

Handbook of Civil Service in Europe - Chapter II, 6, b

Civil Service in transition – The ongoing transformation of administrative culture

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Civil Service in transition – The ongoing transformation of administrative culture

1. Administrative culture

Administrative culture is the amalgamation of “the values, convictions, attitudes and patterns of behavior which are characteristic of a given administrative system” (Sommermann 2013, 5). Organizational cultures emerge from a learning process that occurs in social of problem solving on the group level (e.g., an administrative unit). This process entails the integration of new group members and the evolution of the group as a whole to adapt to challenges posited by the external environment. New group members are taught that there is a specific and correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to these problems (Schein 2010). This socio-cognitive and idiosyncratic process of passing on basic assumptions, values, and norms to new group members is called socialization and it creates the foundation of administrative culture (van Maanen and Schein 1979). Consequently, *administrative cultures* characterize a distinctive type of institution that at its most basic level concerns the general characteristics of public agents (i.e., their shared values, attitudes, beliefs) on federal, state, and local levels (Henderson 2004). Understanding the emergence and change of administrative cultures is essential to understand variations regarding the effectiveness of public administration over time and to identify future directions for reform because “administrative culture is produced by a combination of historical, structural, and contemporaneous political factors that shape not only internal rules and customs, but also the predisposition to reform” (Anechiarico 1998, 17).

In this chapter, which builds upon earlier work by Ritz and Thom (2019) and Ritz (2019), we equate *public administration* with the *civil service* – i.e., the corpus of individual and corporate agents engaged with providing civil services to citizens and relevant stakeholders within the institutional context of public bureaucracies. This means we understand the civil service as the broad governmental domain occupied by public institutions

charged with administration on the federal, state, and municipal level but we purposefully exclude organizations that are not core-administration, such as public enterprises, educational institutions, and public organizations that provide healthcare (Fletcher et al. 2020). With this perspective, we follow the so-called core perspective on *publicness*, which recognizes that the public organizations differ from non-public organizations regarding essential principles and logics, e.g., their value frames, objectives, management styles, the personnel they attract, and their institutional logics (Pesch 2008; Weißmüller 2019, 8; Nabatchi 2018). Since individuals operate within the limits of these distinct logics, they translate and shape a distinct *administrative culture* that differs compared with the organizational cultures prevalent in for-profit organizations.

Comparing the emergence and change of administrative culture across temporal and special boundaries of different jurisdictions can help explain divergence and variety in policy outcomes but also leads to a more nuanced understanding of how different administrative cultures create a dissimilar civil service workforce by dynamic processes of employee attraction, selection, and attrition (MacCarthaigh and Saarniit 2019; Seidemann and Weißmüller 2022; Ritz and Thom 2019). Following this functionalist perspective (Schedler and Proeller 2007), understanding the emergence and change of administrative culture can help solve practical challenges of public management and public administration performance outcomes because civil service reforms, essentially, rely on cultural change (MacCarthaigh and Saarniit 2019)

To understand potential for change, administrative culture must be understood holistically. While administrative culture has been compared to “the ‘software’ that infuses the ‘hardware’ of legal, organizational, economic, financial, and sociological aspects of an administrative systems” (MacCarthaigh and Saarniit 2019, 2), we argue that both components are undetachable from each other without both losing essential meaning because administrative culture entails both tangible and intangible principles that cannot be detached

from the politico-social regimes or organizational logics. For instance, tangible principles may be codified into laws and regulations that define employment regimes to define the relationship between the individuals working in civil service organizations and the state, but this tangible ‘hard’ fact will affect individuals’ behavior within these employment regimes and eventually feed back into the ‘soft’ factors of administrative culture through processes of social learning. Intangible principles concern implicit givens, such as norms of behaviors, narratives, and patterns that frame administrative behavior, e.g., the implicit paradigms, which determine the adequacy of behavior in administrative context, or idiosyncratic values and motives that govern behavior and are internalized by new organizational members by social learning (Weißmüller et al. 2021; Simon 1947/1997; Schachter 2002).

2. Administrative culture codified: Archetypes of public personnel systems

Administrative cultures develop over time. Their dynamic property originates from public administrations’ obligation to respond to societal changes, technological innovation, and political and stakeholders’ demands in order to remain effective and legitimate (Schachter 2002). Consequently, administrative cultures directly translate into public management arrangements (Schedler and Proeller 2007), which is particularly salient in public personnel systems.

Public personnel systems are the ‘hard’ properties of administrative cultures and fulfill central tasks in society. They function as the rule-of-law framework for the employment of private individuals by state institutions by defining the mutual rights and obligations between the state and these private individuals. Hereby, public personnel systems warrant the implementation of fundamental public values enshrined in the professional ethos of the civil service. Consequently, they also influence citizens’ trust in public institutions and their perceived legitimacy to a considerable degree (Ritz 2019). Over time, two distinct archetypes of public personnel systems evolved – the career-based system and the position-based system – both of which are characterized in the following two sections (2.1 and 2.2) because they

mark the two starting points from which we argue a new common European culture will converge, which will incorporate both archetypes' characteristics.

While the personnel systems in public organizations have many characteristics, they are commonly described by either quantitative or qualitative aspects. Quantitatively, the civil service workforce is typically presented as the relative share of employees working in civil service compared with the total number of national employment (e.g., in 2019: the Netherlands 12%, Germany 11%, Switzerland 10% vs. Denmark 28%, Norway 31%, Sweden 29%; OECD 2021) or in relation to the different levels of public government (e.g., central level of government in 2019: Belgium 14%, Germany 11%, Switzerland 7% vs. Greece 77%, Ireland 91%, Turkey 93%; OECD 2021). As illustrated, these numbers vary considerably across European countries and beyond, which highlights the relevance of the civil service and the impact of the diverse administrative traditions associated with each jurisdiction (OECD 2021).

Public personnel systems define the ratio of (tenured) civil servants vis-à-vis temporally employed staff, effectively marking the flexibility, accessibility, attractiveness of, and power dynamics within each respective jurisdictions' personnel system. Different personnel systems can hence lead to stark structural differences even among close neighboring countries: For instance, while the share of civil servants – i.e., employees with lifetime tenure and guaranteed career-based employment – amounts to approximately 57.4% in Austria and 38.2% in Germany in 2022, respectively, the Swiss administrative tradition has embraced public sector reforms more openly and, today, does not offer positions as civil servants in the strict sense anymore (Öffentlicher Dienst Österreich 2022; DBB 2022).

Qualitatively, civil service personnel systems are strongly influenced by their respective jurisdictions' institutional framework, particularly with regard to the degree of the flexibility of employment conditions and the accessibility of the workforce across sectoral boundaries. These factors are the result of specific personnel practices regarding personnel

attraction and recruitment (Weske et al. 2020), the processes of personnel motivation and promotion (Ritz et al. 2017), and relate to specific characteristics of the personnel systems. Over time, associated differences resulted in dissimilar types of civil service cultures, which lead to two archetypes of personnel systems in relation to the different roles attributed to the state as an employer in European welfare in the aftermath of the Second World War (Demmke et al. 2007; OECD 2021).

2.1. Career-based systems

Career-based public personnel systems are based on a unilateral and authoritarian relationship between the state and the employee. The employee (i.e., the civil servant) is obliged to serve the state and the interests of society neutrally and free from the pursuit of their particular individual, self-serving interests. The employment relationship relies on a design enacted unilaterally by the state, offering only very limited rights of co-determination with regard to the specific design of this relationship. This stands in contrast to private employment law and regulations, which are based on bilateral individual or collective employment contracts between the employer (e.g., a state agency) and the individual employee or collective agents representing parts of the (prospective) workforce, e.g., collective bargaining parties or unions.

Civil servants bear the central responsibility of executing functions of authority functions on behalf of the state. To warrant the neutral and selfless execution of these tasks, civil servants are supposed to be attracted by and adhere to public values and must be trustworthy (Ritz et al. 2022). Consequently, their employment relationship is fundamentally based on the principles of loyalty, trust, and stability, which also explains why career-based systems are typically long-term oriented, providing predictable and structured employment relationship that stretches from initial job training until retirement.

Since this archetype is based on a special service and loyalty relationship anchored in

public rather than private law, the employment relationships created within a career-based system are characterized by particular substantive and procedural aspects, which include a high degree of formality and tend toward rather hierarchical, centralist decision-making structures. For the employee, these aspects include duties, such as the duty to serve, the duty to comply with rules and instructions, and the duty of diligence, but also privileges and securities, such as entitlement to a wage increase, wage bonuses and privileges, professional training, and protection against dismissal (i.e., tenure).

As a result, the configuration of these duties and rights creates closed career-based employments systems, which are characterized by lifelong careers, distinctive hiring criteria and procedures, comparatively generous retirement regulations, and promotion and salary increase practices tied to the seniority principle, which are only partially combined with performance-based merit assessment. Given the high degree of job training specialization, long-term orientation, and the gravity of civil service duties (sometimes sworn in by oath), career-based personnel systems lead to a civil service with only little permeability between the public and private sector workforce, a uniform civil servant ethos, and an emphasis on the rule of law and public value. Often, the formalized and secure employment status also results in an elevated social status for civil servants in career-based systems.

2.2. Position-based systems

The second archetype of civil service employment systems is position-based, which means that – in contrast to the career-based system described in the previous section – talents are not sourced for a lifelong career but apply for a specific job. This employment system does not differentiate between public and private law regarding the fundamental legal basis of the employment relationship, neither regarding the content nor regarding the procedures associated. Consequently, position-based systems are designed to be permeable and open for inter-sectoral transfer of personnel and expertise, allowing for each new position to be filled

competitively. This system allows performance-based appraisal and promotion procedures while the focus on public values is less pronounced. Furthermore, this system recognizes the advantages of sourcing diverse qualifications, of encouraging employee mobility, and of embracing the motivational aspects of achievement-based gratification to encourage efficiency and effectiveness. Despite the common legal basis, public and private sector employment relationships still differ because, in many cases, public organizations strive to design their employment relationships and conditions as to set good examples for the private sector. As a result, employment conditions, such as job security, working time regulations, social security and retirement pay conditions, and the relationships with the social and welfare partners and unions, are often generously compared with private sector conditions.

Career-based systems are more status-oriented and – due to their lifelong tenure – shape administrative culture through their high degree of stable consistency, diligence, and long-term planning. In contrast, position-based systems foster the exchange of ideas and innovation because personnel fluctuation and change across organizational and sectoral boundaries is much more common. Corresponding to the distribution of the rule of law tradition, the continental European civil services of Germany, France, Austria, and Belgium can be characterized as career-based personnel systems, while the Anglo-Saxon countries (Great Britain, and Malta) but also North European countries (e.g., the Netherlands, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, and Sweden) and Switzerland use position-based systems.

3. Prior waves of cultural change: Civil service in transition

Civil service in Europe has undergone significant changes in recent decades, which led to a reduction of civil servants compared with public employees. During the 1970s and 1980s, personnel management in the private sector evolved into human resources management, a field which integrated insights of psychology and sociology in addition to business management knowledge. In contrast, personnel management in the public sector

was still (and has been for a long time) dominated by the scholarly perspective of legal sciences, which focuses on the employment-related status of personnel (e.g., the German “Personalstandswesen”), concentrating on the exact classification of personnel in rigid and structured systems, long-term employment, and control of dutiful task performance.

However, these formerly stark differences between the public and private sector perspectives on personnel management decreased in recent years due to the advent of strategic personnel management on the general management level of administration paired with higher degrees of discretion on the operational and procedural levels of personnel management within the separate branches, institutions, and organizations of civil service. Calling into question formally central characteristic aspects of civil service personnel systems, this transition led to several waves of reform and kick-started the ongoing transformation of administrative culture in Europe, illustrating Anechiarico’s (1998, 29) conclusion that “[a]dministrative culture is both the sum of historical and political factors and an indicator of the contemporary interaction of political [and societal] forces.”

3.1. Transformations linked with New Public Management

The growing relevance of strategic personnel management in public administration relates to major social and economic changes that raised the need for systematic change. Despite important international and contextual differences, most jurisdictions faced similar pressures regarding public personnel management in the last decades. During the 1990s, advocates of New Public Management (NPM) promoted changing administrative cultures by the adaptation of competition and efficiency criteria typical for private sector management styles into public personnel management to stimulate civil servants’ motivation and performance (e.g., through pay-for-performance) and to increase HR managers’ flexibility in hiring, promoting, and dismissing employees by decentralizing the decision-making processes from central administration to local agencies (Kellough 2017; Sommermann

2013). After years of continuous reform, particularly in classic Weberian bureaucracies, which shifted from traditional jurisperit HR administration toward modernized and strategic HR management, NPM was challenged on its unintended side effects on civil services by the introduction of New Public Governance (NPG). The NPG principles emphasized the role of public service motivation and personnel integrity (Ritz et al. 2016) in public personnel management and emphasizes the interdependency of organizations and agents and collective co-production to provide civil services and create public value (Boruvka and Perry 2020). This evolution of public motivational practices led to a shift from the red tape-ridden and rule-abiding bureaucrat toward a public manager motivated to contribute to the prosocial benefit of citizens and society creatively and interactively.

However, the NPM and NPG-related reforms have to be understood in their wider context since they are the consequential outcome of fundamental societal and cultural changes. Today, European societies are less hierarchical and social differences are more centrally and more critically discussed, resulting in a decline of the status of sovereign authority and a shift in the relationship between the state, civil service employees, businesses, and society. At the same time, demographic changes exacerbated labor market competition between public and private sector organizations, so that public employers realized the need to offer their staff modern working conditions and benefits. Only attractive conditions will help buffer the future quantitative and qualitative workforce shortages (Ritz et al. 2022), and public HR managers need to recognize the dynamic social and economic developments that promote work and workforce diversity and mobility of various kinds (e.g., temporal, geographical, cultural, or functional) and demand new competences in an increasingly digitalized work environment.

3.2. Transformations linked with fiscal austerity & crises

The long-term public sector reform processes initiated in the 1990s accelerated in the

wake of the global financial crisis in 2007/2008 (Bach and Bordogna 2013). This crisis led to global reform initiatives supported by international organizations, e.g., the European Union (EU), the European Central Bank (ECB), and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Furthermore, the challenges related to aggravated national fiscal austerity resulted in dramatic cuts in public employment job security and salaries in many countries, e.g., Greece, Spain, and Italy, disrupting traditional and long-established patterns of civil service. In these times of crisis, societal demand and political pressure to implement strict spending cuts has become a driving force of modernization in European civil services. Yet, the stressor of financial austerity has not resulted in a total convergence of public and private sector employment regimes and practices. Civil service has not eroded – as some experts had predicted – but has kept distinctive features over the past decades (Raadschelders et al. 2015). On the contrary, many jurisdictions have proceeded in expanding on the unilateral principles of civil service as a sovereign and loyalty-based employment relationship, pushing toward more pronounced centralized decision making with less peripheral discretion. These steps were necessary to implement the necessary harmonization between public and private sector labor regulations in some jurisdictions that needed to streamline and reduce their public workforce quickly and uniformly as a form of ad hoc crisis governance – without eliminating system-specific differences entirely. Moreover, the relevance and power of the social partners vis-à-vis the state diminished during this period because modernizing reforms were pushed forward by state agents themselves, rather than leaving initiatives to market forces (Bach and Bordogna 2013).

While the austerity related to the financial crisis has had similar effects across all countries and regions, the specific type and severity of reform measures implemented in each jurisdiction was contingent upon the status quo of their respective civil service systems (Lodge and Hood 2012). Particularly, system-specific differences in public governance and personnel management principles and logics had a large impact on the degree to which the

following typical reform measures were implemented to modernize the civil service personnel systems in recent years (Lodge and Hood 2012; Brewer and Kellough 2016; Bach and Bordogna 2013; Demmke and Moilanen 2010; van der Meer et al. 2015; Læg Reid and Wise 2015):

Hiring freezes and workforce downsizing: In the aftermath of the 2007/2008 financial crisis but also due to the unprecedented disruptions caused by the global Covid-19 pandemic, many European countries imposed far-reaching hiring freezes (e.g., Austria, France, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Portugal and Spain) and planned downsizing measures to reduce their civil service workforce (e.g., by 23% in the U.K.'s central civil service, 20% in Greece, 15% in the Netherlands, 12% in Ireland, 6% in Germany), although not all planned downsizing targets were fully implemented.

Pay cuts and suspension of wage raises: In the wake of the financial crisis, many jurisdictions stopped wage raises (e.g., Great Britain, France, Spain, Italy, Luxembourg) or implemented pay cuts some of which were complemented by (partially) drastic pension cuts (e.g., by 25% in Romania, 15% in Greece, 15% in Ireland, 10% in Bulgaria, 5% in Spain, 2.5% in Germany).

Decentralization and individualization: Following calls for reform by NPM, many jurisdictions redirected the power to determine employment conditions from centralized to decentralized units of civil service, increasing the discretion and decision-making authority of direct superiors. However, some of these decentralization measures put additional strain on HR management (Demmke 2020) and were temporally or partially revoked in the aftermath of the crises, reverting back to more centralization in strategic HR planning.

Approximation to employment conditions under private law: Similar to the pragmatization freeze in Austria, many jurisdictions reformed the special legal position of civil servants and their associated duties and privileges, either reducing the extent of these special

employment conditions or eliminating the legal status of civil servant positions entirely, replacing civil servants with contractually employed personnel. In addition to the reduction of civil servant positions and privileges, protection against dismissal and principles of unconditional long-term tenure were relaxed by cutting the red tape-ridden and often complicated HR processes of promotion and dismissal. This step of reform resulted in leaner procedures but also often severely reduced the previously guaranteed benefits associated with civil service employment, e.g., reducing the state's care obligations and tenure, reducing the duration and amount of severance payments, pensions, and other social security contributions.

Increasing efficiency with performance-related salary components: Many jurisdictions introduced performance-related salary components to increase the efficiency of administrative action and to facilitate outcome monitoring and control. This reform instrument, however, is limited as in many essential civil service tasks performance assessments are hard to quantify consistently enough so that the pay-for-performance component is only small and, consequently, can only function as a limited motivational incentive. However, meta-analytic research by Weibel et al. (2010) illustrates that pay-for-performance in civil service may come with hidden costs; its effect is task dependent, i.e., increasing performance for uninteresting tasks and reducing performance for interesting tasks, which creates a motivational dilemma, particularly for intrinsically motivated staff. Furthermore, implementation was, in practice, often characterized by enculturated practices from classic bureaucratic and legal traditions so that in these reformed systems, lack in performance did mostly not lead to equivalent negative consequences, which limits the motivational and nudging effectiveness of these incentives. In practice, more and more European states are moving toward a hybrid system for performance assessment (Demmke et al. 2007).

Overall, these reforms have led to a convergence of public and private personnel systems and HR management practices, which reduced the impact of idiosyncratic problems related to the

traditional civil service systems. These reforms have been criticized for their severity because reducing civil servants' benefits and privileges was assumed to reduce public organizations' capacity to signal employer attractiveness. Losing this competitive advantage may lead to negative long-term effects arguably eroding civil services' ability to attract future talent; some experts even prophesized the total collapse of civil service. However, the history of civil service reform has shown that public administration has a remarkable capacity to initiate and achieve cultural transformation dynamically and through self-motivation. Past reforms illustrate that performance can be improved if public personnel systems are equipped with sufficient flexibility and discretion without losing their workforces' fundamental public values. To realize integral transformation and administrative renewability, reform initiatives should proceed with a sense of contextual, institutional, and organizational fit.

The many aforementioned steps of reform – some gradual, some rapid – have led to substantial changes in the fundamental culture of civil service but also regarding its performance. Based on a survey conducted with more than 7,000 top and middle public managers from 20 European countries, Hammerschmid et al. (2019) conclude that the various steps of reform aimed at making European civil service HR management more flexible have led to significant positive outcomes on all four dimensions of performance (cost reduction and efficiency gains; service quality; policy coherence and coordination; equal access to services). Consequently, the transformation from a traditional to a reformed civil service personnel system was successful with regard to allowing the dynamic adaptation of changing environmental, social, and political demands. At the heart of this modernization lies the fundamental transformation of the employment relationship between the individual engaged and the state as an employer. Table 1 summarizes the most central elements of change from a career-based public personnel system (left) to the modernized position-based systems that form the status quo in many jurisdictions after decades of reform (middle column). However, modernization and cultural evolution must not stop at this point to overcome increasing

pressure due to financial scarcity, problems of institutional rigidity, and the demotivating effects of bureaucracy bashing. Civil service needs to adapt an administrative culture fit for the 21st century in order to attract talent, maintain legitimacy, and serve the people effectively. The following section summarizes five impulses for further renewal and reform, the right column of Table 1 displays how these global impulses may evolve administrative culture further and, consequently, transform public personnel systems in the near future.

Table 1: Characteristics of Administrative Cultures based on public personnel systems.

Components		Career-based personnel systems	Position-based personnel systems	Transformed personnel system
Cultural “Hardware” (tangible)	<i>Employer role and interests</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unilateral dominance of the state • Duty to serve & comply • High job security • Obligations regarding employee interests & well-being 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contract-based employment • Focus on strategy, finances, and performance • Concern regarding organizational interests and performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contract-based employment • Co-creating public value in inter-organizational and inter-sectoral collaboration networks • Innovative ideation & legitimacy
	<i>Employment practices</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standardization and homogeneity • Full-time employment • Privileged, equal treatment • Centralization of decision making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individualization • Flexibility • Differential treatment • Decentralization of decision making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team work • Special, temporal, and structural flexibility • Differential treatment with individual arrangements
	<i>Role of unions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highly involved, impactful labor unions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less influence of labor unions • Higher managerial discretion to implement strategic personnel management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong labor unions • Bottom-up agency of external agents, e.g., NGOs, civic society
Cultural “Software” (intangible)	<i>Employer-employee relationship</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loyalty-based long-term orientation • Paternalistic & hierarchical relationship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation based on qualification and performance • Mutual contract termination options • Individual responsibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agile, digital, & dynamic relationships • Value-based and cause-related attraction & retention • Mutual contract termination options
	<i>Employee participation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bottom-up culture • High degree of employee participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasingly top-down culture • Situational employee participation • Delegation of responsibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bottom-up culture • Dynamic participation across hierarchy levels and teams
	<i>Core values</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Neutrality, accuracy & diligence</i> • <i>Expertise & qualification</i> • <i>Public value orientation</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Performance orientation</i> • <i>Efficiency & effectiveness</i> • <i>Flexibility & agility</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Inclusivity & representation</i> • <i>Public value & outcome orientation</i> • <i>Openness, flexibility & agility</i>

Note: Original table, adapted and extended based on Ritz and Thom (2019, 444).

4. Creating a European administrative culture for the 21st century

The transformation of administrative culture is evident in public administrations all over Europe. While systematic changes were often initiated by political, fiscal, and societal demand for modernization, the next big task for civil service is to embrace and complete their transformation by designing a working environment fit for attracting the most motivated and brightest talent into civil service to solve the great societal challenges of the 21st century. Particularly in the context of career-based personnel systems in Western Europe (e.g., Germany, France, and Austria), modernization has stalled and many traditional – non-competitive and outdated – elements of civil service personnel systems remain, including legal employment regulation and slacking administrative practices. Having responded to external pressure, European civil services now need to focus on their own internal agency to shape a contemporary administrative culture for the 21st century.

4.1. Legitimate civil service

Civil service needs initiatives from the members of its organizations and institutions itself and take back agency from politics and media to transform their work environment proactively instead of reactively. Certainly, civil service is essential to any democratic state in providing professional, reliable, legitimate public services that deserve the general public's trust; however, Europe's public bureaucracies must actively work on keeping this trust. Trust is the result of both institutional factors, e.g., political control, accountability, and transparency, and of the outcomes of bureaucratic behavior as well as organizational factors, for instance by responsiveness and measured flexibility, discretion, and consideration regarding citizens' needs and situational circumstances. In this context, the civil service systems increase their legitimacy and, consequently, their employer attractiveness, by demonstrating their ability to respond to a changing societal context and citizens' demands dynamically, purposefully, and with creative agility, overcoming the stereotypical

hierarchical, rigid, and red tape-ridden procedures of the traditional systems. Traditionally, public administration knows strong institutional socialization, which promotes workforce homogeneity regarding bureaucracies' organizational cultures, particularly regarding procurement and personnel sourcing and workforce composition. Exuberant homogeneity leads to undesired consequences, for instance, ideological partisanship, group think, and conservative ideation inhibiting reform and innovation (Seidemann and Weißmüller 2022). Breaking the so-called "jurisprudent monopoly" in leadership positions of public management will help mobilize reform capacities and break adverse and self-preserving cycles of cultural perpetuation in favor of more diversity and representation in administration.

4.2. Pragmatic civil service

Administration is charged with conducting bureaucratic tasks diligently, reliably, and comprehensibly in order to solve citizens' issues by implementing public policies in practice. This means that civil service basically forms the link between politics and society, bridging targeted political outcomes with reality by practical implementation, i.e., planning, organizing, and implementing to achieve a certain objective. Consequently, leadership and management sit at the core of public administration. Empirical research shows that administrative performance outcomes are significantly influenced by good managerial behavior. For example, Meier and O'Toole (2002) conclude that *management matters* based on their comprehensive research program of schools in the state of Texas. The study shows that about 20% of output can ultimately be attributed to the quality of leadership. Boyne (2003) reaches similar conclusions based on a meta-analysis of studies in administrative science. In a different context, O'Toole (2001) points out the importance of management in partnership networks, in which managerial professionalism and competence are essential for achieving inter-organizational and inter-sectoral partnership success (Weißmüller et al. 2021). Consequently, competences in network and alliance management will become ever more

important for civil service. Alliance management competence refers to the central ability to configure and manage alliances together with the network partners through joint and mutually beneficial and fair collaboration and sustainable coordination (Hoffmann 2006). Alliance management competence will only benefit civil service provision in connection with an actual functioning monitoring and control system, managing the organizations often multidimensional alliance and partnership portfolio actively to develop coordination and learning processes (Weißmüller and Künzler 2021).

Relatedly, civil service will profit from attracting entrepreneurial employees, who want to change and improve the system and do not shy away from questioning the status quo. Talent with entrepreneurial spirit are intrinsically motivated and they thrive in organizations that embrace organizational learning – also by taking risk in innovation and learning from mistakes (Fischer and Weißmüller 2021) – to break up outdated routines and hierarchies in favor of finding co-creative solutions in teams and wider, dynamic networks. Entrepreneurial bureaucrats exhibit public leadership, which means that they go beyond the classic strengths and behaviors known from general leadership theory, such as the ability to initiate and implement organizational change, and exhibit a specific understanding of the values, goals, and demands of civil service’s institutional environment and administrative behavior. These include a thorough understanding of institutions, a strong preference for serving the common good, public integrity, and a high ability to find solutions creatively, a goal-oriented pragmatism, and the capability of communicating effectively (Ritz 2019; Vogel and Werkmeister 2021). With these capabilities and traits, entrepreneurial bureaucrats will become increasingly important and characteristic for the ongoing transformation and effective management of the civil service of the future.

4.3. Innovative civil service

Public administrations are organized like monopolies – both externally (jurisdiction) and internally (departmental responsibility) – creating so-called “silo structures” often characterized by distinct organizational structures only linked by red tape and few bridges to span the cultural trenches in between. They promote administrative cultures that inhibit performance by creating a punitive error culture, which, in turn, inhibits innovative ideation and progressive service solution (Fischer and Weißmüller 2021). Prior research suggests that fostering an organizational culture that embraces errors and mistakes as opportunities to learn and grow seems to pose a particularly difficult challenge for civil service. Public bureaucracies often suffer from a punitive, risk-averse, and zero-error culture inhibiting their members from responding to errors proactively (Chen and Bozeman 2012; Weißmüller 2022), which hinders employees from reporting and correcting their errors, leading to worse organizational performance and reduced public value creation (Fischer and Weißmüller 2021; Crosby et al. 2017).

Changing work ethics and attitudes requires daily leadership work and a well-designed and targeted leader-follower communication skills. Transformational public leadership has the potential to change administrative culture in a positive and motivating way but demands a rich set of leadership capabilities and willingness to overcome resistance to change in a workforce that has often self-selected into and has been socialized in a rigid and homogenous framework of very particular sectoral logics, values, and practices (Seidemann and Weißmüller 2022; Ritz et al. 2014). Resistance has many causes and is rarely unfounded particularly in career-based systems. Whether due to lack of motivation, capability, or information, factors and motives that inhibit change need to be identified and addressed in a targeted manner in order to find viable solutions and blaze the path toward institutional transformation (Ritz 2019).

Unconditional tenure, as typical in career-based systems, may discourage employees from embracing organizational transformation and procedural innovation to account for

changing demands on civil service provision by civil society. This is why structural changes – including dismissals – may be required to achieve civil service reforms successfully.

Essentially, structural and cultural changes in organizations break up workforce homogeneity to allow for more diverse ideas, motives, and new types of employees. Old habits die hard, and bringing about cultural change on an institutional level by attempting to change employees' individual attitudes often proves futile, especially if all 'givens' i.e., contexts, processes, and institutional logics, remain the same. Structural changes can accelerate these transformation processes and overcome enculturated (and outdated) modes of conduct, types of leadership, and organization. Top-down, strategic incentives with clearly formulated targets for organizational development and characteristics are particularly important when initiating change to overcome the 'iron cage' of traditional modes and logics of administration (Ashworth et al. 2009).

Another way to implement structural change is by making employment regulation more flexible because it facilitates collaboration, innovative ideation, and a more diverse and proactive administrative culture (Dudau and McAllister 2010). While classic Weberian bureaucracy assumes that public personnel management systems transform recruited talent into rule-abiding bureaucrats who will fulfil their duty neutrally and efficiently (Weißmüller et al. 2022), recent public management scholarship recognizes that modern societies are increasingly diverse and that the bureaucratic representation of this diversity is essential for sustaining institutional legitimacy, procedural justice, citizen trust, and organizational performance (Meier 2019; Hong 2021; Li et al. 2018). Prior research on group decision making show that public workforce composition has a decisive effect on organizational outcomes: Different perspectives allow for a more efficient use of information, increase creativity in deliberative quality, and contribute to finding better solutions (Ritz 2019). When encouraging the sourcing of diverse talent, flexibility in recruitment structures should still work toward homogeneity regarding intangible aspects, such as high public service

motivation, shared moral identity, and value congruence aimed at the betterment of society (Seidemann and Weißmüller 2022; Ritz et al. 2020).

The destandardization of personnel regulations also entails forgoing traditionally rigid and linear career development principles in favor of more leadership and performance-oriented succession planning. The resulting competition for talent between candidates from both within and outside the civil service is crucial for cultural change because higher staff permeability between the (previously separated) public and private labor markets will lead to more excellency-based promotion for administrative staff across and beyond bureaucracies, increase employer attractiveness, and strengthen civil services' reputation and employer attractiveness.

4.4. Digital-era civil service

Digital-era governance changes fundamental premises and practices of administrative work and will also reshape the culture of civil service in Europe (Margetts and Dunleavy 2013). On the one hand, algorithm-based technological advancements allow the intelligent linking of data from a variety of sources to enhance decision making in all aspects of government, including HR management (Maasland and Weißmüller 2022). These developments are the result of the prolific dissemination of information technologies, characterized by digitization (in essence: conversion, capture, and storage of data or information), automation (algorithm-based processing of information), and interconnectivity (dynamic networks making information available across time and space). As technologies develop and change, demands toward employees change as well and ever rapidly so. Due to political pressures for cost-efficiency and citizens' demand for interconnected service accessibility – beyond in-person office hours but across temporal, local, and technological distances – any administrative process with potential for automation will be affected and change bureaucratic office work significantly, particularly for medium-skilled employees

charged with performing routine tasks. Such job profiles are likely to be significantly altered or even replaced, which will affect more senior public sector employees more severely. The digital transformation favors highly skilled, tech-savvy individuals while low-skill employment that requires interaction may be reduced or ousted in the long run, which will lead to a change in task structures and the demand for white-collar vis-à-vis white-collar jobs. This is a looming challenge for civil services across Europe because middle-aged middle-qualified personnel make up the majority of staff in public administrations. Digitization creates opportunities to implement the principles of new work and hence increase employer attractiveness for a younger audience of talent with a more diverse skill set by offering more flexible work environments (Ritz and Sinelli 2018). This flexibility pertains not only to spatial (e.g., mobile workplaces) and temporal (e.g., work schedules) aspects but also addresses and questions the fundamental principles of work when calling for structural (e.g., holocracy) and contractual flexibility (e.g., allowing self-employment and dynamic, individual contracts). Consequently, new work has significant implications for civil service culture, disrupting the traditional administrative culture set on risk-aversion, rule-abidance, strict hierarchy, and presentism (Ritz and Knies, forthcoming).

Besides challenging the practices and rules of administrative work, civil service culture will profit from forgoing narrowed training, selection, and promotion practices, leading to civil-service specific career tracks that lack cross-sectoral – or in extreme cases even cross-organizational – transferability in favor of implementing modernized training strategies that allow trained employees to permeate their skills between occupational fields, organizations, and sectors. Career paths leading to a competence and skill set idiosyncratic to civil service occupation can be detrimental for both employers and employees because the former is forced to rely on a dwindling limited workforce with little choice and high care obligations while the latter will find changing occupation as virtually impossible due to the labor market's exceedingly low demand. Consequently, civil service HR management will be

charged with a dual challenge to master the transition to a civil service workforce ready for the digital-era of public administration: Preserving the psychological contract once entered with and by their current workforce while ensuring to create motivating incentive structures for the new generation of digital-era bureaucrats.

4.5. Value-based civil service

Administrative culture legitimizes administrative behavior and civil service's position in society based on the values prioritized in society (Peters 2021). As job loss is increasingly becoming a reality in public administrations, the implicit contract between employer and employee is beginning to change as well. In the past, the relationship between employer and employee was characterized by the exchange of loyalty for job security, in addition to the conditions in the formal employment contract. Civil service is often ridiculed by partially anecdotal stereotypes of inefficiency, slack, red tape, and medial bureaucracy bashing, which leads to negative stereotypes about employment in civil service (Weißmüller 2022; Bankins and Waterhouse 2019). As a consequence, public personnel management need to develop effective strategies to attract and retain talent despite reputational damage and embrace an organizational culture of transparency that allows learning from mistakes and communicates civil service's transformation and identity clearly to the general public (Fischer and Weißmüller 2021).

Yet, prior research shows that employers' assumption about (future) employees' employment preferences and values may not always align with reality. With a workforce aging faster than the labor force in total, the challenge facing public organizations is how to attract and retain talent in public service careers (Äijälä 2001; Leisink and Steijn 2008). As a result, increasing employer attractiveness, i.e., the interest of individuals in being employed by a certain organization, is of key importance for public organizations. Studies conducted in Austria by Korac et al. (2020) and in Germany by Ritz and Waldner (2011) show that PSM-

related motives, such as helping others, job security, but also explicitly an organizations' value for society (Ritz et al. 2022) are decisive factors for civil service's attractiveness for young future employees. Unfortunately, public administration is not always the employer of choice of highly qualified, career and innovation-oriented talent (Ritz and Waldner 2011; Korac et al. 2020). Public administration tends to attract "middle-aged" and less career-motivated individuals. The former are job seekers who, based on their work experience, know precisely what they want to work for in their remaining professional life and who may also be more locally bound by personal obligations (e.g., family or care obligations). The latter are those who do not aspire an (international) career and tend to prefer predictable working conditions, stable career prospects in one single employer organization, offering plannable and low-risk career advancement through targeted job changes (Ritz 2019).

Nevertheless, it is important for public administration to attract future employees from younger generations to contain rather than accelerate the relative over-aging of the public workforce in the coming years (Colley 2014). Although human resource consulting firms warn that the new generations of the 1990s, the 2000s, and beyond are completely different from prior generations, research shows that younger generations do not differ fundamentally from others regarding their basic work values such as, e.g., altruism versus selfishness, job satisfaction, and commitment (Costanza et al. 2012; Roberts et al. 2010). However, some dissimilarities exist: Different generations experience dissimilar contexts while growing up, which affect their competences and skills, their work values, and the expectations about the employer-employee relationships they introduce when entering the workforce. When seeking to attract and retain talent, public personnel management must acknowledge that younger generations may have very different expectations and demands regarding, for example, communication and leadership styles, flexibility of work tasks and functions, opportunities to collaborate and for personal growth, or knowledge-sharing across organizational and hierarchical boundaries. Civil service cannot ignore the principles of new work that have

become common in many segments of the private sector labor market without risking to lose the ability to attract and motivate the most talented candidates.

Consequently, civil service must reform its strategies for signaling employer attractiveness. First, harmonizing hiring and working conditions with the private sector is one way to increase employer attractiveness. This includes temporal and local flexibility but also prospects regarding salary increases and interesting career opportunities in specific managerial and professional functions in which demand is high. Second, personnel appreciation is a key motivator. Public personnel systems must allow for the individualization and flexibilization of work arrangements, which allow for work-life balance, differential merit-based treatment, and focus on the individual employees with their particular and unique set of competences. While fiscal austerity sets limits to salary increases in many European jurisdictions, offering inspiring and creative work environments, team work, co-creation, and most importantly work contents that are cause-related and based on strong values will attract highly motivated talent into civil service, particularly those with a strong work ethos with high PSM (Ritz and Waldner 2011). Addressing service and cause-related (rather than sector-oriented) motives in specific recruitment tools should help spread this message and signal the many attractive opportunities in a transformed civil service.

5. Conclusion

While the concept of administrative culture has been criticized as vague (Schröter 2007), it is a useful and holistic concept to describe systematic variations in the fundamental principles and structural design of public administrations worldwide (Painter and Peters 2010). Civil services in Europe are in transition and have converged in many aspects toward private sector working conditions and regulations. However, NPM-related reforms and modernization stimulated by crises and societal change have not led to the predicted disintegration of civil service and the core values and logics that govern civil servants' administrative behavior. Particularly in career-based personnel systems (e.g., those in

Germany, France, and Austria), many traditional elements of an administrative culture firmly nested in the principles of Weberian bureaucracy remain and will have to undergo further steps of reform in order to adapt to future challenges of public personnel management.

Essentially, transformation is already ongoing but there are four central aspects that need to be further addressed: First, working environments, conditions, and employer-employee relationships must meet contemporary expectations by citizens, political agents, and future talent by becoming more flexible, more digital, more agile, and more meaningful. In this context, thinking about administrative culture holistically, both with regards to tangible and intangible aspects will be particularly useful to find innovative ideas for reform in practice.

Second, the principles of attraction, retention, and promotion must be reevaluated in favor of differential treatment and inter-organizational and inter-sectoral transmissibility. The principle of competitive performance must be prioritized both in personnel selection and for succession planning. This is supported by relaxing traditional principles of civil service-specific career paths leading to very narrow and incompatible competence sets and, instead of that, training for transferable and highly sought-after competences. This will also increase civil services' employer attractiveness in both the public and the private workforce labor market.

Third, the cultural change toward a more open, more responsive, and adaptable administration should be promoted through increased exchange of knowledge and competences across institutional boundaries – both within the administration but especially with agents outside of the administration, particularly including civil society – without shying away from criticism and unconventional ideas. Innovation springs from co-creation and co-destruction.

Finally, public administrations should capitalize more on their essential purpose, which is serving society. Besides redesigning and opening up training and continuous

education paths to become more attractive, strategic HR management should aim to signal that civil service employment can be a source of fulfilment and purpose, particularly for highly prosocial and high-PSM candidates. Combining this value-based concept of self with a more pragmatic and more open approach to solving societies' challenges through agile collaboration across organizational and sectoral boundaries will rejuvenate the often conservative and rigid image of public bureaucracies. Implementing these changes and creating a new culture from within will be the central challenge for public management in the coming years.

Civil service offers attractive employment opportunities but not for all target groups of (future) talent to the same extent. Administrative cultures in transition and societal change have transformed the civil service, and the central goal for the coming decade will be to attract and retain more of the service-oriented and entrepreneurial bureaucrats for public administrative work. These new types of bureaucrats will use their newly found discretion and overcome the resistant red-taped slack of the past and further modernize and evolve the ethos and culture of the civil service. With this prospect, it will be well-prepared to master future challenges.

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