

Report Study Group IX on Civil Service and Politics

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Executive governments are faced with increasing societal and political pressures. Such pressures may derive from, amongst other factors, increased electoral volatility and polarization, changes in mass media and communications, increased freedom of information and government transparency, and the internationalization of policy challenges. Presidents, prime-ministers and cabinets have found and indeed used different responses to such pressures, many of which include either attempts to delegate responsibility outward (such as privatization, agencification, decentralization, Europeanization), and/or attempts to increase grip on their sphere of responsibility (such as performance management, audits, politicization, increased media management). Each of these responses may have substantial consequences for the interaction between politicians in government and their civil servants, and for the positioning of civil servants vis-à-vis their political superiors.

During the Rio conference, the study group addressed the following themes:

- The Senior Civil Service: Maintaining Quality in a Turbulent Environment
- Civil Service Politicization
- External Policy Advice and the Civil Service
- Representation, Trust and Bureaucracy

From Monday June 22 through Wednesday June 24, one practice-oriented panel took place and 8 papers were presented and discussed. The practice-oriented panel's theme was "The Senior Civil Service: Maintaining Quality in a Turbulent Environment". The panelists were **Mr. Paul Fietz**, Head of the Central Staff at the German Federal Ministry of Home Affairs (BMI) and Chair of the Council of the German Federal Academy of Public Administration; **Prof.dr. Frits van der Meer**, CAOP professor in Comparative public sector and civil service reform and working at the Leiden University Institute of Public Administration; and **Prof.dr. Gavin Drewry**, Emeritus Professor at the Royal Holloway University of London Department of Politics and International Relations. Mr. Fietz and prof. Drewry gave their accounts of present developments in the senior civil service in Germany and the UK respectively, and prof. Van der Meer approached the challenges and issues from a broad comparative perspective.

The remainder of the panel sessions were used to present and discuss the academic papers. Below you find the summaries of the papers that were presented.

- **Paper 1:** *Internal Advisory Systems in Different Political-Administrative Regimes Exploring the Fit of Configuration, Administration and Composition of Internal Advisory Systems in France, Germany, Sweden, The Netherlands and The United*

Kingdom by Daphne Bressers, Martin Schulz, Martijn van der Steen and Mark van Twist, The Netherlands School of Public Administration.

Every country has an internal advisory system that fits the specific country's needs. Internal advisory systems therefore differ not only to the content of their advice, but also to the institutional setup of the system itself. In this paper we present and discuss an intensive desk study in which we explore the fit of institutional elements of internal advisory systems of France, Germany, The Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom with the political-administrative regimes in which these internal systems are setup in. Based on empirical findings and existing academic literature (e.g. Halligan, 1995; Craft & Howlett, 1995; Fleischer, 2012) we identified institutional elements of advisory systems setups that show differences between these systems: configuration, administration and composition. In this paper we discuss that each country's internal advisory system fits into the specific administrative-advisory system. We also find that though the institutional setup of the internal system is different the underlying issues dealt with are the same. One is the attempt by governments to regulate internal advisory systems while at the same time emphasizing the independence of the advisory bodies within that internal system. The other is the apparent necessity to incorporate facts and knowledge into the decision making process while at the same time incorporating value and opinions strengthening the legitimacy of the policy. Different countries cope with these struggles differently resulting in different setups of internal administrative regimes.

- **Paper 2:** *Technical Advice or Political Recommendation: Re-Examining the Role of "Councils" in Japanese Government Decision-Making* by Hiroko Kudo, Bocconi University.

"Shingikai" or "policy council" has been powerful instrument of Japanese government since Eighties, although the form was introduced with the 1948 National Public Administration Organizational Law. Ministries can institute a panel of experts from academia, business, and social sector, or representatives of various interests to discuss policies, strategies, or design of laws. Its impact is significant in terms of policy-making as well as enactment and/or amendment of laws and orders. The government has widely reviewed its institutional settings, role and function in 2001, along with the reorganisation of Ministries and Agencies, but also because of long-lasting critics that these institutions are not neutral but politically biased. The paper analyses cases of these councils through: missions; institutional design; background and competencies of the components; relationship among the Minister, the secretariat and the council members; and their overall impact on policy- and law-making to understand the real role of these entities.

- **Paper 3:** *External Policy Advice in The Netherlands : Searching for Substance?* by Caspar van den Berg, Leiden University

The literature on policy advisory systems has experienced a revival in recent years but its empirical focus has mainly been directed to the group of Anglophone countries (Craft and Halligan 2015). This paper applies the policy advisory systems approach to The Netherlands, as an example of a broader group of consensus-driven, neo-corporatist policy making systems (Lijphart 1999). Using a historical-institutionalist perspective, it diachronically examines the dynamics of the Dutch

policy advisory system from the mid-1960s to the present day. Based on original cross-time survey data and analysis of secondary sources, it examines the impact of depillarization (mid-1960s – mid-1990s), new public management (mid-1980s onwards) and the increased pressure on the executive on the advisory policy system (late 1990s onwards). It finds fragmentation, externalization, and a non-partisan brand of politicization, in which the use of the institutionalized system of permanent advisory councils has lost part of its significance in favour of both external consultants and of ad-hoc advisory committees. It concludes that for the Dutch case, its accumulative institutional design based on Weberianism, neo-corporatism and new public management elements, account for a marked different dynamic than has been documented for the Anglophone group of countries.

- **Paper 4:** *Values in Civil Service Training and Education*, Toon Kerkhoff, Leiden University.

In Europe and elsewhere, we find debate on the values associated with a competent and legitimate civil service. At stake is which values are – or should be – associated with ‘good’ civil servants in the light of changes and challenges of recent times, such as increased citizen participation, politicization or multi-level governance. What seems to be needed are renewed or reemphasized ethical foundations for the civil service of the 21st century. To clarify and further this debate I aim to investigate the values associated with the ‘good’ civil servant in past and present. To do so, I aim to focus on the manifestation of values in civil service training and education programs over time in various national European contexts. With a comparative historical design I aim to look at training and education for national civil servants in the Netherlands, England, France and Germany since the early 19th century to assess change, continuity, differences and similarities regarding the notion of the ‘good’ civil servant. In this working paper for IIAS, I outline the main elements of this proposed research.

- **Paper 5:** *Decentralization of Basic Education in Egypt: A Political Decision with Potential*, by Laila El-Baradei, American University, Cairo.

The quality of basic education in Egypt is suffering. Despite repeated reform efforts, there are very serious embedded shortcomings, including a high degree of centralization. Starting the early 2000s, the Government of Egypt, due to a myriad of pressures mainly from international development agencies, decided to proceed with decentralizing public basic education. Although the decision was mostly political and incentivized by the in-pouring of donors’ assistance, the study perceives that decentralization may have promising results on the long run. Through a meta-analysis of empirical studies dealing with international experiences of education decentralization, and through a stakeholders’ analysis of main influential parties to the decentralization decision in Egypt, the study makes a case for decentralization of basic education in Egypt and identifies a number of prerequisites for effective implementation including: capacity building for administrators, teachers’ training, orientation to parents, genuine authority to school boards and continued government support to disadvantaged communities.

- **Paper 6:** *MLG and the Enabling State in the Netherlands: Implications for Political-Administrative and Societal Relations at the Local Level*, by Frits van der Meer and Gerrit Dijkstra, Leiden University

Relations between political officials and civil servants have been at the core of the field of public administration from the start. 1 Defending or attacking (as has become more usual) the political –administration dichotomy has been on the founding stone of this field. Interesting enough the discussions of this relationship between two groups of vital actors have been dealt with rather separately from the connection to citizens as a group of vital actors in the public domain. This paper will examine the implications of the rise of the enabling state in connection with the changing MLG system in the Netherlands for the role and position of political officeholders and civil servants concentrating on the local level. That emphasis on the local level is to be explained by an increasing emphasis on local public service delivery to citizens as the core in the depillarized MLG system. Secondly from an academic point of view attention for these relationships on the local level has been rather limited. This limited attention relates both to more traditional relationship between local political officeholders and civil servants as with respect the triangular relationship. Core questions thus are: what are the implications for the first kind relations and the triangular relations vis-a-vis the citizens? Concentrating on the Netherlands we also make some outsteps to surrounding countries in order to put the Dutch situation in perspective. This paper has to be seen as preliminary inquiry and as the starting point for further empirical research given the knowledge gap mentioned above.

- **Paper 7:** *Government Control on Socio-Economic Advisory Councils: How Governments Control Socio-Economic Advisory Councils through Design Choices in Institutional Setup in France, Ireland, The Netherlands and Spain*, by Daphne Bressers, Martin Schulz, Martijn van der Steen and Mark van Twist, The Netherlands School of Public Administration

The increasing complexity of the policy environment increases the demand for policy advice. Government is confronted with policy issues that have no clear cut solutions and require knowledge from multiple disciplines. The advisory system providing advice to government has consequently expended , with advice originating from both within the bureaucratic system and beyond (Halligan, 1995). In this paper we build on Halligan (1995) to further conceptualize the aspect of ‘government control’ in advisory systems. We answer the following question: how do institutional design options influence the degree of government control on socio-economic councils in the Netherlands, Ireland, France and Spain? In order to answer this question we first identify six institutional design options that influence the degree of government control. Then, we analyze the choices governments in The Netherlands, Ireland, France and Spain made regarding these institutional designs for the socio-economic councils in the respective countries.

- **Paper 8:** *Patterns of Politicization in 14 Democracies*, by Caspar van den Berg, Leiden University

One of the often-cited determinants of state legitimacy and overall government performance is the interface between politicians and bureaucrats, in other words: the balance between (a) political control over the bureaucracy to ensure

democratically accountable governance, and (b) the insulation from political intervention in administrative business to ensure quality and effectiveness. While increasing politicization, i.e. the existence of political elements in otherwise apolitical government bureaucracies is often reported as a general trend, our empirical knowledge as to the causes and consequences of this phenomenon is patchy and contradictory. This project answers the question under what circumstances politicization is more likely to occur than others and what impact politicization has on government legitimacy and performance, by investigating four policy sectors in 14 OECD countries in Europe, North America and East Asia. The findings shed empirical light on the sources, incentives and impediments of civil service politicization, and its harm or benefits to 'good governance'. This knowledge fills an important gap in the body of knowledge of Public Administration and Political Science, and will provide the policy community with better-informed avenues to respond to decreasing trust in government and decreasing policy effectiveness.