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**Leadership and Culture**

**Montgomery Van Wart, Annie Hondeghem,  
Erwin Schwella and Paul Suino**

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**Comparative Models of Top Civil  
Servant Training**



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LEADERSHIP AND CULTURE

Comparative Models of Top Civil Servant Training

# Leadership and Culture

## Comparative Models of Top Civil Servant Training

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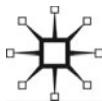
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# Contents

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| <i>List of Illustrations</i>   | vii |
| <i>Foreword by Christopher Pollitt</i>   | ix  |
| <i>Notes on Contributors</i>   | xii |
| Introduction: Understanding the Role and Context of<br>Senior Civil Servant Training<br><i>Montgomery Van Wart and Annie Hondeghem</i> | 1   |
| <b>Part I Training Senior Civil Servants in<br/>Anglo-American Countries</b>   |     |
| 1. Australia<br><i>John Halligan</i>   | 25  |
| 2. The United Kingdom<br><i>Sylvia Horton and Montgomery Van Wart</i>  | 41  |
| 3. The United States of America<br><i>Heather Getha-Taylor</i>   | 56  |
| <b>Part II Training Senior Civil Servants in<br/>Eastern European Countries</b>  |     |
| 4. Estonia<br><i>Külli Sarapuu, Merlini Metsma, Tiina Randma-Liiv, and<br/>Annika Uudelepp</i>   | 73  |
| 5. Hungary<br><i>Márk Gál and Márton Gellén</i>  | 89  |
| 6. Romania<br><i>Cristina Hințea and Tudor Ticlău</i>  | 103 |
| <b>Part III Training Senior Civil Servants in Germanic and<br/>Northern European Countries</b>   |     |
| 7. Austria<br><i>Isabell Egger-Poitler, Monika Knassmüller, and Renate Meyer</i>   | 121 |
| 8. Belgium<br><i>Annie Hondeghem, Christian de Visscher,<br/>Maxime Petit Jean, and Silke Ruebens</i>                                  | 137 |

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| 9. Denmark  | 153 |
| <i>Bente Bjørnholt and Morten Balle Hansen</i>            |     |
| 10. Finland   | 167 |
| <i>Turo Virtanen</i>                                      |     |
| 11. Germany   | 183 |
| <i>Werner Jann and Sylvia Veit</i>                        |     |
| 12. The Netherlands                                       | 199 |
| <i>Trui Steen, Caspar van den Berg, and Peter Leisink</i> |     |
| 13. Switzerland   | 216 |
| <i>Adrian Ritz and Leonie Schuessler</i>                  |     |

**Part IV Training Senior Civil Servants in  
Latin European Countries**

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| 14. France   | 235 |
| <i>Alexandra Coustou, Joyce Liddle, and Robert Fouchet</i> |     |
| 15. Italy  | 252 |
| <i>Denita Cepiku, Alessandro Hinna, and Sandro Mameli</i>  |     |

**Part V Training Senior Civil Servants in Other Countries**

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| 16. Colombia  | 271 |
| <i>Pablo Sanabria and Claudia N. Avellaneda</i>                               |     |
| 17. Namibia   | 288 |
| <i>Erwin Schwella, Yrika Maritz, Michael Conteh, and<br/>Elsie Nghikembua</i> |     |
| 18. South Africa  | 304 |
| <i>Peter E. Franks</i>  |     |
| 19. South Korea   | 321 |
| <i>Sangmook Kim</i>   |     |

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Conclusion: Understanding the Reasons for the Differences in<br>Importance, Quantity, and Quality of SCS Training | 337 |
| <i>Montgomery Van Wart and Annie Hondeghem</i>  |     |

|              |     |
|--------------|-----|
| <i>Index</i> | 349 |
|--------------|-----|

# List of Illustrations

## Tables

|      |   |     |
|------|---|-----|
| 0.1  | Countries endorsing explicit competency models for the SCS or civil service in general  | 14  |
| 1.1  | SES programs, 2013  | 32  |
| 3.1  | Executive core qualifications (ECQs)  | 60  |
| 3.2  | Training assessment   | 63  |
| 3.3  | Satisfaction with training  | 64  |
| 5.1  | Content summary of the mandatory basic exam curriculum  | 99  |
| 5.2  | Summary of the content of the civil service advanced exam   | 99  |
| 6.1  | Mandatory professional training programs (MSTP) for SCSs 2009–2012  | 110 |
| 6.2  | NACS activity between 2010–2012   | 111 |
| 6.3  | Position of SCS in the administration apparatus   | 113 |
| 6.4  | NACS competency framework (based on needs assessment) for prefects and subprefects  | 114 |
| 6.5  | Competency frameworks comparison  | 115 |
| 8.1  | Number of civil servants and mandate holders in the different levels of government, 2012–2013   | 139 |
| 9.1  | Educational background of department heads, in percents (1979, 1989, 1999, 2009)  | 159 |
| 9.2  | Educational background of agency CEOs in percents (1995, 2000, 2005, 2008)  | 159 |
| 10.1 | Top civil servants by sex in Finland in June 2013   | 171 |
| 11.1 | Training for civil servants in the Federal administration according to the “Agreement on public sector modernization and training in the Federal administration” (2007) | 193 |
| 12.1 | Educational levels of Dutch senior civil servants, 2007   | 206 |
| 12.2 | Educational background of Dutch senior civil servants and organization type, 2007   | 208 |
| 13.1 | Timeline and key events affecting the training of top civil servants in Switzerland   | 219 |
| 13.2 | Management positions in the Swiss Federal Administration  | 220 |
| 14.1 | Overview table presenting ÉNA, INET, and EHESP, 2011–2012   | 243 |
| 14.2 | Overview table presenting ÉNA, INET, and EHESP, 2008–2012   | 245 |
| 15.1 | Stages of reform and training supports  | 254 |

|      |  |     |
|------|--|-----|
| 15.2 | Main managerial reforms in Italy                             | 257 |
| 16.1 | Colombian normative regarding senior civil servants          | 279 |
| 16.2 | Norms regarding the training of Colombian senior officials   | 280 |
| 19.1 | The SCS competency model                                     | 327 |
| 19.2 | Training trends by administration                            | 330 |
| C.1  | Summary of senior civil servant training in select countries | 340 |
| C.2  | Importance of SCS training                                   | 344 |
| C.3  | Quality of SCS training factors                              | 346 |

## Figures

|      |   |     |
|------|---|-----|
| 0.1  | Context and background of the training of senior civil servants                                 | 7   |
| 4.1  | The Estonian top civil service competency framework   | 78  |
| 7.1  | Top civil servants (TCSs) in Austria's Federal Administration                                   | 127 |
| 10.1 | Finnish governmental system   | 169 |
| 15.1 | Public employment trends in Italy   | 255 |
| 16.1 | Number of top servants who received training from ESAP (Higher School of Public Administration) | 282 |
| 17.1 | NIPAM's capacity-building framework   | 302 |
| 19.1 | Grade-based training structure  | 329 |

## Appendix

|      |   |     |
|------|---|-----|
| 16.1 | Inventory of existing educational programs suitable to top management | 286 |
|------|---|-----|

# Foreword

For some, the training of top civil servants may sound rather a boring topic or, at least, one of only narrow, technical interest. To my mind, quite the contrary is true: the nature of such training is closely linked to some of the most crucial questions in contemporary liberal democracy, and its implications go far beyond the technical.

Liberal democracies are supposed to be representative systems, in which those who are elected by the citizens play central roles in deciding, as the people's representatives, what gets done. In practice, of course, such representatives cannot possibly know enough to decide many matters in any detail, and neither could they have the time or skills actually to carry out what they have decided. They need help, both to decide and to implement, and, since the nineteenth century in many countries, civil servants have been the principal source of that help. Many civil servants never see a politician face-to-face, but *top* civil servants do. They stand right at the frontier between politics and administration. They are frequently influential. Because of this they need clear rules on what they should and should not do, and we citizens need a clear understanding about how top officials are recruited and trained, and how, once in action, they are going to remain both competent and accountable.

The above considerations have applied for many decades, and have generated a vast literature and an unending debate, in both of which academics have played important parts. Different countries have arrived at different "public service bargains" between politicians and their top officials. Recently, however, the nature of the politics-administration frontier seems to have begun to change. Indeed, the nature of politics itself is changing, and this poses many questions for top civil servants. These changes have been widespread, though occurring in different degrees in different countries. They include:

- Increased electoral volatility and declining party loyalty on the part of citizens
- New parties springing up and making party competition more complex and multilateral
- More media, reporting more quickly and aggressively, 24/7; the growing salience of the sound bite
- The personalization of politics, in the sense of media portrayals of governments and politics becoming more focused on individual characters and their foibles and on clashes between personalities, rather than on policies and programs

- Fewer opportunities for ministers to gain popularity by announcing major new welfare state programs—governments have been more concerned with managing the existing welfare state or, in the more recent period of austerity, trimming it back. These are inherently rather unpopular tasks.

All these developments have made the lives of ministers more pressured and precarious. They have tended to shorten political horizons and increase the influence of political and media advisers. They therefore directly impact the kinds of relationships ministers want to have with top civil servants and that, in turn, carries large implications for training. These pressures are perhaps most noticeable for those settled, career civil services in European states where traditionally there have been few political advisers or consultants, and the top civil servants had functioned as the unquestioned, closest advisers of their ministers. But the greater pace and volatility of politics have also made themselves felt in those systems where ministers have long been surrounded by personally appointed *cabinets* of political advisers rather than interfacing exclusively with career officials.

Yet this is not all. Increasingly, in many if not most countries, politicians are claiming to be making and implementing policies in more transparent and participative ways. “Collaboration” has become a watchword. In so far as this approach goes beyond rhetoric, it also affects what is expected of civil servants. Now they must learn to deal directly with citizens and the media, and to be responsive to them—just as they are simultaneously being asked to be even more responsive to their hard-pressed ministers. And, often, they must also pay attention to (increasingly elaborate) codes of professional values and ethics. Furthermore, in Europe and North America, we are currently in the middle of what may be a generation-long period of fiscal austerity. Harsh resource cuts make policy prioritization even more painful than usual and place both politicians and sometimes top civil servants in the uncomfortable position of having to manage public expectations downward. Finally, states are ever-more entwined in international networks that go far beyond traditional diplomacy. These networks, sometimes steered by intergovernmental bodies, such as the IMF, OECD, World Bank or WTO, demand that top civil servants develop the skills necessary to handle negotiations that cross different cultures and political and legal systems.

Overall, this is indeed a complex environment, and finding training arrangements that adequately address all these competing demands—even if there is the will and the resources to do so—is enormously difficult. While there appears to be a widespread belief that better “leadership” is both desirable and possible, the concept of “leadership” itself has many variants and dimensions.

Despite these momentous changes we have until now lacked a detailed yet internationally comparative academic treatment of current trends in the training of top civil servants (in fact, not only for the top elite but for other grades as well). *Leadership and Culture* admirably fills the gap. Montgomery

Van Wart, Annie Hondeghem, and Erwin Schwella—themselves leading international experts in the field—have assembled a substantial team of HRM experts from many different parts of the world. This immensely knowledgeable collectivity has crafted an up-to-date analysis of top civil service training in the Anglo-American countries; Eastern European countries; Germanic and North European countries; Latin countries; and Colombia, Namibia, South Africa, and South Korea. In each country chapter, top civil service training is set in the wider context of the civil service and the political system, and their histories. The editors bookend these specific accounts with chapters which pick out major similarities and differences cross-nationally, and which offer balanced and cautious generalisations, together with references to useful conceptual frameworks and theories. They conclude with some pointers to future improvements.

The country case studies reveal a complex landscape. Countries start from different histories, work within different political systems, embody different administrative cultures, experience different economic conditions, and so on. Strong leadership in the Australian public service may look very different—certainly at the level of detail—from strong leadership in Denmark or Colombia. All the foregoing contextual factors are likely to have some influence on the demands made of top civil servants. They also influence visions of the desired future and the aspirations for and organization of training. Yet this is not to say that every country is unique and that lessons cannot be learned. As many chapters make clear, lessons—both sound and misleading—are being transferred internationally all the time. Cautious generalizations can be made that will hold, at least within certain “families” of countries, if not universally. Common problems are often apparent. Trade-offs (e.g., between impartiality and responsiveness or between generic competencies and substantive knowledge of a given policy sector) can be identified and explored. There may be no simple answers, but there are certainly hints about common pitfalls and the requisites for giving reforms a chance of succeeding and becoming embedded. It is also quite clear that in some cases the gap between what the current situation seems to require and what is actually happening on the ground is uncomfortably large.

This is, therefore, a timely book. In the trustworthy hands of its editors and authors it eschews simplistic solutions and offers a nuanced picture of a vital, if sometimes overlooked, subject. It meets a hitherto unfulfilled need in the range of scholarly public administration texts. I am delighted to commend it to everyone who believes, as I do, that a sound and trustworthy public service is one of the key characteristics of a civilized society.

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# Introduction: Understanding the Role and Context of Senior Civil Servant Training

*Montgomery Van Wart and Annie Hondeghem*

The training of all civil servants, including senior civil servants, is very important today, but it was not always so (Yergin and Stanislaw 1998). As recently as the eighteenth century, government was a relatively small endeavor in the “night-watchman” state model which focused on national defense, modest public safety, and justice. Since the administrative state was both relatively small and unsophisticated, the training of senior servants was not particularly important since they were simply culled from the gentry. In the nineteenth century, advanced democracies bolstered their services, adding public education, modest infrastructure, postal service, national monetary systems, and minimal services in cities. It was then that efforts were made to bolster merit principles to increase competence and reduce gross political spoils.

In the twentieth century, especially after World War II, advanced democracies expanded the current array of services that we expect from government today, including a host of risk protection programs, progressive infrastructure, social welfare, and strong regulation of areas affecting the common good—from finance to the environment to communications. What government does today is vast, complex, highly sophisticated (Allen, Stelzner, Wielkiewicz 1999), and woven into the quality of life we experience in an interconnected world that has seven times the population of 200 years ago.

Today, training the civil service and senior civil servants can no longer be taken for granted (Bacon 2000; Abramson, Breul, and Kamensky 2006; Denis, Langely, and Rouley 2007). Some of the major responsibilities and functions that fall to the SCS include:

- providing a pool of policy expertise that is blended with that of the political branch and other sectors;
- managing the sophisticated apparatus of administration over time and different governments-of-the-day;

- using legally permissible discretion to adapt policies to regions, offices, and individual cases;
- coordinating across departments to ensure maximum effectiveness of government-as-a-whole;
- communicating and coordinating with society via its professional associations, interest groups, the media, and so on, to ensure responsiveness in a way that prevents conflicts of interest or manipulation of the public good for private ends;
- ensuring the legality and fairness of all activities done by and through public administration;
- creating an organizational environment in which public sector employment is sought after and honorable because it is thought of as efficient and effective; and
- providing an environment of innovation and change, as well as an optimistic can-do attitude so necessary to fulfill the spirit of a vibrant public sector.

Thus, the SCS is a precious commodity and we would be well-served to ensure that those with such great responsibilities are fully up-to-task. The civil service, including both central government and local government, represents approximately 15 percent of the workforce in advanced democracies (OECD 2009) and is responsible for an array of public services, planning, and protections that are indispensable and expensive—the worldwide average on taxes is about 28.9 percent of a country’s GDP (World Factbook 2013). This study focuses on training leaders of administrations who advise policymakers, manage systems—often with thousands and sometimes millions of employees, and who are responsible for implementing change in an exceedingly fast-paced world.

## **Who Makes Up the Senior Civil Service (SCS)?**

An important preliminary question is: How is the senior civil service (SCS) defined? Briefly, members of the SCS are the senior-most civil servants in the administrative system who generally interface with the political system and are responsible for the execution of policy. The term “civil servants” has both narrow and broad usages. Sometimes it implies employees with tenure rights (i.e., careerists) who have been selected through a competitive merit process and are employed by the state to maintain the administrative machinery of government and who often enjoy more due process rights than in the private sector. More broadly and closer to our definition, however, it refers to anyone working for the government, other than the military or political branch of government. For this study, we define the minister, secretary, or commissioner placed in charge of an agency in the formation of a government-of-the-day and her or his political advisers, as part of the

political branch, and not as civil servants. SCS, for this study, are those who report to the agency head and her or his deputies who are the policymakers who oversee administrative functions. Most frequently today, the SCS of a country is comprised of *both* careerists who have risen to executive ranks through the public sector and those who are temporarily appointed to the senior-most position(s) by the government-of-the-day or for a set term and have come from the private sector, nonprofit sector, or political system. The increased politicization of the SCS over the last 50 years has meant that it is not uncommon for the top three levels of large agencies to be politically appointed (Kickert 2007). However, because of the bureaucratization of politics, it is also not uncommon for a minister or secretary to have once been a careerist in the agency and take on a more policy-oriented and political role. Generalizing for clarity, while the bulk of senior officials in typical departments in modern advanced democracies may be careerists, normally those with primarily political or other sector backgrounds dominate the senior policymaking roles and those with administrative backgrounds dominate the subordinate execution roles. Less than a quarter of country experts in our study report that the competence of politically appointed bureaucrats is a chronic or even substantial problem.

It should also be noted that training needs and preferences will vary between careerists and noncareerists. Careerists tend to know their agency or organization's technical and legal system well but may have a greater need for "big picture" training, organizational change, and executive skills, such as public relations. Careerists are thought to be more cautious but potentially also more thoughtful about the details of the change process. Careerists who have been promoted to the senior-most positions are often more willing to be identified with a political party or take a more aggressive change strategy. Noncareerists may have poorer knowledge of the technical and legal system requirements within which they are expected to work, as well as vague knowledge of the programs currently in operation. They have energy and enthusiasm for change but may have limited knowledge about how do to so properly and effectively in large organizational systems. As reported by the country experts, for reasons of critical mass, inclination, and time frame, most leadership training programs that teach management, executive, and change skills tend to enlist careerists, while leadership training that is more short term and technically oriented to the legal requirements of the system (often compulsory) includes both careerists and noncareerists.

## **Assumptions and Methods Used in the study**

Studies of the SCS are often rather mechanistic, even when conducted in a comparative structure as this study is. However, this study takes a much broader approach to understanding the SCS and its training than

is conventional. Since the SCS is such an important element of a well-functioning society, a much richer understanding is merited, especially in an age when the reform of government is critical to so many societies. For simplicity, we lay out our reasoning in a series of premises:

- Society evolves over time; thus social, political, and administrative needs and challenges evolve (Schein 1985).
- Government evolves, too, and can encourage, discourage, or be marginal to social change processes through political and administrative elements (Huntington 1968).
- Government can be, and generally is, a part of the problem (contemporary challenges) as much as it is a part of the solution. Good government is more a part of the solution and bad government (or simply poorly administered government) is more a part of the problem (Van Wart 1998).
- *Good* leadership always matters at all levels (Bennis and Nanus 1985). SCS leadership is always important, too (Van Wart 2011). However, the reasons vary substantially, as this study will indicate.
- Similarly, managerial and leadership competence is important and is a result of *education, experience, and training*, each of which has separate roles and tends to influence different parts of the competency development cycle (Boyatzis 1982). (A typical example: a prospective civil servant may get modest education such as a technical bachelor's degree, receive technical training in junior positions when hired, and supervisory training when promoted. In middle management, the individual may return to school for a managerial master's degree, receive mentoring by a skilled senior administrator, and participate in senior management training and, ultimately, candidate development training for the SCS. When in the SCS, individuals may enhance their knowledge and skills, and bolster their perspective and motivation by taking additional training programs that focus on public relations, policy advisement, change management, cutting-edge technological advancements affecting organizations, or other leadership skills. They may also participate in special executive "lunch" seminars, study tours, or cross-agency seminars on special topics.)
- Different countries have substantially different education/experience/training patterns (Heady 2001). Some start with broad education and add technical education later. Others start with a deeply ingrained legal education and add management later. Still others start with a technical emphasis, and then begin adding management skills for those needing them. Each country has a unique constellation of SCS learning factors affecting continued development. Understanding the factors affecting the SCS training is aided by mapping the cultural/political/administrative antecedents.

The selection of 19 countries arose from those interested in volunteering to participate from the IIAS (International Institute of Administrative Science)

study group on administrative leadership. Because of the membership of the group, it is skewed toward Europe and the Anglophone world; nonetheless, the countries offer a wide variety of experiences and sufficient numbers from which to make some cautious generalizations. Using the House et al. country-cluster groupings (House et al. 2004), the countries represented are:

- Anglo: Australia, United Kingdom, United States
- Confucian Asia: South Korea
- Eastern Europe: Estonia, Hungary, and Romania
- Germanic Europe: Austria, Belgium (partial), Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland (partial)
- Latin Europe: France and Italy
- Latin America: Colombia
- Nordic: Denmark and Finland
- Sub-Saharan Africa: Namibia and South Africa

In most cases, the IIAS representatives brought in a team of country experts from the scholarly community to coauthor the project, but in some instances a single scholar worked alone. The full membership bringing the project to completion was 43 scholars. A framework was vetted and refined over a series of meetings and emails in the fall of 2012. All country case chapters follow that framework, but some latitude was permitted because of the vastly different experiences of the countries involved and to allow the country experts some room to “tell their story.” Most country experts worked on the projects from January to August 2013. Most country experts had done empirical research in the area or were themselves involved at some point in SCS training. Most conducted a series of high-level interviews of relevant government officials. Original analysis of the specifics of various types of SCS training programs was required in all cases. The country studies underwent editorial review, resubmission, and initial copyediting from August to December 2013.

## **Explanation of the Framework for the Book**

The ultimate questions related to SCS training *per se* were structural and operational, and included even elementary conceptual questions:

- What is the range of offerings and types of SCS training? What is the content of SCS training programs? Where do they receive training, by whom, and for how long? What are the leadership expectations of administrative leaders (e.g., competencies) that the programs are attempting to address?

However, the idea for the study was to go beyond the simple identification of SCS training programs as artifacts, and to ask substantially more probing

questions given the importance of the SCS as an ongoing country resource. We also wanted to know:

- Are there discernable patterns across regions, cultural groupings, types of government, and so forth? Further, can best practices be derived in a relatively straightforward manner *across* regions, cultures, and varying path-dependencies (aka country histories), or do such factors weigh heavily in determining appropriate parameters for qualitative assessments and policy recommendations?
- What tends to increase the perceived and tangible importance/need of SCS training in various countries?
- What types of factors tend to increase the quality of SCS training programs, either across or within country contexts?

In order to answer such questions, a robust analysis of the societal, political, and administrative context needed to be addressed in our country studies. To do this, we constructed a framework that provided the outline for all chapters. The antecedent conditions we wanted to address in each country were the societal context, the political structures in place, and the organizational-administrative paradigms functioning. Recognizing that the antecedent conditions are not independent of one another, we hypothesized (and largely assumed, since the study was qualitative) that administrative realities are nested in political realities, which in turn are nested in societal realities, but that causality would not necessarily flow in a single direction. We also hypothesized that organizational-administrative conditions would be most noticeable (have the greatest impact) in the structuring/content of programs, that political factors would be more muted but not insignificant, and that the societal level would be least in direct evidence in the short-term but significant in the long-term attention paid to SCS training, given the fact that governmental administration is only one of many societal concerns.

These hypotheses were borne out in our study with a minor caveat. When radical political-societal change occurred in some of the societies under study, it did have some immediate effect on the training of SCS (e.g., temporary cessation of programs or change of participants). Even so, when analyzing the effects of the New Public Management “revolution,” the transition of Eastern Europe from communist to capitalist economies, and the move away from apartheid in South Africa, the most substantive changes were years in the making and were realized well after “pivotal” events had occurred in the political sphere. A particularly good example of the lag of societal-political events is in the United Kingdom. Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher came to power in 1979, but her privatization policies did not really take effect in various government-sponsored industries until the latter 1980s, and they continued after she left office in 1990. For its part,

SCS training run by the central government adjusted or added to its tone and topics in the 1980s but did not make radical changes at the time. It became self-sufficient in the 1990s, though still wholly run in-government, and only became totally privatized along Thatcher principles in 2012, when most in-house generic civil servant training was turned over to a private company. The framework is shown in Figure 0.1.

## Societal Level

Different cultures have different ideas (aka collective programming) about what is important for society and what is most valued by society (Hofstede 1980, 2001). A series of studies by Robert House and his associates (2004) focusing on broad notions of leadership identified ten culture clusters with somewhat similar cultural characteristics; 8 of the 10 clusters identified by House are represented in this study. It is understood that a culture cluster represents a conceptual type and that there will be a substantial range of ideas, beliefs, and practices within a cluster. For example, Germany and Austria are relatively “pure” examples of the Germanic European cluster, but the Low Countries of Belgium and the Netherlands are not since they have been so influenced by Anglo and Nordic cultures in the north and by Latin Europe in the Wallonian portion of Belgium.

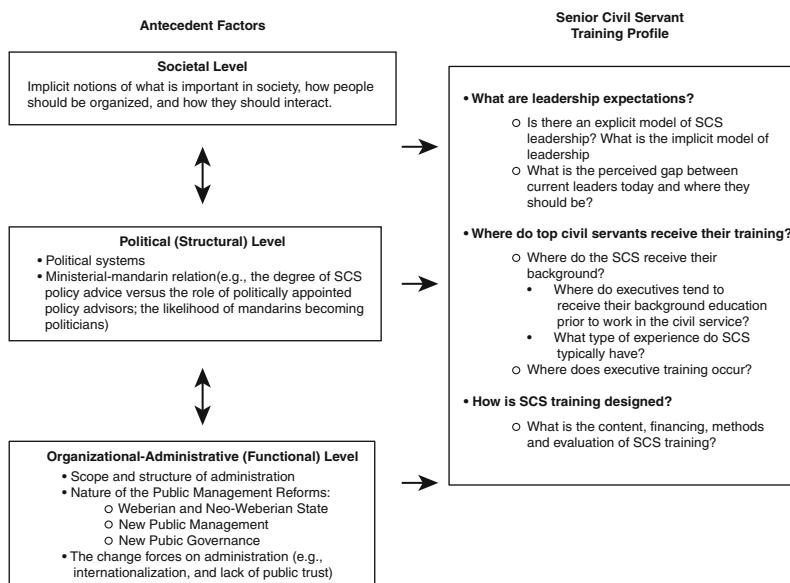


Figure 0.1 Context and background of the training of senior civil servants.

House identified nine distinctive cultural dimensions. Four of those dimensions look at what is important for society. *Performance orientation* is the degree to which those who accomplish a lot are provided greater benefits and rewards. High-performance-oriented cultures include Anglo, Confucian, and Germanic. Lower-performance-oriented cultures include Eastern Europe and Latin America. Worldwide dominance of the market paradigm in the last quarter century has probably enhanced this trend in other cultures. *Future orientation* refers to cultures whose individuals delay gratification for future benefits, who plan a lot, and who tend to invest for the future. Countries that are highest in future orientation tend to be Nordic and Germanic, while Latin American tend to be the least. A nearly opposite characteristic is *uncertainty avoidance*, which is how much a culture uses rules, laws, social norms, and procedures to make things more predictable and to reduce risk. This is most evident in the Germanic and Nordic cultures, and less so in Eastern Europe and Latin America. However, all advanced countries naturally migrate toward risk aversion because they have the means to do so. *Humane orientation* emphasizes altruism, generosity, caring, and kindness to others. In our study, Sub-Saharan Africa represents a greater humane orientation while Germanic Europe and Latin America represent a lesser one.

Another set of dimensions looks at how society should be organized. *Group-oriented* societies (in-group collectivism) emphasize devotion of family and extended group cohesiveness. Cultures high in group orientation include Confucian Asia, Eastern Europe, Sub-Saharan Africa, and Latin America, while Anglo, Germanic, and Nordic cultures stress individualism or self-reliance to a much greater degree. *Institutional collectivism* refers to the loyalty or dedication to social or organizational goals, such as affiliation with the state. Cultures with strong institutional collectivism include Confucian Asia and Nordic Europe, while Germanic Europe, Latin America, and Latin Europe are low in this dimension.

A third set of dimensions relates to how people are supposed to interact. *Assertiveness* refers to the degree to which the people in a culture are determined, aggressive, or confrontational in their social relationships. Germanic and Eastern Europeans represent more assertive cultures, while Nordic culture is very low in assertiveness. To the degree that increased information and education make people aware of comparisons, they tend to increase the demands on society for services. *Gender egalitarianism* is the degree to which the sexes are treated equally. Gender egalitarianism has risen sharply throughout the world, often using government as a conduit of reform, except in the case of the Middle East, which lags in this dimension. *Power distance* refers to the degree to which different levels of status and power are tolerated and encouraged. In the contemporary world, rigid class structures have receded and the acceptability of large power distance has declined markedly. This has had a significant effect on not only interaction

with government officials but also “ideal” patterns of recruitment and selection. The culture with the most tolerance to power distance is Middle Eastern and the least tolerant is Nordic.

### **Political (Structural) Background**

Because administrative systems are authorized by political systems, some examination of them was important, if only to informally control for differences. Basic political questions included the type of political structure and the structure of executive government. Twelve of the 19 countries in our study were full parliamentary systems; five were mixed presidential-parliamentary systems, and two were full presidential systems. Slightly over two-thirds were classified as unitary states. There was not a discernible correlation between these political factors and the administrative focus of our study. Twelve countries had supranational status (European Union), and that did seem to have a mild correlation to discussions of the broader training of SCS and the international themes in training, which was pronounced in newer members of the EU. A handful of the poorer countries indicated that international aid or accession to international organizations was a substantial influence on the provision of training for senior civil servants.

When we asked about political reforms regarding government itself, four themes emerged. The most widespread by far was about *fiscal reforms* to increase efficiency, reduce waste, and/or increase accountability via mechanisms ranging from performance measurement to privatization. The bulk of country experts reported substantial success in reaching this goal, some reported modest success, and a couple reported slow, little, or no progress (i.e., Colombia, Italy, and South Africa). These reforms started in some places in the 1980s, and some countries, such as the UK, have had multiple rounds of major fiscal reforms. *Whole-of-government initiatives* have been increasing in recent years; that is, efforts by central governments to ensure that policy efforts are aligned across agencies to produce coherent government policies that provide demonstrable positive effects in society. Where occurring, these efforts seemed modest, and in some cases largely rhetorical. A third trend was *shifting the center of government*. Some governments, such as Austria, Colombia, and France, reported increases in devolution to local governments while others devolved responsibilities to regions, such as Belgium and the UK, to its constituent countries. Yet some countries reported centralization, such as the UK, at the local government level several decades ago, Hungary more recently, and a massive consolidation of local governments in Denmark. A smaller subset of country studies reported *corruption* as a fourth policy reform challenge, including Colombia, Hungary, Italy, Namibia, Romania, and South Africa, but with significantly differing levels of success. While these four thematic factors are critical for understanding the path dependencies of countries, it is difficult to tie them to concrete SCS

training trends more than to say that there has been an increased interest in managerial-leadership training (fiscal concerns), some modest efforts at emphasizing whole-of-government perspectives in training in some countries, and a major emphasis on integrity training where it has been particularly problematic.

A political-administrative factor of particular importance was the relationship between the SCS and politicians (van den Berg 2010). One clear long-term trend in all countries was the decreased importance of the policy advice role when conceptualizing the SCS, since those who had risen through the civil service and could be considered *administrative* careerists. This occurred through a number of mechanisms. In most cases, personal policy advisers have increased dramatically in the last 25 years (OECD 2011); however, a number of countries are trying to curb this growth, such as Belgium. Often there are either increased levels of politically appointed executives who take on specific administrative areas, or “political” secretaries who manage agencies or divisions, which moves the policy center further from the administrative domain. Other reasons include the increased use of external think tanks, special interests, and private consultants. In some countries the policy advice role for career administrators had become minor, but in some European countries that still have strong legal traditions in administration, the role was still substantial, such as in Austria and Germany, where administrators are generally the drafters of legislation.

A second trend has the loss of official “permanence” for the SCS. Tenure-like rights have been lost in all countries where the SCS is allowed to hold top positions without leaving “covered” status. Nonetheless, in many continental European countries longstanding SCS are not uncommon despite their reduced legal standing.

A third issue is the migration between the SCS administrative ranks and political positions. For example, France is a famous long-time example of administrators taking on key political roles in the country. Although not as prominent, this is also common in the Netherlands and South Korea. Many countries report it as occasional. The other issue is how often politicians retreat to administrative positions, either because their government is about to go out of power or for high administrative salaries. Except for countries that reported challenges in dealing with corruption, flagrant administrative “retreat” job taking was not reported as more than an occasional occurrence in most countries. What was reported in many countries, however, was the fact that the politicization of administration and the bureaucratization of politics have made it increasingly difficult to determine administrative versus political careers in the SCS, for a variety of reasons. First, the level of education and experience in political advisers has become very high, making merit-like transitions easier. Second, those planning to move up to the SCS, and those already in, are more likely to do rotational assignments in political units, such as ministerial cabinets. Therefore the line between

administration and politics is more permeable for those who have *both* the administrative credentials/expertise and the political skills and connections to move between positions.

### Organizational-Administrative Level

A particular interest was to see how ideologically based patterns of organizing public sector administrative systems might, or might not, affect the training of the SCS, as well as to see how and what nonideological change forces were significant. Country experts were asked to examine the status of three well-known paradigms in public administration: the Neo-Weberian State, the New Public Management, and the New Public Governance (Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011).

Neo-Weberian State (NWS) is the most traditional conceptualization in which authority is exercised through a disciplined hierarchy of impartial officials. It emphasizes the technocratic aspects of administration, the necessity of cultivating long-term expertise, and the separation of politics and administration when possible; change does occur, but the administrative aspects of change are considered professional decisions and reform efforts are often called modernization. In the study, NWS reform was defined: "To modernize the traditional state apparatus so that it becomes more efficient and responsive to citizens. Businesslike methods may have a subsidiary role in this, but the state remains a distinctive actor with its own rules, methods, and culture." The countries most strongly in this mode were all in continental Europe: Austria, Finland, France, Denmark, Germany, and Switzerland.

Three trends affected modernization across the countries studied, and were reflected in the training initiatives aimed at the SCS. First, fiscal stress was nearly universal and was seen in a range of activities from proactive to reactive. Examples included revised and more accurate accounting systems, the use of goals and targets in budgets, higher standards for civil servants in terms of education, training and certification, and finding ways to prune costs and redeploy resources more efficiently. A second pervasive and enormous trend has been the digitization of government. Governments have been proceeding at various speeds to place all basic information online for citizens as well as for its own internal use, to provide a greater proportion of services online, and to provide information for citizen oversight in the form of accurate and accessible performance data and productivity reports. Finally, just as ethics legislation for politicians and their staff have increased in many countries, so, too, has ethics training for administrators, often in mandated annual or biennial electronic sessions.

New Public Management (NPM) shifts the emphasis of control from legislative mandates and administrative oversight to market-type mechanisms, performance indicators, targets, competitive contracts, and the creation of quasi-markets (Hood 1991). In the study, the NPM reform was defined: "To

make the core of government more efficient and consumer responsive by injecting businesslike methods." While affecting all countries in the study to some degree, the countries in which this paradigm was most dominant were in the Anglo, Scandinavian, and Eastern European clusters: United Kingdom, Australia, and United States; Estonia; Hungary and Romania, as well as South Korea.

There has been a broad trend to remove the permanence of the SCS and to introduce more term and performance contracts for top civil servants, or simply to expand political discretion of selection and replacement. This has been paired with an interest in enhanced customer service mandates. Numerous countries in the study indicated formal efforts, and some degree of success, in importing more private sector expertise into SCS positions, such as Australia, Belgium, Estonia, Finland, Germany, South Korea, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Additionally, there have been many efforts to cut red tape, reduce due process where it is considered ineffective, increase performance indicators for both administrative and policy usage, and reduce personnel. Finally, many governments have tried to increase the efficiency of large bureaucracies by splitting them up, giving more tightly monitored resources and goals, and providing more managerial authority to "get results." This process is generally called *agentification* (Verhoest et al. 2012). Countries experiencing the highest levels of agentification in the last 25 years included Austria, Belgium, Estonia, Hungary, Namibia, Romania, South Korea, and the UK. Less pronounced were Australia, Colombia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and Switzerland. The least agentification was in South Africa and the United States. However, many of the countries that had more modest tendencies in the latter lists had already largely structured themselves in alignment with this model, so the trend had less significance for them. The agentification trend seems to have largely run its course (Talbot and Johnson 2007), and some countries now see a counter trend to recentralize, such as in Central and Eastern Europe (Hungary and Romania in this study).

New Public Governance (NPG) emphasizes the importance of government to work cooperatively across agencies and levels of government, to accentuate societal—rather than narrower—goals (typical in both NWS and NPM) as well as to include citizens in the ongoing administrative process in nonpolitically charged ways (Agranoff and McGuire 2003; Lægreid and Christensen 2007). It tends to focus on network-oriented approaches and self-organizing communities at the policy level, and sharing resources, service centers, common targets, measures, and social goals at the administrative level (Ling 2002). In this study, the NPG reform was defined: "To make government more effective and legitimate by including a wider range of social actors in both policymaking and implementation." Common mechanisms include networks and partnerships of stakeholders, and horizontal

over vertical controls (professional accreditation standards rather than rules imposed by senior officials).

NPG has been much discussed since the late 1990s and can be seen in many governments' reform philosophies to overcome excessive fragmentation without simply resorting to centralized government, but none have clearly demonstrated this trend as being dominant (Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011). Two of the clearest examples include the agenda under Tony Blair as UK prime minister and the strong collaborative themes emphasized by EU membership.

### Expectations of Leaders

This question deals with the ideal leadership profile and the degree to which current top civil servants meet these expectations. For example, in terms of role expectations, hierarchical leaders (NWS model) might accentuate their roles as bureaucrats with expertise and stewards of long-term public values; market-oriented public sector leaders (NPM model) might accentuate their roles as results-oriented managers and creative entrepreneurs; and network-oriented leaders (NPG) might accentuate their roles as external leaders in bringing communities together and as professionals in terms of arriving at consensus through collaboration and shared standards. Shifts in role emphases seemed to be jointly shaped by changing circumstances and needs as much as by ideology. For example, fiscal stress could lead to modernization such as digitization of government functions for efficiency (NWS), to disaggregation of large agencies into more accountable units with stricter goals (NPM), or to the resolution to have certain expensive services be shared for cost savings (NPG). However, according to the reigning ideology, there might be an emphasis on maintaining the integrity of the state (NWS), downsizing the state through market mechanisms and privatization (NPM), or finding more communitarian solutions to overarching social problems (NPG).

One trend over the last twenty years that has provided a better sense of the role expectations of civil servants in general, and SCS in particular, is the development of competency matrices. Over half of the countries under study had some articulation of officially endorsed competency models in place, yet some Continental European countries have resisted the "managerialist" implications of the use of an endorsed competency model. See Table 0.1 for a list of the countries that used explicit competency models.

Such matrices can be based on explicit leadership theories or philosophical positions about the role of government, but generally are based on a consensus of the multifunctional pragmatic realities in which administrators cope rather than on strict ideological considerations. While competency models reflect general trends, they do not reflect exact priorities. Not surprisingly, there has been an increase in competencies promoted by NPM and NPG in a number of the countries in this study, such as "political savvy" or "ability to see the big picture."

*Table 0.1 Countries endorsing explicit competency models for the SCS or civil service in general*

| Countries       | Explicit competency model   |
|-----------------|---|
| Australia       | Yes   |
| Austria         | No  |
| Belgium         | Yes   |
| Colombia        | Competency framework by legislation is loose and not in operational use |
| Denmark         | No  |
| Estonia         | Yes   |
| Finland         | No  |
| France          | No  |
| Germany         | No  |
| Hungary         | No  |
| Italy           | No  |
| Namibia         | No competency framework currently but one commissioned in 2012          |
| The Netherlands | Yes   |
| Romania         | Yes   |
| South Africa    | Yes   |
| South Korea     | Yes   |
| Switzerland     | Yes   |
| UK              | Yes   |
| US              | Yes   |

It should be remembered that achievement of high-level skill in the various competencies by individuals is primarily based on foundational education, advanced education, experience in various positions, and early basic training. Pre- and incumbent-SCS training enables individuals to fill technical and conceptual gaps, refine competencies, retool to suit contemporary needs, work on problems in a shared governance setting, and so on.

Country experts were asked to make holistic judgments about public perceptions of the gaps between administrative leadership expectations and administrative leadership performance. About half of the country experts noted that there is a perception by the public and lower-level public employees, reasonable or not, that administrative leaders fall considerably short of expectations. In some cases the gap was created in countries that have become interested in the prospect of downsizing government (e.g., the UK); in other cases it was the perceived need to be more efficient (e.g., Estonia); in still others it was a sense of outright incompetence or even corruption (e.g., South Africa).

Also related is the degree to which there is porousness of movement of administrators, politically appointed bureaucrats, and even political office holders because of the somewhat different value sets and role expectations of each (Aberback and Rockman 1988). To what degree is there an effort

to segregate or to integrate the roles of administrators and policy makers? Segregation of roles can reduce political intrusiveness into administrative affairs, and at its worst, gross patronage. On the other hand, integration of roles at the top can increase responsiveness and shared goals. Different countries have different conceptions of these roles, and differing levels of success in handling the ill side effects of bureaucratic rigidity and political short-term manipulation. Two trends are pronounced. First, there has been over the last quarter century increased integration of administrative and political roles at the top in almost all countries studied unless it was already strong. In France, the administrative-political integration has remained strong, as demonstrated by numerous prime ministers and presidents having risen through administrative ranks. But political-administrative integration has increased where countries have mandated or expected the increased integration of private sector expertise, such as South Korea and the UK; where levels of political appointment have increased, as in the United States; and where rotations through politically oriented roles are considered a part of moving up the administrative ladder, as in the Netherlands and Germany. Second, there has been a pronounced interest in increasing mobility within government for a broader perspective, but only a few countries reported enhanced intragovernment mobility (e.g., South Korea and Denmark), and some reported a decline (e.g., Australia).

### **Where Do Top Civil Servants Currently Receive Their Education, Experience, and Training?**

As discussed, the patterns of education, experience, and training are interwoven and vary such that all countries have a unique constellation; nonetheless, patterns are often discernible in country culture clusters or other country groupings. While our special concern in this study is the training done directly in support of the SCS, we are also interested in the pattern in which it is embedded.

In terms of education, two sets of factors have traditionally been used to describe the overarching educational philosophy of where to recruit SCS. First, there is the long-standing discussion of the specialist-generalist education preference. A classic example compares the American and British systems. In the American system, the ideal was that the specialist bureaucrat rose through the ranks by exhibiting technical expertise and later added demonstrations of managerial competence. In the British system, the individual was broadly trained with a classical liberal arts education and expected to be placed into junior management almost immediately, with the likelihood of significant rotation to aid one's technical and management experience base in order to ascend to senior ranks. On the Continent, the standard approach was also generalist, but the educational profile was a law degree which would enable one to draft laws and rules in any agency one was assigned.

Second, there is a difference between an egalitarian model of education and an elitist one. In an elitist model the educational path is highly restrictive, and the likelihood of advancement to the SCS is much reduced without proper educational credentials. In the past, many countries' SCS tended to have strong elitist characteristics because schools drew heavily from the upper classes, whose children received better education and the supplemental instruction such as British A-level training necessary for admission to high-brow universities or top law universities. While upper-class pupils generally retain an advantage, today merit principles provide greater access to talented middle-class, and sometimes even lower-class students.

These categories lead to six ideal types of educational backgrounds: elitist legal, egalitarian legal, elitist management, generalist management, elitist specialist, and egalitarian specialist.

The *elitist legal education* was typical of nearly all countries in continental Europe at one time, except those using the French version of elitism. While some not-so-subtle class biases still exist, a more *egalitarian legal model* favoring those with legal degrees exists in countries such as Austria, Denmark, Germany, Hungary, and Italy. However, most of these countries do report an increase in nonlaw degrees.

While more egalitarian than in the past, both the UK and France continue to have *elitist management education* biases because highly-selective institutions dominate senior administrative ranks. In the UK it is Oxford and Cambridge (aka "Oxbridge"), and in France the primary school is the École Nationale d'Administration (ÉNA). The ÉNA has a flavor of a specialist education in that it focuses on administration, but for this analysis we emphasize its policy focus and the necessity to teach nontechnical subjects. Colombia is an example of a developing country that functions with an elitist model. On the other hand, many countries have either left their strong reliance on legal educations behind, or broadened their emphasis on management skills. Many countries fit into this *egalitarian management education* model including Belgium, Estonia, Finland, the Netherlands, Romania, South Africa, South Korea, and Switzerland.

The *elitist specialist* model is not broadly exhibited in any of the countries represented, but is frequently in evidence in subsystems in which lengthy professional education is a requirement for practice, such as healthcare or engineering. The French specialty schools, such as the EHESP School of Public Health and INET (National Institute of Territorial Studies), also roughly fit into this model. The *egalitarian generalist* model tends to emphasize position over career, so those entering the civil service start with junior technical positions and then compete for management jobs with little assurance of advancement to senior-most positions. Examples of this model are Australia, Namibia, and the United States. It should be noted that generalizations used here have numerous exceptions. For example, while the United States fits the *egalitarian specialist* model adopted in the mid-nineteenth century under

President Andrew Jackson, it uses the Presidential Management Fellowship program (formerly the Presidential Management Internship program) to recruit “fast-track” students into federal service, clearly an elitist bias since it heavily favors top schools.

In addition to these six “models” that capture the most common undergraduate university pattern, there is a pattern that has been superimposed on almost all countries: the *de facto* or *de jure* requirement for advanced management education. This has long been common in countries like Germany with a strong legal tradition and high repute for public administration. Many countries increasingly expect a master’s degree and some, such as Finland, require it. An increasing percentage of countries report that these advanced degrees are in management, such as master of public administration, master of business administration, or executive versions of such degrees.

Experience plays an important role in most successful careers, and five factors tend to enhance the contribution of experience (McCall, Lombardo, and Morrison 1988). One is simply the amount of time, no matter whether that is seniority in a specific agency or time in service in a field. Fast-track systems are designed to get people into SCS positions at a younger, although still mature, age by giving preference to cohorts of “high-potentials.” While there is concern that the increased political responsiveness that has become a pervasive trend in most countries will give short shrift to direct experience, few reported that it was a substantial problem at this point, despite exceptions. Second, while experience is a good teacher when the administrative system itself is coherent, it is not when systems are dysfunctional. This can affect both advanced and “developing” countries whose administrative systems are struggling, from South Africa, Colombia, and Italy, and to a lesser degree, some of the Central European countries. Third, mentoring provides opportunities to make sense of how systems operate and what individuals specifically need to do to develop. Systems with mentoring will provide more and better leaders, all things being equal. Fourth, rotational opportunities and experiences (sometimes called secondments) are a powerful development tool for senior management and executives, long used by military and religious training systems. Rotations can be within an agency, interagency but within a government system, or even intersector. For example, a number of our case studies reported the increasing importance of rotations by administrators in ministerial cabinets for development and networking. Fifth, when one has quality feedback systems about how one is doing, the opportunity for improvement is much enhanced. Feedback from one’s supervisor is assisted when appraisal/development systems are required, supervisors are trained in appraisal, and the system is comprehensively employed. Some organizations today use comprehensive 360 degree evaluation systems for managers (aka multi-source assessment) to provide broad-based feedback for managers.

Long before reaching the SCS, rising managers and potential executives receive a variety of *developmental training* opportunities (Van Wart, Cayer, and Cook 1993). Some of the examples might include:

- Organization introduction training
- Technical training in rules, conflict of interest, and ethics
- Technical training on various HR, IT, and financial systems
- Training for supervisors (e.g., hiring, position management, appraisal, discipline, motivation)
- Training for managers (e.g., project management, leadership, budgeting, performance management, innovation management, change management)

Training occurring immediately before taking on SCS positions and is generally called *candidacy training*. Sometimes candidacy training is used as a type of selection process, but more often it is used as preparation for SCS positions. In the United States, for instance, federal government candidate programs are run by both the larger agencies as well as by the Office of Personnel Management for smaller agencies. Candidates tend to be particularly eager for such training, so it is an ideal “learning moment” when organizations have the critical mass and resources to offer such training, which is often not the case.

Finally, there is training for the SCS in a variety of formats, modes, and purposes, which is a primary focus of this study. The initial question asked here was, where does executive training occur? Is there a centralized training unit in government responsible and how robust does the training seem to be for the SCS in comparison to other countries in the study? What is an example of a country’s flagship program and how substantial is it? Is training for the governmentally sponsored SCS widely utilized and to what degree does private sector training augment or replace government provided training? The concluding chapter reviews some of the highlights of the study results to these questions.

### **The Design of Top Civil Servant Training**

Country experts were asked to explore the specific content, methods, source of trainers, financing, and means of assessing training, which varied widely. In terms of content, was the SCS training provided primarily narrowly focused on agency-oriented legal and technical issues such as in the Italian case, or broadly focused on management and policy training (which is becoming more common)? Also, how did the SCS itself perceive the necessity, utility, and quality of training designed for executives? In some cases, such as South Korea and France, it was sought after; yet in others, such as Austria, it was considered a mild stigma to participate in anything but update training in a public venue. Relatedly, was the role of the individual pivotal in deciding if, when, and how much training might be useful, such

as in Germany and Denmark, or was the State clear about meeting rather strict legal minimum mandates, such as in Romania?

In terms of the methods used, there was a great variety, and in more comprehensive programmatic offerings, nearly all types could be observed. However, in smaller countries the emphasis was on certain types of methods, and even larger countries demonstrated predilections. Generic management and leadership training was perhaps the most common type found. It sometimes provided a review of what constitutes good management, with an emphasis on change management, for example, transformational leadership and collaborative leadership. Sometimes such management training was more narrowly focused on what are primarily executive skills, such as public relations training, policy analysis, political savvy and law drafting skills. Numerous country experts mention executive coaching, but it becomes more prominent in those that do not have comprehensive SCS training programs and where some degree of discretion related to the support of the SCS is expected, such as in Germanic countries. Study tours were mentioned by some countries like Denmark and Estonia. Many countries mentioned special topic sessions as being important, not only to provide a customized focus on themes, but also to create a sense of executive teamwork and joined-up government.

The preferences in teaching strategies appear to be shifting somewhat. While face-to-face training with a strong lecture format remains dominant, and in some places essentially unchallenged (France), it is reported as declining as an exclusive format. Additionally, great attention to customized sessions allowing substantial participatory opportunities was widely reported. The use of web-based learning is increasing in many places, such as Germany, often integrated with face-to-face sessions. One method, case studies, is reported on by several of the countries (Italy and Switzerland, in particular), but it is likely that case method is used occasionally in most long training programs.

The source of trainers for government-sponsored SCS training varies greatly by country. The use of professional trainers is one source, as well as of experts drawn from the government itself. Consultants are another important source; university faculty are a prominent subcategory. In several cases the trainers are largely outsourced for start-up or ideological reasons (Namibia and the UK, respectively), but where such data were available, using a variety of sources seemed preferred to get the best trainers available.

The financing of SCS training varied significantly, too. Some countries paid for the bulk of the expense from a central budget (Austria, Estonia, France, Namibia, and South Korea). Other countries expected agencies and individuals through their professional development funds to pay for, or reimburse entirely, the cost of programs (Australia, and the UK). Most common was a combination of central subsidy and agency contribution such as in Finland, Germany, Romania, and the United States.

The assessment of SCS training is generally less than ideal. Many countries did not report any assessment or only participant end-of-program evaluations. One or more policy reviews were reported in the last five years by Belgium, Estonia, South Africa, South Korea, and the UK. Some countries reported wholesale employee surveys on civil servant training with data on SCS training, such as South Korea and the US.

## Conclusion

The importance of having a highly competent SCS is hard to overstate, and helping it perform at its peak is an assumption of this study. This study assumes that experience, education, and training factors all contribute to top SCS performance, and looks at the ways in which countries use training for incumbent SCS to contribute to that goal. To provide a broader picture of the complementary role played by SCS training, societal, political, and administrative cultural backgrounds are discussed, prior to focusing on the nuts and bolts of executive training. Such nuts and bolts included the expectations of leaders, where leaders receive their training, and the design of training. While some broad and culture cluster patterns emerge, in most of the elements of investigation the unique country-level circumstances have to be taken into consideration for a deeper understanding.

The country examples are discussed in alphabetical order in each country-cluster group. The chapters provide up-to-date assessments of not only the SCS training but also the organization and philosophy of the political-administrative interface.

The conclusion summarizes in tabular form some of the most important questions regarding SCS. Such questions include the location and depth of training, utilization, and use of the private sector. The conclusion also discusses the primary factors leading to perceptions of importance of SCS training, as well as factors that tend to contribute to the quality of SCS training programs. That chapter ends with some policy recommendations.

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## **Part I**

# **Training Senior Civil Servants in Anglo-American Countries**

# 1

## Australia

*John Halligan*

### Introduction

A basic premise of this chapter is that public service leadership is substantially a product of administrative culture, which in turn is reflected in how senior public servants are trained. The extent to which administrative culture is a decisive factor and how training shapes leadership development needs to be explored against the backdrop of a country's political structure and public management paradigms that contextualize, focus, and channel the institutions and programs for developing the capabilities of senior public servants. The training model for a public service system is also subject to internal perspectives about the provision of training and development, agency needs, and conceptions of leadership.

Australia has been strongly influenced by British tradition, but the result needs to be considered within its New World context and the environmental factors that have shaped its identity. A strong strain of egalitarianism has been pervasive in Australian society and has influenced how the Australian senior public service has been constituted. Nevertheless, the managerialization of the national public sector has been the most enduring feature of the last three decades, and approaches to leadership associated with Anglophone systems have been prevalent.

### Political and Administrative Structure

Australia has been a federal system since 1901. It is comprised of six states and two territories with substantial autonomy in their operations that derive from a written constitution, although interdependencies between levels are highly significant. Each jurisdiction has its own public service and is responsible for local government. Another central feature is responsible government based on a Westminster type of parliamentary system, which means that the government is formed from members of Parliament, to which it is accountable.

Employees in the national public sector account for 16 percent of the workforce, but employees of the Australian public service (APS; at the federal level) account for less than 1 percent. There were 154,307 APS employees in 2012. Of this number, 2,786 (1.8 percent) were in the senior executive service (SES).

The APS number has fluctuated over the last three decades according to fiscal stringency and other agendas. Over the last 15 years, the numbers have risen by 30 percent, but the increase in the SES has been 78 percent. Top civil servants are defined as members of the SES, although arguably the “top” category covers departmental secretaries and deputy secretaries and their equivalents in other agencies under the Public Service Act.

The Australian approach to the reform of public sector governance is distinctive in international terms. The reforms were comprehensive and systemic from an early stage of the reform era (from the early 1980s to the 2000s). Australia was one of a small number of countries, mainly Anglophone, which moved toward a new public management (NPM) model. Anglophone countries—Australia, the United Kingdom, Canada, and New Zealand—have been regarded as a coherent group because of their common tradition and historical and continuing close associations and interactions with institutional roots in the British tradition (Halligan 2010).

A number of factors have reinforced the identity of the Anglophone group over time. Continuing patterns of interaction—historically formed and culturally supported—have been highly significant. The export and transfer of British institutions, first within the empire and later the commonwealth, provided mechanisms of communication among the countries based on a common language and cultural legacy. The long-standing relationship with the United Kingdom has been maintained because it furnishes the head of state, but endogenous communication patterns have been influential with active networks that include regular meetings and circulation of ideas and practices.

Administrative traditions reflect values and principles that are influential in shaping structures, behaviors, and cultures. Four features provide a basis for characterizing administrative traditions: state and society, management and law, political and administrative roles, and variations in law and administration (Peters 2003). For Anglophone systems, the concept of the state, the role of management, and the nature of political and administrative relationships point to an instrumental interpretation.

The Anglophone tradition was reaffirmed during the reform era. Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom were grouped together because they adhered more to the precepts of “new public management” than other Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries. At the peak of the OECD fixation on NPM, the Anglophone experiments were upheld as the ideal (OECD 1995). The reform movement served to reinforce the notion of the group’s identity as distinctive from that of other traditions and was also expressed through how leadership was conceived and the devolution of responsibilities to line departments (Halligan 2012).

## Changing Expectations of the Senior Public Service

In the post-World War II period, an American observed that “both the Australian and United States Services are based on a similar classification concept, give wide scope to the specialist, and are founded on a strong and valuable egalitarian tradition” (Scarow 1957: 139–140). The strength of the Australian tradition was subsequently tested as new conceptions contended for recognition prior to the emergence of the SES.

The British administrative class had long served as a model for Australian reformers. Its basis was a group of generalists specifically recruited from universities and displaying certain qualities. Official inquiries had recommended developing the senior public service along the lines of the administrative class, but it was only once the need for a senior service became pressing that there was movement in this direction. With the expansion of the role and size of the federal government during and following the Second World War, new regulatory mechanisms and policymaking processes were required. The higher public service expanded as greater specialization and a larger second division—comprising senior officials immediately below the department heads—became necessary (Scarow 1957).

A Committee of Inquiry into Public Service Recruitment had in 1959 recommended creating an administrative class modeled on the British system; this would have involved the direct entry of recruits into the training classes of an enlarged second division. The committee’s plan differed from the British model in several respects, such as social context and form of recruitment, but in terms of purpose there was a resemblance, as a group of senior public servants was envisaged who would focus on policy, relationships with politicians, and processing the work of program specialists. The influence of egalitarianism, however, remained too entrenched for an elitist concept to receive support (Halligan 1992).

An Australian administrative elite nevertheless emerged as the result of incremental moves toward cultivating a senior public service. The constraints on recruiting graduates were relaxed and the education of staff was given greater recognition. The numbers of graduate entrants with general, rather than specialist, degrees increased, and the graduate generalist acquired a more prominent role than the specialist. The second division gained recognition as a cadre of top administrators, and it became official policy to develop its corporate identity (Wheeler 1964: 293–294; Crisp 1970). Canberra’s variant of an administrative and policy elite became a reality.<sup>1</sup> Under the coalition government (1949–1972), the power of the senior public service increased, and the Canberra mandarin became entrenched.

Pressure to expand the influence of politicians intensified in the 1970s. The bureaucracy was seen as too elitist, independent, and unrepresentative and as insufficiently responsive. The reaction was to challenge the public servants’ monopoly on giving advice to ministers and to question their

indispensability to the processes of government. The ministers increasingly relied on alternative sources of advice and assistance.

The managerial model crystallized in the early 1980s amid a growing consensus about the deficiencies of the public service under the traditional public administration. Management failures in specific agencies had influenced these attitudes, and a bipartisan view emerged that the management skills of the senior public service officials were deficient and had been undervalued relative to policy and administrative skills. There was also growing pressure to give public servants and departments greater freedom from procedural constraints. These sentiments were reflected in public reviews that advocated greater emphasis on mobility, external recruitment, flexibility in deployment, staff appraisal, appointment to levels rather than positions, and a servicewide approach (JCPA 1982).

### **Politicians and the Senior Public Service**

Under the Westminster model, relations between politicians and bureaucrats were traditionally centered on a neutral public service that coexisted with a responsible government (Aucoin 1995; Boston and Halligan 2011). The relationship was predicated on an apolitical public service that served the political executive regardless of party. The political executive, in turn, respected the integrity of the civil service by maintaining its apolitical and professional character. Specific features of this system were the career public servant, a permanent official who survived successive governments, and senior appointments drawn from the ranks of careerists. The ministerial department was the repository of policy knowledge, and the permanent head, as the primary adviser to government, had a special relationship with the minister. Although the minister had the constitutional right to make decisions, in practice, the permanent head was responsible for operational matters.

There was a succession of challenges to this arrangement. Over time, the trend was toward strengthening the political executive, periodically punctuated by debates on issues that slowed the rate of change, constrained political pressures on the public service, and clarified aspects of the relationship. The debates were over the loss of permanent positions for departmental secretaries (in the 1980s), the rise of political advisers (from the 1980s to the 2010s), the turnover of secretaries (in 1996 and 2013), and the demands on the public service from new governments (in 1996, 2009, and 2013). The question of advisers continues to be an issue in terms of their number (about 450), status, and lack of experience. One significant rebalancing initiative has been to formalize the departmental secretaries' roles in policy, management, and stewardship (Halligan 2013).

### **Organizational-Administrative Culture**

The organizational culture has evolved significantly since the 1970s as the approach to public administration changed rapidly. The changes can

be summarized with reference to phases of reform. "Managerialism" best defines the first phase, a period in which management became the central concept in a paradigm change. It was succeeded by a second phase that came close to the mainstream depiction of NPM (Hood 1991) in which the market element was favored and a private sector focus was at the forefront. This NPM phase was followed, though not displaced, in the 2000s by a third phase that emphasized the integration of governance (Halligan 2007; Edwards et al. 2012) and incipient new public governance.

The initial period of reform in the 1980s replaced traditional public administration with a package of reforms based on management. Over about a decade, a new management philosophy was developed and implemented, which replaced the emphasis on inputs and processes with an emphasis on results (Halligan and Power 1992). The reform program mainly focused on the core public service, including commercialization, corporatization, decentralization, creation of a senior public service (i.e., the SES), and improving financial management. The focus on results, outcomes, and performance-oriented management dates from this time. The first core capabilities for the SES were produced in 1987, and in 1990, the six SES classifications were reduced to three bands to allow for greater flexibility and effectiveness in managing the senior service.

Although the first reform phase showed signs of incipient NPM in several respects, the dominant theme was improving management. The commitment to neoliberal economic reforms in the second phase in the 1990s led to the public service becoming highly decentralized, marketized, contractualized, and privatized. The agenda also covered a deregulated personnel system; regulation and oversight of service delivery; and the contestability of the delivery of services in order to allow greater use of the private sector. A new financial-management framework was introduced in the late 1990s, including the implementation of outputs and outcomes reporting and agency devolution in budget estimates and financial management. The devolution of responsibilities from central agencies to line departments and agencies was a highly significant step, with a diminished role for central agencies being one consequence (Halligan 2006). The Public Service Act 1999 outlined the responsibilities, the capability framework, and the selection criteria of the SES.

Integrated governance appeared as a new phase in the 2000s and had an impact on the relationships within, and the coherence of, the public service; on delivery and implementation; and on performance and responsiveness to government policy. Four dimensions drew together fundamental aspects of governance: the resurrection of the central agency as a major actor with more direct influence over departments; whole-of-government as the new expression of a range of forms of coordination; central monitoring of agency implementation and delivery; and departmentalization through rationalizing the nondepartmental sector (Halligan 2006). For the SES, the statement "One APS—One SES" reaffirmed the commitment to "a

single SES across a single devolved APS" in which all SES were expected "to exhibit common capabilities, share common values, common ethical standards, and a common commitment to development and collaboration" (Management Advisory Committee 2005).

A review of Australian government administration produced a new "blueprint" (Advisory Group on the Reform of Australian Government Administration [AGRAGA] 2010). The report's recommendations covered leadership and strategic direction; public sector workforce capability; and reforms, including a strengthened Australian Public Service Commission (APSC) for driving change, strategic planning, and expectations for agencies (agility, capability, effectiveness, and efficiency). Specific recommendations addressed the roles and responsibilities of secretaries, strengthening leadership, and assessing the SES. They also reflected the emerging importance of collaborative relations internally as well as with personnel in other levels of government and nongovernmental actors.

Of particular significance were the recommendations associated with a reconstituted APSC as the lead agency for reform. The commission's approach was to collaborate with departments and agencies in pursuit of common outcomes (Sedgwick 2011). The Public Service Amendment Act 2013 provided the legislative basis for the revised roles of a number of actors: the departmental secretary, a secretaries' board, the SES, and the public service commissioner. Reformulated public service values were also enacted.

## **Structure and Content of Training**

The centerpiece of training and development for the public service has been the Australian Public Service Commission,<sup>2</sup> although the extent of its role has varied over time, and has depended on the willingness of departments to make use of its frameworks and programs. The Commission succeeded the former Public Service Board in 1987, a centralized and all-pervasive central institution of the traditional system with control over personnel transactions. The Commission as originally formulated was essentially a neutered variant of the board that coasted until a revival began with the new Public Service Act 1999. It has since expanded its role.

The Commission has had some responsibilities for the SES since its establishment and considerable leverage over leadership development. However, the environment increasingly emphasized devolution to departments, in particular their secretaries, which became more significant after 1999. The Public Service Commissioner acquired a statutory responsibility for promoting leadership in the public service, which came to be viewed as applying to all staff, regardless of formal status. The Commission developed a model that identified capabilities expected of senior executives (APSC 2003).

The enhanced role of departments was reflected in the considerable discretion they had over lower-level training and management and senior leadership development. The content of executive training has ranged from the narrow and technical to the broad and generic. Departments could either opt for a commission program if it existed or organize their own. The distinction was represented as follows: departments would “typically contract external providers to deliver programs specifically linked to their particular business, while the commission’s development programs tend to focus on developing common leadership capabilities that support the strategic focus of the Service” (APSC 2003: 81). The different roles were represented through a “model” of concentric circles, which, moving from the core of APS values, linked integrity with the APS Commission and the APS leadership group, sustainability with whole of government and agency/APSC collaboration, and innovation with agency business outcomes (APSC 2004: 55).

The commission has run leadership development programs particularly for the SES on a “user pays” basis (with cost recovery around 95 percent). There has been a significant reliance on outsourced delivery of different types of leadership programs with the PSMPC/PSC and department roles being to advise and monitor contract performance. (PSMPC 1992: 34–35). The commission’s core programs have included an orientation program for new SES appointees, and a more substantial and intensive Senior Executive Leadership Program involving officials with several years in the SES (APSC 2003).<sup>3</sup> The content has changed across the three bands of the SES, an example of this being the Band three (deputy secretaries) program, Leading Australia’s Future in Asia, a strategic management program that was conducted by a university.

The reform report *Ahead of the Game* identified a need to enhance leadership, talent management, and learning and development across the Australian Public Service (AGRAGA 2010), and noted that “leadership behaviour trickles down to influence an agency’s culture and APS employees rely on their leaders to model by example.” (AGRAGA 2010: 21). The responsibilities of the Commission in the reform process were strengthened by positioning it to take a leadership role for the APS and, as a central agency, to engage in the provision of “expertise, guidance, performance monitoring and some centralized services to agencies” and developing options for a common approach that included leadership and learning and development (AGRAGA 2010: x).

Agendas derived from *Ahead of the Game* were pursued despite budget cuts, particularly those associated with the reconstituted APSC as the lead agency for reform. The Commission’s new approach was to engage collaboratively with departments and agencies in pursuit of common outcomes. It negotiated a partnership with departments, the emergent arrangements becoming more systemic and holistic. The agencies funded the commission

to provide a range of services covering leadership and skills, talent management, workplace planning and standards, and a range of staffing matters affecting public service capacity (Sedgwick 2011).

The Strategic Centre for Leadership, Learning, and Development was established in 2010 within the Australian Public Service Commission to give effect to *Ahead of the Game* recommendations. The Centre has developed a Leadership Development Strategy using a human capital strategic approach, which involves identifying capability gaps through analysis of drivers in the external environment and the business needs of the public service. The strategy has the imprimatur of the secretaries' board, the steering and coordinating unit of the APS (<http://www.apsc.gov.au/learn/links/strategic-centre/leadership-development-strategy>). The Centre is perceived to have strengthened the commission's contribution.

From the point of view of the individual agency, there are numerous program options available in 2013 (45 programs being listed for a large department). These encompass APSC programs for the three bands of the SES, ANZSOG courses focused on the public sector, and a range of other Australian programs (see Table 1.1).<sup>4</sup> An extensive number of overseas programs covering the usual suspects are also available for nomination by staff. Agencies have "the flexibility to incorporate their own unique leadership programs and adapt it [sic] to their business requirements, while building on valuable APS-wide initiatives" (APSC 2004: 55). Departments have mandatory programs, which range from short course skills development (e.g., dealing with the government, media, and parliament) to multi-day

Table 1.1 SES programs, 2013

| Program                                   | Outline   | Organization and scale        |
|---|---|-------------------------------|
| SES Orientation Program (Band 1)          | Develops APS-wide knowledge skills for surviving as a leader                                    | APSC, run over 6 months       |
| SES Band 1 Leadership Development Program | Develops expertise and capacity   | APSC, run over 6 months       |
| SES Band 2 Leadership Program             | Explores how to leverage personal leadership strengths and expertise                            | APSC, 4 modules over 6 months |
| SES Band 2 Talent Development Program     | Enhances leadership capability of officials with ability to assume more senior leadership roles | APSC, under review            |
| SES Band 3 Leadership Program             | Explores leadership approaches for leading change and strategy across complex systems, etc.     | APSC, 3 modules over 4 months |
| Executive Fellows Program (Bands 1 and 2) | Strengthens core skills to manage organizations in challenging times                            | ANZSOG, 3-week residential    |

courses for transitioning to the SES. Overall investment in learning and development has been between 1.3 percent and 2.3 percent for departments, which is considerably lower than for the private sector (APSC 2010: 136).

Departmental utilization of APSC programs has varied over time according to requirements (core capabilities) and the relevance of the programs for all SES within one or more bands. The view was expressed that the programs were staid in the past, but since the creation of the Strategic Centre, the programs have improved and increased attendance has been reported. In the case of large departments, there are internal complexities in managing SES development, and there is the more generic question of identifying capability gaps and whether to respond through recruitment or upgrading the workforce.

## Leadership Frameworks

The central model of management training and development generally reflects the paradigms of the day, and within that, the evolving features of public management and management improvement. The interpretations and definitions of requirements are generally determined in conjunction with departments. The APSC has also added its own conceptions of leadership and epistemology with nuances and interpretations that reflect thinking within the central agency.

The main elements of the initial (1980s) managerial model were the infusion of managerial skills and private sector values and techniques. The need for senior executives to conform accelerated after the 1987 reorganization of departments as the pressures to manage intensified and as managerial objectives developed. Those who adapted to the new paradigm had to justify their candidacy in terms of SES competencies consisting of general managerial skills, the most successful candidates being public servants with training in economics because they adjusted more easily to the rigors of an “economic rationalist” environment and the requirements of resource management. There was also a greater attachment to instrumentalism among senior executives, reflecting both the nature of managerialism and the pragmatics of survival under governments emphasizing ministerial activism.

In the 1980s, the Public Service Act referred to the SES as providing a group of officers who undertook “higher level policy advice, managerial and professional responsibilities,” and may be deployed by secretaries within departments, and by the Public Service Board (before its closure in 1987) within the public service. As NPM came to the forefront in the 1990s, this was reflected in the programs. Over time, the management focus shifted to leadership development (Baker 1989). The following decade there was more emphasis on working across agencies and recently, a more collaborative dimension.

Leadership has been “a key issue in all reviews of the APS since the 1970s because the external environment is continuously evolving and APS leaders

need to develop their roles and skills in response to new demands" (APSC 2012b: 5).

The increasing prominence given to leadership can also be interpreted in terms of institutionalization. According to this argument, "the public service appropriated the leadership discourse not only because it was 'safe' but also because it found that the management jargon was not enough" (Althaus and Wanna 2008: 126). The political executive didn't initiate this agenda, but the relegation of the public service under managerialist reforms was partly countered through leadership programs (*ibid*: 127).

The notion of leadership has progressed through several stages. Five core capabilities for the SES were first formulated in 1987. The top management program was established to address the developmental needs of public servants with the potential to succeed at the top levels. The program sought "to help top managers play an effective role in developing corporate vision and strategy, adopt a management style which builds commitment and morale within the organization, and deal with the challenges of managing for results and managing with less" (PSMPC 1990: 44).

Following the establishment of the SES in the 1980s, the focus was on its development, but under a central agency with much diminished responsibilities. Since the late 1990s, following the Public Service Act 1999, when devolution to line departments assumed much greater significance, leadership came into play as a primary concept and one that in practice required development. A leadership capability framework was developed (SELC) in the late 1990s, and later refined. With augmentation of the APSC's responsibilities in 2010, and the reaffirmation of whole-of-government approaches (a notion that assumed greater significance following devolution (Management Advisory Committee 2004)), the swing was toward the center under a holistic collaboration between the Commission and departments.

The Public Service Commission developed a framework as part of its leadership role in the public service and quality assurance role in SES appointments, which identified factors significant for performance. The Senior Executive Leadership Capability Framework (SELC) developed in 1999 recorded leadership requirements for an integrated approach to development, performance assessment, succession planning, and the basis for revised criteria for SES selections (PSMPC 1999: 12). The five interlinked core criteria identified for leaders, each with underlying capabilities, were: achieves results; cultivates productive working relationships; communicates with influence; exemplifies personal drive and integrity; and shapes strategic thinking (APSC 2004). The framework reflected the changing administrative culture in that it was designed to complement the new APS values through "promoting behaviours and relationship management in line with modern requirements that emphasise inspiring and motivating, rather than commanding and enforcing" (APSC 2003: 79).

The Integrated Leadership System (ILS; from 2004) expanded on the SELC Framework and incorporated an APS Leadership Model. ILS was regarded

as “a leading-edge system based on APS values” that articulated the desired leadership capabilities at different levels for the whole APS, and provided guidance for individuals and organizations about the appropriate mixes of leadership, management, and technical skills. The “leadership model” shows the relationship between complexity and classification (APSC 2004: 43). The mix of technical, management and leadership roles change between APS, EL, and SES classifications (i.e., leadership increases, and management rises to some extent, while technical declines). It also assumes that all public servants have a leadership role.

The APS Leadership Development Framework (APSC 2011) incorporated SELC or its later iteration, ILS, along with two new elements. First, it was based on the Knowing | Doing | Being framework. Leaders must have, respectively, a strong knowledge base, behaviors and skills for execution, and a strong self-concept and highly developed emotional intelligence. Secondly, it was underpinned by the 70–20–10 principle of program design (APSC 2011) that apportions 10 percent to training, 20 percent to relationship-based learning, and 70 percent to supported on-the-job learning. The argument is that leadership development “is most effective when learning takes place over time and using a range of learning methods” APSC 2012b: 35–36). There is also an implication that on-the-job learning in particular equates with most senior levels and training with APS levels 1–6, and that relationship-based learning applies more to middle-level executives. While the 70–20–10 principle is widely accepted in the APS, formal training is the most extensively used method for leadership development and technical and job-specific development (both over 90 percent), followed by supported on-the-job learning (over 80 percent). Coaching and mentoring are also widely used, particularly for leadership development (APSC 2012b: 36).

The framework incorporates the *doing* component of the ILS, specifically, the focus on the five leadership behaviors (APSC 2013a). The integrated leadership system had been used for more than a decade and continues to reflect behaviors expected of leaders (Sedgwick 2012: 6). The commission’s view is that ‘expanding the focus of leadership development to include the *knowing* and *being* components...builds on and expands the ILS’ (APSC 2012a).

The extent to which departments apply these principles, and the mixes of general APS and agency-specific programs, remain unclear. Much depends on departments’ (and their secretary’s) inclinations. For example, one major department has a centralizing (i.e., secretary-led) focus and is inclined toward formal training.

## **Expectations of Leaders and Prospects for Capability Development**

The pressures on leadership intensified as a number of factors came into play, including environmental changes. The difference now was that the SES itself had become an issue, resource constraints were mounting, and

a neoliberal government was elected (September 2013). Australia was less affected by the global financial crisis than other OECD countries, but the expectations of a decade of fiscal constraint have become the conventional wisdom. The political executive is seeking to “rescale” the public service and to review the role of government, and the resources available for capability development are contracting. As well, there are continuing issues about leadership development.

The SES came under scrutiny because its rate of expansion had been high (Beale 2011). The size of the Australian public service (APS) has fluctuated over the last three decades according to fiscal stringency and other agendas. Over the last 15 years the APS numbers rose by 30 percent, but the increase for the SES was 78 percent (for the reasons see Beale 2011). In 2012, 2786 (1.8 percent) were in the SES compared to 1.2 percent in the 1984.

The devolution of responsibilities to line departments after 1999 had the effect of ‘balkanizing’ the APS as different conditions of service became prevalent and the identity of individual departments was more important than that of the public service. The reform review reported that ‘less than 40 percent of nearly 3,000 SES members “definitely see themselves as part of an APS-wide leadership cadre” rather than as leaders only of their agency.’ This informed the recommendation that a unified APS-wide leadership group was necessary (AGRAGA 2010: 22).

Moreover, the internal mobility of senior executives declined over time. A comparison of agency experience for 1998 and 2012 indicated that those with experience of a single agency had increased (36.5 percent compared to 30.4 percent), while those with experience of two or more agencies had declined. For 2012, the mobility rate for the SES was 5.6 percent, down slightly from 6.3 percent for the previous year (APSC 2012b: 251, 254).

In terms of mobility between APS and the external labor market, 24.1 percent of SES positions were filled by engagement in 2012, an increase from the previous year (19.3 percent) (APSC 2012b: 257). External recruitment has particular implications for both central expectations and values and agency-specific training.

Of particular significance have been the continued gaps between the expectations of leaders and their current competencies. In making judgements about leaders and their competencies, considerable reliance is placed on the results of employee surveys (e.g., AGRAGA 2010; Sedgwick 2013). The three most significant capability and performance gaps for the SES and the SES feeder group were people management, steering and implementing change, and thinking strategically (AGRAGA 2010: 53). As well, surveys of employees have indicated low satisfaction with senior leaders as a continuing trend (JCPAA 2012: 14–15; Taylor 2010).

Research on the SES has indicated weak ‘links between leadership training and career progression. Senior executives themselves do not see a direct correlation between the undertaking of leadership training and promotion

to executive positions.' According to one senior executive 'you can teach content, but not leadership' (Althaus and Wanna 2008: 126).

The agency level has been something of a mystery. It has been argued of capability development in general that the challenge is at the agency level where competency management is not taken sufficiently seriously (Taylor 2010: 22). The APSC surveys of agencies and employees have only reported overall figures, and there does not appear to be an interrogation of agency handling of capability development for the SES.

However, a broader program of capability reviews of departments conducted by independent assessors has been underway for two years, and the main batch of reports was finally released in December 2013.<sup>5</sup> The results across dimensions of leadership, strategy, and delivery provide significant insights into strengths and weaknesses even though they are not directly aligned with the five criteria that underlie the APSC framework. For leadership, 76 percent of agencies are "well placed" (or better) in terms of motivating people, 59 percent are well placed for setting directions, but 71 percent are ranked as a development area (or worse). Under strategy, 82 percent ranked low for "outcome-focused strategy" (APSC 2013b: 208). These and other results indicate considerable variations in departmental assessments, and overall have important implications for priorities in cultivating leadership capability in the future.

## Conclusion

The Australian public service has shifted over the last three decades from a traditional public administration system to various shades of managerialism and NPM, plus elements of new public governance. The senior public service was transformed from a traditional focus on policy to management, leadership, and service delivery.

The powerful Public Service Board was succeeded by a commission with a limited policy role. The evolution of greater responsibilities for the Public Service Commission accelerated in the second half of the reform era, and was expressed through its formulation of leadership capabilities and development frameworks, and forging new relationships with line departments. There has also been substantial continuity in its overall programs. The programs have tended to reflect the paradigm of the day as well as interpretations of leadership that have been issued from the commission. The current approach emphasises a collective approach to the APS.

Leadership development has been a perennial matter susceptible to environment change, resource constraints, and internal adaptation, as well as to the fluctuations in the attention given to human resources/capital. There have been corresponding changes in the organization and content of senior public service training and development.

Australia has adopted a distinctive approach to leadership both conceptually and in its application. A number of questions deserve further attention;

in particular, the interplay between leadership conception and practice, the role of agencies in applying leadership frameworks, and shortfalls in aspects of leadership performance and capability development.

## Notes

1. The notion of an Australian elite differed from British conceptions, with many department heads coming from modest circumstances.
2. The APSC was known as the Public Service and Merit Protection Commission from 1987 to 2002.
3. Other short programs included SES breakfasts and updates and lunchtime seminars.
4. The Australia and New Zealand School of Government has made a contribution to professional development from the 2002 through its Executive Master of Public Administration, Executive Fellows Programme, and a Towards Strategic Leadership Programme (Pollitt and Op de Beeck 2010).

5. Available on <http://www.apsc.gov.au/aps-reform/current-projects/capability-reviews>.

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# 2

## The United Kingdom

*Sylvia Horton and Montgomery Van Wart*

### Introduction

The transformation of British culture over the last century has been slow but constant, so the overall effect has been profound (Inglehart 2008). The notions of how to train senior civil servants and of what the ideal leadership role and style should be have changed, too.

A relatively traditionalist national culture dominated the United Kingdom (UK) until the twentieth century. A 200-year empire was intact, and loyalty to its imperial aspects was largely unquestioned, except in Ireland. The class system was still very strong despite the expansion of public education, certain advances in meritocracy, and some opportunities for social advancement for those who achieved commercial success. Women did not vote, and universal suffrage for men had not yet arrived. The Protestant ethic prevailed, and the established church had great influence. Today, the class structure in the UK has weakened and society is predominantly secular, though substantial elements of the traditionalist deference culture remain amid a neoconservative political climate that emphasizes the importance of leadership by an elite based on money rather than birth. These traditions are in contrast to, and periodically in competition with, a more liberal social democratic political culture that has evolved.

The increasingly liberal social democratic culture that has emerged is the result of a whole series of social changes. These changes included the diminishing power of the landed aristocracy, the ascendance of market capitalism, the rise of trade unions, the extension of the voting franchise, the expansion of education, the demands for greater equality after World War II, and the influx of immigrants from the colonial empire with the simultaneous contraction of that empire. The “unitedness” of the UK was far less coherent after the independence of southern Ireland in 1921 and the gradual devolution of governance responsibilities to the constituent elements of the Union, Scotland, Wales, and Ulster (Northern Ireland). With the advancement of universal education and the new sense of egalitarianism, supported

by the “welfare state” and full employment, a public model of greater access, support, and advancement across society existed by the 1970s. As with other wealthier societies, the British became more demanding of their democratic institutions as they prospered in a world perceived as relatively safe (Inglehart 2008).

The system of public administration has been transformed along with the changes in society, although there are still remnants of the traditional system, which had first emerged in the middle of the nineteenth century, when the modern civil service was established by the Northcote Trevelyan reforms of 1854. Senior civil servants were recruited from the few existing ancient universities on the basis of merit through open competition and were drawn from the same social groups as the politicians of the day. The current senior civil service (SCS) is still heavily influenced today by the “Oxbridge” (the term commonly used for graduates of Oxford and Cambridge universities) tradition, despite criticism of it for many decades. In order to span the contemporary neoconservative and liberal/social democratic cultures, it has morphed substantially with the times.

## Political Structure

The United Kingdom is composed of four countries: England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland and is described as a *differentiated polity* (Burnham and Horton 2013). It is a constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary system of government. The bicameral legislature consists of a House of Commons, which is directly elected and has the bulk of the powers, and a House of Lords, which is mainly appointed and is largely a revising chamber with the power to delay legislation but not to reject it. The UK is a unitary state with some federal elements, but in the absence of a written constitution, the government in Westminster determines all other structures of government, including regional and local governments, as well as the membership of other governmental systems, such as the European Union. The government-of-the-day is determined by the outcome of elections every five years. The Queen (Head of State) will invite the leader of the majority party in the House of Commons to form a government, and he or she becomes the prime minister. In the event there is no party with a majority, a coalition government must be formed by agreement between consenting parties to form a majority. The prime minister then selects the cabinet and appoints other ministers.

The government-of-the-day has wider powers than governments in most other countries to determine the government structures and administrative organs of the state. In the last 30 years, many powers have been devolved to a Scottish Parliament, a resurrected Stormont in Northern Ireland, and a Welsh Assembly, resulting in semi-federalism. Similarly, the British civil service (Northern Ireland has had its own civil service since 1921) was known for

its relative stability; that ended, however, with Margaret Thatcher's government, which used its power to radically privatize, downsize, and restructure the civil service.

The public sector as a whole employs approximately 20 percent of the workforce, a reduction of 5 percent from the high point in the 1970s (QPSES 2012). The long period of Conservative administrations (Thatcher's and Major's) reduced those numbers substantially. The public sector grew again, however, during the Labour administrations (1997 to 2010) because, in part, of the temporary nationalization of some banks from 2008 to 2010, and the civil service in particular grew because of the Labour welfare policies. The current Conservative-led coalition government has put strong downsizing pressure on all parts of the public sector to continue its historic "slimming" trend and reduce the national debt. Local government is the largest public employer, with slightly under 3 million employees. The National Health Service (NHS) has slowly increased to approximately 1.5 million employees. The numbers of employees of public corporations and industrial civil servants have shrunk dramatically since the 1980s, the latter having been all but eliminated.

Only civilian employees of central government (ministerial departments and agencies) are civil servants (in Her Majesty's Service). Their numbers are currently under 450,000 and are projected to fall a further 10 percent by 2015. The armed forces have been slowly declining in size and currently number approximately 220,000, supported by 180,000 reservists. Those in local governments, the NHS, public corporations, and other NDPBs (nondpartmental public bodies) are considered public servants but do not enjoy the same degree of due process rights as civil servants (Burnham and Horton 2013).

The role of the civil service in general and of the SCS in particular has changed along with the role of the state. The growth of the welfare state and the government's involvement in managing the mixed economy post-1945 required more civil servants. Specialists and professionals with the knowledge and skills to run the hospitals and public utilities began to be recruited, as well as a large group of clerical and executive officials, a majority of whom were women, to deliver the vast range of public services. Traditionally, the top civil servants were seen as policy advisers and administrators who were skilled in operating the Whitehall<sup>1</sup> system. The training of lower-ranking civil servants was well established as the state grew and its functions changed. There has always been an implicit bias to take the top people from Oxbridge and from those who had spent most of their careers around Whitehall. They were career civil servants; but, unlike in France, they received no formal training and learned their skills through a process of osmosis and experience on the job. On retirement or on leaving the service early, top civil servants often entered lucrative private sector jobs, and it was not uncommon for senior-level bureaucrats to receive honors. Although recruiting from the private sector into the higher ranks of the civil service

and expecting civil servants to have worked in the private sector had been shunned in the past, both practices have become more widespread since the 1980s. Indeed, the new philosophy is that sector-switching is good for both the public and private sectors, but particularly for the public sector because of the infusion of business and commercial experience. Today's senior civil service looks very different than it did in the past, and its role and mindset have also changed.

## **Organizational-Administrative Culture**

There has been a shift in the organizational culture of the civil service reflecting the gradual changes in administrative philosophy since the 1960s. In the 1960s, the standard approach in the civil service and the broader public sector was strongly bureaucratic, with the possible exception of the nationalized industries. There was a healthy respect for the political leadership of a ministerial government and accountability to parliament. Senior civil servants were anonymous and only answerable to their minister. Belief in hierarchical structures, rules and regulations, respect for seniority, due process, and rigorous impartiality, along with adherence to a code of ethics rooted in honesty, integrity, and loyalty, was the hallmark of senior officials. The same bureaucrats who advised and implemented the programs of the incumbent government were expected to be able to disband them and carry out the instructions of an incoming government with equal commitment and energy. However, the elite-oriented nature of senior civil servants, their generalist credentials, and their isolation from the world outside Whitehall came under criticism during this period with the release of the *Fulton Report* in 1968. The Labour Government (under Harold Wilson) accepted almost all of the report's 158 recommendations for reform and began to implement them, but the loss of the 1970 election saw the return of a Conservative Government with other priorities, and so the reform process slowed (Horton 1993). Further changes were introduced during the return of a Labour Government in 1974, but in the economic crisis of the mid-1970s, there were attacks on the welfare state and challenges to Keynesian economics, which opened the way for New Public Management (NPM) under Margaret Thatcher.

When the neoliberal Conservative government took power in 1979, they began to downsize the state. They started by privatizing public corporations and some industrial functions that were under government control. Contracting out was expanded, using "compulsory competitive tendering." Cuts in the numbers of civil servants and an efficiency drive that had adopted the mantra of the 3 Es, "economy, efficiency, and effectiveness," combined with the recruitment of private sector advisers to assist with the introduction of performance management systems, began to change the culture of the service. The report *Improving Management in Government: The Next Steps*, or "Ibbs Report," (1987) laid the groundwork for restructuring

and accelerating the “agencification” process. This agencification trend was manifested through the creation of executive agencies where large functions of civil service work were hived off from direct control by ministries to semi-autonomous organizations with much greater management autonomy. The new chief executives were drawn not only from the civil service but from the private sector and they were required to draw up business plans and to use market-type mechanisms, such as performance indicators and targets, to use competitive contracts, and to operate in quasi-markets much more than in the past (James et. al. 2012). This was a prime example of what came to be known as the New Public Management (NPM). The Conservative governments not only managerialized the civil service but also shrank government considerably.

When “New” Labour came to power in 1997, they did not reverse the strategy but shifted the trajectory significantly. For example, in line with NPM thinking, a small amount of privatization occurred and although a few executive agencies were reintegrated into the ministries, some new agencies were also created (James et. al. 2012). Furthermore, substantial market-based reforms in the education and health sectors, originally introduced by the Conservatives, were extended and their policy on student fees was expanded. New Labour also targeted certain categories of welfare payments for reduction, although they did introduce the minimum wage. On balance, the tone was far less private sector oriented, and the strategies were more diversified than under Thatcherism’s starker NPM regime.

The diversification was exemplified in the notion of *joined-up government* (JUG) articulated in the policy document *Modernising Government* (Cabinet Office 1999a). JUG sought to reduce the inefficiency created by fragmentation and agencification through improved cooperation and joint planning (Ling 2010). To reduce the perception of “bureaucratic run-around,” there was also a commitment to create a better citizen-government interface by developing e-government and providing the citizen-customers with a better “one-stop shopping” experience. This horizontally coordinated thinking was a fresh perspective and reflected a strong sense of what was called New Public Governance (NPG) in which the ideal is community input, buy-in, and where possible, direct community decision-making. Labour allowed government expenditure to grow and employment to rise but also supported the creation of devolved regional governments in Scotland and Wales and some regional administrative devolution in England. Under Labour, however, despite the rhetoric of decentralization, there was increased centralization, as the government introduced comprehensive spending reviews, which set down departmental aims and objectives, and funding and public service agreements, which included measurable outcomes. A range of new regulatory bodies ensured that the different public services implemented the government’s policies. Aware that these policies would require changes in the civil service, Tony Blair directed the head of the civil service to undertake

a review (Cabinet Office 1999b). Published in 1999, 30 years after the Fulton report, this report was again very critical of the service, but this time focused on the lack of strategic direction and of management and leadership skills and competencies.

The 2010 return of a Conservative-led coalition government, under David Cameron, once more saw considerable continuity in the general direction of contracting the state, but the Conservative Party had clear ideas about changes it wanted to make in the civil service (Pyper 2013). The coalition's policies were made explicit in the publication *The Coalition: Our Programme for Government* (Cabinet Office 2010) and expanded on in *The Civil Service Reform Plan* (Cabinet Office 2012: 7). The latter articulated a need to change "with radicalism and urgency," facilitate the reduction of the national debt, and transform Whitehall from being slow and resistant to change, to being "pacier" and more innovative. In operational delivery, the reform plan advocated creating new service mechanisms, using technology, creating partnerships across departments, and finding ways to enhance whole-systems continuous improvement. There was a significant commitment to a further dilution of the SCS policy-advisory role; the reform plan advocated contracting for research from the private and other public organizations. It also advocated increased use of such tools as crowdsourcing, policy labs, new social media, and direct contact between the public and ministers. It also promoted enhancement of project management skills, contracting skills, and financial knowledge—areas of management expertise still underdeveloped despite the competency framework Professional Skills for Government (PSG), introduced under Labour in 2006. The plan explicitly called for a radically new training model for all government employees to create savings, centralize and rationalize training, develop distance learning utilizing technology, and include more private sector participants. All in all, the 18 action measures in the Reform Plan re-emphasized NPM ideas, paid considerable homage to the NPG, and quietly repudiated most traditional and neo-Weberian bureaucratic ideals. A report one year on (Cabinet Office 2013: 5) recorded that "the delivery of the Reform Plan...has been held back by some of the things it was designed to address—weaknesses in capability, lack of clear accountability, and delivery discipline" and an underestimate of the resources that would be required. A traffic-light-color rating system indicated where progress had been made (green), moderately delayed (amber), or significantly off track (red; Cabinet Office 2013). A further commitment was made to "pick up the pace [speed] on delivery" of the plan and "build a truly exceptional Civil Service."

## **The Content and Structure of Training for Top Civil Servants**

Historically, the top civil servants had graduated from the best universities with generalist backgrounds and got mid-level placements upon entry.

The most successful fast-track candidates would reach the top posts. Very few appointments were made laterally, and the top positions were reached through promotion within the career service. There was no training pre- or postentry in the higher grades, and the knowledge, skills, and in particular attitudes were learned on the job. The ideal was to have a substantial rotation of generalists throughout the administrative corps to create a unified civil service; in reality, rotation was rare outside of the individual ministries, although those who reached the highest level, that of permanent secretary, had usually spent some time in the Treasury and at least two other departments. The system bred departmentalism and a silo mentality.

The first training program for new entrants into the higher administrative corps was introduced in 1964, when a course for administrative trainees was prepared to remedy their lack of knowledge of economics, statistics, and social policy. A milestone in the development of training for top civil servants was the creation of the Civil Service College (CSC) in 1970, following a recommendation by the Fulton Report to especially provide training in management skills. The CSC was never responsible for all training; that was shared with individual departments that provided in-house training or funded external training programs. In fact, only 6 percent of all civil service training was provided by the CSC. Early on, instruction for the SCS focused on specific areas of knowledge that generalists lacked, such as on economics, and in understanding the European Union, the processes and protocols of Whitehall, and various policy fields. The college grew and by the mid-1990s was offering “nearly 500 courses and over 8,000 civil servants, one-third of the top seven grades had attended” (Horton 1996: 138). It also provided a wide range of customized courses delivered to departments in situ.

The College was a pioneer in competency-based training, and by the mid-1990s, the top five levels of the civil service (the Senior Open Structure) were being developed within a core competency structure reflecting the changing needs of departments and agencies that were operating within the new systems of performance management. In developing competency frameworks, the CSC and departments and agencies were influenced by the Management Charter Initiative, a business-led strategy to identify the key competencies of successful managers. This again reflected the government’s philosophy that the private sector should be the model for the civil service and that civil servants should learn to manage efficiently by adopting private sector practices and operating in quasi markets. Not only was the CSC training top civil servants in strategic planning, delivering results, communication, personal effectiveness, and a wide range of more specific skills, it was also training specialists—scientists, economists, and statisticians—in management (Horton 1996).

In 2005, the CSC was succeeded by the National School of Government (NSG), a self-financing, nonministerial department. At its peak, the NSG was a £27 million operation with a staff of several hundred civil servants and

400 private associates. Its creation coincided with the development of a new capability model focused on what were considered the three crucial areas of capability needed by the service—leadership, strategy, and delivery—all recognized as deficient by the Wilson Report in 1999 and also key elements of the Professional Skills in Government competency framework introduced in 2005. Capability reviews of all 17 central departments were conducted by external groups, including “experts” from the private sector and local government. The reviews benchmarked departments against ten criteria, and their ranking became the basis for making improvements. When benchmarked against other public administration systems, including Canada, New Zealand, and Sweden, the UK stood up well, but the internal assessments exposed some serious weaknesses (National Audit Office 2009). The capability reviews were costly and came into question when the National Audit Office (NAO) reported that the departments were unable to develop reliable metrics to indicate that their improved capability was leading to improved outcomes. An updated capability model was published in 2009, and a third phase of the reviews began in 2011, based upon internal rather than external assessments. The Reform Plan in 2012 intended that a new Capability Plan to fill government skills gaps would be established; however, some 15 months later it was still not in place.

Despite the training being provided for the SCS throughout the 1990s, there were continuing gaps in the knowledge and skills of civil servants, which led to increased recruitment from outside the service. Entrants from the private sector and the not-for-profit sector into the SCS made up approximately one-third of the SCS by 2010 (Burnham and Horton 2013: 210–211). The remuneration of top civil servants rose to attract these outsiders but also changed with the introduction of performance-related pay linked to a new performance appraisal system. This has watered down the traditional career system and, combined with the new practice of hiring for specific positions on time-limited contracts, has resulted in a hybrid public service bargain (Van Dorpe and Horton 2011).

Training is a vehicle not only for ensuring that the civil service has the skills it needs but also for changing the culture. An examination of the types of training given since the 1980s conveys a picture of a transformation from a bureaucratic to a managerialist culture, although elements of the traditional culture can still be found. But training is expensive, and the coalition government, faced with the commitment to a policy of austerity, in 2010, turned its attention to cutting expenditure on training in order to cut the budget deficit and the huge government debt.

In 2012, the NSG was disbanded and succeeded by a new system of training. A unit called Civil Service Learning (CSL) was set up in 2011, with a mandate to cut training costs, streamline programs and eliminate duplication, improve quality control and consistency, ensure economies of scale in external training purchases, and implement curriculum changes consistent

with the Coalition government's priorities. It contracted with the private firm Capita to manage a single training portal for government through which all training would be executed. Capita was allowed to provide up to, but not more than, 50 percent of all training offered to government employees, focusing on management essentials and other generic courses. In the first year, Capita delivered 41 percent of training and 59 percent was procured in the open market. In 2011/2012, some 2,000 human resources and training posts in departments and agencies were removed, and the new CSL had a staff of only 60. These changes were projected to cut costs by approximately £90 million across government (Cabinet Office 2011). Capita's revenues were in excess of £30 million per annum when its contract was extended up to 2016.

The CSL described the goal of the new approach as "to enable the development of civil service capability through providing quality learning and development that gives good value for money and supports the delivery of excellent public services" (CSL 2012b). This is being achieved through a new common curriculum; a shift away from classroom-based learning to work-based learning and e-learning, offering online access to material; and the procurement of learning materials from the competitive markets, avoiding duplication, and ensuring flexibility of access. All online resources, including e-learning, are free to users who access the CSL website. Each department must authorize access to their members and make a contribution based on its headcount to cover operating costs. By 2013, over 320,000 civil servants were using the new services either online or in more than 70 face-to-face products delivered by external suppliers that charge departments directly.

Within the common "leadership and management" portfolio, the new SCS program is based upon the latest competency framework. This competence framework (see below) is generic and relates to six levels, ranging from the lowest level of administrative officers to the highest director generals. Each level and competency is accompanied by illustrations of effective and ineffective behaviors. In contrast to the PSG framework, which was all about skills, this one is based entirely on behaviors. Debates about the strengths and weaknesses of behavioral competencies apply here. But one specific criticism is that they do not relate sufficiently to the political context of the civil service.

Training for the SCS evolved from the 1990s into a layered program although the components and their names were never stable. One iteration of the program was the Corporate Leadership First program, which was open to those with only a year in the SCS, and was relatively short and designed to introduce basic leadership concepts and get people to reflect on their leadership style. The second-level course, the Advanced Leadership Program, for those with at least two years in grade, consisted of four modules taken over a year or more in residence at the NSG. The third tier was a long-standing offering called the Top Management Program

which ranged from 10 to 12 days over 18 months and was also attended by chief executives from the private sector and other public organizations. The last two programs both incorporated a variety of leadership components emphasizing leadership-style awareness, people skills, environmental scanning, strategy, resilience, change management skills, and collaboration. The teaching methods included 360-degree instruments, lectures, simulations, action learning projects, and reflection projects. These programs were well regarded as rites-of-passage but were never completely evaluated (Horton 2009; Pollitt and Op de Beck 2012).

The CSL has elected to provide a far leaner and more focused training suite for the SCS, although it is still tiered. The introductory Base Camp class (1.5 days) is maintained and serves as a generic welcome to the SCS immediately before or upon induction. Leading with Purpose, a leadership class of 8 days for senior grades (6 and 7) prepares them for the top grades. Two classes, restricted to the SCS only, are the programs Leading to Inspire and Leading to Transform. The first focuses on people skills and collaboration while the latter focuses on change management in a downsizing environment. Both emphasize the need to look at government as a commercial activity in which value for money and rapid results are critical. A positive action program WIG (Women in Government) Senior Leaders Program and other programs for deputy directors and directors all focus on leadership, while others focus on the areas of change management and the development of commercial skills. The majority of SCS courses are supplied by business schools and the rest by small specialist suppliers—mainly consultants.

Senior civil servants have a variety of other training opportunities. Specific events are held for the Top 200, who are seen as a corporate body, including half-day master classes on such topics as creating business plans, leading cultural change, decision making in government, high performing learning organizations, and encouraging innovation. Senior civil servants can request secondments to other agencies to take advantage of rotational learning opportunities, and external experience is now a requirement for all SCS posts.

## **Expectations of Leaders**

One important way to determine what is expected of leaders in the civil service is to examine the competency frameworks that have underpinned not only their training, but also recruitment, promotion, and appraisal. In 1987, the CSC developed a competency-based training program for the top seven grades of the service. All courses were linked to core competencies and were a combination of job, role, and personal criteria reflecting a mixture of referenced standards and a behavior-anchored approach to competencies (Horton 2000). The competency framework system has experienced continual modifications. The 2001 framework Leadership for Results outlined six behavioral core competencies—giving purpose and direction; making a personal impact;

thinking strategically; getting the best from people; learning and improving; and focusing on delivery. There were 53 effective and 35 ineffective behaviors, which were the criteria subsequently used to assess performance and identify development needs. This framework clearly reflected the priorities of the Labour government's Modernising Government program. The idea of "generic management" was clear in the framework's thinking and consistent with a more managerialist approach to government. The SCS, from this perspective, was intended to be a change agent and the competency framework complemented the new performance management and pay system that was developed and implemented at the same time. The new framework bore a close resemblance to the Peters and Waterman's recipe for success in a fast-changing world, described in *In Search of Excellence* (1983). Essentially, all six competencies were strategic leadership competencies.

After a second victory in 2001, the Labour government directed their attention to the delivery of public services because they perceived that there was an implementation gap. It was felt that the top civil servants were too preoccupied with policy, and not with delivering that policy. A new model for professional development focused on delivery, Professional Skills for Government, was produced in 2005. Core skills, including people, financial, program and project management, analysis and use of evidence (new), strategic thinking, communicating and marketing (new) were more specifically identified than in previous frameworks. All civil servants were to be incorporated into professional groups and those aspiring to enter the SCS and the top posts were now expected to have experience in at least two career groupings from policy, operational service delivery, and corporate services delivery. The intention was to professionalize the generalist administrators/managers by developing the knowledge and skills relevant to their roles, alongside the existing professionals, economists, engineers and scientists. There was also a thrust to create a corporate identity for those at the top who needed to manage across departmental boundaries and the market divide. JUG needed different skills and competencies to manage cooperation, collaboration, and integration.

The latest competency framework, introduced in 2012, returns to a list of ten behavioral competences organized into three clusters: Setting Direction, Engaging People, and Performance. In many ways, the list is representative of previous competency lists, but there are some significant additions reflecting nuanced changes in the government's focus and priorities. Delivering results has morphed into achieving commercial outcomes, delivering value for money, managing a quality service, and delivering "at pace," or speedily. Engaging people now includes leading and communication, collaborating and partnering, and building capability for all. Setting direction now includes seeing the big picture, changing and improving, and making effective decisions. The framework still includes civil service values: honesty, integrity, impartiality, and objectivity. As in earlier frameworks for each of the competencies, examples of three to six effective and ineffective

behaviors are identified at six levels in a matrix, from the administrative officer level to the director general level.

Generally speaking, since the 1990s, all UK competency matrices have tended to emphasize results. Under Labour, a collaborative emphasis was included, but the results orientation was never eliminated. The collaborative language continues in the current framework, but the Coalition framework has signified three new modest tendencies. First, it uses more market-based language—one competency specifically refers to achieving *commercial* outcomes. Second, delivery of results, continually emphasized and “pacier,” was first introduced during the Blair administrations, and has now been elevated to a competency level in the newest iteration: “delivering at pace.” As collaborative concerns have become stronger in the competency documents, it appears that the legal and bureaucratic elements are being squeezed, and this fits with the current coalition’s commitment to removing controls and increasing flexibility. Nonetheless, the values that are fundamental to the traditional culture remain a part of the framework.

Third, the emphasis on change is constantly being elevated. Change has clearly been an integral part of the framework since the 1980s, but elevating the change theme to a competency level is a signal to “challenge bureaucratic decision making” and prod administrators to have the “courage to take risks and challenge the status quo.” Also emphasized in the latest competency, and throughout the framework, is the use of technology as both a mechanism of change and of efficiency.

Press releases from the Cabinet Office, the underlying policy paper for civil service reform (HM Government 2012; Context 2012), and interviews with senior personnel in the new Civil Service Learning indicate renewed urgency to shake off the bureaucratic sensibility of the civil service and its senior leaders.

While the language now being used does not have the denigrating quality that sometimes peeked through during the Thatcher years, it nonetheless clearly considers “all things business” to be better. Collaborative themes are still strongly in evidence, but not at the expense of results and speed of delivery. The SCS are expected to find better ways of doing most things in government, to reduce costs and personnel, increase efficiency, convene opportunities for a variety of types of input by outsourcing, reach as much consensus as possible quickly, and then act with deliberation thereafter, without excessive interference. The new leadership development programs reflect this new approach to governance.

## Conclusion

Just as British culture has changed substantially over the last century, so, too, has the administrative culture. In terms of the three major administrative paradigms, the Neo-Weberian State was strongly represented until it was firmly challenged by the NPM philosophy of the Thatcher and Major

governments. New Labour did not repudiate the NPM ideals but implemented them less robustly and brought in more collaborative themes identifiable with NPG. The coalition government is again steering toward NPM, but has given homage to collaboration themes, at least rhetorically.

The stresses and strains of the current environment continue to have an effect on training and administrative ideals. The UK is grappling with the issue of where it belongs in Europe and the world. Achieving political cohesion domestically is increasingly a challenge; trust in government has declined, even if social surveys show that the public has more trust in civil servants than politicians. Fiscal stress will be enormously important for the next decade or so, as society debates the limits and proper role of the British state. The public wants to remain competitive on the world stage, which means both more and faster change and increased technological excellence, not normally strong points for the public sector.

The training of top civil servants became more explicit with the creation of the CSC in 1970, and there was an increased effort to make the SCS less class and generalist based. Training programs became more results oriented under the Conservatives, who increased the emphasis on performance management and the use of business-like methods. This approach was softened under New Labour but reinforced again under the current Conservative-led coalition government. There has been increased inflow from the private sector to the ranks of the SCS since the days of the Thatcher government, and the current government is eager to increase the exchange between the public and private sectors at the senior level even more. Innovation and pace are key words, but collaboration is also given significant deference. While the virtues of honesty, integrity, impartiality, and objectivity are maintained, it is in a more commercial environment where the values of tradition, loyalty, and the long-term perspective are discouraged.

The delivery model, symbolically linked to the aristocratic setting of the executive programs offered at the Sunningdale estate under the old CSC/NSG, which had already been put on a cost-recovery basis during the New Labour government, was almost entirely privatized by having the major elements of its core curriculum delivered by private sector vendors. This shift is now virtually complete: almost all SCS training is outsourced by Capita acting for the new CSL. The SCS training, though still technically mandated, has initially dipped, while substantial changes occur, including staff reductions at all levels. Both the degree of success (or possible failure) and the strengths and weaknesses of the new model are unclear at this time; however, it is an important experiment that will be much watched, not only in the UK, but around the world.

## Note

1. In the British lexicon, Westminster refers to Parliamentary functions and Whitehall refers to executive and administrative functions.

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# 3

## The United States of America

*Heather Getha-Taylor*

### Introduction

When it comes to senior executives in the US federal government, it seems the old adage is true: there is always room for improvement. Results from the 2012 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) reveal that on key measures of leadership, just over half of federal employee respondents agree that their organizational leaders promote communication among different work units (53.2 percent agree), support collaboration across work units to accomplish objectives (56.9 percent agree), or maintain high standards of honesty and integrity (55 percent agree). Less than half of survey respondents believe that leaders generate high levels of motivation and commitment in the workforce (43 percent agree) and only 57.9 percent of respondents think their senior leaders are doing a good job. Clearly, these results present a challenge and an opportunity for learning and change.

At the same time, continued development for public sector senior executives “is not a priority” (Partnership for Public Service 2009: 17). Yet, in a 2011 statement before Congress, US Office of Management and Budget (OMB) head Jeffrey Zients said, “The SES is the backbone of the federal executive leadership and its members play a crucial role in addressing unprecedented challenges facing our nation.” A 2011 memo to SES members written by Zients and (then) director of the US Office of Personnel Management (OPM) John Berry, summarized the contemporary opposing forces of critical developmental needs and decreasing resources:

Today's economic environment constrains agency budgets and Federal employee pay; these limitations complicate developing, recruiting and retaining senior executives. You are consistently asked to do more with less against a backdrop of heightened accountability for performance and too few professional development opportunities. At the same time, the best organizations know that especially in challenging economic times, investing in their senior executives pays off.

This memo comes at a time when scandals negatively influence public perceptions regarding employee training expenditures. According to media reports, in 2010, the Internal Revenue Service spent more than \$4 million on a “lavish” conference in Anaheim, California. The spending was characterized as “maliciously self-indulgent,” including \$50,000 spent on training videos (Dixon and Temple-West 2013). In related news, the General Services Administration is under investigation for dozens of “potentially wasteful conferences,” including an \$800,000 Las Vegas conference and a \$250,000 one-day event in Crystal City, which were described by lawmakers as “outrageous and wasteful” (McElhatton 2012).

In this context, training is scrutinized and constrained broadly. The Government Employee Accountability Act was introduced in 2013 in the wake of these events as part of Congress’s “Stop Government Abuse” initiative. Such initiatives, combined with sequestration and furloughs, have left senior executives feeling “frustrated, exasperated, sarcastic, dumfounded, and disappointed” (Lunney 2013). One senior executive said in response: “We are working in a completely different environment today. An environment of much more austerity, having to make some really critical decisions, when to take risks or avoid risks, yet we’re not training a generation of leaders to handle those decisions” (Lunney 2013).

Given this complex context, this chapter considers the influences that impact the ways training is conceived and implemented at the senior executive level. It considers contemporary issues that affect training, including the fiscal crisis. The chapter reviews expectations of senior leaders in the United States and the ways in which training aligns with those expectations. The chapter offers information on ways in which training is organized, including content and methods of delivery. Finally, training assessment and future developments are discussed.

It is important to note that the term “training” is typically used to describe the learning of new skills, knowledge, and attitudes for a specific function, while “development” refers to a long-term, strategic investment in the future. For the purposes of this chapter, training and development together reflect an investment in learning that aligns individual growth with an organizational mission. The information presented is based on a review of academic literature and practitioner resources and includes input from interviews with ten subject-matter experts representing a range of stakeholder organizations, including the Federal Executive Institute, the Partnership for Public Service, the US Office of Personnel Management, Leading EDGE, and experienced members of the Senior Executive Service.

## **The Context for the Senior Executive Service**

Leaders in the Senior Executive Service (SES) are the highest-ranking members of the US federal civil service. Reports from FedScope and the

Partnership for Public Service in 2012 provide data on the current cohort. The SES currently includes 7,784 members. Over time, diversity within the ranks improved to today's 33.46 percent women and 17.3 percent minority members. On average, members are 48 years old when hired into the corps and spend approximately 6.4 years in the SES. Most appointments are located in Washington, DC. The corps includes both career and noncareer (politically appointed) members. In total, the SES represents less than 1 percent of the federal workforce. "Despite its relatively small size, this corps is responsible for ensuring the continuity and success of our Government as a whole" (US Office of Personnel Management 2012: 5).

The development of the Senior Executive Service emerged from the need for a group of leaders that could be constant throughout elections and serve as a buffer between top political appointees and the career civil service. The desire for an executive level cadre can be traced to President Dwight Eisenhower's proposal for a Senior Civil Service, followed by additional recommendations from Presidents Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon (see Carey 2012). The goal was realized in President Carter 1978 Civil Service Reform Act, which created a corps of senior managers who would be mobile and serve multiple agencies. "The creators of the SES envisioned a cadre of high-level managers in the government who would provide leadership for agencies across administrations and ensure productivity and efficiency within the government" (Carey 2012: 1).

The SES mobility goal has yet to be realized. Only 8 percent of SES members have worked outside their agencies during their SES tenure (Partnership for Public Service 2012). The overall reluctance to realize that vision can be explained in several ways. First, executives are groomed to be successful within their organization and they spend time building networks and expertise within a single agency setting. Also, mobility has in the past been used as a punishment (Ingraham 1995). Further, some technical skills are not easily applicable to other contexts. A 2012 Partnership for Public Service report notes that on an agency level, some agencies prefer technical experts and "do not relish 'loaning out' their technical experts or providing rotational opportunities for executives who might not have the right technical skills" (p. 2). An interviewee echoed this finding by saying organizations "raise" people with the intent of developing organization-specific knowledge; losing that expertise would be costly.

Looking forward, retirement and attrition projections also put the SES—and their agencies—at great risk. Retirements are on the rise among SES members: from 5.8 percent in 2009 to 8.3 percent in 2012 (FedScope). Two-thirds of the SES cadre will be eligible to retire in the next five years (Partnership for Public Service 2013). Further, Carey (2012) reports that an annual turnover rate of 10 percent has existed since the first decade of the SES's existence. The turnover and expected retirements, while striking in their combined magnitude, are an "opportunity to take a deliberate

approach to developing talent and equipping future executives with the skills they will need" (Partnership for Public Service 2013: 5). As Ink (2007) noted, the SES represents a significant "reservoir of talent," but "our ability to tap this enormous human resource is declining significantly" (p. 47).

## **Political and Administrative Culture**

Several features impact training and development at the SES level, including the changing political-administrative composition of the SES, administrative budget and cultural issues, and the impact of decentralization. To begin, the changing dynamics between career and political appointee members is notable. While the original 10 percent cap on political appointees in the SES has held over time, political appointees have been added outside the civil service system by using excepted (i.e., special) authority "thereby nullifying the curb on future growth of political appointees that Carter's Civil Service Reform sought to achieve" (Ink 2007: 50). This growing number of appointees is focused on making an impact in a short time, not necessarily on developing skills and strengths that are aligned with a long-term vision. Further, frequent turnover among the noncareer corps impacts the relationships that are critical to problem solving and collaboration across agencies.

In addition to these forces, the administrative budgets for training are strained. When given the choice, many SES members prefer to give limited funds to their staff members rather than utilize the funding. One interviewee said: "It's almost an altruistic perspective that leads them to not being able to attend to their own needs." Another expert echoed this perspective: "If what we have for development is ever shrinking, I'm certainly not going to be a good leader if I spend it on myself instead of on my people." The Partnership for Public Service also found that executives "often opt to allocate the resources to others in their agencies" (2009: 18). This may be prompted by individual preference, organizational culture, or external reports that urge senior executives to provide leadership development opportunities to the people who report to them. For instance, one report recommended that agencies "should hold their senior executives accountable for helping to build the next generation of SES members—for example, by incorporating metrics into senior executives' performance reviews on how well they develop and train their own employees" (Partnership for Public Service 2013: 21).

Finally, organizational structures and processes influence the ways in which training and development are conceived and developed. The US Office of Personnel Management was originally tasked with the continual development of SES members or requiring agencies to establish such programs (Carey 2012). Training is now delegated and agencies are responsible for their own programs ([www.opm.gov](http://www.opm.gov)). A 2012 OPM report provides a variety of agency program examples to illustrate the diverse offerings and

methods. Although agencies have taken on this task, for some, the decentralization of executive training communicated the message that training is not a priority. Further, the trend of decentralization impacts both training quality and consistency because these features depend on individual agency capacity (Bonosaro 2009).

## Expectations of Leadership

The OPM's Executive Core Qualifications (ECQs) summarize what is expected of SES members. This model includes five broad competencies (and subcategories for each): Leading Change, Leading People, Results Driven, Business Acumen, and Building Coalitions (see Table 3.1). Its current form was initially developed in 1997. In 2006, the competencies were revisited to extract a set of "fundamental competencies" that undergird all five broad competency areas. Together, the ECQs are considered the essential qualifications for the SES. They serve to assist with various functions, including selection, performance management, and development. The ECQs are "the foundation for most federal leadership development programs" (Hansen 2013: 565). The reason for this is detailed in a 2012 OPM report: "Executives must specifically strengthen and reinforce their Executive Core Qualifications (ECQs), skills and knowledge to make informed decisions and devise new innovative solutions to the complex challenges they continuously encounter" (2012: 5).

The value of competencies comes from their potential to help individuals use their strengths to address the needs of a situation: competence is context dependent. Competence is "not constituted in terms of a specific set of context-free attributes, such as knowledge and skills related to a separate work. Instead, the ways in which work is experienced or understood constitute competence" (Sandberg 2000: 54). As a result, the most competent individuals are those who best understand how to apply their skills and talents

Table 3.1 Executive core qualifications (ECQs)

| Leading Change            | Leading People       | Results Driven        | Business Acumen          | Building Coalitions      | Fundamental Competencies  |
|---------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| Creativity and Innovation | Conflict Management  | Accountability        | Financial Management     | Partnering               | Interpersonal Skills      |
| External Awareness        | Leveraging Diversity | Customer Service      | Human Capital Management | Political Savvy          | Oral Communication        |
| Flexibility               | Developing Others    | Decisiveness          | Technology Management    | Influencing, Negotiating | Integrity, Honesty        |
| Resilience                | Team Building        | Entrepreneurship      |                          |                          | Written Communication     |
| Strategic Thinking        |                      | Problem Solving       |                          |                          | Continual Learning        |
| Vision                    |                      | Technical Credibility |                          |                          | Public Service Motivation |

to their work. As one interviewee said, it is not necessary to be strong in all areas: it just shows how SES members need to build a team to bridge those areas. "Some leaders think, 'I'm strong in 22 out of 28. I need to devote myself to those weaknesses.' You'll spend 95 percent of your time on the 5 percent of things you're not good at: we don't need to encourage that."

According to Hollenbeck and McCall (2003), this perspective suggests that leaders are born, not made; that they don't change and that programs should instead focus on strengths. A debate emerges: should leaders be all the same? Has the emphasis on ECQs developed a group of generalists who lack diversity? One interviewee compared it to biological systems and the need for resilience. Where there is diversity in nature, he said, those areas do well and the same applies to organizations. "We're more creative, happier, and have more positive energy in diversity...however, when it comes to leadership, the diagram says we all must be different but we all must be different the same." Training programs have to consider how best to address both the strengths and limitations of the ECQ approach.

## **Training Senior Executives**

In terms of mandatory training, all federal employees must take a set of courses, including IT (Internet technology) Security Awareness, No Fear Act, and Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) training. The only other mandatory training for SES members required by OPM is Ethics Awareness ([www.opm.gov](http://www.opm.gov)). Additional training and executive development programs are offered through individual agencies as well as a variety of external organizations, including universities offering graduate certificate and degree programs (such as Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government and American University's School of Public Affairs) and the Federal Executive Institute (see Pollitt and Op de Beeck 2010 for a broader discussion).

The Federal Executive Institute (FEI) was originally established in 1968 and operates within the OPM organizational structure. According to Sherwood (2010), the basic goal of the FEI was to "endow the career leadership levels of the Federal government with the capacity and motivation to bring proactive change to a huge enterprise" (p. 3). The institute's name suggests a close relationship with executives, and the original vision of founding director John Macy was that FEI would serve as "a place where senior executives assemble for a variety of intellectual and learning purposes, of which their own development was only one" (p. 13). However, Macy's vision was impacted by changing structures (moving from a direct reporting relationship to an embedded organizational location within OPM), narrowed focus on training (which limited the Institute's ability to more broadly influence policy initiatives and actions), and declining support for development over time (diluting the influence of the 1958 Government Employees Training Act). As Sherwood notes, while the Institute may have originally focused on

how to facilitate change, the current focus on learning is aligned with that goal in that learning is a “prerequisite to change” (p. 25).

FEI provides programs for different stages in an SES member’s career. For instance, the FEI offers onboarding sessions for SES members in their first or second year of executive service. According to the FEI website, this program focuses on “interagency partnerships and current leadership topics.” These sessions are designed with the first year transition in mind: they are time limited (less than a day long), conveniently located, and fast paced. The FEI also offers a two-day SES orientation briefing as well as a series of leadership seminars, which capture many of the original themes of interest to FEI. For instance, the plan for the FEI centered on three themes for executive development, including a “rich understanding and appreciation of the machinery of government,” as well as the “interdependence of sub-programs contributing to major goals,” and the study of public programs to “broaden knowledge and bring out interrelationships and complementary contributions to national purposes” (*The Plan for the Federal Executive Institute*, 17–19, quoted in Sherwood 2010: 26).

The leadership seminars include those centered on organizational development (Creating and Sustaining Organizational Excellence, Leading Change, Organizational Resiliency, Strategic Planning for Executives), individual competency development (Emotional Competence: Working with Others for Results, Executive Communication Skills), the context for exercising leadership in the public sector (Leadership for a Democratic Society, Working with Congress for Federal Executives), and the changing dimensions of federal work (Leading across Generations, Inter-Organizational Collaboration, and Leadership for a Global Society). These seminars are mostly held at the FEI in Charlottesville, Virginia, although some are also held in Washington, DC. The seminars range in length from two days to two weeks and range in price from \$2,775 to \$7,800 per participant.

For aspiring SES members, Senior Executive Service Candidate Development Programs (SESCDPs) are an important part of the preparation process. According to OPM, these are training programs “designed to develop the executive qualifications of employees with strong executive potential to qualify them for and authorize their initial career appointment to the SES” ([www.opm.gov](http://www.opm.gov)). The programs are typically 18–24 months long. Employees at the GS14/GS15 levels (or the equivalent for those outside the federal government) may participate. Successful completion of the program (and certification by an SES Qualifications Review Board) serves to qualify candidates for, but does not guarantee, placement in an open SES position (depending on position-specific requirements). According to OPM’s CDP webpage, federal agencies “may tailor CDPs to meet their particular succession planning needs and organizational missions,” but must include an individual development plan; at least 80 hours of training that addresses the ECQs and includes individuals from outside the candidate’s agency; at least

four months of developmental assignments outside the candidate's position of record; and an SES mentor.

As one interviewee noted, programs like these are opportunities to set an expectation of ongoing learning at the executive level: "As people become more experienced as executives, it becomes harder to convince them." Van Wart (2013) notes that training and education are needed at all levels to address the different skills needed at the entry, mid-level, and executive ranks. However, this approach has not always been evident in public organizations. One interviewee elaborated with this comparison: "If you look at senior executives in private sector or even senior military officials, there's an expectation for continuing executive education even at the top ranks of an organization." Even in times of difficulty, "they stick with that investment...they realize it's the leaders that will marshal the intellect and energy to effectively navigate the storms they face." However, there is a current expectation that taxpayer dollars should be used to support only the most essential programs and services and, as one interviewee said, "spending that on executive education would be a luxury." But that philosophy could be considered, as one interviewee described it, "penny wise and pound foolish." Training investment has important symbolic functions, including communicating the message that employees are assets to be developed (Dipboye 1997).

One way to consider the degree to which this message is received is to analyze responses from SES members on the subject of training. Tables 3.2 and 3.3 present SES responses to the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey prompt "My training needs are assessed." Table 3.2 illustrates perceived improvements regarding training needs assessment over time. Positive responses to the question increased and negative responses decreased. However, there is still work to do: in every survey since 2006, just over half of the SES respondents consistently agree or strongly agree that training needs are assessed.

Table 3.2 Training assessment

|                         | Strongly Agree | Agree        | Neutral      | Disagree     | Strongly Disagree |
|-------------------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-------------------|
| 2012 FEVS<br>SES n=6434 | 25.2 percent   | 33.9 percent | 21.5 percent | 13.0 percent | 6.4 percent       |
| 2011 FEVS<br>SES n=4811 | 24.0 percent   | 34.4 percent | 23.3 percent | 12.6 percent | 5.8 percent       |
| 2010 FEVS<br>SES n=4718 | 23.2 percent   | 36.1 percent | 21.6 percent | 13.3 percent | 5.8 percent       |
| 2008 FEVS<br>SES n=4881 | 20.7 percent   | 33.8 percent | 22.2 percent | 18.6 percent | 3.8 percent       |
| 2006 FEVS<br>SES n=5135 | 15.3 percent   | 38.2 percent | 23.3 percent | 16.4 percent | 5.4 percent       |
| 2004 FEVS<br>SES n=3906 | 16.8 percent   | 32.6 percent | 27.7 percent | 17.1 percent | 4.2 percent       |

Table 3.3 Satisfaction with training

|                         | Very Satisfied | Satisfied    | Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied | Dissatisfied | Very Dissatisfied |
|-------------------------|----------------|--------------|------------------------------------|--------------|-------------------|
| 2012 FEVS<br>SES n=6471 | 28.7 percent   | 37.7 percent | 21.1 percent                       | 8.7 percent  | 3.8 percent       |
| 2011 FEVS<br>SES n=4874 | 28.8 percent   | 39.2 percent | 20.9 percent                       | 8.3 percent  | 2.9 percent       |
| 2010 FEVS<br>SES n=4785 | 28.4 percent   | 39.7 percent | 21.7 percent                       | 7.3 percent  | 2.9 percent       |
| 2008 FEVS<br>SES n=4882 | 26.9 percent   | 43.0 percent | 20.9 percent                       | 6.3 percent  | 2.9 percent       |
| 2006 FEVS<br>SES n=5135 | 22.6 percent   | 38.8 percent | 20.9 percent                       | 11.1 percent | 6.7 percent       |
| 2004 FEVS<br>SES n=3906 | 25.2 percent   | 42.0 percent | 22.7 percent                       | 8.3 percent  | 1.8 percent       |

Table 3.3 presents SES member responses to the survey item, “How satisfied are you with the training you receive for your present job? Aside from the 2006 survey results, the level of dissatisfaction remains relatively constant, although dissatisfaction appears to be on the rise in recent iterations. At the same time, over 60 percent of SES respondents indicated satisfaction with training received, but the percentage of positive responses to this survey item declined slightly in the most recent iterations (since 2008).

## Training Content and Methods

As one interviewee succinctly said, anything related to leadership development “always comes back to the ECQs.” This individual’s point was supported by a report in which it was noted the ECQs “form the basis” for executive and management development curriculum (OECD 2001: 45). As another interviewee noted: “We focus on those five areas because we select along those lines. Once someone becomes a member of the SES, it is less clear. I think we continue to develop along those lines, but there’s less urgency. I think that’s one of the challenges: that we don’t continue to develop executives once they reach that threshold.” A 2009 report underscored the point further and connected both content and methods:

Senior career executives must demonstrate a high degree of competency and training in many areas to be appointed to the SES, but they need ongoing learning and development opportunities to expand and grow. Enhancing the executive core qualification skills requires accelerated developmental opportunities and rotation to other executive positions inside or outside of government, in addition to ongoing mentoring, coaching, and performance feedback. (Partnership for Public Service 2009: 17)

In contrast, Leading EDGE (Executives Driving Government Excellence) is a theme-based rather than competency-based program. The Leading EDGE program was established in 2010 when the President's Management Council saw that there was a need for a supplemental, continuous, executive development program. Leading EDGE is based on the premise that "government cannot operate optimally without collaborative networks and a motivated senior executive corps that has the right tools to lead in these rapidly changing times" (Hicks 2012). The program is housed in the Department of Veteran's Affairs and is open to SES members across agencies. The program includes workshops, leadership self-assessments, executive coaching, action learning projects, and a web portal component. Leading EDGE focuses on contemporary themes that reflect shared problems, such as navigating the fiscal crisis. Such themes reflect the turbulence of public sector life, which calls for a greater emphasis on change management capabilities (Van Wart 2008).

When designing training programs, it is important to strategically consider both inputs (including trainee characteristics, work environment, and learning principles) and outputs (including learning, retention, transfer, and maintenance; Van Wart, Cayer, and Cook 1993). What is clear from this study is that the traditional "brick and mortar" style of training, marked by residential sessions and one-way content delivery is increasingly seen as less relevant (and effective) than the emerging forms, including active learning methods. A 2012 US OPM report concurs that experiential learning is key: "Executives derive more value out of this type of learning by directly applying knowledge to real problems and situations. This facilitates more effective learning and greater return on investment by solving actual organizational problems" (p. 11). As one interviewee noted, once you get to the SES level, "You're pretty much at the proficient to expert level. When you're at that level, its not that training doesn't help, but there's some point when you have to put those things into practice."

In addition to experiential learning, interviewees repeatedly noted the importance of executive coaching at the senior levels. According to one interviewee, this is an opportunity for continuous development in a way that is "focused on your goals...personal, professional, organizational...and suited to your schedule." A 2012 report from the US Office of Personnel Management found that public sector agencies "tend to use executive coaching to address a deficiency or specific developmental need rather than as a blanket opportunity for continued development. In contrast, private-sector companies view executive coaching as beneficial to all executives, regardless of a specific identified deficiency or need" (p. 27). In the private sector setting, workplace learning and employee development have been key areas of investment (Caldwell 2000), although Hollenbeck and McCall (2003) indicate that executive development programs have broadly fallen short of expectations.

In part, success depends on participation. As one SES member noted, downsizing has affected training and SES members' ability to participate:

they do not feel they can afford time away from their work. This is echoed in a report that cited perceived resource constraints (including time and money) as the top barriers to development based on a 2011 SES survey (US OPM 2012: 8). One trainer agreed: “We get evaluations that say SES members are loathe to lose two days away from the office.” But another interviewee said: “Our values manifest in our behaviors.” Not enough time is spent on strategic leadership development, he said, in part because of the urgency of tactical needs or comfort with familiar tasks. His views were supported by a report finding that many executives are more focused on “day-to-day management” than “strategic leadership” (Partnership for Public Service 2009: ii) and, presumably, than on strategic leadership development.

Interviewees collectively spoke about the growing online tools available for training. However, they were cautious about the expected promise of such tools. For instance, one interviewee said: “We want to be careful in that, because depending on what you intend the outcome to be, sometimes just sitting in front of a computer taking a course isn’t going to get you there.” Another interviewee said that online tools are likely to become a predominant learning mode and that we need to know how to use them, but not just for the sake of using them. One widely cited reason for using online tools is conserving resources (namely, time and money). As one interviewee noted: we want to be “fiscally responsible” with training but at the same time, “not compromise the integrity of the learning” process.

Another expert agreed that the focus on fiscal issues is problematic when the issue is behavioral change: “The investment has to be more than fiscal, it has to have a temporal dimension too.” This speaks to the role of individual investment in learning and development when individuals are responsible for their own development (Caldwell 2000). Further, organizations must develop a culture that is conducive to learning. “In the right context, the executives will develop themselves and learn the lessons of experience that allow them to achieve the organization’s results” (Hollenbeck and McCall 2003: 12).

## Assessing Training

The process of evaluation, say Van Wart, Cayer, and Cook (1993), “should occur from the inception of a training program throughout its development and implementation” (p. 249). There are four major purposes of evaluation: (1) to measure end results to gauge overall success of a program, (2) to measure and track results of processes in order to make improvements, (3) to study unquantified or nonmeasurable results, and (4) to investigate side effects (Van Wart, Cayer, and Cook 1993: 249–250). However, as noted in a 2009 Partnership for Public Service report: “You can’t manage what you don’t measure, and due to the challenges of measuring success in the public sector, federal executives have very few indicators to determine what is working, what is not, and why” (p. 6).

It is widely acknowledged that assessing training outcomes remains a challenge. Assessment takes time and training-evaluation expertise is something that most agencies don't have and isn't readily available. Post-training satisfaction surveys therefore remain the dominant form of assessment. As one interviewee said, "I imagine if we were to read summaries of program assessments, they would be positive." Yet, "it is very difficult to make the argument for the return on investment." The Kirkpatrick model, developed in 1959, includes four levels of evaluation: reaction, learning, behavior, and results. It emerges as the dominant model in both scholarly and practitioner accounts. One interviewee indicated that Level 1 (reaction) and Level 2 (learning) evaluations are the most common, but additional training outcomes (including behavioral change or organizational-level effects) are difficult to isolate. Yet, as another interviewee said, if agencies could demonstrate these training impacts as well, training budget cuts would be less likely: "You would not be so quick with the knife."

The FEI utilizes participant self-assessments, portfolios, and "hot washes" at the end of sessions to evaluate their programs. Even for programs that use multiple methods of assessment, there remains work to do. One interviewee noted that you can't measure impact unless you have post-training data, and for most programs, there's no hard data on what you receive for your training investment. Another interviewee elaborated: "In this environment, it's hard to make the business case, even though we probably have plenty of reasons to (expect training at senior level) to have a ripple effect." The long-term impacts, however, may be even more difficult to assess. Interviewees shared stories to illustrate that the seeds of learning may bloom much later, when the SES members have the opportunity to apply the lessons they learned. Evaluators just may not be there for the "harvest."

## **Future Directions**

There are a number of developments in progress or under consideration that will impact executive training in the future. First, regarding the increased use of technology, the move toward high tech may already have gone too far. One interviewee has seen an uptick in requests for in-person networking groups because "it seems people are feeling more disconnected." For many, it simply comes down to learning styles and preferences. The challenge will be if or when the agencies begin to feel that online methods are sufficient or do not provide the necessary support to allow for broader developmental opportunities. "The network that you build when you're sitting at home in your bedroom in the dark," said one interviewee, "is not the best network." Advancements in technology that are working to merge the virtual and the personal (such as online chat programs that allow for spontaneous interactions among the participants) may help bridge this gap.

Given the SES retirement projections over the next five years, it is important to consider how generational changes may alter executive training and development approaches. Looking at the next generation of SES members, said one interviewee, you see individuals who “struggle to fit into this very hierarchical structure that doesn’t think collaboratively.” The use of action-oriented teams in such programs as Leading EDGE underscores the importance of collaborative and distributed leadership in answering the problems of the future (see O’Leary and Gerard 2012) and helps participants convey these lessons to their home organizations.

One final development revisits the original expectation of mobility as a core feature of the SES. One interviewee coordinates no-cost rotations that have had some unexpected benefits. “I’ve been surprised by the host supervisor reactions; they are able to get a new perspective. I would have expected that from the participant, but to hear that from the host supervisor was fascinating. By taking someone in and helping them develop, they’re getting new perspective.” Full mobility among SES members may ultimately be impractical, but temporary assignments would be helpful, especially in times of crisis (Partnership for Public Service 2009). However, there is no single entity that oversees or is responsible for aligning SES talent and needs (Partnership for Public Service 2012). Developing the necessary capacity to allow strategic rotations seems like an important next step.

## Conclusion

This chapter considered senior executive training in the United States, including the historical, political, and administrative context, as well as the expectations for leadership, training content and methods, current assessment efforts, and anticipated future directions. Overall, the chapter reveals strong rationales for investing in senior executives but constraints as well, including limited resources. Will there be a reinvestment in leadership training? As one interviewee said: “It’s not just a matter of more money: we don’t have it.” However, there was a consensus among interviewees that a lack of resources alone should not prevent executive growth. Resource constraints should be framed as an opportunity and a challenge, not just as a definitive barrier.

One interviewee noted, “When I see folks distinguish themselves, it’s not the ones who say, “if only we had bonuses, if only we had more budget authority, if only I could hire and fire people more efficiently, then I could deliver results.” Rather, the most effective people say, “This is the hand I’m dealt, how am I going to make the most of it?” That’s where you see remarkable innovation.” Again, the point about self-development is relevant and was repeated in another interview: “The best executives don’t simply wait for someone else to give them an opportunity...they find an opportunity.” Recognizing the competing needs for enhanced senior executive development and resource sequestration, the OPM offered leaders ideas for low-cost development, including mentoring, book clubs, and learning circles (2012: 40–41).

Just as it is important for executives to value their own development, so, too, should agencies. As one interviewee said, you can provide opportunities "until the cows come home" but if the culture doesn't support that training or provide support for development, then the job is made much more difficult. A learning culture is one marked by acceptance of trial, risk, and even failure. However, as one interviewee noted, such a perspective is rare. "I don't know if the young people are going to get discouraged," she said. "They might decide, in order to move forward, I have to conform. Or, they will leave."

In closing, it is valuable to consider what Schein (2010) thinks a learning culture would look like, including the job of leaders in creating said culture. Such a culture, says Schein, should have several key dimensions, including commitment to learning, positive orientation toward the future, and systems thinking. Further, leaders must be active in addressing the culture-learning connection. Finally, organizations must give leaders room to grow. "In an ideal world, development is recognized as so important," say Hollenbeck and McCall (2003), "that is it incorporated into the fabric of the organization" (p. 22). This requires identifying leaders who value development, who will integrate development into organizational systems, and who will serve as role models of continual improvement. Yet, growing pressure and the focus on performance, combined with the declining rewards for executive service (including pay compression and the recent suspension of the Presidential Rank Awards), suggest a stark contrast between the ideal and the reality.

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## **Part II**

# **Training Senior Civil Servants in Eastern European Countries**

# 4

## Estonia

*Külli Sarapuu, Merlin Metsma, Tiina Randma-Liiv, and Annika Uudelepp*

### Introduction

Although the Estonian state will celebrate its 100th anniversary in 2018, it can be characterized as a young state. The current political and administrative institutions have been built over the last two decades. A declaration of independence from the Soviet Union in 1991 led to a change of the political system, from communism to democracy, and from a planned to a market economy. Political and economic transformation was also reflected in vast administrative changes, both in terms of institutions and people.

The basis for a modern professional civil service in Estonia was created in a 1995 Public Service Act (PSA). It introduced an open, position-based civil service system that included a few elements of a career system (for example, additional pay and pension benefits based on years in service). In contrast to several other post-communist countries, accession to the European Union (EU) did not have a substantial impact on public service regulation in Estonia since the merit-based system had already been established (Meyer-Sahling 2011).

The 1995, the PSA did not stipulate the existence of top civil servants as a distinct category. Although top civil servants came to be treated as a special group for training and development purposes beginning in 2004, and a rather complex system evolved incrementally under the leadership of the Government Office, it existed without any statutory basis until 2012. The 2012 PSA replaced the original act and, among other things, formalized the top civil service. It distinguished top civil servants as a separate civil service category with special regulations for service term, recruitment, selection, assessment, and development.

The positions in the top civil service include the secretary of state, secretaries general and deputy secretaries general of the ministries, and directors general of the executive agencies (such as boards and inspectorates). Top Estonian civil servants serve in public organizations that form a well-defined center of the executive branch and play a primary role in policy

making and law-enforcement. In 2013, 96 positions fell into this group, and top executives made up 0.4 percent of the civil service (as of 2012). This falls into an internationally recognized share of senior servants, ranging between 0.13 and 2.1 percent, and increasingly descending under 1 percent of the civil service (Halligan 2012, 116).

With enforcement of the PSA in the spring of 2013, a new era began in conceptualizing the role and development of Estonia's top executives. The nature of this era, however, is still to be determined. A window of opportunity has opened for advancing from the existing voluntary and rather individual-oriented training framework for top executives to a genuine horizontal system. However, the use of this window depends on the Estonian government's response to three major challenges. The first challenge concerns the need to overcome the "silo-like" nature of the Estonian public administration, which has almost no tradition of centrally coordinated administrative policy. The second challenge is linked to the open-position-based civil service system in Estonia in which there is no institutionalized tenure and the opportunities for top civil servants to move to different positions within the system are limited. The third challenge relates to the identity and role perception of the Government Office—whether it will reassess and redefine its role as the leader of the executive service in the new legislative framework.

The chapter outlines the cultural, political, and administrative factors in order to understand the nature and functioning of the Estonian top civil service, and then takes a more detailed look at the characteristics of and challenges facing the top civil service training system. The discussion draws partly on an in-depth analysis of the Estonian civil service training system commissioned by the Ministry of Finance, and carried out by the authors (Sarapuu et al. 2011).<sup>1</sup>

## **Antecedent Factors**

It has been argued that Estonia represents one of the fastest political and economic transformations in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE; Vihalemm and Kalmus 2008: 904). Estonia's development has generally been characterized as a success, especially by external observers.<sup>2</sup> The sharp break with its communist past after the first democratic elections of 1992 created a favorable ground for vast changes. The right-of-center coalition that took power implemented a liberal "shock therapy" in Estonian society and launched an overwhelming reform of the state (Sarapuu 2013). This included a major change in public service personnel, as more than a half of public servants were replaced from 1992 to 1997 (Titma et al. 1998: 126). The complex move from communism to democracy was also reflected in a considerable social transformation. With rapid economic reforms a new logic of self-determination, characterized by pursuit of personal autonomy and well-being, was introduced (Vihalemm and Kalmus 2008).

The negative economic growth of the early 1990s, combined with the collapse of poor but relatively secure socialist systems, contributed to the growing feeling of insecurity and the overwhelming dominance of materialist values. Whereas people in Western European countries tend to value self-expression, quality of life, and feelings of accomplishment over material possessions and security, people in postcommunist countries that have undergone rapid social change and experienced a great deal of economic uncertainty tend to value economic and physical security (Inglehart and Baker 2000). These findings are also reflected in Estonia, where material well-being is valued more than self-expression, and the populace is characterized by low trust of other people and low political activity (Realo 2013).

Social transformations are reflected also in public service values and motivation. The national independence movement of the late 1980s and early 1990s contributed to a strong collective identification. The restoration of the independent state attracted many of the nation's best and brightest to public office, predominantly for altruistic reasons. However, by the mid-1990s, materialist values became more prominent in the society and the "building up the state" motive started to decline (Lauristin 1997). From 2000 on, the civil servants became more like "rational rent-seekers," as officials started negotiating higher personal benefits, leading to substantial individualization and the "marketization" of public service rewards (Järvalt and Randma-Liiv 2012).

Altogether, the Estonian political, economic, and social development over the past two decades can be characterized by the dominance of a neoliberal worldview (cf. Drechsler 2004; Lauristin and Vihalemm 2009; Raudla and Kattel 2011; Sarapuu 2012a), which can be explained by looking at both the temporal dimension of public sector reforms and the cultural predisposition of Estonians. On one hand, the 1990s, when the transformations began, were a time when the neoliberal approach to the state and public administration was prominent in the West and actively promoted in CEE by international organizations (Randma-Liiv 2009; Sarapuu 2013). On the other hand, neoliberalism combined well with the Estonian cultural predisposition to value independence and the country's communist legacy of distrust of the state (see Realo 2013).

With regard to the structural reorganization of the state, the combination of a neoliberal ideology, fear of the possible persistence of an overwhelming one-party-controlled public administration inherited from the Soviet republic, and an extremely complicated task environment during the initial transition led to the emergence of a segmented politico-administrative system and the ideal of a lean state. A crucial trait of the Estonian central government system is its reliance on ministerial responsibility (Sarapuu 2012b). Although the 11 ministries are rather small (employing a total of 2,473 people in 2012; Pesti 2013), they function as strong administrative actors that have considerable leverage in their particular areas of governance.

Policies are mostly implemented by the various agencies that employ the vast majority of public sector employees and spend most of the state budget (Sarapuu 2012b).

Although Estonia is “one of the CEE countries [that comes] closest to NPM models” (Drechsler 2004: 391), a closer look reveals that Estonia’s administrative system actually represents a peculiar mix of NPM and continental legal traditions. Its administrative development has been influenced by both neoliberal ideas and the pre-World War II historical inheritance. Although some practical public management reforms have been selectively drawn on, primarily from the UK and the Nordic countries, and applied in Estonia as reformers saw fit (Randma-Liiv 2005). But due to the idea of “restoring” the Estonian state in the 1990s and the idealized legacy of the First Republic, Estonia’s administrative law has been heavily shaped by the German models. Furthermore, Van der Wal, Pevkur, and Vrangbaek (2008: 326–328) argue that despite the general NPM nature of the administrative reform discourse in Estonia, the actual public service values are more traditional in nature. According to the surveys conducted among civil servants in 2005 and 2009, the most important values in public service were honesty, reliability, dutifulness, lawfulness, and competency, and these were respected more than NPM-type values, such as attainment of objectives, independence, and innovation (van der Wal et al. 2008; Riigikantselei 2009).

In recent years, the issue of the horizontal integration of various policy sectors and the need for a whole-of-government approach have emerged in Estonia. This shift can partly be explained by the increasing evidence of problems related to the segmented system; but it can also be attributed to the international post-NPM trend toward “whole-of-government” reform. The discussion was bolstered by the OECD Public Governance Review of Estonia (2011) that strongly questioned the administration’s ability to work in a “joined-up fashion.” The review also concluded there was no strategic vision for public administration and personnel management in Estonia (OECD 2011: 32) and pointed to the need for the government to deal systematically with the public service system and its values.

Indeed, the Estonian public service human resource management policy can be characterized as “a case of no central human resource strategy” (Järvalt and Randma-Liiv 2010). Every ministry and executive agency is responsible for the recruitment, training, performance appraisal, and pay of its own officials. The discussion about the public service has been mostly a legal-technical one, and there has been resistance to addressing more fundamental issues, such as the goals and underlying values of the system itself. The open, position-based public service system makes up only a small part of the entire public sector workforce and covers the people working for the ministries, government agencies, local government institutions, and a few other state institutions—that is, the core of the public sector. In 2012, there

were 27,072 people working in public service, constituting 4.3 percent of the total workforce of the country.<sup>3</sup>

The new PSA further endorsed the open and decentralized nature of the public service. The act changed the 1995 institutionally based definition of public service, and reoriented the system toward differentiating between officials who are engaged in executing public authority and those employees who do not have this function. The goal of the new act was to reduce the number of public servants and to abolish the perceived "disparities" between public and private sector employment. This led to the abolishment of public service pensions and seniority pay, reduction of public sector job security to equal that of the private sector, and an increase in managerial discretion over pay. With regard to top civil servants, the new act filled in the previous legal vacuum whereby the top civil service did not have a solid formal basis. The act made participation in the top civil servants development program compulsory for the target group and ended the era of voluntarism. Other mandatory elements include the introduction of open competition for the top positions, and determination of specific requirements that must be met for the development and assessment of top civil servants.

## Expectations of Top Civil Servants

The specific leadership model for Estonian top civil servants is defined by the Top Civil Service Competency Framework, which lays out the expectations of public service executives. The initial competency framework was introduced in 2004–2005 and was developed by a team of top civil servants and external experts led by the Government Office. It contained five competencies: credibility, vision, innovativeness, leadership, and goal-orientation. The competencies were described using from two to four activity indicators with the levels of excellent, good, and poor. The project team relied on McClelland's approach, trying to identify competencies and activities that were relevant for the attainment of work-related goals (Limbach-Pirn 2011: 9). However, feedback on the model revealed that it was deemed to be too general, not related to day-to-day work, and of questionable usefulness (*ibid.*: 11). These findings led to the re-evaluation of the model and its renewal in 2009–2010.

The new model addresses competencies in a more detailed way. The leadership profile it provides aims to ensure that Estonia's top civil servants are committed, know their role, share common values, and make decisions based on the state's priorities (Limbach-Pirn 2011: 61; see Figure 4.1). The four core competencies (credibility, citizen-orientation, leadership, and common identity) illustrate the main expectations of top civil servants and are operationalized in ten further competencies. On the list of competencies, generic management skills dominate.

The competency model is used in the recruitment, selection, and appraisal of top civil servants, as well as to map the overall quality of leadership in



Figure 4.1 The Estonian top civil service competency framework.

Source: Riigikantselei 2013.

the Estonian public service. Candidates for top positions are assessed by the central Top Civil Servants Selection Committee within the Government Office. The committee screens candidates and short-lists up to three for final selection by the relevant minister or secretary general. There are some exceptions for the secretaries general, who are appointed by the Cabinet and may be recruited outside the open competition, but these are also screened by the committee. Top officials are evaluated at least once every two years through a combination of self-evaluation and feedback from direct supervisors and colleagues, most of whom are subordinates. This evaluation was voluntary until 2013, and the results of the evaluations were not made public.

Two studies of top civil servants based on the competency framework, one on competencies and the other on commitment, were commissioned by the Government Office in 2011 (Riigikantselei 2011). In the first study, the competencies of the top civil servants were assessed by politicians and representatives of partner organizations. The survey did not reveal much that was of interest, and most of the assessments fell in the expected average range. The top executives' competencies in awareness of law, resource management, and self-management scored somewhat higher (3.6 to 3.8 on a 5-point scale) than did their competencies in communication,

cooperation, strategic leadership, and policymaking (3.3 to 3.4 on a 5-point scale; Faktum & Ariko 2011). The general conclusion of the study was that the challenge for the future was to develop more of the “soft” competencies (e.g., communication, cooperation, and leadership) among top civil servants (Riigikantselei 2011).

The results of the study on commitment were much more revealing, and disclosed some key challenges facing the Estonian administrative system. The survey interrogated top executives personally, and the results showed that whereas the executives were very committed to their work (though more committed to their institution than to the public service as a whole), only a few of them could be characterized as leaders of development and change. The majority were more oriented toward stability and security than toward looking for avenues for change (TNS Emor 2011). Furthermore, only 31 percent of the surveyed executives saw future career prospects for themselves in the public service, while the rest were hesitant or negative (TNS Emor 2011).

The fact that top executives have difficulty seeing future challenges and career advancement in public administration has led to considerable turnover as many leave the public service. Although the rate of renewal among the top civil servants has decreased compared to the early 2000s (see Järvalt and Randma-Liiv 2010) and has been around 9 percent lately (Limbach-Pirn and Toomet-Björk 2013), the possibilities for mobility within the public service have been restricted. Similarly, the OECD Review (2011) concluded that “the culture of Estonia’s public administration works against movement of staff within the public service. Staff currently view themselves as working for a particular public sector organization, and are hired based on technical specialization rather than generic policy skills; it is therefore difficult to encourage staff to move to other sector portfolios” (OECD 2011: 35). Although several experts, as well as many top civil servants themselves, have suggested the introduction of secondment and rotation schemes, these have not yet materialized.

Altogether, the survey demonstrated the organization-centric and segmented nature of the Estonian public service. It indicated that the top civil servants did not feel united as a group; nor did they believe that their colleagues would place the state’s interests above the interests of their individual organizations. Executives maintained that there was little joint understanding of the state’s strategic goals among them as a group, and that different public sector organizations did not share joint values and principles (TNS Emor 2011). The survey confirmed the results of the OECD review that found cooperation on policy coordination between the top executives to be mostly informal, incidental, personal, or reactive (see OECD 2011: 28–30). The review also highlighted the incapacity of top civil servants to act as a unitified group to lead administrative change and solve horizontal public policy problems.

## Top Civil Service Training System

The education system and the training system for public servants are separate in Estonia. Training is the responsibility of the individual organizations and, because there is no central civil service training institution in Estonia, is substantially dependent on the private sector training market. There is no institutionalized preservice training, and no mandatory training required for promotions or salary increases. Background education prior to entering the civil service is received from various higher education institutions. According to the Government Office (personal communication to the authors), 18 percent of top civil servants have studied public administration, 15 percent have studied law, 9 percent have a background in economics, and 9 percent in history; the remainder have a wide variety of educational backgrounds, including engineering, agronomy, forestry, criminology, and medicine.

Top civil servants also have varied previous work experience in the public or private sectors, which means that when they enter the top ranks, their knowledge, skills, and values may differ substantially. There is no common mandatory entry-level training for top civil servants, and fast-track training systems are unknown in Estonia. Top civil servants often come from the ranks of specialists in the public service, and the politicization of top-level appointments can be considered relatively rare (Meyer-Sahling 2011; Randma-Liiv and Järvalt 2011). According to the Government Office, "The average top executive is a man in his forties with previous public service experience and a level of education that corresponds to the master's degree" (Limbach-Pirn and Toomet-Björk 2013: 19).

The development of top civil servants was addressed in a highly decentralized way by individual public sector organizations until 2004. The Government Office started to work on the development of a top civil service corps, relying on the goals expressed in the Public Service Development Strategy (2004). This document emphasized the need to develop civil service leaders according to a unified competency model and proposed launching a development and training program for top civil servants. At that time, the Government Office was also responsible for coordinating the public service development in general. However, in 2010, all other public-service-related functions of the Government Office were moved to the Ministry of Finance, and since then, the training and development of top executives has operated rather independently of the rest of the public service development.

The Top Civil Service Competency Framework and implementation plan were completed in 2005, without any legal basis. Based on the competency model, a variety of one-off development activities were offered to the target group on a voluntary basis (e.g., specially designed training and development programs, individual coaching and mentoring; Riigikantselei 2006).

During that time, various ideas were tested, a first-round assessment of the target group was completed, and continual adjustments of specific activities were carried out. Because the competency evaluations were voluntary, about 65 percent of the top civil servants participated in the first round. After the third evaluation period, approximately 50 percent of the target group participated in development activities (Limbach-Pirn 2011: 11). Although the evaluation clearly pointed to the need for development (*ibid.*), the voluntary system could not ensure that top civil servants actually obtained the relevant competencies. The target group's participation was quite accidental, and with the financial crisis in 2008, top civil servants were focused on budget cuts and trying to find new ways of coping, which meant that the participation in development activities decreased significantly, although the funding for training was retained (Limbach-Pirn 2011: 11–12). By 2012, however, the participation rate had recovered and increased to 81 percent of the target group. Forty percent of the top civil servants took part in individual development activities, mostly language courses (Limbach-Pirn and Toomet-Björck 2013).

In 2008, special funding for top civil service development activities was allocated from EU structural aid funds through the signing of the program document "Development of the Top Civil Service 2008–2009." Activities addressing top civil service training were part of a general central civil service training program, and 85 percent were financed from EU structural funds. This document not only secured funding for the activities, but also became a semiformal basis for the continuation of the top civil servants development program. From this point onward, development of top civil servants was separated from general civil service training and, through biannual program documents, the goals and targets for the development of top civil servants were set separately. The development of top civil servants has been generously financed by EU structural funds ever since, whereas the Estonian government has covered only the mandatory cofinancing of the project. In the years 2006–2011, the financing for training increased steadily, reaching 311,000 EUR in 2011.

The institutionalization of the top civil service training system within the Government Office has taken place under the direction of the secretary of state, Mr. Heiki Loot. To a great extent, this can be characterized as a personal project of his, and it has benefited significantly from his personal leadership and commitment. In 2010, a specialized and rather autonomous unit for the development of civil service top executives was formed under his subordination—the Top Civil Service Excellence Center (TCSEC). By that time, trust had been built among the target group toward the entire development program, and a systematic approach to working with top civil servants had emerged. The institutionalization of development activities also made their formalization possible by inclusion in the 2012 Public Service Act.

## **Content and Methods of Training**

The way that the top civil servants development system has emerged in Estonia is reflected in the content and methods of training. In general, the system can be characterized as a rather flexible framework that relies on the attractiveness of the activities offered to top civil servants, and creates numerous possibilities for executives to develop their individual competencies. The small size of the target group has made this personalized approach possible and has allowed the TCSEC to maintain an informal working style and to pursue a tailor-made approach. The general goal of the activities has been defined as the development of “competent top civil servants who support the advancement of whole-of-government approach to governing” (Program: Development of Top Civil Servants 2012–2013).

In assessing top civil servants’ training needs and devising training activities, TCSEC plays the main role. It uses the results of the annual competency assessments, feedback from previous development activities, and priorities as defined in the government’s working plans. Other units (e.g., Government Office’s Strategy Unit) are consulted now and then, but the TCSEC relies primarily on its own expertise. The target group’s role in identifying training needs and proposing common development activities has been minor and irregular. However, the top civil servants have had opportunities to propose TCSEC training activities that support their individual development needs (e.g., specific training courses, language classes, lessons for developing public speaking). These activities are financed through the TCSEC. In addition, top executives also have the opportunity to receive training through their own institutions (ministries and agencies).

The training and development activities offered to top civil servants can be divided into three categories (Veisson and Limbach 2007): (1) tailor-made development programs with an objective to develop specific competencies related to the strategic objectives of the state; (2) individual development activities supporting top civil servants in solving specific problems or carrying out organizational change (such as coaching and mentoring); and (3) master classes and workshops with the primary goal of enhancing cooperation and joint discussion and sharing experiences and best practices. Over the years, several training programs have been initiated addressing specific subgroups or topics. For example, in the years 2008–2011, development programs focusing on economic competitiveness, sustainable development, the quality of public services, a single government approach, and financial management were carried out. In 2010, an annual conference of Estonian top civil servants was introduced. The TCSEC also runs a leadership offspring program, Newton, which trains future top civil servants (candidates who are mid-level managers or senior specialists at the time of participation).

With regard to training topics, development activities have cultivated both public-sector specific knowledge and skills related to administrative capacity, policy-making, policy implementation, coordination, and quality of public services, as well as more generic management topics such as innovation, leadership, strategic management, and client-orientation. It can be argued that whereas in earlier years the content of training was quite strongly influenced by business concepts, in later years the TCSEC has focused attention on public sector specifics.

Just as the spectrum of training activities has been quite broad, so are the variety of training methods used. They have ranged from classroom lectures to individual coaching and mentoring. Considerable attention has been given to learning from foreign practices. Study trips abroad have been used to a great degree in almost every multi-staged development program, and have usually involved seminars in the destination country. Likewise, external experts—mostly academics and civil servants from states with special arrangements for top civil servants (e.g., the UK and the Netherlands)—have been involved in providing development and training activities. In general, the emphasis of TCSEC has been on making the training and development activities as attractive, interactive, and as easily accessible for top civil servants as possible.

With regard to evaluation, training activities are mostly assessed by gathering oral and written feedback from the participants and trainers. Whereas such a system gives a representative picture of target groups' satisfaction with the activities, it gives little information of the effect of training on their behavior and performance. An attempt to assess longer-term impacts of training and development has been made via the regular evaluation of top civil servant competencies and surveys. However, both of these sources give only indirect information on the impact of development activities on performance (Sarapuu et al. 2011: 63).

## Conclusion

It is not yet clear how much the top civil service development system has strengthened horizontal cooperation and the whole-of-government approach in Estonia. There is undoubtedly value in recognizing top civil servants as a coherent group with specific development needs and in creating a solid framework for addressing those needs. The construction of a sound foundation for top civil service development based on the competency model and professional testing, competency assessment, and development activities has led to merit practices in the Estonian civil service and a systematic approach toward public service training. The presence of the TCSEC has considerably widened the possibilities for maintaining and further developing a network of top civil servants.

However, with the enforcement of the new Public Service Act in the spring of 2013, a window of opportunity was opened through which to conceptualize the role and development of top executives in a novel, more integrated, and “joined-up” way. There is an opportunity to advance from the existing voluntary and rather individual-oriented training framework for top executives, to a genuine horizontal system of top civil service that would demonstrate a “common identity” as expected by the competency model. To achieve this, Government Office faces at least three major challenges.

First of all, it needs to confront the “silo-like” nature of Estonian public administration, in which there is almost no tradition of centrally coordinated administrative policy. The Estonian administrative system relies on strong ministries that are responsible for overseeing their areas of governance, both with regard to policy content and administrative matters. The top civil service system represents an attempt to build a horizontal instrument aimed at bringing the top ranks of ministries and executive agencies together under the same formal and mental roof. In order to succeed in this endeavor, the Government Office needs to challenge a strongly sectorized administrative culture and the lack of enthusiasm for curbing ministers’ discretion, and ensure the financial sustainability of the top civil service development scheme.

A primary attempt to overcoming the “silos” was unsuccessful when a proposal to establish minimum requirements for top executives with regard to their managerial experience, education, and language proficiency failed in the Cabinet in 2013. Instead of stipulating a minimum amount of work experience, an education level equal to a master’s degree, and a command of Estonian and English, as was proposed in the draft regulation, the Cabinet eventually passed a regulation requiring top civil servants to have only “managerial experience, education, and knowledge of foreign languages sufficient to fulfill their civil service duties,” basically stipulating no formal requirements for top executives.

In addition, the system of top civil service training has thus far benefited from generous funding from EU structural funds. Comparing the resources of the TCSEC with the Ministry of Finance’s resources for central development activities for the rest of the public service, it is clear that the top executives have been a priority. However, the EU structural support for administrative development is expected to end in 2020, and it is not clear how ready the Estonian government is to spend its “own money” on creating a horizontal administrative policy. Considering the general belief in the virtues of a lean state and the distrust of centralization and the “doubling” of functions, the top civil service system needs to prove itself in a persuasive way.

Second, the Government Office operates in the context of an open, position-based civil service system with no institutionalized tenure and

limited opportunities for top civil servants to move within the (top) civil service. Significant staff turnover and a sector-based approach represent serious challenges for a decentralized system that is dependent on cooperation. A frequent change of partners in the top ranks creates an unfavorable context for collaborative action and poses significant obstacles to developing common top civil service culture. The high turnover in the top civil service may also undermine any efforts put into training and development, since executives use their newly acquired competencies to build careers in the private sector or in international organizations. Moreover, top civil servants might design their individual training activities so as to increase their employability in the external labor market. However, in this regard, the Government Office has recently gained some leverage as it has assumed responsibility for recruiting and selecting top civil servants and also supports rotation and career building within the civil service.

The third challenge relates to the identity and perception of the role of the Government Office and of the TCSEC itself—whether TCSEC is able to reassess and redefine its role as the leader of the executive service in the new legislative framework. Thus far, the top civil service training and development system could be characterized as an “island of excellence”—secured with necessary resources and aspiring to a high level of professionalism, but largely separated from the rest of the public service development and with restricted access to other actors in the administrative system that might alert the top civil servants about topics and issues that need their attention. However, the move from a training system to a genuine top civil service that facilitates whole-of-government approach to policy making and implementation also demands integration in administrative policy and, most of all, in public service development.

To conclude, it remains to be seen if the present training and development framework for the Estonian top civil servants will be able to evolve into a unified top civil service system, binding together the existing segmented administrative arrangement. The implementation of the new PSA and the special regulations for top civil servant recruitment, selection, performance appraisal, and development establishes a new formal structure around the existing elements. The potential for the existing system to evolve into a unified system will be determined both by the Estonian politico-administrative context and the identity and perception of the role of the Government Office.

## Notes

1. The research leading to these results has also received funding from the European Union’s Seventh Framework Programme under grant agreement 266887 (Project COCOPS); the Estonian Research Council’s institutional grant IUT 19-13 and the Estonian Science Foundation grant 9435.

2. For example, according to Transparency International's corruption perception index, Estonia was ranked in the top 20 percent of best performers in 2012 (32 among 174 countries; Transparency International). The trust in government is generally higher than the EU average—in 2012, 35 percent of respondents tended to trust government, against an EU27 average of 27 percent (Eurobarometer78). Using its Government's Effectiveness Index, the World Bank Governance Indicators have ranked Estonia well above most other CEE countries (World Bank).
3. The Estonian public sector altogether employs 165,400 people, or 26.5 percent of the country's total workforce (Pesti 2013). The total population of Estonia is 1.29 million.

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# 5

## Hungary

*Márk Gál and Márton Gellén*

### **Introduction**

Contemporary Hungarian public administration (PA) culture is influenced by the interaction of various elements: legalistic Austrian heritage, authoritarianism of the communist dictatorship, and “regulation-process-control” orientation of the European Union (EU). These layers of history determine the ingredients of a complex public administration culture that provide for the unique flavor of this post-transition country of Central Europe.

The current system of public sector manager training in Hungary is currently under revision, transitioning toward a client-oriented focus whose main objectives are serving the citizens professionally and efficiently. The new training system is based on a triple-layered structure: differentiated training programs are aimed at different levels of managers (new, experienced, and top level). Enhancing general civil service training as well as establishing a well functioning public leadership program fit into a wider capacity-building strategy to support national ambitions of a member state of the European integration.

### **An Overview of the Historical Context of Civil Service Professional Training**

Hungary, a Central European EU and NATO member, has been a successful forerunner of Western type democracy, spurred on by Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) region regime changes in 1989 and 1990. Hungary's public administration culture has been largely formed by its historical and cultural heritage. Hungarian public administration in the modern sense was established as part of the Habsburg Empire in the eighteenth century and developed further during the nineteenth century within the Monarchy of Austria-Hungary. During this time, two characteristics of PA took shape: legalism and proceduralism. In the Monarchy of Austria-Hungary, the concept of law and the understanding of public administration were not

separate notions, as they are in contemporary theory. This concept became part of administrative culture and was handed over throughout the ages of various state formations from the monarchy to the People's Republic.

Legal education and public administrative education were interwoven. In 1883, a law was issued stating that eligibility for higher positions in state administration was henceforth tied to having a law degree; the knowledge of public administration meant, *per se*, knowledge of law. Since a law degree was difficult to obtain, public administration had to eventually open up its original concept of limiting PA positions as such. To meet the increasing personnel needs of local administrations, an act was issued in 1900 that allowed local notaries to be employed after only a relatively brief period of notary training. In 1929, degrees in economics received the same state recognition as degrees in law, allowing greater eligibility for certain public service positions. University-level public administration and economics education was established in 1934.

The communist regime that took power in 1949 was in need of a capable and loyal civil service. To provide mid-cadres for the regime, the Academies of the Soviets ("Soviets" meaning municipal and county administrations) were established in 1952, with five-month, and later ten-month, programs. Through a number of gradual institutional changes and mergers, a single Academy of the Soviets was eventually created. The Academy of Public Administration (*Hochschule für Verwaltung*)<sup>1</sup> was established in 1977. However, this academy was not for the leading elite of the Communist Party; such high ranking comrades were trained in the Soviet Union.<sup>2</sup> During this period, law as a discipline seriously deteriorated in its content; during communism, many segments of conventional law—such as commercial law or bank law—were virtually abandoned. Even public administrative law was purified from its original function of providing the legal apparatus for questioning administrative decisions. All branches of law that were considered bourgeois were virtually erased (e.g., public administrative courts were abolished in 1949 because the Communist state dictated that public administrative rulings were not to be reviewed). As a result of politically enforced changes in legal education, "state science" was left occupying the field that other, previously removed bourgeois fields left behind. The approach of "state science" was that law was a textual formulation of state authority, while public administration was the "hand" of the party. In this context, law and public administration as academic disciplines (and everyday practices) were closely related since their purpose was basically the same—the repetition of the will of state (the party) authority in all areas of life, preferably with no distortion. Over time, this attitude crystallized into an overall mindset that today appears to many observers as "legalism," a decisive contextual element of public administration. In terms of public sector leadership, there are certain characteristics of the communist period that apply for the CEE region: mutual distrust between leaders and the public, authoritarianism (later, dominant

authoritarian style leadership within public administration), and duality of power (that is, everyday issues were administered by local officials—steered by the party—while strategic issues were determined in Moscow without any hint of public knowledge or discussion). Further distortions in administrative culture of the dictatorship can be summarized as follows.

Widespread petty corruption and a culture of “mutual favors” made everyday life tolerable. Opportunism became a decisive element—the possessors of power were interested in letting corruption flourish in order to minimize internal tensions (and to avoid another 1956).

The decisions of the state authority were unquestionable. With the abolishment of the public administration court system in 1949, neither law nor PA science was equipped for critical thinking. The deterioration of PA science was tangible as the repetition of communist ideology was virtually the only form of scientific “discussion” until the late 1980s.

## Political Structure

In 1989 and 1990, a plural civil democratic state took shape. During the 1990s, Hungary was the forerunner of stability and prosperity, especially when compared to surrounding countries, such as the former Yugoslavia, Romania, or Ukraine. The relative smoothness of the transition stemmed from the following:

- The 1956 revolution had a deep psychological effect on the Communist elite, causing them to avoid all potential conflicts with society. Unlike other Communist elites in the region in the 1980s, the Hungarian political elite were very much aware that the situation was volatile.
- Longing for internal stability, the Communist state enacted gradual reforms providing for the restoration of individual property and established certain opportunities for entrepreneurship. This easing of restrictions happened in connection with Hungary’s entering the IMF in 1982 and receiving loans from it.
- Certain groups of the Communist elite were prepared for the regime change, which was supported by 800,000 party members, approximately 50,000 internal secret contacts, and 10,000 secret police.

The new democratic republic began to reform its public administration system, rapidly replacing old institutions with new ones. In 1990, the new municipal administrative system (highly autonomous local governments) was installed. The Civil Service Act of 1992 established a “Weberian style” civil service career system similar to those found in most countries with developed market economies (OECD 1997: 83). A significant development in civil service regulation was made in 2001, when new regulations introduced pay-system reforms and established stable, attractive career opportunities

for those who entered public service. The training provisions under the Act on the Legal Status of Civil Servants were concerned with the general administrative exams, which all civil servants were required to pass, and the special administrative exams which were required for promotion.

During the 2000s, a new trend reached the attention of international observers that was a departure from the former Weberian development path. Meyer-Sahling pointed out that increasing politicization of PA caused an institutional and human resource (HR) instability in Hungarian PA (Meyer-Sahling 2006). One obvious way was to politicize the PA through leadership positions and another was through legislation (*ibid.*).

In 2010, a new government came into power after a landslide victory in the general elections. Supported by a two-thirds majority in Parliament, the new government launched a vast PA reform program—the Magyary Plan—the following year under Government Decree 1207/2011 (VI. 28). The reform program aims at correcting the structural distortions of PA that were shaped by the contradictions and compromises of the transition period. Additionally, the aim of the program is to make the changes necessary to improve fiscal balance by increasing overall efficiency of the entire public administration system, and modernizing its tasks, personnel, processes, and structure. These structural reforms can be labeled primarily as a move toward greater centralization, with the ambition of saving costs and having a firm control on policy processes (Gellén 2013).

## **Organizational-Administrative Culture**

Culture defines an organization's performance, acting as a base from which leaders may control a member's future actions. It can also act as a negative force, inhibiting new change away from previous, unfavorable behaviors. Developments in the administrative culture of Hungary, particularly since the reforms of the early 1990s, have met with this duality. On one hand, the new government inherited a vigorous culture that had been shaped over decades, the alteration of which is a slow and difficult process. On the other hand, there is a pressing need to develop a values system, which, alongside managerial tools, can facilitate successful adaptation to a dynamically changing environment, ease challenges that did not previously exist, and encourage competitive behaviors.

The public administration culture can be characterized as legal formalism and proceduralism embedded in the Weberian concept. In terms of culture, legalism is identified as an appropriate label for Hungarian PA culture. Rechtsstaat culture (a constitutional state in which the exercise of power is governed by law) is an inseparable attribute to Hungarian public administration. The view that Hungary belongs to a legalistic public administrative culture is widely shared (Hajnal 2003; Hajnal 2008: 132; Hajnal 2013; Hintea-Ringsmuth-Mora 2006; Drechsler 2005a) and having such a

culture after more than four decades of dictatorship appears to be desirable. However, legalistic public administrations are usually viewed as obstacles to efficiency and performance in the scientific literature on PA.

The associated theory does not elaborate significantly on the content of being "legalistic." Law itself has undergone a serious change: a civil law orientation gradually gave way to a public law legislation in terms of quantity and of the number of professionals in these fields within the PA. This means that human behavior is increasingly the object of public law that has the attribute of being imperative between parties of vertical relations. This is contrary to the dispositive civil law approach, which recognizes and protects the equality of partners. Public institutions that equally serve and protect parties in civil law relations have to be in possession of discretion and insight in order to fulfill their social purpose (civil law courts and alternative dispute resolutions [ADRs] for example). In the case of public administrators, however, the legalistic approach is dominated by public law, which tends to lack the sensitivity and soft competencies that are part of the civil law culture. A "legalistic" culture is not one of unreasonable trust in the legal institutions; rather, it is a naive *Rechtsstaat*-culture that understands law to be no more or less than a transmitter of authoritative will to a society in which there are no operating institutionalized channels for feedback or criticism. This administrative culture is often labeled "legalistic," but in fact, it is rather an imperativistic public-law-dominated system (Fisher 2000). EU accession and EU law tended to intensify the demand for detailed imperative legislation in areas where civic self-regulation had previously been the norm (such as household agriculture, which accounted for approximately one-third of the gross agricultural production of Hungary before the regime change). Legal imperativism derived from the EU's need for legal cohesion and policy harmonization, which, when combined with a residue of obsequious behavior inherited from the Communist era, resulted in the significant retreat of applying critical thinking in legislation and in administrative decision-making.

Hungarian public administration approximates the European continental model, having adopted numerous elements over the past two decades from larger, more established systems, while at the same time striving to preserve its historical traditions. The direct effect of international aid programs contributed to Hungary's transformation and European integration in the first period of post-Communist PA development.

The second grand period of Hungarian PA development, from 2002 to 2010, abandoned the incremental Weberian reform agenda and introduced a managerialist agenda that later gave way to minimal state NPM reform, marked by vast public-private partnerships (PPPs), and to the contracting out of projects (Jenei 2008). The government that formed in June 2006 aimed to tackle the issue of reform more seriously, focusing on regionalization and new public management. The constitution was modified; Parliament

passed a law on central administrative authorities; decisions were made to implement a radical regionalization of the state administration by merging existing administrative bodies; and market-based methods to regulate civil service were introduced. However, in late 2006, the preparatory steps for these decisions and the exterior, professional, and scientific systems changed significantly after it was concluded that it was not possible to reform public administration from within (Szamel et al. 2011).

The first version of the Magyary Program, introduced in June 2011, is a medium-term, complex plan “which defines the aim, intervention areas, and measures to be followed” (Magyary Program 11.0, 2011: 7) to create an efficient national public administration. The goals are to increase the effectiveness of organizations, reformat tasks, establish rational internal procedures, improve public relations, train administrative personnel, and outline a predictable career system (albeit with certain elements of governance “at will”). Certain elements of the Neo-Weberian State live on in the program’s emphasis on efficiency, performance, and quality. At the same time, there is a clear intention to build a stronger state—one that is more resistant to external challenges—in light of the Neo-Weberian State and the public administration, by strengthening administrative centralization.

## **Expectations of Public Leaders**

The CEE countries (so classified based on their political, economic, cultural, and historical heritage) have many leadership features in common, but clear differences as well. Prior to the 1990s, the dominant leadership style was paternalistic (based on cronyism, benevolence, and an authoritative style) (Bakacsi and Heidrich 2011; Farh and Cheng 2000) but with an individualized concern for a subordinate’s well-being (Pellegrini and Scandura 2008). The communist legacy in Hungarian public administration leadership can be characterized as a local version of post-Soviet authoritarianism (Cameron and Orenstein 2012) but with extensive reliance on the trading of informal mutually beneficial favors (Meyer-Sahling and Yesilkagit 2012). Past management practices in Hungary were highly determined by the social and political environment. Obedience to the party and its ideology used to be the dominant philosophy in the public sector. Since the Communist Party (and various factions within the party) dominated the selection process for higher-level management, the key selection criteria for managers were having connections and loyalty.

The structural characteristics of the public administration in Hungary have also contributed to the preferred leadership style. These characteristics were centralized decision-making, strong formalization and regulation, standardized linear organizational structures, department and unit similarity, and standardized coordination techniques, especially through commands and autocratic decision-making authorities (Máriás et al. 1981).

As a result, public administration became an intensive power culture. The attributes of this intensive power culture were the autocratic or paternalistic leadership style, risk avoidance, and responsibility avoidance (Bakacs 1995).

The authoritarianism of the Hungarian public sector management culture gained a new layer in the late 1990s and 2000s, when significant reforms, designed to improve the quality of public personnel, were carried out. Typical training needs within the Hungarian civil service are driven by the following factors (Karoliny and Poór 2007):

- Certification requirement by passing a civil service exam on the executive and professional levels. The executive-level civil service certification program has been available since 1993; the professional-level program was introduced in 1998.
- A 30-hour postcertification civil service training program (available since 1998).
- New legislation (e.g., establishing an accounting system).
- A civil servant examination every three years for high and middle-ranked servants.
- Introduction of new management systems (e.g., International Standards Organization [ISO] Common Assessment Framework [CAF]).
- Offers from different training providers. The selection of training providers (e.g., universities, other private providers) is not free and there is an obligatory regulation for using accredited training providers.

## **The Content and Structure of Training for Top Civil Servants**

Public manager training has been under constant revision over the past 20 years, while the basic civil service exam and the advanced civil service exam appear to be relatively constant elements. The managerialist reform period (2002–2010) pursued an alternate path, consisting of differentiated training programs for different levels of managers (new, experienced, and top managers). The most important innovation of this period was likely the extension of training to top managers via the introduction of leadership training (management excellence training). However, this level of professional training was never sufficiently institutionalized and remained in the test phase. Although there were attempts to create a selection system based on a competitive exam, most key appointments remained political (Meyer-Sahling 2006). An individual performance-based system also operated for a time but was soon abandoned.

After the regime change, external technical assistance projects equipped the lion's share of Hungary's civil servants with the necessary leadership knowledge (Sobis and de Vries 2009). However, the patchwork of technical assistance projects did not provide a unified system of training. The European

Communities approved the PHARE (Poland and Hungary: Assistance in Restructuring Their Economies) project in 1992. These training courses were designed in a collaboration between the European Communities (EC) and Hungarian experts, and trainees were selected from both the local and central levels. The first step toward creating a training system was taken in 1993 when a governmental decree obliged every civil servant to pass a “basic exam” within one year of entering the civil service. This “basic exam” has proven to be vital in achieving an across-the-board uniform level of professional and technical qualifications. In 1998, a special public administration examination was introduced, which all civil servants in senior managerial positions were required to pass. Top servants took the exam at the Hungarian Institute of Public Administration (HIPA) until 2007, at which time its successor, the Government Center for Human Resource Services (KSZK), took over. These two bodies were responsible for preparing, maintaining, and updating the exams, as well as for training the trainers (Perger 2009).

EU accession became an urgent political priority for Hungary in 2003. Having a well-functioning civil service was important to the integration process as top servants were expected to acquire the knowledge and skills to operate the country as an EU member state. The training strategy adopted was based on a time frame of five years. For the courses themselves, priority was given to the senior civil service because of their importance in the EU integration process.

The next change took place in the second half of 2009, when the basic exam was replaced by the so-called “competition examination” (a label that was in line with NPM vocabulary), which became a mandatory requirement for individuals applying for a civil service post. The exam was both knowledge and skill based. Those who wished to take the exam were required to pay an exam fee; if they succeeded in getting a job they would be reimbursed. The government abolished mandatory competition examinations in 2010 in response to an increased need for new appointments. The new system was introduced by Gov. Decree 273/2012. (IX. 28.), which established a study obligation for all civil servants, including leaders (Linder 2013).

Government regulations on further training distinguish between the following program groups (Klotz 2013):

- **Internal continuous training program:** contains self-teaching and curriculum units, specific institutional or job-related skills.
- **Public service training program:** aimed at the acquisition of general administrative knowledge, preparation for the administrative special examination in a modular system, and improvement of law enforcement training via the permeability of career lines. These programs are being developed and implemented by the National Public Service University.
- **Professional development program:** aimed at increasing professional and competency skills for jobs within the administration; the employer

provides a qualified curriculum, including academic skills training, adult education, and further internal training.

Taking part in professional training is an obligation. It is included in the job description and generally takes place during working hours, and all costs must therefore be covered by the administrative organization. Because it is difficult to pinpoint the exact amount of government expenditure on training, it is difficult to assess the proportions that are internally financed or internationally supported. Various ministries spend a stipulated amount on training from their annual budget; however, the amount itself is not recorded separately from other items.

According to Act No. CXCIX (2011), the National University of Public Services (NUPS) is officially charged with all PA professional training, including leadership training, in Hungary. The former Academy of Public Administration (Hochschule für Verwaltung) was integrated into the Budapest University of Economics and Public Administration (today, Corvinus University) as a Faculty (department) of Public Administration in 2000. In 2011, this Faculty was moved into the National University of Public Service where it became a Faculty of PA alongside the Faculty of Law Enforcement (the former Police Academy) and the Faculty of Defense (the former University of Defense). Creating a university based on the concept of public service unity appears to be a unique approach. Regarding the HR needs of the police, Hungarian law enforcement always had the ambition of having a university level education facility and finally, the opportunity has been given within NUPS. From the polity point of view, civilian public administration education is also a beneficiary of the merger since its financing of public education appears to be more secure through the budgets of three ministries (Ministry of Public Administration and Justice, Ministry of Defense, and Ministry of Interior), especially in times of fiscal austerity.

As a general remark regarding the content of public administration, law enforcement, and defense, it can be noted that many fields are more in accordance with each other than they ever were earlier: peacekeeping missions, emergency situations, logistics, IT defense, social stability, and many others are areas in which the three academic fields have demonstrated a new synergy. NUPS itself has a decisive role in forming PA education in Hungary. Besides having a de facto monopoly on university PA programs, it has an exclusive role in compulsory civil service training. According to a new law (discussed later in detail) issued in 2011, NUPS was placed in charge of civil service training, replacing a government agency that had previously held this task. The NUPS has recognized the need to distinguish its PA programs from other similar programs in the country that are mainly provided by universities of law. Thus, NUPS began to promote general PA as an academic discipline. Due to the strongly legalistic legacy, the National Accreditation Committee did not have a category for general PA. Obtaining recognition of a not entirely

legalistic doctoral program in PA first required convincing the Accreditation Committee (dominated by lawyers) that as a discipline PA was indeed different from its traditional, legalistic image. After considerable efforts, the accreditation process for a non-legalistic PA doctorate school succeeded. Prior to 2013, no doctoral school for general PA studies had existed in Hungary and potential PhD aspirants in PA were forced to enter doctoral schools in either law or political science, or perhaps attend one of the interdisciplinary doctoral schools. It appears that because NUPS is such a powerful institution, general PA as an academic discipline has gained a powerful supporter in the domestic realm of polity. NUPS is interested in positioning general PA as a non-legalistic discipline in order to distinguish itself from traditional law schools that have activities in PA as a legal discipline.

Regarding a public administration education, the decisive weight of the National University of Public Service can be illustrated by the following figures. General PA is taught at the following Hungarian institutions, the capacities indicated were for the academic year beginning in September 2013.<sup>3</sup>

- National University of Public Services: 820 vacancies
- University of Debrecen, Faculty of Law: 25 vacancies
- University of Miskolc, Faculty of Law: 15 vacancies
- West Hungarian University, PA and Geo-Information Technology: 5 vacancies
- Péter Pázmány Catholic University, Faculty of Law: 15 vacancies

Prior to 2011, mandatory professional training for the civil service was organized by a government agency (various names mentioned previously). In 2012, the agency became an institute of the NUPS. In 2013, the numbers of civil servants who passed the mandatory professional training exams (see the content of the curriculum in Table 5.1) were as follows: the PA basic exam was passed by 2868 civil servants, while the PA advanced exam was passed by 1315 civil servants. The content of the mandatory professional training is still legalistic and the style of the training is repetitive (see Table 5.2).

NUPS has a *de facto* monopoly on PA education and a *de jure* monopoly on mandatory civil service professional training. Since such established leadership programs did not previously exist, NUPS has launched a pilot project for the development of a leadership training program under the code name ÁROP 2.2.13, with a budget of HUF 300 million (roughly EUR 1 million) and a schedule that runs through September, 2014.

The summarized content of the planned pilot project as of August 2013 is the following:

- Efficient leadership (strategic management and change management, HRM, communications for leaders, leadership skills, and personality training);

Table 5.1 Content summary of the mandatory basic exam curriculum

| Title of main chapter  | Content <sup>4</sup>  |
|--|---|
| I. Basics of Law   | Theory of Law, Constitutional Law, Basics of EU Law   |
| II. Basics of PA   | PA Structure, HR, PA Law, PA Procedures, PA Development   |
| III. Basics of the EU  | EU in General, EU Institutions, EU Law, Relation between EU Law and Domestic Law  |
| IV. Introduction to Public Finances and to Public Financial Management | Public Sector Economics, State Financing, Public Sector Budgeting, State Asset Management, PA Organs under the Central Budget, Public Transfers, Controlling and Auditing |
| V. Basics of Information Security and Data Protection.                 | Data Protection Law, Freedom of Information Law, Public Sector Databases, Law of Classified Data  |
| VI. Institutional Administration                                       | Internal Administrative Proceedings, Internal Institutional Regulations, Internal Performance Management  |

Table 5.2 Summary of the content of the civil service advanced exam

| Title of the main chapter                   | Content <sup>5</sup>   |
|---|--|
| I. System of Central Public Administration  | Constitutional Law, Human Rights, Legal Settings of Central PA, Institutional Law  |
| II. Legislation and Application of Law      | Theory of Law, Rule of Law, Legislative Procedure, Application of Law in General, PA Procedures  |
| III. General State Finance                  | Public Sector Economics, Public Finances, System of the Central Budget and of Social Security, Local Government Budget, Finances of Public Institutions, Control and Auditing                  |
| IV. Public Sector Management and Leadership | Leadership in General, Managing an Institution, Managing the Administrative Process, Quality Management, HR and Public Sector Labor Law  |
| V. EU Institutions and EU Law               | EU Integration in General, EU Law, Fundamental Rights in the EU, Institutional Structure and Institutional Operations of the EU, EU Budgeting, EU Competencies and Policies, Hungary in the EU |

- Strategic case studies from the public sector; selection of concrete case studies, depending on the cases and presenters;
- PA and professional knowledge for public sector leaders; sustainability challenges (agriculture, energy, water, social sustainability); PA serving social inclusivity; PA serving growth, public sector management (policy management, financial management, performance management, HRM, governing PA organs and institutions); ethical dilemmas of contemporary PA leadership (technology and ethics, integrity, personal and institutional ethics, internal control and ethics).

During implementation, the pilot project has faced the following challenges:

- 2014 was an election year in Hungary, and thus there was a certain risk of extensive dropouts.
- Who is entitled to leadership training has not been precisely defined. There is a legal definition of “higher leader” status that includes deputy state secretaries and state secretaries. This circle of top servants is too small to fulfill the project criteria for head counts. Therefore, logic demands enlarging the entitlement category to include all government civil servants who would like to become leaders.
- The pilot project must serve as the first test of the leadership training system, while also developing the necessary capacities at NUPS. Learning by doing on an institutional scale carries a substantial risk.
- It was a conceptual challenge to separate public sector leadership training from the influence of business leadership training. Since MBA programs have historically dominated the intellectual framework of leadership in Hungary, it is an instinctive perception in NUPS, and also with the Ministry in charge of civil service development, that civil service leadership training should replicate MBA curricula but with proportionately less economics and greater emphasis on law and public management. This instinctive approach stems from the “legalistic” perception of public administration, which is difficult to separate from the creative approach to leadership. In order to bridge this cognitive gap, it appears to be more acceptable to borrow the curricula from an external resource.

Today, half of managers have less than three years of experience in their positions, and only 10 percent have more than 12 years of experience.

## **Conclusion**

The connection between the training of top civil servants and the performance of public administration is strong. The major shortcomings of the Hungarian public administration system are the “weaknesses in the overall ‘machinery of government’ [which] include: a lack of strategic focus and evidence-based policy making” (OECD 2008: 206). Public sector leadership training might help to increase strategic capabilities.

Building executive training into the promotion structure remains an “old debt” in the career and training system. There is a need for an administrative executive system within the government civil servant promotion scheme, which should be a merit system based on competence, and a modular construction upon which an official managerial elite (senior civil service) organizational concept can be built (Kis 2011).

Further, the government civil servant executive training system needs to expand into the following areas:

- Managerial supply training (supply and managerial entry-level competence-development training);
- Managerial further training (general and managerial competence development, vocational, lingual, and informational-communicational technological development, including workshops, managerial clubs, professional conferences, e-learning through curricula);
- High-level executive training (individual and team coaching, blended learning, contact and practical days, exam).

New challenges have emerged in Hungarian public administration due to the many global, economic, and social changes regarding the quality of top civil servants. Yet these new values might well follow the improvements of professionalism, flexibility, citizen orientation, and innovation, all of which represent traditional values. In order to be able to develop these values to their fullest, training structured expressly for the Senior Civil Service is considered to be the most effective instrument.

## Notes

1. We use only German terms to explain the Hungarian terminology since a direct translation to English might be misleading.
2. For example, Gyula Horn, the last foreign affairs minister of the communist regime and the prime minister of Hungary from 1994 to 1998, acquired a diploma in economics in Rostov in 1954.
3. Data provided by Hungary's official public education website, [www.felvi.hu](http://www.felvi.hu).
4. Basic Exam Coursebook: 2012.
5. The Evaluation column indicates "PA" if the content of the subchapters includes public sector economics, public policy, political science, or public management. Coursebook 2012.

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# 6

## Romania

*Cristina Hintea\* and Tudor Țicău*

### Introduction

The four decades of totalitarian regime in Central and Eastern Europe that ended in 1990 have left a significant impact, both institutionally and culturally,<sup>1</sup> on public administration development and reform. Romania unfortunately lags behind in administrative reform and civil service development when compared to its neighboring states, although both have been a top priority for all governments since 1990. Regrettably, political rhetoric has been more intense than actual reform measures, and 23 years later, there are still serious shortcomings.

### Political Structure

Before analyzing the political and administrative structure, a short reference to the influence of the communist regime is necessary. Four decades of dictatorship meant the elimination of public administration as a field of study, and civil service in the Western sense of the word was nonexistent, which created a spiral of negative effects. Communist ideology took precedence over administrative competence, with education in the field aimed at transforming bureaucrats into compliant executants of party orders (Verheijen and Connaughton 1999: 328–329). Although the dimensions of the public apparatus expanded continuously (peaking in the 1980s, when Romania's government was second largest after that of the Soviet Union—the last communist government, totaling 79 ministries), its powers actually diminished, remaining concentrated in the hands of a few key party figures (Nunberg 1998). Central government restructuring was frequent (over 20 reorganizations from 1985 to 1988), with high levels of turnover (Nunberg 1988). The system was highly centralized and guided by a strong legalistic and authority-obedient culture (Mora and Țicău 2008).

The transition to a democratic system in 1989 was violent, with the Revolution claiming about 1,000 victims. New legislative reforms

implemented in the early 1990s hinted at a Western orientation for the country, but the transition to democracy and a market economy was slow. A new constitution was adopted in December 1991, and local elections took place in 1992. Central administration was organized similarly to other parliamentary regimes,<sup>2</sup> with the central government headed by the prime minister and the local administration organized in a two-tier system (counties and cities/towns) based on decentralization and local autonomy. The French administrative system remained a source of inspiration, and both the central and local governments took inspiration from that system—the prime minister is named by the president, while the prefect (part of the senior civil service [SCS]) is the Central Government representative at the local level. Similarly, civil servant education and training is managed by a central agency.<sup>3</sup>

Romania faced a twofold challenge: creating quick economic prosperity for a suffering society and reforming both its economy and administration while doing so. One aspect of the former regime that remained strong through the 1990s was the legalistic culture, wherein most reform measures were equated with adoption of new legislation, with little concern for implementation and effectiveness. Political will for state reform gained momentum only when the center-right opposition coalition won the 1996 election, and a clearer orientation toward the EU and NATO was established. All of this delayed Romania's admission to the EU until 2007.

The EU negotiation process in 1999<sup>4</sup> led to Romania's adoption of the first major reform strategy on public administration in 2001, shaped mainly on EU requirements. In 2002, the government created the Central Unit for Public Administration Reform (CUPAR), which had a leading role as reform-policy initiator. CUPAR played a significant role in designing the National Strategy for Reforming the Public Administration 2004–2007, and provided technical advice during the implementation process (Roman 2012). The strategy had three main pillars: (1) develop a professional civil service, (2) reform local public administration through decentralization, and (3) create distinguished, coordinated government systems and enhanced management capacity (Mora and Țicău 2012: 200). The CUPAR introduced the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) in 2005 (performance evaluations); the Multi-Annual Modernization Program (MMP) aimed at increasing administrative capacity; modern performance management tools, such as the Balanced Scorecard (BSC); and a methodology for continuous improvement in the public sector benchlearning (Roman 2012). Other reform measures focused on simplifying the regulatory process, increasing the quality of public policy, introducing a public administrator position at the local level (similar to a city manager) in 2004, and developing specific training programs for civil servants (such as the Young Professionals Scheme in 2003). All these measures came about because of direct pressure from the EU making them prerequisites for accession. Joining the EU in 2007 meant that Romania had

to adopt a postintegration model of development; however, the European Commission (EC) lost most of its leverage after accession, the Mechanism for Cooperation and Verification (MCV) and access to European funds being its only leverage instruments.

The postintegration period coincided with the Great Recession, and Romania briefly enjoyed high GDP growth in 2007 and 2008. In 2009, the country was hit hard by the economic crisis, as its economy shrunk by 6.6 percent and its budget deficit soared to 7.3 percent. This forced the government to sign an agreement with the IMF, EC, and World Bank for a 20 billion euro loan, and agree to a series of fiscal consolidation measures (see Boc 2011 for details). The measures focused on cutting government spending, reorganizing the central administrative structure by consolidating governmental agencies (reducing them from 223 to 114), reducing the number of public employees by more than 143,000 (to 1,255,000 in July 2011), freezing employment in public organizations, and cutting salaries for public employees by 25 percent (in 2010) while introducing a unitary public pay system with a maximum 30 percent bonus for any position. These measures were reviewed positively in a series of external reports (by Moody's, Morgan Stanley, IMF, and the World Bank in 2010 and 2011), and economic growth was restored in 2011 (+2.5 percent).

## Organizational-Administrative Culture

The “cultural” aspect of the administration was also dominated by a strong legalistic component, the “modern” civil service therefore formally took shape with the adoption of the Civil Servant Statute in 1999. This created three categories of civil servants: (1) *execution civil servants* (category I), that is, execution positions in the lower hierarchy of the administration, which represent 89 percent of all civil servants; (2) *managerial or leading civil servants* (category II), middle-management positions in the local or central administration, representing 10.7 percent of all civil servants; and (3) *senior civil servants* ([SCSs] category III), the highest-ranking civil servants, occupying top nonpolitical positions, mostly in the central government (the prefect and deputy prefect being the exceptions), and representing 0.15 percent of servants.

All civil servants are appointed through a public contest, and the SCS positions are filled via a special national competition. Likewise, all the public actions of civil servants must accord with the principles of legality and impartiality, transparency, efficiency and effectiveness, accountability, orientation toward citizens, stability, and hierarchical subordination. These can be seen as a combination of values, such as fairness and social justice (legality, impartiality, transparency, and accountability); orientation toward results (efficiency and effectiveness, orientation toward citizens); and bureaucratic values (stability and hierarchical subordination). From

an institutional perspective, The National Agency of Civil Servants (NACS) is “responsible for formulating the policies and strategies concerning the management of public positions and civil servants, drafts and advises normative acts concerning public positions and civil servants, monitors and controls the implementation of legislation concerning the public position and the civil servants, etc.” (UN 2003; law. 161/2003). Within each public authority or institution, HRM is organized and undertaken by a specialized department that cooperates directly with NACS on matters concerning civil servants and civil service positions (EUPAN 2013: 109). Thus the NACS offers support to civil servants by monitoring whether legislation is implemented by providing career planning; by developing a yearly National Development Plan; by developing mechanisms for rewarding performance; by providing an unitary, motivating, predictable remuneration system; and by offering professional training (UNPA 2013: 109).

## **Statute of Senior Civil Servants**

Senior civil servants can occupy certain hierarchic positions. The positions of secretary general and deputy secretary general in the government, ministries, and central agencies, of governmental inspector, and of prefect or subprefect (at the local level) are all top-ranking leadership positions whose superiors are political figures. This gives the senior civil servant a role as a professional “buffer” between politics and administration. Besides position management, the recruitment, selection, appointment, promotion, evaluation, and mobility of senior servants are governed by specific legislation and supervised by the NACS.

## **Recruitment and appointment**

*Recruitment and appointment of Senior Civil Servants* is done mostly through a career- type system, entry into which is subject to education and training requirements, coupled with taking a national test. Entry into the senior civil service is possible if the following conditions are met: (1) university undergraduate degree or long-term higher education with a degree certificate or equivalent; (2) at least five years of service in the specialty of the position; (3) graduation from the Specialized Training Program for SCS or one full term as member of Parliament; (4) passing the annual national test for the senior civil service. The procedures and evaluation criteria for the national contest are regulated by a specially appointed independent commission (made up of seven members named by the prime minister to serve for a period of ten and a half years). This makes it possible to recruit external candidates for certain senior positions and may signal a trend toward moving to a more open recruitment process for higher civil service positions (Kuperus and Rode 2008: 9). The SCS selection procedure consists of a *written exam* which evaluates a candidate’s knowledge of public administration and

management, along with a case study aimed at evaluating problem-solving skills. There is also a foreign-language proficiency test. Finally, there is *an interview* in which a candidate's motivation, communication skills, managerial competence, and the relevance of his or her professional experience are evaluated.

### **Mobility of Senior Civil Servants**

Upon entering the service, senior civil servants serve for an open-ended term, subject to a mobility clause that offers the possibility of "deployment" wherever there is a need. Mobility is motivated by several situations<sup>5</sup> in which either the complexity of the task, the public interest, the need for better coordination of large projects, or the professional development of the senior civil servants is called for. The practice of mobility, begun in 2007, has increased management flexibility by allowing servants with differing competencies to be used where they are most needed; however, political leaders sometimes use it to send unwanted SCSs to less influential positions. Refusal of mobility is reason for dismissal (Kuperus and Rode 2008).

### **Performance Evaluation and Promotion**

Although each servant category has its own specific evaluation procedure, we present only the SCS procedure. Top servants go through two types of evaluations: an *individual professional performance evaluation*, done yearly to assess the professional results based on previously set objectives or targets, and a *general evaluation*, done once every two years to determine that the senior servant has the necessary knowledge and competence to exercise her or his function. Both evaluations are done by a Special Evaluation Commission (five members appointed by the prime minister), which also establishes the procedure and criteria used. The actual evaluation is based on (1) the yearly activity report of the senior civil servant; (2) the superior's evaluation report (who can be the prime minister, minister, or government secretary—all political figures); (3) the job description (checking position responsibilities); and (4) the objectives, targets, and performance indicators set forth by his or her superior for the respective year. An interview with the senior servant is mandatory if there are discrepancies in the information received. Results are written into a special evaluation report that is part of the SCS's professional file. Results are grouped in four categories: very good, good, satisfactory, and nonsatisfactory and are used for promotion, pay increases, or dismissal. They are also used to determine training and professional development needs.

*Promotion* is the main instrument for career development and can be either through a superior salary level or a position. Promotion into all categories of civil servant is competitive; a candidate must meet a series of cumulative requirements: demonstrate further education and/or training, at least two years of positive results on the yearly performance evaluation,

at least three years in service in the current position, and meet the job description requirements. There is also a *fast-track system* for those with less or little experience (one year), offering quicker promotion only if performance evaluation results are excellent, no disciplinary action has been taken against the civil servant, and he or she has taken part in professional training programs in the last year. The number of positions eligible for the fast-track system is determined yearly by the NACS. At first glance, seniority may seem to be an important criteria because of the minimum "3 years' experience in current position," but the fast-track system is definitely in line with NPM style reform, as it trades experience for merit and promotes rapid advancement of those that have good results and are keen on professional development.

## **Education and Training for Senior Civil Servants**

Training plays a crucial part in the development of top civil servants and is directly linked to their level of competence. According to OECD (1997), the main objectives of public service training programs are to improve professional skills, qualifications, and competencies, and to support the implementation of public administration reform. As in other aspects of a SCS's "life," training is also regulated differently from the other two categories of servants. There is a structured personnel system defined by national law and managed by the NACS, and most of the features of the system fall into the career-based category (stability in position, higher homogeneity). Similar to the French model, the education and training of all civil servants, including SCSs, was the responsibility of the National Institute for Administration (NIA), created in 2001. The main purpose of the NIA was to develop and implement a general strategy regarding professional education, development, and training of all servants or contractual personnel in public administration. The NIA was a central government agency, financed from the national budget, and headed by a general director appointed by the prime minister, holding the rank of secretary of state (Bălan 2004: 5).

Training and professional development are the responsibility of both the *civil servant* (mentioned as a right and obligation of each servant for continuous improvement and development) and the *public institution*, which is required to allocate annual funds for such programs. A training-needs assessment and a professional development plan are mandatory for every public authority each year, and results are sent to NACS, which develops the national planning for training programs. Full financing is offered by the institution only if the professional development program or training has been included in the yearly professional development plan. These procedures apply for all categories of civil servants.

The NIA (and NACS since 2009) has been the state agency offering training, but civil servants can take part in training provided by other public or

private organizations, ranging from universities to NGOs to private training providers (if the organization is listed in the National Register of Training Providers). Any training received (and financed by the institution) that lasts more than 90 days or a year obligates the servant to work for that specific organization between two and five years. The location of training can vary and is usually established based on the type of training received and the needs of the institution.

*Professional development and training for the senior civil servant* can be split into two separate periods: 2001–2009, when the NIA was responsible, and 2009–present, after the NIA was restructured and responsibilities were transferred to NACS.

### 2001–2009 Period

In its effort to align with European standards, the Romanian government adopted the Strategy for Continuous Training of Civil Servants (2003), creating a unique framework for initial and continuous training for all categories of civil servants. The government, via the NIA, would play a major role and offer professional development opportunities through training programs specifically tailored to the needs of each category. Although professional training programs (long- and short term) for lower-level civil servants began in 2003, those that targeted SCSs were offered only after 2007.<sup>6</sup> The strategy framed education and training in four stages, the first two referring to high school and undergraduate education (mainly universities), while stage III referred to specialized training (or initial training to enter into a position—including a six-month Mandatory Specialized Training Program (MSTP) for SCS and a one- or two-year program for civil servants entering managerial positions (category II).<sup>7</sup> Stage IV refers to continuous professional development of skills and competencies (short programs to develop already acquired skills and increase on-the-job effectiveness) based on the yearly training-needs assessment. Typically, the SCSs go through the initial mandatory program (see Table 6.1) and beyond that must take yearly professional development programs based on their needs. Each year, NACS develops the main areas of training (stage IV) based on the needs analysis. Between 2007 and 2013, primary training (for second category civil servants, not SCSs) has included: *management, ITC, public communication and transparency, law and EU legislation, management of public resources and services*, with some exception between 2009 and 2010, when *financial management, management of structural funds, performance management, and ethics and integrity* were also included. Unfortunately, there is no mention of specific priority training (stage IV) for SCSs, the decision itself being the responsibility of the central government (based on the NACS proposal), not NACS. The strategy mentions SCSs as having an important role in developing a modern public administration, but they are only provided with initial training (stage III) and no specific continuous

*Table 6.1 Mandatory professional training programs (MSTP) for SCSs 2009–2012<sup>8</sup>*

|  | 2009   | 2010   | 2011  | 2012   |
|--|--|--|---|--|
| No. of SCS   | 268–0.22 percent<br>(total of 113,023<br>civil servants)   | 158–<br>0.13 percent<br>(total of<br>120,684 civil<br>servants)  | 176–<br>0.14 percent<br>(total of<br>126,146 civil<br>servants) | 185–0.14 percent<br>(total of 132,417<br>civil servants) |
| No. of available places  | 220  | 200  | 200   | 200  |
| Modules covered  | 1. Financial management<br>2. Management of structural funds<br>3. Performance management<br>4. Ethics and integrity in the public sector<br>5. Public communication and decisional transparency<br>6. Information technology <sup>9</sup> | 1. Human Resource Management<br>2. Modern and efficient public administration<br>3. Communication and public image<br>4. Public administration in the context of EU integration<br>5. Strategic management and public policy<br>6. Public Management and managerial abilities<br>7. Project management and structural funds<br>8. Financial management and budgeting |   |  |
| Each module consists of 3 days of 8 hours/day=24 hours of training |  | Each module consists of 3 days of 8 hours/day=24 hours of training. Total of 192 hours (24 days of training)   |   |  |
| Total of 144 hours (18 days of training)                           |  |  |   |  |

professional development framework (stage IV), although the law offers the possibility to attend training programs for the second category of civil servants.

## 2009–Present

After the NIA was restructured and all its responsibilities were transferred to the National Agency for Civil Servants, a more clear-cut training framework was developed for the MSTP (stage III). These are organized directly, annually, and only by the NACS, which decides both the number of places available and the content of the program being. It is a six-month program,

Table 6.2 NACS activity between 2010–2012

|   | 2010  | 2011  | 2012   |
|---|-------|-------|--------|
| No. of training programs (NACS + regional centers)        | 217   | 396   | 566    |
| No. of participants                                       | 3,945 | 8,434 | 10,835 |
| Percentage of trained from total number of civil servants | 3.26% | 6.68% | 8.18%  |

Source: yearly activity reports.

mandatory for entering the SCS (if candidates pass the national test). The diploma is recognized as a master's degree diploma.

For the Stage IV continuous professional development training programs, the number of training programs and classes and participants has risen substantially in the last three years. However, taking a broader perspective, only a meager 8.18 percent of civil servants participated in NACS training in 2012 (see Table 6.2). On the other hand, these figures only reflect the training programs organized by the NACS; others, such as the postgraduate programs (usually three to six months long) or those held by private or nonprofit providers, are not included here. Another problematic issue is that NACS does not report separately, based on category, on the number of the civil servants participating in stage IV training. We therefore cannot know for sure how many SCSs have actually participated.

While the law requires all public organizations to conduct a yearly needs assessment, create a professional development plan, and submit it to NACS, based on official reports only about 5 percent of public institutions actually submitted professional training needs reports between 2009 and 2013 (this is mentioned as a major problem in all the yearly activity reports of the NACS, but no measure has been taken to solve the issue). One possible explanation for this could be the fact that there are no penalties for not reporting. Therefore, the actual needs identified by NACS (based on which it develops the training programs) are far from representative of the entire civil service; rather, they reflect the needs of the most "righteous" institutions. A certain institutional inertia can also be sensed in establishing annual training programs, as the major fields did not change between 2007 and 2013 (see the 2001–2009 period), though there were substantial changes in the administrative realm. When determining the major areas of concentration for stage IV training, NACS looks at central agencies and local public administration separately; however, there is no specific analysis of the needs of each of the three classes of civil servants (execution, managerial, SCS). Furthermore, what each of these general training priorities consists of (what type of training is included in each of them) is not clear. We can only hope that because a large majority of these are provided by private organizations (through public tendering), they have a certain quality standard.

The training content and structure for the SCS is rather blurry: while initial training is covered by the six-month MSTP, there are no continuous

development and training programs specifically designed for them<sup>10</sup> and implicitly no definition of any specific priority areas for such training (with several highly positioned NACS officials declaring that they are not aware of anything existing in this area). Because the formal decision to develop such training priorities and programs specifically for SCSs is the central government's responsibility, one can only wonder how much importance the government actually accords training and development (the legal framework being in place since 2008). This can also be interpreted as a statement regarding the general valuation of SCSs by their political leaders.

## Leadership Profile of SCS

Perhaps the primary role played by SCSs is that of "technical leadership," acting as a buffer between the political decision-makers and the administrative apparatus, positioning themselves "at the junction between strategy making and strategy execution" (OECD 2011: 92). We should expect them to play a leadership role in the policy process and contribute to evidence-based decision-making by using their institutional knowledge and experience (OECD 2011).

We attempt to generate this senior civil servant leadership profile by analyzing the administrative position they occupy and the training they must undergo. Competency-based management can be used to improve the general HR system inside the administration (Kuperus, Rhode 2008: 30), but its understanding is related to the actual position in the organization. Table 6.3 shows that all SCS positions (except those of prefect and subprefect) are *influential in the policy process because they are part of central government structures*. All positions are directly subordinate to a political figure (be it the prime minister, a minister, or the secretary of state); hence political influence is high. On the other hand, responsibilities are defined very broadly, which can be understood as a sign of (potential) autonomy.

In 2013, the NACS developed its 2014–2020 strategy for the continuous professional development of prefects with financing from EU funds, with the aim of improving competencies and performance in this category of the SCS. The strategy identifies the immediate training needs of the prefects and develops a six-tier competency framework in response to those needs (see Table 6.4).

Table 6.4 lists the responsibilities and competencies in the order of their importance, with leadership and management competencies being considered least important of all. A more refined and detailed framework has been developed based on this general framework, featuring no more than 28 "expected behaviors" and 39 specific competencies, distributed among the six main responsibility areas mentioned earlier. We have compared these with the Kuperus and Rode (2008) leadership competency framework (Table 6.5):

*Table 6.3 Position of SCS in the administration apparatus<sup>11</sup>*

| Position  | Organization                              | Subordination  | Responsibility   |
|---|---|--|--|
| Secretary General/<br>Deputy Secretary<br>General of<br>Government                                  | The General Secretariat of the Government | Prime Minister   | Define government priorities, methodology for policy implementation<br>Offers support for technical and administrative aspects of the Prime Ministers activity<br>Monitors the implementation of the government program<br>Coordination of ministries activities and continuity of ministry management –link between the minister and the functional departments in the ministry |
| Secretary General/<br>Deputy Secretary<br>General in<br>Ministries and<br>other central<br>agencies | Ministry                                  | Minister   |  |
| Governmental<br>Inspector   | Central (ministries, central agencies)    | Prime Minister/<br>Minister/<br>Secretary of<br>state/Political<br>appointee | Coordination of projects or complex activities of strategic importance linked to the general development of administrative capacity  |
| Prefect, deputy<br>Prefect  | Local Prefecture                          | Prime Minister   | Management of local diffused services, ensuring government policy is implemented at local level, legality control for local administrative decisions   |

*Table 6.4* NACS competency framework (based on a needs assessment) for prefects and subprefects

| Responsibility areas   | Competencies   |
|--|--|
| 1. Implementing central government's policies at local level             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding the policy process</li> <li>• Effective use of specific instruments necessary for identifying, planning, implementing and evaluating public policies</li> </ul>   |
| 2. Ensuring legal compliance of local administrative decisions           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge of current legislation</li> <li>• Effective use of specific instruments for planning, monitoring, and evaluation</li> </ul>   |
| 3. Managing deconcentrated <sup>12</sup> public services                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge regarding decentralization, deconcentration, devolution</li> <li>• Focus on quality of public services, client-citizen orientation</li> <li>• Use of planning, monitoring, evaluation, control instruments</li> </ul>   |
| 4. Crisis and emergency situation management                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge of specific legislation regarding “crisis and emergency situations”</li> <li>• Capacity to identify and evaluate risk levels of specific “events” that can generate crisis and emergency situations</li> <li>• Capacity to plan, implement and evaluate interventions in crisis and emergency situations</li> </ul> |
| 5. Improving the relation with citizens and creating social partnerships | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institutional representation, networking, developing a culture of good partnership relations</li> <li>• Social dialogue, listening, empathy, verbal fluency, and oratory</li> </ul>   |
| 6. Leadership and management   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategy development</li> <li>• Use of organizational development tools and instruments</li> <li>• Facilitating and encouraging change</li> <li>• Respecting and promoting institutional (and ethical) integrity</li> </ul>   |

Most (if not all) of Kuperus and Rode's (2008) competencies find their correspondent in the 2013 NACS framework for prefects. However, two important details need consideration: first, although the strategy and competency framework exists, no specific training programs for prefects (as part of the SCS) have been developed by the NACS<sup>13</sup>; secondly, prefects are the least “influential” among the SCSs; their responsibilities locally mostly are in the area of policy implementation supervision, and thus their actual leadership role is minor. The general leadership profile based solely on the initial training is hard to depict because little information is available about the content of and methods used in the courses. One could argue that senior civil servant graduates would possess adequate knowledge and,

Table 6.5 Competency frameworks comparison

| Kuperus and Rode (2008)   | NACS competency framework for SCS for prefect and subprefect positions   |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishes a vision</li> <li>• Can steer a group toward realization</li> <li>• Leads the management of change</li> <li>• Builds and encourages the team</li> <li>• Develops networks of cooperation</li> <li>• Ensures staff development &amp; motivation</li> <li>• Displays integrity and ethics</li> <li>• Committed to continuous learning and improvement</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic thinking</li> <li>• Developing a vision</li> <li>• Motivational skills and leading group toward results achievement</li> <li>• Decision making and problem solving skills, analysis, and synthesis</li> <li>• Assuming responsibility</li> <li>• Change management skills</li> <li>• Leading and developing teams</li> <li>• Interpersonal and social skills</li> <li>• Communication skills</li> <li>• Ethical behavior</li> </ul> |

hopefully, competencies regarding *European and national legislation, project management, HRM, communication and PR, strategic management and public policy, financial management and budgeting and performance management*. In the best-case scenario (assuming an adequate level of competencies developed through the MSTP), senior civil servants get a good initial training in accordance with their top administrative position but are forced to struggle individually for continuous professional development after they enter the service. In a worst-case scenario, the program is just a formality that needs to be passed (information from several SCSs interviewed pointing mostly to the second situation).

## Conclusion

Romania's civil service has come a long way in the last 23 years. At the same time, it has a long way to go when compared to what is found in Western countries. Our research shows that, though the legal framework in place is modern, similar to that found in other EU countries that have a career-based system (Kuperus and Rode 2008), and should, in theory, provide a stable, professional, merit-based system of civil service, things are much different in practice. There is no strategic approach to HRM (in general, but more so for the SCS), with significant parts of the legislation not being respected (only 5 percent of institutions do the mandatory needs assessment and professional development planning; central government has yet to decide on the training priorities as required by the SCS legislation in place since 2008). This is reflected in poor planning and training program development, which are not representative of the entire civil service system. The fragmentation of authority between NACS and the central government regarding

training priorities leads to a responsibility void and, inevitably, no initiative emerges for the SCS. One consistent recommendation (WB 2011, 2013) is to strengthen the institutional leadership over HRM and to develop a clear vision for reform by ensuring that the overall responsibility for the formulation and coordination of HR policy across the civil service rests with a single state institution that can ensure continuity and common standards (2013: 39). This should be accompanied by a genuine effort for the professionalization (namely, a general strategy) of the system of recruitment, selection, and promotion or of mobility through the use of operational merit-based criteria that have to be enforced. SCSs are probably most in need of this, as they receive only the initial training, and there are no programs designed specifically for each category of SCSs. One notable exception is the recent strategy for the continuous professional development of prefects, but it, too, needs to go beyond the “checklist effect” and be followed by an actual training framework tailored to the needs of this category.

Political influence remains high, with the perception being that for senior servant positions, one must often have political connections (WB 2013: 39); this in turn raises questions about the MSTP, the national contest, and the criteria used for evaluation. The high turnover rates of top ranking officials (WB 2010, 2013) are an additional sign that political patronage is still strong. This is encouraged by the rather low conditions of admission in the category (five years' experience or one mandate as MP), and ambiguous criteria used for the national contest evaluation, coupled with evaluations that use performance indicators that are too broad (i.e., “activity [is] in accordance with Romania's interest and governmental policy” or “good organizing of own activity respecting the legal requirements and level of resources”), all barriers to a real merit system. A rethinking of the evaluation criteria, which need to be both specific to the position and linked to outcomes (measurable results), and a reconsideration of current job descriptions (focused on clear tasks and the skills and competencies needed to achieve these tasks) that are much too general at present would greatly aid in shifting the system from a career-based one toward a more competitive, position-based one.

Finally, there is a general lack of both political and administrative will for creating a “leadership role” for senior civil servants. Although each year NACS reports on the importance of these civil servants and has the ability to propose legislation (and has actually done so several times in the past decade), there is no sign that the initiative regarding the prefects training framework will be followed by similar proposals for other SCS categories. Current political leaders seem to assign less importance to the senior civil service, and as recently as September 2013, 46 governmental inspectors were dismissed in an effort to make the administrative apparatus more flexible and efficient; most had been named to their positions by the previous government.

It is no wonder, then, that the dominant existing culture of the Romanian senior civil servant is one of obedience to a political master. Education and

training can play a key role in developing an “initiative” culture, but it is clear that this would require a long and sustained effort from all institutional stakeholders and greater political will and commitment (perhaps in the form of a political or institutional champion) for such a change to have a realistic chance. Support could come from international institutional actors (EU Commission, World Bank) through different collaborative projects that have had positive results in the past, but internal political will is essential.

## Notes

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- 1. The most notable aspects would be a slow transition to a market economy, incremental reforms of the public administration, high levels of corruption, legalistic culture (i.e., focus on process, not results), numerous and frequent changes in the legal framework, high political influence, and responsibility-avoiding behaviors among civil servants.
- 2. Although Romania is a hybrid, it is a semi-parliamentary regime because the president is elected directly by the people and shares executive powers with the prime minister; but it is not as strong as the semi-presidential regimes.
- 3. See the section about the content and structure of training.
- 4. The most important pieces of legislation passed were a civil service statute, a law on decentralization and public finances, and a law requiring transparency in decision-making (law no.52/2003), an ethics code for civil servants, and the creation of the National Agency of Civil Servants.
- 5. Govt. Decision 344/2007.
- 6. Government Decision 832/2007.
- 7. Recognized as master's degree programs.
- 8. The total number of public positions in 2012 was 161,583; thus more than 29,000 public positions were unoccupied.
- 9. NACS President order no. 1233/2009.
- 10. One recent exception is presented in the leadership profile section.
- 11. Information based on law 90/2001 regarding the functioning of the central government.
- 12. Refers to services that are not decentralized and are provided by ministries and central government agencies at local level.
- 13. Until December 2013.

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## **Part III**

# **Training Senior Civil Servants in Germanic and Northern European Countries**

# Austria

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## Introduction

Through long stretches of its history, Austria's administration was deeply embedded in an imperial-royal tradition which is an essential element of the sociocultural and administrative landscape even today. In the eighteenth century, it was the concern for the welfare of her subjects that motivated Empress Maria Theresa to form a centrally administered bureaucratic state from the former feudal construct. With this imperial reform, not only did the state take on the responsibility for the welfare of its citizens, but the role of "servants of the public" was created. An administrative system, the rule of law, and the civil service became the guarantors of the welfare state.

These principles were the legacy of the Austro-Hungarian Empire; the successor states inherited not only the conservatism of the former monarchy, but also the pride and loyalty of the imperial-royal civil servants. Today, the fundamental principles of the Austrian Constitution are the republican, democratic, and federal state, the rule of law, the separation of legislative and executive powers, and the separation of jurisdiction and administration. The legality principle (Article 18 of the Federal Constitution) requires all acts of public administration to be exclusively based on law. This has resulted in a "dense web of detailed laws" that requires perpetual change and updating (Marcelo and Müller 2010: 41f). Being the "home of legalistic administration" (Naschold 1996: 43; Hammerschmid and Meyer 2005c), the Austrian administrative practice is bureaucratic in a Weberian fashion. Despite a number of NPM-inspired reforms enacted over the last decade, the administrative system is still characterized by a strong focus on processes (overshadowing output and outcome orientation), a high level of both horizontal and vertical differentiation, monocratic status hierarchy, a strong focus on formal and informal modes of control, and quite rigid and centralist personnel management regulations. According to Article 43 of the Austrian Service Code, civil servants are obliged to act—with respect to prevailing legal norms—faithfully, conscientiously, and impartially.

Overall, these legal norms are underscored by a strong professional ethos (*Beamtenethos*) which “revolves around ideas of neutrality and impartiality, legality of action, stability, and a strong value orientation towards the common good” (Meyer et al. 2013).

Nevertheless, the self-conception of top civil servants has changed together with the administrative landscape, and although the current system is still deeply rooted in its traditional legacy, it absorbs new ideas and paradigms and is, albeit slowly, adapting and changing.

## Political Structure

The Republic of Austria is a federal state which consists of the federal government, nine provincial or state administrations (*Bundesländer* level), and the municipal administrations (local level). Although the legislative and executive powers are shared by both the federal and provincial governments, the federal level remains in charge of the most substantial areas and issues (e.g., levying important taxes). As a result, the Austrian multilevel system shows a strong centralist trait and a high interlevel heterogeneity. Overall, the federal system has considerable parallel structures which have been the subject of ongoing discussions since the 1980s. Furthermore, changes in central areas of civil service regulation policy need a qualified majority vote (two-thirds) of parliament, as well as the approval of all nine state governments. Hence, far reaching administrative changes have proved to be slow, and sometimes quite tedious, processes (Hammerschmid and Meyer 2005a).

On the political level, the depth and scope of reforms are also influenced by a complex, corporatist system of government with a long tradition of consensus building through the involvement of many groups. The system of *social partnership*<sup>1</sup> constitutes a uniquely Austrian manifestation of corporatism and a core component of the *Realverfassung* (the constitution as practiced in day-to-day decision-making). It is based on informal and voluntary, but nonetheless highly institutionalized, cooperation, in which government and major employer and employee associations negotiate compromises on important social and economic matters. Another essential feature of Austrian political culture is the so-called *Proporzsystem* (party proportional representation, also called *Konsensual*, or *Konkordanzsystem*), which denotes a consensual distribution of major economic and political functions according to the political strengths of parties in parliamentary elections. Even though the proportional representation system is increasingly challenged (e.g., by transforming several provincial electoral systems into a majority system), the filling of top positions is traditionally strongly influenced by the *Proporzsystem*. Hence, top civil servants (and to some degree their departments) are associated with political parties, a fact which marks the administrative system as a highly politicized environment.

The Austrian federal administration is a closed, internally highly politicized body with strong demarcation lines to the provincial or municipal administrations, as well as to the private sector. Measures aimed at the depoliticization of public servants have shown little effect up to now, even though interpenetration between the sectors has somewhat, and somehow, improved. In this system, top civil servants hold a key position between the political and administrative levels that traditionally requires a fine grasp of political opportunities, and an unerringly mastery of the tools of political communication. Depending on the respective structure, processes, and managerial instruments, the role of top civil servants varies with regard to the way they provide advice for the minister, as well as in regard to the interplay with cabinet members (Gratz 2012a). Recently, the traditionally powerful role of top civil servants has been challenged by increasingly influential cabinets. This has been especially true if the minister belongs to a different party than the top civil servants of his ministry. Additionally, the civil servants' frame of reference, role identity, and standard procedures have been increasingly questioned by ever-changing reform paradigms over the last few decades (Meyer and Hammerschmid 2006a, 2006b; Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011) that have, albeit with some delay, strongly impacted the Austrian administrative culture.

## **Organizational-Administrative Culture and Recent Administrative Reforms**

Austria has long been considered to have an extensive public sector above OECD average, with 513,463 public employees at the end of 2000, of whom 41.5 percent belonged to the federal level of government (Hammerschmid and Meyer 2005a). In 2012, the public sector employed slightly more than 348,000 (FTE) employees. Of those, 38.02 percent worked for the federal government, 40.43 percent for the *Bundesländer*, or provincial governments (including Vienna), and 21.55 percent for the 2,356 municipalities that constitute local government (Bundeskanzleramt 2012a). According to OECD measures, Austria reduced government employment as a share of the labor force from 13.5 percent down to 11.4 percent between 2000 and 2008, which makes it the largest decrease in the OECD and puts Austria among the countries with the lowest share of government employment (which ranges anywhere from 6.7 percent to 29.3 percent across the OECD area; OECD 2011).

What looks at first like tremendous cutbacks of public employees is largely attributable to a distinctive model of corporatizations, in which governmental units or agencies were converted into legally independent organizations under private or public law. Despite a long tradition of agencies and authorities that exist outside the core ministerial departments, the scope of this "Austrian style of agencification in the face of a quite

distinct political-legal context" has even been referred to as "corporatization fever"<sup>2</sup> (Hammerschmid et al. 2012: 156f). Approximately 26,000 (FTE) civil servants work in corporatized organizations and therefore do not belong to public administration as such (e.g., Statistics Austria, the Austrian Federal Museums, the Labor Market Service, or the public universities) (Bundeskanzleramt 2012b).

The federal level has 132,357 civil servants as indicated by the latest numbers from 2011, of which only 6.8 percent work in the headquarters of the Federal Ministries—and therefore directly at the political-administrative interface. The vast majority of the federal administrative staff is employed in the numerous subordinate departments and organizations (e.g., schools, courts, tax offices, or police stations; Bundeskanzleramt 2012a).

Austrian civil service staff is employed either on a statutory basis (typically employment for life; 58 percent of federal staff) or on a contractual basis (42 percent of federal staff) (Bundeskanzleramt 2011). Both forms of employment govern all relevant terms and conditions in great detail (e.g., recruitment, training, payment, procedures, working time, rights, and obligations), and differ considerably from the private sector in essential respects like payment, job security, or protection from transfer. The resulting differences between private and public sector labor legislation complicate any transitions between the private and public sectors due to possible individual disadvantages regarding procedures, payment, and pension systems (Hock et al. 2011).

Moreover, the nine *Bundesländer* each have their own regulations. This points to a distinctive element of the Austrian administration that has not been changed significantly by any of the various reforms: lifetime tenured civil servants with little workplace mobility and with promotion based mainly on seniority. Subsequently, the Austrian system can be characterized as a career-based system (Demmke et al. 2006) as it features career paths tailored to life-long employment in public service, sets specific criteria for initial entry, shows a strong emphasis on career development with a high emphasis on seniority, and pursues a relatively strong differentiation between private and public sector employment. In Austria, alternate career paths are developing very slowly. Critical discussions of the resulting lack of permeability address, for example, the seniority-based salary and promotion system which provides little room for performance related incentives and therefore leads to (a) difficulties in attracting young high performers (resulting in demographic problems such as an "over-aged" civil servant population), (b) increased motivation deficits, and (c) problems regarding the employment of experienced experts or managers from the private sector. Proposals for solutions to these issues have been widely discussed (e.g., Hock et al. 2011) but have not yet resulted in a comprehensive HR reform program to overcome the structural weaknesses. Within the Austrian career-based system, top civil servant positions are traditionally designed to assure personal continuity regardless of political changes (providing personal

security while being strictly bound to directives), but they are not designed to facilitate mobility.

Alongside societal developments, public sector reform has been a recurrent issue in Austria, with a focus on “administrative simplification” in the 1960s, “democratization” in the 1970s, “austerity” in the 1980s, and *Verwaltungsmanagement* (management for the public sector) in the 1990s (Hammerschmid and Meyer 2005b: 709). The federal structure and the distribution of tasks and responsibilities have repeatedly been the targets of reform considerations. As far back as the 1990s, a reform commission tendered a concept for a fundamental realignment. Other initiatives have focused on transparency, citizen orientation, and efficiency. Ultimately, and with very few exceptions, most of these initiatives have remained only “paper tigers,” and as such, comprehensive state and administrative reform has not yet been realized.

Late by international standards, a broad wave of NPM reforms brought changes to the Austrian public sector in the 1990s. The federal reform program VIP was launched in 1997 in order to implement NPM-driven elements like management tools (BSC, CAF, contract-management, performance indicators, cost accounting, etc.), projects (flexibility clause, Speyerer quality-competition, EU and OECD best practices), as well as to initiate large e-government projects (help.gv.at, FinanzOnline, ELAK). Today, Austria is one of the most successful European countries with regard to sophistication and availability of its e-government services and is regularly highly ranked in the e-government benchmark of the European Commission (European Commission 2010). With regard to “digital-era governance” (Dunleavy et al. 2006) and open data, the Austrian approach is strongly inward-oriented (Egger-Poitler and Polzer, forthcoming). The same is true for most NPM reforms which are focused more on internal management aspects (e.g., structures, processes, etc.) than governance issues.

Perhaps the most salient feature of the managerially driven public-sector reform over the last two decades is the large number of corporatizations, which themselves have raised new challenges with regard to the governance and control of these autonomous units. Appropriate public corporate governance arrangements are, with few exceptions (e.g., a Public Corporate Governance Code for the federal level), still in their infancy. The most encompassing and far-reaching recent reform on the federal level in Austria concerns the new codification of the budget law which, in two phases (2009 and 2013), introduced a Medium-Term Expenditure Framework, incorporated new constitutional principles (outcome orientation, efficiency, transparency, and true and fair view), implemented a number of performance management instruments, and introduced accrual accounting based on the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (Hyndman et al. 2013; Seiwald et al. 2013). It remains to be seen if the proposed changes in the direction of outcome orientation will effectively take place.

In comparison with other European countries, Austrian reform ambitions have always been moderate, and Austria still can be constituted as a welfare state. Although initiatives over the last two decades increasingly embraced NPM inspired structures, measures, and instruments, the model of bureaucratic governance based on the legalistic principle is still eminent.

## **Expectations of Top Civil Servants**

To better understand the expectations of top civil servants and why Austria's top servants at the federal level are not subject to any institutionalized set of HRM measures (e.g., annual appraisal and development interviews, setting and evaluation of personal targets, discussion of the expectations for and appraisal of performance) and, subsequently, systematic training measures, we first portray this group in more detail<sup>3</sup> (see also Figure 7.1).

Many myths surround the *Sektionschef*, the official title of Austrian top civil servants, especially in Austrian literature where they have been portrayed as "the wise civil servant," or "the crypto-minister." Legends refer to the top civil servant as someone whom subordinates had to address with the words "may I express my respect" in the not so distant past, and who were used to experiencing a powerful existence in a sometimes volatile political environment. Today, the mystified "eternal" top civil servant is history.

Political-administrative relationships are now maintained at eye level, and the term of appointment for top civil servants is formally limited to five years (but is usually renewed). Austria's top civil servants at the federal level, a group of approximately 80 people, are increasingly evaluated by their performance and profound expertise. Based on the latter, it is their responsibility to co-create the continuity and quality of the constitutional state. Not only do their ministries vary considerably, but so, too, do the departments they direct regarding the nature and extent of tasks, responsibilities, resources, and subsequently, administrative (sub)cultures. Hence, top civil servants make up not only a small group, but also a very heterogeneous group regarding their particular fields and educational or vocational background. What becomes evident here is that the time when civil servants with law backgrounds held most top positions (a phenomenon considered typical for the german speaking countries; see, e.g., Ritz and Weissleder 2009, for Germany) has ended in Austria. Top positions are increasingly filled by experts with professional and educational backgrounds appropriate to the tasks of their respective ministries.

The typical Austrian top civil servant at the federal level tends to spend his (it is mainly males) life-long public service career in the same ministry. In line with the career-based-system, it is the domain experts, at least those with a high degree of seniority and the "proper" political networks, who are promoted to the executive level. To become a top civil servant, applicants must complete a recruitment process as governed by the Act on the

| Top Civil Servants (TCSs) in Austria's Federal Administration   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>3 Administrative Levels with a Strong 'Centralist Trait'</b> <p><b>348,000 Public Servants (FTE)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>federal government</li> <li>9 provincial or state administrations</li> <li>municipal administrations (local level)</li> </ul> <p><b>career-based system</b><br/>lifetime tenured civil servants ■ little workplace mobility ■ promotion based mainly on seniority</p>  | <p><b>132,357 Civil Servants on the Federal Level (FTE)</b></p> <p>6.8% headquarters of the Federal Ministries headed by appr. 80 top civil servants</p> <p>92.4% subordinate departments and organisations e.g., schools, courts, tax offices, police stations</p> <p>0.8% Republic's supreme bodies</p> <p>(Source: Bundeskanzleramt 2012a)</p>  |
| <b>General Characteristics of Federal Top Civil Servants</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>small group: approx. 80 people</li> <li>appointed for a period of 5 years</li> <li>very powerful: implementation and execution of laws as well as considerable influence over legislative and programmatic matters</li> <li>traditionally strong value-driven orientation (Beamtenethos): neutrality ■ impartiality ■ legality of action ■ stability ■ strong value orientation towards the common good</li> </ul>  |  |
| <b>Recruitment &amp; HRM Measures for Top Civil Servants</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>no centrally defined skills profile</li> <li>appointment by independent body: selection panel and/or assessment centre whose final decision is binding</li> <li>no policies to identify high potentials for top positions early in their career, no fast tracks</li> <li>no institutionalized set of HRM measures for TSCs (e.g., annual appraisal and development interviews, setting and evaluation of personal targets, discussion of the expectations for and appraisal of performance)</li> <li>decentralized HRM concepts and measures vary considerably</li> </ul> | <b>Training of Top Civil Servants</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>individual package of TCSs management skills and training experience varies strongly</li> <li>no comprehensive, generalized approach to the training of federal top civil servants</li> <li>only few systematic and institutionalized training offers</li> <li>hesitance of TSCs to attend scheduled training offers</li> <li>decentralized training concepts and measures in the ministries vary considerably</li> </ul> |
| <b>Important Context Factors</b>  |  |
| <b>Fundamental Principles of the Austrian Constitution</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>republican, democratic, and federal state</li> <li>the rule of law</li> <li>the separation of legislative and executive powers</li> <li>separation of jurisdiction and administration</li> </ul>  | <b>Distinctive Characteristics of the Austrian System</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>inviolable and overriding legality principle</li> <li>unique system of 'social partnership'</li> <li>'Proporzsystem' (party proportional representation)</li> </ul>   |

Figure 7.1 Top civil servants (TCSs) in Austria's Federal Administration.

Advertisement of Vacancies 1989 (Ausschreibungsgesetz 1989). The process demands the involvement of an independent body by way of a selection panel, and/or an assessment center whose decision is binding. Due to decentralized responsibilities and the resulting heterogeneity, no standardized or centrally defined skills profile for top civil servants is currently in place. Instead, job descriptions using generic, standardized phrases which often have very little to do with the real expectations are used. Decentralized initiatives at the individual ministry level regarding explicit leadership profiles remain the exception.

Expectations are manifold and dynamic, primarily because top civil servants have traditionally held powerful and, at the same time, exposed

positions, serving as links between the political and administrative levels. In Austria, the scope of the top servant position goes beyond the mere implementation and execution of laws, regulations, and programs. Despite the formal separation of powers, many parliamentary systems do not develop law texts in the legislative body as one would expect, but do so mainly in the ministerial bureaucracy. This particularly applies to Austrian practices, where federal laws are almost entirely drafted by civil servants (Holzinger et al. 2006; Biegelbauer and Grießler 2009). Thus, top civil servants possess not only executive powers, but also considerable influence over legislative and programmatic matters. Against the backdrop of the principle of legality permitting administrative activity exclusively on the basis of law, the informal process of drafting laws thrusts the Austrian senior civil servant into a prominent position. In order to be successful, expertise in regulatory affairs and sound understanding of legal matters have traditionally been key faculties for top civil servants.

To successfully perform the central role of translator and communicator between the political and administrative spheres, top civil servants must keep a certain distance from both worlds. Concurrently, they must also possess a deep understanding of the political as well as the administrative rationality. Because of this, the ability to deal with often controversial decisions and stand up against pressures exerted from both sides has always been a key component for the job. In the long run, the position demands a high degree of soft skills, flexibility in thought processes and actions, intuition and resilience, and the necessary degree of assertiveness in dealing with conflict in order for a top civil servant to earn the respect and trust—another critical success factor—from both levels.

Currently, top civil servants face a dynamic environment with mounting pressure from the political level, often pushed by a growing number of “power-seeking” cabinet members. At the same time, increasingly confident citizens are calling for more transparency, accountability, and comprehensive participation. Reforms have pushed these demands even further as they force top civil servants to grasp the potential of new technologies (e-government, cloud technology), quickly become familiar with new fields of action and management instruments (e.g., equity interest management, balance sheet analysis), meet constantly rising requirements of their subordinates regarding personnel management and leadership, and cope with lofty power ambitions at the political level. To deal with today’s challenges, the demand for political awareness, leadership, and communication skills is rising, matching the importance of expertise and knowledge for anyone wishing to fill a top civil servant position.

Yet, despite the expanding relevance of leadership skills in top hierarchical positions, it is ultimately expertise and knowledge that usually play an important role in the process of getting promoted (Thom and Ritz 2008). Therefore, executives might, especially at the beginning of their career,

lack strength in competencies such as communicating, delegating, giving feedback, motivating, and managing conflict. With regard to the different educational and vocational backgrounds of Austrian top civil servants, training in managerial thinking is as necessary as the ability to capably handle specific instruments and tools (Knassmüller and Meyer 2013), a line of reasoning supported by our interview data and by an internal analysis of strengths and weaknesses in the Federal Chancellery in 2004.

With regard to required leadership skills, the actual room to maneuver that Austrian public managers possess must be taken into account. The laws and procedural regulations are highly detailed and cover procedures that could be regarded as office management. Manpower is allocated to administration by law each year, concurrent with the passage of the budget. This so-called *Stellenplan* defines the number of staff, as well as the grades of staff, for each unit level within a ministry. The total number of posts within a ministry cannot be changed, and a cost-neutral adjustment within a ministry must be carried out by a government decree (Blöndal and Bergvall 2007). Hence, under Austria's strict public sector employment legislation, public managers do not even possess the power to transfer or dismiss staff. In addition, a traditionally significant degree of influence from the Union for Public Services must always be taken into consideration. Against the backdrop of an extremely narrow leeway for taking action, and given the few available options for steering or effecting change, leadership concerns have received too little attention for too long a period of time. Due to austerity measures and the current hiring freeze in federal administration, these issues are increasingly perceived as pressing problems (e.g., with regard to low-performing employees).

To sum up, the requirements necessary to succeed as a top civil servant have changed considerably in the course of societal developments that were mirrored by reform efforts in public administration. Beyond the traditional virtues of outstanding professional qualifications and a fine sense of the political sphere, the position of top civil servant now demands greater managerial qualifications as well as profound leadership skills.

## **Forms and Modes of Training for Austrian Top Civil Servants**

Despite the uniqueness and small number of top civil servants, human resource management responsibilities are decentralized, and a comprehensive, generalized approach to the training of top civil servants does not exist at the federal level. There is also no uniform or prerequisite educational path leading into public service positions; rather, only an internal basic training is offered, which every recruit has to undergo once, generally very early in their career. When promoted to top levels, executives are expected to attend leadership training. Regarding this training, however, the regulations (§32 Beamten-Dienstrechtsgesetz) are broad, and only demand that civil

servants in executive positions be offered “adequate” training within three years of their promotion if they have not yet attended such courses. The requirements and content of such basic training also differ from ministry to ministry. Consequently, while top civil servants have usually completed at least some general leadership training in the earlier stages of their career, their individual package of management skills and training experience varies considerably. This heterogeneity limits horizontal mobility at the top level and reinforces the trend towards domain experts, rather than generalists, in top positions.

There are two standard approaches to how training is provided for Austrian civil servants: (a) centralized, via the Verwaltungskademie (VAK), the training institution of the Federal Chancellery, and (b) decentralized, through the HRM departments of the various ministries.

To date, the training institution of the Federal Chancellery (VAK) offers centralized, systematic leadership training for lower levels, but no specific programs are available for top civil servants. The standard program of the VAK includes courses in public management, public finance, outcome-oriented administration management, development of leadership skills, process management, and effective information and communication, thereby covering the majority of relevant topics. Courses focusing on public administration issues are usually taught by internal experts, while general courses (e.g., leadership training) are often given by external trainers. If possible and appropriate, team teaching of external and internal trainers is preferred. The courses are fully covered without any form of internal pricing system, resulting in a high capacity usage rate.

Nevertheless, top civil servants usually do not attend these courses. From the VAK’s perspective, and owing to the small size and high level of heterogeneity, a special program for top servants would not be able to cover the diverse content needs, nor would it be viable due to quantity reasons. Instead, small group events (discussions, fireside talks) or special events (e.g., inviting cabaret stars to develop a show on current issues) are organized for top civil servants and, according to our interview partners, quite well received. Additionally, coaching, supervision, and mediation are offered by the VAK, however with somewhat limited success.

The scope and range of decentralized training activities organized by the various ministries differs considerably. In one ministry, for example, all civil servants in management positions (including top civil servants) have to attend specified courses in order to assure a common knowledge base, while in other ministries, internal or external courses are organized on demand. So far, no systematic coordination, cooperation, or exchange among the ministries is in place. As a result, the top civil servant training landscape is quite fragmented, with much duplication and little synergy. Our interview partners report that although there are indeed several official training possibilities in place, top civil servants make little use of them and, if they

do, prefer decentralized in-house training over that offered by the VAK, and may attend technical or knowledge-based courses, but not management or leadership trainings.

Decentralized training measures are developed with a target group in mind and therefore are more likely to be tailored to the particular needs of the group. Nevertheless, in the face of new governance regimes, managerial systems, and tools introduced by recent reforms, some interview partners strongly emphasized the need for obligatory cross-sectoral courses for top civil servants in order to assure a common understanding of new concepts, regardless of an individual's educational or vocational background. The courses are meant to support sense-making processes and introduce a new spirit to the public sector, as well as teach the competent technical and professional handling of instruments.

Within the Austrian career-based system, top civil servants are considered to have reached the highest rung of the career-ladder based on their expertise and, augmented by the civil servant ethos, often perceive themselves as in no need of training, except in the case of technical knowledge from other disciplines or due to recent changes. Officially offered courses that are attended by top civil servants focus on technical knowledge, such as private sector accounting standards, practical implications of the public accounting reform, and foreign languages. However, even these courses would have to be shaped exclusively for this elite group of servants.

Another important factor explaining the absence of top level executives from officially offered training opportunities seems to be that these courses are considered unsuitable for this group. Austrian top executives in both the private and public sectors will usually avoid attending courses that are attended together with lower level employees. This applies all the more to the Austrian administrative culture. For top civil servants, the public administrative environment is seen as a micropolitical arena where displaying knowledge deficiencies exposes oneself as vulnerable and is hardly considered appropriate. As one interview partner put it, "framing training as a measure of correcting shortcomings" is obviously at odds with the idea of lifelong learning as an indispensable prerequisite for sustainable success and development. Accordingly, protected spaces where an informal exchange of experiences based on mutual trust is possible would be required in order to hone personal or leadership skills (Knassmüller and Meyer 2013) among top servants. While programs for top executives in the private sector could provide a well-tailored environment, it is considered difficult for top civil service executives to justify the high costs. Instead, coaching, supervision, and mediation are offered by the VAK. Nevertheless, top civil servants are hesitant to make use of these offers and, as our interview partners describe, would often prefer to pay for classes or coaching out of their own pockets than risk exposure. In fact, personal support is sometimes disguised as external advising or consulting.

In addition to these micropolitical aspects, and due to the increasing dynamics of their internal and external environments, top civil servants usually work under enormous time constraints and often simply lack the time necessary for attending scheduled courses. In the future, in view of the special needs of top civil servants regarding content and form of training, modern technologies may well present interesting potentials. The digital literacy of the next generation, now advancing into top civil servant positions, will allow for e-learning-based training designs which provide the necessary safe space without limits regarding “appropriate content” and will also permit maximum time flexibility.

While top executives might experience more pressure to succeed during the course of their career, they also often face considerably more confirmation than criticism. Consequently, they may feel increasingly reluctant to question their experiences, profession, and status quo (Reynolds 1999; Ritz and Weissleder 2009; Knassmüller and Meyer 2013). Due to the lack of systematic HR measures, Austrian top civil servants are not subject to any form of evaluation or benchmarking and are therefore in danger of becoming self-referential with respect to their personal skills and competencies.

Despite the importance of specific training offers, the development of alternative career-paths like “fast tracks” might be a way to keep the system, as well as the individual, alert and in motion by bringing in fresh perspectives from outside public administration. It was the advent of the heavily promoted “war for talent” on the labor market (owing to workforce demographics and skills shortages) that caused an advisory board of the Federal Minister for Women and the Civil Service to call for such a “fast track,” following the example of Anglo-American approaches, in an effort to recruit experienced employees from outside public administration and attract and develop junior executive staff. Additionally, defined, personalized career plans to be implemented in a targeted way through personnel and standardized development strategies (education/training, promotion, development) were recommended by the advisory board (Hock et al. 2011: 9). Yet until now, there have been no effective policies to identify potential senior civil servants early in their career (OECD 2012), or to offer fast tracks to entrants from other backgrounds. Fast tracks outside the regulated system are considered highly sensible with regard to motivation and team coherence in administration, especially when paired with significantly better payment.

In a nutshell, the current system in Austria offers no way to systematically plan or shape careers. Hence, members of a talent pool might end up demotivated if their expectations have not been met. Further, as one of our interviewees pointed out, “it is the talented ones that might face social exclusion and mobbing from the “normal” colleagues who were not considered apt to participate in the talent pool.” In this context, higher performing potentials

are better served by powerful personal mentors who identify and promote career changes for them informally and with careful political sensitivity. To this end, a data base is currently planned in the Federal Chancellery that aims to help senior civil servants identify and promote high-potentials. Still, a far-reaching reform of personnel management to allow primarily performance driven careers more internal flexibility and increased mobility between sectors has not yet been initiated in the Austrian federal administration.

## Conclusion

The requirements necessary to succeed as a top civil servant have changed considerably in the recent past. Beyond the traditional virtues of outstanding professional qualifications and a grasp of political affairs, the position of top civil servant now demands better managerial qualifications and profound leadership skills. The goal of training activities for top civil servants is to establish a task-oriented and need-based skill set in order to fulfill challenges successfully.

Mainly focusing on strategy and structure, over the last several decades very few reforms at the Austrian federal level have targeted human resource management (e.g., mobility promotion, reform of the staffing plan). Top civil servants as a group have essentially remained unaffected. There is neither a consolidated skills profile, nor any measures in place to identify the potential of senior civil servant systematic training and development programs for this group. All-in-all, although past reforms and, more recently, outcome orientation have brought a whole new spectrum of tasks and requirements to light, and although there is a broad and steadily growing mindset of training for regular staff, there is as yet no comprehensive approach concerning the training of senior civil servants.

In Austria, policies and actions tend to be scattered, and effective improvements strongly depend on the development of contextual factors, notably the reform of employment law. Formalized training and development for all top civil servants is lacking due to the small number of top-level executives at the federal level, the heterogeneity of their tasks and professional backgrounds, and the necessity of this group to be available "on demand" from the political leadership that prevents regular and daylong course-work. Only rarely are programs or courses for top civil servants offered on a systematic and institutionalized basis, and if so, only hesitantly attended because potential attendees are concerned that the need for training may be regarded as a personal shortcoming. Moreover, only programs that offer technical skills and knowledge are made use of to a limited degree. Management and leadership training, coaching, or personal development courses are scarce and often left to the private initiative of the executive. Recently, new opportunities and programs for this particular group, Austria's top civil servants, are being discussed at the federal chancellery.

## Notes

1. The social partners are the Austrian Trade Union Federation (ÖGB) and the Federal Chamber of Labour (BAK) on the employees' side, and on the employers' side the Economic Chamber of Austria (WKÖ), the Standing Committee of Presidents of the Chambers of Agriculture (PKLWK) and the Federation of Austrian Industry (VÖI). It is worth noting that there is only one trade union confederation in Austria (divided into seven separate unions), the ÖGB (see also Tálos 2008).
2. Currently there are about 80 organizations that are 100 percent owned by the Republic of Austria (BMF 2011).
3. The following is based on the analysis of documents and legal regulations, and on interviews we conducted with four top civil servants who are in key positions with regard to the topic: the head of the Verwaltungskademie (VAK), the training institution of the Federal Chancellery, the head of the department in the Federal Chancellery in charge for all centralized human resource measures and activities, and two top civil servants who are responsible for the coordination of the decentralized human resource measures and activities of their respective ministries. Quantitative or longitudinal data on attendance of training by top civil servants is not available.

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# 8

## Belgium

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### Introduction

This chapter reports on the training of senior civil servants in Belgium. It is important, however, to briefly contextualize the “Belgian” perspective. The country has gone through a series of state reforms since 1970, and major responsibilities have been transferred from the national to the state level. Since 1993, Belgium has been constitutionally a federal state. Currently, the sixth state reform is taking place, again transferring more responsibilities to the state level.

Belgium makes a distinction between “communities” and “regions”: *communities* are based on language and cultural groups, while the *regions* are geographical areas. All entities have their own government with their own departments and agencies, whose rules are defined by related levels of power. Although the different levels of government have a common history and many similarities are found, disparity is increasing. Flanders has adopted a New Public Management (NPM) model of governing, while Wallonia has been more influenced by what Pollitt and Bouckaert (2011) call the Neo-Weberian State model.

In this chapter, we discuss the federal, Flemish, francophone, and Walloon levels. We do not discuss the situation in the (very small) German community and in Brussels. We conclude with some comparative insights regarding the cases. Data have been collected by means of document analysis and elite interviews. However, as the authors themselves are involved in several training programs, quite a lot of the evidence is also based on personal observations.

### Political Structure

As mentioned earlier, Belgian federalization led to the creation of two kinds of federated entities: three *communities* (French, Flemish, and German-speaking), in charge of cultural, social, and education matters, and three

regions (Wallonia, Flanders, and Brussels-Capital) charged with economic development, regional development, environmental protection, public transportation, and housing.

Two main characteristics of this new federal state are bipolarism and asymmetry, illustrated on one hand by the Flemish Region and Community, merged since 1980, and on the other hand by the Walloon Region and the French Community. The third region, Brussels-Capital, is an urban entity composed of 19 districts ("communes") entirely enclosed in the Dutch-speaking Flemish Region, although its residents are 85 percent French-speaking. There is an absence of any hierarchy in legal norms between the federal government, regions, or communities: a regional or community decree, concerning its own field of responsibility, is equivalent to a federal law.<sup>1</sup> Any conflict of competencies emerging after such provisions is, in principle, to be settled by the Constitutional Court.

In theory, the Weberian bureaucratic model is still in place in Belgium. This means that civil servants are appointed based on merit and are expected to be loyal and neutral executors of policy. In practice, however, the principle of representativeness has always been very important in Belgium and regarded as a means to overcome divisions in Belgian society (language, religion, political opinions) to obtain stability (Hondeghem 2011). Civil servants who work at the federal level are divided into a Dutch and French language group and posts for top civil servants must be equally divided between the two groups.

Political nominations have always been important at the national level in Belgium, and this has been replicated by communities and regions. Recently, nominations were theoretically softened by new requirements for top civil servants wherein they had to pass an objective selection procedure (e.g., assessment centers, interviews, etc.), but in the end, ministers can choose among those classified as the best candidates.

Each Belgian minister has an average cabinet of around 40 people; these are either civil servants from the administration (about 60 percent), or members from the minister's political party, or people with a specific expertise (Hondeghem 2011: 140). The Belgian *ménage à trois* (minister, personal advisers, senior civil servants) reflects an ambiguous and potentially conflicting situation characterized by an absence of a clear division of labor between the senior civil servants and the ministerial cabinet (de Visscher and Salomonsen 2013: 84–85).

Serious efforts have been made to reduce the size and the role of the ministerial cabinets at the different levels. In the Flemish government, for example, the number of cabinet members was reduced from about 450 in 2008 to 290 in 2010. For the francophone governments, this number decreased from 877 to 731. One of the objectives of the Copernicus reform at the federal level was to transform the ministerial cabinet into a small political secretariat and to transfer policy functions to the administration.

This particular reform was not successful as it touched upon traditional political-administrative relations in Belgium (Hondegem and Depré 2005). Nevertheless, research has demonstrated that federal top civil servants are now more involved in the policy process than before (De Visscher et al. 2012).

The introduction of a mandate system in the beginning of the twenty-first century included that top civil servants are no longer appointed for life, but rather a fixed period that varies according to the polity. During and after this period, the top civil servant is evaluated. Only if the evaluation is positive can the mandate be extended. Whereas in the past, top positions were only accessible through internal promotion, nowadays, these functions can be opened to external candidates. Table 8.1 shows the number of mandate holders in relation to the total numbers of employees and the number of employees in level A (for which a university degree is required upon entrance).

The introduction of the mandate system can be interpreted as a shift towards a managerial public service bargain (Hood and Lodge 2006). Top civil servants receive more managerial autonomy in exchange for greater accountability. The idea is that politicians should be responsible for the overall strategy and policy, and leave operational issues to public managers. Result control replaces input control (Hondegem and Van Dorpe 2013). Objectives are defined in management plans and monitored. If the evaluation is insufficient, the manager can be dismissed.

The mandate system also impacted political-administrative relations. Mobility at the top of the administration has been enhanced, including the possibility to dismiss a mandate holder in case of disagreement with their political masters. It is unclear whether the system has changed power relations. On one hand, top civil servants have gained autonomy (although it is limited as a result of the budgetary crisis), and, on the other hand, they have

*Table 8.1* Number of civil servants and mandate holders in the different levels of government, 2012–2013

| Government         | Total number of civil servants | Number of civil servants in level A | Number of mandate holders | % of mandate holders in relation to level A |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|---|
| Federal government | 79,136                         | 18,773                              | 173                       | 0.9 percent                                 |
| Flemish government | 26,846*                        | 7,850                               | 90                        | 1.1 percent                                 |
| Walloon region**   | 15,464                         | 3,622                               | 29                        | 0.8 percent                                 |
| French community   | NA                             | NA                                  | 44***                     | NA  |

\*This does not include some agencies such as the Flemish Transport Company (De Lijn).

\*\* 2009 (Source: Iweps)/ \*\*\* 2011.

NA = not available.

lost some independence because they are no longer appointed for life. The mandate system also has had implications for the leadership profile.

## Organizational-Administrative Culture

Like other OECD countries, Belgium went through a series of NPM reforms. Because the focus in the 1980s was on the reform of the state and reducing the budget deficit, administrative reforms appeared rather late. The lead was taken by the Flemish government, which launched reforms in the 1990s regarding strategy, organization, HRM, and finance (Bouckaert and Auwers 1999). For other levels of government, major reforms occurred closer to the turn of the century. Therefore, in international literature, Belgium is often considered a laggard in regard to New Public Management reforms (Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011).

### Federal Government

Reform of the federal government became a priority after the 1999 elections. A liberal-socialist-green coalition came into power with the ambition to create a modern citizen-oriented organization, based upon the principles of New Public Management. The Copernicus plan, as it was called, stated that society, not the public sector, should be considered as the center of government. The goals, that the federal administration become a better employer and provide better service, would be achieved through the redesign of the federal organizational structure, the introduction of a new managerial culture, the implementation of a new HR policy, and the re-engineering of the way of working (Hondeghem and Depré 2005).

The HR function was decentralized (to a degree) to individual departments. The Ministry of Civil Service was replaced by the “horizontal” department Personnel and Organization (P&O), now responsible for general federal HR policy, but also for support of the “vertical” departments. In each vertical department, a new P&O unit was created with its own HR manager so that, regarding training, the departments gained more responsibility. The central training unit (OFO), created in the sixties, remained but lost its monopoly. Investments in training were made to further professionalize the federal administration and its managers. The closed career system was replaced by an open (mandate) system for top managers (De Visscher et al. 2012). All top functions were declared vacant. The two highest positions (N and N-1) were open to candidates in and outside the public sector. Lower management functions (N-2 and N-3) were open only for internal candidates. To create sufficient management opportunities for internal candidates, a new training program was created (PUMP).

### Flemish Government

The Flemish public sector has also gone through several changes under the influence of New Public Management. A general reform program, *Beter*

*Bestuurlijk Beleid* (BBB) was introduced to make the Flemish government more transparent and decisive. It was founded upon ten basic principles: primacy of politics, transparency, good governance, a clear allocation of the core tasks among the different administrations, better defined responsibilities within the Flemish government, a new organizational culture, a better policy coordination across the boundaries of the policy areas, slim down the cabinets, more autonomy for the public managers and a partial freedom of choice for management supporting services (Spanhove and Verhoest 2008).

A major change for top civil servants was also the introduction of the mandate system. Top civil servants were now appointed temporarily for a period of six years, with the possibility of renewal based on an evaluation at the end of the term. Candidates for top civil service positions need at least five years of leadership experience over the last ten years or ten years of relevant professional experience in a public or private sector organization. Both internal and external candidates can apply for top civil service positions. Candidates should also have a university degree, giving them access to the highest hierarchical level, except for internal candidates who have reached that level through promotion.

### **Francophone and Walloon Governments**

Since the regional elections in 2009, the civil service minister has been common to both the Walloon Region and the French Community, and therefore recent reforms are shared. This was not the case before.

The main reforms regarding the Walloon region were adopted during the 2000s. An important change occurred in 2003, with the adoption of the code of the civil service. This decree contained provisions for the top civil service, notably a mandate system and compulsory training in public management for those applying for a mandate position. However, due to political, financial, and administrative constraints, this certificate was never implemented (Petit Jean 2013). In 2006, it was replaced by 100 hours of compulsory training after nomination in a top position.

As in the Walloon Region, few reforms were undertaken in the French Community before the 2000s. At the start of the 2000s, the government created a School of Public Administration (École d' Administration Publique), with a mission to launch compulsory training in management, leading to a certificate (Renard and Petit Jean 2012). With the introduction of a mandate system in 2003, all top civil servant candidates had to pass this certificate before being appointed. However, the decree was cancelled by the Council of State and a new governmental decree, adopted in 2006, replaced the 250-hour training program. A much lighter system consisting of 20 hours training was introduced; the main objective was to support the redaction of an operational plan (Goransson 2010).

From 2009 on, two main reforms common to both the Walloon region and the French Community took place. The first, and arguably the most

important, was the creation of a new School of Public Administration. This institution (different from, and replacing the one in the French Community) has three missions: initial and continuous training, training for local top civil servants, and a certificate in public management for regional top civil servants. Only the latter has been implemented, while the others are still matters of debate within the government. The second reform of interest is a change in the mandate system (2012), including specific provisions related to the training of civil servants. In short, each candidate to a top civil service position must obtain a management certificate from the School of Public Administration (Petit Jean 2013).

Compared to the Flemish and federal governments, the Walloon Region and the French Community are late modernizers, since their reform efforts are more fragmented and incremental. It is also clear that the francophone governments, unlike Flanders and the Federal Government, were less impressed with the Anglophone NPM discourse and that the inspiration behind the reforms are mainly based on the Neo-Weberian State (NWS) model (Brans et al. 2006).

## **Expectations of Leaders**

In the past, expectations towards top civil servants were not very explicit as the Weberian model was dominant. Top civil servants were expected to execute policies put forth by government. This explains why most top civil servants had a specialization which was linked to a particular department: they were expected to be experts in a specific domain (Hondeghem 2011). This changed slightly with the reforms as expectations towards management grew. Following are the profiles of top civil servants at the different levels of government.

### **Federal Government**

The federal government has developed a competency framework for the whole of its personnel, which consists of five clusters of competencies: dealing with information, dealing with tasks, giving direction and leading, interpersonal relations, and personal effectiveness (Op de Beeck and Hondeghem 2010). Alongside these behavioral competencies, technical competencies are also taken into account. However, for top civil servants, this competency framework is not entirely used. When a vacancy is published, a specific competency profile is developed. An analysis of 25 vacancies for top functions between 2010 and 2011 showed that the same general competencies were asked for (Verbist 2012); they can be clustered in five groups:

- Way of thinking: analytical skills; flexibility and innovation; vision and integration
- Dealing with an HR environment: coaching, motivating, and developing people; leadership of groups

- Interaction with the environment: collaboration and network building; orientation towards citizens, clients, and society
- Objectives: sense of responsibility; achieving goals; convincing and negotiation
- Other: communication skills; loyalty, and integrity

The most important technical competencies which were included in the vacancies dealt with experience in the functional domain. Insight into the political decision-making process was required in 80 percent of the vacancies. In addition, knowledge of HR, ICT, and financial management was often required.

Contrary to the Flemish government, there is no general leadership model in the federal government. This can be explained by a more decentralized approach in HRM at the federal level, with some larger administrations (such as Finance and Justice), having a relatively autonomous position. Some federal departments and agencies have developed leadership models for their organization. For example, the department of health has a leadership model which consists of three roles: manager, leader, and coach.

In an international comparative study of mandate systems, we examined to what degree top civil servants in the federal government fulfilled specific roles (de Visscher et al. 2011). We made a distinction between four roles: bureaucrat, leader, manager, and policy adviser. According to the survey and interviews, the most important roles as experienced by top civil servants were the role of leader and manager. The policy adviser role appeared to be the least important, a rather atypical situation for Belgium in comparison to other countries. The reason for this can be found in the complex political-administrative relations.

### **Flemish Government**

The expectations of leaders within the Flemish government are found in their leadership model Leadership 2020, created as part of the project Modern HR Policy of Flanders in Action (Ruebens et al. 2013). According to this leadership model, there are four important roles that are expected of leaders:

- (1) The *leader* motivates by stating a clear, transparent, and inspiring vision.
- (2) The *entrepreneur* discovers the priorities and provides the organization with the necessary added value.
- (3) The *manager* runs the organization by planning, organizing, and ensuring optimal use of resources.
- (4) The *coach* has attention for development opportunities of the employees, provides them with feedback and gives them the opportunity to solve problems together.

Leaders who adopt this profile are expected to act according to the following values: clarity, authenticity, respect, and confidence. Other values that are deemed important for leaders are the new cultural values of the Flemish government of openness, decisiveness, 360° trust, entrepreneurship, and flexibility.

The Flemish government is still developing its competency framework for Leadership 2020. However, they do have a competency profile for their senior civil servants based on the job description and competency framework that is being used throughout the Flemish government. This competency framework was developed as part of the competency management project of 2001. The competency profile for senior civil servants is divided into behavioral competencies and technical competencies. The first category consists of the following competencies: continuously improving, working together, customer orientation, reliability, vision, persuasion, decisiveness, empathy, direction, organizational involvement, delegation. The technical competencies consist of: knowledge of management in a public sector organization, a university degree and at least five years of leadership experience.

Leadership 2020 was developed because the Flemish government felt the need to face important challenges, such as financial stress, coordination, and policy coherence. These challenges have an important impact on the kind of leaders the public sector will need (Ruebens, Demuzere, and Hondeghem 2013). Good leadership is critical in coping with these challenges. Therefore, a lot of emphasis is put on the importance of vision and adaptation. The public sector needs leaders that can inspire and motivate, but also have the ability and flexibility to change (De Wilde and Spanhove 2011).

These qualities, which are most present in the role of entrepreneur, however, are the least present in the Flemish government, as was found in a self-assessment study of 2635 (potential) leaders (Ruebens et al. 2013). Based on the same study, the leadership model of the Flemish government has been recently adapted and a fifth role was added: the strategic policy adviser role. The argument was that this role is important if one wants to strengthen the position of the administration in the political-administrative relations, and as a result decrease the importance of the ministerial cabinets in the policy process.

### **Francophone and Walloon Governments**

To our knowledge, there is no explicit model of leadership applying to the higher civil service of the Walloon Region and the French Community. However, according to the governmental decree (2012) instituting the new mandate system, the new executive master aims at developing the management capacities of candidates for a mandate position. In addition, if we look at the “mandate letters” on which the current operational plans of the top civil servants are based in the Walloon Region, we can highlight

some competencies which are common to almost all these management positions. Among those competencies, some of them refer explicitly to leadership capacities:

- Capacity for strategic and operational management
- Development and motivation of human resources
- Teamwork
- Capacity for persuasion and negotiation
- Speech ability
- Creativity and flexibility
- Institutional and budgetary knowledge

## **The Organization, Content, and Method of Training for Top Civil Servants**

For a long time, the Belgian civil service has been an example of a closed career system: civil servants entered the administration at the bottom and climbed up the hierarchy. There was no national school as in other countries. Some civil servants went to university to obtain a management degree, but this was mostly an individual initiative. Most training was done "on-the-job" through gaining experience during one's career.

This has changed a bit as a result of reforms. More attention is now paid to training managers, although most of this training is still geared to the middle level and not top level management, except for the Walloon Region and the French Community. Top managers are rather reluctant to spend a lot of their time in training, choosing to send members of their staff to training initiatives instead, hoping this will lead to a return for the organization. Following are the most important training initiatives for the different levels of government.

### **Federal Government**

We discuss here three programs which have been organized for the whole federal administration: PUMP, Vitruvius, and the leadership program of OFO. We will not address programs which have been organized by individual departments. This does not mean that these programs are less important; on the contrary, as explained previously, initiatives at a decentralized level are very important in the federal government and are mostly the result of well-developed organizational strategies for training.

The PUMP program was one of the first initiatives of the Copernicus reform aimed to attract young "high potentials." PUMP was organized by KU Leuven (Public Management Institute) and ULB (Solvay Business School) who were together responsible for the training program. Each year, 40 civil servants (20 Dutch and 20 French speaking) were selected (increased to

50 after 2005). The program lasted for almost a year and consisted of five different phases: (1) unfreezing (mostly teambuilding and presentation skills); (2) vision on management and policy (different aspects, such as strategy, organization, HRM, finance, etc.); (3) internship in another organization (in Belgium or abroad); (4) integration exercise or organization analysis (application of obtained knowledge on a case); (5) consultancy task (performing a specific project in the federal government). Part of the program aimed to stimulate the interaction between Dutch and French speaking civil servants and was therefore organized for both language groups; other parts were organized separately.

The PUMP program ran for eight years (2001–2008). More than 350 civil servants from the federal government received training, after which time it was discontinued for two reasons: it was considered as too elitist (limited number of persons allowed each year) and too long (a one year average time investment of two days per week). A third reason, however, was that another program had been set up (Vitruvius), which also had to be paid from the training budget.

Vitruvius is quite a different program. While the focus of the PUMP program was on (hard) management skills, the focus of Vitruvius is on (soft) leadership skills. The objective is to develop an employee-oriented leadership style. The purpose is to contribute to a culture change in the federal government. Participants are expected to adjust their attitude and behavior to become a role model in their own organization, and set up new initiatives for cultural change. In this way, the program should create a leverage effect.

Another difference is the organization: Vitruvius is organized by the Department of Personnel and Organization, partly with their own trainers and partly with external consultants. Universities are not involved in the program. The program lasts for 40 training days (spread over 8 months) and consists of five modules: (1) intake (self-assessment); (2) discovering yourself (teambuilding, mindfulness); (3) leadership through connecting (peer-coaching, cases); (4) organizational development (change management, learning organization, cultural change); (5) personal integration (personal development plan). It is important, however, to stress that the program is flexible and adaptable to the personal needs of participants. Learning by experience is the philosophy.

The program started in 2008. Each year, 60 people are selected (30 Dutch and 30 French speaking). Thus far, 300 people have received training, of whom only 30 belonged to the top management level, although this was the main target group. Therefore, a new program was created (*In Vivo*), which is considered a spin-off of Vitruvius. *In Vivo* is less time consuming and oriented towards individual and peer coaching.

In tandem with Vitruvius, another leadership program was organized by OFO, which is the training agency of the federal government. While

Vitruvius aimed to focus on middle and top management, the target group of OFO was operational and tactical management (the group of people who give direction to operational managers). Another difference is that the leadership program of OFO is more focused on organizational needs. The supervisors of the participants are themselves involved in the program and have to support and follow the participants. They are also involved in the intake and selection of participants; together, the development needs are defined and can be modified in the course of the program. The program is less time consuming, as it only requires 12 days a year (one day every month). A debriefing follows the program, to discuss further development needs. This is done together with the supervisor of the participants.

The methods used in the training program are very similar to Vitruvius: the focus is on group dynamics, individual and group coaching, exercises, cases, presentations, self-reflection, and so on. The programs use mostly trainee-centered methods instead of trainer-centered methods (Lievens 2011). Another similarity between the programs is that they both involve consultant organizations, and not universities. The OFO program has run one year at present, and has included 180 participants.

If we count all three programs (PUMP, Vitruvius, OFO), between 2001 and 2013, around 800 civil servants of the federal administration have undergone management or leadership training,<sup>2</sup> or 1 in every 100 federal civil servants. As most of them belong to level A, and level A consists of around 18,800 civil servants, roughly 4.2 percent of them have undergone training.

Whether this investment has been worthwhile is difficult to say. For the PUMP program a thorough evaluation has been conducted, dealing with the application of knowledge to the workplace after the program (Broucker 2010). Based on a survey among PUMP participants, a model was developed to measure the degree to which the insights obtained through the program were used in practice. The model included the variables of the Learning Transfer System Inventory (LTSI) of Holton, et al. (2000) as well as other variables. The result of the statistical analyses was that 53.8 percent of the dependent variable (transfer) could be explained by eight independent variables. Three variables were retrieved from the LTSI-model: transfer design; peer support; self-efficacy; the other variables were the belief that PUMP can lead to progress in the career; the vision of PUMP as a frame of reflection; the belief in the usefulness of training; age; generation.

The conclusion was that of the three groups of variables explaining transfer (trainee characteristics, training design, work environment), individual characteristics seem to have the biggest impact. This can be explained by the rather passive transfer climate within the federal organizations at the time of the PUMP program and may have changed in the meantime. It nevertheless emphasizes the importance of a good selection of participants for training.

## **Flemish Government**

Leadership development has only recently gained a lot of attention in the Flemish government. One of the goals of leadership 2020 is the development of current and future leaders through a government-wide development program for leadership. At the moment, this leadership training has not yet been realized. Within the Flemish government, there is no fast-track training system for top civil servants. The only requirement to become a top civil servant is a university degree and at least five years of leadership experience or ten years of professional experience. However, it is possible that internal candidates have reached their position through promotion and, in that case, have entered public administration with a lower educational qualification.

There is no general centralized training program for top civil servants and most centralized initiatives for leadership development are intended for middle or operational managers. These initiatives are also open for top civil servants and are organized by the Agency for government personnel.<sup>3</sup> Appointed leaders without leadership experience are offered a basic leadership program introducing the four leadership roles (coach, leader, manager, and entrepreneur); situational leadership; and the possibility for self-reflection on their functioning as a leader. More experienced leaders can also participate in this training to further develop and screen their own leadership style. For experienced leaders, there are different kinds of training focusing on the abilities of coaching, managing change, results-based leadership, and managing teams. For middle managers, there are also some network initiatives. For example, the reflection groups where leaders assess their functioning as a leader and share their experience within a small peer group. For operational leadership, there are different programs that are focused on self-reflection, organizational planning, individual leadership, and team leadership. Most of these centralized in-government trainings are given by external trainers.

In addition to these centralized initiatives, there are also decentralized initiatives for leadership programs within specific organizations. The leadership program by VDAB (Flemish public employment service) is one of those initiatives (for further information, see [www.vdab.be](http://www.vdab.be)).

## **Francophone and Walloon Governments**

Two kinds of training can be distinguished: educational and executive. Regarding educational training, the only condition to become a top civil servant in both region and community is a university degree. The type of degree or the place where it was obtained does not matter. In addition, eight years of experience in the public sector, including two years of management positions, are required (Petit Jean 2013).

Concerning executive training, as mentioned earlier, candidates need to pass a certificate in public management in order to be eligible for a mandate

position. This certificate is granted by the School of Public Administration and consists of three parts. First, candidates for the executive master are selected by SELOR (the central recruitment agency); second, those selected follow a one year training course in order to obtain an executive master in public management, which is jointly organized by the six universities of the French Community. And finally, those who succeed in the executive master must pass an oral examination in front of a jury composed of SELOR, two experts in management or human resources, and two top civil servants from the Walloon Region and the French Community (Gouvernement wallon et Gouvernement de la Communauté française 2013; Petit Jean 2013).

The content of the executive master is defined by governmental decree. It must include the following topics:

- Ethics and values of the public service
- Strategic management
- Quality management, change management, creativity management, and innovation management
- Human resources management
- Social dialogue and relations
- Communication
- European politics and policies
- Modernization of the administration
- Management and leadership
- Political economy
- Public finances, taxation, and public accountability
- Public procurement
- Participants also have to write a thesis dealing with a practical case chosen by the School and by the representatives of the universities

Finally, the program allows for individual coaching of the participants, called “trajectory of development.” During these sessions, participants discuss with their coach how to improve or increase their management skills. The entire executive master program is financed by the governments of the Walloon Region and the French Community.

Besides the executive master for potential top managers, some agencies have taken the initiative to develop leadership programs, for example, TEC (transport agency) and AWEX (export and investment agency).

## Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to discuss training of top civil servants in Belgium. To give a more comprehensive picture, we considered both the federal and state levels, drawing comparative insights related to the various cases. Before analyzing differences, it is important to point out that the

different levels of government share several features. Each of them has a mandate system, with its own specifics, but with some common elements such as the limited term, the possibility to hire a top civil servant from the private sector, and the use of term contracts. Moreover, at each level of government, the existence of strong ministerial cabinets can lead to potential conflicting politico-administrative relationships. These structural and political elements have greatly influenced how leadership is conceived in Belgium.

There are also significant differences between the different levels of government regarding leadership, in particular between the federal and the Flemish governments on one side and the French Community and Walloon Region on the other side. First, both the federal and Flemish levels have a competency framework that determines the profile of the top civil servants, while there is no such framework in the southern part of Belgium, despite some elements found in documents. Second, various initiatives at the federal and Flemish levels seem to have taken place within particular reform contexts (Copernicus, Flanders in Action, etc.) while this is not the case in the Walloon Region and the French Community. Third, the Walloon and francophone level opted for a compulsory executive Master for all candidates for a mandate position; this training program is organized in tight collaboration with all universities of the French Community. There is no equivalent at the two other levels.

Differences exist also between the federal and the Flemish government. The federal approach is characterized by a more bottom-up strategy towards leadership development, while the Flemish level applies a more top-down strategy. In Flanders, the starting point is the general leadership model that forms the basis of all leadership initiatives. At the federal level, there is no such general model; more attention is paid to the organizational needs of the different entities that want to develop their own leadership development program.

It is clear that the different levels of government have followed separate trajectories regarding training top civil servants, perhaps explained by differences in history, areas of policy and service responsibility, and political priorities. One can also observe some policy transfer effects. It seems that the Walloon Region and the French Community are now, with some delays, implementing reforms that have already taken place elsewhere. We derive such an assumption from the PUMP initiative at the federal level that meets some features of the School of Public Administration. For example, both target high level candidates and demand a certain commitment of the trainee in terms of time. We note, however, that the new executive master focuses not only on management skills, like PUMP, but also on leadership skills, such as Vitriivius.

We expect there might be some further policy transfer mechanisms in the future. For example, the leadership model based on different roles, which

has been introduced in the Flemish government recently, might also be used at the other levels of government. We also expect that the demand for short term training courses might increase due to fiscal constraints. Finally, the trend towards trainee-centered methods instead of trainer-center methods is probably irreversible.

## Notes

1. It is slightly different for the Brussels Region though.
2. Some participants have participated in more than one training program; therefore we have rounded off.
3. <http://www.agoweb.be/ontwikkelingeninzetbaarheid/personeelsopleiding/201.aspx?mId=4225>.

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# 9

## Denmark

*Bente Bjørnholt and Morten Balle Hansen*

### Introduction

The Danish civil service is organized into a national administration, five regions (since 2007), and 98 municipalities (since 2007). The primary responsibility of the regions is to manage the healthcare system, especially hospitals, although part of this responsibility has been handed over to the municipalities. The municipalities have become the primary service providers in the Danish welfare state and are responsible for the provision of a number of services such as childcare, primary schools, eldercare, culture, city planning, and road maintenance and construction.

About 30 percent of the Danish workforce of 2.92 million people (2008, Statistics Denmark) work in the public sector, the vast majority in the 98 municipalities (271 before 2007) and in the healthcare system, which is organized in the five regions (14 counties before 2007). Of those working in the public sector, about 131,000 full-time employees work in public administration, of whom about 68,000 work in the central administration of the state (2008, Statistics Denmark).

This chapter analyzes the evolution of the Danish civil service in state administration in general and the collective profile of the top civil servants of the Danish state administration in particular.

The chapter is based on the primary and secondary data sources. In order to describe the training and educational background of top civil servants, the analysis rests on five surveys sent out to top civil servants at the national and local levels. The surveys were initiated by the Forum for Top Executive Management (Forum for offentlig topledelse), which was established by the Danish Ministry of Finance and the interest groups of the Danish municipalities and the Danish regions. Moreover, we have conducted interviews with the former head of the agency for personnel management and with two representatives of the universities offering the most important training programs, and we have had access to an investigation of the education and training of top civil servants in 20 interviews with top executives (Lollike

2012). Finally, the analysis draws on a database<sup>1</sup> on the background and characteristics of agency heads and another database on permanent secretaries.

## Comparable with Political Structure

### Historical Background

Denmark has developed its civil service system gradually by incorporating a number of European trends into already existing Danish institutions, rather than by abruptly abandoning previous institutions. The history of Denmark is deeply embedded in the history of Europe and the Nordic countries. The history, language, and culture of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden are closely intertwined. The common language and culture, combined with a cultural and political movement called Scandinavism (or Nordism) in the latter part of the nineteenth century, have provided an important background for the easy diffusion of ideas among the Scandinavian countries, which in turn has contributed to the development of the Danish central administration.

Denmark was constituted as a kingdom in about the year 900 and the evolution of the Danish central administrative system was closely related to the royal institution for centuries. In the medieval ages, after the era of the Vikings, the royal institution gradually evolved from being a weak, semi-elected institution ruling through an influential nobility, into an absolute monarchy with a powerful king. Absolute monarchism was formally institutionalized in 1660 (Jespersen, Petersen, and Tamm 2000). The education of nobles serving the king was not formal, but it was often quite sophisticated, and included years of foreign service in order to get acquainted with administrative practices in other countries (Knudsen 2003).

Although the old nobility retained strong influence in the central administration, other social classes increasingly entered as well, gradually transforming the central administration from a collegial type of rule into a Weberian type of bureaucracy (Weber 1947) with loyalty and strong ties to the king and the state. In 1821, having a degree in jurisprudence became a formal requirement for obtaining a higher civil service position. Thus, when the absolute monarchy became a constitutional monarchy in 1849, the central administration was organized into seven ministries, staffed by members of the legal profession who still tended to have a family background in the old Danish nobility, but with a distinct civil service loyalty to the state and the king.

The latter part of the nineteenth century in Denmark was, as in many other European countries, characterized by a political mobilization of the former lower and middle classes (farmers, workers, etc.) and later, women. The transformation from an absolute monarchy to a constitutional monarchy and then later into a parliamentary democracy in 1901 took place in these formative years. Many of the institutions that remain essential to Danish society and the civil service today were formed during these past decades,

including the political parties that were most important and influential throughout the twentieth century (Hansen 2011, 2013). The development of what the Danish people now perceive as obvious rights in a democratic society took decades, as can be seen in the gradual change in voting rights in national and local elections. In the first democratic constitution from 1849, only men over the age of 30 owning property above a certain value were allowed to vote. Women were first allowed to vote in municipal elections in 1908 and in national elections in 1915. The latest change in this aspect of the Danish democratization process took place in 1978, when the voting age was officially lowered from 21 to 18 years. The societal democratization process during this time had a gradual impact on the ethos of the Danish civil service. From 1849, when servants entered the civil service, they swore their loyalty to both the constitution and the king, but gradually the social bond to the royal institution was loosened and replaced by a social bond to parliamentary democracy and to society at large. Durkheim's concept of organic solidarity (Durkheim 1984), which is based on a division of labor, strong social bonds, and administrative and constitutional law, and is concerned with human interests, adequately portrays the type of *esprit de corps* that gradually replaced the royal institution. Formally speaking, the oath to the king was superceded in 1919 by a written promise by all civil servants in the national administration in order to defend the democratic constitution and fulfill all obligations of civil servants, symbolically stressing the democratization of the civil service (Knudsen 2000).

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Denmark could still by and large be characterized as a "night watchman" state, a form of government in which the state's only authentic function is to protect its citizens, and its legal institutions are generally the military, police, and the courts. At that time, Denmark's total public-expenditure share of the total GDP hovered at 10 percent to 12 percent (Christensen 2000). Nonetheless, the seeds were sown for the later universal welfare state that came to fruition during the social reform of the 1890s, heavily inspired by Bismarck's social reform in Germany (Petersen 1985; Ringsmose and Hansen 2005). Thus, by extension, it was a relatively small civil service compared to what later came into existence after the Second World War and the growth of the universal welfare state.

Throughout the first half of the twentieth century, the public-expenditure share of GDP gradually rose to 20 percent to 22 percent after the Second World War. Then, in the latter part of the century, the public sector rapidly expanded its scope. For instance, about 10 percent of the Danish workforce was employed in the public sector in 1950, whereas close to 30 percent were public employees 50 years later, at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Again, this trend seems to mirror an almost global phenomenon. The twentieth century, particularly the latter half, became the century of public sector and civil service growth in most countries, including the United

States (Tanzi and Schuknecht 2000), but especially in northwestern Europe and, in particular, Scandinavia (Esping-Andersen 1990).

Changes in the internal organization of the central state administration, from the first democratic constitution in 1849 to the organization as we see it today, can be divided into a number of different periods (Bogason 2008) according to different criteria. However, a four-epoch classification, which is closely related to the overall evolution of the universal Danish welfare state, seems most reasonable:

- 1849–1890: Consolidation of constitutional democracy
- 1891–1945: Democratization and slow expansion of the welfare state
- 1946–1980: Rapid expansion of the welfare state
- 1981–2009: Reorganization and reduction of public sector growth

Besides capturing the broader trend, this subdivision reflects changes in the organization of the central administration reasonably well. Broadly speaking, the expansion of the state into a universal welfare state corresponds to a long-term tendency to increase the number of ministries, from the original seven ministries in 1849 to 20 ministries in the 2013 administration. Many of the new ministries were organized around tasks originally placed in the former Ministry of the Interior, which, because of the increasing activities of the state in society, had become too large and complex to remain as it was originally constituted. Two of the ministries established in 1849, the Ministry of War and the Ministry of the Marines, were merged into the Ministry of Defense in 1950, but otherwise the old ministries from 1849 have survived, although some of their functions have changed over the years.

## Political Structure

Denmark is a constitutional monarchy with a democratic, parliamentary one-chamber system of government. It is a homogenous country in religious and ethnic terms.

Denmark is a unitary state and has had a unicameral system with one national parliament since 1953 (the *Folketinget*; Armingeon, Careja, Engler, Potolidis, Gerber, and Leimgruber 2010; Hansen, Steen, and de Jong 2013).

Although the monarch (Margrethe the second) *formally* possesses executive power, this power is strictly ceremonial. Executive authority is exercised by the government, which is lead by the prime minister (*statsministeren*), who appoints the other ministers that collectively make up the government. These ministers are responsible to the Parliament.

The Danish Parliament is the national legislature. It has the ultimate legislative authority based on to the doctrine of parliamentary sovereignty. The Parliament consists of 175 members from Denmark, plus two from

Greenland and two from the Faroe Islands. The Danish political system has traditionally generated coalitions. Most Danish postwar governments have been coalition governments that do not have legislative majority in the Parliament but rely on support from nongovernment parties. Thus, they do not have a majority against them.

## Organizational-Administrative Culture

The Danish civil service is fundamentally organized as a Weberian merit bureaucracy (Christensen 2004; Hansen and Salomonsen 2011; Weber 1947), with career civil servants appointed on the basis of their educational, professional, and managerial merits, not on their political affiliation.

In the 1950s, employees had civil service status with lifelong tenure, government-paid pensions, and economic guarantees against being fired or transferred to an inferior position. Although remnants of this system are still present in the contracts of the permanent secretaries, since then, the system for the majority of civil servants has fundamentally changed. In the early 1970s, new legislation opened up fixed-term contracts for managerial positions in the central administration, although this option was rarely exercised until the 1990s. Today, with a few notable exceptions, such as the permanent secretaries, individually negotiated fixed-term contracts with performance-related pay are standard for high-ranking managers in the Danish public sector. This system gradually gained prominence in the 1990s, was formally institutionalized in 1998, and has since then been adopted almost universally but with significant variations in its practical execution and importance (Binderkrantz and Christensen 2012; Bruun 2000; Gregory and Christensen 2004; Hansen and Salomonsen 2011).

Generally speaking, international comparative studies of organizational cultures in the Hofstede tradition (Hofstede 2001) indicate that Danish organizations tend to be characterized as egalitarian, with low acceptance of hierarchical power. This picture was by and large confirmed in our interviews with Danish permanent secretaries in 2009, indicating a strengthening of the egalitarian trend in recent decades (Hansen and Salomonsen 2011).

## Expectations of Leaders

The long-term trend in the expectations on Danish top civil servants in the state administration is clearly indicated by the evolution in the basic training and career system. On one hand, there has been a change from a focus on rules and legal competencies to an additional focus on strategy, political competences, and leadership and change management. On the other hand, there is also a stable expectation of learning by doing over years of experience in the state administration.

In general, top civil servants are generalists rather than specialists (e.g., doctors, engineers, etc.). Among the generalists, those with legal training have played a major role in the civil service throughout the twentieth century. As noted earlier, historically, the Danish civil service was characterized by a legalistic culture and inhabited by legal professionals. In the 1930s, economists began entering the central administration, many of them inspired by a Keynesian understanding of the role of the state in society. Beginning in the 1960s, political scientists, and later other types of social scientists, entered the ministerial departments, which to a large extent today employ individuals with one of these three types of educational background (Hansen and Salomonsen 2011), as indicated by the education backgrounds of the 19 permanent secretaries in 2009: nine had a degree in law, six had a degree in economics, and four held a degree in political science (*ibid.*; see Table 9.1).

The career system in the state administration indicates stable expectations of deep knowledge of the formal and informal rules of the system. Less than ten years of employment in different parts of the Danish state administration is highly unusual (only one of a sample of 165 department heads from 1950 to 2009 had less) and a career track outside state administration is also highly unusual. However, there has been a change from staying on a career track within the same ministry to shifting between ministries, agencies, and departments. Thus, the career system has changed from one supporting unique ministerial cultures, to one supporting a more unified administrative culture of the entire state administration.

## **Where Do Top Civil Servants Currently Receive Their Training?**

Since the early 1990s, the basic education of Denmark's top civil servants has increasingly been supplemented by further education and training, with a focus on administration and leadership. Diplomas and master's degrees along the way have become an important signal of the ambition to climb the career ladder. However, once a top civil servant has entered high office, no additional official program for training has thus far been enacted. As for basic educational background, former top civil servants have typically graduated from universities with a background in law and, increasingly, other social science university degrees (see Tables 9.1 and 9.2). In ministries relating to professional and specialist areas, a few top executives had a specialist background as military officers (Ministry of Defence), agronomists (Ministry of the Environment), and doctors (Ministry of Health), but most of these specialists have worked in the more specialized agencies and rarely in the ministerial departments that have been traditionally inhabited by legal professionals. Candidates from universities had and still have to patiently work their way up the hierarchy in order to apply for any top

Table 9.1 Educational background of department heads, in percents (1979, 1989, 1999, 2009)

|                                       | 1979              | 1989              | 1999              | 2009              |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Economics                             | 30.8 percent      | 29.6 percent      | 31.6 percent      | 31.6 percent      |
| Law                                   | 61.5 percent      | 59.3 percent      | 36.8 percent      | 47.4 percent      |
| Political science                     | 0 percent         | 0 percent         | 15.8 percent      | 21.1 percent      |
| Specialist                            | 0 percent         | 0 percent         | 0 percent         | 0 percent         |
| Other                                 | 7.7 percent       | 11.1 percent      | 15.8 percent      | 0 percent         |
| Number of<br>respondents /<br>percent | 26<br>100 percent | 27<br>100 percent | 19<br>100 percent | 19<br>100 percent |

Source: Yearbooks: Hof- og statskalenderen; Kraks blå bog; various years. Percentages of known responses.

Table 9.2 Educational background of agency CEOs in percents (1995, 2000, 2005, 2008)

|                                       | 1995             | 2000              | 2005              | 2008               |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Economics                             | 0 percent        | 17.1 percent      | 16.7 percent      | 19.5 percent       |
| Law                                   | 55.6 percent     | 40.0 percent      | 40.7 percent      | 38.3 percent       |
| Political science                     | 0 percent        | 8.6 percent       | 13.0 percent      | 9.7 percent        |
| Specialist                            | 44.4 percent     | 25.7 percent      | 22.2 percent      | 21.4 percent       |
| Other                                 | 0 percent        | 8.6 percent       | 7.4 percent       | 11.0 percent       |
| Number of<br>respondents /<br>percent | 9<br>100 percent | 35<br>100 percent | 56<br>100 percent | 158<br>100 percent |

Source: Contract database.

positions. But, again, there has been a significant change from intram ministerial career tracks to interministerial career tracks, permanent secretaries' having experience in other departments and in state agencies has increasingly become the rule rather than the exception. These changes in career system are, however, generally limited to the state administration. No permanent secretaries and very few agency CEOs have experience from the local or regional levels (Survey 1). Moreover, only a few top civil servants have leadership experience in private companies, and only a few agency CEOs and no permanent secretaries have international experience in other jobs.

Before the 1990s, further education of top civil servants was rare, both before and after they entered leadership positions. There is still a strong tradition of "learning by doing" (Lollike 2012), and, over time, top civil servants are expected to obtain the relevant skills, knowledge, and attitudes on the job.

Today, some of the older traditions and cultures have fallen by the wayside, while others still persist. Both agency CEOs and permanent secretaries still graduate from universities. Tables 9.1 and 9.2 present the educational background of the top civil servants (permanent secretaries and agency CEOs) for various years. Both tables indicate a shift among top executives from having a background in law and being specialists (for agency CEOs), toward having a generalist educational background in economics or political science. The category “specialist” covers engineers, officers, doctors, and so on.

In Denmark there has been a significant professionalization of leadership in the public sector, and the top civil servants are no exception to this trend. Thus, to a larger extent, top civil servants are promoted on the basis of leadership training and experience rather than on professional skills and knowledge. And despite there being no formalized training requirement of top civil servants, it is increasingly an informal norm that to reach the highest positions, top civil servants must persistently seek training and inspiration (Interview Lolllike 2013). For instance, the Ministry of Finance specifies that top civil servants need general experience and relevant leadership development, and has recently developed a document outlining the relevant qualifications of top officials—interministerial experience being one of them. Accordingly, most top civil servants have followed national or international training programs, engaged in professional networks, and so forth. Furthermore, top civil servants tend to ask for, and appreciate, leadership training. Typically, they spend ten days a year in training, but they actually would like to spend more time learning (Survey 2). Cultural changes in the training of top civil servants are confirmed by the fact that young top civil servants in particular express a stronger need for training than their older and more experienced colleagues (Survey 5). To some extent, this may be because the younger top civil servants spend less time in training (Survey 2), but it also reflects differences in the positions of the older and younger top civil servants. Thus, top civil servants at the higher positions tend to be less concerned about training and find they already have the qualifications needed. Permanent secretaries notably spend very little time in training (Survey 2), and, to a larger extent than others, they express a desire to spend more time in further training (Survey 2005). However, civil servants in the higher-ranking positions find it more challenging than their colleagues to find relevant training programs (Lolllike 2012).

## **The Content and Structure for Training Top Civil Servants**

Despite the increased emphasis on training and leadership training, it is not mandatory for Denmark’s top civil servants. No obligatory systematic and formalized training programs exist. On the contrary, it is an established tradition that training and education is voluntary; and top civil servants

have the freedom to decide whether to pursue more training and what training programs they wish to follow. This means that the training of top civil servants does not follow any regular pattern but tends to be very individualized. Accordingly, the training is to a large extent financed by individual budgets of the various departments, and it is often the top civil servants themselves who plan their individual training programs.

As mentioned earlier, an informal norm of training exists and most top official participate more or less in their own personalized informal training program. In 2009, 42 percent of the responding top civil servants had created an individual training plan (Survey 5). Top civil servants themselves prefer a broad range of training programs to arrange their own individual training paths (Forum for offentlig topledelse 2007). This means that the institutions offering training programs for top civil servants have to contact the executives individually, which is often difficult since it is hard for top executives to decide whether they have the time for training (Greve 2013). The individual perspective on training programs means that no formal evaluation of these programs can be initiated by the state administration. Individuals do assess and evaluate their training, but often the assessments of the various programs are spread among top executives verbally.

In Denmark, the training of top civil servants is not initiated exclusively for top executives in the state administration. Top servants from the local levels (regions and municipalities) are also included, and training programs are often developed across the three administrative levels of the Danish public sector. Accordingly, a more generic perspective on leadership training is applied. To some extent, this may be due to the relatively small amount of top civil servants in Denmark who influence the possibilities for, and profitability of, developing formalized training programs for top civil servants at the central administration only. Furthermore, the exchange of ideas and inspiration among top executives from different administrative levels is given priority and is considered essential for the development of the Danish public sector in general. The cross-sectional and cross-level training of top civil servants means that, to a greater degree than before, top executives follow career paths across sectors and administrative levels. However, rotation of positions across the various levels is still rare.

The training programs for top executives tend to last only a few weeks, and very few top civil servants would sign up for a training program that was any longer. This may be because top civil servants do not have the time for extensive training programs (Survey 2) and generally feel that they already possess the qualifications needed for their positions (Survey 1). Civil servants do, themselves, ask for more systematic training programs (Lollike 2013), but they still appreciate the possibility and freedom they have to find individual programs. Thus, their requests for training are more a question of getting inspired than improving their professional and technical

skills. Accordingly, their training programs often teach broad perspectives on leadership instead of following narrower and more technical paths.

Despite the appreciation of cross-sectional and cross-level training programs, a number of short, in-government training programs exist at the state level. These are often developed within the individual ministries only, or in cooperation between departments. Lately, study trips to China are a trend (Lollike 2012). For instance, such a trip could be arranged by the permanent secretary of the Ministry of Education. The trip may include visiting Chinese party-affiliated schools, studying how they work with leadership development, and overall, experiencing what is happening in a country of high growth (Lollike 2012). Most in-government programs are, however, attended by civil servants at lower positions.

Top civil servants achieve a large portion of their training through network activities. One such formalized network is the Forum for Top Executive Management, which is probably the strongest and most inspirational network for Danish top civil servants. The forum is a loosely organized cooperation among top civil servants across the state, regional, and municipal levels. It was established in 2003 by the Danish Ministry of Finance, the association of Danish municipalities (Local Government Denmark), and the association of the Danish Regions (Danish Regions). These are also the main financial contributors. Its first activity was to develop a code of conduct for top civil servants to guide the activities and ethics of top officials. The aim of the Forum for Top Executive Management is to further establish working networks of top civil servants and foster ongoing debate about what constitutes good executive-level management among researchers and top civil servants in Denmark in order to inspire and engage top executives ([www.publicgovernance.dk](http://www.publicgovernance.dk)). Twice a year, the forum arranges conferences that feature presentations from other top executives, scientists, advisers, and business executives. Most top executives across the three levels of government participate in the conferences, at which they have the opportunity to discuss different issues, both formally and informally. Moreover, the forum facilitates seven networks across top civil servants, each with an interest in a specific topic. Despite the fact that the forum does not offer any formalized training programs, it is an important player in the informal training of top officials ([www.publicgovernance.dk](http://www.publicgovernance.dk)) and almost all top civil servants are guided by the code of conduct (Survey 4). Initiation of The Forum for Top Executive Management has meant increased interaction and cooperation among top civil servants across the state, regional, and municipal levels.

In the late 2000s, the Copenhagen Business School (CBS) developed a formalized training program for top civil servants based on the code of conduct. The program consists of an international executive development trip; about 20 top civil servants visit a university in the United States (the past several years, Washington University) for one week, where they receive training and inspiration from a number of international (especially,

American) researchers and top officials and visit various American institutions. Before and after going abroad, the top civil servants receive training in Denmark to prepare for the discussions and ensuing translation and implementation of international perspectives. The top officials are accompanied by two Danish professors who translate the different lectures into a Danish context. The aspect of translating is emphasized by the top civil servants, just as the fact that the program is only for top officials. The program applies a very broad perspective on leadership and in the first of the programs the code of conduct ([www.publicgovernance.dk](http://www.publicgovernance.dk)) was the point of departure.

Other programs for the top civil servants in public administration have also been initiated, but none of them, except for the CBS program, has been institutionalized as a permanent program. For instance, a Danish consulting company arranges a recurring trip to New York. The program, however, has a much narrower focus, with an emphasis on performance management, and especially the measuring of effects and public values. The participants include fewer civil servants occupying the highest positions. This is probably because executives at upper levels ask for much broader educational programs that emphasize training, and involve other top civil servants with positions similar to their own. The program is also more popular in some policy areas (especially the Department of Employment), but a number of executives from different sectors have participated in the program. The top executives highlight the networking possibilities, with dialogue between top civil servants and international colleagues being given priority in the program (Lollike 2012).

Most top civil servants have received training abroad and in international training programs and summer schools at international universities. Courses offered at Harvard and Stanford Universities and the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania are especially popular (Lollike 2012). The courses often last from one to three weeks and apply a broad perspective on leadership. Thus, the overarching focus tends to be on strategizing, leadership, human resources, globalizing, and innovation. The combination of a strong focus on empirical cases and highly qualified teachers are the main reasons top civil servants emphasize these programs (Lollike 2012).

Over the last few years, training for civil servants has been increasingly formalized. In the 1990s, Danish universities started offering master's programs for executives and, since then, an increasing number of civil servants have enrolled in a master's degree program for leadership. In 2009, as part of the so-called quality reform, the government put an even stronger emphasis on the leadership training of public servants in top positions. Accordingly, the Danish Ministry of Finance, Local Government Denmark, and Danish Regions, and a number of unions, together with most of the Danish universities, initiated a flexible master's program in leadership for executives (Greve 2013). The program has been an enormous success, and since 2009, more than 1,000 civil servants have participated. For civil servants, an executive

master's degree in leadership (Master of Public Governance, MPG; master of public administration, MPA; and master of public management, MPM) has to some extent become the generally accepted entrance requirement for the higher positions and recently, a number of municipalities began requiring a master's degree for applicants seeking the top positions. In the state administration, a similar formalized demand is not as yet present, but it appears that if preleadership training becomes more important in order to enter the higher grades of civil service, it may well become the standardized prerequisite to reach higher government positions.

## **Conclusion**

Since medieval times, the Danish civil service has changed from a system inhabited by nobility (1100–1700) to a Weberian bureaucracy inhabited by legal professionals (1800 through the 1950s) to a kind of neo-Weberian bureaucracy inhabited by a more heterogeneous group of social science academics (1960– 2000s) who increasingly see themselves as both bureaucrats and leaders. In Pollitt and Bouckaert's terms (Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011), the current Danish system can be characterized as a Neo-Weberian State, having incorporated important elements from the New Public Management movement.

Top civil servants in the state administration (department heads and agency CEOs) typically have a university degree in social science (law, economics, or political science) and years of experience in the Danish state administration, and few have experience in other contexts. Since the 1990s, diploma (provided by university colleges) and master's level programs (provided by universities) in public management have steadily become part of the career track to the top civil servant positions. Additionally, there has been an increased focus on strategy, political competencies, leadership, and change management. Still, however, there are no formal training requirements, and there is a stable expectation of learning by doing over years of experience within the state administration. This means that most top civil servants receive their training abroad or enter ad hoc programs.

Top civil servants achieve a large portion of their training via networking activities, which include interactions between top civil servants from both the central and local levels. In 2003, the Forum for Top Executive Management in the Danish public sector was established ([www.publicgovernance.dk](http://www.publicgovernance.dk)) as an important professional network of top civil servants. The forum is made up of top servants from the state, municipalities, and regions, and has formulated the Danish Code for Chief Executive Excellence in public governance. It has had some impact in setting an agenda, organizing public sector CEO networks, and enhancing discourse on good governance. However, formal education programs for top CEOs once they have entered their position have been hard to establish.

## Note

1. The database was originally developed for a research project on leadership and contracting.

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# 10

## Finland

*Turo Virtanen*

### Introduction

Finland was part of Sweden 700 hundred years before it came under the rule of Russia, from 1809 to 1917. The historical background of Finnish civil service lies in the strengthening of the Swedish monarchy in the sixteenth century (Tiihonen and Ylikangas 1992). The top positions on the collegial boards were held by aristocrats, with no formal qualifications required.

In the eighteenth century, a hierarchical ranking system of positions was established. After the War of Finland between Sweden and Russia (1808–1809), Finland was made a grand duchy of imperial Russia. This status lasted until 1917, after which Finland became independent. Laws were, to a great extent, prepared and implemented by the Finnish Senate. In 1817, an act specifying the qualifications for state offices was passed, requiring a university education for all but the highest positions. For the highest positions, only the political support of the ruler was needed, and there was no public application for these posts.

The Swedish tradition of a strong and aristocratic central government was a fruitful background for competing with the imperial powers of St. Petersburg. It is often argued that the relatively strong position of central government in the Finnish political system had its genesis in the need to develop an autonomous civil service during the period of Russian rule. Finnish lawyers were favored over Swedish lawyers and soldiers who had been educated in the Russian army. Together with the proliferation of legal norms and the introduction of a system of government based on laws—common features in all European countries of that time—lawyers' influence increased the autonomy of Finland. At its peak, nearly all upper civil servants were lawyers in the agencies organized under the senate.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth-centuries during the Russian rule, the tradition of recruiting aristocratic bureaucrats from noble families was challenged by the pressure to make civil service more Russian (Savolainen 1996). It was countered in a political movement aimed at maintaining and

increasing the influence of the Finnish language and culture. The tensions led to the dismissals and resignations of many agency heads. Close links to Russia tempted the aristocrats within the Finnish government to follow the principles of favoritism that were traditionally applied in imperial Russia. At the same time, the system requiring formal qualifications was not abandoned.

The clearest change in the social background of Finland's top civil servants took place during the period between the country's independence and the Second World War (1910–1944). More civil servants were recruited from the middle class, and the percentage of those from the upper class fell from 20 percent to about 10 percent (Ylikangas 1996). The lower classes became more common in the sectors of government that were expanding rapidly (defense and agriculture). The number of Swedish-speaking lawyers with an upper-class background, once common in the ranks of top servants, shrank more than ever before. Top civil servants were still part of the social elite, because a university degree was a condition for appointment. But many unsuccessful efforts were made in the first decades of Finland's independence to lower the required qualifications. There were political pressures to appoint Finnish-speaking representatives from lower classes who had less education.

In the 1960s and 1970s, from 95 percent to 98 percent of top civil servants had an academic education, about the same number as in West Germany but more than in the UK (Ylikangas 1996). The proportion of lawyers filling the highest ministerial positions was 50–60 percent as of 1984, although the number of social scientists has been growing since then. There has never been a separate civil service education, such as the French *École Nationale d' Administration* (ÉNA). Civil servants are traditionally recruited from the open labor market.

## Political Structure

Finland is often characterized as a semipresidential parliamentary democratic republic with a multiparty political system (OECD 2010). The Finnish state is unitary, but municipalities have their own autonomy, based on the Constitution. Municipalities form the major part of local government, but some state agencies have regional and local organizations as well. The Parliament is unicameral. There are 12 fairly small ministries (with 200–300 people in each), one of which is the Prime Minister's Office. The government is typically a coalition government based on four to six political parties and is relatively weak. Ministries have their own decision-making powers, national agencies also have independent responsibilities based on law, and municipalities are political systems of their own. According to the comparative analysis by Pollitt and Bouckaert (2011: 50), Finland's state structure is unitary, decentralized, and fairly fragmented; the executive government is

consensual; minister-mandarin relations are fairly politicized; the administrative culture, formerly Rechtsstaat, is now more plural; and policy advice is provided mainly by the civil service.

The number of staff employed by state government has diminished radically since the 1980s, when the organizational form of major service organizations (railroads, postal, and telecommunication services, etc.) was changed to one of a public enterprise, and then later, to joint-stock companies. The number of staff employed under the state budget was 215,000 in 1988, but only 122,000 in 1996 (Ministry of Finance 1997). In 2009, the state employed 160,000 persons overall (or 6 percent of total employment). Of these, five thousand were employed in ministries; 24,000, in other central government agencies and institutions; and 54,000 held positions in decentralized national agencies (OECD 2010). In a recent major reform, universities were detached from the regular state budget and staff in 2010. This reform, together with a general policy to cut the staff to improve work productivity, further reduced the number of state personnel, which currently stands at 82,000 (2013; source: Ministry of Finance). The major elements of Finnish governmental system are described in Figure 10.1.

The appointment of top civil servants is influenced by politics in the sense that the ministers of the coalition government tend to appoint people close to their party. Top civil servants are not openly political figures and tend to

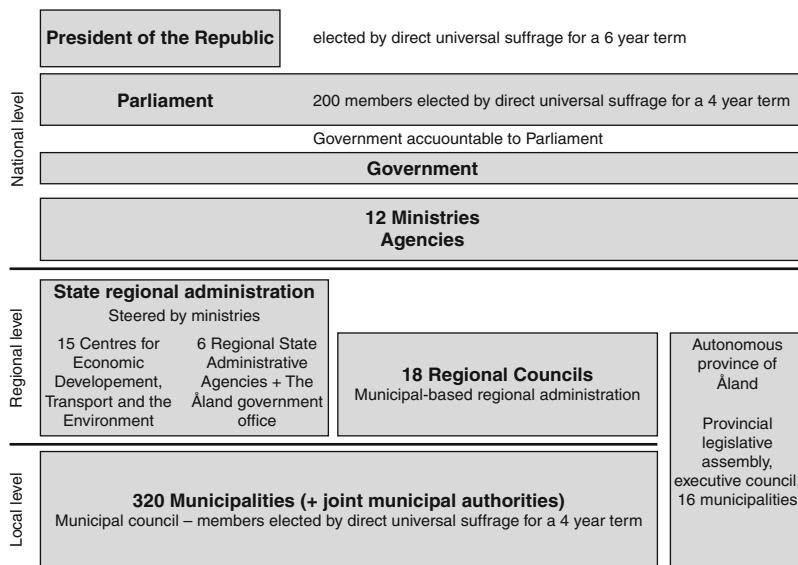


Figure 10.1 Finnish governmental system.

Source: Ministry of Finance 2010.

remain neutral when it comes to party politics. Since 2005, ministers have had the right to invite political state secretaries to assist on issues related to political steering. Quite often, these secretaries or other ministerial advisers are appointed to important positions in the state government or in major interest-group organizations. Permanent secretaries, appointed for a term of five to seven years, are in charge of the civil service of the ministry. Since the introduction of political state secretaries, the division of labor between the political state secretaries and the permanent secretaries has often been a topic of discussion. There is no up-to-date research on the mobility between the positions of politician as opposed to top administrator, but the tradition has been that top level administrators rarely become politicians. Sometimes top politicians retreat to high administrative positions, more often than not outside the core ministerial positions.

In Finland, the national civil service is a noncareer structure with open, merit-based recruitment (Demmke and Moilanen 2010). The Finnish governmental system does not have well-defined group of top civil servants in the same sense as the UK, the Netherlands, and the United States. However, there is a special group of civil servants who can be dismissed on very general grounds. The Finnish Act of Civil Service (750/1994, § 26–26a) lists a number of civil servants who can be dismissed “when there is an acceptable and justifiable reason, considering the nature of the position.” These constitute the top civil servants in Finland:

- (1) Chancellor of Justice and Deputy Chancellor of Justice
- (2) Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces
- (3) Permanent secretaries, permanent undersecretaries, and heads of the departments of the ministries, and other civil servants with the corresponding official rank in the ministries
- (4) Heads of the state agencies
- (5) Special advisers of the ministers
- (6) State Secretaries of the ministers

In the Civil Service Act bill presented to Parliament, the government explained its reasoning: these civil servants have status and authority that requires “specific trust or subordination to specific supervision.” They also are responsible for attaining governmental results. If these qualifications and performance goals are not achieved, the government must be able to terminate their contract.

Special advisers to and the (political) state secretaries of the ministers are openly political appointments, since these office holders are personal assistants to the ministers. The state secretary in the prime minister’s office has a similar status. Because they are mainly responsible for political management, they are not considered part of the civil service in the same sense as, for example, the permanent secretaries of the ministries and their

subordinates. The chancellor of justice and deputy chancellor of justice have an independent status as government supervisors, which sets them apart from the regular civil service working under the government in power. Also, the presidents of the Supreme Court and Supreme Administrative Court must be excluded if the trichotomy of state powers is followed.

Apart from these exceptions, the Finnish top civil service can be said to be composed of staff working in positions 2 through 4 of the above list (131 persons). Their remuneration is decided in a special way: centrally, in the form of a contract, by the Office for the Government as Employer (a department of the Ministry of Finance). If top civil servants are understood to be only those working in the central state government, then the directors of regional government must be excluded from the group. Depending on the relevance of this exclusion, the size of the group varies (see Table 10.1). In terms of training and developing practices, the group of top civil servants is defined more pragmatically. Inclusion of regional government and some other key civil servants working in the managerial positions of the ministries increases the number to about 160 managers.

## Organizational-Administrative Culture

During the late 1980s and early 1990s, Finnish public administration underwent a radical reform program. The main doctrine of the reforms can be traced back to New Public Management (NPM). The Finnish version of NPM has been more moderate than that of New Zealand or the United Kingdom. The nature of Finnish public administration reforms is closer to the idea of the Neo-Weberian State or new public governance than to NPM (for distinctions, see Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011, 22).

During the active phase of Finnish public administration reform, three major changes were executed: marketization (introduction of state

Table 10.1 Top civil servants by sex in Finland in June 2013

|  | Men        | Percent | Women     | Percent | Total      | Percent |
|--|------------|---------|-----------|---------|------------|---------|
| <b>Central government</b>  | <b>90</b>  | 72.6    | <b>34</b> | 27.4    | <b>124</b> | 100.0   |
| Ministries (12)  | 48         | 67.6    | 23        | 32.4    | 71         | 100.0   |
| National agencies (52)   | 42         | 79.2    | 11        | 20.8    | 53         | 100.0   |
| <b>Regional government</b>   | <b>14</b>  |         | <b>8</b>  |         | <b>22</b>  |         |
| Regional state administrative agencies (7)                           | 4          | 57,1    | 3         | 42.9    | 7          | 100.0   |
| Centres for economic development, transport and the environment (15) | 10         | 66.7    | 5         | 33.3    | 15         | 100.0   |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>104</b> | 71.2    | <b>42</b> | 28.8    | <b>146</b> | 100.0   |

Source: Ministry of Finance.

enterprises, customer orientation), abolishment of earmarks in state subsidies to municipalities, and management by results reform (Temmes and Kiviniemi 1997). These were, in turn, supported by a number of other reforms. The restructuring of central, regional, and local administrations began in 1993. The goal of these reforms has been to improve the productivity, economy, effectiveness, and quality of public services and public management. At same time, reforms have tried to increase the influence of Parliament and make public agencies more accountable for their performance. The role of Parliament has also been relatively strong in European affairs; since joining the European Union in 1995, the Grand Committee of Parliament has taken part in the formulation of Finnish positions in policy-making for the EU.

Since 2000, reforms have addressed the quality of public services; better coordination by horizontal policy programs; the relocation of agencies to support regional economies; and structural reorganization, including merging agencies and setting up new agencies (Ministry of Finance 2010). One major reform has been the division of provincial state offices into regional administrative agencies and centers for economic development, transport, and the environment. Over the years, the government program has been seen as a strategy portfolio, and ministers have been understood to adopt the role of strategic leaders in implementing the program. However, this has often been challenging, as ministers are also political actors who pay attention to their political future (Tiili 2008).

Key central reforms that have had significant influence on the powers of civil servants in state administration are *frame budgeting* (setting budget ceilings for the ministries before the actual budgeting is done), and *management by results* (MBR), with performance contracts between the ministries and public agencies. MBR was piloted at the end of the 1980s and rolled out to the whole of state government in the middle of the 1990s. There are no legal sanctions for not succeeding in achieving goals related to the performance of agencies. Lump sum budgeting has strengthened the position of agency management.

In the country rankings by Transparency International, Finland has ranked very well, earning the top position in many years (holding the top position again in 2012; <http://www.transparency.org/>). However, some recent cases involving the illegal funding of election campaigns have affected citizens' perception of ethics in government. In general, citizens' trust in governmental institutions has remained high, even though they perceive a threat of unethical behavior in the working of old-boy networks affecting political decision-making (Salminen and Mäntysalo 2013). In the study of House and colleagues (2004), the leadership culture of Finland is characterized by relatively low power distance, similar to Sweden but not as low as in Denmark or the Netherlands. It is also characterized by relatively high future orientation, again as in Sweden, but not as high as in Denmark

or the Netherlands. This is assumed to affect leadership and management practices within public organizations.

## Expectations of Leaders

The Finnish government (Council of State) crafted a resolution on central government management policy in 2008, covering issues of both leadership and management. An important, formal decision, this resolution outlines the principles by which the central government recruits and develops competent managers. From a terminology standpoint, it is important to note that it is not easy to differentiate between leadership and management in the Finnish language, as there is only one basic word (*johtaminen*) that may mean both but has many modifications available in Finnish (see Virtanen 2010). The English translation of the resolution primarily uses the word "management."

According to the resolution, a well-managed public administration is a national success factor. The goal of the resolution is to make management appointments in central government attractive, and for the managers appointed to have the potential to succeed. The resolution acknowledges the fact that the duties of senior management have become more demanding over time and include the following paradoxes:

- Be interest-neutral but competent in the political field.
- Care for your organization but commit to the shared goals of central government.
- Implement top-down decision but take a customer-responsive approach.
- Be a line manager in central government but be an active network player.
- Ensure continuity of operations but be a change manager.
- Assume responsibility for your organization and accept its limited maneuverability.
- Be a manager and be an expert.

At the time of the resolution more than 60 percent of senior civil servants in office could retire by 2011, and almost all current senior servants will have retired by 2020. This is understood as a unique window of opportunity for central government management policy and provides an opportunity for government to both recruit capable and motivated managers with development potential and to strive for coherence and diversity in a balanced way. "Coherence" refers to a shared management culture and "diversity" is understood as varied backgrounds, duties, career paths—and also as strengthening the share of women. The resolution gives the newer managers the explicit role of reforming public sector management.

The resolution sets the following “immediate goals” for management policy:

- (1) Attractive management roles and good development potential.
- (2) Professional and sufficiently coherent senior civil service management.
- (3) Potential of managers to perform their duties well.

The first point (management roles and development potential) refers to the competitive advantages of senior positions. The general competitiveness of career potential compared with other employers is addressed, as are the characteristics of governmental work: prominent duties in society, a strong values basis, and communalism. The resolution also expects that “senior managers in particular must commit to the shared goals of central government and the new management practice, both by their personal example and as a community.” The appeal of this element of attractiveness may not be shared by everyone, but at the same time it is a clear indication of administrative values and ethics, without which no government can function effectively. Among other expectations are an increased mobility between units of central government, a preference for fixed-term appointments (5–7 years), and a broad-based experience.

Many elements of the first point refer to career flexibility of senior managers. In fact, the background for this is a longstanding discussion about the possibility of weakening the sectorial nature of the Council of the State as a collection of separate ministerial organizations (i.e., silos). Crossing the boundaries of administrative branches and sectors of state, municipal, and private organizations, and creating a more professional culture of management have long been the development goals of a ministerial management system. In 2006, the government’s bill (245/2006) to Parliament proposed a new system for senior government managers that gave them permanent contract with the Ministry of Finance; but they would have rotated through consecutive fixed-term leading positions in the ministries and agencies of the central government. The result would have been a kind of career system of professional public managers with the formal status of permanent civil servants. The bill was criticized by many in the parliamentary hearings, including legal experts, and it was finally withdrawn. It was only after this failure that the above-mentioned resolution of management policy was crafted. However, the same issues for managerial careers are part of a more recent reform effort pursuing a merger of separate ministerial organizations to form a joint Council of State as a single organization.

The second point (professional and coherent senior management) underscores the fact that as an employer the government is active in supporting the career development of managers, although the principal responsibility for development and career progression rests with the managers themselves. The resolution points out that, at its best, career progression involves

flexible moves between positions of expertise, project leadership, and line management. The support of individuals is complemented with measures strengthening senior managers as resources both for particular organizations and the whole of central government. To this end, the resolution sets out a shared development program, Managers of the Future.

The third point (potential of managers) refers to employer support for job performance. The resolution emphasizes achievement as a key success criterion and promotes clear-cut supervisor relationships and an active compensation policy related to the performance management process. Ministries are expected to introduce shared "professional management evaluation principles and practices, prepared jointly by the ministries." The introduction of personal management agreements is linked to personal target setting and evaluation.

All in all, the resolution promotes a performance-oriented management system in which senior managers circulate within the central government to create a set of shared principles of public management and broad competencies based on crossing sectors and levels of government. In a way, this indicates the will to create a career-system within a decentralized system. The promotion of shared senior management principles and career progression based on personal development and evidence of meeting performance expectations can be interpreted as a prioritized view of leadership at the top level of management.

The implementation of this resolution has begun. In addition to the launch of the Managers of the Future development program (2008), the Ministry of Finance has established recruiting guidelines for senior managers of ministers and directors of state governmental agencies (2011); the competencies of the senior managers of ministries have been updated to include, as a new element, "broad experience," by an amendment (520/2011) in the decree of the Council of the State (2011); and the principles of the personal management agreement have been specified by the Office of Government as Employer (2013). Recruitment guidelines issued by the Ministry of Finance specify that the most important management objective is to bring about results. The skills and abilities needed for management are very much the same as in any organization, but in state government, the manager needs to pay attention to large-scale societal effectiveness and political steering and possess an ability to interact with societal actors accordingly.

The understanding and expectations of good leadership culminate in the competencies required for recruitment. While each appointment is unique, the Ministry of Finance expects that some common guidelines to be applied in the recruitment process. Perhaps the most important change is the introduction of "broad experience" to replace the traditional criterion of familiarity with the administrative branch or the governmental function in question. The Ministry gives specifications for broad experience: work experience in different jobs in different organizations, for example, in

state government, municipal government, private sector, or in international tasks. The scope and weight of broad experience is to be assessed independently in each case, and the Ministry does not want to establish any specific assessment measure. The goal is that the person has experience from "more than one job or organization," but even this is not considered compulsory.

In addition to broad experience, the Ministry specifies other "grounds of selection" for senior managers: a master's degree, management skills shown in practice, experience in management, and other requirements (language proficiency or certain task-specific competencies depending on the task). The criteria have not been specified to this degree before. The following criteria for management skills shown in practice are specified in two pages:

- (1) Exhibiting leadership and creating of work community
- (2) Being able to improve the efficiency and quality of processes, supervise of operations, manage resources, and coordinate operations
- (3) Achieving results and steering organization
- (4) Having influence over the operational environment and managing change
- (5) Having general expertise in public administration
- (6) Being familiar with the management related to matters of the European Union, as required by the task
- (7) Having the ability to pursue continuous personal development

The expectations are a mixture of the knowledge, skills, and values of individual managers, but these expectations also cover the process of recruitment. Although many aspects of recruitment are determined by law, there is some flexibility. The guidelines reflect some ideas of good leadership and management, but the training practices do not take into account the formulations of official documents as the starting point in developing learning outcomes. However, the idea of professional public management seems to be widely shared among the key actors responsible for training. This was reflected already in 1997, when the Finnish government decided on the qualifications and appointment of higher civil servants (VM/22/97), recommending more professional recruiting procedures. There is no systematic information about the preferred managerial ideologies of the trainees. However, the feedback of the trainees is generally positive.

## **Organization of Training**

The main actor in policy issues related to the civil service and to civil service training and development is the Ministry of Finance. The Ministry is not involved in the provision of actual training. All ministries and national agencies are responsible for developing the competencies of their staff, and they have the freedom to acquire the training and development services

from wherever they choose to do so. HAUS Finnish Institute of Public Management, Ltd. has a special status (described later) in providing these services for state government, but it has to compete with other actors. In this sense, the organization of training is very decentralized.

The personnel and governance policy department of the Ministry of Finance has established a management policy support group to assist the ministries and coordinate management reform. Management policy and the development of management in state government are also dealt with in the management forum of state government and peer groups, the forum of personnel management, employer groups, the group of directors general, and so on. The steering style is interactive and participatory, based on the needs of the ministries and agencies and even of individual managers.

The Ministry of Finance decides on the trainees for the Managers of the Future program, based on recommendations by the various ministries. The Ministry covers half of the total fee; the other half is the responsibility of the trainee's employer. The program started in 2008 with 25 participants, and after the sixth program, in 2013, a total of 150 people have completed the course. The program is currently the only centrally organized training program within the authority of the Ministry of Finance. Over the years, the Ministry has launched and implemented several projects with the goal of improving management (Ministry of Finance website 2013); the majority of these are related to human resources management and leadership. Historically, financial management and international management have not been topics, until recently. This is partly because of the division of labor within the Ministry of Finance, since the responsibility for fiscal policy and fiscal management is in the hands of the budget department, which is not charged with agency-level issues of financial management. Performance management and quality management are the responsibility of the department of administrative policy and public management.

Since 2010, HAUS has enjoyed legal status (act 944/2009) as an in-house organization for training and consultancy in the Finnish government. HAUS was established in 1971 as a state training center. It enlarged its activities and clientele in the 1980s and 1990s, functioning both as a public enterprise and a state-owned company. Today, HAUS is a 100 percent state-owned company with a business strategy for in-house training and consultancy for the Finnish state government, but it also operates abroad. At least 90 percent of its revenue comes from in-house clients. The special organizational status of HAUS has proved interesting to other international governmental training agencies. For its in-house activities, HAUS does not need to follow the act of public procurement (348/2007) with the ensuing processes of competitive tendering. However, HAUS has to be competitive in terms of price and quality in a market that includes other training providers, since government clients always have the option of choosing other providers. The organization of a private company ensures more flexibility in terms of financial management

and human resources management than that of a regular agency financed by the state budget. State ownership ensures that the company board and leadership of HAUS are responsive to the government priorities of training and consulting within the whole of state government.

## **The Content and Method of Training<sup>1</sup>**

The majority of Finnish top civil servants have a master's degree (65 percent), but one-third (33 percent) hold a degree of a licentiate or a doctor (Lehtonen 2013b). About one-third (38 percent) have a degree in law; 12 percent, a degree in economics; and 12 percent, a degree in one of the other social sciences. The numbers of those with a degree in agriculture and forest sciences (8 percent), natural sciences (7 percent), and technical sciences (7 percent) are almost equal; the rest (16 percent) are spread evenly over smaller groups.

The general management training for Finnish state government has four components (Ministry of Finance 2013, webpage): (1) The Managers of the Future program; (2) state government programs; (3) Specialist Qualification in Management (Johtamisen erikoisammattitutkinto, or JET) training provided as a competency-based qualification (an official category of adult education leading to diploma; see Finnish National Board of Education 2011) for those already working as managers; and (4) personal support of individual managers. The actual provision of the first two is the responsibility of HAUS. Public agencies may acquire tailor-made personal support for their individual managers from different sources. There is no official framework for the training and coaching of managers in state government, only the general expectations described earlier. In this sense, not only the organization, but also the philosophy of training civil servants has been significantly decentralized.

### **Managers of the Future Program**

The program is part of the general goal of improving governmental management policy. Participants are only from the state central government. The content of the program is built around changes and strategies of the key clusters of public administration, varying slightly with each course. In 2013, the modules of the program were leadership and strategic environment; forecasting the future; brave leadership; network modules related to Parliament, municipalities, and companies; and Finnish leadership in world-class competition. The methods used in training have included case study exercises, personal assessment of leadership behavior, role-playing games, and scenario working.

### **Programs of HAUS Finnish Institute of Public Management, Ltd.**

HAUS is responsible for state government programs for the training of civil servants, few of whom are targeted directly as top civil servants. Work Spirit

of Top Civil Servants (VALTIO-TYVI) is a coaching program for 6–9 top civil servants at a time, including analysis of the work welfare of each participant and focusing on such themes as renewal, creativity, personal resources, and recovery. The program aims at supporting individuals who pursue “excellence” in their work.

Strategies of Public Management (VALTIO-JUST) is targeted to those working in demanding managerial jobs in state government. The content reflects the needs of the whole-of-government view of strategic management. It sees government as the key actor in the strategic steering of state agencies, and recognizes central themes of strategy and implementation, as well as strategic leadership at the level of personal development for the manager.

These two programs, together with the Managers of the Future program, are the key programs arranged for and offered to top civil servants. For middle managers and experts, there exist two other programs that many current top managers participated in earlier in their careers, along with around 1,000 other participants.

### Other Training

Each ministry and national agency is responsible for improving the competencies of their managers and staff. Ministries may pursue training personnel in all the organizations in their policy sector. For example, the Ministry of Employment and Economy has been active in training personnel at the central, regional, and local levels of its administrative branch, but it has no training targeted specifically to top civil servants. However, it has been active in developing the work of the management board of the ministry by employing external leadership consultancy (Aaltonen and Haikala 2012). Activities have included also individual coaching of members of the board.

As another example, the prime minister’s office has launched a program for permanent secretaries of ministries (highest civil servant position, responsible for the entire civil service within the ministry). The program, initiated by the prime minister’s (political) state secretary, strives to develop joint leadership of the ministries (Kulmala 2013). The goals include supporting the development of leadership skills, strengthening joint working models, and developing the leadership role and tasks of permanent secretaries. The method is based on coaching and utilization of participants’ own experience.

Sitra (the Finnish Innovation Fund) and Aalto Executive Education, Ltd. (affiliated with Aalto University) started leadership training on sustainable financial policy in 2013 (<http://www.sitra.fi/en>). The goal is to organize two courses annually, each with a length of seven days, for 30 participants. The target group includes the top decision-makers from diverse societal sectors, all having the common need of knowing more about financial policies in their work. Senior civil servants belong to the target group.

## Needs to Developing Training

The Ministry of Finance has provided a job-satisfaction survey to state agencies since 2004 (Lehtonen 2013a). In the last work community survey in 2012 on the issues of leadership and management, staff dissatisfaction is greatest around issues of the openness of preparatory work and decision-making (32 percent were very dissatisfied or dissatisfied), followed by leaders being an example and showing direction (27 percent), internal communication (26 percent), and the general organization of work (24 percent). Respondents were most satisfied with just treatment by supervisors (68 percent satisfied or very satisfied); feeling supported by their supervisor in work and the creation of its prerequisites (64 percent); and supervisor feedback about the results of work, professional capacity, and development (54 percent). On average, satisfaction levels have been improving since 2006.

The results of staff surveys are used both at the agency and state government levels to improve leadership and management and its training. Also, the challenges of the operative environment of top civil servants have been investigated. In a recent survey of top civil servants (Lehtonen et al. 2013), some respondents claimed that, along with the customary scarcity of resources, a stop-go mentality, short-sightedness, and nonworking steering from politicians and ministries also weaken leadership and management, both now and in the future, but given the poor response rate (20 percent), the evidence is not strong.

## Conclusion

The state civil service is based on the principle of a noncareer system with an open merit-based recruitment. The training system similarly does not make a distinction between people who have a career inside of state government and those who have a career outside of state government before entering managerial positions within state government. There is no fast-track training system. Each public agency is responsible for its training practices under the very general steering of the Ministry of Finance and general governmental decisions about management policy, both based on information rather than regulation.

Training is very decentralized. A key provider of training is HAUS, a fully state-owned company with the legal status to operate as an in-house provider. HAUS has competitors, and ministries and agencies have the right to acquire training services on the open market. There are no statistics concerning the market shares of the providers of training and coaching, but HAUS has a unique role among the providers.

The mobility of top civil servants is generally seen as insufficient in terms of breaking through the boundaries between administrative branches. There have been attempts to create a common pool of public managers in the central state government, but so far there is no formal system in place. Among the

experts responsible for centralized steering of management policy, there is a general goal to develop public management as a more professional and generic area of competencies, including the ability to see state government and public policies as an integrated whole. Training and development is understood as an instrument in dismantling the negative effects of "administrative silos." This instrument is relatively weak compared to the goal of creating management careers in a structure of merged ministries.

The training is relatively broad and generic, as opposed to narrow and technical. The employers of the trainees pay all the costs of training, but are responsible for only half of the cost of the Managers of the Future program. The training is evaluated by the providers of training. In addition to customer surveys, the Ministry of Finance conducts more general staff surveys and organizes external evaluations of the general state of the leadership and management and needs for development (e.g., Temmes et al. 2011).

## Note

1. Some descriptions of the role of the Ministry of Finance and HAUS in the training of top civil servants and the content of the programs are based on website information of these organizations: [http://www.vm.fi/vm/en/12\\_government\\_as\\_employer/07\\_Leadership/index.jsp](http://www.vm.fi/vm/en/12_government_as_employer/07_Leadership/index.jsp) and <http://www.haus.fi/en/>. The study is also based on to background interviews: CEO Anneli Temmes (HAUS), and financial counselor Ari Holopainen (Ministry of Finance).

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# 11

## Germany

*Werner Jann and Sylvia Veit*

### Introduction

The ideal leadership profile for top civil servants in the German ministerial administration is that of a “generalist.” From the generalist perspective, the professional qualification of civil servants is not primarily based on specific policy expertise, but on well-rounded competencies that are required in all domains of the federal administration. Traditionally, in the German politico-administrative system, those capabilities are assigned to fully qualified lawyers who acquire leadership competencies over the course of a long, step-by-step career in the civil service. When appointed as a “political civil servant,” hence, as director-general or state secretary in a federal ministry, these people are in their fifties, and have served in up to twelve different positions in the civil service. However, in recent years, more top positions have gradually come to be recruited from outside, thus adding experiences from other areas to leadership positions (e.g., private companies, interest groups, or academia). Despite the high relevance of the merit principle for the promotion of civil servants in Germany, there is no overall policy governing personal management, training, and development. Further, because of the established institution of “political civil servants,” and due to the experiences of the Nazi dictatorship, the idea that top civil servant positions are basically apolitical and mainly “managerial” was never accepted in Germany. Instead, affiliation, or at least sympathies to political parties are widely accepted selection criteria for senior civil servants. Taking these apparently somewhat conflicting observations—that is, the tension between merit bureaucracy and politicization—as a starting point, this chapter deals with training of senior civil servants in the German federal bureaucracy, its historical and cultural antecedents, and recent developments.

### Ministerial-Mandarin Relations

Political-administrative relations are certainly not a new topic of academic interest. More than a century ago, Woodrow Wilson and Max Weber dealt

with this question and developed very influential theoretical ideas. Wilson's model of the politics-administration dichotomy assumed a separation of roles between bureaucrats and politicians in democratic political systems, but he also pointed to the "ambiguous position [of public administrators] of having to follow orders, even if they considered themselves more capable than their nominal superiors [the politicians]" (Peters 2009: 9). Weber stressed the dependency of politicians on bureaucrats was because of two types of knowledge: *Fachwissen* (which is a bureaucrat's superior professional expertise) and *Dienstwissen* (which is their procedural and institutional knowledge of the functioning of public administration). However, he described the division of labor and the fundamental values and outlooks of politicians and of bureaucrats as being deeply ingrained. Empirical research from the second half of the twentieth century has fundamentally questioned the "instrumentalist" concept inherent in Wilson's and Weber's descriptions of political-administrative relations (for Germany, Mayntz and Scharpf 1973; Döhler 2007). The first comprehensive and comparative empirical study on this topic, the Comparative Elite Study (CES I) was carried out by the American political scientists Joel Aberbach, Robert Putnam, and Bert Rockman. From 1969 to 1973, they interviewed about 1,300 top bureaucrats and politicians in seven Western democracies (United States, United Kingdom, France, Germany, Sweden, Italy, The Netherlands) with respect to their role perceptions, working tasks, and political preferences. In order to explore cross-country differences in political-administrative relations, a typology of four "role images" was developed (Aberbach et al. 1981: 4–20): While image I, referring to Max Weber and Woodrow Wilson, hypothesized a strict division of competencies between politicians and bureaucrats, images II, III, and IV presumed—to a different extent—that both politicians and bureaucrats are involved in policymaking.

As a result of the German case study, Image III—hypothesizing that top bureaucrats are engaged in both policy formulation *and* interest negotiation, but that "the policymaking influence of civil servants tends to diminish or even vanish at moments of acute social crisis or major reforms" (Aberbach et al. 1981: 15)—was considered to be most appropriate to describe political-administrative relations in Germany. Despite the high degree of bureaucratic involvement in the policymaking process and a high degree of "functional politicization" (Derlien and Mayntz 1989), empirical findings showed clearly differentiated career patterns of politicians and top civil servants (Derlien 2003). Top administrators usually had a background as career civil servants. After having completed a university exam in law, most of them started working in the state or federal civil service at a young age, moving up the hierarchy and becoming administrative leaders in their fifties. Politicians, however, usually had held a career in another sector—for example, as lawyers or teachers—before becoming professional politicians.

One important and defining feature of the German system is that all civil servants, from the lowest to the highest level, can be members of political parties, and very often are. Usually, this membership is well known within ministries and agencies, and in some ministries, party members are even organized into specific party groups (nicknamed *Betriebskampfgruppen*). Allowing party membership (even for soldiers) is one of the many lessons the “founding fathers” of the Federal Republic drew from the experiences of the downfall of the Weimar Republic and the rise and success of Nazi Germany. Despite the apolitical and antiparty dogma prevailing in Germany at that time, most top civil servants were decisively antidemocratic, supported right-wing politicians and ideas, and later played an important role in the crimes of the NSdAP (National Socialist German Worker’s Party), many, indeed, joining this after Germany became a one-party state in 1933. Thus, the ideology of the apolitical, neutral civil servant only interested in the “common good” was brutally discredited. According to a famous quote by a liberal constitutional lawyer, the apolitical civil servant was the “living lie of the authoritarian state” (*Lebenslüge des Obrigkeitstaates*, Radbruch 1930). As a result, Germans prefer their civil servants to declare where they stand and not hide behind a false veil of political disinterest. This does not mean that all civil servants are members of a political party, but that being a member is a legitimate and respectable expression of one’s political views.<sup>1</sup>

Empirical studies on the federal administrative elite indicate a high degree of continuity in terms of recruitment mechanisms, role perceptions, and attitudes of top civil servants in the federal ministerial bureaucracy (e.g., Derlien and Mayntz 1989; Derlien 2003; Schwanke and Ebinger 2006; Derlien 2008). Yet over the last decade, some changes can be identified:

- (1) Party politicization, that is, the share of party members among top bureaucrats increased from the 1970s to the 1990s (Derlien 2003).<sup>2</sup> Senior civil servants mostly sympathize with the government parties (Bogumil et al. 2012: 161). “Political civil servants” (i.e., state secretaries and directors-general in federal ministries) today are somewhat more often replaced when a new government takes office than was previously the case (Schwanke and Ebinger 2006: 241).
- (2) Traditionally, senior civil service positions in Germany were almost exclusively filled by men (e.g., only 1.7 percent of all state secretary positions in federal ministries from 1949 to 1999 were held by women; Derlien 2008: 297). This has changed, but women are still underrepresented in administrative top positions: Only 7.3 percent of the federal state secretaries and 14.3 percent of directors-general 2002–2013 (n = 341) were women.
- (3) The proportion of lawyers among senior civil servants gradually went down: While 77 percent of the administrative top positions in Bonn were held by lawyers in 1954, the share of lawyers amounted to 64 percent in

1984 (Derlien 1990) and has further decreased to about 51 percent (Veit and Scholz 2015) today.

- (4) With regard to career patterns, it is remarkable that—despite the continuous significance of a rather “classical” civil service career—a growing number of top civil servants in federal ministries have experience in political office, not as elected members of Parliament, but as professionals working for parties and/or Parliaments (Jann and Veit 2010). Moreover, the proportion of top bureaucrats with a “two-sector-career” (*ibid.*) as well as the intersectoral mobility of state secretaries (Derlien 2008: 305) slightly increased. And finally, outside recruitment for top administrative positions has gained in importance (Fleischer 2011).

In Max Weber’s time, it was the privilege of bureaucracy to provide policy advice. Over the past decades, in Germany as in other Western democracies, the number of competing actors providing policy advice increased considerably. Policy advisory systems diversified in response to the growing importance of external “think tanks,” academic policy advice, and formal policy evaluations or technological developments. Today, the policy expertise of ministerial bureaucracy is increasingly supplemented (and sometimes substituted) by the policy advice of actors as different as, for instance, governmental research agencies, permanent scientific advisory bodies, ad hoc commissions, and think tanks or consulting firms (Döhler 2012). However, in Germany, unlike in other countries, the changing demands on policymaking under the conditions of globalization, Europeanization, the increasing importance of media logics for politics (Hustedt 2013), and the decreasing dependence of national governments on bureaucracies as the sole suppliers of expertise did not lead to significant changes in the formal structure of the ministries. In some countries, such as Austria or France, the policy advisory function of line administration partly passed over to ministerial cabinets, and political advisers gained in importance in the UK, but there was no comparable development in Germany. Since “political civil servants” enjoy the trust of their political masters (an ideal principal-agent relationship, since they can be dismissed at any time without any reason given), there has been no need for “special advisers” or “spin doctors,” even though there is some evidence that the personal offices of ministers, the so-called *Leitungsbereich* (leadership area), has gained importance in recent years (Hustedt 2013).

In sum, ministerial-mandarin relations in federal ministries in Germany are characterized by close collaboration in policymaking and a high level of functional and party politicization of top bureaucrats on one hand, and differentiated career patterns of politicians and bureaucrats on the other. However, the growing importance of outside recruitment and the professional experience of bureaucrats in the political sector indicate some changes. Remarkably, these changes are more advanced at the *Länder* (state)

level, where many ministers have a professional background in the civil service, and where a considerable share of top civil servants have gained professional experiences in the political sector—either as professionals working for political parties or for the Parliament, or as elected politicians (Jann and Veit 2010).

### **Expectations of Leaders: Still the “Michelangelo of the Public Sector”?<sup>3</sup>**

As noted earlier, the ideal leadership profile for top civil servants in the German ministerial administration has traditionally been that of a “generalist.” Top civil servants must possess professional qualifications that enable them to work in leading positions in the public sector, regardless of the specific functions of these organizations. From the “generalist perspective,” the professional qualification of a civil servant is not primarily based on a particular policy expertise; instead, well-rounded competencies are required in all domains of federal administration. In the German politico-administrative system, those capabilities traditionally were assigned to fully qualified lawyers. This picture of administrative generalists does not contradict the expectation that leaders be exceedingly competent in their area of responsibility. As a state secretary in the federal ministry of the Interior put it 30 years ago:

Executives have to be exceptionally well-qualified in their special field. Specialized knowledge, however, does not mean that senior civil servants will themselves have to enter into the labyrinth...of detailed knowledge...But it is their task to make use of the expert knowledge of their staff and to have them prepare the basic essentials for decision. (Hartkopf 1983: 41)

Other key skills of public leaders, such as political sensitivity and personnel management, are supposed to be acquired “on the job” over the course of a long career in the public sector. The ideal is that this learning process is facilitated by a substantial rotation of generalists within the ministerial administrative corps. However, unlike in countries such as the UK, rotation in Germany very seldom referred to interdepartmental mobility. Instead, it is practiced, if at all, within individual departments.<sup>4</sup> An exception in this regard is the secondment of ministerial officials to the Federal Chancellery, mostly for about one legislative period. A secondment to the Chancellery is often associated with further promotion in the “parent ministry” afterward (Schröter 2004). The dominant career for German civil servants, however, is within one ministry, and the tendency to recruit employees at the entry level and retain them in the same organization until they reach the top positions fosters specialization in areas of professional expertise, making each department in the end a “cultural fortress.”

Also intersector mobility, as a means of gaining specific competencies for leadership positions in the public sector, does not have any strong tradition in the German ministerial bureaucracy. In October 2004, the federal government launched an exchange program for ministerial officials aimed at a temporary personnel exchange between federal ministries and the private sector to facilitate a knowledge transfer and enhance mutual understanding of structures, processes, and interests. However, very few ministerial officials participated in the program, probably because work experience in the private sector is not regarded as an effective means of accelerating a ministerial civil service career in Germany.

Over the last two decades or so, a growing awareness has emerged that specific competencies, such as EU-related knowledge, languages, international experience, and management skills,<sup>5</sup> could well be important for senior civil service positions. Moreover, the decrease in the number of lawyers in top positions, as well as the growing proportion of outsiders and individuals with a mixed-career background among top civil servants, reflects that there is a demand for competencies that cannot be learned "on the job" in the course of a classical civil service career. However, these new demands have not fundamentally changed the established routines of recruitment, training, and promotion in federal ministerial administration. Hence, there has been no radical change in the ideal leadership model in Germany. Due to the high degree of continuity among the formal organizational structure of federal ministries in Germany, the ideal senior executive still is much more a well-rounded "Michelangelo of the public sector" with a strong professional background in one ministry than merely a manager, a policy adviser, or a policymaker.

## **Where Do Young Executives and Top Civil Servants Receive Their Training?**

This section discusses the training system for ministerial officials, particularly top executives, in Germany. We start with information on the educational background of higher civil servants in Germany, followed by a description of the training institutions. Then, we discuss whether, or to what extent, the education and training systems in Germany are merged or separate. Finally, we outline the governance model of training in the German federal administration.

Regarding the university education of ministerial officials, three characteristics have to be highlighted: First, in Germany there are no elite schools—like the ENA in France, or Oxford and Cambridge in Great Britain—for educating future top bureaucrats.<sup>6</sup> Second, as already mentioned, more than half of the ministerial top officials in Germany have completed university studies in law. The remainder are social scientists, economists, natural scientists, graduates in technical subjects, or graduates in the humanities, all in

approximately equal shares. Third, ministerial officials in top positions often have completed a doctorate (PhD): For state secretaries and directors general in federal ministries from 1999 to 2013, this applied to 38 percent.

Further, education and “on the job” training for higher civil servants in the German federal administration is provided by various institutions, the most prominent being the Federal Academy for Public Administration (*Bundeskademie für Öffentliche Verwaltung*—BAKÖV). The BAKÖV was founded in 1969 and was modeled after the British Civil Service College (Derlien 2003: 406). It runs offices in Berlin and Brühl (near Cologne), and has 52 permanent staff members, most of them working in Brühl. In addition, there are 350 trainers and 150 coaches working for the BAKÖV, providing about 1,300 courses with approximately 16,000 participants every year (BMI 2013: 4–5). Trainers at BAKÖV are professional freelancers or come from the private sector (52.3 percent), but are also university professors and lecturers (7.4 percent), and civil servants (40.3 percent; BAKÖV 2013: 56). The BAKÖV has its own annual budget of about 3.5 million euro. Open seminars are financed from this budget, while closed seminars for specific departments or agencies have to be paid by the respective institution.

Aside from the BAKÖV, there are about 30 other governmental institutions (BAKÖV 2008a: 83) providing training for higher civil servants in the federal administration in Germany. These institutes offer specialized training for single agencies or policy areas, such as the Federal Finance Academy (providing training for higher civil servants in the federal and *Länder* tax authorities and in the tax divisions of federal and state ministries of finance), the Federal Police Academy (providing training for the federal police), the Federal Academy for Security Policy (providing training in the field of security policy), the Meteorological Training and Conference Center (providing training for the German National Meteorological Service), or the Leadership Academy of the Federal Employment Agency. As in the case of the BAKÖV, the trainers have various backgrounds: Some are permanent staff members of the training academies, some are government officials from federal ministries or agencies, and some are freelancers or consultants.

In addition to the high number of training institutions, most departments and agencies also organize training internally, either with their own civil servants as lecturers or by hiring external trainers. This decentralized model of training for top civil servants in German ministries is part of the constitutional principle of departmental autonomy. In 2008, the BAKÖV tried to formulate a comprehensive overview of the maze of training courses and institutions. The report, which stressed that not all ministries cooperated in its preparation, showed that about 70 percent of internally organized training concerns skills that are not sector-specific, such as soft skills or project management (BAKÖV 2008a: 84). Altogether, two-thirds of training measures in the federal administration (more than 5,000 seminars a year) are organized internally by the different departments and agencies, and

one-third are provided by one of the governmental training institutions. The total expenses for training amounts to about 110 million euro a year for about 108,000 civil servants in the entire federal administration (BAKÖV 2008a: 42, 85).

Remarkably, there is no separate institution providing training for senior civil servants, and the number of training courses exclusively addressing top executives at the BAKÖV and other governmental academies is limited. Hence, the top ranking civil servants rarely participate in BAKÖV or other institutional training (BAKÖV 2008a: 23).

While the majority of "on the job" training is organized as in-government training, there are also a variety of external providers and universities offering training or coaching for higher civil servants. This field has considerably expanded over the last few years. For senior civil servants, the German University for Administrative Sciences in Speyer is the academic institution with the longest tradition of providing short-term training for officials in the federal and (mainly) *Länder* administrations, and to a lesser extent, for local authorities. The training courses are held by full professors from Speyer University. Speyer University also offers a one-term program for lawyers aiming at a civil service career (between their first and their second state examination in law).

While education and on-the-job training systems for higher civil servants in Germany traditionally have been separate, there are some developments that point to a blurring of the boundaries between the two systems. First, there is a tendency to embed training in academic education by creating specific executive MA programs on public management or public governance. Since 2005, the MA program Master of European Governance and Administration (MEGA) has been providing training, mainly for higher civil servants from Germany and France. MEGA is a collaboration project of the BAKÖV, the École Nationale d' Administration, as well as four additional universities (University of Potsdam, Humboldt University Berlin, Speyer University, and Université Paris I Sorbonne). This illustrates a trend toward the merging of education and training, even if this primarily refers to executive MA programs. Second, over the last decade, some private public policy and governance schools have been established, for example, the Hertie School of Governance in Berlin, which was founded in 2003 to prepare students, as well as professionals and executives, for public leadership positions. The Hertie School offers an EMPM (Executive Master of Public Management) for experienced professionals. Lecturers come from academia, the public sector, or business. All training courses are provided in English in order to attract participants not only from the German civil service, but also from other countries. Most of these executive MA programs or certificate programs include modules focusing on international competencies. In addition, since the second half of the 1990s, several state universities have started to offer training courses for civil servants, often by establishing specific institutes

or schools, such as the Potsdam Center for Policy and Management, or the Management School of the University of Kassel.

It is obvious that there is a wide range of different training institutions and courses for higher civil servants in the federal administration. But how is participation in "on the job" training measures organized? Are there mandatory courses? How is training intermingled with personnel development and personnel management?

First of all, it is important to stress again that according to the constitutional principle of departmental autonomy, recruitment and personnel management in the federal administration are the responsibility of each individual department. Because of that, it is not possible to develop and implement a top-down strategy for training and leadership development in the federal administration in Germany. Joint efforts in personnel development and training are restricted to voluntary agreements. It is therefore not surprising that an interview study on training of officials in federal ministries in 1998 (Lohse 2001) concluded that participation in training courses was mainly optional and did not have any high priority in departmental personnel policies (Lohse 2001: 237). In most ministries, there was no structured, mandatory training program for leadership development, and personal development and training were scarcely linked to each other. Specific training courses for leadership positions were regularly offered, but participating in these courses was not a prerequisite for promotion. Hence, the extent and focus of training did, to a high degree, depend on individual initiative and support by the superior as places were limited and demand exceeded supply (Lohse 2001: 98–125).

Since then, there have been some efforts to improve the linkage between training and personnel development in federal ministries, notably in the Federal Ministry of the Interior (BMI). In 2003, the BMI introduced a mandatory introductory training course for higher civil servants which is organized internally and is conducted by experienced ministerial officials. In addition, the BMI offers internal training on information and communication technologies on a voluntary basis, as well as foreign language courses. Unlike in other departments, in the BMI participation in leadership training is a mandatory prerequisite for promotion to leadership positions, but as usual in Germany, there are always exceptions.

To sum up, the governance of training for higher and top civil servants in the federal administration is highly decentralized and fragmented and varies among the different departments.<sup>7</sup> In particular, specialized training focusing on professional expertise in different policy areas (and thus in different departments and agencies) is organized in a decentralized way by the different federal ministries. Some of them run their own training academies, and others organize training internally. Leadership training, as well as training on management tools or other key competencies, is slightly more centralized, with the BAKÖV being the most important training institution.

However, even if the BAKÖV offers government-wide training courses on a variety of non-sector-specific topics in the field of ICT, public management, and soft skills, most of these courses are still organized internally by ministries or other governmental training institutions. Participation in “on the job” training is predominantly optional and depends on individual initiative. In most ministries, leadership training is not a precondition for promotion to executive positions. The traditional culture of the German civil service may even run counter to these efforts. Formal “on the job” training is usually seen as appropriate for those whose careers do not follow expectations. If you are a real “high flyer,” you are usually deemed much too important to enroll in these courses. Concurrently, there is no institutionalized, government-wide fast-track-system for high-performing civil servants to systematically prepare them for leadership positions.

The most important training ground for future top civil servants and prospective high flyers in Germany is much less formalized and much more erratic: many top civil servants in the early stages of their careers worked in the personal offices of ministers or state secretaries, usually starting as “private assistants” (*Persönlicher Referent*). Here, they can show both their competencies and their dedication by working long and unusual hours in diverse areas, and they acquire the personal, managerial, and political skills, and the networks necessary to move ahead in a political organization like a ministry (Goetz 1997; Veit and Scholz 2015).<sup>8</sup> Another often complementary means of training is acquired by working for parliamentary parties. In Germany, parliamentary parties, parliamentary committees, and members of Parliament employ quite a considerable number of assistants,<sup>9</sup> and these assistants are partly “on leave” from various ministries. Sometimes these official leaves can last for many years, during which time ambitious civil servants can acquire the necessary skills for managing political affairs at the top of ministries and agencies.

## **Contents and Methods of Training for Young Executives and Top Civil Servants**

The most recent official declaration on the content of training for top civil servants in German ministries was published in 2007, when the federal government and the German public service trade unions reached an agreement on public sector modernization and training in the federal administration (BMI 2007). This agreement defines the main training measures for civil servants in federal ministries and agencies (see Table 11.1). Special emphasis is placed on leadership development: it is proposed to increase efforts in leadership training as well as in training of young executives. The agreement vaguely emphasizes that “lifelong learning and permanent training” (BMI 2007: 8) is mandatory for public leaders. Moreover, leaders are responsible for reaching agreements with their subordinates on the

*Table 11.1* Training for civil servants in the Federal administration according to the "Agreement on public sector modernization and training in the Federal administration" (2007)

| Category                   | Contents of training courses  |
|----------------------------|---|
| Professional training      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Public sector management, e.g., project management, quality management, controlling, efficiency analysis, process optimization, flexible budgetary instruments</li> <li>– better regulation, i.e., regulatory impact analysis (RIA), bureaucracy cost assessment and consolidation</li> </ul>              |
| Behavior-oriented training | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Time management, communication, conflict management, organization of work, stress prevention, etc.</li> </ul>  |
| International training     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Strengthen collaboration capacities of civil servants at EU level and in international cooperation, i.e., by training courses enhancing intercultural competencies and foreign language skills</li> </ul>  |
| Leadership development     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Management skills, i.e., human resource management, gender mainstreaming, health management, change management, financial management</li> <li>– Personnel management tools, i.e., management by objectives, performance evaluation, staff appraisals, implementation of performance-related pay</li> </ul> |

schedule of individual training measures. Finally, the regular monitoring of training activities is part of the agreement.

The BAKÖV regularly provides training courses in all four categories defined in the agreement of 2007. Topics in the field of professional training are public budgeting, methodologies and didactics, organization, personnel management, public relations, and law and lawmaking. The number of participants in each area varies considerably, with public budgeting and personnel management being the most important issues. International training focuses on intercultural competencies, knowledge on institutional characteristics of the EU and of selected EU member states, and on EU negotiating competencies. Despite the significance of EU integration, the number of participants in international training courses is considerably lower than the number of civil servants completing behavior-oriented training or leadership training.<sup>10</sup> Nevertheless, a basic qualification program for future leaders, introduced in 2010 and consisting of several modules, was cut in 2013 because of a lack of demand (BAKÖV 2013: 33). Hence, separate courses are obviously favored over a structured training program for future leaders. For senior executives, there are separate training courses focusing

on change management, leadership philosophy, strategic planning, and personnel management. These courses are often organized as workshops to enable the participants to share their experiences.

Analyzing the seminar schedule of the BAKÖV and its annual activity reports in recent years, it is apparent that there have been few changes in the scope and content of training courses over the last decade. One of the few changes is that individual coaching—on different topics, such as conflict management or presentations skills—has gained importance. Responding to this development, the BAKÖV has started to build a database of experienced coaches (BAKÖV 2013: 40). Another notable fact is that there were many more leadership courses offered in 2007 than in other years. This can possibly be explained by the fact that performance-related pay was introduced for the federal administration in January 2007, and that the aforementioned agreement on “Public Sector Modernization” was signed in that year. A third development is that e-learning has gained in popularity, though very slowly. Since 2007, the BAKÖV operates an e-learning platform that is able to support multiple clients. Besides course materials and tests, some self-learning modules for software are provided in this platform. Selected courses are offered in a combination of classroom and online teaching (blended learning). However, the overwhelming majority of training courses are still in the format of classroom seminars, and a survey study in 2008 showed that this was also regarded as the most important form for learning by the ministries and agencies (BAKÖV 2013b: 21). Furthermore, it should be kept in mind that the vast majority of BAKÖV courses are for ordinary civil servants, not for the top-level.

An overall controlling system for training activities in the federal administration does not exist. Again, this is a consequence of departmental autonomy in Germany. Only a few ministries and agencies have defined concrete and measureable objectives for their higher civil servant training (BAKÖV 2008b: 25). Hence, more elaborate controlling systems for training and personnel development are not in place in the federal administration in Germany. The few ministries and agencies that do operate a controlling system mainly collect input-oriented figures, such as the number of training courses, the number of participants, and the content of training measures. The same is true for most of the governmental training institutions. Most of them do—if at all—collect some input-oriented data, but only one institution has established a more elaborate reporting system that also provides information on the qualifications of trainers, as well as on costs (BAKÖV 2008a: 25).

## **Conclusion**

The dominant features of senior civil servant training in Germany are decentralization and fragmentation. Civil servants and other public employees

are either employed by the federal government, by the *Länder*, or by local governments, each with their own training institutions and programs. Within the federal government, the constitutional principle of departmental autonomy implies that each ministry recruits and trains its own employees within its own jurisdiction. The historical antecedents for these arrangements are obvious. Germany became a unitary state only in 1871, and many of the prerogatives of the several kingdoms and principalities that formed the new *Deutsches Reich* were guaranteed by the new constitution (several *Fürstentümer*, e.g., Bavaria, even kept their own armies). The Weimar Republic continued this strong federalism, and after the devastating experiences of Nazi centralism, both the liberal German elites after 1945 and the Allied forces occupying Germany re-founded the Federal Republic as a federation without any dominating center.

As part of the first wave of administrative reforms in the 1960s, the BAKÖV was founded as a federal institution dedicated to further education and training for federal employees. Especially in its first decades, BAKÖV succeeded in modernizing, and in many ways establishing, systematic "on the job" training at the federal level. But since different ministries kept and indeed enlarged their own activities in training and personal development over time, the BAKÖV was not able to establish a lasting dominant position. The fact that it stayed in Bonn after most of the federal government had moved to Berlin further weakened its standing and attractiveness. Today, aside from the BAKÖV, about 30 other governmental institutions provide training for higher civil servants in the federal administration in Germany. Moreover, most departments and agencies organize additional internal training courses, either with their own civil servants as lecturers or by hiring external trainers.

The different reform waves of recent decades (New Public Management, New Public Governance, the Neo-Weberian State, Digital Era Government, Better Regulation, etc.) had some impact on the training courses offered, but did not really change the overall recruitment and training of top civil servants. Because of the established institution of "political civil servants" heading ministries and directorates-general, the idea that top civil servant positions are basically apolitical and mainly "managerial" was never accepted in Germany. The strong suspicion of top civil servants who claim to be neutral and apolitical is a direct result of the experiences during the Nazi dictatorship, when large parts of the administrative elite willingly cooperated with and took part in Nazi crimes. The typical training for future top civil servants therefore occurs in a less formalized way in positions near the political sphere, such as personal assistants to ministers or state secretaries, or by working temporarily for parliamentary parties or committees.

In preparing for top positions in the civil service, aspiring individuals may take special courses, either offered by BAKÖV or by other, often private, institutions. In recent years, specialized private coaching has gained ground

and is now even offered by BAKÖV. Still, the participation in training courses very much depends on the initiative of individuals. It does not guarantee promotion, and there is usually no systematic integration with personal management and development. These features have been criticized for many years, and there is a broad consensus that personal management is one of the most neglected areas of administrative reform in Germany. Even though the share of lawyers in the federal and *Länder* bureaucracies has gradually decreased, lawyers still dominate in personal administration, which is usually defined as *Dienstrecht* (employment law), and not as personal development.

There is thus nothing like a “fast track” or an established career path for “high flyers” in the German federal administration. In recent years, some academic programs at the level of “executive masters” have been established to “accelerate” careers toward higher and eventual top civil servant positions. These programs usually combine public management, public governance, public policy, and organizational approaches and move away from the traditional disciplinary frameworks of law, economics, and political science. The eventual success of these new programs is yet to be determined. Experiences until now show that some alumni really can, and do, enhance their careers, but this is certainly not the case for all. And as long as aspiring and ambitious employees cannot be sure that an investment in these demanding programs really will make a difference, the demand will still be quite limited.

## Notes

1. In Germany, civil servants can even become party leaders: The election of Bernd Schröder, a civil servant in the Federal Ministry of Defense, as party leader of the newly founded Pirate Party (*Piratenpartei*) in April 2012 did not cause any public debate and was regarded as legitimate.
2. State secretaries (i.e., the highest-rank civil servants in federal ministries) are more often party members than directors-general.
3. This quotation goes back to Hartkopf (1982: 35) ironically referring to the ideal leadership profile in the German ministerial bureaucracy.
4. This is due to the constitutional principle of “departmental autonomy” (*Ressortprinzip*) in Germany. According to this principle, every minister conducts his ministry and policy domain independently. This also includes personnel development.
5. According to the “Agreement on public sector modernization and training in the Federal administration,” signed by the Federal Minister of the Interior and the heads of the big trade unions for employees in the public sector in October of 2007, top civil servants are expected to possess highly developed management skills, involving both general skills such as personnel-, project-, change-, quality-, or health-management, as well as more specific NPM-related skills, such as management by objectives, or the implementation of performance-related pay (BMI 2007: 7). However, this is probably more a delayed lip-service (Brunsson and Olsen 1993) to the rational myth of managerialism than the beginning of a new area of public sector training.

6. However, it is remarkable that 22 percent of the top bureaucrats that held office in a federal ministry in the time period from 2002 to 2013 had studied at Bonn University, and about 8 percent had studied at the University of Cologne. But this is most likely mainly a result of their proximity to Bonn, the former capital and seat of government in Germany, and the established networks (Veit and Scholz 2015).
7. The *Länder*, of course, are totally independent in this regard.
8. In many respects, this career pattern is quite similar to the private sector, where top managers in Germany very often start their careers as assistants to members of the board (*Vorstandsassistent*).
9. Altogether, the members of the *Bundestag* employ more than 4,000 persons, about 1,700 of them as "scientific assistants." In addition, the party fractions in the *Bundestag* employ approximately 900 staff members (Deutscher *Bundestag* 2011).
10. In 2012, 810 civil servants completed courses in the field of international training; 2,872, on leadership issues; and 4,569 participants registered for courses in the field of behavior-oriented training (BAKÖV 2013: 26, 32, 36).

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# 12

## The Netherlands

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### Introduction

In order to understand the position of top civil servants and the competencies that are regarded as requisite for the responsibilities they perform, it is pertinent to describe the political and administrative context within which top civil servants operate. In The Netherlands, this context has changed significantly since the 1980s under the influence of several developments, one of which is the NPM movement. These changes have gone along with the creation of the Senior Civil Service. A competency framework for top civil servants formed the basis for policies of recruitment and selection, training and development, and career planning and mobility. Following a description of the current model of training and the inherent views on leadership competencies, the changing views on administrative leadership and the training of top civil servants in relation to the shifts in the political and administrative environments and wider society are analyzed.

### Political Structure

The Dutch political-administrative system is based on three key institutions—namely, an electoral system of proportional representation, a neocorporatist policymaking tradition, and a Rechtsstaat tradition. Each of these contributes to a consensus-driven type of governing activity that is multiple, fragmented, and decentralized.

Politics in The Netherlands is based on a system of proportional representation, resulting in a multiparty landscape and generally minimal winning coalitions. Coalition agreements, negotiated among the prospective coalition partners before taking office, have become increasingly comprehensive and binding. As a result, the emphasis of parliamentary activity has shifted from setting the executive agenda to scrutinizing executive action (Van der Meer 2004). Also, multiparty coalitions have toned down trends toward the centralization of power with the head of government, the prime minister

(who is *primus inter pares*, or first among equals). The formal absence of power by the prime minister over other cabinet ministers allows ministers to have a relatively high degree of autonomy within their sphere of competence. As a consequence, ministerial civil servants close to their minister can exert a relatively high degree of influence on their ministers' policies (Van der Meer 2004).

From the 1880s to the 1970s, the divisions within Dutch society were pacified and governed by means of "pillarization," a social and political system in which communities were relatively separated on one hand, and in which elites cooperated in governing the country on the other. The main pillars—the Protestant, Roman Catholic, socialist, and liberal pillars—each operated by means of their own separate institutions such as churches, broadcasting associations, newspapers, trade unions, schools, hospitals, and housing associations. Individualization, along with the decreasing importance of religion in society in the 1960s, heralded the collapse of the pillarized system. New political parties emerged and challenged the old established parties, leading to additional political fragmentation (Van den Berg, Braun, and Steen, forthcoming). The system in which government works together with employers and unions and with the often politically, socially, and religiously "deregulated" successors of the formerly pillarized civil society organizations, has acquired international fame as the Dutch neocorporatist polder model.

On a spectrum ranging from the *Rechtsstaat* to the public interest model, the Dutch state is positioned closer to the *Rechtsstaat* model. However, the Dutch version of the *Rechtsstaat* differs from the more closed *Rechtsstaat* regimes in France and Germany in that government in The Netherlands is relatively open to external ideas, expertise, and interest-representation (Kickert and In 't Veld 1995; Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011).

## **Organizational-Administrative Culture**

### **Political-Administrative Relations**

In a formal legal sense, there is a clear separation between the responsibilities of ministers and civil servants: the former are responsible for the formulation and content of policies, while the latter are responsible for policy execution. In practice, the bargain between Dutch political and administrative elites best resembles the functional village life as described by Peters (1987). Many people in top administrative and political positions in The Netherlands know each other from their university days, political party, or as board members of the large variety of academic, economic, political, administrative, cultural, and social associations in the country (Braun and Van den Berg 2013).

Since the early 1980s, the handling of expertise by the Dutch government has entailed a move away from civil servants as experts in their own field toward a system with more specialist expert units within the civil service.

That move has been combined with an increase in the hiring of temporary assistance from advisory bodies and consulting firms (Van der Meer and Raadschelders 2007). A sizable number of former (senior) civil servants have taken up positions in such firms, and it is not uncommon that they have come to advise their former colleagues. Also not uncommon is for external advice to be sought by ministers or civil servants to provide a solid basis or legitimize (policy) their policy ideas or to provide ammunition against the (policy) ideas of others. In recent years, however, as part of cost-cutting policies, explicit measures have been taken to decrease the amount of external advice offered by consulting firms (Van der Meer and Van den Berg 2011). Also over the years, the number of personal advisers, political advisers, and press officers has gradually increased (Van den Berg and Toonen 2014). The interaction between permanent senior civil servants and personal advisers can be a complex one, given the potential competition for access to the minister and the typical difference in professional perspectives.

Despite the growing use of external policy advice, the image of the Dutch political-administrative elite as a cohesive group remains. This image is also based on the relatively high share of ministers who have a professional background in the civil service (Van der Meer and Raadschelders 1999). If the civil service background of ministers is an indicator of the cohesiveness of politicians and civil servants as a social group, then political involvement by civil servants is its mirror image and is equally important. Active membership of one of the governmental parties is seen to be beneficial for a career in the senior civil service (Van der Meer 2009; Daalder 1993). This claim was supported by the findings from a 2007 survey of Dutch senior civil servants (senior civil service members and official candidate-members): 35 percent of the respondents affirmed that they were a member of a political party, while 64 percent answered no (Van den Berg 2011). The significance of these figures becomes clear when compared to the 3 percent of political party membership across the whole of the Dutch population. Political party membership provides no clear picture of political party patronage, as it provides no information on the actual recruitment and selection of top civil servants. Nevertheless, there is general agreement that political sensitivity, including knowledge of the political game and the potential to provide advice that is sensitive to the political impact of policies, as well as ethics of loyally serving the minister irrespective of political preference, are crucial competencies for top civil servants (Steen and Van der Meer 2011; 't Hart and Wille 2006).

### **Administrative Structures and Civil Service**

Dutch central government administration is formed by the ministries and the executive organizations, or agencies, which fall under the responsibility of the ministries. Next to these are agencies, independent administrative bodies, and various kinds of semigovernmental organizations. While

organizational fragmentation seems fitting for a consensual political-administrative system without an evident power center, much of the present fragmentation has been created by the NPM-like reforms of the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s.

The central departments, headed by a secretary general, act as the core of the administrative system. The policy part of the ministry is organized into directorates-general, which are in turn divided into directorates, divisions, and finally, units. The Dutch civil service system is traditionally a departmental civil service with very few characteristics of a unified civil service. To a certain degree, the unlikelihood of a unified civil service in The Netherlands can be understood in terms of the political fragmentation of Dutch society: political fragmentation leads to coalition governments; coalition governments prevent a centralization of power within the core executive; absence of strong central power in the cabinet allows for high ministerial autonomy; and high ministerial autonomy implies that each minister is largely free to develop and implement his or her own personnel management policies and practices.

Interestingly, attempts to unify personnel policy first became real at the senior civil service level, when in 1995 the Senior Civil Service (Algemene Bestuursdienst, ABD) was set up as a service-wide career structure for top civil servants in Dutch central government. With senior civil service membership widening to over 750 civil servants, the top management group (TMG) was created as a separate group in 2000. The TMG consists of the secretaries general, directors-general and inspectors-general, the directors of planning bureau, the director of the secret service, and the national antiterrorism coordinator. The Senior Civil Service was to counter the rather closed recruitment, selection, and career system that existed at the apex of the civil service. Increasing inter-departmental (or even intergovernmental) mobility was set as an explicit goal, as the lack of mobility was perceived as enhancing departmental compartmentalization and hindering the unity of government direction.

The need to enhance professionalism was also driving the creation of the senior civil service, resulting in much attention being directed at coaching and training (future) top civil service servants, and for strategic career planning and preselecting candidates to fill vacancies at the senior level. Developing management capacities of current and future top civil servants became a main focus in the beginning of the 2000s, and gradually focused on how to connect competency-based management with societal changes and individual manager's qualities and motives. (Van der Meer 2004; ABD 2006; Leisink 2010). The Dutch Senior Civil Service Office was created as a structure to implement this HR policy for top civil servants.

### **The Nature of the Reforms**

The 1960s and 1970s brought about the end of automatic acceptance of central government authority, an impetus for bringing administration

closer to the citizens by means of decentralization, and an expansion of the already advanced structure of interest-group involvement in decision-making. Attempts to decrease the size of the civil service and to organize it in a more managerial manner have been undertaken since the beginning of the 1980s. However, the consensual and deliberative nature of Dutch governance means that there is no central body that can easily push through drastic policy shifts (Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011; Van den Berg 2011).

The recent economic crisis and fiscal deficits have reinforced earlier administrative reform programs (Leisink, Weske, and Knies 2013; Steen et al. 2010). Cutting costs by means of quantitative measures, such as freezing salaries and downsizing civil service staff has been the highest priority in central government policy for successive governments. Other major reform themes have included streamlining governmental procedures and information streams so as to decrease the administrative burden on citizens and business, recentralizing management functions through shared service centers, and decentralizing public service provision in the areas of social and employment policy, social support, and youth care.

## Expectations of Leaders

Steen and Van der Meer (2011) provides a historical account of the role of the Dutch top civil service. Only in 1988 did a Royal Decree formally make the secretary general the highest civil servant in a department and outline the function and responsibilities of the secretary general as chief executive officer. Each department was headed by a secretary general, charged with leading all ministerial tasks and duties under the direction and guidance of the minister. The secretary general's tasks involve the coordination of policy in general, personnel management, financial management, organizational issues, operational management, and ministerial responsibility (Steen and Van der Meer 2009, 2011). The secretaries general have quite broad responsibilities, and great flexibility in how they implement policy. However, the primacy of politics, hierarchy, and continuity remains highly valued (Balle Hansen, Steen, and De Jonge 2013). Attached to the department, a deputy secretary general assists the secretary general and usually has responsibility for internal management tasks. The secretaries general regularly meet in the Council of Secretaries General, an informal coordination body that has increased in importance since the 1990s, as a forum for interdepartmental coordination and for initiating central government reform.

The Senior Civil Service developed a competency framework that made it possible to describe the requirements for a particular post, and to assess, develop, and evaluate the competencies of senior civil servants (Van Vulpen and Moesker 2002). The seven core competencies defined in the first outline of the Senior Civil Service Competency Framework provide a clear picture of the leadership model that took form in Dutch central government.

Political-administrative relations were mirrored in the core competency of "environmental awareness," which signifies the art of interactive policy-making and picking up signals from society and political quarters, while the competency of "decisiveness" indicates behavior targeted at convincing other parties of the relevant point of view and winning support. The competency to "understand the need for staff development" refers to a proactive role of managers to stimulate staff development and growth. A proactive attitude was also called for in the core competency of "initiative," while "integrity" refers to maintaining generally accepted social and ethical norms and being answerable to these norms. Finally, the core competencies also involve the development potential of the senior civil servants themselves, in terms of "self-appraisal" and "learning potential" (Van Vulp and Moesker 2002; Toonen and Van der Meer 2005; Leisink 2010).

The career system and the internal mobility system set up since the creation of a Senior Civil Service decrease identification with one specific department. The secretary general is responsible for running a department and providing service delivery, yet this entails a managerial role and a generalist view, rather than a specific knowledge of a policy field. Another HR instrument influencing the leadership model is the appointment system, set up to limit political appointments. The leadership model entails that senior civil servants serve different ministers, irrespective of their political identity, even if in practice there is an impression that political affiliation does play a role since it is rare that a secretary general with a party affiliation divergent from the political composition of the ruling coalition is appointed (Steen and Van der Meer 2011).

Dutch top civil servants combine an increased managerial focus on service delivery with a respect for bureaucratic principles, such as continuity and hierarchy (Steen and Van der Meer 2011). A small written survey—among 6 of the then 14 secretaries general in Dutch central government—showed that the secretaries general scored high on the leadership role, as well as on the bureaucrat and professional roles. Identification with the managerial and policy advisory roles was somewhat lower. The low score on the managerial scale is especially remarkable, as it conflicts with the general notion that the introduction of the Senior Civil Service has led to the development of a professional, managerial, and entrepreneurial model of public sector leadership. A closer look at the questionnaire, however, reveals a high agreement on lawfulness, legal certainty, and equality before the law as key values of government, and a strong rule-abiding norm among the secretaries general in their role as professional managers. Additional interviews with nine secretaries general showed results that to some extent differ from this assessment. The top civil servants indicated that their primary focus was on their role as manager and policy adviser to the minister. The secretaries general interviewed found that they are responsible for service delivery as promised by the minister through establishing a good functioning ministry,

and also have a role as personal, nonpartisan adviser to the minister (Steen and Van der Meer 2011).

Rather than challenging the notion of a more managerial model of top civil service, these empirical data show that *Rechtsstaat* principles still form the basis for the functioning of senior civil servants, even at a time when management competencies have gained considerable importance. In the performance agreements between the minister and the secretary general, the focus is on ensuring “service delivery” and on timely realization of the minister’s policy priorities; managing the department and taking up responsibility for the modernization and reform; and personal development. The performance agreements are much in line with the traditional tasks of managing the departmental organization, providing reliable advice to the minister and seeing that policies are implemented (cf. ‘t Hart and Wille 2006). Yet the focus on “delivery” and on the secretaries’ general role in the ongoing government modernization are a striking part of the performance appraisal. The performance agreements, however, are of a rather soft nature. Evaluation of secretaries general by the minister happens in a rather informal manner and there are no harsh consequences in cases of disappointing results. At the same time, characteristics of a traditional reward system—such as elements of permanence, career progression, and comfortable pay—persist alongside the new managerial traits (Steen and van der Meer 2011).

## **The Content and Structure of Training for Top Civil Servants**

### **Top civil servants’ background training: Educational level and disciplines**

In the twentieth century, the mean educational level of entering civil servants increased significantly. Before the democratization of higher education, it was not exceptional for candidates without much pre-entry education to enter the service and ascend in the hierarchy on the basis of experience and additional postentry training. From the 1960s on, such cases have become increasingly rare (see Van der Meer and Raadschelders 1999). A survey among senior civil servants (in ranks 15 to 19), including senior civil servant candidates (rank 14), showed that only 6 percent do not hold a university degree (see Table 12.1; Van den Berg 2011).

Over the years, the disciplines in which senior civil servants are educated have changed. In line with the *Rechtsstaat* conception, law is seen at the primary source of authority. From the early nineteenth century until after the Second World War, a large majority of the Dutch civil service were law school graduates. As the tasks of central government have expanded, and thanks to the diversification of academic disciplines after the Second World

Table 12.1 Educational levels of Dutch senior civil servants, 2007

|                                       | 14          | 15          | 16          | 17          | 18          | 19          | Total (N=234) |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|
| HBO (non-university higher education) | 0 percent   | 5 percent   | 5 percent   | 10 percent  | 0 percent   | 0 percent   | 6 percent     |
| Kandidaats / Bachelor                 | 0 percent   | 7 percent   | 1 percent   | 3 percent   | 17 percent  | 0 percent   | 3 percent     |
| Doctoraal / Master                    | 100 percent | 80 percent  | 80 percent  | 73 percent  | 50 percent  | 80 percent  | 77 percent    |
| PhD                                   | 0 percent   | 9 percent   | 14 percent  | 15 percent  | 33 percent  | 20 percent  | 15 percent    |
| TOTAL                                 | 100 percent | 101 percent | 100 percent | 101 percent | 100 percent | 100 percent | 101 percent   |

Source: Van den Berg (2011).

War, the variety of disciplines in demand for civil service jobs has grown (Van der Meer, Van den Berg, and Dijkstra 2012). In addition, the goals set in terms of functional mobility—specifically, that members of the Top Management Group are obliged to change positions at least every seven years— influenced the profile of the top civil servants. Currently, the former dominance of law as the primary field of education for top-civil servants has given way to a broader academic spectrum, with economic or managerial studies as an important alternative (see Table 12.2).

A generalist perspective, however, remained. As heads of ministerial departments, top civil servants are still expected to be experienced, highly educated generalists rather than technical specialists. However, interviews with secretaries general showed that the specific education and knowledge of a secretary general still impacts on the career path, as secretaries general feel a need to have some affinity with the department they are heading, and a need to know the institutional relations in the field (Steen and Van der Meer 2011). There is a trade-off between the specialized expertise deemed necessary for a particular policy field on one hand, and a interdepartmentally mobile civil service on the other. There is, however, a clear difference within the top management group, as senior civil servants at the director-general level are expected to be far more directed toward the specific policy field, while the role of the secretaries general is seen more as a managerial one.

### **Post-entry Training: Executive Training for Top Civil Servants**

Although postentry training in The Netherlands does not so much serve to create an esprit de corps as it does in France, it is seen as an important source of skills and expertise within the Dutch civil service since there is no academic or other type of education that fully prepares a student for the tasks of the civil service. In addition, post-entry training is regarded as important because the job and required knowledge and skills for civil servants change continually, as society is constantly being subjected to change. Almost every department has an introductory course for its new recruits at the policy level. Van der Meer (2009) has distinguished different types of postentry training, including formal education, for example, long-term courses and training in and on the job, which largely involves learning by doing under the supervision and coaching of superiors or peers, and secondments (extended professional rotational opportunities) and traineeships.

A survey among senior civil servants shows that they feel secondments and training on the job are the most effective ways to learn. Formal coursework is generally least preferred, as the senior civil servants perceive the direct applicability of any knowledge or skills gained in this kind of training is often lacking. In this context, many respondents applauded the intensive training program that is offered to the participants of the National Trainee Program, a two-year work and training structure for young university graduates considering a career in the national civil service. Senior civil servants

Table 12.2 Educational background of Dutch senior civil servants and organization type, 2007

| NL               | Humanities | Law        | Economics  | Administration | Education field |  |            |             | Total       |
|------------------|------------|------------|------------|----------------|-----------------|--|------------|-------------|-------------|
|                  |            |            |            |                | Political       | Science / Public<br>social<br>sciences | Science    | Other       |             |
| Ministerial      | 3 percent  | 22 percent | 18 percent | 10 percent     | 13 percent      | 15 percent                             | 19 percent | 100 percent | 100 percent |
| Executive Agency | 2 percent  | 27 percent | 15 percent | 9 percent      | 12 percent      | 17 percent                             | 19 percent | 101 percent | 101 percent |
| Regulatory Body  | 0 percent  | 21 percent | 13 percent | 13 percent     | 17 percent      | 4 percent                              | 33 percent | 101 percent | 101 percent |
| Other            | 0 percent  | 0 percent  | 50 percent | 10 percent     | 20 percent      | 20 percent                             | 0 percent  | 100 percent | 100 percent |
| Total (N=249)    | 2 percent  | 22 percent | 18 percent | 10 percent     | 13 percent      | 15 percent                             | 19 percent | 99 percent  | 99 percent  |

Source: Van den Berg 2011.

feel that such a program covering all the basics of how to become a good policy official should ideally be open to all starting higher civil servants. The similarities between this idealized training scheme and the curriculum and organization of the French École Nationale d' Administration (ÉNA) training is striking, apart from the ÉNA's highly selective and elitist nature (Van den Berg 2011).

### **Competency Management**

Management development policies initially focused on a systematic approach to the development of careers of top civil servants and on organizing necessary training facilities to meet the demands of adequate task performance. In the mid-1990s, competency management was emphasized as a means to create a flexible and professional civil service (Leisink 2010). The emphasis in individual capacity development was placed more on generic competencies and skills, and less on expertise development and maintenance. Political and administrative leadership were enhanced by the idea of defining competencies in terms of directly observable behavior of civil servants rather than by keeping formal knowledge up to date (Van der Meer and Toonen 2005).

Competencies were incorporated into the career planning system and were used to create job vacancy profiles and to assess candidates accordingly (Leisink 2010). According to Van der Meer and Toonen (2005), the experiments with competency management were not a great success, however, partly because of the stronger need for the cabinet to cut personnel costs, and partly because the new regime was often neither understood nor supported by the line managers who were put in charge of applying competency management. Yet despite these earlier signs of lack of support for competency management, the Senior Civil Service Office still operates on the basis of a competency profile of senior civil servants. The current profile<sup>1</sup> describes leadership in terms of five leadership responsibilities which involve 22 competencies. These assignments are:

- acting with a view to central government as a concern (rather than separate ministries),
- arriving at well-considered implementation policies (taking into account external and internal contextual factors),
- setting direction,
- inspiring leadership, and
- exploring and expanding one's boundaries permanently.

The 2007 senior civil service survey by Van den Berg revealed what competencies the senior civil servants themselves perceive as focal in their functioning. Out of three of the main civil service competencies, that is, substantive expertise, procedural knowledge, and political-strategic insight,

there is relatively little variation as to the perceived relevance. Ninety percent of the respondents feel substantive expertise is of more than average importance to their work, while 89 percent feel this way about procedural knowledge, and 96 percent see political-strategic insight as a competence of higher than average relevance.

More surprising are the responses to the question asking to what extent they feel that each of these competencies is currently increasing or decreasing in relevance to their work. Substantive expertise is increasing in relevance according to the smallest percentage of respondents (27 percent), followed by procedural knowledge (34 percent). No less than 63 percent of the respondents indicated that political-strategic insight is currently increasing in relevance to their work. This indicates the fast growing importance of political-administrative sensitivity and the possession of a political-strategic mindset for senior civil servants (Van den Berg 2012).

### **Current Organizational Model of Training**

The Senior Civil Service Office organizes the management development programs for over 750 managers who are currently listed as SCS-managers, entailing both the top management group and the submanagers (ABD 2013).

The Civil Service Professionalism program targets secretaries general, directors general, and inspectors general in the higher salary scales. The program deals with the themes of democracy and *Rechtsstaat*, public finance and economics, ICT, international developments and innovation, and policy and organization. These themes are regarded as the essentials of civil service professionalism. Using the baseline "need to know," the program seeks to develop top civil servants' knowledge rather than being skill oriented. For each of these themes, a module has been developed that consists of group sessions and personal conversations between a manager and an expert over a period of six months. This program was developed in response to a need voiced by the secretaries general themselves (ABD 2011). In 2013, 90 members of the Senior Civil Service, which is 53 percent female, took part in one or more of the 12 modules organized.

The Civil Service Consultation with Colleagues program targets not only central government managers, but also managers employed by the police, municipalities, provinces, water boards, and independent government agencies. Of the 150 to 175 participants each year, about 30 percent are female, and about 80 percent come from central government. The idea is that a mixed setting provides a platform for intergovernmental reflection, cross-fertilization, and sharing experiences, and contributes to personal development as well as the concept of "one government." Consultation groups consist of five or six managers and a professional facilitator who have roughly twelve meetings over a two year period. The focus is on such issues as leadership style, the interaction between politics and administrative management, change management, and personal career issues.

In addition, there is a Senior Civil Service Candidates program which targets managers who have the potential to grow to the level of an ABD director within two to four years. The two year Candidates program consists of nine modules and intervision meetings. The program concentrates on developing insights in strategic leadership and on practicing leadership through leadership challenge assignments.

The Senior Civil Service Office also offered a program for managers entering the civil service from outside the public sector (ABD 2012). The so-called PLEX program—Program Leadership External Inflow—aimed to acquaint managers who had a career outside government with the the political-administrative environment. However, because of the downsizing of government employment, this program no longer runs.

The Senior Civil Service Office is responsible for organizing these programs for top civil servants, but their actual implementation is in the hands of professional outside training institutes such as Avicenna, a professional training institute that combines experts from universities and think tanks to carry out the Senior Civil Service Candidates program. Its programs display a mix of formal cognitively-oriented training and personal and professional reflection through consultation with peers or professional coaches and counselors.

### **Changes in the Views on Leadership Competencies**

The current programs provided engage the cognitive needs and functional requirements of top civil service managers and emphasize the professionalism of top civil servants. This emphasis differs from the more visionary views of leadership which the Senior Civil Service Office was promoting five years ago. The latter is illustrated, for instance, by a 2007 analysis of societal changes such as a growing lack of confidence of citizens in government, an ageing population, and climate change. The Senior Civil Service concluded that if the government is to deal with these challenging societal developments, it will need managers with excellent competencies in network collaboration, in the development of employees, sensitivity for societal and political developments, the ability to imagine and develop connections across borders, and professional substantive knowledge (ABD 2007). At that time, the Senior Civil Service Office stressed the need for senior civil servants to think about the impact of current political decisions on future generations, and illustrated the importance of the core quality of the future orientation with the example of the Iroquois Indians, native inhabitants of the region north of New York, who used to deliberate on important decisions by thinking about their impact on the seventh generation ahead (ABD 2009). However, in current programs offered by the Senior Civil Service Office, rather than such visionary views, the “need to know” aspect of professionalism is addressed.

## **Executive Training outside Government Structures**

Next to the training programs organized by the Senior Civil Service Office, a number of management development opportunities exist for top civil servants. Important in this respect is the Netherlands School of Public Administration (Nederlandse School voor Openbaar Bestuur, NSOB), a collaboration between seven universities that provides executive training for the top levels in Dutch public administration.<sup>2</sup> The Interdepartmental Management Course, organized for central government top civil servants (directors and above), combines a focus on managerial competencies and leadership with knowledge development. The so-called Learning Network specifically aims at networking and reflection among top civil servants from different public sector organizations. The NOSB also organizes a number of master programs and specific training programs, and offers a program to support professionals in acquiring a PhD. Most recently, NSOB developed a new platform for training: the Capita Selecta. Through this platform, NSOB offers short-term (four-day) training programs that focus on new challenges governments and civil servants are confronted with. The Capita Selecta include such issues as ethics, lobbying, multiactor collaboration, social entrepreneurship, technological innovation, politics of advice, law and governmental power, communication, and risk management. Each year, about 200 civil servants participate in NSOB courses.

## **Conclusion**

The history of administrative leadership in the Netherlands shows that concepts of administrative leadership resonate and evolve with the changing political and administrative environment. The traditional Weberian bureaucratic model provided the paradigm for administrative leadership until the 1980s, when the NPM movement then began to introduce managerialist ideas. Such ideas did not replace earlier notions of administrative leadership but rather added to them. This can be seen from the study by Steen and Van der Meer (2011) which demonstrated that top civil servants' orientation of their role as manager referred to values of lawfulness, legal certainty, and equality before the law.

Top civil servants combine a managerial role of running a department with the political administrative role of providing advice toward the minister, which includes sensitivity to the wider society and the impact of policies. Over time, shifts in emphasis on these two roles can be observed, and with these shifts administrative leadership competencies vary as well. Initially, the political administrative role dominated, and with this came an emphasis on the specialist expertise of the policy field in which the secretary general operated. From the 1980s onward, the managerial responsibility of the secretary general gained in importance, and this went along

with managerialist notions of targets, performance contracts, performance evaluation, and performance-related pay.

The generic competencies that were developed as part of the Senior Civil Service Competency Framework are not exclusively managerial in orientation, however, but reflect a mixture of politically relevant and managerially relevant competencies. Shifts in the wider environment are reflected in shifts in the emphasis on specific competencies. The emergence of populist parties in the Netherlands from the late 1990s onward, the decrease of citizens' trust in government, and climate change are part of the context in which the Senior Civil Service policies emphasized such competencies as sensitivity for societal and political developments (2007) and awareness of the impact of policies on future generations (2009). Meanwhile, the banking crisis of 2008, followed by an economic and fiscal crisis, appears to be reflected in the current emphasis by training programs for top civil servants on functional knowledge of main managerial areas of public finance and economics, ICT, and organizational change.

It is difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of the Senior Civil Service programs in terms of achieving the desired leadership profile. Even though the Senior Civil Service was created to be a unified government-wide career structure for top civil servants, its functioning was affected by departmental policy preferences. For instance, the Senior Civil Service Office can advise ministries on recruitment and selection for vacant positions and propose competent SCS candidates, but it is the ministerial prerogative to decide. It is therefore dependent on ministerial views to determine to what extent the competency framework really informs personnel policies.

At the moment, the Senior Civil Service Office has to cope with restrictions on financial resources (ABD 2013). Yet in terms of its involvement in actual appointments, its share of 10 percent in 2012 within the SCS domain is fairly normal.

Another indicator of effectiveness is the continued use of competencies to describe the leadership profile of top civil servants. While the wording in terms of leadership assignments differs, the competencies involved are not different from the previous seven core competencies. The leadership profile related to these leadership assignments expresses a certain continuity although the emphasis on particular competencies shifts over time. In conclusion, it would seem that the overall activities undertaken by the Senior Civil Service Office continue to be the basis for developing administrative leadership in the Netherlands.

## Notes

1. See <http://www.algemenebestuursdienst.nl/werving-en-selectie/profiel-abd-managers>, accessed October 3, 2013.
2. See [www.nsob.nl](http://www.nsob.nl), accessed January 6, 2014.

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# 13

## Switzerland

Adrian Ritz and Leonie Schuessler

### Introduction

Switzerland is a small, highly developed country of eight million people with a multicultural and liberal society. However, the Swiss also succeed at maintaining their cultural specificities and traditions. A number of societal variations are not only causes of conflicts, but also important features of Swiss identity. Most notable are the four languages that divide the country into regions, and the dichotomy between metropolitan cities such as Zurich and rural areas of the countryside (Linder 2010; Ritz and Brewer 2013).<sup>1</sup>

Switzerland is located in the very heart of Europe but is not a member of the EU. However, Switzerland, as the EU's fourth-largest trading partner, is very well integrated into Europe. The country's main political features are that of a semidirect democracy with far-reaching plebiscitary (direct vote) elements, and the principles of neutrality and independence are two of the arguably most important reasons for Swiss abstinence from European political integration. The principle of neutrality, paired with a political system featuring low centralization of powers, gives way to a multitude of potential domestic veto players, which may slow down or impede decision-making on disputed issues.

The *vertical dispersion of authority* in Switzerland dates back to the establishment of the modern federal state in 1848 when religious differences provoked strong reservations about a centralization of competencies by several cantons. Today's legacy is a system that confers far-reaching autonomous decision-making on the 26 cantons and beyond to the country's approximately 2,400 municipalities. The authority of the federal government is further constrained due to the direct democratic system (e.g., popular rights to block reform attempts) and reform initiatives are often slowed down due to the principle of concordance, which promotes "proportional power-sharing, the participation of all important groups in the decision-making process, and the resolution of political conflicts through negotiation and compromise" (Linder and Steffen 2007).

The *horizontal dispersion of authority* is characterized by a bicameral parliament that is more powerful than the executive branch with its rotating presidency. The power of the executive branch is vested not in a single person or party (coalition), but in a seven-member Federal Council composed of members of all the major parties, requiring what is called the “Swiss consensus” model of democracy. The “principle of collegiality” (Klöti 2007) guarantees that decisions of the council are concordantly represented by the council members, who all preside over a federal ministry. Despite these consensual principles, the federal administration is extremely heterogeneous in practice, and fragmentation exists between the different federal ministries and offices.

Another structural issue of the executive branch concerns the relationship between political executives and the top civil servants. In general, a strong and moderately politicized “government-mandarin” relationship exists in the Swiss federal administration, save the politically appointed personal collaborators of federal councilors. Even though the administration is formally characterized by political neutrality, top civil servant positions are increasingly politicized.

## Organizational-Administrative Culture and Reforms

Since the 1990s, the federal administration has experienced a gradual agencification, and parts of the federal public administration are now run as state-owned enterprises (e.g., Swisscom). Since 1974, in the context of a deterioration of public finances, several modernization initiatives have aimed at increasing the efficiency of the federal administration, mainly by reducing the number of employees. It was only in the early 1990s that a far-reaching institutional reform process was initiated with the proposed Law for the Organization of the Government and the Administration (RVOG, which came into force in 1997). Under the label Managing by Performance Agreements and One-line Budgets (*Führen mit Leistungsauftrag und Globalbudget, FLAG*), the law initiated a reform process inspired by the principles of New Public Management (NPM).

The reform discourse highlighted a paradigmatic change toward a client, performance orientation, responsible use of resources, and increased transparency (Eidgenössische Finanzverwaltung n.d.; Ritz 2002). Limited market mechanisms were introduced, mainly to increase cost transparency and, to a lesser extent, generate revenues from by-products. Despite its limited application (approximately 30 percent of overall operating costs and one-sixth of staff), this project was one of the most sustainable reforms at the federal level. Its expansion to the whole federal administration, now known as the New Steering Model of the Federal Administration (*Neues Führungsmodell für die Bundesverwaltung, NFB*), is currently passing through consultations.

Two further reforms, the so-called debt brake (*Schuldenbremse*) in 2003, and the New Accounting Model (*Neues Rechnungsmodell*) in 2006, have had an important impact on the management of federal finances, preventing chronic deficits and introducing double-entry bookkeeping for the federal administration (Eidgenössisches Finanzdepartement 2002, 2011b; Eidgenössisches Finanzdepartment 2013). In addition, from 2005 to 2007, in the wake of increasing public debt, the Administrative Reform 05/07 (*Verwaltungsreform 05/07*) was initiated with the goal of implementing cost saving measures (Merz 2005). This austerity program had important consequences for federal personnel management (Eidgenössisches Finanzdepartement 2011a).

In regard to *personnel policy reforms*, the federal personnel law has been substantially modernized in the last 20 years in an attempt to be in step with private law (Eidgenössisches Finanzdepartment 2013). In the subsequent sections, we discuss the major reform steps (see Table 13.1).

Until 2000, the federal civil servants employment conditions were based on the Public Servants' Act (*Beamtengesetz*) dating to 1927. It was replaced by the internationally recognized Law on the Personnel of the Confederation (*Bundespersonalgesetz, BPG*; Helbling 1999; Schweizerischen Eidgenossenschaft; Schweizerischer Bundesrat). With the revision of personnel law, the federal administration aspired to be a "modern and dynamic personnel management in order to stay an attractive, competitive and social employer" (Parlamentarische Verwaltungskontrolle 2009). The Law on the Personnel had important consequences for recruitment, retention, and dismissal, as well as remuneration. Special attention was further paid to the development of employees and top civil servants. The federal administration introduced performance-based salaries, encouraged the promotion of civil servants in management positions, and eliminated the four-year employment period (Eidgenössisches Finanzdepartment 2013; Varone 2007).

The latter must be put into perspective: the Swiss federal administration had never had tenure employment or a clearly regulated career model for its employees, as did Germany, Austria, and France (Thom and Ritz 2004). It may therefore be classified as a position-based system, which is quite permeable to internal and external applicants at any hierarchical level (OECD n.d.). However, in practice a large number of top civil servants are recruited from within the administration. Although employment contracts are becoming similar to private sector appointments, the context of federal personnel policies still differs from that of the private sector. On one hand, job security is higher due to greater protection from dismissal and several benefits exist (e.g., working conditions, paternal leave). On the other hand, so-called performance pay still characterizes a mostly continuous pay development based on an appraisal process, with more than 90 percent of employees ranked in the two highest appraisal categories out of four (Schweizerischer Bundesrat 2013).

Table 13.1 Timeline and key events affecting the training of top civil servants in Switzerland

| Timeline         | Event or Period   |
|------------------|---|
| —To present      | The decentralized nature of Swiss government does not lend itself to strongly centralized models (e.g. France's ENA, British Oxbridge); executive preparation historically mainly a law degree and on-the-job training; training of top civil servants by rational agreement of the need for cohesion and modernization |
| 1974             | First common framework of Guidelines for Administrative Leadership  |
| 1990s to present | Greater appreciation of management, leadership skills and training. Continuing diversification of educational backgrounds of top civil servants   |
| 1992             | Directive of the Federal Council to improve the position of female personnel  |
| 2000             | New Law on the Personnel of the Confederation promotes all types of training on legal basis and pays special attention to the training of the management positions  |
| 2002             | Federal Office of Personnel replaced the Guidelines for Administrative Leadership in the Federal Administration with the so-called Leadership Questions   |
| 2005/2007        | Cost-saving measures of the administrative reform restricted the training activities of the Federal Office of Personnel to the top cadre, training of human resources specialists and the vocational training   |
| 2008             | Evaluation commissioned by the federal parliament is critical of lack of support and focus of training and creates momentum for change (centralisation of HR)   |
| 2010             | First HR Strategy and new Federal Administration Training Center created due to the 2008 assessment   |
| 2011–2015        | Basic Requirements for the Cadre of the Federal Administration based on competency framework adopted and implemented with more narrowly defined leadership expectations   |
| 2012             | Federal Administration Training Center was awarded with the quality label <i>EduQua</i> , a Swiss quality label for adult continuing education  |

In addition, the new law yielded an important stimulus regarding the social responsibility of the federal administration as an employer. It promoted equal opportunities between men and women, encouraged the integration of disabled persons, introduced more flexible and family-friendly working conditions, and fostered an adequate representation of the different linguistic groups in the federal administration (Parlamentarische Verwaltungskontrolle 2009; Schweizerischen Eidgenossenschaft).

More recently, the federal administration developed personnel policies and strategies corresponding with the new law and introduced quantitative

and qualitative personnel planning. In addition, the recruitment and career development of federal personnel underwent professionalization with the introduction of competency models (Emery 2013).

## Expectations of Leaders

The Swiss federal administration does not have a clearly delineated, systematically developed elite corps of civil servants. Nevertheless, the federal administration defines five management positions (see Table 13.2), which are linked to the wage brackets and pension plans of civil servants in management positions or “cadres” (Eidgenössisches Personalamt 2013).

In 2013, the central federal administration employed approximately 36,000 civil servants, of which about 27 percent belong to the above-mentioned cadre categories 1–3. When speaking about top civil servants, we refer to the approximately 700 upper cadres and 130 top cadres (EPA 2013), which are the focus of this research. These are the so-called “high potentials.” The top civil servants of state-owned companies are not included.

The top cadre is positioned at the border between politics and administration and is made up of the directors of federal offices, the secretaries general, and the state secretaries. The upper cadres consist of the deputy secretaries general, the deputy directors, the vice directors, and the heads of divisions (Eidgenössisches Personalamt 2012b). Diversity management among top civil servants is an important issue. The Swiss federal administration has defined a gender quota for the top and upper cadre (16–20 percent) as well as for the middle cadre (29–34 percent). Furthermore, there is a quota for each national language and for the employment of disabled persons (1–2 percent).

### Development of expectations of leadership

While a uniform and clearly defined system regarding the formal status of top civil servants exists, much less uniformity is observed in the leadership model and leadership profile of the top civil servants due to the the strongly decentralized structure of the federal administration.

Despite this fragmentation, common Guidelines for Administrative Leadership in the Federal Administration (*Richtlinien für die Verwaltungsführung im Bunde*) for all management positions were first developed in 1974,

Table 13.2 Management positions in the Swiss Federal Administration

|  |                    |
|--|--------------------|
| 1. Top cadre ( <i>Topkader</i> )           | Top civil servants |
| 2. Upper cadre ( <i>Höheres Kader</i> )    |                    |
| 3. Middle cadre ( <i>Mittleres Kader</i> ) |                    |
| 4. Basic cadre II ( <i>Basiskader II</i> ) |                    |
| 5. Basic cadre I ( <i>Basiskader I</i> )   |                    |

providing an important umbrella for the federal administration as a whole (Germann 1998; Schweizerischer Bundesrat 1974). These guidelines defined leadership (*Führen*) as “[directing] the action of all those who are involved in achieving a set of goals” (Schweizerischer Bundesrat 1974). They further established several principles for the management routine of top civil servants, such as cooperative leadership, joint thinking and acting, clear goal setting, and cost effectiveness as well as contemporary conduct. In the 1990s, against this backdrop, the limits of the traditional and hierarchical administrative culture became obvious, and more proactive forms of leadership slowly emerged. However, it may be argued that the political backing was still lacking at that time (Jegge and Schwaar 1995).

The Law on the Personnel of the Confederation confirmed this new approach to leadership, and in 2002 the Federal Office of Personnel replaced the Guidelines for Administrative Leadership with the so-called Leadership Questions (*Führungsfragen*). These questions were intended to induce civil servants in management positions into constant reflection on their leadership behavior (Hirsbrunner 2002). Five areas of questioning were developed (Eidgenössisches Personalamt 2002b):

1. Know own leadership role and take on a position
2. Influence and shape relationships
3. Give orientation and facilitate personnel development
4. Know the rules of the game at all levels
5. Have an impact on the environment and external stakeholders

With the new HR Strategy 2011–2015, this open framework was complemented by more concrete leadership expectations. The Basic Requirements for the Cadre of the Federal Administration (*Grundanforderungen für Kader der Bundesverwaltung*) describe the expected competencies. The specific requirements for the top and upper cadre are organized according to five dimensions (Eidgenössisches Personalamt 2012b):

1. Top/upper cadre as a *person Competencies*: leadership, ethical behavior, integrity, loyalty, self-reflection
2. Top/upper cadre and his or her *tasks Competencies*: analytical, conceptual, and joined-up thinking by tackling problems in an interdisciplinary way and across organizational units, individual responsibility, linguistic skills
3. Top/upper cadre in his or her *relationship Competencies*: planning, recruiting, and managing/leading employees, dealing with diversity, communication skills, capacity to deal with critique and conflict
4. Top/upper cadre in his or her own *organizational unit Competencies*: strategic and managerial/business thinking and acting, shaping change

## 5. Top/upper cadre in his or her relationship with *politics, media, and stakeholders Competencies*: acting effectively in a political environment

These requirements, based on the Competence Model for the Federal Administration (*Kompetenzmodell der Bundesverwaltung*<sup>2</sup>), served as a support for human resources and leadership development in the administration as a whole (Eidgenössisches Personalamt 2012a), even though they can be complemented with specific requirements by individual ministries and offices. The requirements have been defined by taking into account the context and recent developments that top civil servants in the federal administration face: increasingly strategic working environment, tension between the pressure for and resistance to change, need for higher performance, mounting complexity, and growing internationalization (Eidgenössisches Personalamt 2012b). Even though generalization is difficult in the heterogeneous federal administration, leaders do not merely fulfill a public servant role anymore. Nor should they be solely considered managers, because having a strategic orientation has become more relevant and private sector measures have been introduced, such as entrepreneurial thinking or controlling. Instead, leaders increasingly play a political role and bear political responsibility; at the same time, they interact with the external environment, both nationally and internationally, and are requested by the media. In addition, professional qualifications are mounting, including language skills and intercultural competencies.

### **Management development in the federal administration**

Up to 2000, a wide range of technical and personnel development opportunities were on offer for civil servants in management positions at the central and decentralized levels of federal administration. However, they lacked a targeted approach and did not correspond to pressing needs of the administration (Eidgenössisches Personalamt 2002a). Moreover, the decentralized nature of the federal administration, with its varying strategies and political duties, made it virtually impossible to promote a talented cadre beyond its ministries and offices, a key aspect to developing a uniform organizational culture and strategy (Hofer 2002). With the new Law on the Personnel of the Confederation in 2001, which paid special attention to top civil servants, a comprehensive strategy for management development was introduced (Schweizerischer Bundesrat).

To ensure a common approach, clear roles of the central level—the Federal Office of Personnel and ministries—were defined. On one hand, the Federal Office of Personnel was responsible for the basic principles and coordination of management development. The ministries, on the other hand, were responsible for the definition and implementation of strategies and tasks for management development within their sphere of action (Eidgenössisches Personalamt 2002a; Hofer 2002; Schweizerischer Bundesrat). Assessments

received increased interest and an interministerial Center for Assessment and Development was established as an internal service-provider (Fahrni and Gonin 2002). However, there has been some resistance to the centralized assessment center approach, and the center has been outsourced since 2004. Today, the federal administration relies on assessments provided by external partners to ensure independent evaluations.

Austerity programs between 2005 and 2007 reduced the role of the Federal Office of Personnel and largely decentralized the federal personnel policy. In 2008, an evaluation commissioned by Parliament was carried out regarding the implementation of the Law on the Personnel of the Confederation. The evaluation, though highlighting the modern legal framework, pointed to several key problems in federal personnel policy and management development. In particular, it criticizes the lack of a uniform strategic orientation and the diffuseness of the steering mechanisms and responsibilities. In contrast, highly elaborated and committed individual strategies often exist at the level of ministries and offices.

Inspired by these findings, the Federal Office of Personnel's role as a promoter of a common personnel policy was reconfirmed in 2010. The new HR Strategy 2011–2015 gave the impetus for a new attempt at creating a common framework for career development of federal employees and, in particular, for civil servants in management positions. The HR Strategy sets, for example, a goal of 60–80 percent for internal recruitment of the middle, upper, and top cadre. With this target, the administration intends to promote career opportunities for its employees and use their specific knowledge and experience (Eidgenössisches Personalamt 2011).

## Contents and Methods of Training

### Background training

No formalized, institutionalized, background education is required for an executive career in the Swiss federal administration, and no specific trainee programs or fast-track systems exist for preselected high potentials. As a consequence, there is no national training institute that acts as a required stepping stone. Leadership positions are often filled by outsiders selected on the strength of their technical knowledge. However, recent developments also show that top-level positions require an academic education, as well as experience in public management and politics. The only exception relates to those aspiring to a diplomatic career in the Department for Foreign Affairs and career army officers or customs officers, which already offer clearly defined internal career and educational paths.

As a consequence, the academic profiles of the top civil servants are quite diverse and have experienced a change in recent years. Koller (2013) argues that the senior cadre at the federal level consists of Swiss-German men, usually with a degree in law or, increasingly, economics. Bangerter et al.

(n.d.) observe a decrease the number of top federal servants with a law background, from 50 percent to 28 percent between 1980 and 2010, including state-owned enterprises; whereas they increasingly have some management experience in the private sector (an increase of 13 percent between 1980 and 2000).

As the profiles of top civil servants indicate, administrative sciences in Switzerland have long been dominated by the discipline of law. With the emergence of NPM-inspired reforms in Switzerland, public management is increasingly analyzed from an interdisciplinary perspective, and academic institutions and programs in the field have experienced growing momentum (Schedler 2008).

### **Executive Training**

Following the Guidelines for Administrative Leadership in the Federal Administration of 1974, top and senior civil servants were targeted through specific training courses. But because of its meager financial resources, this undertaking remained largely incomplete (Germann 1998). In the early 1990s, more ambitious, specific *internal* in-service training and development opportunities for management positions aimed at strengthening leadership and management competencies. The integration of female top civil servants into the development process was a particular concern in 1992, due to a directive of the Federal Council (Jegge and Schwaar 1995).

In 2000, with the adoption of the Law on the Personnel of the Confederation, training of management positions received another boost. A revised program was developed targeting explicit cadres at different levels, with the aim of providing succinct management instruments and comprehensive leadership competencies (Volken and Strahm 2002). However, cost-saving measures of Administrative Reform 2005/2007 restricted the training activities of the Federal Office of Personnel to the top cadre.

The Personnel Strategy 2011–2015 redefined the holistic promotion of leadership competencies and development for civil servants in management positions at all levels as a priority (Eidgenössisches Personalamt 2010). To implement this strategy, in 2010 the Federal Administration Training Center, a newly established organizational unit within the Federal Office of Personnel, offered a comprehensive training program, including a range of specific internal leadership training offers for top civil servants (Eidgenössisches Personalamt 2010). Since then, there has been a continuous increase in the number of managers who apply for training (2010, 1,200 participants; 2011, 1,350; 2012, 1,650). The exclusive seminar provided for top civil servants takes place on a yearly basis for approximately 15 participants.

Thus, *internal* in-service training opportunities for top civil servants have become a priority since the mid-1970s. However, these programs have suffered from financial cuts and had different thematic foci, depending on

the strategic orientation of the federal administration and the Personnel Office in place. The current Federal Office of Personnel, for example, has adopted a strategy-oriented, client-centered approach to offer training programs that respond to the needs of the different federal ministries and offices and to render these training programs as attractive as possible. Internal seminars for top civil servants are partially held by external, or out-of-government, trainers and academics, and partially held by internal trainers or top civil servants. Moreover, internal speakers as well as members of the Federal Council are invited to "fireside chats" and *top cadre* meetings (Eidgenössisches Personalamt 2012c).

A wide range of *external* further education opportunities are available at universities and universities of applied sciences. These in-service training programs are certified with further education degrees, such as the Certificate or Master of Advanced Studies. No statistical information is available regarding further education degrees of federal top civil servants. However, servants in the top cadres generally do not undertake long-term further external education since there are fewer incentives for obtaining certificates, the higher a civil servant is ranked. However, the trend of NPM-inspired reforms in the Swiss public sector at all levels may also contribute to an increasing demand for executive courses and education opportunities (Schedler 2008). According to Sager and Schläpfer (2011), there are 69 further education programs in Switzerland related to public management. However, only a few programs specifically address the *top cadre*.

### **Organizational model**

Due to the highly decentralized structure of the Swiss federal administration, internal training programs for top civil servants are often found at the center of decentralized and centralized claims, torn between a compulsory and a voluntary character. On one hand, federal ministries and offices generally oppose a mandatory approach regarding the training of top servants, and the need exists for individuality and space for locally relevant implementation of training activities due to the heterogeneity of the ministries and offices. On the other hand, the Federal Council intends to make some training activities compulsory for senior civil servants (Eidgenössisches Personalamt 2010)—that is, for the basic and middle cadres. It thereby aspires "to increase the significance of leadership, to establish a common leadership culture of the federal administration and promote the exchange among senior civil servants" (Eidgenössisches Finanzdepartement n.d.).

External further education programs are organized on a market-based provision and take place in the context of independent public universities and universities of applied sciences. A number of partnerships with other academic institutions exist. However, these programs enjoy full independence from the government. There are no formalized contracts between the

federal administration and institutes of further education, even though low-there is level cooperation in the form of mutual recommendations.

### **Content of executive training**

Since the 1990s, the focus of *in-government training* for top civil servants has shifted from technical knowledge toward general social, communication, and strategic competencies (Jegge and Schwaar 1995). From 2000 on, the focus was on management instruments and the leadership competencies of senior civil servants (Ritz and Weissleder 2008; Volken and Strahm 2002). An exclusive seminar offered to the top cadre by the Federal Administration Training Center focuses on the development of leadership and management competencies from a practice-oriented approach. It has integrated general leadership aspects as well as content about leadership in a political context, change management, strategic management, and innovations. The training program of 2013 also offered specific courses on financial processes and the development of strategies for federal offices. In addition, a TV-training program aims to prepare top senior civil servants for public media appearances (Eidgenössisches Personalamt 2012c).

The training programs of *external further education* institutions offer a very broad thematic range and include general public management programs, and courses in the field of administrative law, public planning and building, public finances and taxes, public health, school leadership or communal, urban, and regional development (Sager and Schläpfer 2011).

### **Methods of executive training**

Since the 1990s, the *internal* training for senior civil servants has combined classic seminars and coaching (Jegge and Schwaar 1995). In the early 2000s, a very broad approach to the development of senior civil servants and young potentials was introduced, and included individual, group, and organizational learning. It promoted internal and external off-the-job training activities as well as near and on-the-job development programs, job rotations for a limited period of time, international exchange, second career, and senior consulting (Hofer 2002). The description of training activities for civil servants in management positions from 2000 onward highlighted a practice-oriented approach in which learning is based on case studies, allowing top servants to reflect on their own practice. Training strategies for top civil servants also promoted coaching, interview, and networking, as well as learning in the organizational unit (Volken and Strahm 2002).

After downsizing the activities of the Federal Office of Personnel during the Administrative Reform of 2005/2007, this broad range of methods was reduced and became more concentrated. The Personnel Strategy 2011–2015 mentions the development of innovative teaching and learning methods, including related modern technologies, with the aim of increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of its training activities. This concept is yet

to be realized. In the meantime, practitioner-oriented seminars and individual coaching activities, including specific coaching for the first 100 days of a top civil servant, are organized for the development of the top cadre (Ausbildungszentrum der Bundesverwaltung 2013).

### **Financing of the training**

The activities of the Federal Administration Training Center are financed through a lump-sum budget so as not to discriminate against small ministries with restricted financial resources (Eidgenössisches Personalamt 2002a). External training activities are financed through specific training credits of the different federal ministries. The growing importance of training and development activities for federal employees is reflected in increased spending for training activities since the 1990s. Although spending doubled between 1989 and 1994, representing 0.5 percent of overall staff costs (Jegge and Schwaar 1995), the current value reflects 0.8–1.2 percent of overall staff costs. However, financial resources spent per employee for training and further education differ greatly between ministries and can be twice as high in one compared to another (Ritz and Waldner 2008). External further education is usually financed partially by the organizational unit and by the candidate him- or herself, depending on individual deals about time and money contributions as well as repayment requirements. However, there are no strict federal administration guidelines about financial contributions for external continuing education.

### **Assessment and evaluation of training**

As one of its basic principles for further education, the Federal Office of Personnel states that systematic control of its training measures is necessary for value creation, and it plans to openly communicate achievements (Eidgenössisches Personalamt 2008). Such a control is not yet in place because it requires substantial personnel and financial means. Furthermore, strategic goal No. 6 of the Federal Personnel strategy 2011–2015—“preparing employees for future challenges”—is only defined in terms of spending as a percentage of overall personnel expenses (Eidgenössisches Personalamt 2011). Introduction of new indicators and appropriate concrete goals is planned within the framework of the Federal Personnel Strategy 2016–2019. However, the quality of trainings activities is reported by EduQua, a Swiss quality brand in adult continuing education. On the other hand, all programs are assessed by participants. Nevertheless, comprehensive training evaluations are missing.

### **Conclusion**

From an international perspective, stable, lean, well-functioning and slow, but continually moving institutions characterize the Swiss politico-administrative

system. In a direct-democratic, highly federal, multicultural, and consensus-driven context, administrative reforms have not included radical changes during recent decades. Although public organizations took part in the international NPM reform movement, a Swiss-specific and less radical way of outcome-based public management evolved (Ritz and Sager 2010). However, the overall aim of society and politics is to keep public institutions small and to make continuous advances in reform processes. The complete revision of the Law on the Personnel of the Confederation in 2000 was crucial for the development of personnel policies and human resources management practices. Clear tendencies toward private sector values, such as performance and service orientation, room for maneuvering due to performance contracts and lump-sum budgets, stronger expectations on and more leeway for leadership, lower job security, higher permeability with the private sector, and to some extent a performance-based pay system, all characterize the continuous change in the federal administration.

Nevertheless, public personnel policies at the federal level are still a role model for the private sector. Equal opportunities, flexible and family-friendly working conditions, representation of minorities, and the country's linguistic subcultures are key issues of federal personnel policies. Thus, the reform approaches and federal personnel policies are situated within a neo-Weberian framework, expecting the professionalization of federal employees in performance- and citizen-driven organizations.

These reform developments clearly influenced administrative leadership expectations. Higher requirements have led to an increasingly strategic and international work environment challenged by pressure for, and resistance to, change, the need for greater performance with fewer resources, and a mounting complexity of task fulfillment characterize the federal public manager. Leaders are expected to meet managerial and political responsibilities, be highly sensitive to politics and policies, and handle diverse interests from stakeholders, including the media, in an efficient and role-conscious way. All this requires professional leadership and policy-management abilities. These expectations have impacted the content of centrally organized training activities, and broad, generic, and global knowledge is shifting from a legal to a more interdisciplinary perspective.

The organizational setting and arrangements for leadership training have changed over the last decade. A rather centralized approach was drastically cut during the Administrative Reform 05/07 and led to highly decentralized training programs. This changed again based on external findings that the federal administration lacked a coherent human resource strategy that set measures and guidelines for leadership development and human resource management. Today, the Federal Office of Personnel promotes such an approach, aware of the subtleties in a highly fragmented and decentralized administration. One remaining concern is the institutionalization of a mandatory leadership development program connected to measures of

career development. The Law on the Personnel of the Confederation and the newly established Federal Administration Training Center seem promising as a way of putting forth these issues. The training center prepares the federal cadres within a direct, public-monopolistic framework controlled by the Federal Office of Personnel. Although, in reality, multiple actors from public and private institutions are involved, this organizational arrangement enables a client-centered approach to offering training programs in response to the needs of different federal offices. In recent years, this has moved federal executive education from a knowledge transfer and theory to practice focus to a practice-oriented approach, promoting higher interministerial transfer and networking in the upper and top cadres.

To conclude, training of top civil servants in the Swiss federal administration is clearly characterized by recent reform attempts and evaluations that are forcing personnel policies toward a more strategic approach that emphasizes the need for leadership development for the federal administration as a whole.

## Notes

1. Please see also the extended version of this article: Ritz, Adrian/Schüssler, Leonie: Training of Top Civil Servants of the Swiss Federal Administration. Journal Series No. 54 of the Center of Competence for Public Management at the University of Bern, ISBN 978-3-906798-53-0. The authors would like to thank the Office of Personnel of the Swiss federal administration and the following persons for their support in collecting information: Christian Bühlmann, François Chassot, Vanda Descombes, Roland Hämmeterli, Jorge Kühni, Gabrielle Merz, Karl Schwaar, Ursula Volken. Special thanks go to Oliver Neumann for helping with the draft of the Introduction.
2. The Model includes the following categories: 1. management competencies; 2. personal competencies; 3. social competencies; 4. professional competencies; 5. method competencies; 6. language competencies.

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## **Part IV**

# **Training Senior Civil Servants in Latin European Countries**

# 14

## France

*Alexandra Couston, Joyce Liddle, and Robert Fouchet*

### Introduction

French society has undergone profound changes over the past several centuries, and major historical events have brought radical political and social changes to the French administration. The 1789 Revolution led to the abolition of the monarchy, the society of orders and privileges, and the spread of the power of the Catholic Church. France became a secular state founded on a Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen. Since then, the country has experienced alternative and hectic changes under successive liberal and interventionist governments. In the recent past, a very bureaucratic and centralized administration has developed, enhanced by the creation of the European Community embodied in the 1957 Treaty of Rome. The bureaucratic state, however, is not immune to economic crises and globalization.

Since the 1980s, French public administration has been subject to laws of devolution and decentralization that transfer skills and powers from the central government to local authorities. In addition, recent economic and budgetary pressures have imposed more rigorous governance and have led to a questioning of the legitimacy of actors and policy decisions. New public management was imposed on France in the late twentieth century, bringing a new commitment to streamline services and a demand to obtain results in all public policies. This led to greater accountability and involvement for all administrative officers and the highest officials of state organizations. In a context of governing amid uncertainty, the training of elites must include strong skills, in addition to basic academic knowledge, to prepare them for the challenges of the twenty-first century if France is to preserve its historic place in the world.

After discussing the sociological and political context, we emphasize the willingness of successive governments to build a comprehensive centralized administrative structure, and then consider a policy of greater decentralization in 1983, a reflection on the rights and expectations of users, and

the performance of public policies in the 2000s. We detail the evolution of the administrative organization and outline the framework for training top officials in three French schools: the National Administration School (ÉNA), the National Institute of Territorial Studies (INET), and the School for Advanced Studies in Public Health (EHESP).

## **Sociological Background**

Between 945 and 1947, metropolitan France was constantly evolving as provinces were added or lost as a result of successive wars or alliances. The country changed little, but the population grew from 6 million people in 987 to 65,800,000 in 2013, including overseas territories.

Urbanization was accompanied by profound social and political change. Work patterns shifted from agriculture and industry, to the tertiary sector and social groups that were initially based on family units, social class, lifestyle, or political families for which the nation state was key, fragmented (Kokoreff and Rodriguez 2012). Work has lost its integrative role and its ability to make sense of collective identities. Additionally, the increase in educational markets in France, the plurality of family environments, and the logistics of separation and segregation have led to an increase in individualism and identity (cultural, religious, gendered, generational, and territorial) and a communization, or pooling, of social conflict. In this context, there is a need to rethink management methods and organizational and social life as it relates to work to create a new balance, incorporating both social and economic performance (Lachmann, Larose, and Penicauld 2010).

Collective action on new issues involves “excluded” players (unemployed, unregistered, and antiglobalization protestors) who claim some form of recognition. With the decline of politics, the “deinstitutionalization” of families and schools, and the detachment of large companies from the state, the private market can optimize performance without concern for the public good. In this context, progress and change are not perceived as positive, the legitimacy of institutions and their representatives is not acquired, and the complexity of society and its place will not ensure efficient public policy legislation.

## **Political Background**

France is a constitutional republic with a president who is elected for five years, supported by an executive. The role and powers of officials of the state have evolved with the history of the nation. Under the old regime, public officials already worked within a hierarchy of “high public service.” From 1789 on, municipal and departmental staffing led to increased administration in local departments, and at its peak in 1812, the French Empire

had 130 departments and over 44 million subjects. Entry into the senior civil service was reserved for elders and their children; whereas officials recruited into the lower grades came from modest backgrounds with limited opportunities for advancement. Throughout the nineteenth century, the power of various successive regimes strengthened administrative supervision, resulting in increased bureaucratization of public services and a steady increase in enrollment. The first General Staff Regulations were published in 1941.

On October 9, 1945, the Provisional Government of the French Republic created the École Nationale d'Administration (ÉNA) to train future leaders, providing uniform and high-level joint training opportunities and a specific recruitment procedure to identify the candidates who have potential, regardless of social background. The 1946 Constitution established the 4th Republic, stabilized French institutions, and enshrined economic and social constitutional rights in the 1789 Declaration of Human Rights. Rights on gender, asylum, and freedom of association, as well as the rights to strike and work were reaffirmed in the 1958 Constitution, when France came under the 5th Republic, a parliamentary constitutional republic that retained the idea of "one and indivisible." France was less decentralized in comparison to neighboring federal states until the 1980s.

In the second half of the twentieth century, a proliferation of government missions led to a heavy and inefficient centralized welfare state, with an administration that was difficult to manage in a rapidly changing and diverse world. Multilayered and entangled structures of administrative *mille-feuilles* (thousand leaves) of regional, departmental, and intercommunal government diluted responsibilities, leading, ultimately, to delayed decisions. In 1981, President Mitterrand began a program of economic and social reform. The general status of the civil service was amended in 1983, 1984, and 1986 as a civil service of the state, and local civil service and public hospital executives were expected to be trained in three separate schools—ÉNA, the INET, and EHESP.

A change in public policy and a new "bureaucratization of politics" created a situation in which members of the senior civil service could pursue successful political careers at the highest levels, including that of president. Rule changes regarding the status of public servants meant that in the event of failure in the elections, officials could easily return to their original bodies. Despite administrative inefficiencies, this period saw a steady increase in the number of officials, the result of territorial and functional decentralization and of power being handed down to local actors. Departments and regions became full-fledged local authorities with powers and budgets previously held by the state. Responsibilities and skills now encompassed taxation, management, law, economics, social, health, infrastructure and housing, security, education, and human resource management.

The reform of the civil service and the adoption of the Organic Law on Finance laws (OBL) in August 2001, came into full force in January 2006, with the additional reform of the management of state public finances. The act introduced a logic of performance and accountability that had previously been managed by government. Since the election of Hollande in 2012, the decentralization process and clarification of responsibilities at each territorial level has continued. Projects now focus on cities, land use, intercommunal issues, strengthening the powers of the regions (European companies and workers), and regional solidarity. The skills expected of officers and directors of services were not necessarily transferable from one central service to another because the radius of action had decreased (yet still employing over 44 percent of employees), but the decentralization required more new recruits to public service.

## **Organizational-Administrative (Functional) Background**

The French administration has a long history of reform, struggle, and statutory development. Often described as the archetype of a nonreformable state, however, France underwent numerous reforms in response to fiscal pressures. The state has evolved from a centralized structure to one that is closer to its citizens and subject to a bureaucratic system of performance targets. The debate regarding the state goes back to the old regime, whose members had long advocated a Weberian approach; the rational system was considered to be the cornerstone of an effective administration. In line with the ideas of H. Fayol, the 1934 reform intended to introduce the concept of management and achieve administrative reform by reducing the number of officials.

After the Second World War, the executive training arm, ÉNA, and the authorizing legislation for the top civil servants (related to salary, promotion, skills, discipline, and control) were created to improve organization, operation, equity, and the coaching of officials. In 1964, with existing resources, state activities enlarged in many areas to meet the needs of industry (modernization in telecommunications, energy, transport, defense, etc). Additionally, service users began to compare the quality of private services with the often lesser quality of the public services financed by taxes, such as schools and hospitals. This crisis of the legitimacy of bureaucratic representation and operations created the need to incorporate managerialism into public authorities. Laufer and Burlaud (1980) suggested that "public management is not a fad but a historical development: the systems legitimacy that allow organizations to exercise their authority."

In 1989, Prime Minister Rocard proposed substituting the "logic of responsibility" with a "logic of process," developing responsibility, independent services, and systematic evaluation of public policies. However, public managers are often faced with a contradiction between rhetoric and the

formalized expectations (proposed models) and actual operations (subject to bureaucratic and financial constraints). Notwithstanding this inconsistency, the public manager then must bring about real change in organizational operations.

In 2006, France was engaged in neoliberal trends when the OBL transformed the financial administration of the state by setting performance targets and goals. The change transformed professional practices and impacted the value system of public service employees. Thus, the idea of performance in the public service does not indicate that it is necessary simply to lower costs (Abraham and Brillet 2008). Although the methods of analysis and concepts were borrowed from the private sector, the management of public services requires a management philosophy and specific tools (Muller 2008). This approach differs from the Anglo-Saxon managerial doctrine reflected in both the private and public sectors. In France, public organizations must pursue external goals that are imposed by law (in education, defense, health). They lack capital profitability, are free of competition, and operate within complex and fragmented organizational systems. The market logic is not predominant and state organizations remain highly rigid.

The French state is the largest employer of public servants, with 5.2 million employees and a 19.5 percent share of total employment. Of these, 44.1 percent work in the public service, of which 5 percent are in group A+ (top management), 34.6 percent are in territorial agencies, and 21.2 percent are in public hospitals. This distribution shows a still highly centralized state compared to England and Germany, where civil service numbers are quantitatively smaller. The career system ensures job stability and protects the administration from the vagaries of politics. However, the OBL encouraged mobility through the better identification of jobs, structures, and other public functions (Abraham and Brillet 2008).

The reform of the French state was a long-term project to reduce public sector spending within the context of economic globalization and competition for foreign investment. It was part of the neoliberal movement and served the ambitions of some politicians (Merrien 1999); it also had a significant impact on the reconstruction of professional practice, the concept of public service, and the redefinition of public sector ethics. The establishment of performance indicators based on user expectations and the suggestions of agents has created a new roadmap (Cornut-Gentille 2010) that introduces a different logic into the public service.

This change also alters the social nature of the employee. The principle of "profit sharing" in State operations, because it is based on the equal treatment of employees, calls merit-based or individualized pay into question (Hockey et al. 2005; Silicani 2008). It conflicts with the principle of equal treatment that is part of the structure and values of public service.

In addition, devolution and decentralization involve material autonomy, both organically and functionally, that frees headquarters to deal with other,

more general tasks. Administrative reform redefines the state's core missions, the steering and evaluation of public action, determination of collective priorities, and missions and resource allocation (Picq 1994). The 2010 "Local government reform" was designed to achieve substantial savings in management and reduce territorial *mille-feuilles*. But in practice, some unintended negative effects of the new public management have emerged, such as:

- central government inability to coordinate and plan, resulting in poorly executed reorganizations that create a climate of widespread skepticism (Merrien 1999);
- autonomous agencies that ignore directives of political power and focus on internal efficiency at the expense of the needs of society (Cassin 2010);
- users, now seen as customers, who are dissatisfied will the move toward competition (e.g., Free Schools);
- large-scale commercialization that is not suited to public service and market mechanisms that do not always provide optimum solutions (Williamson 1975);
- actual final direct and indirect costs that sometimes exceed any savings generated;
- lack of reliable management indicators, causing significant bias toward production statistics at the expense of concrete actions; and
- effects that do not always go in the expected direction (Klein 1995).

In 2012, the general secretariat for the modernization of public action, under the authority of the prime minister, reflected a desire to make modernization an interpriority topic. However, rigid status, employment conditions, immutable conventions (Montmorrillon 1999), and old management practices (Brunhes 1989) have remained obstacles.

## **Top Civil Servants Training Profile**

In France, three institutions prepare candidates for higher state administrative roles: ÉNA, founded in 1945; EHESP, founded in 2004 (after an unsuccessful first attempt in 1945), and INET, founded in 1990. In 2006, the president of the republic emphasized "the diversification of access to senior public service, while strengthening its professionalization" and questioned the sustainability of the training institutions. Management methods were in need of change due to globalization, European expansion, the outsourcing of jobs, and the impact of taxation on French and foreign investments. Furthermore, the focus on performance and quality of service presents a clear challenge to centralized and hierarchical structures (Reichard 1996). In private companies, managers have clearly defined roles and responsibilities; in public service, civil servants must follow rules and procedures, and are shown less respect by subordinates.

At the upper level, France is administered by high-ranking officials representing key state bodies in positions that carry great prestige and stature in the hierarchy (Inspector General of Finance, State Councilor). Unity comes partly from the power of members at the head of the state (government offices, public enterprises) and partly from the homogeneity of their origins (Parisian bourgeoisie, formed at the ÉNA or École Polytechnique). These great bodies of the state have grown in importance in the 5th Republic (Silicani 2008), in the entourages of the president of the republic, the prime minister, and various ministers, but also in parliamentary circles. We must distinguish the main technical body, recruited largely through the École Polytechnique, from departmental administrative bodies, mostly recruited through the École Nationale d'Administration. The engineering schools (Ponts et Chaussées, Mines, Polytechnique) can be traced back to the old regime and were created to prepare leaders of major construction projects, directors of large industrial works, or high appointed executives such as the minister of economy, finance, and industry. The main administrations include the State Council, Court of Auditors, and the General Inspectorate of Finance.

Since the beginning of the 5th Republic in 1958, there has been a question about the politicization of the administration. Some officials take on political roles and occupy parliamentary seats (previously, national officials were mostly lawyers or teachers) before exercising the highest functions of the state. The general status of public service allows this transition, as officials engaged in politics become detached, allowing them to return to their administrative jobs. This politicization ultimately affects the tradition of neutrality, but some appointments involve political considerations (prefects, ambassadors, and heads of central administration). Political power often requires flawless loyalty, so certain public employment is obtainable without limits or qualifications, in order to implement government policy. Politicization has also increased the status given to unions in institutions, established to govern territorial public services.

In France, civil service training is independent from the universities, in contrast to most other foreign countries. ÉNA, INET, and EHESP offer courses in initial training and continuing education, as well as training modules on specific topics (e.g., Europe, security, culture, health). The selection is very stringent, and less than 10 percent of applicants usually succeed. Part of the curriculum is common to ÉNA and INET (based in Strasbourg). The number of participants seems quite low compared to the leadership needs of public service, and the number of students admitted to ÉNA has decreased steadily for several years (187 graduates in 2004 against 107 in 2012). The selection of candidates applying to these institutions is of particular importance in France. Three entrance exams are currently open to applicants:

- an external competition restricted to graduate students
- an internal competition set aside for public servants in active employment

- a competition reserved for professionals with experience outside public service, an electoral mandate in a local authority, or responsibility in an association (except for the EHESP)

For all three schools, the homogeneity of recruited “heirs of the dominant culture” is a real problem (Bourdieu and Passeron 1964). Preparatory classes for competitions were created to improve diversity, and are open to selected students based on their level of resources, motivation, and academic background. In all the tests, general knowledge and knowledge of letters are valued over the sciences.

The initial training is essential to ensure fairness in recruitment. Public officials can go through an internal competition and take courses that are comparable to those of students without work experience training. All three institutions offer many training modules to support specific themes and issues. The courses enhance or provide new knowledge and skills, and have as strong an impact on careers as the initial training or competition. Three sample courses offered are presented in Tables 14.1 and 14.2.

The majority of students in these schools are newly appointed cadres or core groups promoted in training. The duration of training for officials is important: students enrolled in Grade A+ receive an average of 27 months of training, while those enrolled as C agents stay anywhere from a few weeks to nine months at school (as do, for instance, those students who participate in training on the protection and rights of minors).

The implementation of a modular school is delayed, and the earlier individual trajectories of students are generally not taken into account in the conduct and organization of schooling, regardless of any previous academic training they received. The duration and content of the training provided in schools are the same for all applicants. However, the EHESP strives to adapt the training programs to students’ specific needs in the early grades. The professional training is essential and sometimes constitutes half the training. Even if the training cannot ultimately prepare students for the actual exercise of power once they are in these positions, those students will still have been exposed to the various problems of management and the importance of good leadership. Nearly 80 percent of the schools training public officials operate a ranking system, and each student’s grades are published.

## ÉNA

The French, though critical of the ÉNA, remain attached to this prestigious institution. According to P. H. Argenson, “Not only will ÉNA not disappear, but one of the greatest dangers facing France is to believe that it can regain its place at the head of the great nations without high public service at the height of its ambitions.”

Table 14.1 Overview table presenting ÉNA, INET, and EHESP, 2011–2012

| Years 2011–2012              | ÉNA   | INET   | EHESP   |
|------------------------------|---|--|---|
| Missions                     | Selection for initial and continual training of senior French/international officials | Former executives of large local authorities   | Former executives of social, medical, environmental agencies  |
| Promotions                   | 80 students in competition per annum  | Approx. 850 students with: 130 students in competition<br>120 foreign students<br>60 masters students<br>1600+ auditors in executive education | 1300 students/ initial training<br>4500 students/training<br>150 trainees<br>70 conservatory students<br>300 managers in continuing education |
| Methods of recruitment       | External competition<br>Internal competition<br>Third (professional/mandate)          | External competition<br>Internal competition<br>Third (professional/mandate)   | External competition<br>Internal competition  |
| Minimum entry                | Bac+3<br>French national  | Bac+ 3<br>European national  | Bac+ 3<br>European national   |
| Duration of longest training | 24 months   | 18 months  | 27 months; varies between 14 training courses for masters for health professionals, specialist masters, engineer and PhD                      |
| Period of internship         | 12 months   | 9 months   | 12 months (Hospital Director)   |

(Continued)

Table 14.1 Continued

| Years 2011-2012  | ENAE  | INET  | EHEESP   |
|------------------|---|---|--|
| Teaching content | 3 modules:<br>1-Europe<br>2-Territory (33 weeks at INET)<br>3-Management and Public<br>Management                                     | 3 modules:<br>1-Ownership issues/local public<br>actors<br>2-professionalization (33 weeks<br>at ENA)<br>3-specialization | Departments of health, environment and<br>laboratories<br>3 departments: clinical epidemiology,<br>biostats, and nursing<br>Management departments (Institute of<br>management); social/human sciences<br>and health behaviors |
| Training issues  | Finance and accounting<br>Information systems<br>Change management<br>HRM<br>Crisis management<br>Management/ decision making<br>...  | Management control of human,<br>financial, logistics and IT<br>Writing strategic<br>briefs<br>Managing teams/ operations  | Public health reforms<br>Managing budgets<br>HRM<br>Communication<br>Crisis management<br>Quality, Risk management<br>Public procurement   |
| Internships      | European institutions and<br>international diplomatic<br>representations<br>Prefectures, local authorities<br>Companies, associations | Local authorities<br>Decentralized state services   | Logistics<br>Observe healthcare environments,<br>work situations outside schools   |

Table 14.2 Overview table presenting ÉNA, INET, and EHESP, 2008–2012

| Years 2008–2012                            | ÉNA  | INET  | EHESP  |
|--|--|---|--|
| Method of course evaluation and validation | Testing during tuition and courses are noted<br>Order release  | No ranking<br>Inscription on eligibility based on professionalism, potential, and experience  | Continuous assessment noted internships and dissertations<br>120 ECTS  |
| Post filled                                | General managers/deputy managers in central government<br>Director/department heads<br>Heads of Mission  | General directors/deputy directors<br>Directors/department heads<br>Heads of Mission<br>civil administrators, and subprefect, prefect, inspector IGF, IGAS, or IGA,<br>adviser regional audit | Hospital director, health/social institution, hospital engineer<br>Inspector of Health and Social Welfare,<br>Attached to hospital administration      |
| training                                   | Regulatory modules type for executives/<br>department managers<br>International programs-foreign officials<br>Centre for Research and Publication ÉNA  | Annual conference of senior government officers<br>Graduate in management   | Training courses and specialized masters with Universities (Rennes, Paris)   |
| Research                                   |  |   | Contribution to research in public health<br>Development of international relations  |
| Date of creation                           | 1945   | 1998—first school dates from 1990   | 2004—first national school of public health dates to 1945  |
| Budget                                     | Approx. 44.3 million euros   | Approx. 120 million euros   | Approx. 56 million euros   |
| Tuition                                    | Free tuition for admission on commitment but in public administration for at least 10 years  | Free tuition on admission   | Free tuition on admission  |
| Numbers employed                           | 204  | 450   | 360  |
| Remuneration for students                  | Yes (from 400 euros gross monthly)   | Yes (about 1600 euros gross monthly)  |  |
| Development focus (goals)                  | Improving the diversity of competitively recruited profiles<br>Strengthen training alternating<br>Strengthen modules on international issues<br>Replace the system by assigning a classification of skills folder<br>Accompany officials in their career | Changes in governance, operation, and management of the school  | Improving the diversity of competitively recruited profiles<br>Decompartamentalize departments, improve the cross- and international relations courses |

Questions have been asked about the pedagogical content, working philosophy, classification output, and recruitment. A report by Silguy (2003) notes that

pedagogy, mostly provided by members of the administration from the school, remains isolated from other fields of knowledge or higher education. Officials involved in the school know how to teach about the public service or public finances, but (are) not necessarily best placed to develop the sense of innovation among students and awaken their creative imagination which the state will need in the coming years to be at the forefront of modern methods for human resource management, negotiation, management by objectives, and management of change.

The student rankings, after two years of intensive training, have been criticized—mainly because students receive no comment on their professional or personal qualities or defects, or indeed on how their progress might strengthen their ability to undertake future roles. Students choose their jobs and their employer based on their ranking. Employers cannot create competition among several candidates. Candidates are recruited without the possibility of assessing their value in terms of job requirements, and the student has little information on the positions available and very limited time in which to inquire about them (15 days). The system promotes conformity, rather than personal development, teamwork, and project management. Respect for the hierarchical system is considered a virtue, but it can become a handicap when later in a person's career one has to be open-minded, innovative, able to think critically, adaptable to change, and willing to take risks.

The ÉNA, aware of development opportunities, gradually integrated certain recommendations from the government reports (Silguy 2003), such as:

- opening the school up to foreign, business, and social partners and civil society;
- creating a real consistency between courses and internships;
- individualizing training at the ÉNA;
- proposing international, economic, financial, and general majors;
- combining attractiveness of the school with less weight for the end ranking and exit procedure on the development of education;
- improving the match between the student profile and the trades of the school;
- strengthening interministeriality and mobility;
- bringing general public service and territorial public service closer together;
- ending the dual monopoly by creating a single-lane access to training and one employer (the state);

- breaking with conformity, and encouraging innovation and risk-taking;
- developing a spirit of collective intelligence to enhance the role of community in the evaluation of performance in public administration, because individual performance indicators only harm the collective labor efficiency and social cohesion; and
- encouraging interdisciplinary study.

If they are recognized as competent, hardworking, fast, knowledgeable, and with a sense of general interest, young *énarques* (graduates of the École nationale d'administration) are also often perceived as arrogant and overly cautious in action. They do not master new capacities of authority and management needed to function at the highest level of the state, yet at the same time, they expect high-quality careers and resent the criticism they receive. It appears that beyond the intrinsic quality of the training, competitive recruitment is a plausible explanation for the mismatch between the expectations of the state and the skills of ÉNA graduates. Since its inception, nearly 6,000 French officials and 3,000 foreigners have been trained by the ÉNA.

## INET

Decentralization laws have strengthened local governments, employers of 1.81 million as of 2012. Launched in 1990, the INET's mission is to form a high-level senior management able to act in complex, diverse environments and lead important administrations. In 2011, over 90 percent of applicants were admitted from a high school (the vast majority from the Political Studies Institute but also from École des Hautes Etudes Commerciales de Paris [HEC Paris], École Supérieure des Sciences Économiques et Commerciales [ÉSSÉC], Naval Academy, St. Cyr, or held a postgraduate degree. Recruitment is high. Students learn to advise elected politicians on making strategic choices in law enforcement and security and to optimize the production of services to citizens in the tasks assigned to local authorities and public institutions. The theoretical knowledge is complemented by field experience. Increasingly complex relationships between general directors and mayors means that diplomacy is essential (Le Saout 2011). The link between major personalities commonly depends heavily on political configurations, and the local strategic roles and territorial leaders remain subordinate to the interests of the mayor.

Several ongoing training programs welcome new administrator trainees who have been internally promoted and were able to change their grade by completing a general six-month training period that covers expertise and management, theoretical training, and internships. Future efforts seem to focus on the optimization of the management of resources available to the institution as a whole.

## **EHESP**

The School for Advanced Studies in Public Health, created by a 2004 public health law, aims to have a significant international presence. The health-system reforms, including in hospital organization, the implementation of economic health decisions, and the creation of regional health agencies, required a cross-disciplinary vision of public health (Strohl and Lannelongue 2011). Traditionally, most candidates for external competition are students and graduates of the Institut d'Etudes Politiques (26 percent of those registered) or Level I servants (50 percent of those registered). Candidates for the internal competition come mainly from public bodies (state, hospital, territorial) or inspection (tax, treasury, finance, customs). Some of the challenges facing candidates include:

- competitive low-skilled entry that does not guarantee the acquisition of basic knowledge in finance or human resources management and does not provide health benefits;
- lack of the knowledge needed for training exercises; and
- inadequate specialized instruction due to deficient teaching resources.

Even if problems are different for each of the three institutions studied, they are all criticized for their very closed recruitment policies, and they need to evolve, adapt, and prepare more senior officials to face the challenges of the twenty-first century.

Presentation of the main courses was used to assess the content and context of student training. Schools prepare their students for issues related to demographic changes, internal changes (the role of the state and government), or external changes (the European and global environment). They must also teach them how to manage teams in the spirit of the OBL and must attract, develop, and energize human capital (Crozet and Desmarais 2004).

For the French central government, the importance of European activities is becoming more pronounced, resulting in a change of the diplomatic function in the EU. The territorial state is increasingly in a partnership and contractual framework, refocusing on core functions to protect citizens while developing, monitoring, and evaluating public policies. The scale and mastery needed for modern public management is unprecedented, especially since the link between "work efficiency and well-being" was established (Lachmann, Larose, and Penicaud 2010). The capacity to drive change, negotiation skills, communication, and the ability to contract are essential (Abraham and Brillet 2008).

Officials promoted to manager are often not trained for their responsibilities as team leaders, so they must be prepared to manage teams efficiently within crisis situations. Any proposed reorganization or restructuring must anticipate and measure the impact and feasibility of human change.

## Conclusion

Since 1982, the trend toward new public management has continued, but the performance of public services is not similar to the profitability and productivity of the private sector (Ughetto 2006). Quality and value-to-user are key performance criteria in responding to citizens' needs for health, safety, and education. The performance of state action is measured in socioeconomic terms. Management methods adopted from the private sector are efficient in terms of market analysis, empowerment of services, and proximity to customers, but policymakers need to look primarily at the needs of citizens and to use specific public performance tools for evaluation (Muller 2008). Public service managers must be capable of anticipating and addressing emergent societal problems, such as demographic change; strengthening security; maintaining economic competitiveness; and managing health, disability, and inclusion as well as sustainable development.

Solving these problems will require:

- new forms of regulation and intervention requiring openness, imagination, innovation, and capacity for analysis and synthesis;
- integration of the changing European economic, legal, political, social, cultural, and international environments amid ongoing globalization;
- responsiveness to citizens' desires for administrative simplicity, efficiency, and quality of services;
- anticipation of changing modes of intervention for the public authorities, increasingly passing through arbitration, regulation, and partnership;
- understanding the changes induced by OBL, widely felt in all jurisdictions, and the impact of frequent reorganizations and restructurings on services, human resources, and employee conditions; and
- doing more with fewer resources, ensuring that public service reforms do not value individualistic ethics at the expense of the group (Marciano 1999); it is necessary to do things differently and develop teams.

These skills can be broken down into eight general actions (Gilbert 1999):

1. Clearly identify contributions to the structure.
2. Attract candidates and keep them motivated.
3. Measure individual and/or collective performance.
4. Measure skills and identify potential.
5. Streamline internal market for mobility.
6. Develop the skills and employability.
7. Manage seniors and transfer knowledge.
8. Create a value system based on merit.

This shift in values has implications for workers; it destabilizes the previously established balance and changes behavior. Valuing those who simply have the best indicators of activities can go in the opposite direction of the interests of citizens and bring about unintended consequences. On what basis should public service be continued? The issue of training officials for successful modernization appears essential.

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# 15

# Italy

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## Introduction

This chapter analyzes how historic, economic, and social factors, as well as political-administrative relations, shape the structure and content of training programs for top civil servants in Italy.

The first part is dedicated to the factors historically influencing public sector leadership, describing the different stages of public sector reform since the country's unification, and critically analyzing the role of training in sustaining modernization efforts. It then moves into an analysis of organizational processes and deals with the relationship between human resources and potentials of organizational development and the evolution of political-administrative relations. The part concludes by identifying the paradoxes of leadership expectations in the Italian context, identifying the emergence of a "dual discourse" within two major reform components.

In the second part of the chapter, training content and methods are analyzed and the main features explained in light of the specific reform trends previously described. Neither a collaborative style of reform, such as the one in the early 1990s, nor a more directive one, such as the package adopted in 2009, has thus far overcome the strong administrative compliance culture and the intricate political-administrative relationship present in Italian public administration (PA). The absence of a comprehensive framework on leadership contrasts with the top-down approach of the last reform; however, this has led to an ongoing rethinking of leadership training that takes into account both the idealist perspective of the reform and the context of Italian PA.

## Stages of Reform and Training Supports

The history of Italian organizational administrative culture began with the unification process in 1861, and continued with the fall of Vatican authority and the accession of several northeast regions after the First World War.

The various institutional, political, and administrative cultures that gave birth to the unitary state, the difficulties in their homogenization, and the clarification of unitary and shared procedures in central and local administrations have all shaped Italy's PA reform efforts over the years. The story of Italian PA can be divided into five main phases of development from 1860 to date (Sepe 1995; Melis 1996, 2003; see Table 15.1).

### **Stage 1: The Origins of the Italian state (1860–1900)**

As was the case for many other Mediterranean countries conquered during the advance of Napoleon, the first government of the Italian state had its primary origin in the French administrative model. It is characterized by (1) the assumption of the principle of "uniformity," with a rigid prescription of formal rules concerning the organization and activities throughout the national territory; (2) "reductio ad unum" (reducing to one) of center-periphery relations, with total dominance by the central state, which could grant certain prerogatives to the individual territories; (3) a control system based on the concept of "legitimacy" of the act and, therefore, on its compliance with the rules established by the central government; (4) an organization in which the "Ministry" has a central role in the administration of the state; (5) the institution of the "prefect" as a single delegate of the government at the local level of administration (Melis 2003: 12; Cammeli 2004: 48–51).

In this stage, employee training occurs on the job (Cassese 1976). There is, in fact, a substantial homogeneity of the scientific and cultural backgrounds of the administrative body, which comes from a small oligarchy that ruled the country at the time. Access to employment was based on practical training, and it was not related to the educational system. The practical training period was unpaid and, therefore, reserved for the wealthy. Once hired, the individual built his/her skills in a purely experiential way. The hierarchy was based on seniority (within the same level) and on merits, in the case of transition from one level to the next.

### **Stage 2: The Administrative "Take-Off" (1900–1920)**

In the first fifteen years of the twentieth century, under the guidance of Giovanni Giolitti, the government introduced some major changes to meet profound economic and social revisions. The state began to promote economic development, while the various PAs began to perform new social functions, with important consequences on public spending (Cammeli 2004: 65; see Figure 15.1). Concerning public employees, the important innovations of this period can be summarized in three main areas (Melis 1996: 184–196):

1. *The growth of the duties and functions of the state*, with a consequent increase in the number of both administrations and public employees (Sepe et al. 2003: 91; Cammeli 2004: 65).

*Table 15.1 Stages of reform and training supports*

| <b>Stage of Reform</b> | <b>Contents</b>   | <b>Leadership training</b>   |
|------------------------|---|--|
| 1860–1900              | Creation of a highly centralized and standardized administrative environment, where all activities are concentrated in central ministries.  | The professionalism of leaders was ensured by selection and internal career. Their training is on the job.   |
| 1900–1920              | The State begins to assume new social features, along with the administration. Growth in the number of employees.   | Specific schools for each sector are founded at this stage (i.e. Police Training School, 1902; Post Office Training School, 1902), to support the new functions of the State. Given the number of employees, training on the job can no longer guarantee the professionalism of all employees.   |
| 1920–1960              | The State continues to increase its role in the economic and social life. Assumes, in fact, a fundamental role during the war, as well as in early stages of post-war reconstruction. Uncontrolled increase in the number of public organizations.  | Previous system of school for specific sectors expanded, but not in quality. They do not have the purpose of recruitment, and they do not have specialized teachers. Education remains substantially on the job.   |
| 1960–1990              | This stage originates a new government level (the Regions), increasing the efforts to reform the Italian PA. The Administration, however, is now too big and out of control. Lack of real political intentions to undertake reforms.  | In 1963, the activities of the National School of Public Administration (now SNA) begin, with the objective of training an elite of employees to guide the entire (central) administration. The project conceived on the model of ENA, but the parallel emergence of other schools by individual ministries hampered the goal, supporting trends of differentiation and separation.  |
| 1990–Present           | In contrast to the incremental logic of direct State intervention in the economic and social life of the country, the reforms of the nineties trace the way for a different organization of welfare. Service quality and citizens relationship management have been at the forefront, as well as output measurement and evaluation. | The role of the SNA is progressively growing through compulsory training and recruitment, however the reinforcement of spoil system and reducing specificities of top-managers represent limiting factors. Training programs gradually integrate non-legal modules, non-linear position on Leadership training (in parallel with stop-and-go approach on reforms), in the last four years Leadership becomes an item <i>per se</i> and specific modules are developed in both initial and lifelong training. |

### Public employees in Italy

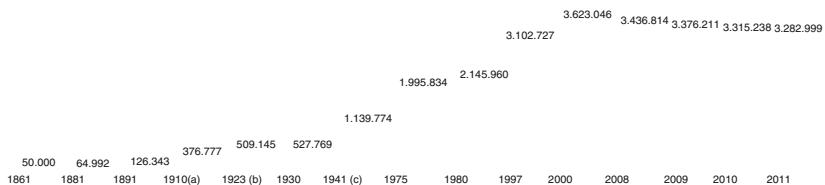


Figure 15.1 Public employment trends in Italy.

Notes: Since 1910, figures include autonomous public enterprise; since 1923, judges; since 1932, teachers.

Source: Based on data from Cassese 1983; ISTAT 2005; Ragioneria Generale dello Stato 2013.

2. *Reconfiguring the geographical and cultural composition of public sector employees*, through the hiring of “new” bureaucrats from regions in the South, using employment in PA as a way to balance the lack of employment opportunities in the private sector.
3. *The first general regulation of public employment* (recruitment, career, powers, and duties of the employee) with law n. 290 of 1908, a result of the emergence of new corporate associations and public employee trade unions (Cammeli 2004: 66).

Given the increasing number of employees, training on the job could no longer guarantee the professionalism of all employees. At the same time, the emergence of specialized administrations contributed to the birth of the first training schools for specific sectors (i.e., Police Training School in 1902; Post Office Training School in 1902). These schools, however, in part because of the growing influence of union membership, did not represent a real path for selecting and training public sector employees. Without the aim of recruiting, they were offering relatively short training courses, with a strong mix of training and work activities. In the end, these schools merely represented a general continuation of training on the job.

### Stage 3: The Great Growth (1920–1960)

The State continued to increase its role in the economic and social life of its citizens and assumed a fundamental role during the war and in the early stages of postwar reconstruction, albeit in an uncontrolled manner via a number of organizations. At this stage, the very peculiar Italian compromise between a “market” and a “state” economy took shape, representing from this point onward a particular mixture of political, bureaucratic, and business interests, at a huge cost to the community (Barca 1997: 3).

Yet an important theoretical and academic debate about the need to begin a process of analysis and of streamlining the PAs had already begun, with

the ambitious attempt to find points of connection between the tradition of administrative law and the arguments of administrative science. Many of the ideas produced during those years failed in practice. They were, in fact, impeded by a policy that had an interest in maintaining the status quo to better reap the benefits of public spending, which was already out of control. The ideas of renewal were not even supported by the bureaucracy itself, which was unable to understand or appropriately implement them (Sepe 1995).

Attempts to introduce elements of a spoils system—such as law n. 2300 of 1923 establishing the purge of employees whose behavior was not consistent with political guidelines, mobility at the discretion of prefects, also known as the “waltz of prefects,” requiring university professors to take an oath of allegiance, and the mandatory political enrollment of public employees—all failed. The politicization of the bureaucracy, during fascism, was more ritual than substantial (Di Andrea 2003).

Although the problem of training was at the center of the debate on public sector innovation, it produced only a quantitative growth and not a qualitative development of the training schools (Saltari 2009). There was no real recruitment or use of specialized teachers, and education remained essentially on the job. The first university courses to train public managers began in this period; however, they were only offered rarely and at irregular intervals that, although innovative, did not produce any significant impact.

#### **Stage 4: The Great Disorder (1960–1990)**

To assist with the overall general disorder of Italian PA, starting in the early 1960s, emphasis was placed on finding a better balance between the organization of the state and the roles and functions it performs, in a push to produce an increasingly dynamic economic system.

In this stage, ideas and goals of reform failed in their efforts to translate into practice, in particular due to a new and even stronger alliance between the political and administrative spheres, which became united in defense of personal interests at the expense of the collective interest. In the meantime, however, the social policies of the 1960s and 1970s increased the responsibilities and activities of the state, and this corresponded with a new season of dimensional growth. Along with the goals of reorganization and better planning, a new regional level of government emerged. The creation of this new level of government was followed not by a reduction of central government structures, but rather by the separate ministries drawing new administrative functions to defend their own structures and establish new offices.

In this stage, too, the excessive fragmentation of Italian PA had an effect on its training system. The role of the newly established National School of Public Administration (1957) was soon hampered by the parallel emergence of other schools by individual ministries, worsening the trend of differentiation and separatism.

Table 15.2 Main managerial reforms in Italy

| New Weberianism   | NPM   | Public Governance   | Other  |
|---|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access to information, transparency and integrity (1990, 2009).</li> <li>Civic access (2013).</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Performance management, mainly focused on output (1993, 1999, 2009).</li> <li>A more flexible HRM in the civil service, with the reform of the Senior Civil Service and the application of Civil Law to Civil Servants (1993, 1998).</li> <li>Citizens' and service charters (1994).</li> <li>Customer relation management. Quality initiatives (CAF/EFQM, customer satisfaction surveys, emoticons).</li> <li>Reorganization and merger of ministries.</li> <li>New institutional arrangements (executive agencies, independent authorities, public enterprises, non profit foundations).</li> <li>Market-type mechanisms (competition in health and higher education; privatization; project finance; contracting out).</li> <li>Adoption of managerial tools (accrual and cost accounting, internal controls).</li> <li>Discipline and parsimony (frozen recruitment and budget ceilings).</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Intermunicipal networks.</li> <li>One-stop shops.</li> <li>Deliberate and participative decision making (planning and budgeting).</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Devolution and federalizing processes.</li> <li>Measurement of administrative burdens (standard cost model).</li> </ul> |

### **Stage 5: The Great Reforms (1990–Present)**

Managerial reforms in Italy date back to the 1980s, when several PAs (mainly local governments) introduced a number of management principles and tools. The more massive reforms that followed in the early 1990s moved in many directions as shown in Table 15.2.

Political agendas were clearly inspired by the New Public Management (NPM) model, not only in the early 1990s, but also in 2009. Although no comprehensive evaluation has ever been conducted, the literature agrees that reforms have been generally unsuccessful (Cepiku and Meneguzzo 2011). Organizational change has been cosmetic without producing any real downsizing; market mechanisms have not significantly improved quality or reduced costs; managerial techniques and tools have only been formally adopted; and several e-government plans have been approved but back-of-fice reorganization has not occurred, to name just a few areas where reform has fallen short.

Regarding the civil service, the two main reforms agendas have been: (1) adopting civil law and collective and individual contracts for public managers and employees, reducing specificities of public employees (often referred to as the “privatization” of public employment in Italy); and (2) the decentralization of human resource management, as increasingly more aspects are being dealt with at the organizational level rather than the central level (often referred to as the “contractualization” of public employees). The reform of leadership can be considered rather schizophrenic: termed contracts were introduced for top managers, but these were often linked to performance and political approval. The overall impact on training programs was slow, gradually integrating managerial and leadership contents.

### **Administrative Reforms, Change Management, and Political Structure**

Considering the size and quality of legislative intervention over the last thirty years, the administrative reforms of recent years should lead to a profound transformation of organizational competencies, pushing the single administration to implement radical changes in nature, clashing with the political and cultural dimension (Mintzberg 1979; Schein 1993). These important changes are difficult to achieve since they are strictly dependent on the human and financial resources of each organization and its ability to manage them. Further, there is a risk of “apparent” innovation, as has frequently occurred in the history of Italian public sector reforms.

Although the relationship between human resources and the potential of organizational development is a common topic in change management research, this is an issue of particular importance in Italy, which is characterized by a rigid external and internal labor market (Itami 1987; Grant 1991).

The majority of individuals currently employed in the Italian PA field, in fact, were hired a number of years before the administrative reforms of the 1990s. Therefore, from the viewpoint of organizational analysis, the strategies of change and innovation in the Italian public sector must necessarily be measured by both the quality and quantity of the individuals employed in public organizations, since they represent an organizational asset that is as important as it is difficult to modify in the short term (Fernandez and Rainey 2006). This raises a problem with organizational development that underlies actions imposed by the external environment (legislative reforms) but is also strongly affected by the internal environment (individuals and groups within the administration). In practice, to carry out the reforms, it is necessary to enter into organizational change processes, incorporating the vision, cognitive maps, beliefs, and values of all the actors involved (Hinna 2009) because, above all, these are the individuals who have the responsibility of leading individual organizations (Gnan et al. 2013; Condor and Thompson 2006: 27).

As has already been observed in other contexts (Barzelay 2001), the problem of driving change is closely related to the terms and conditions of the relationship of top civil servants with the political sphere (Hinna et al. 2010). Historically, Italy has suffered from politics' and administration's mutual interest in defending the status quo, inhibiting many of the reform projects already assumed, and in particular those undertaken from 1960 to 1990. This phenomenon was also partly the result of the transformation of the Italian political parties during that same period whose membership was based less and less on ideas, knowledge, and values, and increasingly based on interest and career (Cotta et al. 2001: 174–175), with little ambition for long-term programs. Among the protected interests were those of the bureaucracy, resulting in a collusion in which the two parties (the political sphere and the administrative sphere) tried to minimize the conflict and to maximize their own interests (Mortara 1974; Cassese, Franchini 1994; Dente 1995).

This type of relation between the political and administrative spheres changed, however, at the beginning of the 1990s. The financial crisis required administrative capabilities to improve efficiency and effectiveness and the observed phenomena of political corruption prompted a redefinition of the politics-administration relationship by assigning distinct roles and responsibilities to each. Therefore, this reconfiguration can be closely linked to the implementation of the whole of managerial reform within Italian PA (Hinna 2009).

According to the political-administration separation introduced in 1993, the political sphere is responsible for public policies and strategies based on special value judgments, establishing the merit of an intervention in terms of its content (what), time (when), and resources (how much). The administrative sphere is responsible for identifying operational objectives

in terms of the implementation of political decisions (how to). In this manner, the legislature recognized a relevant degree of autonomy for the top civil servant with respect to policy implementation. At the same time, the top civil servants assumed a clear responsibility for the results achieved, in terms of an efficient and effective management of the resources at their disposal.

However, even today, this autonomy and responsibility of the administrative sphere encounters a number of difficulties in practice. This happens primarily for two reasons: (1) the system of recruitment and selection of top civil servants, and (2) the failure to introduce adequate managerial skills and systems (Cimino 2009).

With reference to the former, in Italy there is a halfway system between a merit and a spoils system. Among employees, the applicants for top positions need to win a competition to gain the "status" of top civil servant. However, achieving the "status" is a necessary but insufficient condition to obtain the position. An additional subsequent step is needed, with the (termed) decision to hire taken by the political sphere, based on trust. Furthermore, the selection of top civil servants from the private sector, within certain limits, is up to the policy sphere.

The choice of this mixed model is motivated by the search for a balance between (a) the impartiality and quality of a public sector individual career (merit-based system), by ensuring individual professional autonomy, and (b) respect for the democratic principle of political accountability (spoils system) to guarantee an effective control over administrative actions.

Obviously, the effectiveness of this model is strongly linked to the way in which the policy "chooses" the top civil servant. According to the law, the selection of candidates should be based on technical and objective considerations and criteria, and not on patronage and political membership. In practice, however, this is in fact what happens. As anticipated, beyond historical-cultural reasons, this is seemingly the result of lack of both general knowledge of the politicians in charge of selection and of the interactive systems supporting the activities of planning, organization, control, evaluation, and reporting (Gnan et al. 2013). The political bodies, in fact, have over time demonstrated a lack of ability to develop public policies, to construct annual programs and, therefore, to develop goals. Without these contextually essential features, most of the basic elements needed to set expectations for top management behaviors and actions are missing, making it virtually impossible to select and evaluate top civil servants on a technical and objective basis (Cimino 2009).

This phenomenon has not been strongly opposed by top civil servants. The administrative sphere stems predominantly from a judicial background and has not been able to fully embrace the importance and usefulness of introducing "new" technical knowledge and managerial tools, even when it is in defense of their own professionalism and autonomy.

## Expectations of Leaders

As outlined in the previous section, the role of public managers is at the core of the last two stages of reform. It is unfortunate that the results of these waves of legislative intervention do not provide a single comprehensive framework and are rather patchy in terms of leadership expectations.

The Italian paradox of having a “managing class” for PA defined by law (since 1972) while at the same time having no clear boundaries of the managerial role (i.e., the limits of macro- and micro-organization continue to be the subject of legal debates) has made it difficult to bring together a single leadership competencies framework, and has made it even more difficult to create a much-awaited *élite* (Cassese 1990). In the absence of a single leadership framework developed at the HR level, we turn to the legal disposition regarding public managers to define and analyze leadership expectations.

A legal distinction is made between first- and middle-level managers (Arts. 16 and 17 of Leg. Decree n.165/2001) in regard to their respective hierarchical functions (both bearing a striking resemblance to Henri Fayol’s management functions), but no difference is spelled out regarding the performance requirements of each of these categories (Art. 9 of Leg. Decree 150/2009). Leadership expectations would be more interested in the process of how managers achieve results, rather than in the results themselves.

From that perspective, we can identify the emergence of a “dual discourse” in two different areas of reform—performance and transparency—that helps to highlight the paradoxes and limitations of such expectations.

The gradual “privatization” of labor relations in Italian PA led to the development of a “prototype” public manager with *“the capacity and powers of the private employer”* to organize and allocate the resources of her or his office (Art. 5, para. 2, of Leg. Decree n. 165/2001). Granting this autonomy to public managers should have occasioned a paradigm shift relative to previous reforms (Pioggia 2008; Cimino 2009). The 2009 reform enhanced the NPM characteristics of the Italian public management framework (versus the more collaborative approach in the 1990s).

The reinforcement of the managerial role (evaluation, exclusivity of organizational decisions vis à vis labor unions and politics, and sanctions) in a “must do” fashion<sup>1</sup> can be considered disruptive for the Italian context, however, because the autonomy granted by law must be analyzed before what is actually meant by “private employer” in Italian civil law can be understood. Civil code (Arts. 2086 and 2094) offers a rather paternalistic interpretation of the concept of employers, strongly limiting the responsibilities of the employee. Ironically, the legal definition of the private employer in Italy did not help public managers in developing a culture of results championed by the reform, while it presumably helped reinforce the culture of means and compliance already rooted in Italian PAs. One can argue that the recent reforms of PA in Italy have contributed to the development of a intricate panorama of rules, sanctions, and expectations for

public managers that is not yet backed by the appropriate autonomy or by a comprehensive leadership framework, leading to an on-going dispute of the true nature of the managerial role in PA (Sgroi 2003; Carabelli and Carinci 2010: 124–125).

## **Training Content and Methods**

### **A growing influence on tomorrow's elites?**

The Italian National School of Administration (Scuola Nazionale dell'Amministrazione [SNA]) was established in 1957 with the aim of creating a system of recruitment and training similar to the French ÉNA. Because of fundamental differences in recruitment systems, the homogeneity of careers, and the social systems of these two countries, this goal was never quite realized. However, the legalistic and formal approach to training civil servants was the primary education strategy for the SNA, with only a few, albeit high-quality, exceptions throughout the years.

The fifteenth annual report on PA training, drafted by the SNA in cooperation with the Department of Public Administration (DFP) and all the PA schools at the central and local levels, provides some edifying data, covering all training hours provided either by the public schools or outsourced.

For central administrations, the progressive alignment of training with the performance management framework requirements covers from 72.2 percent to 80.7 percent of the total training hours. Nonetheless, a closer look at the content of training provides a less enthusiastic picture. In 2010, the prominence of legal and technical training for managers covered 40 percent, while leadership-related training was integrated with other types of managerial training and accounted for a mere 7.5 percent of the total training hours, although an increased share in this area was noted from 2008 to 2010 (from 3.3 percent to 7.5 percent). The general trend in central administration training sees a reduction of resources for training (down 19 percent from 2009 to 2010) but an increase in participants and hours of training (up 8 percent of hours provided and 28 percent of hours received, for an increase in participation of 12 percent). This marks a 2010 total of 442,038 hours provided for central administration, and a total of 272,560 participants out of a population of 475,408 (57 percent).

Moreover, the SNA is missing out, at least in its regular training offer, for any training specifically aimed at top managers and senior civil servants. The bulk of leadership training is thus focused on recruits or newly appointed middle managers, and the SNA has developed, since 2010, a series of programs that reflect the peculiarity of both the legislative framework and the emerging multidisciplinary approach favored in all its programs.

## Training content

The SNA focuses its training offer on three main activities, the first two being multidisciplinary training programs:

- Selection and training of public managers (similar to the French ÉNA selection procedure)
- Compulsory training for middle managers appointed by their respective administrations after a selection procedure (since 2000), with a relatively high level of enforcement
- Lifelong executive education on managerial, legal, and policy issues for all civil servants (either through bilateral agreements with single administrations or through voluntary participation by single civil servants)

In the wake of the 2009 reform, the governance and mission of SNA have been redefined to support the reform implementation process (Strategic Plan 2010–2012, Draft Strategic Plan 2013–2015). This priority has led to a comprehensive effort to redesign the training offered, starting with the initial training for appointed managers, previously centered around legal, economic, and, marginally, organizational skills and delivered through classical lecture teaching. In tandem, the debate on training methods has developed around four main elements: the use of cases, exercises and simulations, interaction with practitioners, and the consolidation of a comprehensive evaluation scheme.

The share of training that is directly related to leadership in multidisciplinary courses varies from 10 percent to 20 percent of total training hours. For example, leadership training for newly appointed managers selected by their respective administrations is 52 hours out of a total 340, while the final project work is focused on a reflection of the managerial role. However, the growing share of time dedicated to case studies and decision-making implies that more time is devoted to specific facets and applications of leadership. The training content for leadership is focused on blending the legal dispositions regarding a managers' responsibilities and the practical or reflective modules are focused on the perception, by managers, of the leadership role they have to fulfill.

The main skills are developed through the use of two conceptual frameworks, The Competing Values Framework (CVF; Quinn and Rohrbaugh 1983; Whetten and Cameron 1998), and Group Variables Model (GVM; Quaglino et al. 1992). In the framework of SNA training, the CVF is used to analyze possible tensions between the four "spaces" in order to develop change strategies, while the GVM provides group management variables as semantic fields that must be contextualized by participants.

Although the authors define other variables as well, in the training context of the SNA, they are blank cognitive maps upon which the participants work. This approach is in line with the objectives within leadership development

training to create a more reflective approach on work dynamics, rather than providing prescriptive behavioral norms.

The choice of framing training in this manner is largely influenced by the absence of a reference framework at the government level, and by the contradictory nature of the managerial position within PA, enabling such frameworks to guide the training process without being prescriptive.

### **Leadership training for public managers: methods and examples**

The lack of a reference framework for leadership competencies development and evaluation at the civil service level pushed the SNA to develop a specific approach, blending theory and practice. The aim of this approach is to balance any possible dysfunction at the managerial level induced by contradictory input from the various reform measures and cultures (administrative, collaborative, and managerialist) by providing managers with a meta-competence to "read the context" and understand the complex nature of their role. The shift from a prescriptive approach relying on established leadership models (transactional, transformational, situational, charismatic, etc.) to an abductive approach (Morin and Le Moigne 1999) relying on context and relationships. This enables each manager to find, or at least to develop awareness of the possibility of finding, a "way out" of the organizational double-bind that characterizes the working context of public administrations confronted with NPM (or NWS) reform frameworks.<sup>2</sup>

In this approach, three methods are emerging as a "model" of training at the SNA as far as leadership is concerned:

- Open-ended, ill-structured case studies, where the manager is confronted with several ethical and managerial dilemmas in an ongoing narrative. The most used case is the Gastadi Case (Mameli et al. 2012), a seven-day case study centered on a manager on the eve of the evaluation interviews. The case unfolds backward, with critical incidents relating to various aspects of the CVF (results, processes, people and networks) being discussed, simulated, and reflected on.
- Open-ended, multidisciplinary case studies, where the focus is on the decision taken or to be taken by managers, and leadership is a component of reflection induced by the case. The "Budget Cut" case is a prime example; managers are faced with a budget and HR downsizing, with little available information, and with the goal of elaborating a strategy that is backed up by evidence and hypothesis.
- Leadership Laboratories, loose structures developed by teams of practitioners, organizational theorists, and organizational psychologists, are based on clinical/relational approaches to leadership. These use the GVM framework and are organized either by using the results of the case studies or as a follow-up to legal training on managerial responsibilities. A typical lab focuses on the self-other relationship within a given context provided

by the participants, in order to elaborate on the organizational, cultural, and interpersonal assumptions underlying the work relationships. The labs start with the participants' sharing objectives, their preferences, and their perception of the leadership roles they should fulfill. In this phase, the demand for "tools," "rules," and "recipes" is very high. Working through the various assumptions behind such demands, participants develop an understanding of relationships in terms of their complexity, power, culture, roles, expectations, and norms that allows them to "see" how they are themselves a force in the reproduction of such relationships.

## Conclusion

Analyzing the Italian case is akin to taking a picture of a moving object. Legislative production, the lack of comprehensive reviews of reforms, and the constant redefinition of the resources available to PAs provide a blurred environment for such an analysis. Leadership in Italian PA comes with autonomy and a responsibility to produce results. The two primary attempts to create the appropriate conditions for development of a leadership framework for SCS, be it a more collaborative style of reform (1990s) or a more directive one (2009), have both been confronted with a strong administrative culture of rules, a compliance and sanctions mechanism, and an intricate relationship between politics and administration that is reminiscent of the industrial era concepts of worker and owner.

The leadership framework that has emerged from the legal requirements is herein interpreted as a dual discourse: on one hand, autonomy is proclaimed, and on the other hand, it is severely hampered by a series of stringent requirements and compliance obligations. Although not new in the panorama of training for civil servants, leadership training began to take form under the impulse of the National School of Administration, with promising outcomes coupled with limiting factors. The introduction of a reflective and interactive methodology and the use of interdisciplinary teams (legal, organizational, and relational experts) have provided a breakthrough vis à vis previous teaching methods, offering a realistic perspective on leadership development in the Italian context. However, the elite structure within CSC still favors top managers with a legal background (administrative magistrates in particular) who do not fall into the SNA trainee categories.

Could there be a different way? Thus far, any attempt to centralize the Italian administrative context via a comprehensive top-down framework of any kind (whether performance management or transparency and risk management) has led to an almost automatic bureaucratization of the process. A comprehensive framework on leadership could certainly help better assess training, although this process would immediately be at risk

of being bureaucratized, thereby hampering its potential effectiveness. Additionally, since leadership in its daily practice occurs in systems of relationships that could be considered by some to be “legally irrelevant” (Spinelli 2012), there is a tendency to treat it as a “non-issue” left to individual preferences, somewhat echoing the elements of classical theories of leadership such as the Great Man theory. But the picture might be less gloomy than it appears, and present adverse conditions could prove to be fertile ground on which to build a realistic, contextualized, and practical approach to leadership in the Italian PA.

## Notes

1. This “must do” approach has been repeated in the recent (2012) anticorruption framework, even though the objective of the Law 190/2012 is to transform the repressive culture into a preventive one, leading to yet another dual discourse.
2. See references on “Dual Discourse” in the introduction of Leadership expectations in this chapter.

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## **Part V**

# **Training Senior Civil Servants in Other Countries**

# 16

## Colombia

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### Introduction

Colombia, located in northwest South America, has a population of 46 million people and is divided into 32 departments (states) and the capital district of Bogota. Colombia has a long history of civilian rule and control over the armed forces, experiencing only three military governments since its independence from Spain in 1820. Civilian rule came after a long period, dubbed *La Violencia*, triggered by the assassination of Liberal leader Jorge Eliezer Gaitan on April 9, 1948, an event known as the *Bogotazo*. For ten years, tensions between the two traditional parties, *Liberales* and *Conservadores* escalated, spreading to much of the country. To quell the violence, in December of 1957, Colombians adopted a referendum for consociational democracy—*Frente Nacional*, a power-sharing mechanism in which the two main political parties agreed to rotate presidential terms and share bureaucratic positions equally (Dix 1980).

Although free elections were re-established in 1974, sharing bureaucratic appointments endured until 1986, when the Liberal president Virgilio Barco abolished the practice (Pearce 1992). Subsequent administrations varied greatly in terms of sharing bureaucratic appointments with other parties. In 2004, Colombia adopted Law 909 to rule and oversee the entrance to and mobility of one's "administrative career" in the public sector, the regulatory duties to be performed by the Comisión Nacional del Servicio Civil (CNSC). Nevertheless, the law has not been fully implemented because powerful political groups have resorted to freelancers and provisional and interim appointments to avoid compliance (Ortega Suescún 2011). In 2009, the Court ratified the administrative career as the only channel to get access to the public service (Sentence C-588). However, through legislation,<sup>1</sup> the Congress continues to grant rights to freelancers, and provisional and interim appointees.

Despite its long history of democratic rule, Colombia continues to face violence because of the presence of leftist guerrillas and right-wing

paramilitary groups. According to Pizarro (1992) and Molano (1992), poverty, inequality, the geographic and social-economic landscape, and not adopting agrarian reform led to the emergence of guerrilla groups in the 1950s. In 1990, Colombia signed a peace agreement with three small guerrilla groups as well as with the M-19 (Movimiento M-19), which then became a political party (Mondragón 2004). In 1991, Colombians opted for a new constitution, which removed barriers restricting political participation, and adopted new electoral rules that favored the proliferation of myriad small political parties (Moreno 2005; Cardenas et al. 2006). Meanwhile, a flawed counternarcotics strategy helped Pablo Escobar of the Medellin drug cartel and the Orejuela brothers from the Cali drug cartel to become key players in Colombian politics.

In 1998, President Andrés Pastrana tried but failed to negotiate a peace with the Colombia's two guerrilla organizations—ELN (Ejército Popular de Liberación) and FARC (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia). The failure brought Alvaro Uribe to power in 2002. Uribe adopted a heavy-handed position against the guerrillas, and was reelected president in 2006 to continue his crackdown. Under the Uribe administration, a woman was appointed for the first time as minister of defense, and other key cabinet and independent agencies were occupied by women. In 2010, Uribe's former minister of defense, Juan Manuel Santos, won election as president. Like Pastrana, Santos is striving to negotiate peace with the FARC, but as of December 2013, Colombia still struggles under the presence of paramilitary forces and the well-armed ELN and FARC.

In the next section, we provide a brief sociological/societal and political background. We then develop a profile of civil servant training by reviewing the demand for training in public organizations and training programs offered by both public and private educational institutions. We adopt a qualitative methodological approach. First, we provide interviews with key actors in the Colombian government related to training and education programs for civil servants; we identify the characteristics of existing programs or the actions being taken to train top officials, and then we explore the flaws and limitations in the approach. Secondly, we undertake an extensive review of official and academic documents dealing with the issue of training of the higher echelons of the government.

## **Sociological/Societal Background**

Despite relative political and economic stability, the Colombian government still faces security and social challenges. The long-lasting internal conflict with drug traffickers, leftist guerrillas, and right-wing paramilitary movements has had enormous costs in terms of lives and productivity. Not surprisingly, the State Fragility Index puts Colombia as the second most fragile state in the Americas, after Haiti (Marshall and Cole

2011). In terms of delivery of social programs, Colombia's performance has been extremely modest: 45.5 percent of its population is below the poverty line, and Colombia remains the most unequal country in Latin America after Haiti (Gini coefficient 55.9 in 2010) and the eighth most unequal worldwide.

In the last decade, Colombia has seen a vibrant civil society, contributing to both the adoption of strong laws in favor of women's rights and the creation of institutions that support gender equity (Ruiz 2012). In 2011, for example, law 1475 established a 30 percent minimum quota for women candidates in all elections (Ruiz 2012), and the same percentage in the highest levels of public service. Maclarens and Salahub (2012), however, argue that despite these attempts to promote gender equality, women still suffer from regular forms of violence, exploitation, and social marginalization. Hence, 514 women were assassinated in the first half of 2013 (*El Tiempo* 2013), leading Oxfam (2009) to suggest that violence against women, including sexual violence, is a weapon of war in Colombia.

## Political Structure Background

Colombia is a unitary republic in which central institutions have ultimate political and legal authority. The executive branch consists of the president, vice-president, 16 cabinet members, seven administrative departments, and 11 superintendents—each of them is ascribed to a ministry, for a total of about 230 public agencies (IADB 2004; Contraloría General de la República 2010). The Colombian legislature is bicameral. The senate has 102 members, 100 who are elected via the national districts and 2 targeted to indigenous persons. The House of Representatives consists of 168 elected members.<sup>2</sup> Colombian electoral laws have created strong personal, rather than party, vote-seeking incentives.<sup>3</sup> Because of this, multiple candidates from each party traditionally ran simultaneously in any given election, creating high levels of inter- and intraparty competition (Moreno 2005) in a system that is effectively a single, non-transferable-vote electoral system (Cox and Shugart 1995). This produced a pattern whereby legislators tended to favor targeted legislation and to de-emphasize national legislation (Avellaneda et al. 2012), leading Jones and Mainwaring (2003) to conclude that the Colombian party system is highly localized, rather than nationalized.

Until 1988, departments (states) and municipalities were subordinate to the central authority; The president appointed subnational leaders and could override mayors' and governors' actions (Avellaneda 2009). However, in 1983 (Law 14/83), Colombia embarked on a process of increasing fiscal decentralization, and in 1988, held the first mayoral and gubernatorial elections and legally adopted political decentralization (Law 78/86).

## Organizational-Administrative Culture

Since 1938, Colombia has undertaken several normative efforts to consolidate the civil service on a basis of merit and professionalization, but most of those efforts have been highly ineffective (Sanabria 2010). In fact, the Global Integrity indicators *de jure* (75 percent, or the maximum score) and *de facto* (55.6 percent) illustrate the gap between law and implementation that characterizes Colombian civil service. The civil service has long been at the forefront of political conflict in the country. During *La Violencia*, liberals and conservatives clashed over the allocation of public jobs (among other things) and control of the government payroll (Bushnell 2007). Since political patronage was common, each party developed strategies to ensure government control through the appointment of public servants. The process was highly costly for Colombia since all administrations had to start over each time there was a government change. The clashes finally ended during the National Front, as parties alternated power for sixteen years, coinciding with the first formal reform efforts to establish a merit-based civil service. Yet, those attempts were again unsuccessful.

The evolution of public sector bureaucracies in Colombia is characterized as a sequence of failed reform efforts during the second half of the twentieth century. Many of the 20 regulatory efforts between 1950 and 1990 that tried to emulate other countries' systems (France and the UK, in particular) were based on recommendations from international experts hired by the government. However, each set of reforms seeking to formalize the situation of public officials appointed through patronage—who made up the largest part of the public sector workforce (euphemistically termed “provisional”; Contraloría General de la República 2010)—was followed by poor implementation in the development of Colombian civil service (Sanabria 2010). Failure of civil service reforms mainly owed to pressure from political actors and interest groups, low administrative capacity, and the weak political will of successive governments to eradicate political patronage practices.

During the 1980s and 1990s, the first and second generations of reforms showed a more positive evolution. First-generation reforms, although not as comprehensive or aggressive as in other countries, aimed to modestly reduce the number of public agencies and ministries. The Betancourt (1982–1986) and Barco (1986–1990) administrations executed reform processes mainly in response to fiscal pressures and a profound international economic crisis. The greatest change took place during the Gaviria administration (1990–1994), with comprehensive market-oriented reforms in health and labor, privatization of some public utilities, and the sell-off of some public assets. Reform here was not ambitious in terms of civil service; however, the government created a significant number of new agencies in response to the enactment of the 1991 constitution. As a result, the country saw an increase in the number of public officials and agencies.

Later reforms have followed the second-generation profile, especially with loans and technical assistance of multilateral lenders such as the Inter-American Development Bank (2004). In fact, in 2002, the Uribe administration initiated an ambitious process of restructuring state institutions. Centralized in one office as part of the executive branch, the Programa de Renovación de la Administración Pública-PRAP had greater support this time among politicians. PRAP attempted to reduce the number of organizations (and not necessarily employees), merged ministries and public agencies, and privatized others. It also encouraged adoption of a merit standard for recruitment and promotion, and enhanced institutional and managerial environments within the civil service system. This led to the enactment of Law 909/2004, which provides the current civil service framework. This law aimed to provide the regulatory basis for a massive competitive process of recruitment for almost 120,000 positions, beginning in 2005. Although initially promising (over 650,000 Colombians registered to participate), a high number of positions remain unassigned to date. This was due to pressures from different political actors, helped by judicial sentences which, on due process grounds, hindered the dismissal of provisional workers who had passed the competitive entry tests.

Another feature that has hindered merit and professionalization in Colombia is the political decentralization process enacted during the 1980s. As a result, implementation of social policies, particularly in health and education, was devolved from the central government to municipalities and *departamentos* (Oszlak 2003). This procedure has possibly enhanced entrenched clientelist practices, especially in those regions with low institutional development.

Although the merit component has been less effective, Law 909 and PRAP have been more successful than any previous effort to define a formal structure for public personnel policies in Colombia. Constitutional provisions have deemed the National Commission of the Civil Service responsible for providing civil service policy guidelines and for the administration of the career system, and have strengthened the role of the Departamento Administrativo de la Función Pública (DAFP), charged with designing public personnel management policies. However, according to IADB (2004), practices such as evaluation linked to performance, the creation of an incentives policy, and greater flexibility for work mobility are still in the early stages of development.

## Changing Forces in the Training of Top Civil Servants

Among a number of change forces affecting Colombian public service are:

- the adoption of a new constitution in 1991,
- sustained economic development combined with high levels of poverty and income inequality,

- the presence of internal conflict and the poor presence of the state,
- the signing of international and free trade agreements and harmonization of norms,
- two decades of comprehensive state reforms, and
- the sociodemographic and educational advancement of the people.

The adoption of a progressive constitution in 1991 emerged from the demands of university students and the population itself, and provided a more active role for the state, compared to the highly conservative previous constitution. Moving to a constitution that defined the social rule of law as the basis of the nation implied new duties and demands for the Colombian government and called for the establishment of an independent and professional civil service.

The Colombian economy has consistently grown since the Great Depression, experiencing only one year of negative growth, in 1999. This trend has allowed the emergence of a diverse economy with a strong presence in commodities and primary goods, but also with certain level of sophistication in industry and services. On one hand, this diversification has demanded more sophisticated public goods and services from the state in terms of infrastructure, public utilities, and human capital. On the other hand, high levels of poverty and income inequality continue imposing greater demands on the amount and kinds of resources and services the government must provide. Nevertheless, given the prevailing internal conflict, traditional policy has concentrated high portions of the budget on defense and security issues, affecting the configuration of the higher echelons since there is strong demand for qualified people, not only for defense strategy, but also in conflict resolution and negotiation.

Signing international agreements in trade and political issues has also affected human capital management, particularly at the top (e.g., Free Trade Agreement with the United States in 2012, followed by treaties with Canada, Korea, the European Union, and others). Agreement details have also defined a new set of rules for the Colombian government in terms of expectations in the quality of services and enforcement of law. This has created new pressures for a more sophisticated competition and operation of the state. To that end, Colombia has recently begun lobbying the OECD to become a member, a process which comes with specific requirements for the quality of government services and human capital management.

Two other forces have affected the policies or training of top civil servants. The country has observed a rapid demographic growth accompanied by a strong urbanization process, making it the second most populated country in South America. This has come with greater educational advancement, mainly from the middle class. This has engendered a new generation of professionals who have populated state organizations so much so that there is a perceived change from a strong presence of lawyers to a more diversified

technocracy of economists, engineers, and physicians (Serres (2005) in Hernandez and Dueñas 2005). Although a comprehensive merit component has yet to be adopted, comprehensive reforms over the last two decades have implied certain advancements in public employment that have begun to define new strategies for attracting top officials (Sanabria 2010, 2012).

## Expectations of Leaders and the Government

To evaluate the expectation of leaders regarding senior civil servant training, we reviewed public documents, the national plan of development, handbooks of the DAFP,<sup>4</sup> and the websites of the main government agencies. We also analyzed the standard regarding top officials training in order to identify any recent changes. Additionally, we developed comprehensive, semistructured interviews with four individuals involved with training public servants. Specifically, we interviewed two top Colombian officials in charge of training topics—namely, the director of the main school of public administration in the country, ESAP,<sup>5</sup> and the director of a private school of government. The interviews were recorded and coded for this section.

In general, the interviews indicated that the training of civil servants in Colombia (1) is not part of the public agenda—although laws mandating training exist, implementation has been slow, (2) is not part of a comprehensive plan of skills and competencies required by senior civil servants and their organizations, (3) that time is a key variable that affects training opportunities for those at the top, and (4) that training for top officials is essentially self-obtained.

Attention is still lacking when it comes to implementing existing laws. National development plans for the past two governments have lacked specific training instructions for high level government officials. Interviewees argued that, although the 2004 and 2005 decrees gave the ESAP a more active role, implementation still requires attention from the top government itself and that “government leaders appear not to perceive yet the relevance and strategic value of training and educational programs for those at the top.”

The interviews did reveal singular efforts from some organizations to provide training to their top officials but these efforts appear to be disconnected from a general government strategy. For instance, three interviewees provided examples of organizations that offer educational alternatives to their top management. One interviewee commented that “when in place, the educational programs tend to respond more to the ideas or needs of the specific official rather than to the needs of the organization and to the government itself.” Thus, a comprehensive government strategy that promoted and standardized further training could be instrumental to the particular efforts of individuals and organizations.

Time was considered to be a difficulty to overcome when providing adequate training to top officials. One participant acknowledged that “the fact that most of the top officials are either politically appointed, or appointed without tenure as they can be dismissed, makes it hard to maintain a sustained strategy.” Restrictions in tenure and appointment, usually under four years, seem to make it difficult to motivate officials to take any training or educational programs. Another interviewee, also in charge of training programs, mentioned that “most training and educational programs tend to be better used by career officials than by those at the top. Since they remain in office for longer periods, they are better suited to take advantage”—that is, the electoral cycle seems to impose limitations in the learning processes of public organizations at the top.

Finally, interviewees were unanimous in that most top officials, when entering office, display high levels of education, generally at the graduate level, and the education itself is most often acquired at top international institutions. “This situation,” it was noted, “tends to make them reluctant to obtain further preparation even though they may need some particular training in national laws, budget and human capital management, decentralization, and other domestic aspects that are highly relevant for their time in office.” On the other hand, another interviewee mentioned that “in a country like Colombia, the overall sentiment was that most educational needs are felt at the lower rungs of the civil service, and it seemed to makes more sense to focus educational efforts there” rather than on those individuals at the top that are usually highly educated and have received the best training a person can get.

## **Content and Method of Training of Top Civil Servants**

In reviewing documents and official information, we find that training top civil servants does not appear to be a strong agenda item in Colombia. A review of the political constitution indicates that merit is indeed the base of civil service provision of jobs, but it makes no reference to the top civil service. However, the constitution does establish education as a fundamental right of Colombians. Moreover, despite the signing of the Ibero-American Charter of Public Administration,<sup>6</sup> which included elements regarding the professionalization and training of civil servants, there is still room for advancement of a global strategy for the management of the higher echelons of government.

Moreover, the National Development Plan (NDP) 2010–2014 establishes that effective public management is a cornerstone of “Good Government,” a principle that the current Santos administration has defined as pivotal to state performance. The plan offers guidelines for improving public management through the use of different incentives. For instance, the NDP suggests symbolic inducements for top civil servants, such as the “National Prize of

High Management" for outstanding managers in the public sector. It also describes how the government has started to use training as an instrument to keep public servants up to date in skills and knowledge and to increase officials' performance.

The NDP also reflects on how the government aims to adopt a new appreciation of public officials. A principle of public service vocation is mentioned for the first time in the document, and, more importantly, it involves training and learning as part of the strategy. The plan proposes that each public servant should improve her or his personal skills and competencies according to a proper assessment of their needs and performance. Every training plan must be addressed in the National Plan of Formation and Training for Public Servants (the Administrative Department of the Civil Service, DAFP, is responsible for this plan).

The National Plan states that the Higher School of Public Administration (ESAP) is responsible for designing an induction program for new senior officials through the School of High Government. According to the regulations, DAFP is responsible for designing an incentives system that includes training and learning strategy. The system describes benefits, such as formal education funding, for those public servants that show outstanding performance in office.

A review of norms regarding training for top officials (see Table 16.1) affirms that the last two Colombian governments have focused better attention on the professionalization of public sector management and have

Table 16.1 Colombian normative regarding senior civil servants

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Senior Executives and Top Management</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Law 909 Title VIII aims to introduce "Public Management Principles in the Administration. Art. 47 creates a new category of jobs called "Jobs of Managerial Nature."</li> <li>– In this category are all jobs that are not matters of presidential appointment and some particular categories at the territorial level.</li> <li>– Art. 48 and Art. 49 state those positions are merit based and are mediated by the criteria of managerial responsibility; public managers will be evaluated on the grounds of efficiency and efficacy. The program considers the provision of incentives, although it does not clarify.</li> <li>– Art. 50 Management Agreements. This is probably the main feature of this new category. It states that, once selected, the public manager should establish with her/his superior the goals to be achieved during time in office. Accordingly, a "management agreement" will be signed. The agreement should contain all expected results in terms of quantity and quality of goods or services, and a set of indicators to measure the achievement of goals. Three months after finishing the period of agreement, evaluation should be undertaken with the boss.</li> </ul> |
|---|---|

provided greater recognition to the role of top management in an effort to improve the effectiveness and efficiency. Still, specific policies addressing the needs of the senior civil service and public organizations are lacking. The primary regulation (Law 909/2004) provides only modest mention of performance agreements and measurement, and does not impart instruction on the training of top civil servants.

Initial training for top public officials began with the creation of the School of High Government, part of the training center of ESAP. Through Law 489/1998 (see Table 16.2), the national government established the center as a compulsory source of training, with elected mayors and governors attending the school before entering office. Other senior managers must also attend at the commencement of their jobs. According to ESAP (2012) and Portal de Alcaldes y Gobernadores de Colombia (n. a.), the induction course for elected officials includes topics such as (1) structure of the Colombian state and the national government; (2) relationships with

*Table 16.2 Norms regarding the training of Colombian senior officials*

| Name of the Legal issue | Relevant Aspects   |
|-------------------------|--|
| Law 489/1998            | Creates the School of High Government as an educational center for the training of the senior government officials. The Higher School of Public Administration (ESAP) and the Administrative Department of the Civil Service (DAFP) are responsible for developing and maintaining the School of High Government.  |
| Decree 188/2004         | Establishes different roles for the Administrative Department of the Civil Service (DAFP), which includes (1) design the curriculum for the School of High Government (in association with ESAP), (2) fill senior management positions through open competition.   |
| Decree 219/2004         | Establishes different roles for the Higher School of Public Administration (ESAP), including the responsibilities of the School of High Government.  |
| Decree 2539/2005        | Defines the work competencies for the public servants (hierarchically): (1) General competencies for all public servants: goal orientation, service delivery, transparency, compromise with the public organization. (2) Specific competencies for directives: leadership, planning, decision-making, direction and personnel development, knowledge of the environment. |
| Decree 1227/2005        | Regulates Law 909/2004. It establishes that DAFP is responsible for training public managers, and its design is based on performance assessment.   |
| Decree 2636/2005        | Amends Decree 219/2004. Establishes the subdirection of high government.   |

subnational governments; (3) national development plan and governmental priorities; (4) sectorial review (minorities, safety, justice, gender and equity, victims and land restitution, and culture, among others); (5) disciplinary risk and control and monitoring agencies; (6) local public management; and (7) project management. The analysis of these contents indicates that the training tends to be informative rather than analytical and that it is limited in profundity and coverage of topics. Key topics and such operative skills as budgeting strategies, human capital management, and the like, still appear to be missing. Nonetheless, this seems to be an isolated effort that might require a more sustained strategy from the government for the top civil service, elected and appointed.

Subsequent rulings aimed to provide a more comprehensive framework and duties for the School of High Government as a pivotal institution in the training strategy of the senior government. Those changes (Table 16.2) assigned concrete curriculum design and educational program tasks to DAFP and ESAP for senior civil servants and defined some programs of training for high-level officials as compulsory. Nonetheless, the implementation of such regulations has been limited in the scope and profundity and training. Hence, DAFP documents (cartillas) indicate that senior civil servants do have further education opportunities while in office. Yet as the interviews revealed, there are elements (e.g., contents, untenured, electoral cycles, level of education, tight agendas, etc.) that refrain top officials from obtaining such training. In addition, the statistics in Figure 16.1 indicate that there have also been some courses directed to top senior managers, assumedly nonelected. Nonetheless, information is lacking about the contents and extent of such courses. Moreover, the data shows that this program has lost importance lately. In any case, these numbers show that there have been some efforts, particularly from ESAP, to fill the gap in the education of top public management.

## Where Do Civil Servants Currently Receive Their Training?

An inventory of the main private and public educational programs targeted for top officials and management is found in Appendix 16.1. We observe a growing array of programs in public management/affairs, but those intended for the senior managers are still uncommon. Both the ESAP and Universidad de los Andes are the sole institutions that have programs specifically addressing the needs of top officials, particularly at the national level. At the regional level, there are interesting efforts, particularly from Universidad de Antioquia which has a School of Public Affairs that offers an array of short training courses to public officials and top managers in the province of Antioquia. Also, a number of years ago, the Universidad Icesi in Cali developed a High Government Program for the municipality and recently created a Master in Government with an affirmative action component for Afro-Colombian

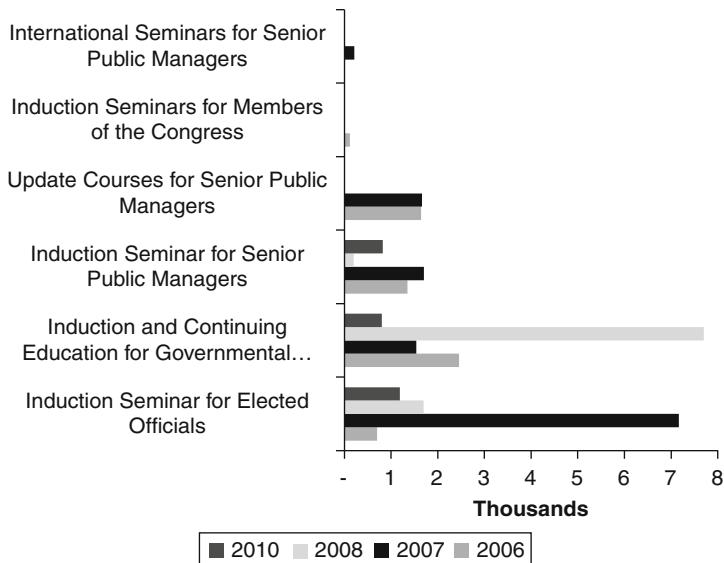


Figure 16.1 Number of top servants who received training from ESAP (Higher School of Public Administration).

Source: ESAP (2012).

leaders. The remaining programs are essentially masters in public administration/management/policy or government targeted to regular public officials with very high internal levels of diversity in content and foci.

One remarkable trait of Colombian civil service is that it is common for topmost officials in the national government to have acquired their graduate education in public affairs or other areas at top institutions abroad. In fact, an international graduate degree appears to constitute an important credential to become a top civil servant in the country (Sanabria 2012), explaining why most top servants fail to take advantage of the extant training opportunities.

Consistent with interviewee testimony is the need to reposition and utilize the potential of ESAP as the provider of training programs for the top civil service. Our research indicated that top managers tend to attend the same four or five (essentially private) Colombian universities for degrees before continuing their training abroad. To date, graduates of ESAP in the higher echelons of government are rare, as internal studies of ESAP (Careaga, Sanabria, and Caballero 2012) have shown. Nonetheless, one respondent argued that this practice has started to wane in the last several years, as there is now greater diversity in terms of undergraduate institutions attended by top civil servants.

At the subnational level, the lack of training programs for top government officials is more evident than at the national level. According to one interviewee, "There is greater variation in the levels of education—from high school to graduate degrees—between mayors and governors. This may stem from a belief that elected officials, politicians, and top managers in small towns and provinces do not necessarily value credentials as they do in Bogota. Instead, they may place more emphasis on leaders' commitment over expertise and knowledge." Apart from efforts by some of the most developed provinces (Antioquia, Valle, Distrito Capital de Bogotá), provincial or municipal programs for the senior civil service are almost nonexistent. As governor of the state (department) of Norte de Santander, Edgar Diaz, stated, "Our current top servants think that the skills learned 30 years ago are still applicable to manage the changing demands of government now."<sup>7</sup> In sum, a more sustained and overarching central strategy can help subnational governments to enhance their institutional capacity through focused training of their top civil servants.

## Conclusion

Although in the last decade Colombia has experienced relative political and economic stability, the government still faces critical security and social issues, a high level of poverty, and remains the second most unequal country in Latin America. Colombia has undertaken several normative efforts since 1938 to consolidate the civil service on a basis of merit and professionalization, but low administrative capacity and weak political will have impeded progress (Sanabria 2010). Law 489 (in 1998) and subsequent decrees (in 2004 and 2005) establish the norms regarding the training of Colombian senior officials. Specifically, it created the School of High Government as a training and education center for senior elite. The Higher School of Public Administration (ESAP) and the Administrative Department of the Civil Service (DAFP) are responsible for developing and maintaining the School of High Government. Elected mayors, governors, and other senior managers must attend the School of Government before they take office. Nonetheless, the implementation of these requirements has been limited.

In 2002, Colombia initiated an ambitious process of restructuring state institutions and encouraged the adoption of merit in recruitment and promotion, which eventually led to Law 909/2004, providing the current normative framework of the civil service. This law regulated the National Commission of the Civil Service—responsible for providing policy guidelines related to civil service and the administration of the career system, and strengthened the role of the Departamento Administrativo de la Función Pública (DAFP)—the agency in charge of designing the policies of public personnel management.

Although Law 909/2004 introduces standards regarding senior civil servants through the “Public Management Principles in the Administration” and creates the category Jobs of Managerial Nature, documents and official information confirm that senior civil servant training remains lackluster. Moreover, political pressures continue hindering the evolution of civil service toward merit and professionalization. Of late, however, domestic and international forces have opened the door to incentives for public managers and other civil servants to receive more professional training. Still, it is the tenured-low level official that seems more motivated in taking advantage of training.

Finally, interviews with individuals involved with public servant training suggest it is neither part of the public agenda nor part of a comprehensive plan of required skills and competencies. Given this, top officials pay for their own education, acquired through graduate education in public affairs or other areas at top foreign institutions. But this type of education is not mirrored at the subnational level where training is needed to provide skills to municipal and provincial civil servants, perhaps due to fewer technical and financial resources to design and fund such programs. Although the government has defined a compulsory short training before mayors and governors take office, interviews indicate the need for a more sustained effort to ensure they gain stronger skills in light of the enormous disparity of education and administrative skills at the subnational level.

## Notes

- \* The authors are grateful for the valuable research assistance provided by Mauricio Astudillo, graduate assistant of the Alberto Lleras Camargo School of Government at Universidad de los Andes.
- 1. Artículo 22, Law 5 of 199.
- 2. Two representatives from each of the 32 departments and capital district and one more representative for each 250,000 habitants in each political subdivision. Five more representatives are elected in special districts to favor minorities.
- 3. Avellaneda and Escobar-Lemmon (2012) illustrate the low profile that parties have in candidates’ victory. Results from their survey of 120 Colombian mayors indicate that regardless of parties’ financial or logistic support campaigns, Colombian mayors give no credit to their parties for their victory.
- 4. DAFP is the main government agency in charge of human capital management policies for public organizations, and its acronym in Spanish stands for Administrative Department of Public Function.
- 5. ESAP, according to its Spanish acronym, stands for Higher School of Public Administration.
- 6. Some of the charter’s recommendations were included in Law 909/2004 and some subsequent decrees.
- 7. Personal interview by one of the authors, December 27, 2013.

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*Appendix 16.1 Inventory of existing educational programs suitable to top management*

| Institution  | Program  |
|--|--|
| Academia Diplomática de San Carlos                 | Master in Analysis of Political, Economic and International Contemporary Problems  |
| Corporación Universitaria Empresarial de Salamanca | Diploma Degree in Public Management  |
| ESAP   | Graduate Program in Public Management<br>Graduate Program in Social Management<br>Graduate Program in Contemporary Public Administration<br>Graduate Program in Public Finances<br>Graduate Program in Hospital Management<br>Graduate Program in High State Direction |

*(Continued)*

## Appendix 16.1 Continued

| Institution   | Program   |
|---|---|
| Goberna América Latina  | Master in High Public Direction   |
| Pontificia Universidad Javeriana (Bogotá)                             | Graduate Program in Government and Public Management in Territories               |
| Pontificia Universidad Bolivariana                                    | Master in Urban and Regional Planning   |
| Universidad de Antioquia – Escuela de Políticas Públicas de Antioquia | Graduate Program in Public Management   |
| Universidad de Medellín   | Short educational programs for top officials at the municipal and province level. |
| Universidad del Cauca   | Graduate Program in Urban Management  |
| Universidad de Santander  | Graduate Program in Senior Management   |
| Universidad del Norte   | Graduate Program in Public Management   |
| Universidad del Rosario   | Master in Government  |
| Universidad del Valle   | Graduate Program in Public Policy   |
| Universidad de los Andes – Alberto Lleras Camargo                     | Graduate Program in Government and Public Policy                                  |
| School of Government  | Master in Public Management   |
| Universidad EAFIT   | Master in Public Management and Government  |
| Universidad Externado   | Graduate Program in Public Health Management                                      |
| Universidad Icesi   | Graduate Program in Public Administration   |
| Universidad Industrial de Santander                                   | Master in Public Policy   |
| Universidad Nacional de Colombia – Bogotá and Medellín                | Master in Government and Public Policy  |
|   | High Government Program   |
|   | Master in Government and Public Policy  |
|   | Master in Government and Public Policy  |
|   | Master in Government and Public Policy  |
|   | Master in Government and Public Policy  |
|   | Executive Program in High Municipal Government                                    |
|   | Graduate Program in Public Management   |
|   | Graduate Program in Public Policy   |

# 17

## Namibia

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Elsie Nghikembua*

### Introduction

With a population of 2.14 million people, Namibia, situated in the southwestern part of Africa, is one of the most sparsely populated countries in Africa, with an average density of 2.5 persons per square kilometer. According to IndexMundi (2013), the relatively small population is constituted in the following way: black 87.5 percent, white 6 percent, and mixed 6.5 percent. The population is urbanized mainly around the capital, Windhoek, but a substantial part of the population still lives in or maintains links to the more rural and tribal territories and traditions. Although many other languages are spoken, English is the official language of Namibia.

According to the World Bank (2013), Namibia's per capita income, is USD4,700. This places Namibia in the World Bank's upper-middle income grouping. However, Namibia's income distribution is among the most unequal in the world, with a Gini coefficient of 0.5971, as estimated by the latest (2009/10) household survey. The incidence of poverty is high, although it has declined somewhat during the past decade. Twenty-nine percent of individuals had consumption below the national poverty line in 2009 compared to 69 percent of the population in 1993. Unemployment has remained extremely high for decades. Namibia is ranked 128th out of 187 countries surveyed in the 2012 Human Development Report.

Agriculture, tourism, and mining form the backbone of Namibia's economy. The Namibian economy is closely linked to the South African economy and the Namibian dollar is pegged one-to-one to the South African rand.

Although Namibia is a secular state, Christianity dominates as the religion of choice for up to 90 percent of the population. Namibian society is largely conservative, and, in subscribing to ideas of African cultural traditions, still shows signs of male-dominated and sometimes authoritarian attitudes and actions, as is evidenced by the approach toward traditional gender roles, acceptance of authority, and respect for elders. Namibian society currently strongly aspires to the greater education of its people in an effort to redress

the inequality fostered by racial discrimination, entrenched during the colonial period and apartheid.

Since the adoption of the Namibian Constitution in 1990, there has been a paradigm shift in human rights ideals, concepts, and practice. Nonetheless, equality in Namibia is still not fully realized. Namibia is continuously initiating legal reforms to address all forms of discrimination. Numerous acts and policies have been put in place to protect the equality of all Namibian citizens. This legal and policy framework, as well as attempts to improve law enforcement and judicial responses to violations of human rights in Namibia, have created the foundation for the legal protection of the equality of all citizens within a human rights culture and practice (Conteh, LeBeau, and Lipinge 2005).

Namibia's historical context, constitutional, and institutional realities impact on administrative leadership training. Some perspective on this is evident in the following quote from a speech by President Hifikepunye Pohamba (2005) to the permanent secretaries in the Namibian Public Service:

Before independence, civil servants were used by the machinery of apartheid as tools of advancing apartheid policies and sustaining oppression of the majority of citizens in our country. Therefore, after the attainment of our freedom and independence, the civil service was naturally expected to change in order to serve Namibia within the letter and spirit of our democratic Constitution, the Supreme law of the land. Another important element of the post-independence public service is grounded in the constitutional provision of achieving a balanced restructuring of the civil service. This exercise did not only entail bringing in previously disadvantaged Namibians, it also entailed issues of gender balance with the view to including women from all backgrounds in decision-making positions.

Pohamba then stated the desired values of the Namibian Public Service in the following way:

The civil service in Namibia must, therefore, maintain high standards of service delivery...our civil servants must embrace the ethos of hard work, commitment to duty, and self-sacrifice. Our civil servants must embrace the values of efficient service delivery and productivity. This is the only way we can promote excellence in the public service. Our senior civil servants must lead by example in this regard. By definition, a public servant's duty is to serve the people. (Ibid)

Gurirab (2010) provides a concise historical perspective relevant to the genesis of the Namibian Constitution. German South West Africa, as

Namibia was known during German colonization, was under German occupation from 1884 to 1915. In 1915, the country was invaded by South African forces after Great Britain declared war on Germany in August 1914.

The Peace Treaty of Versailles designated South Africa as the mandatory power over Namibia, then known as South West Africa, in 1920. German, and later South African, colonial rule was characterized by gross violations with respect to the human rights, freedom, and dignity of Namibia's inhabitants. Eventually, South Africa also introduced its policy of apartheid to the territory, resulting in discrimination against the majority of citizens.

Gurirab (2010) concludes that the decision of the Namibian people to fight for their independence and self-determination came as no surprise. This fight was spearheaded by the South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO). SWAPO came into existence in 1960 and vowed to liberate Namibia from oppression, even if it meant "crossing rivers of blood" to do so.

Gurirab (2010) explains that in the decades that followed, a process ensued, resulting in the liberation of South West Africa from South African rule. This culminated in the drafting of the Namibian Constitution, with SWAPO taking power as the ruling party in a democratically elected Government of Namibia in March of 1990. As apartheid left in its wake a multitude of racial, political, and economic disparities, the Namibian Constitution was looked upon as the founding document of liberal democracy, human rights, constitutionalism, the rule of law, and constitutional supremacy.

After independence, the Namibian Public Service grew in size; first, in an effort to respond to the needs of the Namibian people on both an economic and social level; and secondly, as explained by the liberated state's first prime minister, Hage Geingob, to "make room for the new civil servants who are responsive to the aspirations of a new Namibia" (Geingob 1995).

The Namibian Public Service is the largest employer in Namibia in 2013, employing about 90,000 people. Despite its comparatively large size, Namibia's public service is often criticized for lacking essential technical and administrative competencies. Over the 23-year period since independence, the government has invested heavily to overcome poor service delivery, develop capacity, and strengthen training across the public service sector.

There is an emerging aspiration to embrace good governance and professional service delivery. This move toward raising the professionalism, quality, and responsiveness of the public service links to the African Charter on Values and Principles of Public Service and Administration, to which Namibia is a signatory; as well as to the Namibian Public Service Charter and the Namibian public service code of conduct.

Public service leadership in Namibia has also been shaped by a number of national strategies, including the recurring set of five-year National Development Plans (NDPs), as well as the long-term development plan, Vision 2030. This vision states, among other things, that by 2030, the nation will see "a prosperous and industrialized Namibia, developed by her human

resources, enjoying peace, harmony, and political stability" (GRN 2004). Public and administrative leadership is a major driver of the 2030 vision in setting and achieving the medium-term goals of effective and efficient service delivery.

Vision 2030 is supported by the outcomes and objectives articulated in the NDPs. These outcomes and objectives are, in turn, translated into implementation agendas through various sectoral projects in the Strategic and Annual Plans drafted for each Office, Ministry, and Agency (O/M/A).

Civil servants are required to be the key agents of change in the public sector. To fulfill this role effectively, they need to display professionalism, efficiency, courtesy, and a commitment to serving the public. This underscores the need for, and importance of, management and leadership development competencies to attain the strategic objectives of Vision 2030 and the development plans.

Given its political history under colonialism and apartheid linked to the politically strong position of SWAPO as dominant political force in Namibia, administrative leadership is closely related to the transformation ideals of SWAPO, and there are strong ties to the party in political and administrative leadership. Many SWAPO political leaders, as well as high-ranking administrative leaders, were also educated in the former communist bloc and some of this ideology is still evident in governance and administrative rhetoric and actions. This is a decreasing phenomenon, though, as the Namibian Constitution generally guides these actions.

## Political Structure

Article 28 of the Namibian Constitution provides that the president of the country is elected by direct, universal, and equal suffrage every five years. Members of the National Assembly, from which the prime minister and cabinet ministers are appointed, are elected on a proportional representation system every five years. Members of the judiciary are appointed by the president on the recommendation of the Judicial Service Commission, and the Constitution ensures their independence. The central government consists of the president and the two houses of Parliament: the National Assembly and the National Council.

Article 102 of the Constitution provides that the country be divided into regional and local units. Administratively, the government of the Republic of Namibia is divided into three tiers of government—namely, central government, regional government, and local government. Regional and local Authority Councils have substantial fiscal powers and have to adhere to established procedures, systems, and regulations in the handling of financial matters.

The political and administrative arrangements in Namibia are informed by a Weberian-Wilsonian dichotomy based on an emphasis of the separation of

powers and a strict division of functional roles, prescribed rules and procedures, and official documentation. It is also based on hierarchy of authority and loyalty, selection based on merit, and the political neutrality of the civil service.

Separation of powers is provided for in the Namibian Constitution and the functional divisions in terms of the relevant legislation regulating the public service. The ultimate objective of these political and administrative arrangements is the rationalization of the collective actions of the state in order to achieve the highest degree of efficiency. As a result of the constitutional, legislative, and policy arrangements formalized in the Constitution and other acts and policies, the behaviors of the administrative elite are ostensibly guided by the principles of the separation of powers, administrative hierarchy and bureaucratic routine, discipline, pragmatism, responsiveness, and rationality.

Given the political dominance of SWAPO, which has won all the elections in all tiers of government with large majorities since the country's independence, the formally subscribed to and constitutionally enshrined model of the state shows some signs of blurring in political and administrative roles and functions. This blurring of roles has given rise to the notion of a moderately bureaucratic polity, and a politicized bureaucracy. This, in turn, has created a system of government to some extent characterized by the political co-option of top civil servants and competition among bureaucratic cliques. According to Haque (2007), under such conditions, administrative leadership is often associated with highly politicized administrative systems, excessive controls, inflexibilities, patronage, and corruption that create clear obstacles to the orientation of bureaucracy toward sustainable development.

In the Namibian Public Service, the development planning system operates at national and subnational levels. Article 129 of the Constitution provides for the establishment of the National Planning Commission (NPC) under the Office of the President to plan the priorities and direct national development.

The structure, functions, and administration of the executive branch of government as well as the structure, functions, and administration of the public service sector are provided for in the Namibian Constitution; namely, the Public Service Act, 1995 (No. 13 of 1995); and other relevant international and national charters. Thus, technically, every public servant is accountable through the hierarchical structure of, first, his or her administrative department, second, the political leadership, and finally, the people.

Former Prime Minister Nahas Angula noted the following in this regard:

In the past few years, the public service of Namibia has introduced public service charters to address professionalism and ethical behaviour in the public service. A Charter sets out the standards of service that users can

expect from the various Offices, Ministries, and Agencies of government. In this way, charters contribute to good governance. (Public Service Commission 2011)

With the adoption of Vision 2030, the government adjusted all its medium- and short-term planning approaches to incorporate its long-term objectives. Thus, from 2007 forward, all five-year NDP goals and associated programs have since been defined with Vision 2030 targets in mind.

O/M/A programs are in turn connected to Vision 2030 and the NDPs by way of Strategic Plans that create links between national goals and institutional and organizational objectives and strategies. In addition, the results-based program budget approach has helped sectors in their efforts to pursue integrated planning and better focus their budgets on results. Government institutions, including parastatals, are now obliged to budget for results—as opposed to the previous tradition that focused on input.

## Organizational-Administrative Culture

A number of global governance and administrative trends are observable in Namibia and indicate a deliberate move toward notions of New Public Management (NPM). This is a major paradigm shift in the theory and practice of traditional public administration and represents a moving away from state-centric bureaucracies to a new direction of market-led principles and business-like structures, techniques, and standards.

One of the specific tenets of NPM that is relevant and observable in Namibia's administrative relationships relates to the establishment of a large number of state-owned enterprises (SOEs) in the country since independence. Legislation such as the State-Owned Enterprise Act, 2006 (No. 2 of 2006) regulating SOEs provides for the expansion of board and managerial autonomy, as well as flexibility in financial and personnel matters through agencification and the conversion of public organizations into various business-like, autonomous agencies.

Emphasis is put on decentralization and delegating greater authority and responsibility to agency boards, agency heads, and top-level managers. SOEs are also governed in accordance with corporate governance rules rather than in terms of the precepts and laws applying to public governance in Namibia. Nonetheless, there is evidence that the NPM model draws some criticism from some traditional political and bureaucratic role-players and authorities. The autonomous behavior of SOEs is, in many instances, is not received without significant skepticism in the political and administrative circles of conventional government as well as among certain social interest groups (Haque 2007).

The observable trends related to agencification take place simultaneously with many examples of the contractual outsourcing of service delivery, the

creation of public-private partnerships for service delivery, the use of consultants, and similar NPM activities at all tiers of government. Many of these approaches and the types of SOEs established in Namibia are similar to those in South Africa. Public service charters are also popular as the guiding approaches to public service reform in Namibia.

Most senior public servants in Namibia working in the designations of permanent or deputy permanent secretaries of ministries and departments and equivalent positions in regional government possess tertiary academic and/or professional qualifications. In a number of cases, these qualifications were awarded by universities in the former communist countries where the senior officials spent time in exile and, subsequently, by European and South African universities and the two national universities in Namibia.

Most of the senior public service leaders are also associated with the liberation struggle and closely linked to the governing party, SWAPO. Some submit that party loyalty in this top echelon is a very important qualification and sometimes even more important than mere professional administrative competency.

## **The Content and Structure of Training for Top Civil Servants**

Since independence in 1990, capacity development across Namibia's public sector has been coordinated centrally by the Department of Public Service Management under the Office of the Prime Minister. More specifically, the Directorate of Human Resources Development was responsible for providing supervisory, functional, and operational level training across the public service. Although improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the public sector through training and other interventions has been a government concern for quite some time, the absence of an integrated and national facility to address these concerns and aspirations posed an on-going problem. Training in this time was fraught with a number of serious challenges related to the fragmented approach to administrative leadership training in the Namibian Public Service.

The training of senior managers was referred to various service providers, either outside the country by virtue of bilateral capacity development programs under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, or locally through the Center for Public Service Training (CPST) situated at the University of Namibia. Unfortunately, both types of programs were largely ineffective in systematically contributing to a more professional public service and greater service ethos within the public service.

Programs were often criticized for being too academic and theoretical to support the immediate problem-solving requirements of the Namibian Public Service. There were also numerous problems in coordinating, monitoring, and evaluating the returns of training. It gradually became obvious

that a different approach to training in the public service was needed. As a result, the government decided, in 2008, to commission an investigation into the feasibility of establishing a dedicated institute tasked not only with public service training, but also with coordinating the capacity development function of the Namibian public sector.

As a result, the Namibia Institute of Public Administration and Management (NIPAM) had its beginnings as a project under the Office of the Prime Minister. The feasibility study report, which highlighted NIPAM's context, curriculum, governance, and structure, informed a Cabinet decision in 2009 to pursue the institution's establishment. NIPAM was then elevated into a trajectory of becoming a full-fledged department headed by an under secretary.

During this process, the Office of the Prime Minister received both local and international support for the institutionalization of NIPAM. The Government of India committed itself to offering technical advice by seconding a technical expert to coordinate NIPAM's foundational activities over a four-year period under its Technical Economic Cooperation Program. The French government also contributed technical and financial support in developing curricula for middle managers, while the Finnish government played a similar role in developing curricula for senior managers.

By 2010, NIPAM, as a training body dedicated to delivering capacity development interventions across the public sector, was formally set up by the Namibia Institute of Public Administration and Management Act 2010 (No. 10 of 2010). February 2011 saw NIPAM's official public launch.

One of the core intentions of NIPAM is to provide administrative leadership training as part of the functional prerequisites required for the appointment, promotion, or transfer of persons in or to the public service. Central to these training interventions is the need not only to foster a sense of purpose, value, and tradition, but also to develop a new generation of leaders and managers who are competent in dealing with public policies, strategies, and projects in a systematic manner. To fulfill the mandate in terms of capacity development, a well-equipped learning resource center has also been established to foster an awareness of local and international issues related to public sector management and good governance, and to involve a wide range of individuals and institutions in the pursuit of excellence in public administration.

NIPAM is also focused on helping public servants develop cooperative relationships with their colleagues, professionals, and others at all levels and at all O/M/As of public service through enlightened leadership, motivation, effective communication, and innovation, so that high-quality service to the public is ensured. NIPAM serves as a center of excellence and a think tank for the public sector by acting as an observatory for the capacity-building needs in the country's public service sector. To this end, consulting assignments with the private and public management sector are undertaken in

order to strengthen partnerships between public administrations and civil society organizations at central, regional, and local levels (GRN 2010).

In terms of governance, NIPAM is a full-fledged regulated SOE, reporting to the Office of the Prime Minister. NIPAM's highest level of governance is constituted by the Governing Council which reports to the prime minister. The Governing Council is chaired by the secretary to the Cabinet, while the NIPAM Training and Development Board, chaired by NIPAM's executive director, reports directly to the Governing Council. The board and the Governing Council have specific functions and are ultimately accountable for achieving targets prescribed by the NIPAM Act. Administratively and functionally, NIPAM's executive director is responsible for day-to-day functions and operations.

The principles of good governance and sound management feature high on the government's agenda. Vision 2030, for example, highlights the government's explicit concern for the Namibian population's social and economic prosperity, which will only be achieved by adherence to these principles. NIPAM's role is to assist in promoting good governance by instilling the skills that ensure its actualization and by equipping senior public servants with appropriate training.

There is growing criticism of the old modes of public administration for their preoccupation with rules and procedures and a growing trend toward emphasizing responsiveness, customer satisfaction, and efficiency in governance. NIPAM, as a change agent within this context, is charged with transforming the public service into a results- and customer-centered organization and seeks to meet the challenges of capacity development. In the foreword to Vision 2030, Dr. Sam Nujoma, Namibia's Founding President, emphasized the following in respect to capacity development:

In support of the objectives of Vision 2030, capacity building will be pursued with the utmost vigour by both the private and public sectors, to facilitate the implementation of the Vision. The capacity building process (including institution restructuring and building, and human resource development) will continue to be promoted by the existence of a suitable, enabling environment in terms of political stability and freedom, a sound legal system, economic resources and opportunities, and social norms which are conducive to sustained development. (GRN 2004)

NIPAM's operational model, in terms of delivering both executive and senior management development programs in particular, is based on the principle of harnessing strategic partnerships. To this effect, the School of Public Leadership (SPL) at the University of Stellenbosch was selected as NIPAM's preferred partner to devise and deliver a Senior Management Development Program (SMDP). The explicit outcome of the three-year partnership was the development and training of a sizeable number of senior managers from

the public sector, in addition to the opportunity gains of a planned and deliberate skills transfer from SPL trainers to NIPAM trainers.

The SMDP is offered on campus in four one-week sessions spread over a period of six months to one year. The topics covered in the modules provide an indication of the content of training provided to senior administrative leaders in the Namibian Public Service. These modules are: Governance in Namibia: Context and Strategic Challenges; Understanding Good Governance: The Evolution and Impact of Concepts, Ideas, Philosophies, and Theories; Public Finance for Good Governance; Professional Competencies for Good Governance: Leadership and Organization Development; and Management Applications for Good Governance.

The initial challenge that NIPAM faced in developing the SMDP was to determine a balanced mix of local, African, and international perspectives. These perspectives include, for example, the development of competencies aligned to being responsive to identified national needs and to demonstrating desirable personal qualities and values. It also includes perspectives closely relating to Namibia's vision, mission, and strategic objectives as highlighted in individual O/M/A strategic plans that, ultimately, aspire to good public governance.

NIPAM also collaborates with the Harvard Kennedy School of Government in the United States by nominating accounting officers to attend executive leadership courses there. Successful applicants attend a rigorous and intensive six-week program at the Kennedy School.

In terms of funding, NIPAM has a clear budget system in place, but it derives its main, centralized funding under the budget vote of the Office of the Prime Minister. Both the NIPAM Training and Development Board and the NIPAM Governing Council submit budgetary proposals according to available funding and NIPAM's perceived priorities. The main challenge is that the institute rarely receives the funding requested. Unfortunately, in the long term this will have a negative effect, as a lack of funding is likely to result in the reduced quality of capacity development. Since NIPAM is an SOE, the onus is also on the institute to generate its own funding to meet its annual budgetary needs.

The assessment of training in Namibia rests with the National Qualification Authority (NQA), which accredits academic programs and institutions providing qualifying training. At present, there appears to be a gray area in terms of the accreditation of all national short courses and NIPAM's management development programs, as they are beyond the scope of the NQA's current role and mandate. Nonetheless, as a preparatory measure for future accreditation, NIPAM's existing training context is structured to meet the competency requirements set out under NQA design frameworks and guidelines. Thus, specific and modular learning outcomes are also applied to the short courses at lower levels. Short courses presented at NIPAM support the immediate skills and competency needs of the Namibian public service.

The duration of these hands-on practical and professional development courses is five days. Topics covered include Minutes Writing, Secretarial Skills, Customer Care, Report Writing, and Project Cycle Management, Business Process Reengineering, and English Writing Skills for Public Sector Professionals.

## **Expectations of Leaders**

There is very little research available on administrative leadership in Namibia. In one of the few empirical studies on leadership in the public service sector of Namibia, Hoffman (2010) explored the relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership with 148 middle managers. Compared to the South Africa- and Europe-based subjects in the study, the Namibian sample scored lower on *transformational leadership style* and *emotional intelligence*. This observed discrepancy indicates some potential for further engagement through training.

In an article in *Finweek* (2006) entitled "What Africa Needs Now," by its own leaders' admission, Africa continues to be in crisis due to the "loss of the spirit of its traditional leadership and postcolonial questionable leadership."

There is a challenge to strengthen and sustain progressive political leadership and to improve leadership across the board. Namibian leaders' expectations reflect the same sentiments, as evidenced in a number of statements by both political and executive government officials against corruption. These sentiments include ethical and accountable leadership, and good political, economic, and corporate governance.

Mucavale (2006) notes that NEPAD's authors refer to "the new political will of African leaders," which includes African ownership and responsibility, and the protection and promotion of democracy and human rights. In Namibia, this good political leadership is defined as leadership exercised in the public interest rather than in the leaders' self-interest, as the former contributes to higher levels of state and human security.

From the stated expectations of senior political leadership and the public service ethos as reflected in the Constitution, as well as the emerging public service policies, the ideal Namibian public service leader is expected to be performance-driven and able to produce measurable results in terms of achieving national outcomes, such as enhancing the standard of living, raising basic development indicators, guaranteeing personal and universal freedoms and opportunities, enriching educational opportunities, providing adequate medical care, ensuring a crime-free society, and strengthening the country's infrastructure.

Given the meeting of different cultures and institutions in Namibia, authority is located along a continuum, with submissiveness at one end and insubordination at the other. *Submissiveness* indicates a compliance or

recognition of all forms of authority. *Insubordination* often results in a defiance of the norms when there is a mismatch between the needs and expectations of the community and that of their leaders.

However, the emerging trend in Namibia, like comparable trends in a growing number of African states, is one in which the rule of law and political freedoms are respected. The liberation struggle in pre-independent Namibia left various legacies. One important one related to administrative leadership links to the impact of liberation politics leadership on the administrative culture of post-liberation Namibia. It is generally accepted that most pre- and postindependence politics and leadership revolved around the personality of founding president Sam Nujoma. Thus, given Namibia's purportedly neopatrimonial system of governance, Namibian politics and political institutions do not necessarily always conform to the notion of a Weberian and Taylorist modern performance-based understanding of leaders and the state, and the predominant institutionalized Western-type state system that prevails in the country.

Such a *patrimonial system*, as Kebonang (2005) states, is one in which power is centralized in one individual who applies it for his or her self-interest, and loyal supporters are rewarded and selectively favored. In a contemporary, or *neopatrimonial system*, power and the right to rule are located in a powerful individual—not in a traditional political environment, but in the context of a state based on traditional and Western state structures (Kebonang 2005). Furthermore, in the latter system, politics continues to be conducted inside a closely knit network of dependent relationships.

A useful approach toward determining what leaders expect from training in the civil service is to view the government's human-capital system holistically: from recruitment to placement, to performance management and promotion, and finally, to retirement or exit from service. With the move toward improved efficiency, responsiveness, and service delivery, it became necessary to introduce a performance culture through a series of interventions and policy instruments.

As a signatory to the African Charter, which originated at the Third Biannual Conference of Ministers of Civil Service in Namibia in 2003, Namibia is bound to inculcate the associated values and principles among civil servants in order to foster in them a culture of accountability, transparency, and responsiveness to the beneficiaries of public service. Although the signing of the African Charter took place after the Public Service Charter of Namibia was launched, the two documents resonate the same principles of upholding the universal standards of helpfulness, accountability, nondiscrimination, value for money, providing information, consultation and participation, transparency, quality of services, and accessibility.

To reinforce these principles, the Office of the Prime Minister issued the more strictly enforceable Code of Conduct. The code is a set of behavior guidelines for public servants meant to enhance professionalism and ensure

that confidence in the public service sector is maintained. The code is based on three main principles: professionalism and integrity, equity, and avoidance of conflicts of interest. These elements laid the groundwork for a new performance management system to replace the outmoded appraisal system of the 1980s.

In 2012, the Directorate of Human Resource Development and Planning worked with consultants to develop a competency framework for all occupation levels in the public service field. Pending the results of the study, it is likely that the competencies will include the Human Resource Capacity Development Policy released by the Office of the Prime Minister in 2012, which seeks to raise the level of skills and competencies of civil servants.

In 2013, at the twenty-third anniversary of Namibia's independence, President Hifikepunye Pohamba's official statement heralded the government's desired refocus on the utilization of relevant policy tools and mechanisms "to track and evaluate the progress being made and the difficulties being encountered in the implementation of Government policies and programmes."

The themes of performance, equitable access to opportunities, and services such as healthcare, education, housing, food, and other socioeconomic amenities feature in the same official statement. This is an attempt to find efficient and effective ways in government to reduce overall administrative costs within the framework of good public governance. The leadership and management development courses offered at NIPAM, as well as its flagship programs, already reflect this mindful direction of thought.

## **Conclusion**

Just as the Namibian cultural landscape has changed substantially over the years, so, too, has the administrative culture. Given the context of the liberation struggle and the initial link with leadership cadres educated in the former communist bloc, the initial rhetoric related to political administrative institutions and leadership were initially often radical and ideological. However, after the processes of negotiating and adopting a modern constitution, the public service development trajectory reverted back to a Western constitutional approach with some African influences and connections.

In terms of the three major administrative paradigms provisionally applied to Namibia, the neo-Weberian state is strongly represented. This continued until it was challenged by the NPM philosophy, which was linked to global trends that were also impacting Namibian governance. The purpose of the new system and the need to achieve Vision 2030 goals demanded a paradigm shift, which seemed to indicate that NPM elements needed to be accelerated for Namibian public service.

The reform initiatives required a new set of competencies at all levels, including senior management. The latter includes, but is not limited to,

visioning, strategic management, project management, governance, and attribute and results-based leadership. Most senior managers have attended training courses, but these have all varied in content and have been offered at different institutions. Moreover, their impact is yet to be determined. Since NIPAM's establishment in 2010, it has been tasked with the training and development of senior managers in the public service sector.

Although it is still in its infancy, through its partnership with the SPL of the University of Stellenbosch, NIPAM did its first intake of SMDP trainees graduates in 2013. Although NIPAM programs have been sanctioned and endorsed by the Namibian government, the public service is faced with a mushrooming of private service providers, and in most cases they are not offering what is required by a modern and twenty-first century public service. Despite this, the current system and attitudes toward acquiring training are still haphazard because many of these service providers are still currently being utilized by many O/M/As.

In addition to the developments on the training front, a new Human Resource Development Policy mandated that government institutions allocate a specific percentage of their total budget to staff training. The spending of this budget will be guided by the competency framework, as well as by each individual public servant's Personal Development Plan, as part of the Performance Management System. Currently, however, it is difficult to assess the success of the senior manager training programs. This is due to the many challenges of implementing a cohesive and integrated monitoring and evaluation model to assess the impact of training. It is hoped that NIPAM's experience in senior management training will empower not only the overall Namibian public service sector, but can also translate effectively to empowerment for civil services across the world.

In conclusion, it is useful to refer to the training philosophy and framework of NIPAM, which summarize the NIPAM approach to developing public service leadership and professional competencies. The training philosophy states: "We believe that the elements of 'experiential, participatory, life-long learning and transformation' should be embedded in our approach to national capacity development. We strive to do this within the broader context of achieving the goals of both the National Development Plans and Vision 2030 for Namibia." To achieve this, the NIPAM capacity building framework, a structure for continuous learning was developed (see Figure 17.1).

NIPAM's capacity-building framework, which is articulated in both the NIPAM Policy and the NIPAM Act, takes into account the adaptive learning environment. It provides a platform for systems-wide learning to facilitate the development of public servants who share common values, and whose ethos and perspective make for excellence in Namibia's public service. The entry-level Foundation Programme (FP) is designed to be applied to every public servant upon entry into the public service at the supervisory

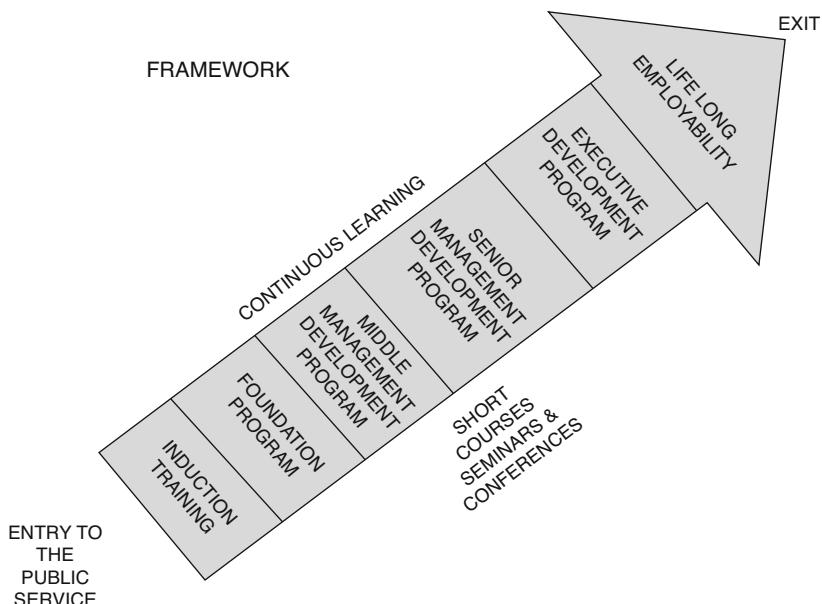


Figure 17.1 NIPAM's capacity-building framework.

and operational level. It acts as the preparatory program for the Middle Management Development Programme (MMDP), primarily targeting first level-managers in the public service. This is then followed by the Senior Management Development Programme (SMDP) and the Executive Development Programme (EDP) across all offices, ministries, and agencies.

All programs and courses will eventually be linked to the performance management system to ensure that training and capacity building responds to actual performance challenges in the public sector (NIPAM Prospectus 2013).

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# 18

## South Africa

*Peter E. Franks*

### Introduction

The new South Africa emerged from the negotiated end of apartheid in a world context of regime change, globalization, and successive global economic crises. As Brent (1996: 126) states, "South Africa is not a normal country. It has emerged from a history of tragedy to become a model of compromise and creative leadership for the world." The promise of the new South Africa was wildly exaggerated by the euphoria that accompanied the negotiated settlement. However, the depth of the challenge of lifting up, integrating, and providing leadership to the formerly oppressed black community was underestimated.

The new South Africa inherited a racially skewed public service in which 95.5 percent of the top 3,239 civil servants were white and only 0.6 percent were black Africans (Picard 2005: 40). Black Africans, however, made up the vast majority of public servants in the lower ranks, with a few middle and senior level public servants in the homeland Governments (Picard 2005: 45). Faced with this history of exclusion from executive roles in the public service, as well as the private sector, most members of the African National Congress (ANC), were suspicious of the existing public servants.

In preparation for taking over government, the ANC set up "a group to explore post-Apartheid public administration in South Africa" which concluded "that public administration policies should be redirected to development management through education and training" (McLennan 2007: 41), and called for the establishment of a Civil Service College.

The enormity of the task facing the new government was daunting. It had to merge the many administrations of the central government and the various homelands into one coherent, vastly extended administrative system, while at the same time develop policies and practices to ameliorate the ravages of apartheid and its colonial and settler predecessors. It also had to contend with the rapid urbanization accompanying the lifting of influx controls, which was increasing the demand for urban services. To

add to these difficulties, the ANC was faced with an administrative system and “mandarins” (top civil servants) whom they felt they could not trust. Nonetheless, an effective restructuring occurred in which a three sphere system (National, Provincial, and Local Governments) was created, incorporating all the previous administrations and rationalizing the previously fragmented local governments. The three spheres are both independent and interdependent, which makes central control difficult; some in the government would have preferred them to be tiered.

## Sociopolitical Nexus of Governance in South Africa

For convenience, five overlapping periods can be identified in the development of the new South African public service to the present juncture:

- 1987–1994 Preparations for change
- 1991–2003 Euphoria for the new South Africa
- 1999–2008 Defensive denial, blaming unintended consequences
- 2006–2012 Growing acknowledgment
- 2011–present Comprehensive and integrated response

In transition negotiations, it was agreed that a Government of National Unity would be formed for the first five years. The so-called Sunset Clause, which guaranteed public servants their jobs until 1999, was an important compromise. The settlement was reluctantly accepted by the ANC, but many within the broad coalition remained allied to the idea of the national democratic revolution, requiring dismantling of the racial/class system fostered by capitalism. As Fraser Moleketi (2006: 14) put it, “When the time came for a negotiated settlement, the ANC and its partners had to consider a more strategically informed settlement rather than the initial desire for a clean break.” In the 1990s, a number of policies were speedily produced in order to bring about the desired transformation of South Africa in general, and the public service in particular.

Although the ANC took the reins of government as a movement of liberation, it had to transform itself into a pragmatic ruling party. The ANC has always maintained that it is a “broad church,” a “coalition” of a broad variety of ideologies that exist, centering on the Tripartite Alliance with the South African Communist Party, and the Congress of South African Trade Unions. The challenges of a broad coalition, containing such diverse and even opposing value systems and interests, make coherent policymaking and effective administration enormously difficult.

In this rapidly changing and confusing environment, training in administrative matters has been overwhelmed by the political, as with the Apartheid regime before it. Loopholes were exploited as public servants interpreted policy in terms of their own ideological bent and/or personal interests,

as well as those of their kin and comrades. The problems inherent in this corruption of management are that they cascade down the ranks and are compounded throughout the public service system. Incompetent managers hire even less competent subordinates in order to safeguard their positions. Centers of excellence and commitment become swamped by the malaise.

Policy was distorted, first at the level of formulation by an overreliance on foreign models and failure to develop truly contextual policies; and secondly at implementation, where particular interpretations and interests have distorted the original intentions and spirit of these policies.

Understandably, many public servants were motivated by the possibilities of capital accumulation attached to their positions, and conspicuous consumption became the rule. At first, the new government was careful in its deployments. However, as many skilled and experienced public servants left the service, after the introduction of the Voluntary Severance Packages (1996), many deployments were not based on merit (Kanyane 2012). In addition, cadre deployment was complemented by an unfettered application of Affirmative Action, without the support, monitoring, or management both promised and required. This reduced it, all too often, to mere favoritism and nepotism.

In particular, the contradiction between responsibility to the constitution and to the national democratic revolution has hindered the ANC Government's ability to implement policy and maintain well-functioning management. Kader Asmal, a former ANC minister, warned in 2010 that the national democratic revolution should be scrapped, as dire consequences could result if it was not. As he said, it creates a fundamental, "conflict of interests because the values of the revolution are incompatible with those of the constitution" (Hoffman 2010: 1).

The lack of a unifying vision has meant that policy implementation has been frequently and extensively undermined. The argument against neutrality in favor of ideological loyalty, although well meaning, undermines management as a whole. Rousseau (1762: 44) warned, "Nothing is more dangerous than the influence of private interests in public affairs, and the abuse of the laws by the government is a less evil than the corruption of the legislator, which is the inevitable sequel to a particular standpoint. In such a case, the State being altered in substance, all reformation becomes impossible" Chipkin (2012: 21). concurs when he describes the South African Public Service as a "captured institution" whose "officials do not produce an 'effect of universality' but an effect of particularity." Impartiality and commitment to the general good is essential for democracy.

In the beginning of the transition from apartheid, the Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP) promised an extensive program of affirmative action, including training and support, and stated further that within two years of its implementation, "recruitment and training should reflect South Africa in terms of race, class, and gender" (1994: 127). Despite warnings

of the need to support appointees (Franks 1995), the training and support promised was seldom forthcoming; nor was the situation adequately managed or monitored. Furthermore, the concept of "potential" became a favored loophole through which kin, friends, and comrades were advantaged over more competent applicants. Even the possibility of on-the-job mentoring and training diminished as the Voluntary Severance Packages (VSP) depleted the store of experience and skill in the public service, despite government's commitment to retain skills. Many of those with skills and experience, who knew they could get further employment, took the packages and many later came back as consultants, while much of the deadwood from the old regime remained.

The racial and gender composition of senior management was quickly transformed so that by 2006, 52 percent were black African; 8 percent, colored; 8 percent, Asian; and 32 percent, white. By 2011: 72 percent were black African; 10 percent, colored; 5 percent, Asian; and only 13 percent were white. In 2011, 63 percent of senior managers were male and 37 percent female, but it will still take some time for the revised 50 percent target to be met.

By 1998, the Presidential Review Commission noted that the benefits of the voluntary severance packages, such as opening spaces for the appointment of black South Africans, were "far outweighed by the disadvantages," including a number of "undesired and serious adverse effects," or so-called unintended consequences. Picard (2005: 370) warned that "the failure to focus on institutional strengthening in the first decade of non-racial government may have long-term implications for South Africa."

In October 1997, the Department of Public Service and Administration, recognizing the need for an ethos of service delivery, launched the Batho Pele initiative (a SeSotho phrase meaning "putting our people first"). The Batho Pele campaigned to implement eight service delivery principles aimed at improving efficiency and accountability. The initiative failed to take root or show significant results in changing the politico-administrative culture. In 1998, the White Paper on Public Service Training and Education noted a number of concerns with regard to training, but the growing problem of corruption was not mentioned in the Presidential Review Commission that same year (Picard 2005: 154).

Recruitment of public servants through political processes and affirmative action congealed around the notion of cadre deployment (i.e., selection of party-loyal members in senior administrative positions). The unintended consequences of these practices began to be noticed by some commentators; this was initially met with denial from the ruling party, but later implicitly acknowledged (Fraser Moleketi 2006: 6).

The Department of Public Service and Administration Review 1999–2000 (2000) identified the following shortcomings of the transformation project: time lines were overly optimistic; it tackled too many interventions at the

same time in an unplanned fashion; the need for management development had been underestimated; and that, in hindsight, some interventions could have undermined the resilience of the bureaucracy.

In 2001, the Senior Management Service (SMS) was introduced, which developed a Handbook (2003) defining a competency framework for the 10,000 senior managers in the public service (directors, chief directors, deputy directors general, and directors general) as well as the 250,000 junior managers. The competency framework (2002) identified the Ten Core Managerial Competences:

- Strategic capability and leadership
- Program and project management
- Financial management
- Change management
- Knowledge management
- Service delivery and innovation
- Problem solving and analysis
- People management and empowerment
- Client orientation and customer focus
- Communication

In 2008 an eleventh core competence, "honesty and integrity," was added. A public service job summit was held in 2001, successfully reaching a framework agreement.

Challenges continued to undermine the progress of these initiatives and service delivery protests increased due to the continued failure to deliver promised services. From 2011, the government responded with a number of far-reaching interventions: the National Development Plan (2011), aimed at mobilizing all sectors and resources toward the development of South Africa; the proposed Public Administration Management Bill of 2013, aimed at establishing basic Weberian competencies and management in the public service, and outlawing public servants or their families doing business with the state. This package of interventions also provides for an anticorruption bureau; and establishing a National School of Government to utilize academics and experienced public servants for appropriate training and development of incumbents and new appointments.

Government seems agreed that the public service is the engine room of development and has to be put right. The National Development Plan has placed a high priority on building a capable professional and competent developmental state. Despite the need for rationalization, professionalization, and anticorruption, it remains to be seen if the new initiatives can withstand criticism from alliance partners and vested interests and mobilize all sectors to contribute.

## Organizational-Administrative Culture

In preparation for democracy, public service academics, assisted by various funding agencies, held a number of conferences and workshops and set up the New Public Administration Initiative (NPAI) modeled largely on NPM. It was an exciting and vibrant time among both academics and practitioners, involving them in a number of activities at which they jointly discussed public service transition and transformation. "The Public Administration academic community got caught up in the euphoria of the New South Africa" (Cameron 2008: 61). Academics introduced supportive principles and concepts from NPM but with only some success. Overall, the academics and the ruling party were talking at cross purposes. Academics became enthusiastically supportive but somewhat uncritical training and research beneficiaries of the foreign aid funding released by the coming of democracy.

The ANC embraced the NPAI's emphasis on popular participation, citizen-oriented service delivery and management empowerment. Fraser Moleketi (2006: 62) noted "not surprisingly the minimalist, neo-liberal ideology of the NPM clashed with the democratic and radical approaches of the ANC, especially with regard to the 'macro' sides of reform." Levin (2004: 78) suggested that NPM emphasis on "decentralization and deregulation" ran "counter to the central tenets of developmental statism, which are based on coordinated planning from a central level and greater regulation." NPM competed with other models, notably the Developmental State model with its Japanese origins (later influenced by Deng Xiaoping's vision of state-led capitalism), and also the centrally planned economy of communist regimes. The "old" Chinese model also embraces cadre deployment which Minister Sisulu continues to defend.

The trajectory of public management theory in the West, from public administration to new public management, to the various conceptions of new public governance, is perhaps best suited to the needs of that context. NPM and New Governance assume that basic public administration principles—the so-called Weberian competencies—are in place. Whether NPM and New Governance are appropriate for situations in which the basic public administration principles, especially that of an impartial public service, have been challenged and undermined in practice, is doubtful. No doubt aspects of NPM and New Governance are certainly being incorporated as the government, through the National Development Plan, attempts to build a consensus among all sectors toward a democratic developmental state. However, these networks can only thrive in a context of fairness, harmony, and trust, underpinned by an efficient and accountable public service. It is not just that public servants simply lack the Weberian competencies, for competence does not seem to hinder the project management of some highly complex corruption schemes. What is required is an unambiguous ethical framework that is monitored, managed, and exemplified.

## Expectations of Leaders

The 1996 constitution provides a clear idea of the kind of Public Service management that was envisaged, and a clear goal for the transformation process (Presidential Review Commission 1998):

- Professionalism, impartiality, and excellence
- Accountability and transparency
- Participatory policymaking
- Efficiency, effectiveness, and equity
- A developmental and service orientation

In addition, section 195(1) of the Constitution prescribes basic values and principles for public administration:

- A high standard of professional ethics must be promoted and maintained.
- Efficient, economic, and effective use of resources must be promoted.
- Public administration must be development-oriented.
- Services must be provided impartially, fairly, equitably, and without bias.
- People's needs must be responded to, and the public must be encouraged to participate in policymaking.
- Public administration must be accountable.
- Transparency must be fostered by providing the public with timely, accessible, and accurate information.
- Good human-resource management and career-development practices, to maximize human potential, must be cultivated.
- Public administration must be broadly representative of the South African people, with employment and personnel management practices based on ability, objectivity, fairness, and the need to redress the imbalances of the past to achieve broad representation.

However admirable these goals, implementation was distorted by particular interpretations and conflicts of interests, unmediated by Weberian competencies or a notion of impartiality. Rothstein (1968: 184), in discussing China's cadre deployment with reference to the concept of "enfeoffment," (the deed by which a person was given land in exchange for service), describes situations in which the incumbent views their position in the public service as " something they could use more or less as their property to extract private resources from." South Africa has too many examples of such entitlement from even the highest offices.

The framers of the constitution could never have envisaged the way in which the "participatory" in participatory policymaking could have enabled such distortion in practice. Participation was not only perceived as a process for establishing legislation for the general good, but became

a justification for particular interpretations, often undermining management in the process. This was further exacerbated by the lack of a clear delineation between political and administrative affairs, which confounded politics with administration, leading to tensions and/or collusion between ministers and their directors general.

Efforts to develop senior management have also been hindered by rapid turnover, with about 30 percent of senior managers moving per annum. It has been acknowledged that there is a crisis of standards within the public service resulting from the decentralization of human resource functions, whereby differing standards in different departments and spheres contributed to the rapid turnover of senior personnel. People took advantage of lower standards elsewhere to apply for transfer, even at the same level, and achieve a much improved remuneration package. Others were leaving for the private sector and parastatals.

Because public service placement became so politicized, incumbents too often spent their time garnering political favor and looking for their next position. Thus a position became something one possesses, and not something one has to do. In addition, issues of selection and placement have been found to be treated casually, while many who take training courses are motivated by promotion and their next position rather than improving their job performance. Many senior managers enrolled for MBA degrees with an eye to the private sector.

Coming together as a perfect storm, these issues have resulted in poor management, deficient and partial decision-making, a too casual selection and placement of staff, excessive staff turnover, frequent misuse of training opportunities, and high levels of financial and administrative corruption.

At root is the issue of conflicts of interests and especially the contradiction of adhering to both a constitution and the national democratic revolution at the same time. The conflicts of interest are further complicated by what Mthembu, chairperson of the PSC, describes as "a lack of clarity on what constitutes good practice and what is not acceptable" (2013: 1). As he explains, "In African culture we believe in taking care of people who are important to us, by ensuring they are fed and provided with opportunities. We know this has limits, but what are they? It is important that we have a conversation about how far well-intentioned and good-hearted cultural practices should extend in the professional realm and where they must stop." South Africa has to establish an ethical framework, based on the values in the constitution, so as to govern and manage conflicts of interest to achieve public service delivery for the public good.

## Training of Top Civil Servants

The public service consists of more than 1.6 million employees, spread across all spheres of government, leading to a heavy state wage bill of at

least 11.5 percent of GDP, which is expected to increase. This is nearly three times that of South Africa's BRICS partners, Brazil and Russia, and even larger than that of the United Kingdom and the United States. Because of high unemployment and the relatively small tax base, this is unsustainable (Schüssler 2012). The need for training 10,000 senior managers and 250,000 junior managers in all spheres of the public service, despite contributions from many sources in the public, private, civil society, and academic sectors has not been met.

Much enthusiasm was generated by the establishment of democratic South Africa worldwide, in Africa, and within South Africa itself. The various schools and departments of public management or administration were quick to contribute and to experiment with the training of public servants. The Department of Public Service and Administration was also intent on developing public servants. While the academics concentrated on general competencies, such as critical thinking and policy analysis, the government trainers concentrated on general skills training. Debate and dialogue were dynamic and vibrant, if influenced by theoretical discussions from elsewhere. In the euphoria for the new South Africa, not many predicted the poor level of service, or the greed and avarice that South Africa has witnessed. The warning of Adu (1965: 115) that "Africanization for the sake of Africanization only, without relating it to a well-considered plan, would undermine this policy" was overlooked.

Prior to the inception of the Government of National Unity, 1994–1999, the ANC sent selected cadres to various countries to investigate their different administrative practices. "The British Civil Service College trained an initial cohort of ANC officials and continued to provide support to SAMDI [South African Management Development Institute]" (McLennan 2007: 44). South African academics provided "new content to the paradigm of South African Public Administration" (Schwella 2013: 9).

The Winelands Conference, which continues as a biennial conference, was launched at Stellenbosch in 1987 with the theme, "South African Public Administration—Past, Present, and Future." In 1990, a Coordinating and Consulting Working Conference on the Teaching of Public Administration in South Africa, funded by Liberty Life, facilitated "discussion on new forms of public administration teaching" (McLennan 2007: 42), and led to the formation of the New Public Administration Initiative and the Joint Universities Public Management Education Trust (JUPMET). Mount Grace 1 was held in 1991, providing input from academics and practitioners which, according to Schwella (2013: 15), influenced the framers of the new constitution. Mount Grace 1 also led to the formation of the Association of Southern African Schools and Departments of Public Administration and Management and *AdministratioPublica*, its academic journal.

The ANC deployed cadres throughout government and the public service training institutions. JUPMET was established with a large donation from the

European Union. As Clapper (2007: 38) has commented, JUPMET's "dominance in the market of academic consulting to the public service resulted in them managing to monopolize consultation and training" resulted in resentment from those academic Departments of Public Administration that were excluded.

In 1992, the Harvard/Otis workshop was initiated by the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, with funding from Otis Elevator Limited. The workshops trained public management academics and practitioners in case study and other interactive methods of teaching and learning to prepare people for the new public service and its challenges, stimulating dialogue concerning key public service challenges.

The Otis Workshops continued after 1996 as the South African Public Management Workshops facilitated by South African Academics. This period roughly coincided with a rise in concern for issues of service delivery, and the workshops became dynamic annual conversations among academics, practitioners, and civil society of the challenges facing the public service.

JUPMET collapsed in about 2000, because "the consortium was seen to be rather exclusive and parochial; contrary to some of the inclusiveness and developmental objectives they subscribed to" (Clapper 2007: 38). The Winelands Conference continued to foster dialogue and debate together with the South African Association of Public Administration and Management and the Association of Southern African Schools and Departments of Public Administration and Management. The South African Public Management Workshop was institutionalized in the Department of Public Service and Administration as the South African Public Management Conversation and was able to facilitate dialogue and conversation among academics and practitioners until 2006. There has been much discussion of the academic and practitioner interface and revolving doors, allowing for academics to experience practice and for practitioners to get some time for reflection in an academic setting. To date, this has not happened.

As unintended consequences emerged, the Department of Public Service and Administration introduced a number of initiatives aimed at improving the situation. The Public Finance and Management Act was introduced in 1999 to ensure fair, equitable, transparent, competitive, and cost effective procurement by all organs of state. Attempts to motivate performance through the rewarding of excellence were hampered by implementation challenges. For instance, the Minister of Education found that teachers all evaluated each other as excellent. Performance management was attempted, but was undermined by the same comraderie, a mixture of favoritism, solidarity, and fear.

The South African Management Development Institute (SAMDI) was founded in 1993 as an independent institute under the Public Service Commission. Its predecessor, the Public Service Training Institute had enjoyed a virtual monopoly of in-service management training of public

servants. In contrast, SAMDI was envisaged to encourage wider participation in training.

In terms of leadership development, SAMDI offered the following:

- Executive Development Programme
- Advanced Management Development Programme
- Emerging Management Development Programme
- Foundation Management
- Mentorship Programme
- Project Management
- Accelerated Development Programme
- Khaedu (service delivery challenge programme)

Considering the size of the public service, the training reach was wholly inadequate. By the end of 1994, SAMDI's composition, structure, and role was under review. McLennan (2007: 44) has noted, "SAMDI's role in the capacity building of the public servants was contested from within government as well as by academics. Critiques ranged from the quality of the training provided, to inadequate skills, to poorly conceptualized development programmes." In December 1998, almost all its training activities were suspended and it thereafter functioned as a department of the Department of Public Service and Administration. In 1999, at the second Mount Grace Conference, practitioners were no longer present (McLennan 2007: 44). However, dialogue between practitioners and academics did continue until 2007, when Fraser Moleketi's term of office as Minister of Public Service and Administration ended abruptly with the ousting of Thabo Mbeki as President. Dialogue fell off considerably, subduing the acknowledgement of serious issues faced by the Public Service. Since 2004, public service protests have increased exponentially, with 2012 experiencing nearly 30 percent of all such protests.

In November of 2006, SAMDI was reconstituted as the Public Administration Leadership and Management Academy (PALAMA) and was formally launched in August of 2008. *Palama* is a SeSotho word meaning "arise" or "get on board." PALAMA changed its focus from being a training provider to that of facilitating leadership development and management training in collaboration with other training institutions, significantly increasing its offerings and reach.

## **The Content and Method of Training**

By the time of the watershed ANC Conference at the University of Limpopo in 2007, known as the Polokwane Conference, it was clear that there were serious challenges in the public service at all levels. This conference, building on the work of Fraser Moleketi's term as minister of public service and

administration, crafted the attributes of the developmental state. It emphasized “proper training, orientation, and leadership of the public service” and the state’s “ability to translate broad objectives into programmes and projects and to ensure their implementation” (ANC 2012: 59). This was reaffirmed at the ANC Conference of 2012 together with the National Development Plan.

The training and development interventions of PALAMA aimed at dealing with the skills gaps identified by the SMS Competency Framework in 2003: service delivery innovation, program and project management, and financial management. PALAMA trained about 20,000 public servants per year. The PALAMA annual report of 2010/2011 clarifies that PALAMA mainly conducted shorter and cheaper courses for general public employees; however, the Executive Development Programme for senior and middle managers exceeded the annual target of 1,500 managers by training 7,011 officials during the 2010/2011 fiscal year.

The flexible Executive Development Programme consists of the following modules:

#### Core Modules

- Compulsory orientation
- Strategic Planning and Management
- Financial Management and Budgeting
- Strategic Human Resources Management
- Leadership for Good Governance
- Policy Formulation and Implementation
- Programme and Project Management

#### Additional Modules

- Communication and Customer Focused Strategies
- Leading Change
- Research Methodology for SMS in the Public Sector
- South African Economy in a Global Perspective

And, at a higher education institution:

- Compulsory Research Methodology Session
- Mini Dissertation

Senior and junior managers with bachelor degrees could select individual models to enhance their professional skills in an area, do all six modules to earn the postgraduate certificate in executive leadership, or complete all modules and the mini dissertation to earn a master's degree in public

administration from one of the higher education institutions. All modules consist of three days of contact over five weeks supported by an e-learning platform.

An assessment conducted by the Public Service Commission in 2011 found that 90 percent of the departments sampled indicated that they did not use PALAMA for training, but instead used higher education institutions, private training institutions, and in-house capacity.

The skills gaps among senior managers were holistically revised to include policy development and implementation, risk management, supply chain management, monitoring and evaluation, research, job evaluation, labor relations, organizational development, and performance management and development, as well as computer skills, soft skills, values and integrity, and mentoring and coaching. At the same time, the Department of Public Service and Administration established national norms and criteria applicable to all three spheres of government, and made training and development mandatory for induction and career progress.

The Diagnostic Overview of the National Planning Commission identified “deeply rooted systemic issues,” which require, “a long-term and strategic approach to enhancing institutional capacity.” The commission addressed “a set of interrelated issues including instability resulting from repeated changes in policy, understaffing and skills shortages, obstacles to building a sense of professional common purpose in the public service, political interference, lack of accountability, and insufficient clarity in the division of roles and responsibilities” (National Planning Commission 2011: 26)

The National Development Plan (2011), which many in government are equating with the National Democratic Revolution, can serve “as a guiding framework for action” (Levin 2013: slide 32). It has been accompanied by the launch of the Public Service Charter, the Year of the Public Service Cadre and the Public Administration Management Bill (2013). This bill, in consultation processes since 2007, forms a comprehensive and integrated response to the challenges faced by the public service, instituting basic Public Administration in the Weberian sense. The bill provides for the following:

- Establishes a single public service (national, provincial, and local “spheres”) with national standards and systems
- Establishes an Office of Standards and Compliance to establish and monitor standards as well as oversee and promote quality assurance in service delivery
- Extends the role of the Public Service Commission to all spheres of government and makes the commission’s directions binding on the state
- Outlaws public servants, their families, or relatives doing business with government
- Establishes an anticorruption bureau

- Mandates all public servants to attend the school throughout their careers
- Establishes a National School of Government (launched October 21, 2013) to enhance the quality, extent, and impact of the development of human resource capacity in institutions through education and training by
  - in-sourcing expertise, especially experienced public servants for facilitation and curriculum design
  - issuing or causing to be issued diplomas and certificates
  - interacting with and fostering collaboration among training institutions, higher education institutions, further education and training institutions, and private sector training providers in furtherance of such education and training

This is a comprehensive, multipronged, and integrated response to the challenges facing the development of public servants in South Africa. However, it remains to be seen whether the response can ameliorate the soft issues which ultimately determine how these interventions will be interpreted and implemented. The bill directly confronts corruption, nonmanagement, and mismanagement, ultimately providing a legal framework wherein a senior manager can be dismissed for not instituting anti-corruption and other disciplinary measures.

The minister of finance, Pravin Gordham, has acknowledged that previous efforts "have not matched the size and complexity of the challenge" and has appealed for "a special effort from all of us in government, assisted by people in business and broader society." He conceded that "it will take time. But we are determined to make progress" (Gordham 2013: 28). Government appears determined to succeed.

## Conclusion

Coming off the April–June 2014 elections, much is expected to remain the same as the newly reelected ANC government finds itself immersed in a sea of unintended consequences, with nonaccountability, corruption, and particularism embedded in the very fabric of public service. Nearly two decades of cadre deployment and redeployment, inadequate training, management and discipline, and the increasing evidence of corruption of public funds and processes, have been met by increasing service delivery protests and something of a breakdown of the labor relations system.

It is a critical moment in South Africa, wherein, if these issues are not radically confronted, they may continue to undermine the technical and legal efforts to deal with the symptoms and management in general.

The Public Administration Management Bill 2013, if enacted, may well establish the basics of a disciplined and managed public administration system and stop the procurement and services corruption, but can it come to

terms with the conflicts of interest within the public service itself? Conflicts of interests do not stop at family relationships but extend far wider, especially since the defense of cadre deployment remains.

South Africa is heading toward a form of state-led development, which, hopefully, will furnish an appropriate model for the public service in this complex context. The emergence of an impartial civil service requires, "both a legal framework to make civil servants accountable and a conceptual development of the importance of ethics in the public service" (Rothstein and Teorell 2008: 185). This will require exemplary, untainted, and bold leadership. South Africa has to face its realities if it is to reform the public service and work for the general good. The current initiatives are comprehensive and integrated, placing training at the core; however, what will emerge remains to be seen. The stakes are high.

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# 19

## South Korea

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### Introduction

The Republic of Korea, commonly known as South Korea, is an East Asian country on the southern half of the Korean Peninsula. Korea traces its founding to 2333 BC by the legendary *Dangun*. Korea has traditionally had the strong characteristics of a career civil service system (Kim 2010). Its origin dates back to the Unified Shilla Dynasty, about 1,200 years ago. During this era, King Wonseong (AD 788) operated a national examination system, a kind of limited competition structure used to select civil servants. The system allowed only people who had finished studying classics such as *the Analects of Confucius* to take the examination (Kim 2006). Until the nineteenth century, Korea had a formal class system. Under this system, only the privileged could enter the government. Becoming an official meant achieving good social and economic status. This tradition survived even after the class system was abolished and constraints were lifted on the qualifications to enter the civil service (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development 2005).

The modern civil service system began in 1949 with the legislation of the National Civil Service Act during the Rhee administration (1948–1960), followed by a series of innovations during the Park administration (1963–1979). The basic characteristics of the Korean civil service were a merit system, a rank-in-person system, a closed-career system, and a centralized management system (Namkoong 2007). However, the traditional Korean civil service was incapable of success in a rapidly changing environment. In 1997, the foreign exchange crisis led to a severe slowdown in the economy, and the insufficient competitiveness of the Korean government was thought to have contributed to the economic crisis (Kim 2000). The Korean government thought it urgent to initiate government reforms to enhance competencies and to create a more competitive workforce. Following the major principles of New Public Management (NPM), the Kim Dae-Jung administration (1998–2002) emphasized small size, competitiveness, openness, and performance (Moon 2008). The Korean national government began to place

more emphasis on leadership skills and competency among top civil servants. When top civil servants are in charge of central administrative units and have a close relationship with politicians or political appointees, the group of top civil servants is defined as the Senior Civil Service (SCS) in Korea. This chapter will explain the training of the SCS and its candidates in the Korean culture and context.

## Political Structure

The Constitution of the Republic of Korea calls for a liberal democratic political system. Its principles are based on the sovereignty of the people, and any authority the state has is granted by the citizens of Korea themselves: separation of powers among the three branches of government, the rule of law, and the responsibility to promote citizens' welfare as well as the attainment of a peaceful unification of Korea.

The Korean government's structure is determined by its constitution. The government is divided into three branches: executive, judicial, and legislative. The executive and legislative branches operate primarily at the national level, although various ministries in the executive branch also carry out local functions. Local governments are semi-autonomous, and contain executive and legislative bodies of their own. The judicial branch operates at both the national and local levels.

The president, who heads the executive branch, is also the head of state and represents the state in international affairs. The president is elected directly by the people and serves for one five-year term. The president performs her or his executive functions through the State Council (Cabinet), which is made up of 15 to 30 members. The Constitution charges the State Council with deliberating on major policy decisions. The members of the State Council lead and supervise their respective ministries, participate in the deliberation of major state affairs, and act on behalf of the president when necessary. The current government comprises 17 ministries and three ministry-level agencies. The Ministry of Security and Public Administration is in charge of government's personnel management.

The legislative branch at the national level consists of the National Assembly of Korea. The National Assembly is a unicameral legislature, a single large assembly of 300 members. Single-member constituencies elect most of the body's members, although 54 are elected through proportional representation. The members of the National Assembly serve for four years. In addition to making laws, major functions of the National Assembly include deliberation and approval of the annual budget, audits of the administration, matters related to foreign relations, declarations of war, the dispatch of armed forces abroad, and impeachment of high-rank posts in the executive and judicial branches including the president. Currently, four political parties have representation in the National Assembly.<sup>1</sup>

The judicial branch includes the Constitutional Court, the Supreme Court, regional appellate courts, local district courts, and specialized courts. All courts are under the jurisdiction of the national judiciary; independent local courts are not permitted. The Constitutional Court conducts constitutional review and rules on cases of impeachment. The Supreme Court oversees other judicial matters and is the final court of appeal for all cases.

Korea has a unitary system and adopted a two-tier local government system. There are 17 upper-level local governments, and 227 lower-level local governments. The upper-level local governments are autonomous local authorities with relatively broad territorial jurisdiction; the lower-level local governments are basic authorities.

The civil service in Korea is divided into national and local civil service. The number of national government civil servants as of 2010 is approximately 150,000, while that of local government civil servants is approximately 230,000.<sup>2</sup> The government rank-in-person system consists of nine grades, from Grade 9 to Grade 1 (the lower the number, the higher the position), and new entrance through the open competition examination has applied to only three grades: Grade 5 (junior manager level), Grade 7 (principal clerk level), and Grade 9 (clerical level). A combination of seniority, training, and performance review determines promotions to upper grades. The Senior Civil Service covers all positions at the bureau director level or higher in the central government ministries and agencies that require management and leadership competencies (Han and Kim 2009).<sup>3</sup>

Ministerial-mandarin relations in Korea can be analyzed in two ways. First, ministers play important managerial and policy roles within their ministries, as well as increasingly political and public relations roles in dealing with various political actors, such as the president, the media, and the legislators. Since the democratic transition in 1987, the Korean political nexus among the president, bureaucracy, and civil society has changed from the president-led triad to a more balanced distribution of power (Moon and Ingraham 1998). With this change, “ministerial leadership becomes increasingly important to the success of ministries, and its political role in bridging the president and the bureaucracy is significantly expanding” (Jung, Moon, and Hahm 2008: 671–672). Therefore, bureaucrats’ power and discretion in decision-making and controlling policy outcomes have declined since the 1990s, while under authoritarian regimes, bureaucrats emerged to play important roles in policy planning, development, and implementation (Jung, Moon, and Hahm 2008). Second, the majority of ministers are recruited from former civil servants. For the five administrations (1980–2008), the majority of ministers were recruited from former civil servants. Out of 504 ministers, 187 (37.1 percent) were civil service career holders (Halm, Jung, and Lee 2012).<sup>4</sup> This finding implies the importance of career civil service experience as preparation for ministerial positions when the president expects ministers to effectively control and manage their ministries (Jung,

Moon, and Hahm 2008). Ministers who had a career in the civil service are likely to have a strong ministerial identification with the departments for which they worked (Lee, Moon, and Hahm 2010).

## Administrative Culture

The Korean state has on the whole been influenced by Confucian culture. Confucianism is a philosophy that considers proper behavior and human relationships as the basis of the society. In Korea, Confucianism was adopted as the official philosophy of the Joseon dynasty (1392–1910) and was developed during its 500-year reign. Even today, it is taught as the basis of morality. Confucian values, such as respect for authority and elders, loyalty, and the importance of education and diligence—values aimed at maintaining social order, harmony in the family, and self-cultivation—have heavily influenced Korean government and Korean attitudes toward government (Ro, Frederickson, and Hwang 1997).

Also, a collectivist culture prevails in Korea (Hofstede 1991). Collectivist behavior is very much oriented toward families, relatives, and coworkers. This is also related to the Confucian emphasis on hierarchical relationships and mutual aid (Kim 1991). In Korea, people think that the quality of interpersonal relations is more important than work performance in organizational life, and helping coworkers and inferiors is more importantly recognized in social relations than is achieving better performance. This relates to the orientation toward harmony embedded in Korean culture. Most Korean managers are more inclined to maintain harmony by producing lenient appraisals of subordinates than to arouse conflict and tension through critical or negative appraisals (Kim 2005). In addition, most Korean bureaucrats are inclined toward hierarchical harmony whereby they are presumed to accept authority, to follow socially accepted norms of behavior, and to get along well with other members of their organizations (Park and Joo 2010).

New social values and cultures have, however, started to emerge in Korean society. The Western ideas of individualism, liberalism, constitutionalism, human rights, equality, liberty, the rule of law, democracy and free markets have permeated Korean society. The processes of globalization have led to pursuits of modernization with a combination of Western and Confucian culture. Korean behavior has constantly been influenced by both traditional Confucian and modern liberal values (Yun 2008). With an influx of global information and multiculturalism, foreign thoughts and cultures have rapidly spread to Korean society and have had a great impact on the Korean people (Lee 2001). Korean administrative culture has incorporated aspects of progressive rationalization as a result of the impact of liberalism and globalization on Confucianism and the former authoritarian-development matrix of that culture.

After the foreign exchange crisis of 1997, there was a social consensus that it was urgent to initiate government reforms in order to create a more competitive government. The Kim Dae-Jung administration (1998–2002) formulated Korea's own public sector reform programs in the aftermath of the financial crisis as important ways of overcoming the economic difficulties and negative sentiments of the people toward the government (Park and Joo 2010). Adopting the core reform programs of NPM, the public sector reform aimed to create a competitive and highly productive government by slimming down the public sector, expanding the scope of private sector activities, and applying the principles of competition and performance to bureaucratic institutions. The Kim Dae-Jung administration proclaimed "a small and efficient but better-serving government" as its motto for public sector reform (Ministry of Planning and Budget 2003: 7). Many of the reform efforts initiated by the Kim Dae-Jung administration were sustained in the successive Roh Moo-Hyun administration (2003–2007).

Considering that performance is important in a highly competitive environment and that improving the government's competitiveness is essential for government success, it was indispensable to transform the merit- and seniority-centered personnel management to a more scientific, systematic, and objective personnel management.<sup>5</sup> Among the many NPM reform initiatives, the Open Competitive Position System and the Senior Civil Service are the two most related with leadership competencies and training in higher civil servants. In 1999, the Korean government introduced the Open Competitive Position System (OPS), designed as a way to recruit outstanding talents and experts to the OPS positions from both the private and public sectors. The fundamental purpose of the OPS is to strengthen the core competencies of top civil servants by exposing them to competition, and the five competencies of expertise, strategic leadership, problem-solving ability, management ability, and communication and negotiation skills were established for the OPS positions (Kim 2010).

In addition, the Roh Moo-Hyun administration (2003–2007) introduced the SCS in 2006.<sup>6</sup> The SCS, an equivalent of the Senior Executive Service in the United States, is expected to serve as the key link between political executives and the rest of the career civil service (Kim 2007). Focusing on openness and competitiveness, the objectives of the SCS are to improve the core management of the government by holding senior civil servants accountable for individual and organizational performance, to select and develop them from an expanded government-wide pool of talent, and to make senior levels more open to talented individuals from the lower ranks and from the outside (Namkoong 2006). The SCS covers all top civil servants, such as bureau director or higher-ranked positions (approximately 1,500 individuals), in the Korean national government.

## Expectations of Leaders

The administrative leader needs to assess difficult and changing conditions, identify action options, craft the best strategy based on available information, and take on levels of risk for the promotion of greater public or national causes (Rusaw 2009). Good administrative leadership is “deft, efficient technical production, firm and compassionate utilization of human resources, a clear sensibility of what the organization needs to be doing and how it needs to adapt, and a sense of integrity that overlays it all” (Van Wart and Dicke 2008: 399).

Numerous attributes, skills, and behaviors—collectively referred to as *competencies*—have been identified for administrative leadership. Van Wart (2005) describes in some detail ten traits, six “meta-skills,” and 21 behaviors to total 37 competencies for developing organizational leadership in the public sector. Leader behaviors are subgrouped into task-oriented, people-oriented, and organization-oriented behaviors. Clearly many of the traits, skills, and behaviors are as applicable to the Korean context. Park (2009) found that Van Wart’s public sector leadership theory is valid in the Korean central government, and that especially important for the SCS are fourteen competencies: self-confidence, energy, willingness to assume responsibility, flexibility, and emotional maturity in the type of traits; communication and social skills in the type of skills; and clarifying roles, problem solving, motivating, managing personnel conflict, strategic planning, articulating the mission and vision, and decision making in the type of behaviors (Park 2009). The most important trait for the SCS is willingness to assume responsibility, followed by self-confidence; the most important skill for the SCS is communication; clarifying roles is most important among task-oriented behaviors, motivating is most important among people-oriented behaviors, and decision making is most important among organization-oriented behaviors. These leadership competencies are mostly included in the SCS competency model.

A competency model is understood as “a systematic presentation of competencies which the public employees in each group classified by grade and job classification should have” (Ministry of Public Administration and Security 2008: 17). At first, in 1999, the competency model for the OPS positions was established as one of the qualification standards for performing the roles and duties of each OPS position. After that, in 2001, the *Government Standard Competency Dictionary* was made as a reference for developing the competencies of civil servants in general as well as the top civil servants. Its primary purposes are to bring more detailed definitions to the competencies that are important for the government to achieve its strategic goals and to create a common, objective language for talking about competencies. The *Competency Dictionary* includes a detailed definition of each competency, along with specific descriptions and behavioral indicators. Each competency is divided into five proficiency levels, and each level is described in terms of observable behaviors, showing how that particular level is distinct. This competency

dictionary has been used as a basic reference for developing competency models for different target groups and for each of the central ministries and agencies. The dictionary can also be used for a variety of purposes including recruitment and staffing, learning, and career development. Identified are 19 standard competencies: ethics for an official, organizational commitment, teamwork, customer-orientation, professionalism, business acumen, information management, problem recognition and understanding, self-control, communication, vision, adaptability, strategic thinking, coaching/development, resource management, effective implementation, political savvy, coordination and integration, and negotiation (MOPAS 2008: 24). There are currently different competency models for different hierarchical ranks at the national government level (Kim and Jung 2010).

The SCS competency model is used for the SCS members and candidates. The SCS competency model initially consisted of nine competencies: recognition and understanding of potential problems, strategic thinking, results orientation, professionalism, innovative leadership, communication ability, customer-orientation, presentation of vision, and coordination and integration. In March 2009, it was simplified to have only six competencies, as shown in Table 19.1. There are three competency groups with a framework of thinking, working, and relating in the SCS competency model; the

Table 19.1 The SCS competency model

| Competency group | Competency                            | Competency definition   |
|------------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| Thinking         | Problem recognition and understanding | Recognizing problems timely through information analysis, and identifying the cores of problems through studying various related issues   |
|                  | Strategic thinking                    | Creating long-term vision and goals, and making action plans with clarifying priorities in order to achieve vision and goals  |
| Working          | Performance orientation               | Considering various methods to maximize job performance, and pursuing effectiveness and efficiency in the process of goal achievement   |
|                  | Change management                     | Understanding the trends and flow of environmental change, and taking measures for making an organization and individuals respond appropriately and adapt to changing circumstances |
| Relating         | Customer satisfaction                 | Recognizing work partners as customers, understanding customers' needs, and making every endeavor to meet the demands of customers  |
|                  | Coordination and integration          | Understanding the interests and conflicts among stakeholders, making decisions based on a balanced perspective, and suggesting rational solutions                                   |

competencies for the SCS include problem recognition and understanding, strategic thinking, performance orientation, change management, customer satisfaction, and coordination and integration.

## **The Content and Structure of Training for Senior Civil Servants**

The purpose of training and development is to cultivate ethics, abilities, and skills for civil servants to faithfully accomplish their duties as servants of the citizens (Kim 2006). The training system is classified into three types of training: On-the-job training conducted by each ministry and agency, training conducted by professional government training institutes, and training programs offered by universities and other institutes. Of these, the majority of training is conducted at government training institutes. Most managerial and executive programs for central government civil servants are conducted at the Central Officials Training Institute (COTI). COTI, founded in 1949 and operating under the Ministry of Security and Public Administration, is an interministry training institute which performs four basic functions: expanding training programs aimed at helping share and disseminate the direction of the government's state affairs management; fostering the competency of government officials by strengthening public service life cycle-based training; providing full-fledged Smart Learning (SL)<sup>7</sup> using new learning models; and enhancing training programs aimed at strengthening cooperation with foreign countries and the private sector (COTI 2013a).

COTI provides general and specialized training for central government civil servants.<sup>8</sup> COTI offers 107 training programs and 134 e-learning courses as of 2014 in an effort to educate several thousand public officials, including senior civil servants. The training programs include grade-based development programs, core competencies training, specific competencies development programs, global competencies training, and international programs for foreign government officials as well as online training. Recently, COTI initiated various innovations in terms of its training methods, training materials, and facilities in pursuing outcome-centered training and development programs based on actual situations and experiential learning, as well as nurturing the capability of government officials to execute national agendas (Han and Kim 2009).

In order to foster public service ethics and enhance the essential knowledge and competency relevant specific responsibilities, COTI offers several grade-based training programs, including a development program for senior civil servants, as shown in Figure 19.1. It is assumed that most senior civil servants who are participating in the Senior Executive Program have already completed lower-level training programs such as the Senior Civil Service Candidate Development Program and the Division Director Candidate



Figure 19.1 Grade-based training structure.

Source: COTI homepage, <http://eng.coti.go.kr/front/programs/change.jsp>, accessed May 18, 2013.

Development Program, as well as the New Leader Development Program or the Newly Promoted G5 Leader Development Program.

The Senior Executive Program (SEP), COTI's most representative program (along with the New Leader Development Program), is a long-term training program for senior civil servants, first operational in 1993. Having been run twenty times since its inception, this program currently lasts for 43 weeks (from February 15 through December 14 in 2012), and 59 senior civil servants completed the most recent cycle of training. In the 20 years it has been in existence, 1,023 participants have completed the SEP. This program aims to enhance the leadership competency of senior civil servants up to a world-class level and to instill them with both a broad range of perspectives on state policies and strategic thinking for state affairs management. It also intends to foster senior civil servants as key policy leaders who will stand at the forefront of realizing the national vision. The program's training sessions are conducted in a participatory manner, using a combination of lectures, sub-group discussions, individual presentations, and research activities covering policy cases and key issues. Participants also engage in extracurricular activities, such as playing musical instruments, writing calligraphy, and playing sports, to gain skills in new areas and enjoy themselves during the program. Since the SCS was introduced in 2006, leadership building has been emphasized in the SEP.<sup>9</sup> Table 19.2 summarizes training trends in the last two decades.

*Table 19.2* Training trends by administration

| Year                           | 1993–1997<br>(Kim Young-Sam<br>Administration)   | 1997–2002<br>(Kim Dae-Jung<br>Administration)  | 2003–2007<br>(Roh Moo-Hyun<br>Administration)  | 2008–2012<br>(Lee Myung-Bak<br>Administration)   |
|--------------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| Primary<br>Training<br>Methods | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Lectures</li> <li>– Participatory training</li> <li>– Research activities; discussions; presentations on pending issues and policy cases</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Lectures</li> <li>– Participatory training</li> <li>– Case studies; presentations; field study</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Lectures</li> <li>– Participatory training</li> <li>– Foreign languages; IT-based training</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Leadership building</li> <li>– Field-oriented training</li> <li>– Creative, practical training</li> </ul> |

Source: COTI (2013a: 13).

The SEP's program content in 2012 can be divided into five sub-categories (COTI 2013b): training on state affairs management competency (353 hours, 24.0 percent), general and job-specific competency development training (553 hours, 37.4 percent), communication between the private and government sectors (48 hours, 3.3 percent), liberal education (172 hours, 11.6 percent), and individual competency development (350 hours, 23.7 percent). First, the training on state affairs management competency is a kind of theme-based field study. During the 2012 program, participants built 13 research teams dealing with current policy issues, conducted field surveys and research, and presented study results at seminars. They made visits to sites associated with national security, historical relics, industrial sectors, state-funded project development, and the livelihoods of the people, and had chances to thoroughly understand important affairs of state.

Second, in the general and job-specific competency development training, participants improve their competencies to the levels required of senior civil servants in a broad range of fields, such as media response strategies and interview skills, while sharing specific knowledge and work experiences and building up human networks through peer learning and team-based policy task learning. They submitted research papers on assignments regarding government policies. In addition, COTI, in cooperation with the Korea National Diplomatic Academy, hosted a joint global leadership seminar to increase participants' diplomatic security capabilities and global perspectives. Between June and July of 2012, participants went on study trips in subgroups to locations around the world with the goal of broadening their insights regarding international affairs.

Third, to promote interactive communication between the private sector and the government sector, COTI held the Joint Private-Government CEO Policy Forum 12 times, inviting 57 CEOs from the private sector. The forums proved very effective in helping senior civil servants understand the difficulties facing small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Forum

participants shared ideas about the current state issue of win-win growth for SMEs and conglomerates.

Fourth, the liberal education aspect of the program focuses on developing emotional leadership through lectures on humanities, experiencing various culturally traditional activities, and conducting social volunteer activities. It also aims to develop creativity and sensitivity, and improve quality of life at the individual level.

Fifth, the individual competency development sessions consist of less-formal courses including foreign language training, computer skills, meditation, exercise, and athletic activities. Cultural experiences for couples and volunteer service work are also options for participants to pursue.

Through all of the above-mentioned courses, participants come to deepen their insight into government policy issues and the current international situation, as well as strengthen their common and job-specific competencies. As in the 2012 SEP, the long-term program will be conducted every year in a participatory and experiential fashion, using a combination of lectures, research activities, subgroup discussions, and individual presentations.

After finishing the 2012 SEP, a survey on the training quality was conducted.<sup>10</sup> Results showed that most participants were satisfied with the SEP: 94.4 percent of the participants were satisfied with the overall training program, 63.0 percent satisfied with class participation, and 85.2 percent satisfied with the lecturers (COTI 2013b). A recipient of the 2012 SEP said, "Privately, it was a good opportunity for me to extend human network and learn more about humanities and information science. I was able to broaden my knowledge on major domestic and international issues through the lectures by experts."<sup>11</sup> Another of the 2011 SEP mentioned, "Generally I was satisfied with this almost-a-year-long training program. Senior civil servants can have time to recharge themselves in the SEP. However, there were also a number of training sessions which were insufficient in specific contents of education."<sup>12</sup>

The Senior Civil Service Candidate Development Program (CDP) fosters core competencies of SCS candidates (COTI 2013b). Along with the launch of the SCS system, competency assessment for SCS candidates and competency training that highlights core competencies was introduced in 2006. The updated sessions consist mostly of simulation sessions in which participants work to resolve problems encountered in job-related simulations. The CDP aims to increase core competencies and problem-solving capacities required for the SCS and to improve the competitiveness of the SCS through fostering competent SCS candidates. The COTI conducted 14 CDP courses for 328 candidates in 2011, and 16 CDP courses for 343 candidates in 2012. The CDP focuses on problem recognition, strategic thinking, performance orientation, change management, customer satisfaction, and coordination/integration.

The CDP consists of a two-week online course and a five-day offline course (COTI 2013b). The online course aims to give participants an orientation to competency training including competency assessment and competency training methods. Competency assessment is conducted to identify strengths and areas for development. It also reflects the individual's competency by comparing self-assessments with feedback from multiple evaluators including senior managers, peers, and direct reports. During the offline course, participants engage in simulations which help develop their core competencies. The course is conducted with a focus on subgroup discussion and feedback that participants receive from peer participants and facilitators. In addition, participants have chances to exhibit their strategic leadership and communication skills in simulated emergency situations. In the last stage, each participant formulates and presents an individual development plan.

This competency training is effective in that the training is conducted in a learner-based way and helps participants pursue competency development through self-evaluation. Since COTI was the first training institute in Korea to conduct competency development training, the development and conduct of competency training have had a spillover effect on government ministries, local government agencies, and the public and private sectors. In a survey conducted in 2008 on the appropriateness of the CDP, 35.4 percent of the 246 SCS respondents gave positive answers, while only 17.0 percent answered negatively, and 36.7 percent of the 245 SCS candidates answered positively, while 22.5 percent gave negative answers (Lee et al. 2008).

## **Conclusion**

In general, both the SEP and CDP have received positive evaluations. The training for top civil servants has been professional, rational, and of relatively high quality. However, there are certainly several areas for possible improvement. First, training opportunities for the senior civil servants have been relatively limited. Even though the total size of the SCS is over 1,500, only about 60 participants are able to participate in SEP training each year. Between 2006 and 2012, only 428 senior civil servants completed the SEP. This means that the current training program for the SCS is not adequate to handle the training demand of senior civil servants. The director of the executive training division in COTI said, "Many senior civil servants want to take the SEP but the capacity is very limited. Only 67 are allowed to participate in the 2013 SEP."<sup>13</sup> Thus, training the SCS should be the highest priority in the training of government officials, and it needs to extend the capacity of the SEP and provide additional training programs for senior civil servants.

Second, the new emphasis on collaboration represented in the New Public Governance paradigm is largely lacking. Such a collaborative leadership emphasis can be easily integrated into the Korean cultural context.

"Collaborative means to *co-labor*, to cooperate to achieve common goals, working across boundaries in multi-sector relationships" (O'Leary, Gerald, and Bingham 2006: 7). Collaboration includes the variety of ways ministries and agencies work across boundaries. The newly launched Korean Administration is also emphasizing collaboration and communication between the government and private sector, as well as collaboration among ministries and agencies. Leadership evoking collaboration, partnership, and mutual learning is more important to overcome inter-ministerial barriers, to solve public problems, and to make competing or conflicting groups aim toward shared values and outcomes. Training for senior civil servants needs to focus more on developing collaborative leadership by using various methods such as project-based and team-based learning sessions associated with policy tasks across multiple ministries and agencies.

## Notes

1. The Saenuri Party has 153 seats, the Democratic Party 127 seats, the Unified Progressive Party 6 seats, and the Progressive Justice Party 5 seats, while there were 7 members with no political party affiliation as of October 14, 2013.
2. The total number of national government employees is approximately 620,000, including public school teachers (356,000) and police (108,000), while that of local government employees is approximately 280,000, including firefighters (35,000) in 2010. Government employees in Korea do not include employees of any public corporations (state-owned or state-invested enterprises) or military soldiers.
3. The grading system (Grades 1–3) of the SCS was abolished, and the SCS members have been managed in accordance with their ability and performance since 2006.
4. The career where a minister stayed the longest was coded as a main career for the ministers when a minister has more than two careers. The second largest group was outside experts (92 ministers) including university professors, medical doctors, and researchers. Interestingly, 78 out of 92 were university professors. The next largest group was politicians (68 ministers) including congressmen and campaign contributors (Halm, Jung, and Lee 2012).
5. Prior to the NPM reforms, most of the higher positions were filled on the basis of seniority; the merit system did not operate well as a key personnel factor; seniority became the key factor of promotion and pay increases; and there was no particular personnel mechanism to strategically manage top civil servants. The public personnel system had been criticized for the ineffective supply of competent experts to the civil service in the rapidly changing administrative environment of the twenty-first century (Park and Joo 2010).
6. Initially, the SCS was managed by combining the OPS (20 percent), the government-wide job posting system (30 percent), and agency flexibility (50 percent). Since December 2008, the ratio of job posting positions was reduced to 15 percent, and the same ratio was added to agency flexibility. On the perspective of competition, the OPS means competition with the private sector, the job posting system means competition with other government agencies, and agency flexibility means internal competition (Kim and Jung 2010).

7. SL emphasizes the new training methods that are not limited by time and space through the introduction of smartphone-based mobile learning and social network service-based learning.
8. Please look at the documents and explanations provided at the COTI's homepage, <http://eng.coti.go.kr/front/index.jsp>
9. Senior civil servants anticipate that the introduction of SCS will be effective in improving their leadership competencies through systematic training programs, according to a survey conducted in 2007 (Park and Cho 2013); 57.6 percent of the SCS respondents gave positive expectations, while 10.4 percent answered negatively. In another survey with senior civil servants in 2007, 50.5 percent of the respondents answered that it was necessary to have additional training programs for senior civil servants besides the current SEP, and 62.8 percent of the respondents answered that, should they be given the opportunity, they were willing to participate in the SEP (Cho, Jin, and Lee 2008).
10. All the survey items explained here allowed responses on a five-point Likert-type scale (1 = strong disagreement/dissatisfaction, 5 = strong agreement/satisfaction). Thus, a satisfied response means answering "satisfied" or "very satisfied," while a negative response means answering "disagreement" or "strong disagreement."
11. Based on an interview with Mr. Wongu Hong, Office for Government Coordination. August 7, 2013.
12. Based on an interview with Mr. Chulhwi Kim, Prime Minister's Secretariat. August 7, 2013.
13. Based on an interview with Mr. Soondong Bang, COTI. July 29, 2013.

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# Conclusion: Understanding the Reasons for the Differences in Importance, Quantity, and Quality of SCS Training

*Montgomery Van Wart and Annie Hondeghem*

While our study reinforces the importance of carefully planned SCS training, it is essential to remember that training is only one major factor among several that create a high-performing SCS. Training is built on basic and advanced education, as well as well-rounded experience. Training for the SCS is itself based on preparation earlier in the hierarchical careers of administrators, including candidacy training which can occur just before entry to the SCS. Some countries in the study do not have particularly robust SCS training programs, but their SCS is still relatively high-performing because of high levels of education and career experience, giving relatively high homage to civil servants and making recruitment of the best candidates somewhat easier. Yet all societies should seek the best SCS training systems possible, because, *ceteris paribus*, it will tend to create greater dynamism, coherence, responsiveness, and innovation when top quality training systems are in place, prodding administrators to go from good to great (Collins 2001). And when such training is lacking and conditions are less than ideal, it creates a system that cannot correct past weaknesses of SCS leadership, which may be extensive, nor can it provide the guidance necessary to motivate the efficiency, effectiveness, and collaboration that is so much desired today. Indeed, in some of our case studies, better SCS training seemed the best factor to focus on in order to assist leadership to achieve more and improve its performance substantially.

The range of circumstances—antecedents—among the case studies was extensive. The study included countries from eight culture clusters. It included presidential, parliamentary, and blended political systems. Some countries had strong supranational status (e.g., the EU) while others dealt with other international pressures. At the political level, countries were dealing with fiscal stress, whole-of-government coordination, devolution and centralization, and corruption in different ways, with varying levels of success. Some trends that seemed widespread were the increased politicization and porousness of administration and the decreased permanence of the senior-most SCS when they retained positions of great responsibility. In

terms of administrative ideology, all three paradigms were represented across the range of countries to different degrees. Neo-Weberian State tendencies for modernization were felt by all countries, but most countries were much more affected by New Public Management tendencies. A number of countries were struggling with fragmented government issues with some initiatives to join-up government, but this trend has been more muted. While these factors helped explain the context for the challenges and expectations of the SCS, the unique combination of factors present in countries usually defied simple correlations.

### **Summary of SCS Training Programs Including Private Sector Inclusion and Utilization**

The actual set of training opportunities for the SCS varied greatly among the countries, and frequently in the countries themselves. While a few countries, such as France and South Korea, had relatively stable programs for a decade or more, most countries experienced major shifts in delivery and philosophy as the government of the day and circumstances changed. Particularly striking in this regard are smaller countries that are seemingly reinventing their SCS training every few years, Eastern European and African countries struggling with competence concerns of managers, and the UK moving to a radically privatized model. Even in the United States, where SCS training offerings have had relatively stable support, the former flagship program, a three-week residential program called Leadership for a Democratic Society, has become an occasional program and more targeted, shorter programs are taking its place. Thus, capturing concrete trends, even when a snapshot is obtained, is difficult.

The location of training programs for the SCS varies from the prime minister's office itself to being a part of a specialized training unit for the entire civil service (often within the personnel department), to having independent status as at least quasi-private (e.g., Finland and the UK). Proximity of administrative place to the prime minister or president did not seem to assist in the quality or support of SCS training, given the pressure of other pressing topics in high-level offices.

There was great interest to see if in the countries there was a "flagship" program which was relatively substantial in terms of (a) hours and (b) duration. About two-thirds of the countries had had programs within the last couple of years that loosely fit these criteria. However, only about one-third had such programs that were consistently provided over time and targeted the SCS more directly. An example of a particularly robust and consistent program was the Senior Executive Program in South Korea which had been operating since 1993, had included over 1,000 participants, and provided training over 43 weeks. The lesson here is that sustaining substantial

flagship programs for the SCS is difficult for even large countries and that such programs must be reinvented from time to time or decline.

The other way to look at SCS training is as a portfolio of options, including not only a flagship program, but also specialized programs on topics, such as transformation and policy issues, customized training options like personal coaching, exclusive briefings in an executive discussion format, and study tours. Also in the mix was whether or not there were candidacy programs in place to launch the SCS. Using a holistic judgment derived from country experts, about one-third were assessed as substantial in their array of offerings, one-third were moderate, and about one-third were modest.

While senior civil servant training programs may be available, country experts also made judgments about the utilization of such programs. Again, the pattern was split approximately in thirds. Substantial utilization typified Australia, the Netherlands, Romania (because of its legal training mandate), South Korea, Switzerland, and the United States. More moderate utilization included Estonia, because of the limited interest of top executives in the activities and the voluntary nature of them, and the UK, where the SCS training is being downgraded. Modest utilization (of government-sponsored programs) occurs in countries in which SCS training is not a high priority (often for very different reasons), such as Austria, Germany, and South Africa.

Country experts also reported on the degree to which some of the programs were open to other levels of government or even members of the private or nonprofit sectors. Less than a third reported this to be an option, and it did not appear as a particularly important element in any of the country programs studied.

Finally, country experts reported on the utilization of private sector programs that suited the needs of the SCS. Slightly over half reported some or a good deal of utilization of private sector programs. In some cases this was clearly in lieu of government-sponsored programs, but in many cases it was either complementary or supplementary. Table C.1 provides a concrete listing of the trends by country.

## Perceived Importance of SCS Training

Stepping back from the micro-trends, we next asked if the case studies provided a more theoretical perspective on why SCS training was perceived as more or less important in the first place, and what factors seemed to support stronger SCS training regimes in some countries more than others.

SCS training may be *perceived as* more or less important depending on many factors, but eight factors seemed to rise to the top. If there is a sense in the country's political-administrative regime that all systems decay over time, there is more likely an awareness that SCS training is one of a number of factors that keep organizations and systems "well maintained" and vibrant. Another factor is a perception that there is a need to reinvigorate the administrative

Table C.1 Summary of senior civil servant training in select countries

| Location of Central Government programming for SCS training | Examples of a specific program, with flagship status or otherwise  | Flagship SCS training program(s) (if any) is substantial, moderate, or modest <sup>1</sup> or modest <sup>2</sup> options) | Depth of SCS training options is substantial, moderate or modest (including support for access to private sector options) <sup>2</sup> | Central government SCS program includes other government levels and sectors | Well utilized private sector program(s) for SCS |
|---|--|--|--|---|---|
| Australia   | Australian Public Service Commission (Strategic Centre for Leadership, Learning and Development)   | Senior Executive Leadership Program  | Substantial  | Substantial   | No  |
| Austria   | Federal Chancellery  | Special events and executive coaching  | Modest   | Modest  | No  |
| Belgium   | Department of Personnel and Organization and central federal training unit (OFO)   | PUMP, Vitruvius  | moderate   | Substantial   | No  |
| Colombia  | Wallonia: School of Public Administration School of High Government (ESAP) under the Administrative Department of the Civil Service (DACP) | Induction Seminar for Governmental Officials   | Modest   | Modest  | Yes   |
| Denmark   | None   | Forum for Top Executives   | Modest   | Modest  | Yes, inclusive approach is used with forums     |

|          |   |   |             |             |  |  |                  |
|----------|---|---|-------------|-------------|--|--|------------------|
| Estonia  | Secretary of State, Top Civil Service Excellence Center (TCSEC)   | Programs offered on ad hoc basis  | Modest      | Moderate    | Moderate   | No   | Some utilization |
| Finland  | Ministry of Finance via HAUUS   | Managers of the Future ENA Grade A+ program   | Substantial | Moderate    | Substantial                                      | Yes  | Yes              |
| France   | École nationale d'administration (ENA)  |   | Substantial | Substantial | Moderate   | Yes, covers central, local, and territorial government | No               |
|          | Institut national des études territoriales (INET)   |   |             |             |  |  |                  |
|          | Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Santé Publique (EHESP)   |   |             |             |  |  |                  |
| Germany  | Federal Academy for Public Administration (BAKOV) and departmental training academies                                 | Ad hoc and specialized programs only  | –           | Moderate    | Modest   | No   | Yes              |
|          | National University of Public Services (NUPS)   | Civil service exam training for executives and professionals; ÄltereReform Operativ Program currently planned | Substantial | Moderate    | Compulsory for those without law degree          | No   |                  |
| Hungary* |   |   |             |             |  |  |                  |
| Italy*   | Italian National School of Administration (SNA) is an autonomous agency inside the Presidency of Council of Ministers | Compulsory training for middle managers (only ad hoc for senior managers)                                     | Substantial | Modest      | Modest (at senior level)                         | No   | No               |
|          | Namibia*  | Senior Management Development Program   | Substantial | Modest      | Moderate (limited capacity of Executive program) | No   | No               |

(Continued)

Table C.1 Continued

|                 |   |  |                          |             |             |                          |   |
|-----------------|---|--|--------------------------|-------------|-------------|--------------------------|---|
| The Netherlands | The Senior Civil Service Office (Bureau ABD)                              | Civil Service Professionalism program (ABD Ambtelijke Professionaliteit programma) | Substantial              | Substantial | Substantial | Other governments        | No  |
| Romania*        | The National Agency of Civil Servants                                     | Mandatory Professional Training Program Executive Development Programme            | Substantial              | Moderate    | Substantial | No                       | No  |
| South Africa    | Public Administration Leadership and Management Academy (PALAMA)          | Training Program Executive Development Programme                                   | Substantial              | Moderate    | Modest      | No                       | Yes   |
| South Korea     | 2013: National School of Government                                       | Central Officials Training Institute   | Senior Executive Program | Substantial | Substantial | Robust program but small | Some  |
| Switzerland     | Federal Administration Training Centre in the Federal Office of Personnel | Exclusive seminar for executives   | Substantial              | Substantial | Moderate    | No                       | Yes   |
| UK*             | Civil Service Learning (CSL)  | Leading to Inspire and Leading to Transform  | Moderate                 | Moderate    | Moderate    | Yes                      | Government SCS training run by private sector |
| US              | Federal Executive Institute (FEI); Office of Personnel Management         | Leadership for a Democratic Society  | Substantial              | Substantial | Substantial | Yes but rarely utilized  | Yes, numerous university programs, others     |

\* Senior Civil Servant training is currently in a major transition.

system in particular and to sharpen SCS skills, awareness, and motivation or “reprogram” attitudes. A third factor is the perception that SCS skills, awareness, and motivation are perceived as deficient. If there is a perception that there are common gaps in education in technical, management, and leadership competencies among SCS, it increases the importance of SCS training. If there is a perception that high-quality experience is lacking for many in the SCS because of little or no on-the-job practice and ad hoc mentoring, working in a well-coordinated and coherent system, few rotational opportunities in different departments and sectors, it increases the importance of training. The importance is also increased if there are perceived competency gaps due to lack of previous training, as SCS develop through their careers. Still another factor increasing the importance of SCS training is one or more powerful advocates of training and development in the government. A final factor is a perception that government needs to constantly invest in itself over time, and therefore to improve through training and improve training itself. These factors are summarized below in Table C.2 along with the reverse aspects that would decrease the importance of SCS training.

## **Quality and Robustness of SCS Training**

Beyond the factors that encourage investment in SCS training because of its perceived importance or lack thereof, additional factors directly and substantially affect the *quality and robustness* of SCS training by governments. One significant factor, in terms of having government-sponsored programs, is having a critical mass and an ability to train executives in centralized locations. In this regard, larger countries have a slight advantage in having a larger critical mass, although larger land mass can introduce travel challenges. Larger countries are more likely to be able to sustain an ongoing program, while smaller countries often need to provide executive training more episodically. Another factor is the ability and willingness to aggregate when necessary to get sufficient critical mass. In our case studies, this was more often done by meshing middle managers and executives than by integrating different levels of government or different sectors, at least in terms of government-sponsored programs. Of course, when there are more resources available to the central government, agencies and/or individuals for SCS training opportunities, such training will likely be more available and better. Some of the poorer countries reported that SCS training was largely due to international aid, and all country experts reported that fiscal constraints have put pressures to cut costs on individuals and agencies. Another factor is the ability of those in charge of training to address current needs coherently. Or stated in the reverse, to the degree that training managers have other responsibilities that pull them away from a focus on SCS training, have political agendas, or are simply not talented enough themselves to provide programming that is truly excellent for a very discerning audience, the quality will

Table C.2 Importance of SCS training

| Primary Factors Leading to Perceptions of SCS Training Importance |   | Greater importance/need for SCS training  |
|---|---|---|
|   | Less importance/need for SCS training   |   |
| 1   | Lack of awareness that all systems decay over time and that SCS training is one of a number of factors that keep organizations and systems “well maintained” and vibrant. [lack of understanding organizational dynamics]                             | Awareness that all systems decay over time, and that SCS training is one of a number of factors that keep organizations and systems “well maintained” and vibrant.  |
| 2   | The administrative system is perceived to be working well. [leads to neglect problem]   | There is a need to reinvigorate the administrative system and thus to sharpen SCS skills, awareness, and motivation or “re-program” attitudes.  |
| 3   | SCS skills, awareness and motivation are perceived to be high. [leads to neglect problem]   | Gaps in SCS skills, awareness, and motivation are perceived to be deficient.  |
| 4   | Thorough and extensive education in technical, management, and leadership competencies is common among SCS. [ironic, leads to overreliance problem]   | Gaps in education in technical, management, and leadership competencies is common among SCS.  |
| 5   | High-quality experience has been provided via on-the-job practice with quality mentoring, working in a well-coordinated and coherent system, numerous rotational opportunities in different departments and sectors. [leads to over-reliance problem] | Gaps in high-quality experience because of little or no on-the-job practice and ad hoc mentoring, working in a well-coordinated and coherent system, few rotational opportunities in different departments and sectors. |
| 6   | Competency needs are addressed by previous training, e.g., technical, supervisory, management, etc. [may lead to over-reliance problem]   | Competency gaps due to lack of previous training, e.g., technical, supervisory, management, etc., as SCS developed through their careers.   |
| 7   | The governmental system lacks powerful or key advocates of training and development.  | The governmental system has powerful or key advocates of training and development.  |
| 8   | Perception that government is wasting money on training and other developmental activities. [political problem]   | Perception that government needs to constantly invest and improve training.   |

suffer. Quality also tends to increase when the perception of senior servants themselves is that additional training is useful in order to fill gaps, rejuvenate, or change mindsets as government agendas evolve. When the SCS makes time for training, there is more of a training-education culture, and training mandates are perceived to have more credibility. Another factor that increases SCS training quality substantially is the ability to identify both group and individual needs for SCS or enable them to identify and address their needs themselves. Still another factor is the accurate identification of systems needs and a resulting “game plan” for improvement that informs SCS training. Finally, SCS training tends to be of higher quality when there is a perception that government is generally the solution, that government institutions and personnel are valuable resources, and that government executives need to be constantly honed and improved as they are in the private sector. These factors are summarized in Table C.3.

## Making Policy Recommendations to Improve SCS Training

No matter how good current SCS training is, it can always be improved. Indeed, based on our case studies, most countries have enormous room for improvement in terms of articulating more coherent policies, carefully assessing system and individual needs, providing the types of resources necessary for this important leadership group charged with so much responsibility, and monitoring the actual quantitative and qualitative performance of this area. We provide four simple steps for governments and ministers in charge of these affairs to consider:

1. *See what factors are lacking in the perceptions of importance of SCS training, and then articulate the appropriate arguments to enhance perceptions of importance.* Is there a general lack of awareness of SCS training? Has there been a complacency in terms of assuming that SCS skills and support are acceptable? Is there an overreliance on basic and advanced education? Is there an overreliance on training for supervisory and managerial competencies to the detriment of executive competencies? Does SCS training lack a champion?
2. *Analyze the factors detracting from a high-quality system of SCS training in the context of country needs and propose improvements in the most critical factors (and amenable to change).* Does the small critical mass lead to a lack of continuity in training opportunities? Is funding an issue, making cost-effective strategies more important? Is the lack of importance by members of the SCS more of an issue than the costs? Is the training provided without genuine and powerful insight into system and individual needs? Has the loss of trust in government negatively affected investment in programming?
3. *Develop a long-term plan.* A plan can be based on a combination of many elements, such as:

Table C.3 Quality of SCS training factors

| Tends to produce <i>lower-quality</i> SCS training or weak programming |   | Tends to produce <i>higher-quality</i> SCS training or strong programming   |
|--|---|---|
| 1  | Perceived lack of critical mass of SCS.   | Substantial critical mass in terms of numbers and ability to train in centralized locations.  |
| 2  | Lack of aggregation of different levels when critical mass is otherwise lacking.  | Ability and willingness to aggregate when necessary to get sufficient critical mass.  |
| 3  | Fiscal stress leads to insufficient funds for individuals, tendency to ignore SCS competency gaps.  | Resources are made available to central government, agencies, and/or individuals for SCS training opportunities.  |
| 4  | Inability of those in charge of training to address current needs coherently with resources available.  | Ability of those in charge of training to address current needs coherently with resources available.  |
| 5  | Perceptions of SCS that they do not need additional training tends to dry up critical mass for training; SCS might perceive need but be unwilling or unable to participate because of time demands. | Perceptions of SCS that additional training is useful in order to fill gaps, rejuvenate, change mindsets as government agendas evolve, etc.; SCS makes time for training because of training-education culture, necessity for continuation in service, training mandates. |
| 6  | Little ability to concretely identify individual training needs of SCS.   | Ability of the system to identify needs for SCS or enable them to identify and address their needs themselves.  |
| 7  | Lack of analysis of system needs.   | Good identification of system needs and a resulting "game plan" for improvement.  |
| 8  | Perceptions that government is the problem, that government is bloated, and that government needs to be cut leads to SCS training reductions.   | Perceptions that government is the solution, that government institutions and personnel are valuable resources, and that government executives need to be constantly honed and improved as in the private sector.   |

- a. An internal review of programming in the last decade
- b. An expert or ministerial staff report on SCS training, both for candidates and incumbents
- c. A policy study on SCS training by an audit or management agency in government. Such studies ideally identify synergies between whole-government initiatives and SCS training goals
- d. A commissioned think tank or university report
- e. Surveys of the SCS member perceptions and of the civil service in general related to training and leadership

The plan can include a description of SCS training, a review of the recent literature and comparative examples (e.g., from studies such as this), the current status of SCS training, the plan for an improved SCS training program, and action steps for its achievement.

- 4. *Work through public, political, and administrative channels to achieve improvements because of the importance of the resources being targeted, and the importance of what affect they have on the system.* Broader plans may have public relations components and legislative elements. Most plans will inevitably involve administrative changes to current programming to, at a minimum, refine and invigorate training but in most cases, induce significant innovations and expanded service.

In sum, we were relatively heartened by the efforts made in so many different countries to address the needs of the SCS. Having said that, few country experts did not find extensive gaps, severe limitations in resources, holes in the development model, and a general lack of coherence in current training options. We hope that this study is useful in providing a comparative context and a range of applied options to help countries to improve the training of one of their most important assets, the Senior Civil Servant.

## Notes

1. Flagship program is substantial if over 100 contact hours or held over six months. Moderate if 50 to 100 hours or held over three months. Modest if less than 50 hours and conducted in a single series of sessions.
2. Depth of SCS is a holistic judgment based on the number of programs genuinely targeted for senior executives (in service), as well as targeted candidacy programs.
3. Utilization rate is a holistic judgment based on (a) the culture to use the SCS training programs available and (b) the availability or seats in such programs.

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# Index

Aalto Executive Education, Ltd., 179  
administrative careerists, 10  
Administrative Department of the Civil Service (DAFP), 279, 281, 283  
administrative structure. *See* political and administrative structure  
administrative-political integration, 14–15  
administrators, mobility of, 15, 27, 36, 58–9, 67–8, 107, 170, 180–1, 187–8  
African Charter on Values and Principles of Public Service and Administration, 290, 299–300  
African National Congress (ANC), 304, 305–6, 309, 312, 313  
agentification, 12, 293  
*Ahead of the Game*, 31  
American education system, 15, 16  
Anglophone tradition, 26, 133  
Angula, Nahas, 292  
apartheid, 291, 304, 305  
APS Leadership Development Framework, 35  
Argenson, P. H., 242  
assertiveness, 8  
assessment of training, 20, 57, 63–4, 66–7, 68, 108, 109, 176  
    *see also* evaluation  
austerity policies, 125, 223  
Australia, 25–40  
    expectations of senior public service, 27–8  
    leadership, 33–7  
    organizational-administrative culture, 28–30  
    political and administrative structure, 25–30  
    politicians, 29–30  
    public sector reform, 123–6  
    SCS training, 340  
    structure and content of training in, 30–3  
    training content and structure, 129–33  
Australian Public Service Commission (APSC), 29–35, 37  
Austria, 7, 10, 121–36  
    introduction to, 121–2  
    leader expectations in, 125–9  
    organizational-administrative culture, 123–6  
    political structure, 122–3  
    public sector reform, 121–2  
    SCS training, 340  
    Austrian Constitution, 121  
    Austro-Hungarian Empire, 121  
background training, 223–4  
BAKÖV, 189–91, 193–5  
Basic Requirements for the Cadre of the Federal Administration (Switzerland), 221  
behavior-oriented training, 193  
Belgium, 7, 9, 10, 137–52  
    introduction to, 137  
    leader expectations, 142–5  
    organizational-administrative culture, 140–2  
    political structure, 137–40  
    public sector reform, 138–40  
    SCS training, 145–9, 340  
Berry, John, 56–7  
Blair, Tony, 13, 45  
British culture, 41–2, 52  
British education system, 15, 16  
bureaucracy, 12, 28, 128, 154, 157, 164, 183–6, 188, 204, 255–6, 292–3, 323–4  
Cameron, David, 46  
candidacy training, 18  
capability development, in leaders, 35–7  
Capita Selecta, 212  
career paths, 36, 79, 107–8, 196, 204  
careerists, 2, 3–4, 10, 28, 58, 59, 131  
case studies, 19  
Center for Public Service Training (CPST), 294

central government, 2  
 Central Officials Training Institute (COTI), 328–32  
 Central Unit for Public Administration Reform (CUPAR), 104–5  
 centralization, 9  
 change management, 19, 258–60  
 China, 309, 310  
 civil servants  
     categories of, 105–6  
     role expectations of, 13–15  
     training of, 1 (*see also* senior civil servant (SCS) training)  
 Civil Service Act (Finland), 170  
 Civil Service College (CSC), 47, 53  
 Civil Service Consultation with Colleagues program, 210–11  
 Civil Service Learning (CSL), 48–50  
 Civil Service Professionalism program, 210  
 civil society, 323–4  
 collaborative leadership, 19  
 collectivist cultures, 8, 324–5  
 Colombia, 9, 16, 271–87  
     historical context, 271–2  
     introduction to, 271–2  
     leader expectations, 277–8  
     organizational-administrative culture, 274–5  
     political and administrative structure, 272–3  
     public sector reform, 274–5, 283–4  
     SCS training, 275–7, 286–7, 340  
     sociological background, 272–3  
     training content and structure, 278–81  
 colonialism, 291  
 Comisión Nacional del Servicio Civil (CNSC), 271  
 Common Assessment Framework (CAF), 104  
 communist regimes, 90–1, 94, 103–4  
 Comparative Elite Study (CES I), 184  
 competency management, 209–10  
 competency models, 13–14, 77–9, 80, 115, 144, 203, 211–13, 221–2, 308, 326–8  
 competition examination, 96  
 Confucianism, 324  
 consultants, 19, 50, 163  
 continuity, 204  
 contractualization, 258  
 Copenhagen Business School (CBS), 162–3  
 cost of training, 19–20  
 cultural dimensions, 7–9  
 customer service, 12  
 debt brake, 218  
 decentralization, 9, 222–3, 235, 247, 275, 293  
 Deng, Xiaoping, 309  
 Denmark, 9, 153–66  
     historical context, 154–6  
     introduction to, 153–4  
     leader expectations, 157–8  
     organizational-administrative culture, 157–8  
     political structure, 157  
     public sector reform, 155  
     SCS training, 158–64, 341  
     training content and structure, 160–4  
     developmental training, 18  
     devolution, 9, 36, 45, 235  
     digitization, 11, 195  
 École Nationale d'Administration (ÉNA), 16  
 education, 4, 15–18, 90, 129, 158–9, 178, 188, 205–7, 223–4, 241–2  
 efficiency, 12, 13  
 egalitarian generalist model, 16  
 egalitarian legal model, 16–17  
 egalitarian management education, 16  
 egalitarian model of education, 16  
 egalitarianism, 27–8, 41  
 EHESP, 240, 241, 243–5, 248  
 e-learning. *See* online learning  
 elite universities, 188–9  
 elitist legal education, 16  
 elitist management education, 16  
 elitist model of education, 16  
 elitist specialist model, 16  
 emotional intelligence, 298  
 ÉNA, 240, 241, 242–7  
 entrance exams, 241  
 Estonia, 73–88  
     content and methods, 82–3  
     context for SES in, 74–7  
     leader expectations, 77–9

public sector reform, 74–7  
 SCS training, 341  
 ethics, 44, 99, 109, 162, 172, 174, 201, 212, 239  
 ethics legislation, 11  
 ethics training, 11–12, 18, 61  
 European Union, 9, 96, 104, 193, 216, 313  
 evaluation, 83, 116, 179–80, 227, 297–8, 316–17  
 executive coaching, 19  
 Executive Core Qualifications (ECQs), 60–1, 64  
 Executive Development Programme, 315  
 executive training, 207–9, 212, 224–7, 314–16, 328–32  
 experience, 4, 5, 17, 175–6, 223–4  
 experiential learning, 65–6

face-to-face training, 19  
*Fachwissen*, 184  
 fast-track systems, 17  
 Fayol, H., 238  
 Federal Academy for Public Administration (BAKÖV), 189–91, 193–4  
 Federal Chancellery (VAK), 130–1  
 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS), 56  
 Federal Executive Institute (FEI), 61–2, 67  
 Federal Ministry of the Interior (BMI), 191  
 feedback systems, 17  
 Finland, 16, 167–82  
   historical context, 167–8  
   introduction to, 167–8  
   leader expectations, 173–6  
   organizational-administrative culture, 171–3  
   political structure, 168–71  
   public sector reform, 169, 171–3  
   SCS training, 176–80  
   training content and structure, 178–80  
 fiscal reforms, 9  
 fiscal stress, 11, 36, 59, 124, 218, 222–3  
 flagship programs, 338–9  
 Flemish government, 140–1, 143–4, 148

Forum for Top Executive Management, 162  
 frame budgeting, 172  
 France, 10, 15, 16, 235–51, 338  
   entrance exams, 241  
   historical context, 235–8  
   introduction to, 235–6  
   organizational-administrative culture, 238–40  
   political background, 236–8  
   public sector reform, 236–8, 239–40  
   SCS training, 240–51, 341  
   sociological background, 236  
 francophone government, 141–2, 144–5, 148–9  
*Fulton Report*, 44–5, 46  
 future orientation, 8

gender egalitarianism, 8  
 Germany, 7, 10, 16, 183–98  
   Estonia, 341  
   introduction to, 183  
   leader expectations, 187–8  
   ministerial-mandarin relations, 183–7  
   policy making in, 186–7  
   political and administrative structure, 183–7  
   public sector reform, 194–5  
   SCS training, 188–9  
   training content and structure, 192–4  
 Giolitti, Giovanni, 253  
 Gordham, Pravin, 317  
 government  
   digitization of, 11, 195  
   reform (*see* public sector reform)  
   shifting the center of, 9  
   structure, 8–11 (*see also* political and administrative structure)  
 Government of National Unity, 305, 312  
 government services, 1, 2  
   delivery of, 51–2, 204–5  
   evolution of, 4  
*Government Standard Competency Dictionary*, 326–7  
 group-oriented societies, 8

Harvard University, 313  
 HAUS Finnish Institute of Public Management, 177–8, 179, 180

hierarchy, 11, 121, 138, 145, 158, 203, 204

Higher School of Public Administration (ESAP), 279, 281–3

high-performance-oriented cultures, 8

horizontal dispersion of authority, 217

humane orientation, 8

Hungarian Institute of Public Administration (HIPA), 96

Hungary, 9, 89–102

- historical context, 89–91
- leader expectations, 94–5
- organizational-administrative culture, 92–4
- political structure, 91–2
- public sector reform, 91–2
- SCS training, 341
- training content and structure, 95–100

Ibbs Report, 44

Ibero-American Charter of Public Administration, 278

Image III, 184

INET, 240, 241, 243–5, 247

in-group collectivism, 8

institutional collectivism, 8

instrumentalism, 33

insubordination, 298

Integrated Leadership System (ILS), 34–5

integrity training, 10

International Institute of Administrative Science (IIAS), 5

international training, 193

international universities, 162–3

Italian National School of Administration, 262–6

Italy, 9, 252–68

- historical context, 252–8
- introduction to, 252
- leader expectations, 261–2
- political and administrative structure, 258–60
- public sector reform, 254, 258–60, 261–2
- SCS training, 262–8, 341

Jackson, Andrew, 16

joined-up government (JUG), 45

Joint Universities Public Management Education Trust (JUPMET), 312–13

law degrees, 205

Law for the Organization of the Government and Administration (RVOG) (Switzerland), 217

leader expectations, 13–14

- Australia, 36–7
- Austria, 125–9
- Belgium, 142–5
- Colombia, 277–8
- Denmark, 157–8
- Estonia, 77–9
- Finland, 172–6
- Germany, 186–8
- Hungary, 94–5
- Italy, 261–2
- Namibia, 298–300
- Netherlands, 203–5
- South Africa, 310–11
- South Korea, 325–8
- Switzerland, 220–2
- United Kingdom, 49–52
- United States, 60–1

leaders

- capability development in, 36–7
- competencies for, 50–2, 60–1, 77–80, 112, 114, 142–5, 157–8, 187–8, 203, 209–12, 326–8
- experience of, 175–6
- leadership, 3–4, 7–8
- Australia, 33–7
- collaborative, 19
- competencies for, 308
- development programs, 31, 192, 194, 209–10, 220–2, 224–5, 263–4
- emotional intelligence and, 298
- frameworks, 33–5
- professionalization of, 160
- reform, 256
- Romania, 112–15, 116
- styles, 94
- theories, 13
- training, 61–7
- transformational, 19, 298

Leadership for a Democratic Society, 338

Leadership Questions, 220–2

Leading EDGE, 65

learning culture, 69  
 Learning Network, 212  
 Learning Transfer System Inventory (LTSI), 147  
 legal education, 90, 222–3  
 lifelong learning, 131  
 local government, 2, 9, 195

Magary Program, 94  
 management by results (MBR), 172  
 management development, 222–3  
 management education, 16–17  
 managerial model, 28  
 managerialism, 29, 33, 204, 212, 261–2  
 Managers of the Future program, 175, 178  
 Mandatory Specialized Training Programs (MSTP), 109–10, 110  
 market paradigm, 8, 41  
 Master of European Governance and Administration (MEGA), 190  
 master's degree, 17, 163, 178, 190–1, 254, 311  
 Mbeki, Thabo, 314  
 mentoring, 18, 83  
 merit-based system, 2–3, 16, 41, 73, 83, 100, 108, 115, 159–60, 170, 175, 180, 239, 283–4, 321  
 Middle East, 8–9  
 middle management, 4  
 Ministry of Finance, 176–8, 180, 181  
 mobility, of senior executives, 15, 28, 36, 58–9, 67–8, 107, 170–1, 180–1, 187–8  
 modernization, 11–12, 238  
 Moleketi, Fraser, 305  
 Moo-Hyan, Roh, 325  
 Multi-Annual Modernization Program (MMP), 104–5

Namibia, 9, 288–303  
 historical context, 289–91  
 introduction to, 288–91  
 leader expectations, 298–300  
 organizational-administrative culture, 293–4  
 political and administrative structure, 291–3  
 public sector reform, 293–4, 300  
 SCS training, 294–8, 341  
 training content and structure, 294–8

Namibia Institute of Public Administration and Management (NIPAM), 294–8, 301–2  
 National Agency of Civil Servants (NACS), 106, 108–9, 111, 115  
 National Development Plan (NDP) (Colombia), 278–9  
 National Development Plans (NDPs) (Namibia), 290–1  
 National Institute of Administration (NIA), 108–9, 110–11  
 National Plan of Formation and Training for Public Servants (Colombia), 279  
 National Planning Commission (NPC) (Namibia), 292  
 National Qualification Authority (NQA), 297–8  
 National School of Government (NSG), 47–8  
 National Socialist German Worker's Party, 185  
 National University of Public Services (NUPS), 97–100  
 Nazi Germany, 185, 195  
 neoliberalism, 29, 36, 44, 75–6, 239–40  
 neopatrimonial system, 299  
 Neo-Weberian State (NWS), 11–12, 13  
 Belgium, 137–8  
 Germany, 195  
 Hungary, 93–4  
 Italy, 257  
 Namibia, 291–2, 301  
 United Kingdom, 46, 52  
 Netherlands, 7, 10, 199–215  
 administrators structures, 201–2  
 historical context, 199  
 introduction to, 199  
 leader expectations, 203–5  
 organizational-administrative culture, 200–3  
 political structure, 199–200  
 political-administrative relations, 200–2  
 public sector reform, 203, 212–13  
 SCS training, 205–13, 342  
 training content and structure, 205–7  
 Netherlands School of Public Administration, 212  
 network activities, 162, 192

New Accounting Model, 218

New Public Administration Initiative (NPAI), 309, 312

New Public Governance (NPG), 12–13

- Germany, 195
- South Africa, 310
- United Kingdom, 45

New Public Management (NPM), 6, 11, 13, 338

- Australia, 29–30, 33
- Austria, 121, 124–6
- Belgium, 137, 141
- Estonia, 76
- Finland, 171–2
- France, 239–40
- Germany, 195
- Hungary, 93, 96
- Italy, 258
- Namibia, 293–4, 3001
- Netherlands, 199, 212–13
- South Africa, 309
- South Korea, 322, 324–5
- Switzerland, 228
- United Kingdom, 45–6, 53

“night-watchmen” state model, 1

noncareerists, 3–4, 58

Nordic countries, 8

Office of Management and Budget (OMB), 56

Office of Personnel Management (OPM), 18, 56, 59, 61

online learning, 66, 194

on-the-job training, 189, 190, 195

Open Competitive Position Systems, 325

Organic Law on Finance (OBL), 238

organizational-administrative culture, 274–5

- Australia, 29–30
- Austria, 123–6
- Belgium, 140–2
- Denmark, 156–8
- Finland, 171–2
- France, 238–40
- Hungary, 92–4
- Namibia, 293–4
- Netherlands, 200–3
- Romania, 105–6
- South Africa, 309

Switzerland, 217–20

United Kingdom, 44–6

organizational-administrative level, 11–12

Otis Elevator Limited, 313

Otis Workshops, 313

Oxbridge, 16, 43, 189

patrimonial system, 299

patronage, 15, 116

Peace Treaty of Versailles, 290

performance orientation, 8

PHARE project, 95–6

policy advice, 10, 43, 186–7

policy makers, 15

political and administrative structure

- Australia, 25–9
- Austria, 122–3
- Belgium, 137–40
- Colombia, 272–3
- Denmark, 156
- Finland, 168–71
- France, 236–8
- Germany, 183–7
- Hungary, 91–2
- Italy, 258–60
- Namibia, 291–2
- Netherlands, 199–200
- Romania, 103–5
- South Africa, 305–8
- South Korea, 322–5
- United Kingdom, 42–4
- United States, 59–60

political background, 9–11

political freedom, 299

political reforms, 9–10

politicians, 10–11, 241

- Australia, 28–9
- Netherlands, 200–2

postentry training, 207–9

power distance, 8

Presidential Management Fellowship program, 17

private assistants, 192

private sector programs, 339

privatization, 9, 45, 258, 261

professional development, 96–7, 108–9, 110–11, 193

Professional Skills for Government (PSG), 46

promotions, 107–8, 159–60  
 Protestant ethic, 41  
 Public Administration Leadership and Management Academy (PALAMA), 314–16  
 public sector reform  
   Australia, 26, 29–30  
   Austria, 121–2, 123–6  
   Belgium, 138–40  
   Colombia, 274–5, 283–4  
   Denmark, 155  
   Estonia, 75–7  
   Finland, 168, 171–2  
   France, 237–8, 239–40  
   Germany, 194–5  
   Hungary, 92  
   Italy, 254, 258–60, 261–2  
   Namibia, 293–4, 301  
   Netherlands, 203, 212–13  
   Romania, 104–5  
   South Korea, 322, 324–5  
   Switzerland, 217–20, 228  
   United Kingdom, 42, 45–6  
   United States, 59  
 Public Service Act (Australia), 33  
 Public Service Act (Estonia), 73  
 public services, 1, 2  
 public-private partnerships (PPPs), 93  
 PUMP program, 145–6, 147, 150

Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP), 306  
 resource management, 33  
 Romania, 9, 103–18  
   education and training of SCS, 108–12  
   leadership in, 112–15, 116  
   mobility of senior civil servants in, 107  
   organizational-administrative culture, 105–6  
   performance evaluation and promotion, 107–8  
   political structure, 103–5  
   public sector reform, 104–5  
   SCS training, 342  
   stature of civil servants in, 106–7  
   training content and structure, 111–12  
 rotational experiences, 17  
 rule of law, 299

School of Public Leadership (SPL), 296–7  
 Scuola Nazionale dell'Amministrazione (SNA), 262–6  
 seconds, 17  
 senior civil servant (SCS) training  
   assessment of, 20, 66–7  
   Australia, 25–40, 340  
   Austria, 129–33, 340  
   Belgium, 145–9, 340  
   Colombia, 275–7, 278–84, 286–7, 340  
   content and structure of, 30–3, 46–50, 64–6, 82–3, 95–100, 111–12, 129–33, 160–4, 178–80, 192–4, 205–7, 225–6, 263–5, 278–81, 294–8, 314–17, 328–32  
   context and background of, 6–15  
   Denmark, 158–64, 340  
   design of, 18–20  
   differences in, 337–47  
   Estonia, 73–88, 341  
   evaluation of, 83, 116, 179–80, 227, 297–8, 316–17  
   financing of, 19–20, 227  
   Finland, 176–81  
   France, 240–51  
   Germany, 188–96, 341  
   Hungary, 89–102, 341  
   introduction to, 1–20  
   Italy, 262–6, 341  
   Namibia, 294–8, 341  
   Netherlands, 205–13, 342  
   perceived importance of, 342, 344  
   quality and robustness of, 343, 345, 346  
   recommendations for improving, 345, 347  
   Romania, 107–12, 342  
   South Africa, 311–20, 342  
   South Korea, 328–33, 338–9, 342  
   summary of programs, 338–42  
   Switzerland, 223–9, 342  
   United Kingdom, 41–55, 342  
   United States, 56–70, 342  
 senior civil service (SCS)  
   Australia, 25–40  
   Austria, 121–36  
   Belgium, 137–52  
   Denmark, 153–66  
   educational background, 15–17  
   Estonia, 73–88

senior civil service (SCS) – *continued*  
 evaluation of, 179–80  
 expectations of, 27–8  
 Finland, 167–82  
 France, 235–51  
 functions and responsibilities of, 1–2,  
   112–15  
 Germany, 183–98  
 Hungary, 89–102  
 importance of, 20  
 Italy, 252–68  
 members of, 2–4  
 Namibia, 288–303  
 Netherlands, 199–215  
 permanence of, 10, 12  
 politicians and, 10–11, 28  
 role expectations of, 13–15, 43  
 Romania, 103–18  
 South Africa, 304–20  
 South Korea, 321–36  
 study of, 4–6  
 Switzerland, 216–32  
 United Kingdom, 41–55  
 United States, 56–70

Senior Civil Service Candidates  
 program, 211

Senior Civil Service Office, 211–12, 213

Senior Executive Leadership Capability  
 Framework (SELC), 34–5

Senior Executive Program (SEP), 328–32,  
 338–9

Senior Executive Service (SES), 57–9

Senior Executive Service Candidate  
 Development Programs (SESCDPs),  
 62–3

Senior Management Development  
 Program (SMDP), 296

Senior Management Service (SMS), 308

service delivery, 51, 204–5

Sitra, 179

social partnership, 122

society  
 cultural dimensions, 7–9  
 evolution of, 4, 7  
 values of, 7–8

sociological background, 272–3

South Africa, 9, 304–20  
 historical context, 304–8  
 introduction to, 304–5  
 leader expectations, 310–11

organizational-administrative culture,  
 309

SCS training, 311–20, 342

sociopolitical context, 305–8

training content and structure,  
 314–17

South African Management  
 Development Institute (SAMDI),  
 312, 313–14

South Korea, 10, 321–36, 338  
 historical context, 321–2  
 introduction to, 321–2  
 leader expectations, 326–8  
 ministerial-mandarin relations, 323–4  
 political and administrative structure,  
 322–5  
 public sector reform, 322, 324–5

SCS training, 328–33, 338–9, 342  
 training content and structure,  
 328–32

South West African People's  
 Organisation (SWAPO), 290, 291,  
 293

specialist education, 16

specialist-generalist education, 15

Speyer University, 190

state-led capitalism, 309

state-owned enterprises, 217, 224

Strategic Centre for Leadership,  
 Learning, and Development, 32

Strategy for Continuous Training of  
 Civil Servants, 109

structural background, 9–11

submissiveness, 298

Sunset Clause, 305

supranational status, 9

Sweden, 167

Switzerland, 216–32  
 historical context, 216–17  
 introduction to, 216–17  
 leader expectations, 220–2  
 organizational model, 254–5  
 organizational-administrative culture,  
 217–20  
 public sector reform, 217–20, 228–9

SCS training, 223–9, 342  
 training content and structure, 225–6

teaching strategies, 19, 64–6, 145–9,  
 178–80

Thatcher, Margaret, 6, 43  
top management group (TMG), 202  
trainers, source of, 19  
training  
    background, 223–4  
    candidacy, 18  
    developmental, 18  
    ethics, 11–12, 18, 61  
    executive, 212, 224–5, 225–6, 314–15, 328–32  
    face-to-face, 19  
    integrity, 10  
    international, 193  
    on-the-job, 188, 190, 195  
    postentry, 207–9  
    *see also* senior civil servant (SCS)  
        training  
transformational leadership, 19, 298

uncertainty avoidance, 8  
unitary states, 9, 195  
United Kingdom, 6, 9, 41–55  
    content and structure of training, 46–50  
    culture of, 41–2  
    leader expectations, 50–2  
    organizational-administrative culture, 44–6  
    political structure, 42–4  
    SCS training, 342  
United States, 16, 56–70

content and methods, 64–6  
context for SES in, 57–9  
future developments in, 67–8  
leadership expectations, 60–1  
political and administrative culture, 59–60  
scandals, 57  
SCS training, 61–7, 342  
Universidad de Antioquia, 281–2  
Universidad de los Andes, 281  
Universidad Icesi, 281  
universities, 16, 17, 27, 163, 205, 241, 281–2, 286–7, 296–7, 308  
university faculty, 19  
University of Stellenbosch, 296–7, 301

vertical dispersion of authority, 216–17  
Vitruvius, 146–7  
Voluntary Severance Packages (VSP), 307

Walloon government, 141–2, 144–5, 148–9  
web-based learning, 19  
Weber, Max, 183–4, 186, 291–2, 299  
whole-of-government initiatives, 9–10  
Wilson, Harold, 44  
Wilson, Woodrow, 183–4, 291–2  
Winelands Conference, 312–13

Zients, Jeffrey, 56