INTER-AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK

Regional Policy Dialogue   Diálogo Regional de Política

PUBLIC POLICY MANAGEMENT AND TRANSPARENCY: CIVIL SERVICE

THE CIVIL SERVICE IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBEAN:

SITUATION AND FUTURE CHALLENGES

W O R K I N G   P A P E R

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Washington, D.C., April 26 and 27, 2001

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Executive Report (April 23, 2001)

Introduction

The present report has two purposes: 1) to review the progress achieved so far in the comparative study of the Civil Service (CS hereafter) in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC); and 2) to present preliminary conclusions and options that result from the analysis. Partial information obtained so far from ten questionnaires, out of a total of 26, has been used in the preparation of this report, together with available literature on the subject, and the personal experience of the author as a consultant.

Transformations in the nature of the civil service

In a broad sense, it is possible to characterize different moments in the establishment of CS systems in LAC using three alternative approaches, that take into account various dimensions involved in the process. These are: the characteristics of the role assumed by civil servants, the management areas that develop in each stage of the historical process, and the strata of public employees that appear in each stage.

Different civil service systems

The notion of civil service admits multiple interpretations. For the purpose of this study, we have chosen to define **a civil service system** as as a set of juridical and instrumental rules dealing with the modes and conditions whereby the state ensures the availability of personnel with the skills and attitudes required for the efficient performance of the activities involved in discharging its role vis-a-vis society. Certain features should be specified in this definition and its scope should be limited to the Central Administration and decentralized organizations at the national level of government, thereby excluding public enterprises and sub-national jurisdictions.

The configuration of a CS system results from linking three structures: the *organizational* one, the structure of *human resources* employed by the state, and the *salary structure* (O-HR approach). A civil service system will be more coherent the greater the degree of technical control on each of the subsystems and the more integrated they be.

To construct a typology for the current CS in the region, a classification along a continuum, which would have a "traditional pole " and a "managerial pole" as extreme models could be used. Although these extremes may be easily typified, the experiences in the region indicate a varied combination of the descriptive elements of each model, thus demanding another kind of classification. For this purpose, the O-HR approach is proposed, identifying for each analytical dimension (microstructure or job position relations, human resources policies and rules of the game regarding salaries), dichotomic situations of the variables that form part of each dimension. This work suggests the way to carry out this exercise, but postpones it until information for the universe of cases in the region becomes available.

Current situation of the civil service systems in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The questionnaires provide the necessary information to describe the state of affairs of the current CS systems. For this purpose document has been organized around the analytical dimensions considered relevant.

Size of the CS. There is no predictable relation in LAC between the size of the CS and the total population, even when comparing countries with populations of similar size. The proportion of state employment in relation to the population of working age varies from between a little over 5% (Chile) to over 17% (Uruguay). All countries have carried out more or less significant downsizing of state employment, through a battery of measures which include voluntary retirement, early retirement, redundancies, the elimination of temporary staff and others.

Administration of structures and job positions: Organizational charts of public administration increasingly admit horizontal structures in the organization, which leads to the search for solutions to the problem created by the double hierarchical and functional dependency of staff. The assignment of authority and responsibility to the organizational units is carried out mainly on the basis of their respective functions and not according to results. The most frequently used criteria in job positions management is to rank tasks, conditions and requirements of job positions in the structure.

Human resources management: Entry to the civil service in certain cases can imply becoming the holder of a specific job position; while in others it implies being included in a corps or structure and, within it in a scale or category. The criteria used in the selection of personnel do not, save for a few exceptions, take into account competitive selection processes, by means of transparent and objective criteria. The responsibility of the process tends to fall on the director (or his superior) of the organization using the selection process to fill a position. In the trial period that must elapse before an appointee acquires stability is relatively short, generally not longer than twelve months. On the other hand, evaluation procedures prior to the access to stability are not habitual. Promotions to positions of greater responsibility are generally automatic. Although regulations almost always mandate annual evaluations, there are virtually no cases of effective and generalized implementation of formal performance evaluation systems. Lastly, in the case of training, although there has been an increase in the level of effort and resources used, there is no adequate planning and assessment of activities, with a tendency to rely on an indiscriminate offer of courses rather than the identification of real needs.

Salary administration: In most countries, salaries of lower level state employees are comparatively higher than those of equivalent workers in the private sector; inversely, personnel in higher levels, particularly in the top echelons, have comparatively lower salaries. In Central America and the Caribbean a significant part of the salary is taken up by components associated to the nature and level of the position. In the Southern Cone and other sub-regions, instead, a large proportion of the salary comprises items associated to personal characteristics of the job holder (position in personnel system, seniority, education and others).

The Civil Service and second generation reforms

Throughout the 20th century there have been several recurrent attempts in LAC to implement administrative reforms, which centered on modernizing the CS systems. Nevertheless, the ideological climate in which these processes were nurtured (which reserved for the state a fundamental role of articulator of social relations), together with the scarce progress achieved on the whole by these reformist initiatives, appear to be clearly differentiated from the ones which were introduced in the 80s, and above all in the 90s. These latter efforts were implemented with much more success. This result, in part, was due to the fact that the so-called "first generation reforms" had as principle objective the downsizing of the state, not necessarily its improvement. In fact, the issue of organizational and functional rationality of the state, main focus of all CS reforms, was relegated to a second phase.

Challenges in modernizing civil service systems

The modernization of civil service systems can be considered as a policy belonging to second generation reforms, which implies that its aim is to improve management and no to merely reduce the scope of state activity. These reforms include the following list of possible actions:

- Organizational restructuring of the administrative apparatus.
- Redesigning of the personnel structures.
- De-bureaucratization of norms, processes and administrative procedures, replacing it with results oriented management
- Introduction of a merit-based administrative career.
- Training and permanent development of personnel.
- Improvements in information systems and of its technological base.

By way of conclusion: technology, culture and irreversibility of the reforms

A general conclusion of this study is that the success of second generation reforms related to civil service depends largely on the extent to which the values which underlie the new public management are able to permeate the prevailing political-administrative culture. Only then is it possible to ensure that the changes are irreversible. The repeated failures reflect the permanent conflict between the values on which the reform is based and the interests affected by its implantation. The key question, then, is how to ensure that the available technological advantages are incorporated as guidelines, methods or procedures habitually used in everyday activity, as the natural way of doing things. In *inward* reforms of the state, the political constraints are much more determinant than in *outward* reforms. For this reason, the main responsibility for these conditions to be created fall, almost exclusively, on the political leaders. This view, of course, is not incompatible with the negotiation and compromise that may be required in the pursuit of these initiatives of transformation, but does not admit to any retreat. It assumes, on the other hand, full knowledge of the problems to be faced, of the potentially more adequate strategies to overcome them, of the expected resistance, of own capacities to establish alliances and convince the undecided, of the available resources and of the limits that may be reached in order to achieve results.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background and scope

This paper presents the preliminary results of a study of the Civil Service systems (CS hereafter) currently in force in Latin American and Caribbean countries (LAC). Its purpose is to carry out a comparative analysis of the progress achieved by these countries in their efforts to introduce public employment systems based on principles of capability, equality, merit, transparency and efficiency.

The study is based, mainly, on the author´s own experience in research and consultancy on the subject in various countries of the region, on the available literature and on information obtained so far from ten countries which have responded to a questionnaire distributed by the IDB in 26 LAC countries. Our expectation is that, in a future revision of this paper, results from all or most of the questionnaires will be available, which will permit the standardization and systematization of the data provided by all the countries involved, and thus the conclusions.

Information provided by the survey, although partial, has been of enormous value to assess the state of affairs in each country on the subject and for the comparative exercise, since the countries have been asked to report on the existence and effective enactment of institutions, norms, procedures, systems and practices that regulate and administer the different aspects that define the CS systems. In particular, how people fit into the organizational structure of the state and the manners in which these structures are defined; the systems and procedures used in the management of the different aspects of a civil service career; the structure and composition of salaries; the characteristics that develop in labor relations and some variables related to the legal framework, information technology and the overall administration of the systems. Participants have also been asked to provide up-to-date statistical information about composition and distribution of human resources, and a variety of indicators related to the employment situation in each country.

It is important to underline that the CS field of study in the region is extremely limited. In spite of considerable literature included by the Latin-American Center of Administration for Development (CLAD) in its information network (SIARE), and the fact that this institution has made a noteworthy effort to systematize available information from the countries of the region, there is practically no "dialogue" in the literature, no accumulation of experiences, no development of any tradition of academic debate between different currents of thought or authors and so far, there is a lack of systematic, and above all, of comparative knowledge that would lead to the identification of trends, models, shared features in the current systems, or other aspects that would have made the work involved in the this study easier.

The present document analyzes the data of the following countries which so far have completed the questionnaires: Argentina, Belize, Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Uruguay and Venezuela.[1] Once the data from all participating countries is collected, we will have the first systematized data base on on CS in the region,

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[1] While revising the final version of this document we received the questionnaire from Colombia, which contents, for reasons of time, were not included in the analysis.

which will serve to obtain an up-to-date, and above all comparative view, of current structures and direction of changes that are emerging.

The analyses of civil service systems here presented are limited to the national or federal level of government. As LAC countries differ in their jurisdictional organization (i.e. centralized or federal) and in levels of government (national, provincial, state or department, municipal or local), this circumstance should be taken into account to interpret the scope of the comparative exercises. The main consideration refers to the decentralization processes that have occurred, principally but not exclusively, in federal countries such as Argentina, Brazil, Mexico and Venezuela, where the transfer of management responsibilities to sub-national levels has transformed the role and scope of the intervention of the national state in a significant way and, therefore, the size and mission of its CS systems. In any case, informants of the countries were asked to provide the necessary explanations and specifications when relevant to differentiate the jurisdictional scope of answers. For similar reasons of homogeneity in the subsequent comparison, they were requested to specify if the data supplied correspond only to the Central Administration or if they also include decentralized organizations, public enterprises, state banks, or other types autonomous agencies.

The structure of the document is simple. The introductory chapter will be completing by introducing, in the first place, some definitions about the concept of **civil service systems**, as well as on the universe of human resources that the conventional wisdom has included in its scope. In the second place we will present the conceptual framework underlying the questionnaire that was distributed among the countries, which identifies dimensions and variables deemed relevant for the analysis. In Annex 2 we include some historical references to the appearance and development of the concept of civil servant, and a broader conceptual and methodological discussion, directed to those who are interested in the construction of analytical models of CS systems. Once the totality of the questionnaires are received, analyzed and compared to other sources and bibliographical references, it is the purpose of this study to build a typology.

Chapter two is the core of this paper, in which , following the order established in the analytical framework and the questionnaires, the results of the survey are presented and the main trends and conclusions resulting from the comparison of cases are examined. Chapter 3 places the previous analysis in the context of CS reforms carried out in the 20th century, especially those adopted during the 80s and the 90s. Finally, in Chapter 4 we review pending reforms and challenges on the subject.

1.2 Conceptual aspects and relevant analytical dimensions

In accordance with the agreements achieved by the Preparatory Group of the Regional Dialogue, which has promoted the present study, we will define a **civil service system** as a set of juridical and instrumental rules dealing with the modes and conditions whereby the state ensures the availability of personnel with the skills and attitudes required for the efficient performance of the activities involved in discharging its role vis-a-vis society. It should be added that those modes and conditions to which the above mentioned rules are referred, include garanteeing the citizenry that civil servants will act professionally and objectively upholding democratic values, and that the principles of equality, merit and capacity at the various stages of the public service career will be applied, all of which should be formalized in a special normative body. In addition, the timely availability of

personnel imply the application of criteria, methods and technologies that ensure access of the best fitted, adequate filling of work posts, regular evaluation of performance and eventual promotion, recognition of an equitable compensation for services rendered and enforcement of rights and duties allowing for professional realization and stability of employment insofar as behavior is based upon merit, honesty and transparency.

We should admit that, even with these specifications, the definition is still partial and that, if applied with no caveats, would reach staff employed by the state that, according to the usual interpretation of the concept, would not qualify as civil servants. Therefore, it is necessary to consider what are the groups of employees that would be included within the civil service--an aspect which is sometimes privileged in the current definitions on the subject that consider civil service a bureaucratic corps.[2] Hence, to draw more precise boundaries regarding who is to be reached by the definition, we should drop its normative tone and make reference to the countries' usual practices, keeping in mind that the very idea of "civil service" is not sufficiently embedded in Latin America's culture and institutions, so that ambiguity in the use and application of the concept is even greater.

The employees of the central administration at the national level are usually considered to be part of the civil service without more ado. More controversial is the inclusion of officials with particular profiles (e.g.. military and security forces) or of employees belonging to sub-national administrations. To resolve this dilemma, Stevens (1994) suggests differentiating between different classes of workers. In the first place, what he calls the "core" of the civil service, formed by an "internal nucleus" of professionals that occupy senior managerial positions and the rest of staff and line employees. The quality of the public policies, strongly conditioned by the degree of professionalism, expertise and stability of the administrative élite, determines that this internal nucleus constitutes the target of the reform in matter of incentives designed to make the public sector more attractive. Surrounding this nucleus and conforming a much larger group, are the employees recruited for different services, such as teachers, health workers and police, agencies funded by the budget and public enterprises. Finally, there is another group of workers hired for very short period -including day laborers- whose appointments are linked to seasonal needs of certain agencies or programs [3]

If we bear in mind that reforms in LAC generally covered all the state apparatus, including not only to the central administration but also decentralized entities and agencies, and that a better part of the provision of goods and services traditionally in the hands of the state are being transferred from the national level to sub-national ones, it seems appropriate to adopt a more comprehensive vision of the scope of the concept of civil service, not restricted to the Central Administration. Though it can affect the comparison of the data, insofar as the composition of public sector employment in each country has very different proportions of personnel in centralized and decentralized organizations, is also a fact that many functions can be carried out by either type, which keeps the problem unresolved. Therefore, we will use the concept in its broader meaning, i.e. including personnel of the central and decentralized administration at the national level and, on those occasions in which specific references to the civil service are made in a restrictive sense, the pertinent explanations will be made.

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[2] Besides the definitional difficulties of the concept, the coexistence in a single country of several systems of employment in the public service also attempts against a precise delimitation of its members.
[3] Stevens, quoted by Haggard (1998)

The configuration of a CS system results from linking three structures: the *organizational* one, that determines the distribution of responsibilities in the group of units and job positions required for public management; that of *human resources* employed by the state, which sets the rules for the management of a professional career in the civil service; and the *salary structure*, that establishes material incentives to compensate the work and dedication of the state personnel.[4]

In practice, this means that on entering into the public administration, a person simultaneously "enters" these three structures. In the organizational structure he/she is assigned a job position and a function within a unit (e.g. Under-secretariat, Department, Division) that has specific competences and responsibilities for the production of results. In the human resources structure, the worker belongs to a labor regime or structure, with a series of rights and obligations and is given a specific category or degree, as from which he/she starts or continues a career. Finally, within the salary structure, the person is assigned a salary according to a scale that allocates differentiated compensation according to functional, individual or performance criteria. The quality of a civil service depends basically on the articulation and congruence of these three structures. We will examine this point into greater detail.

The incorporation to a job position implies the occupancy of a "chair", that has two basic characteristics: a) It is defined on the base of certain requirements (which the occupant should meet) and of specific responsibilities (that constitute the function of the position), and b) It reports to a specific organizational unit, which at the same time has been assigned functional competences within the structure, with some of them being covered by the function of the job position. Thus, the incorporation to the job position, seen as the insertion in the organizational **micro**-structure, is the way in which each employee is linked, through the unit to which he/she belongs, to the organizational structure of an institution.[5]

At the same time, each employee is incorporated to a category within the human resources system currently applied in the institution. This category constitutes the place that the person occupies in the administrative career of the institution. Just as each person can move along the organizational structure as he occupies different job positions, also he can move along the career structure as he acquires new personal attributes that allow him to reach higher categories of the regime. Though performance in different job position constitutes, as a measure of quality of the accredited experience, one of the main factors that weigh in the administrative career of an employee, what is relevant in determining the position that he should be assigned in the human resources regime is not the requirements of the job positions that the employee has occupied successively, but the attributes of the person himself, including not only accumulated experience but also training, as well as the quality of performance.

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[4] This approach is known as the "O-HR approach" (Organization and Human Resources), has been developed by Jorge Hintze of Argentina, and used as a conceptual framework of technological and systems applications in areas of the Public Administrations of several countries of the region.
[5] See graph in following page

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK
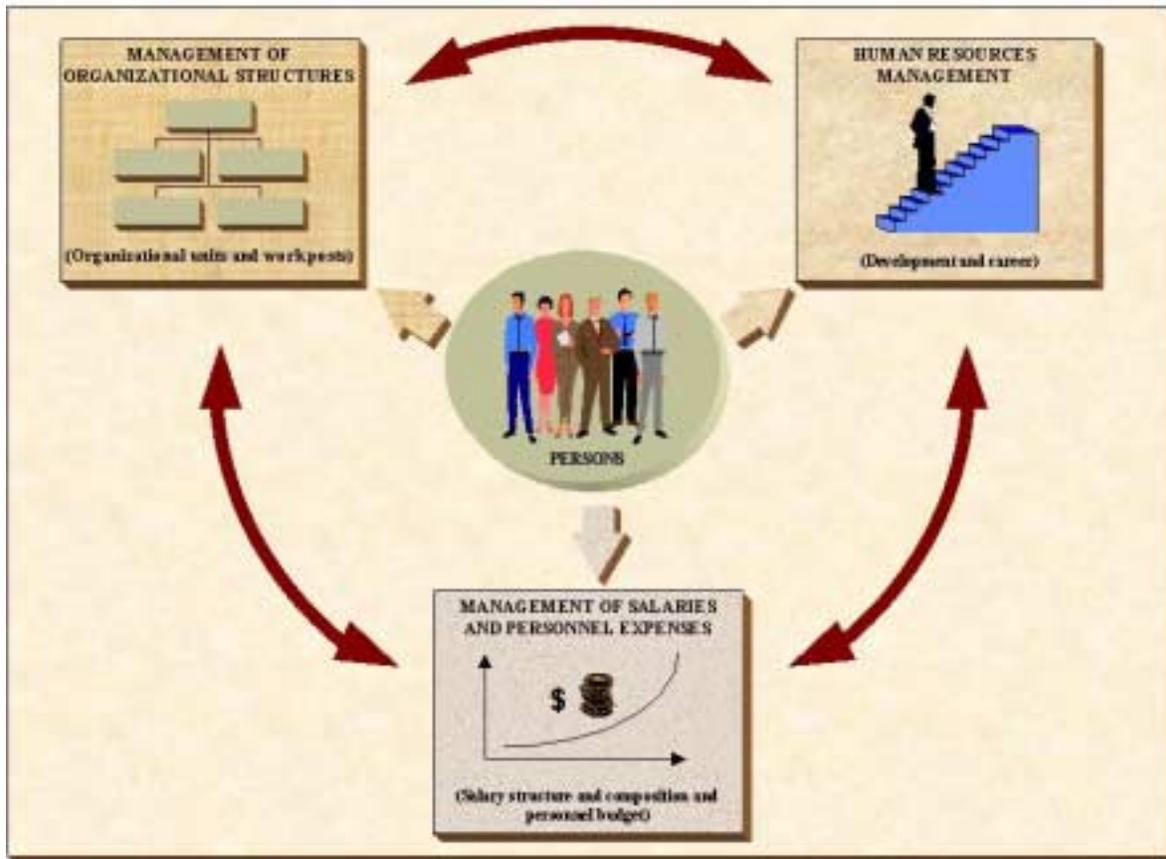
Finally, each employee is also incorporated to a salary structure, in which each one of the degrees or steps represents simultaneously, although in proportions that vary from one structure to another, both the place that the worker occupies in the organizational structure and the one that he occupies in the human resources system. Thus, the salary degree expresses the compensation that corresponds, at the same time, to the valuation of the job position and to the valuation of the attributes that the person has.

The simultaneous belonging to these three subsystems is independent of the degree to which they are technically integrated and to which each one is the object of management also based on technical criteria. A civil service system will be more coherent the greater the degree of technical control on each of the subsystems and the more integrated they are.

On the other hand, each one of the three subsystems includes, at the same time, a series of components whose presence, quality and effective application allow us to estimate the development of the subsystem as a whole. In particular, the management of organizational structures includes: a) the management of organizational units; b) the administration of micro-structures (job positions management) and c) the institutional evaluation. The management of human resources, in turn, includes: a) the administration of appointments and promotions (assignment of categories in the human resource system and designation in job position through mechanisms of competitive selection); b) the administration of the training activities and human resources development; c) the administration of the evaluation of performance and potential of the human resources; and d) the

administration of human resource planning. Finally, the components of salary management are: a) salary administration (administration of the structure and composition of salaries); and b) the administration of personnel expenditures.

Thus, each one of the components that conforms the three subsystems constitutes a relevant analytical dimension to classify civil service systems. According to the degree in which the organizational structures, human resources and salaries are the object of an integral and integrated management, based on technical criteria and backed by adequate technologies, different will be the location of the system in a classification of CS systems. Anticipating a point dealt with more extensively in the Annex, the greater the integration and incorporation of management technologies, the more each system will move away from a traditional model of CS management and nearer to a managerial model. We could even define a traditional type as that where none of the analytical dimensions analyzed meet the requirements mentioned and, reciprocally, the managerial type could be identified by complying simultaneously with each and all of these requirements.

2. Current situation of the civil service systems in Latin America and the Caribbean

This chapter focuses on a series of features that allows us to characterize, on the basis of information gleaned from the questionnaires, the current situation of the CS systems in the region. If data received is distributed in a matrix, in which the vertical axis corresponds to the questions asked and the horizontal axis indicates the respondent countries, the vertical readings will provide a CS profile or model for each country, and the horizontal readings will provide a basis for comparisons amongst countries. This last criterion was chosen for analysis, so that country profiles will not be discussed.

2.1 Size of the civil service

The size of the civil service can be analyzed by considerering the number of persons employed as compared with the population of the country, with the economically active population, or with the remainder of the public sector work force (e.g. state and local governments, public enterprises). We may also consider the number of units at each level of the organization or the personnel expenses incurred in relation to the overall budget. In any of these cases, we should bear in mind that we are considering a portion of state employees, and that the role of the state, as well as the jurisdictional levels that carry it out, vary significantly from country to country, so that any results on this subject are bound to be inconclusive.

In LAC there is no predictable relationship between the size of the CS and the overall population, even when comparing countries with similar population size. This disproportion is a result, on the one hand, of differing traditions regarding the role of the state, and, more recently, of important reform processes that have caused, among others things, a significant reduction of the state´s structure and, consequently, of the civil service. A decline in the number of public employees (and the corresponding decrease in personnel expenditure) has allowed some governments to create new incentive systems in public sector management and public employment (Reid, 1992), by introducing new guidelines regarding recruitment, promotion, evaluation, training, stability and accountability.

The downsizing of public sector personnel varies considerably from country to country, while the approaches followed to obtain this result vary widely. The most drastic and of greater scope have resulted from the implementation of voluntary and early retirement programs throughout the central government, although there have been several cases of reductions resulting from the elimination of job positions, redundancies or outright dismissal, with or without compensation according to the current legislation in force in each case.

Although the elimination of contract or temporary staff has frequently been used as an emergency measure, with partial or global impact, it has often been offset by re-hiring and, in many cases, by the incorporation of temporary personnel as permanent staff. In a similar way, the oft-used recourse of freezing vacancies has been countered by innumerable exceptions for reasons of service, making it meaningless.

Less frequent has been the use of retrenchment due to redundancies, which were not translated into definite decisions, save for a small number of civil servants; and the dismissals derived from overlapping structures, which instead of being made effective, were substituted by mechanism of horizontal mobility. And lastly, outright firing, except for

exceptional cases associated to individual situations, does not constitute a commonly used mechanism for personnel reduction, on account of its high potential for conflict.

The questionnaires received provide evidence of considerable cuts in public employment in the course of the last decade. .With the exception of Brazil, Chile and Belize, that register increases of 29,2%, 20% and 5%[6] in state employment respectively, the rest of the countries report reductions that range from 5% to a maximum of over 40% of pre-existing employment. The greatest reductions took place in Bolivia and Argentina.

As regards the share of the state personnel (including all jurisdictional levels and forms of employment) in relation to the population of working age, the values fluctuate, from 5.5% in the case of Chile to 17,6% for Uruguay, with Bolivia, Nicaragua, Guatemala and Brazil exhibiting percentages closer to the lower end., Argentina[7] and Venezuela closer to higher end and Honduras and Belize in an intermediate position (10% for both).

2.2 Unity versus fragmentation of the civil service

Governments are increasingly less inclined to set up a sole CS system for all the public administration.[8] The trend towards differentiated structures and functional specialization, together with the focus on flexibility in relation to the working conditions that are offered in order attract and retain highly qualified people, have led to a marked fragmentation of these systems.

There are at least four different ways in which the governments of the region have attempted to introduce changes to improve the quality of their public administrations. Accordingly, the scope of the respective systems can be defined in terms of: 1) a limited number of key positions; 2) an elite corps; 3) an extensive civil service system; or 4) a parallel network of consultants financed by international agencies.

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[6] Increases in employment reported by these countries deserve to be clarified. In the case of Brazil it is reported that this increase occurred in "public administration employees". Yet from information from this country about the distribution of government personnel between the different sectors or functional areas indicates that the National Government (486.323 persons, with no reference if this includes the armed forces) represents a bare 8.5% of overall state employment (5.473.909 persons), which suggests that at some point there have been important cuts. There were also reductions through the privatization of public services. Belize reports that in 1995 the public sector went through a "retrenchment exercise", which according to the spirit of the question, should be included in the reductions of the last decade. Therefore the net effect of mid-90s reductions and the appointments during the last years is unknown. Lastly, Chile also acknowledges that there were substantial cuts in the 70s and the 80s, and that during the 90s public employment grew at the same rate as population of working age.

[7] The apparent contradiction that appears in the Argentine case, with drastic cuts of government workers at national level (over 50%) and, at the same time, a high proportion of public employment in relation to the population of working age, derives from the fact that a considerable portion of the downsizing was the result of decentralization of functions to the provinces, with personnel in this jurisdiction being retained (and then increased). It is likely that it may have also occurred in other countries.

[8] In the answer to the questionnaire, no country informs of the incorporation of personnel to a complete multi-organizational institutional system (at national and sub-national levels). In five cases, out of ten, there are partial institutional systems, in which certain sectors of the administration (such as police, education, health) have their own employee structure. In the same five cases and an additional one, there are also organizations (public enterprises or other entities) that have special personnel systems. And in six other cases, a person can be incorporated only to a specific public agency (ministry, department, agency, enterprise).

Very briefly, the first system seeks to improve the performance of public management relying on the critical role carried out by small corps of public managers (that, usually, does not exceed 5% of all central administration staff), assigning them to key managerial and technical positions (policy design, steering, coordination, highly specialized positions, etc). In a way, the system is similar to the "Senior Executive Service" created in the USA during the Carter Administration, although there are some variations in different countries (e.g. the 600 positions of the "*Sistema de Cargos Clave*" originally proposed in Bolivia, or the 465 "*Cargos en Función Ejecutiva*" in Argentina).

The élite corps approach, patterned after France's ENA model, has only been adopted in Argentina. Members of this corps (the so-called *Administradores Gubernamentales* or *AGs*) are recruited through a very strict, competitive system, following a complex selection process and a specialized training program. Upon entering the Corps, AGs are destined to various staff, consulting, and managerial positions within the public service, while maintaining a double dependency with both the Secretariat of Public Service and the official in charge of the unit to which the AG has been assigned.

An extended civil service system is much more costly and difficult to implement. It requires a radical reduction in the size of personnel and sophisticated managerial tools to deal with the new rules and procedures established under a meritocratic system. For years ago, Bolivia has embarked in the establishment of a program of this kind, while Argentina, with the so-called SINAPA (National System of the Administrative Profession) has been undergoing a similar experience for several years.

Finally, almost every government in the region has introduced, to a lesser or greater extent, an employment mechanism for medium and top level specialists (even in high managerial positions), through parallel contracting by international donor or financial agencies. Three countries report an extensive use of this option, six inform that they employ it occasionally or never and one provides no information on the subject

An assessment of these different systems allows us to advance the following conclusions. The experience of regimes based on a limited number of "executive positions" or "key positions" exhibits, at least, two mechanisms that have distorted the expected benefits of its implementation. On one side, the criteria to determine when or why a position is to be considered a **key** position have not been observed, as a result of which, to fill certain positions lacking in wage incentives, they are so considered in order to persuade the employee to accept the job. On the other hand, the requirements of a competitive selection process are sometimes ignored, together with the necessary impartiality and transparency, and once more the result is that political considerations rather than merit prevail in the selection process.

The Government Administrators system has fulfilled, in the only known experience, a prominent role as regards the possibility of training and supplying the government with a competent and well-prepared group of professionals. The problems that the system exhibits have more to do with 1) the conflicts that arise due to the double hierarchical and functional dependency that inevitably must exist with both the agency that these civil servants report to, and their appointments; 2) with its reduced size (200 members, now reduced by voluntary retirement to 170) and low impact on public management; 3) with its concentration in advisory capacities rather than the executive functions which constituted

its initial purpose; and 4) by the lack of a system of evaluation and incentives that can better identify the relative capabilities of the members of the corps. [9]

The biggest disadvantage presented by the introduction of an extensive CS system derives from the difficulties that accompany the "rite of passage" from an existing system to a new one (reclassification of positions, transfers, re-training), of the resistance to the cultural changes associated with a new managerial conception of civil service and the greater monetary incentives that the system requires.

Finally, the parallel hiring of personnel through international or multilateral agencies has created problems of equity, discrimination, double loyalties and in some cases, severe disturbances in the routine activities of the public sector, given the growing number of these positions. On the whole, countries are either unwilling to provide this information or simply do not know the figures. Nevertheless, estimates range from 2 positions in a small country like Belize or a small, irrelevant number as reported by Chile, to several hundreds (Guatemala 200, Uruguay 800) rising to thousands in the larger ones (e.g. Argentina). [10]

2.3 Current legal frameworks

The legal frameworks that regulate civil service systems can be grouped around two extreme possibilities: a) the existence of a sole, comprehensive legal framework or job structure for all public employees in a particular jurisdiction (i.e. national, state or local public administrations), that includes regulations regarding rights, obligations and administrative career of the civil servant (entry, promotions, compensation, performance evaluation, training, etc.); and b) heterogeneous and multiple civil service regimes, determined by the search for more favorable labor conditions for different groups, levels or types of personnel, and where technical criteria remain conditioned by ad-hoc considerations.

Guatemala and, surprisingly, Brazil, have the first type of systems. [11] In other cases there is, on one hand, a sole legal system or job structure which applies to a considerable part of civil servants in a particular jurisdiction, which co-exists, on the other, with a variety of personnel regimes that perform certain specialized functions (e.g.. military, police, educational, health, foreign service, scientific research). Venezuela, Uruguay Honduras, Nicaragua, Argentina, Chile and Belize are in this situation. Finally, Bolivia reports the existence of multiple and heterogeneous regimes for state employees, attributed, as has been mentioned above, to the search of favorable labor conditions for different groups, levels or types of personnel, and in which technical criteria remain conditioned by ad-hoc considerations. Direct knowledge of some experiences in the region allows us to assert

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[9] The recruitment of new members of the AGs corps has been suspended for several years. For a more extensive analysis of the experience of the AGs, see Oszlak, 1994.

[10] Argentina informs that this type of hiring is not possible. In fact six years ago Decree 82/85 "legalized" the situation of staff then under this type of contract, creating a special regime for these workers, without job security and with significant wage incentives. Nevertheless there are thousands of professionals that, under service or term contracts, work in programs and projects carried out in all the public sector, supplementing, or in some cases substituting permanent staff.

[11] Without this implying any value judgment, given the size, extension and diversity of the Brazilian CS it would be expected that its situation were nearer to option b) of the questionnaire (co-existence of a basic CS regime and diverse systems for other types of personnel).

that the number of cases that belong to this third group is far more numerous than what in appearance so far is evident in the reports.

Disregarding the multiplicity or singularity of current systems, and always from the point of view of the existing legal framework, job conditions, employment and salaries of public sector employees are determined by the following modes: a) by legal norms, notwithstanding the fact that some lesser aspects may be subject to negotiation; b) by a set of basic norms that can be developed and improved through pacts and agreements between management and the unions; or c) by means of strict legal regulation of some features of the CS system, while other are regulated through different mechanisms of collective bargaining. In the region´s scenario we find a great variety of situations which resemble the different options that have been analyzed, although the last two options tend to prevail.

Another feature related to the current legal systems is the degree of resemblance or divergence that is found between the existing civil service regimes in the countries and the labor laws that regulate private sector employment. In Nicaragua and Argentina there are high degrees of correspondence that make both systems indistinguishable. In the rest of the answers six bear some resemblence in certain aspects, although they differ strongly in others, while two (Guatemala and Venezuela) hold that their regimes have virtually no points in common.

2.4 Institutional responsibilities

The responsibility of defining policies and directives regarding the CS may be more or less centralized, following some of the following patterns

a) Existence of a central body and decentralized units that report to the central body;
b) Existence of a central body, without decentralized units in the different institutions;
c) No central body: each institution executes the policies and norms dictated by the executive and legislative branches on the subject.

Each one of these systems has its advantages and disadvantages. On the whole, type (a) systems permit standardization in the application of norms and criteria to administer different aspects that include the management of workers: competitive selection processes, promotions, leave of absence, embargoes, salaries, performance evaluation, training, etc. But their successful operation depends on the degree of interaction that they may achieve in practice with the decentralized units, with which they usually only maintain a functional relation and not a hierarchical one. On the other hand, a greater centralization tends to be associated with greater rigidity in the enforcement of regulations and standards, which sometimes leads to reduced flexibility in management as the specific traits of each institution are disregarded. Brazil and Chile fall into this system

Type (b) systems tend to appear in countries that either have CS systems of limited extension or have learned that regulations and directives may be enforced by units in the vertical structure of institutions, which means that only occasional auditing is necessary to check that regulations are being enforced. As examples we may mention Guatemala, Venezuela and Nicaragua.

Type (c) cases would appear to correspond to smaller countries, such as Honduras and Uruguay, where the creation of a central authority responsible for interpreting and enforcing norms, systems and procedures might not be justified. The data received suggests a relatively even distribution of these diverse situations in the different LAC countries.

Another aspect related to institutional responsibility offers different options regarding the mechanisms for approving organizational structures, a subject of our interest because such decisions involve the formalization of the job structure. The first variant is a specialized agency whose technical intervention is necessary in order to legally validate a structure, passing judgement both on the design as well as on future changes. In general, the data indicates that the majority of countries have these specialized bodies of approval. A second variation is when the Executive branch directly approves the organizational structures without the intervention of technical agencies. As regards this sub-universe, four cases (Bolivia, Guatemala, Honduras and Belize are in this situation. Finally, the organizational structures may be approved by the relevant minister or be enforced without formal approval or intervention of a special technical body. Of the countries surveyed, only one (Guatemala) acknowledges this scenario.[12]

In our view, the advantages of having technical instances for the analysis and approval of structures derive from elementary considerations of control, that are not limited to the aspects of organizational design. In every approval of structures there is a guarantee not only of its technical rationality but also of the reasonability of the expenditure involved and of the political priority of establishing a particular structure, comprising certain quantities and job descriptions, responsibilities (competences and results) assigned, etc. Therefore, it is assumed that the non existence of these instances denotes the absence of other conditions that are present in a managerial model of public administration, such as specification of objectives and goals, justification of volumes and allocation of resources and so on.

Finally, a third aspect related to the allocation of institutional responsibilities is the subject of keeping personnel records. Though centralized personnel records exist (i.e.. "legajos", folders, files or similar denominations) that contain basic information about employees (individual, family, educational, labor, salary, etc.), normally such records are kept in each institution or organizational unit, without being fully dependable on account of their sporadic updating.

Brazil, Belize and Bolivia have data bases and information technology applications that maintain a managerial system of information, integrating data about structures and job positions, the characteristics of employees and salaries, with cross reference to obtain statistics for consultation and decision-making. The other countries report isolated and incomplete systems with information about various aspects of the structure, personnel or salaries.

The integrated systems of financial information, at present do not allow budget programs to calculate indices of cost-effectiveness in the utilization of resources (including human

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[12] Curiously, in this case two other situations are reported, which leads us to consider, in fact, a fourth option: the co-existence of different modalities of approval. of organizational structures

resources). In Honduras and Chile, and to a lesser degree in Belize, some organizations are able to do so, but on the whole this practice is not carried out.

2.5 Administration of structures and job positions

As we have already indicated when we referred to the relevant variables of this study, managing organizational structures involves a variety of processes: a) design and definition of the structural configuration of its units (organizational charts); b) definition of competences and responsibilities of each unit; c) determination of size in terms of quantities and types of job positions; d) formal approval of structures and successive restructuring, taking into account the mission and objectives of the respective agencies.

In this section we will analyze the criteria used to establish the relative hierarchy of the organizational units; the degree of "matrixiality" of the structure, that is to say, the degree to which vertical units (or line units) coexist with horizontal units (basically conformed by programs or projects); the modes employed in the allocation of responsibilities to the units; and the definition of job positions for their occupational classification.

The assignment of hierarchical levels to the organizational units is carried out, in some cases, on the basis of technical instruments applied in a standardized form, which establish criteria of valuation according to factors, variables, and total and weighted scores. At least, this is what is frequently present in the regulations. But it is also habitual for such assignment of hierarchies to be determined by intuitive criteria of comparison with similar units, by institutional traditions, by the hierarchy that is intended for the appointee or by political-strategic ad-hoc considerations. Of all the cases surveyed, five report the use of the first mode of assignment and two report the second one.

The organizational charts of public administration sometimes admit horizontal structures and, in other cases, only vertical structures. In practice, however, there are some units, which generally are not part of the formal structure, that horizontally articulate activities carried out by two or more vertical units, in order to achieve results planned in programs and projects. More frequently, the horizontal structures are part of the organizational structure and they depend hierarchically from vertical units, while their personnel report to a coordinator or director of a horizontal unit. This type of institutional arrangement is reported in almost all the cases surveyed.

The assignment of authority and responsibility to the organizational units is carried out mainly on the basis of their respective functions and not according to results. The units are responsible for achievement of objectives and actions established in the charter or law of creation of the institutions, in organizational and process manuals, etc. Management control is limited to establishing if the functions entrusted to the different units were carried out according to regulations and authorized procedures. This description seems to apply according to the data to almost all the cases

Only in two cases (Honduras and Nicaragua), of the countries surveyed to date, is the assignment of authority and responsibility carried out according to results, in which case the units are considered as result centers and the assignment of authority and responsibility is based on the effective achievement of the goals of production, according to objective indicators which have been previously defined. In Nicaragua both types of

situations coexist, that is to say, certain agencies apply the first criterion while others use the second one.It is likely that this situations occurs partially in other cases.

The criteria used in the classification of job positions vary according to countries with the predominance of the use of ranking tasks, conditions and requirements. Classification can de also done according to the category in the job structure, and mixed or informal systems are used as well.

Together with a general regime for job positions, the legislation of various countries contemplates special situations, which establish job positions with special status or rank.:

a)   managerial positions, with executive functions or of senior management, characterized by the special conditions that are required from their holders (i.e. competitive selection process, testing, education, previous training requirements), or the possibility of being assigned special missions.
b)   "critical" posts, established according to the strategic importance or impact of the work of the job holders in the achievement of vital government goals or objectives, although they are not always identified in the classification systems or legally recognized by number and type.

Guatemala, Belize and Argentina have both types of regimes; five countries (Bolivia, Belize, Guatemala, Uruguay and Argentina) have systems of managerial positions with executive functions, which in Uruguay are very highly ranked, resembling positions of special trust. Something similar, but applied to the other type of regime ("critical posts") exists in Venezuela, where these positions are called "unclassified" as they are not included job position manuals, and can be freely appointed and removed. Brazil and Guatemala also have this type of positions, while the Honduran and Nicaraguan legislation does not contemplate these cases. Chile is initiating the process of recognizing critical posts, with special conditions for the holders.

2.6 Human Resource Management

Human resource management includes the group of activities required to administer the links between the public administration and its employees, all along the life cycle that a civil servant experiences throughout his career. Therefore, it includes selection and appointment, development, promotion, training, salary, retirement, obligations and rights of public servants. This management is usually backed by a legal framework of statutes and regulations, complemented by a series of norms and dispositions of lower rank.

In this section we will successively approach those diverse aspects of personnel management. We will also broach the subject of regimes for political or trust positions, in view of the significance that these positions have in some countries, the "politicization" it entails, and the impact on the implementation of public policies that may derive from high turnover in these positions.

2.6.1 Recruitment, hiring and duration of employment

Entry to the civil service can imply: a) becoming the holder of a specific job position; b) to be included in a corps or structure and, within them, in a scale, category or any other denomination that involves the capacity to carry out different jobs, in which an

administrative career develops; or alternatively c) both things at the same time. The cases surveyed show that the three situations seem to be evenly distributed, the first one prevailing in Central America and the second one in the Southern Cone.

It is unusual for governments to keep track of potential candidates for public sector employment that have passed the initial phase of evaluation (e.g. candidates for promotion, for re-entry into the civil service, or new candidates). Only Brazil and Belize have seem to keep up-dated records, while Guatemala and Uruguay also keep records, but they are not up to date.

The criteria used in the selection and incorporation of personnel in the public administration may correspond to any of the following situations:

a) Generalized selection procedures are used, based on competitive selection processes (open or closed), by means of transparent and objective criteria, comparison of backgrounds, neutral and competent juries, as well as other guarantees that ensure the incorporation of the best available candidates, in a scenario in which most of the personnel of a particular jurisdiction must go through an unique entry system.
b) Informal (or semi-formal) guidelines are used in the selection process, in which certain criteria of objectivity are respected (such as background searches, interviews and the matching of position and person).
c) Selection and incorporation of personnel in the civil service is largely based on trust, with scant attention to the merits of the candidates.
d) A mixed system of selection and entry, covering a certain number of situations (filling in of critical posts, directive functions, executive positions, etc.) in which the formalities of the competitive selection process apply and majority cases incorporated by direct appointment, with no selection process.

In the region the three last variants prevail, although several countries report more than one option. Argentina, Brazil and Chile are the only countries that report the generalized use of selection procedures as defined in option a). In other cases these procedures are used exceptionally in some specific jurisdictions, such as the foreign service or the health services. In conclusion option b) is used in four cases out of ten; c) in three cases and d) in four.

The dominant criteria in the appointment are, for the most part, the circumstances, background and formal achievements (i.e. seniority, diplomas, etc.) accumulated by the individual, although previously defined skill profiles, based on the needs specified in the job descriptions, are also considered. In several cases, both criteria are used.

As for who is accountable for the selection procedures of a public sector job, this responsibility might fall on:

a) the official (for example, a director) that heads the unit or department, or his superior;
b) an ad hoc technical body, within the same organization;
c) a different political instance or organization (ministry or specialized agency); or
d) an independent technical instance or organization.

Save for Brazil, in all countries the responsibility falls on the director (or his superior) of the organization that uses the selection to fill a position. In three cases (Argentina, Chile and Belize), the answers included more than one option. The instance of selection depends on

the nature of the position to be filled (e.g. senior management, middle management, technical, semi- or unskilled line positions).

The countries have been asked to inform about the possible existence of barriers that block or otherwise complicate the entry of persons belonging to certain minorities or sectors of the population into the civil service. Although legislation is not expected to establish such barriers, history has shown that in certain circumstances, there have been restrictions in employment due to gender, ethnical groups, religious beliefs, ideology and nationality, even in cases of foreign-born citizens. Although most answers report no restrictions, three countries have acknowledged the existence of barriers based on ideological considerations, political convictions of the candidates or the waiting period nationalized citizens have before they are eligible for state jobs (3 years).

The trial period that must elapse before a new civil servant acquires stability is relatively brief, generally about twelve months.[13] There are cases in which a mere three months suffice to be able to acquire this benefit (Honduras and Nicaragua) and in some cases the employees acquire stability from the moment they are appointed (Uruguay and Chile). Except for Belize, usually there is no evaluation until stability has been achieved and, when testing is required, there is no certainty that it will be administered. In part, this may be due to the fact that penalties do not exist or are not applied in the case of the supervisors of new workers that are on trial, and if testing is mandatory it is not carried out.[14] Finally, in Guatemala, Honduras, Venezuela, Brazil and Argentina the employee acquires stability by the simple passage of the trial period.

As for the institutional status of an appointee, there are various options. A person may become public servant by his entry into:

a) a fully multi-organizational institutional system (at national or federal levels; state, provincial or similar; municipal or local);
b) a partial institutional system, from which eventually certain sectors of the administration are exempt (such as police, education, health), that have their own workforce, or those agencies (public enterprises or other institutions) that have their own personnel system; and
c) a specific government organization (Ministry, Department, agency, enterprise).

Except for the first case, all the other possibilities may be found in the region, with a relative predominance of the third one, although in some cases more than one option was reported. This situation accounts for the existence of multiple legal frameworks. However, the decision to incorporate a new employee, and subsequently major decisions related to assignment, promotion and evaluation can be made, within the boundaries of the relevant regulations, by the director of the unit or division, by the head for the institution or agency, or at a level of multi-organizational responsibility. All these options, but above all the first two, are present in LAC: in 60% of the countries that responded, the decision falls on the head of the organization, although in several there were two or more options, as in the case of Belize, Nicaragua and Argentina. In the latter country, for example, responsibility falls on the head of the unit, on an ad hoc technical body, on a political instance, or an

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[13] In Brazil three years must elapse before the employee acquires stability
[14] Again, Brazil reports that such penalties exist and are applied.

independent technical agency, according to the employee system of each organization.[15] In the cases of Bolivia and Venezuela, the decision is made only by the director of a unit or department.

The external contracting of personnel, through service or term contracts, mainly to elude the restrictions regarding the hiring new workers or to attract them with better salaries, seems to be partially applied in the countries. The cases surveyed are evenly distributed: one third admit that this type of hiring is quite frequent (Bolivia, Honduras and Argentina). Another third indicate an intermediate situation (Nicaragua, Chile and Belize). The remainder indicate scarce or no use of these mechanisms.[16]

We note that some countries such as Brazil and Uruguay, do not allow vacancies in the public sector to be filled through the external recruitment of candidates, although more often no such prohibitions exist. Only in the case of Argentina, the prohibition applies to some institutions and specific positions. On the other hand, when the hiring of external personnel is allowed, it is also possible to do so at levels over the lowest rank in the job structure or personnel system. (i.e. entry level of civil service career).[17]

Finally, very few countries have legislation for priority groups to fill positions in the public sector, giving, for example, priority to candidates from within the organization, in the second place to those who are already in the civil service and lastly to external eligible candidates. This situation is reported in Argentina and Chile. In Nicaragua, Guatemala and Belize, in spite of the fact that such legislation does not exist, these different priorities are observed in practice, but the majority reports that usually there are no priority groups to fill vacancies.

2.6.2 Political and trust appointments

Almost all CS systems of the region include positions for political and trust appointments in the national government (including, for example, the Cabinet, advisors to Cabinet, presidents or directors of public enterprises and decentralized agencies, division heads, etc.), that is, personnel which is freely appointed and removed, that does not have stability and must resign when a minister or an immediate superior leaves office. Usually, however, there is no legislation limiting the number or ratio of political appointments in the total payroll of each organization, or in any way defining such a number or ratio. Only Argentina, Honduras and Chile report this kind of limitation. In any case, there are significant differences regarding the level of the organizational structure of the national government at which it is possible to appoint political or trust officials as head of a unit.

In the first place, the systems would be able to appoint political staff only up to the lowest level of cabinet appointments (i.e. under-secretaries of state or similar), presidents of public of enterprises and decentralized agencies, or positions of equivalent hierarchy, and

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[15] In Brazil normally a Director has faculties to propose rankings for evaluation and promotion, so that the decision to appoint a new employee is reserved to the organization's political authority, provided vacancies are allotted by a inter-.governmental commission.

[16] In the case of Brazil there are no records.

[17] Once more, Brazil proves its singularity by its decision of not allowing a new employee to be placed in any position over the one allotted on entering the administrative career.

their advisors. This situation, has been reported with reservations by two of the countries of the region[18].

Alternatively, also it could be possible for such appointments to cover positions in the hierarchy immediately below (e.g. directors or managers). About half of the cases surveyed apply this policy (Bolivia, Guatemala, Honduras and Belize). Lastly, in the other half (Guatemala, Venezuela, Brazil, Nicaragua and Chile) political appointments can occur at even lower levels of the hierarchy (e.g. heads of Departments, junior managers). These are clear indicators of the level of politicization of appointments, which reach levels of medium responsibility, and therefore of the relatively low ceiling that an administrative career has in the public sector. In addition it is an indirect indicator of the unstable leadership and lack of continuity in the execution of government policies and plans.

In general, the countries have no legislation limiting the number or ratio of political appointees in the total payroll. But in certain cases the law determines a fixed amount:

a) according to ministries (e.g. Uruguay, where the ministries are known as *incisos,* sort of *clauses*),
b) according to the organizational structure of each institution (Venezuela),
c) according to the size of the payroll available to make the appointments at different political levels (Argentina)
d) limiting the trust positions to the first three hierarchies in the SC (Chile) and
e) legally indicating the positions that can be covered as such. (Honduras).

In any case, the number of political or trust appointments is significant, ranging from a total 300 to 500 appointments in the smaller countries to several thousands in those of larger population and size. In many cases it is acknowledged that the appointment of personnel in political and trust positions is a means to circumvent the restrictions of frozen vacancies or salary "caps": appointments are possible and salaries offered are considerably higher.

Average tenure of political or trust appointments vary a great deal, depending mainly on how the political context evolves. Nevertheless, the countries coincide in indicating that average duration of political appointments is not less than two years.[19]

2.6.3 Job security in the civil service

Once stability is achieved (regarding the trial period or other conditions), job security of the civil servants tends to be extensive, but with varying scope in the different CS systems. However, there are only few cases in which regulations refer to types and number of job positions that are subject to differentiated treatment in this matter. The differences derive mainly from the labor regime applicable to different types of workers, although there appears to be a trend towards a greater flexibilization in working conditions, with a clear tendency to include a growing proportion of personnel into a system of free hiring and firing along the lines of the private sector labor market.

Neither it is usual to find that regulations are actually applied, in cases of negative performance evaluations, acts of corruption, non-compliance of duties or others, when

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[18] In the case of Argentina, in the last year there has been an increase in appointments of National and General Directors. In Uruguay, instead, appointments include up to the level of Director of Executive Unit, that is, not including advisers.
[19] With the exception of Guatemala, where average tenure is between 1 and 2 years.

they mandate the dismissal or firing of the civil servant, nor of those rules that apply sanctions or dismissal in the case of workers that take part in strikes that disrupt activities in the public administration. Therefore, the loss of the employment due to causes in the first type of situations does not usually happen in most cases. Some countries inform that the degree of effective enforcement of this extreme sanction is medium and only in two cases is there a rigorous enforcement of dismissal norms.[20] As for the participation in disruptive strikes, the results are the opposite. In almost half of the cases surveyed such participation can lead to sanctions (including dismissal) and these rules are enforced; in the other 50% the procedures leading to the sanction and dismissal may be pursued, but the decision is seldom carried out. And only two cases (Venezuela and Argentina) report that participating in strikes does not provide a reason for sanctions or dismissal if legal requirements are met.

2.6.4 Types of the labor relations

In most civil service systems, we find special hiring regimes, such as daily employment, hiring on private sector terms, hiring for a limited period of time as temporary staff and hiring through international agencies, using service and term contracts.

Although the employment of day laborers, while not reaching significant proportions in the whole of the public administration, it is frequently utilized to carry out public works and for transitory or seasonal activities. The percentage of people hired according to the legislation of the private sector is low and is randomly distributed, with a great dispersion. Instead, the other two forms of hiring not only have greater significance, but they have also become the two modalities that many countries have recently resorted to as part of state reform and restructuring processes.

Contracts for limited periods of time, besides being associated with the execution of public works investment programs and projects, has accompanied the expansion of employment used to achieve other kinds of objectives (social programs and projects, institutional development and strengthening, etc.), in a manner similar to the hiring through international agencies. Two main factors, both associated to state reform processes, account for the growth of these two types of hiring: in the first place, the increasingly generalized use of program budgeting, which allows a more flexible use of human resources; and additionally, the growing role of international agencies in the financing of programs and projects.

A significant part of contract personnel hired in temporary plants tends to remain on the job for periods that vary from one to five years. In any case, the phenomenon admits different interpretations. On the one hand, we can consider that this modality of employment permits a more adequate and flexible use of human resources; on the other hand, we can interpret it as evidence of growing instability in public employment, which seems to be the consequence of the need to elude restrictions: a) in the recruitment of new personnel; b) to fill vacancies by the recruiting of candidates outside the civil service; or c) to offer salaries that are above the current civil service wage in order to attract specialized human resources.

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[20] In Argentina, for example, although effective application is high, there must be many previous offences. In Chile in cases of corruption, the attrition rate is high, but low in the case of poor performance.

While barriers to entry for new personnel are frequently a result of downsizing and restructuring programs, the other restrictions are usually a consequence of pressures from the civil servants themselves, directly or through their union representatives. All these restrictions have a diffuse presence, with regulations that vary significantly both between agencies and between the different personnel structures.

2.6.5 Promotion systems

In promotions to positions of greater responsibility, there are sometimes situations that are similar to those analyzed in the case of recruitment into the CS. In some countries, legislation establishes priorities for applications or promotions to higher positions, with, for example maximum priority for candidates from the same organization, secondly for those who are already in civil service, and lastly for eligible external candidates. Guatemala, Uruguay and Argentina, that have such legislation, really enforce it in the aforesaid sense. In very few cases (Nicaragua and Belize), in the absence of regulations, these priorities are applied in practice. But in the great majority of the cases, no priority groups are established to fill vacancies.

Promotions are based on different criteria. Seniority is frequently considered but is not determinant. The need to use promotions as a means to improve pay levels of employees, independently of capabilities or performance, has much more weight. It is also quite frequent to find that performance evaluations and their results are a determining factor, or have certain weight as regards promotions. In contrast only Venezuela considers annual training as a decisive factor. .

In most cases promotion is contingent to the availability of positions, while in a few no such restrictions exist. When this is so, the promotion to a higher category or degree in the structure happens automatically once all requirements are met (e.g. seniority, training credits, transfers to other jobs, performance evaluation and others). The point is important because when there is no link between available positions and promotions, the job structures tend to get distorted, thinning at the base and becoming top heavy, ending up, in practice, as meaningless structures when promotion of employees is simply done to improve salaries.

2.6.6 Horizontal occupational mobility

The functional mobility of personnel appears in different forms. In general, it is possible to grant transfers to other organizational units on a temporary basis, on request from the interested party and with the consent of the receiving unit, but more often (80% of the total) temporary commissions are granted so that personnel may work in other units or organizations, on the initiative of the unit of origin and with consent of the receiving unit. There are not many cases, on the other hand, in which such temporary transfers or commissions actually become permanent, neither are they totally blocked.

As for geographical mobility, defined as functional mobility that implies a transfer of residence, in some cases it happens on the initiative of the organization to which the employee belongs, although with greater frequency, it occurs only at the request, or with the consent of the employee involved. Only in the case of Bolivia is functional mobility not allowed or is only used in exceptional situations.

Whatever the form of occupational mobility, however, we find differences regarding its organizational scope. There do not appear to be situations of unlimited scope (except in the case of Argentina) for all the public system, including sub-national levels (e.g. functional mobility between a municipality and the federal government), and neither is it frequent (except for Brazil) that it apply to all the institutional system of a same jurisdiction. On the other hand, it is more common for this option to be used with certain exceptions (e.g. transfers of workers to positions that belong to different personnel systems). It is also common to find functional mobility operating inside a given sector (teaching, health, police, etc.) or within the same organization.

2.6.7 Systems of performance evaluation

There are few countries in which there is an effective and generalized application of formal systems for evaluating performance based on principles and technical instruments aimed at ensuring impartiality and quality in the assessment.[21] It is more likely to happen only in certain institutions and/or categories of personnel, and not always regularly, but in occasional or sporadic moments. Finally, in Honduras, Nicaragua and Bolivia this type of formal evaluation is not applied.

The questionnaire distributed among the countries anticipates a number of reasons that could explain the absence of systems of performance evaluation: too rigid, complex, burdensome or difficult to apply by the senior staff. Curiously, the great majority of the answers received have chosen the option "other reasons". Thus, the reasons given are:
- They have not been designed but could be put into practice;
- Lack of interest in the development of the human resources;
- Technical limitations to introduce them;
- Resistance to face the inter-personal costs of mandatory excellent and very good qualifications for the performance bonuses; or
- They are simply not applied.

In any case, it is well known that senior staff find these systems difficult to apply, as they are often compromised before their subordinates by the decisions that are made, or because they have misgivings about the effective enforcement of the sanctions that may derive from a negative evaluation.

Considering the limited number of cases which apply systems of performance evaluation, the responsibility of carrying out the evaluation falls in most countries on the immediate superior, with or without validation from the next hierarchical level. Less often, there are mechanisms of self-evaluation, of consensual evaluation with the superior or of evaluations carried out by an ad hoc body, which can be internal or independent.[22]

The methods of evaluation are varied, although the mixed types tend to prevail, in which there are elements of evaluation of results (what the employee achieves) integrated to behavioral evaluation (how he obtains results). Methods based on only one of these factors are rare. [23]

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[21] Only Uruguay, Chile and Belize report this type of practices
[22] In Bolivia, for example self-evaluation is carried out, though very sporadically. In Chile instead, there is a pre-qualification of performance ,by the direct supervisor.
[23] Behavioral or conduct evaluation and evaluation of results, in Uruguay and Venezuela respectively.

As for the objectives of performance evaluation, again there are diverse situations. Evaluations that pursue multiple objectives prevail, such as justifying the payment of variable salaries, deciding on promotion, detecting training needs and planning courses and programs, encouraging career development in personnel, strengthening of relations between employees and supervisors, thus stimulating improvements in job performance, justifying disciplinary measures or serving as informative source in decisions about termination of employment. Two of the countries surveyed (Venezuela and Belize) inform that practically all these purposes underlie the process of evaluation, but in general, the option is a combination of two of them, mainly those linked to promotion and the payment of some variable remuneration.

It must be emphasized that, save a few exceptions, such as Guatemala and Uruguay, the systems of performance evaluation, when they exist, tend to discourage the assignment of low grades in cases of poor performance, or to expose the evaluator to the risk of physical, legal, property or moral damage. Thus, usually the immense majority of the personnel obtain the maximum or the two highest grades of the scale, since there are no incentives for the evaluators to assign fair grades, that reflect the real differences in performance, instead of rewarding the majority with homogeneously high grades.

In the cases in which bonuses or compensations exist, resulting from some form of performance evaluation, in their distribution among the employees the following criteria may be applied:

a) Distribution among all personnel. Budget allocations are made for compensations related to merit, productivity or the like, which are distributed among all personnel according to some criterion, generally not associated to individual merit but to seniority or category in the job structure. When these compensations are associated formally to the individual evaluation, the characteristics of the instruments employed or its application, eventually lead to all or the majority of the personnel receiving this bonus.

b) Distribution among the personnel with best evaluations. The mechanisms of allocation are designed so that only a part of the personnel receive bonuses according of their evaluation in each period, or else, in practice they are paid different proportions of the compensation.To acquire legitimacy there must be guarantees that there are reasonably equal opportunities to accede to the compensations and that mechanisms of evaluation are transparent.

This second option appears more frequently, but presents the defects indicated above. The first option, on the other hand, does not seem to be applied in a generalized manner in an entire jurisdiction, but it is used in some isolated organizations, such as the tax revenue services.

Finally, and in relation to the frequency of the evaluation, regulations, whether enforced or not, almost always require annual evaluations, although there are also cases in which the norms stipulate more frequent evaluations (e.g. semi annually) or these are carried occasionally or sporadically.

2.6.8 Training and human resource development

In over half of the countries reported, legislation stipulates mandatory allocation of resources for staff training activities[24] but in the remaining cases this is not considered. When it is mandated, the types and objectives of training activities refer mainly to the need to: a) train civil servants for promotion and b) correct knowledge or skills deficit. In no case is it related to the development of qualifications of personnel for reasons of replacement schedules or for the purpose of rewarding highly qualified employees. In practice, the training and development activities are limited, due to budget constraints or lack of political will to give priority to the promotion of these activities, or by the incapacity to program them according to a realistic diagnosis of individual shortcomings in skills.

Among the basic orientations exhibited by civil service development programs, the following may be highlighted:

a) Development programs geared to individual professional profiles, according to available opportunities and resources and of individual needs and potential.
b) Development programs designed for professional institutional profiles (managerial, research, technical, etc.) in which the individual potential is evaluated in relation to these profiles. These systems require mechanisms to evaluate persons and to assess their backgrounds.
c) No formal development programs. The public administration (whatever the jurisdiction) has no system or mechanism for the design and ongoing implementation of personnel development programs, or else they are used exceptionally in some organizations.

The third option describes the most frequent situation, with two cases classified as type a) (Chile and Belize), and two as type b) (Argentina and once more Belize). As regards the basic orientation of the training programs, two options are present:

a) Training activities that respond to specific demands. There are training programs and plans based on the detection of the needs of employees, using permanent and systematic instruments. The resources for these programs and plans are included in the budget. In certain cases, the programming is linked to career systems, with training credits required in order to advance horizontally or vertically in the structure.
b) Training activities based on an unspecified supply, unrelated to the detection of individual skills deficit. In this case, supply generates its own demand. Training activities consists of indiscriminate offers of courses, generally in a sporadic way and with total absence of systematic evaluation of training needs of the different strata or levels of personnel.

Most situations correspond to the second orientation (60%).

Overall, there is no state monopoly for training public employees, although the majority of the countries have training centers that concentrate most of the training activities. Only Bolivia informs the existence of a monopoly, adding that this circumstance conspires against the quality or effectiveness of training.

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[24] Nevertheless, in certain cases (Chile) although the state has a generic obligation, there is no specific number or amount.

One of the reasons for the limited scope of training activities in the CS is that current regulations related to training do not stipulate mechanisms that hold heads of units or programs accountable for the allocation of resources and the results of the activity carried out. In absence of evaluation of this activity and of sanctions, the system tends to feed back lack of interest and mediocrity.

The proportion of the payroll allocated to CS training varies considerably. In general, there are significant variations in the resources that the different institutions of the public sector assign to training activities. For example, more frequently we find that resources are allocated in more or less significant amounts to train specialized personnel that are not part of the general personnel system of the public administration, such as health, education, tax collection, foreign service or public enterprises and decentralized agencies. There are also substantial differences in the training offered to different types of personnel (and job levels), and frequent cases, for example, of training activities focused on middle management.

In some cases, governments, through some of their institutions, promote postgraduate training or specialization courses for their agents abroad, offering them scholarships in exchange for the commitment to return to service for specific periods of time when the course concludes. In other cases, only leave of absence is granted, on a salary or not, when an employee is admitted into a postgraduate program. Venezuela, in particular, exhibits long and intense work in this field, especially through programs and specialized foundations (e.g. Fundayacucho).

2.6.9 Working conditions

Among the rules that govern labor conditions, working hours have frequently been the object of negotiation and a relative source of privilege compared to the private labor market. Although, historically, the work day has shrunk significantly, there has been a trend of shorter working days for public employees compared to workers in the private sector.

We could argue that this situation is related to the salaries which are paid each market, under the assumption that remuneration in the civil service is lower than what is paid in the private sector. This is not necessarily so, and usually depends on the hierarchy of the position, or at times, on personal relations (patronage) that the employee has developed. As we will see in the section on the wage structure, there seems to be a recurrent pattern in the countries, in which salaries of lower level state personnel are comparatively higher than salaries of equivalent positions in the private sector; and inversely, personnel in higher levels, particularly in the top echelons, have comparatively lower salaries.

In any case, in a same country there may be large variations in the work day, according to personnel systems which are more or less privileged. This is even more notorious in the cases of the differences that often exist between personnel employed by the national public administrations and sub-national ones. For example, in some Argentine provinces the work day lasts 6 or 7 hours. Information provided by LAC countries indicates that the average workday lasts 8 or more hours, although there are some countries like Uruguay in which, on average, more than 60% of public employees work less than 7 hours per day.

Working hours constitute another unresolved issue. Given the great variety of activities and services that the public administration carries out, in many cases the working day has

to adapt to restrictions imposed by the nature of those services. In some cases continuous attention is required, as in police stations, emergency rooms in hospitals or fire brigades. In the Central Administration, there is a tendency to keep the same hours in all ministries, but decentralized agencies that attend the public generally set their own timetables.

Another issue related to working hours is the flexibility that exists in some administrations to set timetables that usually accommodate more to the needs of the employees rather than to those of their customers. This issue is also related to a very singular characteristic of public employment, in that it is often used as unemployment insurance or moonlighting, while other jobs are held, aided and abetted by working hours that facilitate double or multiple employment, as in the case of continuous six hours shifts that leave mornings or afternoons free. These possibilities are a great deal more accessible to professionals, and in some countries such as Uruguay or Argentina, they can work in their profession in other public or private venues.

2.7 Salary Administration

Salaries constitute, in the first place, the material reward for services rendered to the state by its employees. But they are also an expression of institutional policy regarding retention and career development of its personnel. Implicitly, the salary structure may include -or not- a greater part of the incentives that promote a meritocratic behavior, permanency in the public sector, the assumption of greater responsibilities, ongoing training and other attitudes which favor increased adjustment between individual and institutional goals. To a large extent, the degree of motivation of the salary system is linked to the structure, flexibility and composition of salaries.

2.7.1 Structure of the salary system

Most of the current salary systems in the public sector of the region do not seriously observe the principle of "equal payment for equal job in similar conditions" (which assumes that employees that carry out similar tasks in different levels and institutions are paid approximately the same amount). With the exception of Honduras and Belize all countries indicate that their systems are not following this principle.

This is corroborated by the fact that, in general, no systems of job valuations are utilized in order to define the salary structure. When it does occurs, the systems can consist of:

a) a specific method of valuation (scores, ranking, etc.) and comparison with studies of other reference groupings; or
b) an internal system, that compares the internal relevance of the different types of positions, but does not cross-reference their value with external market wage conditions.

The second of these options seems to prevail.[25] Consequently, it is not usual for the wage scale which results from the classification of positions in the public sector to take into account competitiveness with similar positions in the private labor market.

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[25] Once more Honduras and Belize are the exceptions, with both countries leaning towards the first option.

To have an idea about the shape of the curve that defines the salary structure of the countries of the region, we requested information about the relation between the minimum basic salary and the salary of the maximum degree in the salary scale.[26] The answers show large variations and indicate equally important differences in the "flatness" of the curve, which is often a disincentive for better performance. The end values are 1 to 2,89 times higher and 1 to 67 times higher, with significant differences in the intermediate situations (e.g. 1 to 10, 1 to 26).

Governments of the region were also asked about average range in salaries (difference between the basic salary and highest salary) for the highest and lowest levels of the salary structure. For example -according to indications- this range can be 100% in the lower level and 60% in the highest end of the scale. Theoretically, the salary ranges tend to be greater at the lowest levels of the salary scale (for example, an employee may collect a salary that is 100% higher than the basic salary due to other additional benefits, such as seniority, child benefits, meals or others). On the other hand, in the top levels, the additional benefits over and above the basic salary tend to be lower. Although situations reported fall within "expected" values, such as 80%-60%, 100%-55% or even 96%-96%, respectively, there has also been a case (Uruguay) in which the relation is sharply inverted (25%-300%), a situation that could be explained by the fact that, in this case, the significance of the basic salary is the lowest one reported to date.

Finally, although LAC do not at present have the levels of inflation that the region experienced in the past, countries were asked to give their opinion about the distortions that sustained inflation could have caused in the salary structures in the public sector, and the devaluation of the pay scale, without being able to carry out the appropriate adjustments. The distribution of the answers is even among those that have answered that the effect has been high, medium and low.

2.7.2 Criteria for defining the composition of salaries

The criteria used to define the composition of salaries vary significantly according to the CS systems. Nevertheless, in the majority of them, principally in Central America, a very significant part of the salary comprises concepts associated with the nature and level of the position occupied by the personnel. Likewise, in only two countries (Uruguay and Belize), a significant proportion of the salary is formed by concepts which have to do with personal characteristics, such as the category in the personnel system, seniority, training and others, that depend on individual valuation, and which are maintained once they are acquired and do not change in relation to function or level of performance.

On the other hand, the relative significance of the additional benefits, insofar as they represent compensations linked to characteristics or circumstances of the persons, with the requirements of the job or with the level of performance, varies enormously between salary systems and sub-systems, even in the same country. In some cases, the number of additional benefits may be well above 50 (e.g. Uruguay and Venezuela)[27] but in other

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[26] Certainly, this isolated piece of information does not allow us to identify the "shape of the curve", since its trajectory may exhibit substantial changes for the different salary degrees, but at least it gives us an idea about its extremes.

[27] It is necessary to clarify that the number of additional benefits is obtained by adding all those that are paid in the Public Administration and not only the ones that are paid in a specific agency.

cases additional benefits are virtually non existent (e.g. Bolivia, Honduras and Nicaragua inform that the salary composition includes less than 10 additional benefits). Finally, there are countries in which additional benefits vary between 10 and 50 (e.g. Argentina, Chile, Guatemala). Though salary composition comprising many additional benefits can help to better discriminate responsibilities and types of tasks, or differential working conditions which develop in the workplace, it has often served to resolve wage disputes, through the granting of additional benefits that would have a limited scope, and therefore, would not substantially affect the total payroll of the public administration.

The answers to the question about the proportion of the basic salary in relation to the total salary confirm the differential situation that the countries exhibit in this matter. In Honduras, Nicaragua and Bolivia the percentage is above 80%, in Guatemala and Venezuela it varies between 50% and 80% and in Brazil, Argentina Chile and Uruguay, the basic salary represents less than half of the total.

Likewise, the capacity to ensure the strict observance of policies and central directives regarding salaries also reveals big differences between countries and between organizations in same country, although most questionnaires acknowledge capacity to control in some areas. This capacity has a strong correlation with the availability of information systems capable of monitoring in a regular and appropriate manner the enforcement of government policies on salaries for public employees.

2.7.3 Payroll systems

The mechanism used for the purpose of preparing the payroll and the payment of salaries can adopt some of the following forms:

a) An organizational unit (e.g. Computer Center), reporting to a Ministry of Planning, of Economy, of the Civil Service or similar functions, has the responsibility of preparing the lists and processing the salaries of all public employees.
b) A unit similar to the previous one has the responsibility of processing the salaries of a considerable part of the payroll; other institutions such as decentralized agencies, public enterprises or even organizations of the Central Administration (such as education) have their own systems for this task.
c) Practically every institution has its own payroll system and processes the salaries.

In the region all three forms are present, with the third option prevailing. It is not unusual that a country like Nicaragua should have a completely centralized payroll system (the only one reported) but it is strange that countries of similar size have multiple systems. The issue is important, inasmuch as the existence of a centralized system, though distributed, has ample advantages from the point of view of the control and of the possibility of developing managerial systems of information, both institutional and central. Brazil, for example, which has a numerous and extended civil service, has developed a sophisticated centralized payroll system that, although it does not monopolize all the payment of salaries, is used in most state institutions.

3 The Civil Service and second generation reforms

3.1 Challenges in modernizing civil service systems

The analysis made in chapter 2 allow some insights into state of affairs of the current CS systems in the region, especially in relation to a greater part of the mechanisms and specific rules of the game the systems use. In this chapter we will analyze the strategies followed by the governments to overcome some of the existing constraints or restrictions, reflected in the preliminary diagnosis. Our examination will include, as far as possible, the links between actions or solutions effectively implemented and the global strategy of state reform.

The history of the 20th century has innumerable episodes of attempts of large scale state reform, interpreted as systematic and massive efforts aimed at transforming certain characteristics of the organization and operation of the state apparatus in order to endow it –to use a traditional term- with greater efficiency and effectiveness. During most of the century they were known as "administrative reforms", a very precise expression which refers to the type of changes advocated.

The periodic announcements of massive reforms can be considered as milestones, as moments of condensation and acceleration, along a slow and incremental process of change. Beyond their impacts and immediate consequences, it is necessary to emphasize the symbolic and rhetorical value of these reformist endeavors, as an expression of the will to change of society and state.[28] The Latin-American experience offers numerous examples of these periodic bursts of reform. In a relatively recent paper, Spink (1997) examines 70 years of reform in the region, starting with the Kemmerer missions in the ´20s and the early 30's in Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, Bolivia and Peru. Similar attempts were tried in Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay and Panama in the 30's and 40's. Gilbert Siegel (1964) and Lawrence Graham (1968) carried out in-depth studies of the reforms in the Brazilian civil service during the Getulio Vargas´ *Estado Novo*. In the 50s, the creation of the EBAP in Brazil and the ICAP in Costa Rica started a process of establishment of CS schools and institutes throughout Latin America that would eventually become the present ENAPs and INAPs.

Only as from the 60´s and 70´s did efforts become more systematic. The Alliance for Progress was an important trigger of the reforms in those two decades, during which USAID was the principal instrument of technical aid to the governments of the region. Simultaneously, United Nations missions began to carry out diagnoses and make recommendations in a great number of countries.

The preaching of CEPAL with its emphasis on planning and the need to have state structures for capably implementing development plans, offered an additional impulse to the debate and the reformist action. On the other hand, Venezuela and Mexico, which in

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[28] In this respect, March and Olsen (1983), after analyzing the history of administrative reforms carried out in the United States during the better part of the century, conclude that the balance is not encouraging or, at least, the record of changes is way below the expectations initially raised in each experience. Nevertheless, these authors point out that the manifest intentions and the actual message constitute values that the citizenship appreciates, and in that sense they assert that the president of a country could be criticized more for what he does not say than for what he fails to do on the subject.

those years were experiencing the economic boom produced by the unprecedented increase in oil prices, displayed an intense activity in the training of civil servants and in promotion of reforms in the public sector. It is no coincidence that these were the countries that in 1974 backed the creation of CLAD, which signified an important contribution to the generation and exchange of knowledge and experiences on administrative reform.

In this brief review of the last century, we find that there were recurrent attempts in the region to implement administrative reforms, much before they began to be ordered and numbered by generation. In our judgment, however, two particular characteristics of these experiences seem to differentiate them clearly from the initiatives of the 80's and, above all, of the 90's.

Firstly, the ideological climate in which those processes were conceived, reserved for the state a fundamental role as the venue of articulation of social relations and, therefore, did not seriously question its intervention in this instance.[29] In general, state structures and payrolls had reached their maximum expansion during the 60's and 70's. Together with the adoption of a growing role as an employer, there was an expansion of the state as entrepreneur, regulator and subsidizer. Reform recommendations did not advocate the elimination of public enterprises or of subsidies, but rather the institutional strengthening of the former and better control in the allocation of the latter. This situation would be in open contrast with the orientation favored in the following decade, which in time would evolve into to what today is known as the "first generation" of state reforms.

Secondly, the overall balance of the reformist initiatives described above evidenced scarce progress. In this sense, we coincide with Spink (1997) in that large scale reforms, viewed as systematic and massive attempts to thoroughly transform the public administration, were not successfully implanted in LAC, especially during the tenure of pluralistic and democratic governments. At the most, their results only covered a minimum fraction of the initial expectations. And although the bureaucratic-authoritarian states had better fortune, due to their own nature, in dictating legislation, in establishing systems, creating agencies and introducing certain modern administrative practices, the results on the whole did not last. On the other hand, reforms that many of those same countries undertook in the second half of the eighties and, especially, during the last decade, were carried out with a greater degree of success.

It would be legitimate to speculate on the different outcomes that the previous reforms exhibited compared to the more recent ones. A first explanation is found in the disparate nature of the changes pursued in each case, which, as must be acknowledged, could well invalidate the comparative exercise to a certain extent. Actually, the main purpose of first generation reforms was downsizing the state, not necessarily improving it. A smaller state did not signify reducing structure and payroll for the simple reason of rationality, but because the structure had functions and activities that in the new ideological context were considered illegitimate. In fact, the issue of organizational and functional rationality of the state, main focus of CS reforms, was relegated to a second phase. The objective was to dispose of entire institutional segments, through outright elimination or transfer to other jurisdictions. On the contrary, the pre-80s reforms were more inclined to strengthening the

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[29] Only at the end of the 70s, specially with the simultaneous arrival of conservative governments in USA and Great Britain, was there the beginnings of an incipient reversal in the ideological cycle that turned the state into the scapegoat for the economic slump, first due to oil prices and towards the end of the decade to the imminent default of the foreign debt. Latin American military regimes, such as the Argentine one would claim, in this new ideological climate, that "the smaller the State, the larger the Nation"

existing state apparatus and making it more efficient, just as, apparently, is the intention of the current second generation reforms. In this sense, and up to a certain point they are a prolongation of the old efforts at achieving a better state.

In first generation reforms there are usually two kinds of situations. Or the state stops doing "something" (e.g. production of goods, provision of services, regulation of certain actors), and is replaced by a third party (including the "invisible hand" of the market). Or well, it divests itself of an entire portion of state providers (i.e. public employees), with no replacements. Examples of the first situation are the privatization processes, outsourcing of services, decentralization and deregulation, in which service cooperatives, private enterprises, NGOs, the self-employed, sub-national governments or economic agents in general, find their sphere of competence potentially expanded with new business opportunities, new responsibilities or a bigger scope of action due to less regulation. The second situation corresponds, typically, to the processes of personnel downsizing, in exchange for material retribution in the form of compensations for voluntary retirement, early retirement or others, in which case the same functions must be carried out with a smaller number of agents.

An element common to all these reforms is the change that is produced in the nature of the legal relations that involve the actors in these diverse forms of transfer, as well as in the economic consequences that result from these arrangements. In many cases, these are the most conspicuous changes, since other aspects of reforms may not be evident or only appear in the medium and long term.

All the first generation reforms are oriented "outwardly" of the state apparatus: mostly they modify relations with society, not so much the structures, operational mechanisms or organizational culture. In the "inward" reforms, on the other hand, the fiscal and legal considerations are relegated to a second place, and technological and cultural transformations occupy the center of attention. By this assertion we are not trying to establish sharp differences, but rather to highlight relative weights.[30]

3.2 Successes and failures in the experience of the region (best practices)

The Latin-American experience registers very dissimilar progress as regards CS reform. In some cases, there were attempts to carry out important transformations in the rules of game that govern the relations between personnel and the administration, and these measures became the key pieces of the strategy to modernize the state. At least, this is reported Bolivia and Venezuela.

Starting from this leading role of CS reform, is possible to consider a variety of contrasting situations in which this type of change has had a decreasing significance to the point of not being considered in state reform programs. We anticipate that, in most cases, the countries will report that the modernization of the CS has been, either one of the more important components but not the main one, or a policy under which there were some actions aimed at improving management. The opinions collected lean to the first of these options (in 7 out of the 8 remaining cases although two countries, Argentina and Belize

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[30] It is relevant to say that, although there might have been a first–second generation sequence of reform, as defined by the World Bank, there is no consensus about the kind of reforms that strictly conform either stage. There have always been combinations of reforms of one or another type, even when, as we have tried to do, it is possible to distinguish them conceptually by the nature of the changes involved.

also chose the second option). Only in one (Guatemala) is it indicated that this type of reforms has not been considered or has been postponed to a later phase, adding that in its name there was privatization, with the more skilled employees moving out of the public sector.

Among the aspects that got most of the attention in the reforms that were actually carried out during the last decade, the following may be mentioned:

a) changes destined to introduce more rationality in the employee systems' scales or human resources regimes;
b) introduction of competitive and transparent mechanisms of selection and promotions;
c) implementation of performance evaluation;
d) rearrangement of the structure and/or composition of the salary systems; and
e) Increase in training and development of personnel.

All these options have been syndicated as object of reform, and in most cases, the answers included between two and five options.[31] The introduction of changes tending towards more rational employee systems has been the more ambitious and most frequently used modality, although at the same time greatly resisted by the employees and the labor unions. Besides, in some countries a common obstacle was the fact that most employee regimes contemplate collective labor contracts that are object of negotiation between the state and the unions, instead of being governed by legal instruments inherent to the public sector. Successful changes in human resource systems have generally coincided with strong cuts of public expenditures, backed by emergency laws that totally or partially suspended the collective labor contracts.

Increased transparency in appointments and promotions has also been a major target of the reforms, a policy which at the same time has consensus of both civil servants and unions. But it has only been introduced in a partial way, mainly in those areas of the civil service where the requirements of professional qualifications are stricter and, simultaneously, the nature of the services places the employees in direct contact with the public. Typical examples are the health and educational services.

One of the main obstacles for the generalized application of mechanisms of selection and promotions resides in the interest that political officials have in being allowed high degrees of discretion in the appointment of close collaborators, in addition to the existence of favoritism and patronage in relation to job positions of lesser qualification.

Even more important has been, according to the governments, the introduction of performance evaluation systems, at least as regards its legal formalization. In fact, seven countries[32] have mentioned it, which makes this the measure most commonly included in the reform programs. Paradoxically, it also appears to be the one with the lowest degree of implementation, if we consider the answers on the subject which were received in the questionnaires (see 2.6.7). In practice they tended to encounter serious obstacles, derived from the existence of cultural attitudes that are not permeable to the acceptance of meritocratic criteria of the type that are implicit in the qualification of performance. We anticipate that, in the experience of the region, there will be many attempts to incorporate

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[31] In fact, the 10 countries that responded chose a total of 28 answers related the inclusion of these options in the reform strategies.
[32] Bolivia, Uruguay, Venezuela, Nicaragua, Argentina, Chile and Belize

these systems into human resources management, but probably there will be very few successful results.

The rearrangement of the structure and/or composition of the salary systems has also been considered as one of the features that are frequently present civil in civil service reform. The situations observed differ not so much by the coherence of the salary systems that were tried to be introduced, but by the scope of their application. Thus, it is frequent to find that such rearrangements reached only to a part of the civil servants, generally the ones belonging to the Central Administration. Additionally, the acknowledgement of the rights acquired under the salary systems that were replaced means that the full enforcement of the new systems will only be achieved in the long run, ever so slower the lower the turnover rate.

Finally, although in a smaller degree, the promotion of training and development of personnel has also been incorporated to the programs of modernization of the CS. The importance of these reforms can be assessed from two complementary perspectives. On the one hand, the increase of the proportion of the civil servants that each year have access to training and development activities, as well as the increase in the frequency with which it they do. On the other hand, the degree to which mechanisms of detection of individual and institutional needs of training and development have been introduced, that lead to the use of adequate plans and programs. In general, the first type of innovation seems to prevail, and only exceptionally, the second aspect has been sufficiently considered. In this way, the possibility of accessing to training and development activities remains mainly freed to the individual initiative and interest of the civil servants. A factor that contributes to this is the scarce relation between levels of development reached by the employees and salaries.

Among the comments received in the surveys, some indicate additional efforts to overhaul the organizational structures and the job positions in relation to public processes and products, as part of the strategic redefining of state responsibilities and of the way it provides goods and services. This type of reforms, which Uruguay has been implementing for some years, aims in our view at the effective adoption of management by results and justifies, we believe, the emphasis that this paper gives to management of structures and job positions.

In the same manner, the comments refer to another type of change not included among the options to the question at hand. It deals with the development of systems to classify positions and to manage human resources, which have been undertaken in various countries, including among others, Panama and Nicaragua.

Some countries exhibit important efforts to improve the interaction between the civil servants and citizens. For this purpose, these countries have employed one or more of the following instruments:

a) training of personnel to improve service to the public;
b) diffusion of guidelines and manuals that facilitate administrative procedures;
c) access of the citizen, in his interaction with the public administration, to computerized information systems;
d) elaboration of citizin charters by public agencies; and
e) public hearings and citizen participation instances in management control.

The training of staff to improve service to the public, as well as the publishing and distribution of different types of manuals, constitute a frequently used initiative of governments, which has been in practice for many years both in centralized and decentralized forms. Uruguay, Venezuela, Nicaragua, Argentina and Belize coincide in that they have had both types of experiences. Access of the public to computerized information systems, is also becoming common although generally it is limited to information about the status of claims, it is applied in few institutions and does not yet include fully interactive mechanisms. Three of the countries named above have introduced this innovation, in addition to Brazil.

The signing of citizen charters and the introduction of public hearings as a mechanism of participation and citizen control, is very incipient, generally as pilot tests in decentralized or sub-national jurisdictions, but is still without any genuine roots in the administrative culture of the public sector. Argentina is found currently embarked in an ambitious program of diffusion of these charters, following the British experience, and has begun to use public hearings in areas related to regulation of public services, ombudsmen and consumer protection, etc.

Finally, and even when may not be legitimately included among second generation reforms, the mere reduction of personnel plants (downsizing) has had a strong impact on the CS and, from a certain perspective, can considered as successful reforms. The instruments used to achieve these reductions have been the following:

a) Voluntary retirement
b) Anticipated retirements
c) Elimination of contract staff or temporary personnel.
d) Transfer of personnel to on-hold status, prior to dismissal.
e) Redundancies due to overlapping structures
f) Direct dismissal, with or without severance pay.
g) Frozen vacancies

The information received confirms that all these modalities are or have been used in the experience of the region, without, save for voluntary retirements, a clear predominance of any one type. The most common characteristic of the answers is that most report the simultaneous or alternate use of several of these mechanisms.

3.3 Balance of CS reforms in LAC

The main conclusion that arises from the previous analysis is that many of the reforms that are currently considered to be part of the *best practices* according to the state of the art are reflected in the legislation of a fair amount of countries of the region, but were not actually put into practice according to the original intentions. Legislation dealing with the civil service, the public function, or more generically with reform or modernization of the state has been enacted in most of them. New career systems, specialized corps, more or less innovative training programs, regulations on selection and promotion, have created a generalized feeling that CS reform has finally found its place in the state's agenda. International funding has promoted the use of process manuals, of systems of job classification, computer technology for information systems and many other initiatives of the kind. And yet, once the results are reviewed, the gap between initiative and

achievement is still wide. In the final chapter we will analyze the reasons behind this lag, and will review the main challenges that must be addressed.

4. Pending reforms and challenges

When comparing the results achieved by the programs of modernization of the state, we can conclude that, from the point of view of the objectives proposed in their introduction, first generation reforms, oriented to minimize the state apparatus, have been relatively successful or could be expected to be so in the future.[33] Instead, second generation reforms have not achieved comparable results, in spite of the progress that can be seen in the countries. From the analysis carried out so far, it is possible to conclude that these pending reforms, aimed at improving, rather than reducing the state apparatus, include the following possible courses of action:

- Organizational restructuring of the administrative apparatus.
- Redesigning of the personnel structures.
- De-bureaucratization of norms, processes and administrative procedures, replacing it with results oriented management
- Introduction of a merit-based administrative career.
- Training and permanent development of personnel.
- Improvements in information systems and of its technological support.

This group of measures continues to be the hard core of the pending reforms in almost all the region. And in all of them the essential elements of change lead to a transformation of the culture and the prevailing management technologies in the public sector. To date, the relative failure of these reforms would seem to be explained, generically, by the perennial contradiction between the technical rationality on which they are based and the political rationality that interferes with its effective implementation. That is, the technical and axiological bases of these reforms (e.g. merit, responsibility, capacity, equity, transparency) are insufficient for overcome to the interests -not only material ones- that these measures affect (e.g. privileges, discretionality, nepotism, rent-seeking).

In this final overview, we will focus on analyzing the causes of this phenomenon, reviewing the specific manners with which this contradiction expresses itself in the various pending reforms. In the first place, to explain the contrast observed between the "successes" of reforms that tend to minimize the state and the relative failure of those trying to improve management. In second term, to improve our understanding about the way the criteria of political rationality operate in the implementation of the different types of the pending reforms. And in third place, so that feasibility analyses of the reforms, often inspired in a naive technical voluntarism, tend to explicitly incorporate realistic estimates about the chances of converting the political restrictions into controlled variables.

4.1 Organizational restructuring

Restructuring almost always implies a mere reduction in the number of existing organizational units. There is an illusion that if the quantity of ministries, under-secretariats, divisions or other types of units diminishes, there will have been an

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[33] This assertion does not consider the secondary impacts or consequences, negative in many cases, that these reforms had. For example, increasing rates of unemployment, more distortions in the production function of the state, enlargement of sub-national work forces, or overpricing of public service rates. Neither can it be suggested that these reforms are inevitable. Uruguay is a unique case in which the popular will has repeatedly rejected privatizations, but at the same time has achieved significant improvements in the performance of the public enterprises. Only in the last referendum has the door been opened to some partial reforms of this type.

improvement in the operation of the public sector. In terms of the new managerial vision of public sector management, on the other hand, restructuring is to adjust size, division of labor and allocation of competencies and resources to the mission that the organization has, keeping in mind the goals and desired results to be achieved in a given period of time.

Unfortunately, there are no "golden rules" in this matter, that may orient a correct quantification (rightsizing) of an organizational structure, whatever its mission. These "reforms" have often been limited to modifying the formal organizational charts, without considering that the ultimate object of an organizational design is, really, to have the most appropriate structure so the institution can achieve its objectives. It is hopeless to determine a numerus clausus on the basis of which, repeatedly units and levels are eliminated, so after a while, the very own bureaucratic dynamics will imperceptibly regenerate, or even end up by raising the number of agencies and units.

The redesign of the state is a permanent task that, as such, should be trusted to specialized political and technical units. To design the structures, to allot them competencies, to endow them with resources, to register changes permanently and, above all, to produce information about the type and quantity of results that are expected with those structures, all these at present constitute -at least according to the best practices indicated by the state of the art- the new routines of management and reform of organizational structures.

A well designed structure should reflect, implicitly, a rational plan of differentiation, specialization and integration (Lawrence and Lorsch, 1967) that considers an optimum allocation of responsibilities and resources, by way of contributing to the achievement of the results which, ultimately, justifies the very existence of the organization. The administrative practice inverts this simple logic. Very often, the structures are created to accommodate the persons. Very often the creation of units is used to reward loyalties, relocate political officials that have fallen out of favor or, simply, "promote" personnel when the career structure establishes ceilings or the salaries are low. In this way, the solution of political commitments or career problems are transferred to the institutional design, with which the organizational irrationality is extended and aggravated.

It very difficult to ignore the fascination provoked by the discretional, if not arbitrary, use of this extraordinary source of power. Therefore, not we will fall into the simplicity of denouncing this practice as manifestation of the high degree of nepotism that is still nested in the civil service of the region. We wish to indicate the enormous difficulty that its eradication entails, because it would imply giving a technical-administrative instance veto powers that would restrict the degrees of freedom that political authorities hold, in crucial matters such as deciding on the number, size, distribution, hierarchies and competencies of the units that form the organization. Here is the insurmountable schizophrenia to which the incumbent authorities are exposed: they accept the implicit values in the technical solution, but avoid using it in their own institutional setting so as not to fall prisoner of its possible consequences.

4.2 Redesign of personnel size and distribution

A major problem, faced by the majority of administrative reformers, is to determine the optimum size of civil service structures. Most of the time, this type of estimate is not

carried out, because to express the role of the state in operational terms is an extremely complex exercise and, generally, the necessary information to carry out that calculation is not available. The difficulty can be expressed in terms of the comparison between a **goals function** and a **production function**. The first concept alludes to the varied mix of orientations, policies and objectives that every government tries to achieve, on the basis of definitions included in its political program or platform. To do so, the government must obtain and combine human and material resources that, in different proportions, constitute the specific production function of each area.

In order to ensure an adequate fit between both functions, the quantity and quality of the resources used must correspond with the nature of the objectives pursued, situation that only happens occasionally. Usually one, or both of the following situations, will occur: 1) the human resources, and the corresponding expenditure absorbs a proportionally larger share than what is allocated to investments in infrastructure and/or operating and maintenance expenditures of the organization; 2) the combination of human resources employed do not satisfy the operating requirements, with a "excess-shortage" syndrome (Oszlak, 1972) in which the professional profiles of the employees show overabundance in certain categories (generally low-skilled ones) and deficit in others of greater technical requirements.

Given the narrow budget margins that characterize the countries with recurrent fiscal deficit and, above all, keeping in mind the inelastic nature of personnel expenditures, all attempts to change the production function rapidly find a ceiling. As it is a matter of achieving a better fit with the objectives function, the "downsizing" or "retrenchment" (i.e., the outright reduction of the structure guided by predominantly quantitative or fiscal criteria) do not satisfy the requirements of the "rightsizing", synonymous of an adjusted plant in which both quantitative and qualitative criteria intervene.

Voluntary retirement or anticipated retirement, repeatedly mentioned by the countries, reduce the structure, but at the same time tend to aggravate the problem of its deformity, because the personnel that retires is usually more experienced or likely to have a greater chance of finding a job in the private sector. To avoid this type of consequence, the retirement plans must impede the exit of qualified human resources, only allowing redundant or lower skilled workers to be included in the scheme.[34] In spite of the spectacular reduction of agents that sometimes occurs because of these policies, we believe that in most of the public administrations that have adopted them, there are still important problems of design in the employee structures of their institutions.[35]

Structural problems of this kind only can find solutions in the medium and long term. A possible strategy, in this sense, could be designing functional plants adjusted to the real requirement of management, in line with a vision of a society deemed desirable and of a legitimate mission to be pursued by the state. Based on this definition, it is necessary to "block" doors and windows of access to public employment, by **really** freezing the structure, and establishing a mechanism of control of structures, jobs and positions that

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[34] Though the regulations that approve these plans generally establish this type of restrictions, their effective compliance is undermined by the strong pressure exercised upon the decision makers to approve retirements not contemplated in the dispositions. This is another example of the distance that often exists between the spirit of the law and its effective enforcement.

[35] For several reasons too lengthy to explain, these problems are much more critical at the sub-national level, where the decentralization processes have provoked a strong rise and increasing distortion in the employment structure.

considers the gradual replacement of personnel who leave their job for reasons of age (or of another nature) by human resources that have the required profile for vacant job positions. Surely, the quantity of appointments needed to substitute (not replace) these natural vacancies would be considerably smaller, although the possible savings would be offset by the greater salary incentives that should be offered to the new personnel.[36]

This type of strategies sounds sensible to the political decision makers, but there are huge difficulties in putting them out in practice. In the first place, because they can signify, once more, resigning the use public employment as an instrument of political patronage. And in second place, because the decision will be taken today but its effects will be evident only in the medium and long run. Not it is easy to convince political officials to adopt measure that could expose them to immediate conflicts with the state workers and their unions, without the certainty of being able capitalize the results during their short mandates. Trapped in this dilemma, they only attempt to adopt short term measures (e.g. government borrowing using future taxation as collateral; establish spurious hiring mechanisms, use external loans for severance payment of retiring workers) that, generally, tend to aggravate the problems of oversize and deformity of the human resources structure.

4.3 Debureaucratization of norms, processes and administrative procedures

Although the problem of the debureaucratization has not been incorporated in the survey distributed among the countries of the region, we consider that it cannot be omitted from this analysis of pending reforms of the CS, since it directly and indirectly affects the possibilities of an efficient management and an adequate response of the civil service to the demands of the citizen.

On principle, the design and implementation of norms, processes and administrative procedures constitute the mechanism through which the state shows its capacity to satisfy demands of different external or internal users. The manuals of processes and administrative procedures tend to meticulously specify the circuit that each action should follow until a decision is reached, in which a right is acknowledged, an obligation is established, a sanction is applied or, in general, an administrative act is formalized.

The weberian arguments, that justify this institutionalized style of management on account of the public interest involved and the demarcation of responsibilities that every administrative act requires, have been criticized for their negative consequences on the transparency and efficiency of management. The rigidity of the procedure -the argument goes- is far too high a price to justify the resulting bureaucratic tangle and the lack of opportunity of the decisions that are finally adopted. This is why the file, physical vehicle that crosses the organizational assembly line, climbing up the hierarchy in search of a decision, has become the emblem of a barren bureaucracy.

Both in national and sub-national administrations, bureaucratization has tended to concentrate in staff functions (e.g. admission offices, legal counsel, personnel management areas, internal auditing, technical assistance offices). Issues that in normal

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[36] This possibility of renewing and reconsidering job profiles by taking advantage of worker turnover increases the higher the rate of turnover.

conditions should be resolved in a few hours or days, demand weeks, months and even years.

Among the factors associated to the difficulty of eradicating excessive red-tape in public management are:

a) The lack of clear-cut boundaries among the responsibilities of each organizational unit.
b) The reluctance to acknowledge responsibilities, and the lack of accountability.[37]
c) Absence of process manuals that describe, with some degree of detail, the procedures each action should follow until the decision level is reached
d) Obligatory sequence (or "route sheet") as criterion of circulation of the files, even in cases in which the simultaneous processing by two or more areas would be advisable.
e) Absence or lack of adequate diffusion of information systems for the follow-up of the procedures, so that it is possible to permanently monitor the current situation of the files and to control possible lags in processing at each intervening instance.

The first factor highlights the fact that, generally, there are no rules or manuals related to management of organizational structures or, if they exist, they neither identify nor specify the scope of responsibilities of the different institutions and units, in terms of competencies and results to achieved.

As regards the reluctance to assume responsibilities, it is a generalized belief -perhaps backed by the administrative practice- that the more numerous the number of stations a file has to pass through, and the greater the agreement between the opinions of the successive interventions, more adequate will be the decision adopted on the subject. But ultimately the unspoken objective is to dilute the responsibility, that ends upon an anonymous machinery which is unaccountable, since there is no institutionalized practice of accountability as a management requirement.

The lack of process manuals is symmetrical to that of the organizational manuals. Their use should not entail an increase in the bulk of the administrative procedure; on the contrary, they should contemplate typical situations that originate claims, reviews and decisions, in order to avoid pointless pilgrimages.

The simultaneousness of the procedure, when this criterion is applicable, constitutes a particular aspect that should be dealt with in the process manuals, as a result of its corresponding re-engineering. It is highlighted mainly because it represents one of the factors of greatest impact on bureaucratization[38].

Finally, we must highlight the progress that current information technologies foster in the monitoring of files and procedures. The initiatives for introducing these systems are still scarce, although they be are being extended quickly, above all at the municipal level. Generally, they allow citizens to know the status of their files or claims, by consulting a

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[37] In a group work of the Latin American Center of Administration for Development (CLAD), the current state of the different types of accountability were analyzed (CLAD 2000). For an analysis of various forms of state unaccountability see Oszlak,1998

[38] The very term "route sheet", so internalized in the bureaucratic culture, anticipates a long intra-organizational trip, in which the possibility of creating a "clone" of the file for its simultaneous processing in more than one instance, is hardly ever considered, so that a common decision may be reached by all parties, in a fast and negotiated manner. The feudalization of the state conspires against this type of institutional arrangements, by discouraging the coordination and the informal consultation which are typical of more open and collaborative organizational environments.

data base on a computer screen. On the other hand, its applications for the monitoring of internal files have not had an equivalent diffusion.

As proved in the preceding analysis, the available technologies would be easily able to solve the problems of existing bureaucratization. Besides, from the point of view of political rationality, there does not seem to be, in this case, manifest contradictions with the technical criteria and tools that provides the expertise to overcome these expressions of bureaupathology. Therefore, ¿what can explain its continued existence?

Earlier on, we listed a series of factors associated to this phenomenon. Some of them are clearly technological; other, relate to the dominant culture. However, we believe that the deepest causes are related to the resigned attitude of the responsible politicians who believe that attempts to transform those cultural features will turn out to be useless.[39]

In addition, we must bear in mind that the effectiveness and efficiency of every management process depends to a great extent on the degree of coordination that can be achieved in the interaction between multiple these actors and of to the extent that these actors can be required to account for the quality or opportunity of their intervention. The "coordination crisis", that authors like Phillip Cooper refer to, and the absence of accountability, add even more difficulties to the prospects of reform. For the political authority, "taking the chance" in this terrain equals to: 1) to exercise full authority of their office, introducing the managerial systems of information, monitoring and management control as natural mechanisms of management; and 2) to apply sanctions for non compliance, thus enforcing rules that generally exist and few obey.

4.4 Introduction of a merit-based administrative career

A characteristic feature of the numerous attempts recorded in the history of the administrative reforms in the region, is the insistence in assuming that simple legislative changes will provide sufficient bases for the introduction of an administrative career. All these attempts could be reconstructed by piecing together numerous statutes, employee systems or regimes which replaced themselves successively through time. This "history" would reveal, almost certainly, that the ideas were correct, oriented by criteria which were modern for the time and relevant for the management of the diverse aspects that should be contemplated in a professional career in the public sector.[40] But also very likely, this history would be far from reflecting a real application of its precepts.

To go through an administrative career, as we have indicated, implies to going through a life cycle: entry, training, working in positions with different degrees of responsibility, periodic evaluations, to rise in the structure and the personnel system, to obtain a better salary and to retire on reaching a specific age and years of service. But beyond these aspects, almost always carefully observed in the regulations, to complete a career also

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[39] At risk of trivializing a well-known issue, we must remember that internal management processes have a dynamics conditioned by multiple variables. In the balance of power between the political instance and the permanent bureaucracy, the latter has in its favor two invaluable resources: 1) its knowledge of the "consecrated" channels of internal communication, of the administrative nooks and crannies and of the file depositories; and 2) its surviving all the successive political governments, which always lack the requisite time to generate and introduce deep transformations.
[40] For a comparative analyses of processes to introduce civil service systems see Morgan and Perry (1988), Bekke, Perry and Toonen (1996) and Rahman (!998). Reid, and more recently Spink (1997) offer interesting contributions on the subject in the Latin American experience

means to have taken advantage of learning opportunities, personal growth and professional development, as well as to have achieved material and moral recognition based on merit, equity and transparency.

The data collected and material consulted show that, during the last fifteen years, there were some important changes in these aspects, but many more are demanded by future reforms. New personnel regimes were created, oriented by managerial criteria; legislation was written about the competitive selection processes and periodic evaluation of performance; training programs were reinforced; and new data processing systems were developed to support to the human resources management. But many of these attempts were interrupted by a variety of circumstances: frequent turnover of those in charge, strong bureaucratic resistance to change, technological difficulties in the implementation of systems and/or an excessively slow incorporation of the new techniques by the existing administrative culture. Therefore, there are few cases in which there has been a real implementation of competitive selection (whether open or internal) as pre-requisite for entry; of performance evaluation based strictly on merit and the rewards of differential material incentives; of the promotion conditioned by qualifications and training and not by simple seniority; or the adoption of salary structures that reward merit and responsibility, besides the personal conditions of the employee.

In this way, appointments are still conditioned by favors or partisan loyalties; evaluations, when carried out, try to minimize conflict through a leveling out that tends to recognize merits that are not based on real performance, with the intention of preserving a formal authority that is not backed by leadership and responsibility; promotion operates automatically by the simple passage of time, which distorts the organizational pyramid and reduces incentives to take on responsibilities; and the salary systems continue to preserve small (or large) conquests in the job structure, without any technical criterion to justify the existence of widely different regimes and treatments to deal with similar situations.

The introduction of a professionalized administrative career is surely one of the areas in which second generation reforms encounter and will continue to encounter maximum difficulties of implementation. More than in other areas, the firmness of the political will and refusal to turn back, are in this case, indispensable conditions to achieve irreversible changes. No doubt, it is necessary to overcome powerful resistance. For the state worker it is not easy to accept that barriers to promotion determined by the availability of vacancies in upper positions. Or that ranking in performance evaluation results from a transparent process of analysis and negotiation involving the whole organization.[41] Or that the selection process for certain positions can be open. Or that the salary systems tend more to compensate hierarchy and responsibility of the position or the merit accredited in performance, than the attributes and situation of the persons. Or that the repetition of a poor performance, as well as the sanctions applied for not complying with conditions stipulated in statutes and contracts, can lead to the automatic loss of the job.

The way in which these issues are addressed defines the real scope of a professional career in the civil service. And each one of them can become arenas of confrontation and

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[41] The most common performance evaluation systems are based either on the discretionary allotment of points by the immediate superior, which tends to skew the evaluation towards the higher values of the scale, or on what is known as forced distribution, which obliges evaluators to assign points following a distribution according to bands or predetermined proportions. In one case known by the author, a different system has been presented, consisting of an evaluation process by stages, following a logic of negotiation, and mutual adjustments which ultimately establishes a sole ranking for all the institution.

conflict. There are multiple ways and strategies that the political authorities could use to counteract the opposition to the reforms. Among others, the launching of limited pilot experiences; the search for support and legitimacy in public opinion through an adequate communication; the diffusion of successful experiences in other contexts; the co-optation of the state labor unions more inclined to the adopt new rules of the game on this matter, and so on. But whichever strategies are used, they require a high dose of conviction, boldness, vision and political leadership to apply them, knowing that the attempt could have high personal costs.

4.5 Training and permanent development personnel[42]

According to Say's Law, supply creates its demand. The sphere of education and training of civil servants is no exception to this economic law. It is the providers of these activities who determine to a great extent the level, the contents and, on the whole, the profile of the activities that are really carried out. Generally, the demand adjusts its needs and expectations to the available supply, or else it satisfies them outside of the regular training system.

At the same time, public management training institutions design their programs, courses and seminars anticipating that their offer will find a certain market due to the existence of unsatisfied needs, captive students due to the requirements of existing personnel systems, professionals who want to add an extra line to their curriculum and, also, candidates genuinely interested in that particular educational offer.

However, on the demand side, there is a very limited institutional capacity to identify training needs in a systematic way, either for the duties of present or future civil servants or for the development of a professional career that open the door to positions of greater responsibility. It is difficult for these institutions to elicit a demand for training services leading to the formation of human resources required by a specific area of the public management.

Partly, because there is no tradition of formulation of plans and programs of this type; and also, because it is not easy to set in motion mechanisms to detect individual needs of training; and finally, because the cause-effect relation of providing an official with specific training courses and obtaining the professional profile that allows him to perform certain functions and/or to do it in a more productive form, is not simple or linear.

The countries of LAC have made evident efforts to improve their training systems. For this, they have created specialized institutions, designed programs for different profiles of personnel, organized training activities and even instituted mechanisms to assess the quality of the courses. In many cases there are regular courses for senior management, that aim at forming leaders or upgrading the profile of officials in positions of high responsibility. But often, these efforts are frustrated by the absence of a prior diagnosis that allows the detection of real training deficit according to profiles or management's own needs, above all in specialized areas.

Human resource development is consubstantial to the introduction of a professional civil service system. There must be political will to set up and maintain a career or human

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[42] In the analysis of this section we will use material developed by Oszlak (1994).

resources regime, that promotes and encourages training as a permanent activity. It is not enough to offer the possibility of accumulating credits. It is a matter of linking more organically the development of the human resource with the effective occupation of positions and assumption of responsibilities in upper hierarchical levels of the institutions, identifying needs, designing plans and allocating resources for that purpose.[43]

In principle, there does not seem to be a manifest contradiction between the technical rationality behind a program of permanent training and development and the political interests that could be affected by its implantation. On the contrary, we would expect the political leadership to be pleased and to support any initiative of this type. We believe there are two circumstances that still restrict any major progress in this field. On one side, the relative lack of knowledge about the difference between organizing training courses "**on the demand side**" instead of "**on the supply side**", as well as about the greater costs involved in the detection of needs. And on the other, the low priority assigned to professional training in the state budget, which results in an occasional and asystematic supply.

4.6 Improvement of information systems and technological support

This is another of the areas in which second generation reforms for the improvement of the civil service will produce deep transformations. It is a known fact that the availability of a technical solution and the awareness of its potential uses, can be the most direct route to acknowledging the existence of a problem. In this sense, the development of information systems has opened huge opportunities for the solution of management problems.There is virtually no area of management in which the introduction of these technologies, almost always with advanced computer support, has not produced a revolution in the methods and techniques traditionally employed. Although its impact has also reached the public sector, progress in the introduction of such systems in the state administrations of the region has been a great deal less spectacular and still has far to go before permanent results are achieved.
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They are several the reasons that explain this technological lag. In the first place, the very decision making style of the state administration, in which the compulsion to act prevails upon the full understanding of the situation which must be addressed. Therefore, if the information systems serve, especially, for extending the limited rationality of politicians and executives, the prevalence of an uninformed decision-making style, guided by intuition or by ad-hoc considerations, will hardly create a suitable environment where information is generated, distributed and applied.

Secondly, there is a marked contrast in the degree of utilization of these systems according to their potential applications or services and according to the institutions in which they are introduced. In general, there has been progress in those cases in which IT has become the all but exclusive technology to handle great volumes of data, above all

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[43] One current experience which deserves to be mentioned is the civil servant development program initiated by the Government of Neuquen, an Argentine province. It is a kind of career similar to what would be offered by a University, in which employee profiles are determined (e.g. higher authorities, middle management, professional, technical staff, semi skilled). Each employee has the right to join the program, informing and accrediting previous training, so the career will consist of filling the unaccredited gaps. Different mechanisms of accreditation have been established, in addition to priorities in the distribution of quotas and training opportunities.

when the processes involved are repetitive or continuous. This group includes the payroll system, the billing of services, monitoring the personnel system, accountancy, etc. But even in these cases it is common to find systems based on obsolete technologies or that have not integrated into larger systems, in spite of using common data bases.[44]

This does not mean that there has not been any progress. Various countries of LAC are involved in the development and introduction of these systems, particularly central data bases for consultation or decision-making. With greater or smaller defects and eventual interruptions, as an example we can mention Panama´s system of classification of job positions or the centralized data systems of personnel, structures and salaries of Brazil, El Salvador, and Argentina. In some cases the software has been designed but is not in use, or there are difficulties in implementing the systems. There have also been successful experiences at isolated institutional levels. But the majority of the answers in the questionnaires inform that there are no single and central data bases or applications that support a system of management information, but only isolated and partial systems related to various aspects of the structure, the personnel or the salaries.[45]

A third reason to explain the limited adoption of information technology can be attributed to the fact that, very often, the systems "squeal", i.e., they tend to make management more transparent and to expose irregular situations. A new government may be interested in introducing a managerial system of information that permits, for example, financial auditing or to determine if expenditures on personnel by the previous management were correct. On the other hand, if that same government decided to apply such system towards the end of its incumbency period, it may find that its own faults or mismanagement will be exposed. It is symptomatic, in this the respect, that in Argentina there is almost no evidence of effective mechanisms being used to monitor and control management based on hard technologies.[46]

In the fourth place, the political cadres that succeed each other in running the organizations often conspire against the effective introduction of information technology. Sometimes, the systems fall in disuse and are abandoned for lack of continuity of the initial political support that led to its development. The automatic rejection of the initiatives of predecessors, the running out of funds used in the initial stages, the search for

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[44] One of the most conspicuous examples is that of the integrated systems of financial administration , that intend to articulate the functions of budget, accountancy, treasury, public credit, auditing and even management of personnel, purchases and supplies or registration of state assets. In this sense it is symptomatic that only very recently has there been a first successful project, in Guatemala, that coincidentally, received the Prize for Excellency 1999 from the World Bank. among 2500 projects funded by the Bank. Similar deficits are present in the area of the human resources systems, where the majority of the activities (v.g. recruitment, evaluation of performance, human resources budget, salary analysis, training and development) have no computerized systems, in spite of available technological tools.

[45] The differences in the degree institutions adopt technological innovations do not escape a rule common to other aspects of public management: agencies linked to the more powerful clienteles, often colonized by these, tend to gather and retain the technological, material, and human resources of greater level and quality, so it should not be unusual for them to be the ones that exhibit greater advances in IT systems. This judgment extends to the decentralized or autarchic institutions, that generally have greater possibilities of development in this matter. Hence, a central bank, a ministry of economy, one of foreign affairs or a tax service, contrast strongly with a labor ministry, a public school or hospital as far as their respective possibilities of successfully installing modern systems of information and management. The greater availability of funding from multilateral banks for the development of these technologies in fiscal and financial sectors has also contributed to widening the technological gap, as compared with organizations in other sectors.

[46] In a paper written years ago, we found that although a National System of Management Control was in effect, the institutional mechanisms to carry out this responsibility had not been created, or when formally existing, they only played a token role. See Oszlak, 1987.

protagonism (and, sometimes of rent) through the promotion of alternative redundant projects, the unjustified extension of project negotiation or the technological obsolescence itself that often takes place during these processes, end up by interrupting all attempts of transformation in this field.

A fifth problem is linked with the availability of technical equipment used in the design, development, implementation and maintenance of public management information systems capable of conceptualizing the diverse applications as components of a global system to be introduced in amodular form, taking advantage of economies of scale, and avoiding redundant efforts and contradictory initiatives. The shortcomings of training in conceptual, methodological and technological aspects are enormous, especially in the areas of strategic design of policies, regulations, development of standards for the applications, consultancies and customer service, particularly at sub-national levels, where the larger proportion of the responsibilities of public management is concentrated.

In the sixth place, we must also mention the difficulties in identifying and generating users, a necessary condition -although not a sufficient one- for the success of an information system that operates on a continuous and regular basis. Even when operating systems and potential users are obtained, their disposition to maintain, to keep up to date and to use the respective applications also turns out to be critical for the sustainability of those systems. Without real clients, the information systems quickly become obsolete and are finally abandoned.

In the seventh place, the enormous quantity of applications that current technology provides and the shortage of resources to fund its development and implantation, makes it necessary to determine priorities and feasibility of each one of those systems, particularly when the developments are part of a global strategy.[47]

Finally, it is important to consider the technical sequence involved in the design and implementation of this type of systems. For example, although office automation may not be considered as a critical information system, it could turn out to be a strategic point of entry to make civil servants more familiar, more receptive, to systems, applications thus creating conditions for the future adoption of more complex or sophisticated technologies. Or, as another example, the design and implantation of a automated payroll system may be a pre-condition to organize a personnel data base or, even, a management information system in this matter.

These observations reinforce the need for a coordinated action, a careful selection of priorities, a clear understading of the technical precedents and an adequate timing for the introduction and extension of the new systems, in order to avoid the implementation of ill-conceived strategies. It would be facilitated by the dissemination of a culture that promotes networking and shared technological packages or common data bases, inside and through organizational boundaries. Bureaucratic feudalism, still firmly entrenched in the administrative practices of the countries of the region, is not precisely the most adequate environment for this new culture to spread.

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[47] Priority in this context, is the degree to which the lack of an information system can be highly damaging for an efficient public management. In turn, feasibility refers to the degree of uncertainty on the expectations of an effective implementation of the system, due to political, technological, cultural or financial constraints.

4.7 By way of conclusion: technology, culture and irreversibility of the reforms

The preceding analysis has tried to show that the success of second generation reforms in the service civil (or, as we have called them, "inward reforms" of the state) depend to a great extent on the likelihood that the values which underlie the new management technologies will permeate the prevailing political-administrative culture. Only then it will be possible to ensure the irreversibility of the changes that are introduced. We have seen that the repeated failures reflect the permanent conflict between the values which underlie the reforms, and the interests that are affected in its implantation. In each area of the internal management of the state we have examined a series of variables that explain this phenomenon which, ultimately, seem to reflect an inherent contradiction between technology and culture.

The issue is not new and has been the subject of notable essays, especially with regard to the impact of technology on culture.[48] In the field of public management, the close bonds between these two variables include a better part of the determinants of administrative and political behavior. Their relation was the center of debate during the period in which the theory of dependence impregnated the thought of those who questioned the acritical incorporation of "western" approaches, techniques and methods to the administrative practice of Third World countries.[49] To justify its recollection for the present debate, we will indulge in a final digression.

Technological variables affect the functioning of organizations on two distinct levels. One has to do with the external products they produce, which normally require the application of a **central technology** (or *core technology*, in terms of Thompson) inherent to the activity that is carried out (e.g. techniques to produce certain goods, to carry out regulatory functions or to provide specific services). The other one refers to the **management technologies** that provide support activities to the main production-- which some analysts used to call *orgware.* The latter clearly correspond to the inward reforms analyzed in this paper: re-engineering of processes, career plans, information systems, etc.

Both components explain why institutions that develop similar activities present common characteristics, both in the organization of production as in the support activities. Certain norms and professional standards contribute to reinforce these similarities, constituting a sort of technological subculture that tends to prevail beyond geographical borders or cultural barriers. On the other hand, there is a strong relationship between the type of technologies in use and the kind of interdependence and coordination required (Thompson, 1967). Therefore, the degree of compatibility which is necessary between core technologies and management strongly conditions performance and contributes to homogenize the functional and structural patterns of those organizations that operate with similar technologies.

Culture also exercises a homogenizing influence on bureaucratic behavior. The ways of perceiving and categorizing reality, the beliefs about the efficacy of certain instruments to achieve objectives, the prevailing criteria of legitimacy, the attitudes towards authority or the orientation towards time, are elements that together make interpersonal perceptions on

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[48] See, for example, the interesting comments by Kenneth Boulding (1967) on C.P. Snow´s well known essay on "The Two Cultures"
[49] On this subject see Kliksberg (1979), Crowther and Flores (1980), De Marquez and Godau (1980) and Oszlak (1977).

what should be done or be expected in a given situation become more homogeneous, thus reducing uncertainty in the interaction.

In this sense, each culture has its own vision about how public officials should behave and the legitimacy of their roles is strongly conditioned by this culture. Nepotism, venality, absenteeism -among other practices that Parsons called "particularistic"- are peculiar to certain cultures or, in any case, are more widespread in some than in others. This is the way the culture operates as a homogenizing factor but, at the same time, as a differentiating element when facing other cultures. Most administrative reforms are designed, precisely, to act upon those cultural characteristics, starting from a universalistic conception that, ultimately, amounts to an ethnocentric interpretation, a transplant of alien cultural patterns disguised under the trappings of neutral organizational technologies.

By this we do not mean to raise the old debate on dependency, since the values that underlie these "imported" technologies should be alien to us. That is, the point is no longer whether the technologies are useful to meet the management needs of our governments, but rather whether they are able to "force" their adoption and thus to definitely banish undesirable cultural patterns. In these cases, therefore, the homogenizing influences of the culture tend to become organizational constraints, that is, factors that retard or interfere with the organizational action under norms of rationality. In developed countries, on the other hand, the homogenizing effect of culture is almost imperceptible, given the degree of congruence between technology and culture. In other words, the technological contents of the culture are coherent with the cultural assumptions of the technology.

The introduction of the written word brought about an irreversible change: the past could start speaking with the future. The invention of the stirrup modified the way of conducting war. The world wide informational web transformed the possibilities and modes of communication. The cultural impacts of these types of technological change are irreversible and can only be modified as a consequence of new developments. Transferring this reasoning to the sphere of public management and reform, the key question is how to succeed in getting the available technological advances to be incorporated as guideline, method or routine procedure in daily activities, as the normal way of doing things.

For a child of our times it is unconceivable that television has not always existed, because it has been incorporated into his socialization process. For the civil servant of the future it should be equally normal to have entered the public administration through a competitive selection, to periodically have access to training activities, to be judged according to results, to promote according to merit, to be solicitous in serving the public, to avoid unnecessary interventions in the administrative process and to work in a transparent, responsible and cooperative environment. Or, at least, the gap between the values implicit in these ideal cultural mores and the reality of management, should be substantially reduced.

In this reasoning, there is no immutable goal to be reached. On the contrary, we try to characterize a "moving target" that, as the line of the horizon, will surely move away at the same rhythm with which the transformations materialize, thus generating new challenges. The present proposal does not mean to resort to either easy solutions or dire fatalism. Rather, it acknowledges that in inward reforms, political constraints are a great deal more determinant than in outward reforms and usually become factors of failure; but at the same

time it considers the possibility that those constraints can be converted into relatively controlled variables.

In each one of the second generation reforms analyzed, we tried to specify the political and technical factors that seem to explain their scarce success and, in several cases, we proposed some strategies to reverse this result. Although the observation may sound rather naive, we cannot fail to stress that the necessary counterpart for this desirable scenario is a the existence of political entrepreneurs willing to do battle and to "burn the ships"[50] if necessary, knowing that there will be defeats and casualties, but that the final triumph will depend on the conviction and endeavor of those who take up the cause. The main responsibility for these conditions to be created falls, almost exclusively, on the political leaders.

Burning the ships, in this context, is not incompatible with bargaining and compromise that may be required in the pursuit of these initiatives of transformation, but does not admit to any retreat. It assumes, on the other hand, full knowledge of the problems to be faced, of the potentially more adequate strategies to overcome them, of the expected resistance, of the capacities available to establish alliances and convince the undecided, of the available resources and of the limits that may be reached in order to achieve results. Some manage to do so.[51]

Although the metaphor does not mention the fact, it is known that Hernán Cortés kept a ship, in which he allowed those opposed to his risky project of a new conquest to return to Cuba. At the turn of the centuries, this continues to be the maximum concession a strategist is allowed and, above all, a statesman, if he intends to finally eradicate the dregs of a culture that has little in common with the objectives and values of the post-bureaucratic state: to invite dissidents to board the returning ship.

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[50] When Spanish conquistador Hernán Cortés decided to march on Mexico, to expand Spain´s dominion over the new continent, some of his men refused, using as pretext their diminished force and the dangers involved. He then made the heroic decision that history would use as a metaphor for irreversible acts: he ordered the ships burned, which made any retreat impossible. The metaphor is often used when a crucial decision is in play and there is no turning back once the decision is made. As from that moment *alea jacta est*: it is only possible to function under the new conditions imposed by the irreversible decision. In fact, irreversibility is a condition of the success or failure of any endeavor undertaken in its name. The decision compromises those involved far beyond their will or desire.

[51] In this sense Bresser Pereira (1999) offers a vivid account of his experience as Minister of the Federal Administration and State Reform in Brazil, when he attempts to identify the conditions for the success of a reform strategy which, in addition to its technical feasibility, involved the deployment of deliberate and persistent political actions.

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Annex

Civil Service Systems: conceptualization and models

1. Problems of definition

The notion of civil service admits multiple interpretations that, in general, are related to different cultural and theoretical traditions, which assume significant differences about the elements that legitimately may be included in the concept. Very often, especially in Anglo-Saxon countries, the term is identified with the state apparatus so that "civil service reform" is equivalent, in one extreme, to "state reform". On the other extreme, there are much more limited versions of the term, in which civil service applies only to a group (or even to a level) of the public employees of a country.

With the exception of the Caribbean countries with a British tradition, the concept of civil service has not had, in the rest of the region, any significant diffusion and cultural acceptance. Actually, it is one of those typical terms that specialized literature of American or English tradition, and technical aid missions have tried to impose with relative success. More frequent are references to bureaucracy (undoubtedly a less specific term), to personnel employed by the state or simply public functionaries.[52] There has also been a deeper penetration in Latin-American cultures and the French-speaking Caribbean of the notion of "public function", as way of referring, not only to an area of management but also to the staff that is involved. Morgan and Perry (1988) define the civil service as a formal system of mediating institutions that mobilize human resources at the service of state affairs in a specific territory. This definition suggests that civil service systems are structures, i.e. a combination of rules and relations of authority that link the state policies to the management of organizations. This conceptualization also assumes that the specific domain of the civil service system involves persons, rights, and both financial and human resources (Bekke, Perry and Toonen, 1996: 2).

From another perspective, Katorobo[53] asserts that the analysis of the problems related to the mission, strategies and objectives of the civil service require a concept that is not strictly linked to the administration of human resources and which has a wider reach, characteristic of the Anglo-Saxon tradition already mentioned. Rahman (1998), on the other hand, distinguishes three types of reforms referred to areas that have recently undergone important changes: political, administrative and the civil service reform. The author highlights the precise limits of these domains and suggests, on the basis of historical experience, a coincidence between public administration reform and civil service reform. This comparison -according to the author- permits us to grasp and articulate the different objectives that underlie the reforms.

In turn, a Dialogue paper[54] indicates that there is consensus on a definition of Civil Service that includes and tries to integrate the two interpretations which the expression may

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[52] We must point out that the term "functionary" can have, in turn, different meanings according to the country that is being considered. In some cases it applies only to the political personnel that is freely appointed and removed. In others it applies to all government employees or, even to a certain level of these workers (e.g. those employed by the Central Government, or white collar workers).

[53] Personal correspondence with the author (March, 1999).

[54] Paper written by participants of the **Public Policy Management and Transparency Network Preparatory Group Meeting**, "Conceptualization of the object of the dialogue", Washington, November 27, 2000.

convey: on one hand, its more profound institutional character, that makes the Civil Service an essential component of the democratic State, as the set of rules that guarantee professionalism and impartiality in public officials and which include the observance of the principles of equality, merit and capacity in entry, career and removal; and on another hand, the instrumental side of the Civil Service, as the collection of policies and management techniques for the human resources that work for the State and which must be organized to ensure their efficient utilization and their response to the satisfaction of the social needs that the State must address at any moment, which involves the use of the most modern techniques in management of human resources in organizations.

Even though we agree with the normative background of this last conceptualization, we believe that a precise definition should avoid value elements which could give it a prescriptive nature. Otherwise, any empirical experience exhibiting other attributes would be denied its Civil Service character, with which the phenomenon would have no chance of belonging to any CS classification, unless it displayed a commitment to the values of transparency, equity, democracy and capacity as a prior requirement. Therefore, we are inclined to favor Morgan and Perry´s definition, the idea of **system** and, from the Dialogue document, its explicit mention of **rules of the game**. In this way, we have proposed the definition included in point 1.2 of this document's main body.

If conventionally, that definition of a *Civil Service System* is found both apropriate and applicable for comparative purposes, we will now proceed to analyze the concept of *civil servant*, from a historical perspective.

2. Transformations in the nature of civil servants

Regardless of the inclusion or exclusion of specific types of personnel within the scope of a definition of CS, as we discussed in Chapter 1, it is possible to analyze in what way this institution evolved throughout the history of public administration, especially the concept of civil servant A brief historical review allows us to identify different moments in the creation of CS system in LAC. For that purpose, alternative approaches can be used, that take into account different dimensions or features of this creative process. For example, 1) the characteristics of the role assumed by the civil servants, 2) the areas of management that develop in each phase of the historical process and 3) the strata of public employees that begin to appear.

In relation to the first classifying criterion, Raadschelders and Rutgers (1996) propose five stages in the development of these systems that are based on the European experiences:

➢ *Civil servants as personal servants of a ruler*, with no strict demarcation between the private and public spheres (high and late Middle Ages);
➢ *Civil Servants as servants of the state*, where there is an incipient separation between state assets and the ruler's personal possessions; the officials become employees of the state or of whom governs (XVII and XVIII Centuries).
➢ *Civil Servants as public servants*, where these serve the public (not only the state). The administration begins to be an independent instrument of state power, or is perceived as such. Dichotomies are recognized, such as public-private, political-administration, ministerial accountability versus anonymity of the civil servant, and

career and pensions systems, ranks and degrees, pre- job and on the job-training are introduced (1780-1880).

> *Civil Service as a protected service*, when the legislation protecting private property from the state becomes generalized and working conditions of the civil service improve through service civil laws, tenure instead of contracts, etc. (1880-1940).

> *Civil Service as a professional service*, where the preeminence of legal criteria in the organization of the CS declines and, with the introduction of the Welfare State, the demand for specialized professional services increases to strengthen the CS in areas such as education, health, engineering, economy, environment, etc. (1940 to the present).

By adopting these periodization, the first two categories are immediately excluded, as the historical experience of Latin America only begins in the XIX century with a common denominator in the severance of colonial links and the constitution of national states as a result of the independence movements that followed the rise in autonomy from the metropolis (Spain, Portugal, England, France, Holland). The notion of civil servants could be applied not only to the characteristics that were initially adopted in the CS of these countries, but also to the ones that were maintained all along its historical development. In this sense, the concept of protected service would allude, simply, to a particular aspect of the relation between the state and the public servants, which is the recognition of certain rights of job security and to certain compensations when this relation ends (pensions) which, generally, accompanied the evolution of the Welfare State in the better part of LAC. In most cases, these trends peaked after the second world war, involving a growing professionalization of public employment and the creation of certain strata or corps of senior and middle managers in the bureaucracy, which could be characterized as professional service.

The second classifying criterion involves the distribution of state employees according to areas of public management that emerge and develop, which is an extremely revealing indicator of the nature and role of the state in a society. From this perspective, we can assert that at the initial phases of its formation, the national state functioned as a coercive and repressive apparatus, more inclined to impose order that to promote progress, which were the two central issues in its agenda at this incipient formative phase. An eloquent indicator is the importance, both in the composition of civil service as in its share of the budget, of the military apparatus maintained by the new national states. This feature was much more pronounced in those countries that went through long periods of armed conflict between factions, before finally achieving relatively stable levels of national organization (e.g. Argentina, Venezuela, Colombia, Mexico, Uruguay, among others).

This notorious feature of the first phase of formation of the nation states disappeared or declined considerably towards the end of the XIX century and the beginnings of the XX century, when the pacification of the countries and their remarkable integration into the world economy, found national states ready to promote and accompany these processes, playing a central role in the development of infrastructure, of commerce and industry, of scientific and technological knowledge, and even in the training of the labor force. It was in this pioneering phase that the services of the national state began to extend to the interior of the countries, with the appearance of true "*Adelantados*" (forerunners) of the CS that took on the responsibility of creating, among other services, customs and tax collection, education, port administration, posts and roads, mail and other multiple activities, creating an ever extending institutional structure and acting in some ways as a beachhead for economic and social development in the interior of the countries.

The third classifying criterion can, at the same time, lead to different conclusions. On the whole, the strata or types of civil servants that evolved over the decades, were closely related with the particular circumstances in which each country's historical process unfolded. However, some common patterns emerge. Before the definite formation of the national states, the role models of belonging and social identification were local. The state consolidated itself as an instance that crowned a nation-wide institutional system insofar as the process of functional expropriation that characterized its formation allowed it to establish its own agenda of social intervention, which, paradoxically, was also a condition of its legitimazation as the national unifying instance. This process accelerated, in turn, the professionalization of the corps of officials and employees that took on the different responsibilities that were defining the role of this new instance before society. Since then, there has been significant division between the national and the sub-national CS, as the latter never achieved, even in the more recent phases of historical development, comparable levels of professionalism, maintaining in many cases institutions typical of colonial times, with some modernizing features.[55]

To this first differentiation we may add another two. The first is related to the nature of the functions that the state apparatus has developed over time. In their origins, they were relatively simple activities of fiscal administration, foreign representation, promotion of public works and services, education, sanitation and others, besides the ones linked to the war effort. In time, they constituted the nucleus of what would be the core functions of the Central Administration. This first period, also witnessed the appearance of government contractors as a result of the need to provide the increasingly specialized public works and services required by the growing economies. Many of these functions would be later taken on by public enterprises and decentralized agencies, created in the wave of nationalization that followed the Great Depression and the second world war. In this way, a second differentiation was established, between civil servants of the Central Administration and of the autonomous sector of the state, constituted by these public enterprises, decentralized entities, state banks, etc., with CS regimes begining to acquire singular features that generally favored state employees.

A last criterion of differentiation takes into account the period of greatest expansion in the public sector, when the national state turned into entrepreneur, employer, subsidizer, regulator and promoter of social welfare (approximately between 1945 and 1980). This greater presence and degree of intervention demanded even more differentiation and sophistication in the occupational profiles of the civil service, as well as greater degrees of flexibility in its availability, due to the temporal demands of the services, occasional needs to reinforce the workforce, etc. This led to creation of non permanent or temporary employee structures, that began to acquire significant weight in the workforce and, often, ended up by being incorporated to the permanent plants. The fiscal crisis and budget cuts, that translated into frozen vacancies, elimination of positions and programs of voluntary retirement, accentuated the tendency to create temporary job structures and opened the way, at the same time, to the constitution of parallel plants, with contract staff financed by multilateral agencies. In this way, this third type of differentiation appeared, between personnel with acquired rights of job security and contract staff, either in special public sector regimes or according to private sector labor conditions.

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[55] The situation is likely to have been different in the Caribbean countries, where the processes of de-colonialization appeared later and the institutional structures created by the metropolis had deeper roots, with a more professional conception, which endured strongly after independence.

Having made these conceptual distinctions, we will now examine which analytical dimensions and variables are more appropriate to analyze of the CS systems in the region.

3. Criteria of classification for model-building

Any attempt at classification assumes an underlying theory or, at least, a hypothesis to explain the relevance of the variables that are selected to classify the cases under consideration. We can even say that theories, hypothesis and models often have their first explicit formulation in the criteria of classification which are chosen. The history of biological theories throughout the XVIII and XIX centuries offers a clear example of the central role of taxonomy in the formulation of the conflicting models.

In social sciences most of the classifications rest in the assumption that the different types to which actual cases are made to correspond constitute abstract categories, relatively stylized, that express significant moments along evolutionary processes through which social formations necessarily or probably should pass. Thus, locating "real" civil service systems in a classification inevitably implies a simplification, that obliges one to group, on the basis of some common features, phenomena that in other aspects would not be similar. Therefore, for the classification of the civil service systems the general observation applicable in all social disciplines is valid, in the sense that classifications represent "pure", "ideal", cases which not necessarily respond strictly to a real case.

In the specific case of civil service systems, the classification necessarily remits us to the types of political regimes under which they have developed and with whose evolution and characteristic they are strongly   related to. In the scenario LAC, the relevant political regimes cover a spectrum ranging from those corresponding to a patrimonialist type of domination, and evolving in an irregular and discontinued way towards those that best correspond to the legal-rational type of domination. This long-term trend has manifested itself with relative independence of the degree of democratic or authoritarian components that, to other effects, cannot be ignored in order to achieve an accurate characterization of these regimes.

Therefore, a first criterion of classification consists of situating the observable CS systems in the Latin American and Caribbean scenario along a continuous line ranging from a "traditional pole", where significant features which are characteristic of neo-patrimonialist states[56] subsist, to a "managerial pole", where the legal-formal rationality not only expresses itself through a weberian bureaucracy, but also through the incorporation of practices and values taken from a profit-seeking entrepreneurial culture.[57]

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[56] The neo-patrimonialist concept has been discussed in Oszlak, 1978.
[57] It could be held that, in the current CS conceptions, we should mention a post-bureaucratic system of domination in which the rational-legal component that characterized the bureaucratic organization has been replaced by a new one, not yet properly defined, which some associate vaguely with the notion of democracy. In our view, in spite of the contradictory sentiments that Max Weber expressed on this point (i.e. the belief that the bureaucracy was the most compatible form of organization for the rational-legal type of domination but, at the same time, increasing bureaucratization was a threat to democracy), there is no doubt that in his conception, bureaucracy and democracy were part and condition of one same system.

Of course, none of the experiences of the region adjust to this superficial characterization. The application of the aforementioned criterion of classification presented leads to the majority of cases being situated in some intermediate point between both poles. The point is that if the variables that define a given model are the ones that have been presented when referring to the relevant analytical dimensions, the "real" CS systems will exhibit combinations of options (or of states of the variables) that, not by chance, correspond to the ones that served to define the attributes of those systems. In other words, if aspects such as the management of the organizational micro-structure, the norms and practices that conform the administrative career and the guidelines used to define the structure and composition of the salaries are some of the most relevant features to characterize a specific CS, it is very likely that the empirical situations will show diverse combinations of the options of each type of management, a variety that, in turn, would admit equally different explanatory factors: for example, acritical incorporation of other models, fiscalist criteria, unstable political contexts, leftovers of presumably eliminated sub-cultures, etc. Then the key question arises: How to identify in this diversity, regularities, typical patterns or **configurations**?

The literature on the subject registers various attempts in this sense, some of which introduce interesting sophistications. Heady (1996), for example, identifies five variables to characterize configurations of CS systems: 1) relation of the CS with the political regime; 2) socioeconomic context of the CS; 3) focus of functions of personnel management in the CS system; 4) qualification requirements to enter the CS; and 5) sense of mission of the civil servants. For each variable, Heady presents four possible options, which results in a matrix of twenty cells.[58] Morgan (1996) also proposes a similar exercise, ending in another configuration (or set of "fields", as he calls them), that takes into account: 1) the relation between state and society, viewed in terms of two parameters: level of institutionalization of the nation state and public attitudes for- or anti-state; and 2) the characteristics of the CS system, which he also conceptualizes on the basis of two parameters: level of independence of the CS and degree of tension between processes and results[59] In our judgment, these attempts have serious problems of construction and conceptualization, on which we cannot elaborate but have been commented in a previous work.[60]

In another more recent attempt (Echebarría, 2000) four models of administrative reform are conceptualized, in which their respective political orientation is identified in relation to the CS.[61] In the model that the author calls *guarantizer*, public employment policies are oriented to protect the independence and professionalism of the public employees to isolate them from the double risk of partisan decisions and clientelization of personal or corporative interests. In the *efficientist* model, employment is perceived as a productive factor to be optimized, applying methods of organization of work (analysis of work loads, classification and valuation of positions, payment by results). The *contractual* model breaks away, according to the author, from the idea of centralized management of human resources, highlighting the figure of the directives, that emerge as pivots of articulation among the principal-politician and the agent-producer, being responsible for contracts to be complied with. This requires a specific regime for this personnel, while the rest continues to observe general regulations, and becomes fragmented into different systems according to the conditions of the work environment. Finally, in the *service* model, "employment is perceived as the system of human relations in which public responsibilities

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[58] See matrix at the end of Annex
[59] See graphs at the end of Annex
[60] For a thorough appraisal of these models, see Oszlak (1999).
[61] See graph at the end of Annex

are carried out" (Echebarría, 2000). The public official is as a professional who is expected to participate and show commitment with the objectives and goals of public policies.

In this summary of the analyzed proposal, other aspects have not been considered that also conform the models, such as the administrative structures, the procedures for decision making and the relations with the citizens. In this sense, these models are of little use for our exercise, since its purpose is to characterize administrative reforms and not, specifically, CS systems. In any case, they serve to draw attention to the difficulties involved in the construction of typologies, since the features of CS that those models identify are not states of a single variable, but relative emphases that, in relation to this subject, tend to underline optional strategies of administrative reform.

After this brief excursus, we return to the axis of our analysis. We had pending the issue of whether it is sufficient to work with polar types of a continuum (i.e. traditional pole vs. managerial pole) or if it is convenient to present intermediate types, which confronts us with the need to "modelize" heterogeneous combinations of features that form patterns which are not easily identified. We have chosen to consider that the descriptive models of the polar situations are sufficiently known and to propose, then, the bases of a possible analytic model that, surely, will require subsequent developments.

4. Notes for the construction of a new typology

We believe that, although descriptive models can approximately reflect polar situations to which current CS systems might tend, in no way do they offer us elements that permit the conceptual construction of intermediate configurations which are the ones that prevail in the region.

Nevertheless, we do not want to leave this subject without making a reference to a possible way of approaching the implied theoretical and methodological problem with some expectation of success. For this, we suggest returning to the three analytical dimensions considered relevant for our analysis, that is, the administration of structures, of human resources and of salaries, and to present for each one of them, dichotomic situations that have some relation of correspondence between each other.

The common reference of the three dimensions are the persons that are incorporated to each one of the three structures already examined: organizational (job position), personnel or career systems (levels and degrees) and retributive (salary composition). In this way, instead of considering polar situations globally, as we did previously, we would be relating them to each one these relevant dimensions. The result of crossing two extreme and possible states of these three variables could be reflected in a "cube" with eight different situations.

We will try to bring this abstract conceptualization " down to earth". In the organizational dimension (that we will limit to the micro -structure or relation between job positions) we will highlight a variable that describes what is done in the job position, which we will temporarily denominate **orientation of the holder of the position**. We could consider that holders can adopt some of the following orientation: a) to observe the formal norms (or the existing sub-cultures) that determine what things have to be done and how (i.e.. management processes), rules that are not always formalized, but that are quickly "learned" by the holders in order to legitimize the "compliance" of their responsibility; and

b) to observe what results derive from their tasks and for whom they should be produced. This is, in short, the typical orientation to processes or results.

In the second dimension, in which we will consider the variable **development of persons**, we will establish a distinction between: a) rules of the game that aim at ensuring availability and replacement of personnel whenever necessary, with little attention to how is it obtained, how is it placed in a career structure or through what procedures is it evaluated or promoted; and b) rules of the game that are oriented to improving the available personnel, applying procedures in which cursus honorum constitutes the dominant criterion of the career.

In the third dimension, in which the variable considered is **orientation of the retribution**, two situations can be distinguished: a) structures and concepts of composition of salaries that preferably tend to compensate personal characteristic of the employee; and b) salary curves and concepts of composition oriented mainly to compensation of responsibilities of the job position and the level of performance of the holder.

Although we have not yet submitted this tri-dimensional proto-model to a consistency test, we anticipate that the eight minor cubes that form part of the cube resulting from crossing variables and the options, could have to be cut down in number because in a logical contrast with empirical situations, there could be some unresolved contradictions.

CONFIGURATION OF FERREL HEADY

CONFIGURATIONS OF CIVIL SERVICE SYSTEMS

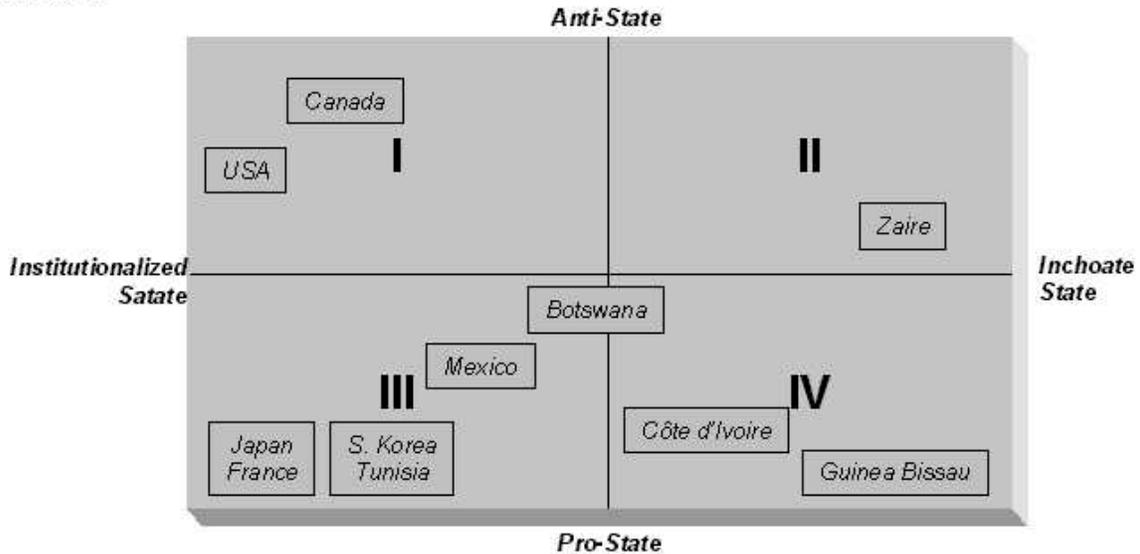| Variables	Ruler Trustworthy	Party Controlled	Policy Receptive	Collaborative
Relation to political regime	Ruler responsive	Single party or majority party responsive	Majority party responsive	Military responsive
Socio-economic context	Traditional	Corporatist or plannes centrally	Pluralist competitive or mixed	Corporatist or planned centrally
Focus for personnes management	Chief executive or ministry-by-ministry	Chief executive or ministry-by-ministry	Independet agency or divided	Chief executive or ministry-by-ministry
Qualification requirements	Patrimony	Party loyalty or party patronage	Professional performance	Bureaucratic determination
Sense of mision	Compilance or guidance	Compilance or cooperation	Policy or constotitional responsiveness	Cooperation or guidance
Examples	Saudi Arabia Iran Brunei	China Cuba Egypt	France Great Britain United States	South Korea Indonesia Ghana

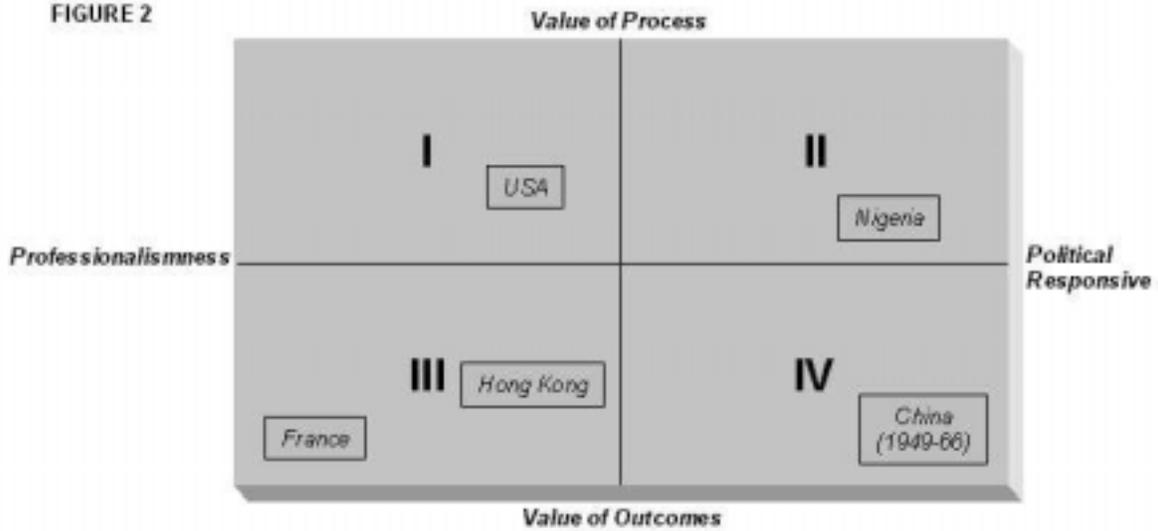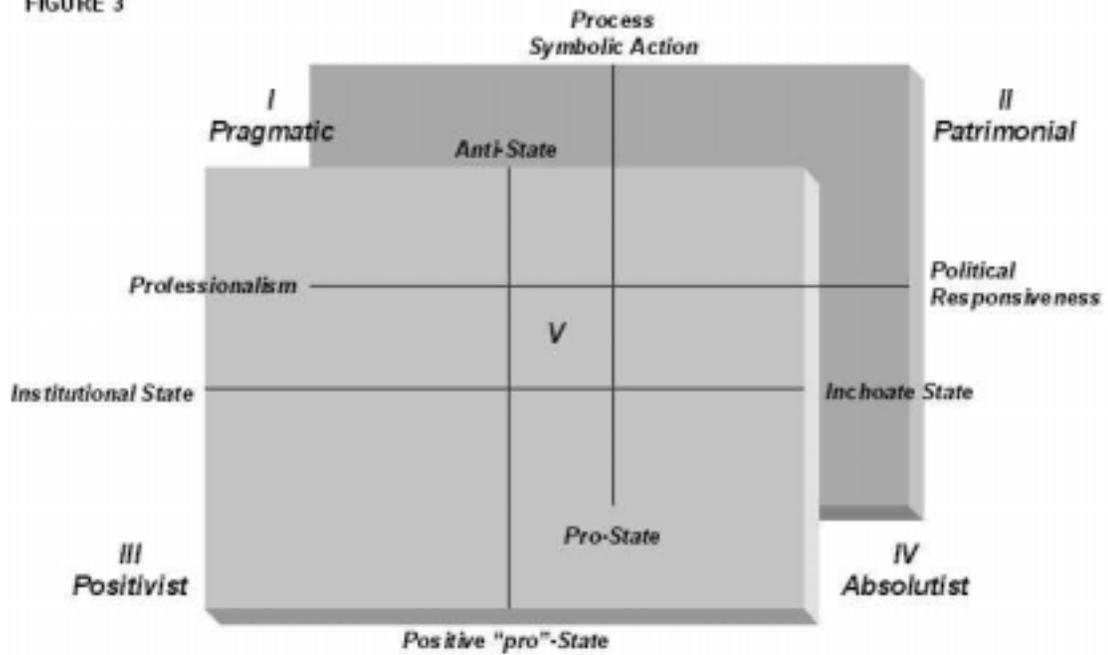# CONFIGURATIONS OF PHILIP MORGAN

FIGURE 1

FIGURE 2

Value of Process

I   II

USA

Nigeria

Professionalismness   Political Responsive

III Hong Kong   IV

France   China (1949-66)

Value of Outcomes

FIGURE 3

Process Symbolic Action

I Pragmatic   II Patrimonial

Anti-State

Professionalism   Political Responsiveness

V

Institutional State   Inchoate State

Pro-State

III Positivist   IV Absolutist

Positive "pro"-State

66

MODELS OF ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM AND CHARACTERÍSTICS OF THE CIVIL SERVICE

	General Characteristics	Civil Service
Guarantizer	Central value is judicial security, aspires to achieve full legality of the actions of the state as a means of avoiding arbitrariness and guaranteeing the political and economic rights and liberties. Promotes an institutional model directed towards the objective and uniform rule of law.	It is oriented to protecting the independence and professionalism of civil servants, trying to isolate decisions from political influence and lobbies. This is achieved through specific legal regime and the creation of a culture based on sprit de corps.
Efficientist	Central value is economic rationality, in the transformation of resources into results. Its proposal is based on scientific management. The directors must be empowered to fully use the resources. Yet the political environment of public management has kept this institutional development distant, hindering the effective use of management techniques.	Employment is conceived as a productive factor to be optimized, using methods of work organization such as analysis of loads, classiifying and valuating job positions or the use of payment by results
Contractualist	Anti-bureaucratic management guidelines without losing sight of economic rationality. Its source of inspiration is *public choice*, the theories of business organization and modern economic organizational theories. Aims at substituting hierarchical coordination by contractual coordination, with competition between the suppliers, which would operate autonomously.	Breaks with the idea of a centralized management of human resources, with the appearance of the figure of the directive that mediates in the principal-political-producer relation . This assumes a special regime for appointments, salaries and removal and general guidelines for preparation and socialization. The rest of employees merely observe general norms, becoming fragmented in different regimes according to the work environment.
Service-oriented	Perceives management as control or standards to monitor predetermined objectives . The post-bureaucratic view equalizes management with learning. Three sources of inspiration: the theory of human relations, management science and modern sociology of organization. Anti-bureaucratic thought: political and administrative theories and citizen participation	Employment is seen as a system of human relations in which public responsibilities are carried out. At the same time the civil servant is seen as a professional, beyond bureaucratic automation. Steering responsibilities are based on eliciting participation and commitment with goals and objectives of public policies.

Source: Based on Koldo Echebarria (2000)