

CENTRAL CIVIL SERVICE MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES AS BROKERS OF DE-POLITICIZATION AND EVIDENCE-BASED CIVIL SERVICE MANAGEMENT: A TYPOLOGY¹

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Abstract: This article provides a methodological tool for studying central civil service management structures (CCSMS) and their role in de-politicizing the civil service, thereby contributing to evidence-based civil service management. This tool can be used in comparative studies of CCSMS across, but also within countries, since civil service management functions are often split between several central organizations in one country. The comparative study of CCSMS is particularly useful for contemporary policy makers in EU member states, who currently face the challenge of reforming civil service systems due to EU pressure. There is therefore an urgent need to establish which type of central structure would effectively support the EU's favored values of professionalizing and de-politicizing the civil service. Stemming from theory on organizational autonomy, our typology focuses on two key dimensions of the CCSMS that support these values: decision-making autonomy over individual civil servants and structural accountability.

Key words: civil service; organizational autonomy; decision-making autonomy; central structures; civil service management.

Introduction

Central civil service management structures (CCSMS) are organizations at the central government level responsible for the coordination, management and control of civil servants in personnel policy issues. These organizations first received attention in SIGMA/OECD papers (1999), which formulated common European principles of public administration. CCSMS were considered an important part of establishing a professional civil service. However, they have not yet received attention in academic literature. The goal of this article is to propose a typology for studying CCSMS, so that the performance of these structures in civil service systems can be measured and compared across countries.

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Our typology reflects what we consider to be the key characteristic of these structures, and that is that are supposed to act as brokers of de-politicization and evidence-based civil service management. Our perspective follows up on the dichotomy of politico-administrative relations developed by Woodrow Wilson (1887). The central claim of his work is that public administration should be separated from politics. Stemming from that, we maintain that politicians should not interfere in personnel decisions regarding civil servants. The CCSMS have horizontal competencies and civil service management expertise and so they have the potential to separate civil service management from politics and use professional knowledge instead of political criteria as the basis for making personnel decisions.

The two key dimensions that contribute to de-politicization as the key function of CCSMS are the extent of decision-making competencies and structural accountability. We discuss the two key dimensions of our typology in the light of European practice using data from OECD (2012) Human resource management country profiles. Using empirical knowledge we create categories of both dimensions which allow us to produce types that may be evidenced in real life. The typology may serve as a methodological tool for future researchers who attempt to measure the potential of a CCSMS to act as a de-politicization tool and compare CCSMS across countries.

Central civil service management structures—capable of preventing political patronage

It is almost undisputable that politicians have vested interests in who works in state administration, particularly the executive. Civil servants materialize political power by formulating and implementing various laws, by being legal experts in public law and finding ways to make political objectives happen (Wilson, 1887). The separation between politics and administration is inevitable if civil servants and politicians are to be allowed to fulfil their distinct, but according to Wilson, equally important roles—civil servants consolidate policies, while politicians introduce change, innovation and reform. This delicate balance requires minimal political intervention in civil service staffing otherwise the role of politicians easily dominates. “The power of parties to appoint people to positions in public and semi-public life” (Kopecký, Mair, & Spirova, 2012, p. 358), referred to as party patronage in the literature, blurs the lines between politics and administration and enables politics to dominate over administration.

Kopecký et al. (2012) distinguish between patronage as an electoral resource and patronage as an organizational resource, the main difference being the purpose each serves. While patronage as an electoral resource enables parties to win votes in elections by rewarding their supporters with employment in state structures, patronage as an organizational resource is more about parties having control over the recruitment of experts from different fields and creating networks of professionals they can trust. Whatever the motivation, loose rules enable politicians to recruit, promote, remunerate and dismiss civil servants on the basis of criteria other than merit. This has been termed as “formal political discretion” by Meyer-Sahling (2004), the counterpart of which is the constraint posed on formal political discretion by civil service regulations.

Another way to constrain formal political discretion and introduce merit into personnel decisions is by creating central bureaus specialized in civil service management—the CCSMS. Research has also shown this. The abolition of the Civil Service Office in Slovakia and the dismissal of the coordinating unit in Hungary, for example, are “one of the driving factors of increased politicization” (Staroňová & Gajduschek, 2013, p. 15). Politicization here is understood as “any type of intrusion into the civil service system that enforces anything else than merit” (ibid., p. 2).

The fact that management competences are centralized enables easier control over potential patronage practices in contrast to when the competences are in the hands of individual ministries, and are hence dispersed and more difficult to control. The centralization of management tasks also has a positive impact on the standardization of management practices and the unification of the civil service as a profession, both of which can potentially constitute a purpose of the CCSMS. However, we have chosen de-politicization as the key purpose of the CCSMS and will develop our typology based on dimensions that contribute to this purpose.

Key dimensions of central civil service management structures

The CCSMS is by no means the only organization with managerial competencies in the civil service system and its performance is relative to the performance of other organizations. A suitable approach to describing the performance of CCSMS would therefore be one that is sensitive to the competencies of other organizations participating in civil service management. The concept of organizational autonomy reflects the degree of independence of an organization from other organizations, which serves as a stepping stone in defining our dimensions of CCSMS performance.

According to Verhoest, Peters, Bouckaert, & Verschueren (2004), there are two types of organizational autonomy. The first is autonomy as decision-making competencies in the policy tasks of the organization. The authors suggest six degrees of governmental interference in the agencies’ decisions over policies, which show the degree of decision-making autonomy the agency has in relation to the government:

- government takes the decision itself without asking the agency for advice (lowest degree of autonomy);
- government takes the decision itself after consulting the agency;
- government takes the decision itself based on the agency’s suggestions;
- government and agency take the decision together after negotiating;
- the agency takes the decision itself after consulting the government, within strict rules set by government; and
- the agency takes the decision itself without consulting the government and is not restricted by any rules set by government (highest degree of autonomy).

We find this type of autonomy to be applicable in the study of CCSMS. If the CCSMS takes decisions itself without consulting the government or being restricted by its decisions, it has the highest degree of autonomy and hence also the greatest potential to de-politicize the civil service. The more the government or members of the government (ministers) may interfere in its decisions, the less autonomous it is and the less impact it can have on de-

politicization. If the ministries themselves make the decisions, the civil service system is *vertically decentralized*. If a CCSMS decides, it is *vertically centralized* (Demmke, 2004).

The second type of autonomy suggests that organizations may in practice be limited in making decisions, due to the fact that they depend on resources granted by other subjects. Verhoest et al. (2004) identify four types of constraints on this type of autonomy: financial, legal, intervention and structural. Financial constraints refer to the organization being dependent on financial resources from the government. Legal constraints refer to the organization's legal subjectivity, i.e. the degree of legal protection it has when it comes to its status and existence. If the government can easily change its status, i.e. abolish the organization or take away its competences, the legal constraints are very high and autonomy is low. The highest degree of legal autonomy would apply if the organization's existence was rooted in the constitution and could only be changed by amending the constitution. Intervention constraint refers to the government being able to intervene in the agency outputs—for example using performance indicators, audits and other forms of ex-post control.

Structural constraints identified by Christensen (1999 in Verhoest et al., 2004) apply when the head of the organization is accountable to government or a supervisory board that consists of members of the government. We find this type of constraint most relevant for the study of CCSMS, because as Meyer-Sahling & Jäger (2012) claim, patronage cascades down to lower levels in the hierarchy. Therefore, what is crucial is who appoints the head of CCSMS, and who makes further personnel decisions. We take structural accountability, i.e. who appoints the head of CCSMS, as the second dimension for our typology. The person who appoints the head of CCSMS is likely to pose constraints on how that person makes use of his decision-making competences in civil service management policy. We can assume that the greater the accountability of the CCSMS to the government, the higher the risk of political patronage.

Both decision-making autonomy in civil service management and structural accountability constitute the key dimensions of the CCSMS, as they both have effects on civil service de-politicization. In the following sections, we will discuss each of these dimensions in more detail and propose categories.

Decision-making competencies of central structures

The first dimension of CCSMS this section is concerned with is the decision-making competence of these structures in civil service management. The goal is to propose categories for this dimension and, that way, provide a basis for our typology. In order to do that, we first need to clarify what civil service management is and which areas of management activity are crucial for the CCSMS to perform its de-politicization role as mentioned above. We propose five core civil service management areas: recruitment, promotion, remuneration, training and dismissal. In the second part of this section, we attempt to categorize competencies that the CCSMS may have in these areas based on the degree to which it intervenes in decision-making. The more it is allowed to intervene, the stronger its de-politicization role. At the end of this section, we propose three categories of CCSMS function—control, coordination and consultative, with the first being the strongest and last the weakest in the ability of CCSMS to prevent patronage.

Areas of decision-making competencies of central structures

When we refer to civil service management, we generally mean the personnel management or human resource management (HRM) of staff working in government structures (following Nunberg, 1995, p. 1). Areas of civil service management may be found in the public administration literature, but may also be derived from the literature on HRM, which deals with business organizations. The HRM literature distinguishes two main HRM functions: 1. *strategic* (transformational), i.e. concerned with the alignment and implementation of HR and business strategies, or 2. *transactional*, i.e. covering the main HR service delivery of resourcing, learning and development, rewards and employee relations (Armstrong, 2009, p. 83).

Examples of the strategic civil service management functions used by OECD (2011) are accountability frameworks for managers, targeting HRM performance assessment, assessment of ministries in HRM practices, top and middle management to planning and reporting and forward planning. Semi-academic working papers on civil service make reference to strategic personnel management functions, such as level of salaries, general criteria for promotion, general criteria for evaluation, general criteria for recruitment and general criteria for downsizing. On the basis of these functions we can define the role of the strategic manager as one who defines criteria for processes which are connected to achieving policy goals, and as one who assesses compliance with these criteria and plans ahead. These activities strongly relate to the policy making/guidance function and financial monitoring function mentioned by Nunberg (1995).

Transactional HR functions relate more to the actual delivery of an HR service. Armstrong (2009) writes that HR services are most often related to “resourcing, learning and development, reward and employee relations”. Stone (1995, pp.10-13) mentions similar HR services: “acquisition, development, reward, motivation maintenance and departure of employees”, as does Brown (2004, p. 304): “recruitment and selection of employees, training and skills development, career advancement, job performance evaluation, conditions of employment, compensation and rewards”, also adding “planning and audit of work capacity”. The majority of transactional HR functions relate to managing the employee’s professional trajectory, from when he enters the organization until he leaves it. Activities such as planning and auditing work capacity involve more organizational management than the management of individual employees.

Transactional HR functions can also be found in civil service systems. The public administration literature focuses on these functions of civil service systems: 1. Access to the civil service, 2. career development, internal promotion and mobility, 3. Training, 4. Appraisal system, 5. Remuneration, 6. Working time, 7. Pension systems and reform process, 8. Social dialogue, 9. Equal opportunities and 10. Disciplinary legislation and codes of conduct (Demmke, Nomden, & Polet, 2001). Laegreid, Roness, & Rubeckssen (2005) define “operational functions” as wage increases for individual employees, promotion of individual employees, evaluation of individual employees recruiting individual employees and dismissal of individual employees (p. 19). OECD (2011) recognizes a similar set of transactional HR functions, referred to as “HR management practice”: recruitment, pay setting, promotions, mobility, performance, working conditions and training. Van der Meer (2011) addresses the same areas when he analyzes the internal labor market.

Figure 1. Core civil service management functions and the level they affect

	Organizational level	Individual level
Recruitment	General recruitment criteria	Recruiting individual employees
Training	General training programs	Training program for a particular position
Remuneration	Level of salaries Salary grades	Salary increases for individual employees
Promotion	General promotion criteria Post classification system	Promotion of individual employees
Termination	General dismissal criteria	Dismissal of individual employees

Source: Compiled from Laegrid et al. (2005)

A clearer distinction between strategic and transactional CSM functions can be made by looking at which level is affected by decision-making, as distinguished by Laegrid et al. (2005) in their working paper on the Norwegian civil service. They claim that operational management affects the individual level, while strategic management concerns general decision-making and issues (p. 18), which we refer to as the organizational level. Recruitment, which we categorized as a transactional function, could, therefore be managed both strategically, i.e. defining policy, instruments and processes, and operationally, i.e. executing a recruitment process referred to here as a “selection procedure”. Taking into account the level being managed in civil service helps us to understand the impact decisions have on patronage. We can assume that individual-level decisions will directly enable patronage, while decisions made on the organizational level can do so only indirectly. The degree to which CCSMS intervenes in individual-level decisions will therefore be crucial for preventing patronage. To give an example, having the competence to select a particular candidate through a selection procedure can directly prevent patronage, whilst the competence to set standards for the selection process (organizational level competence) will be less effective in preventing patronage.

When defining the main areas of CCSMS decision-making competence, both levels should therefore be considered. While strategic areas of decision-making competence only involve decisions at the organizational level, transactional areas involve decisions both on the individual and organizational level. Recruitment, a transactional area, for example requires strategic decisions about selection standards, but also individual decisions on who to recruit. For this reason, we consider transactional areas (or functions) of civil service management to be the core civil service management functions (Figure 1).

Categories of decision-making competencies of central structures

To understand just how important the decisions made by a CCSMS are within each of the areas of core civil service management activity, it is useful to look at civil service management as a process consisting of several decision-making stages regarding the individual as well as organizations. The “stages” heuristic has been used by practitioners and

Figure 2. Decision-making stages in the recruitment process

Recruitment process – main stages	Action to be taken in the recruitment process	Decisions to be taken in process (general)	Main stages in process (general)
Recruitment standards	– creating recruitment standards (general eligibility criteria, general methods of assessment) and selection procedures (procedural requirements)	Defining processes (i.e. issuing secondary legislation)	Process formulation
Recruitment process	– authorizing the selection procedure to take place – publicising the vacancy	Process initiation (i.e. authorizing the request for process to take place)	Process implementation
	– selecting eligible candidates – inviting candidates for selection procedure – creating selection committee – assessing candidates	Process materialization (i.e. assessing evidence gathered for decision-making)	
	– selecting the winner	Process finalization (i.e. reaching a decision on the individual)	
Appeals procedure	– evaluating the result of the process and demanding correction if necessary	Process evaluation (i.e. subsequent controls over the process)	Process evaluation

Source: Author

derives from the work of Harold Lasswell & Daniel Easton (Jenkins & Sabatier, 1993, p. 135). By shifting the attention to the process, the stages model allows us to study decision-making that exceeds the boundaries of one organization (*ibid.*, p. 136) and allows us to capture where in the process of making decisions on personnel issues does the CCSMS step in.

We attempt to identify and categorize the different decision-making stages using recruitment as an example. The process starts with the request to fill a vacancy. This request has to be approved by a competent authority so that selection procedure may take place. Once this has been approved, the selection procedure in compliance with the legislation, both primary and secondary, which means someone has to be responsible for drafting, implementing and evaluating the legislation. Some managerial discretion may be allowed in applying the legislation, for example in creating the selection committee or having the discretion to choose the most appropriate candidate. These stages are listed in Figure 2.

As we can see from the diagram, we can divide the activities related to recruiting employees into decision-making stages consisting of three main phases—the *process formulation* phase, which takes place before the actual process starts and aims to define rules for the process; the actual *process implementation* and *process evaluation* that takes place after the process has ended. In labeling these phases we were inspired by the formulation stage of the policy cycle (Malíková, 2003, p. 55).

Within the first process formulation phase, we identified one decision-making stage relating to the determining the rules for the process. The determining the rules for the process usually takes the form of secondary legislation, i.e. internal regulations that may be issued by the line ministries or the CCSMS. The government may also issue secondary legislation, such as government resolutions.

The process implementation phase starts with *initiation*. This stage deals with the authorization of the request for the process to begin, i.e. a request for a recruitment procedure, for rewarding an employee, a request to train, promote or dismiss an employee. As soon as authorization is given, process materialization can take place.

Process *materialization* involves gathering the information that must be assessed so a decision can be reached. For recruitment, this stage would require selecting eligible candidates, inviting them to participate, creating a committee and assessing candidates during the selection procedure. Process *finalization* refers to making a choice based on an assessment of the information, i.e. selecting the candidate who will be offered the vacant position.

The process *evaluation* phase may involve several stages, but for the purpose of our analysis—i.e. establishing decision-making autonomy—the final stage is important, i.e. who has the “final word” in evaluating the process in the case of appeals, for example. By that we mean the competence to change the outcome of the process.

The next question is how can we assess the stages? Are they all equally important or are some more important than others? As we mentioned in the previous section, we believe individual nominations encourage patronage practices and if the CCSMS has the competences to interfere in this decision, it may be considered as having stronger competences than it would have in, for example, setting standards for these nominations.

If a CCSMS has the authority to intervene at the individual level in decisions, whether through preliminary or subsequent controls, we think it has the greatest potential to prevent patronage. This category can be labeled a “control body”. One step away from that would be a body that can intervene in decisions at the organization level, i.e. issue secondary legislation, but individual decisions would be made by the line ministry. This category can be labeled “coordination body”. Finally, the weakest method of preventing patronage would be a body that can assemble information and perhaps give advice, but has no right to intervene at the individual or organization level. This category could be labeled a “consultative body” (Figure 3).

It is worth noting that it is important to distinguish between the groups of individuals that are affected by decision-making. If they are senior civil servants or civil servants in managerial posts for example, the role of the CCSMS is even more significant as these groups have the authority to make policy and managerial decisions. If a CCSMS is responsible for recruiting top civil servants, who further recruit regular civil servants, its role

Figure 3. Categories of CCSMS decision-making functions

	CSM function		
Stage of the CSM process		Decentralized	Centralized
	Organizational level	Consultant CCSMS	Coordination CCSMS
	Individual level	Coordination CCSMS	Control CCSMS

Source: Own compilation

can be regarded as quite significant even though the group may represent a small number of individuals. This unfortunately is not reflected in the categories, but should be taken into consideration when conducting analyses of the CCSMS competences.

Decision-making competencies of central structures in EU-OECD countries

The goal of this section is to discuss the decision-making competencies of CCSMS in practice in EU-OECD countries. We used OECD's Human Resources Management Profiles (2012) to collect information on the types of function that are most often centralized in the hands of a CCSMS. We will assess whether these functions affect the individual or the organizational level and that way, address the potential of the CCSMS to de-politicize the civil service.

Figure 4 shows which CSM functions are most frequently vertically centralized in EU-OECD countries. The data was taken from the OECD HRM country profiles and covers 23 countries, two of which (Slovakia and Germany) were assessed as not having a central HRM unit. They are, however, included in the graph, because centralization also includes other central government institutions, which are not regarded as HRM units, but may nevertheless perform an HR function.

The most centralized CSM functions are pay system management, budget allocation, classification of posts and code of conduct. The least centralized, i.e. where line ministries have the highest degree of discretion in decision-making, are recruitment, career management, bonuses management and contract duration. The most centralized functions involve decision-making at the organization level, while the most decentralized functions are decision-making at the individual level. We can see that the trend in European OECD countries is to centralize organizational decision-making functions, but decentralize individual decision-making functions. This would confirm that CCSMS have a weak, rather than a strong de-politicization function.

OECD (2012) mentions three categories of roles that the HRM unit (i.e. referred to here as CCSMS) performs in relation to line ministries: "coordination", "responsible for defining HR policy" and "responsible for HR". However, there is some inconsistency between how these roles are defined, because the responsibilities of HRM units often overlap, regardless of how their roles are defined. For example, the Austrian DG for Civil service and Administrative Reform under the Federal Chancellery is considered a "coordination

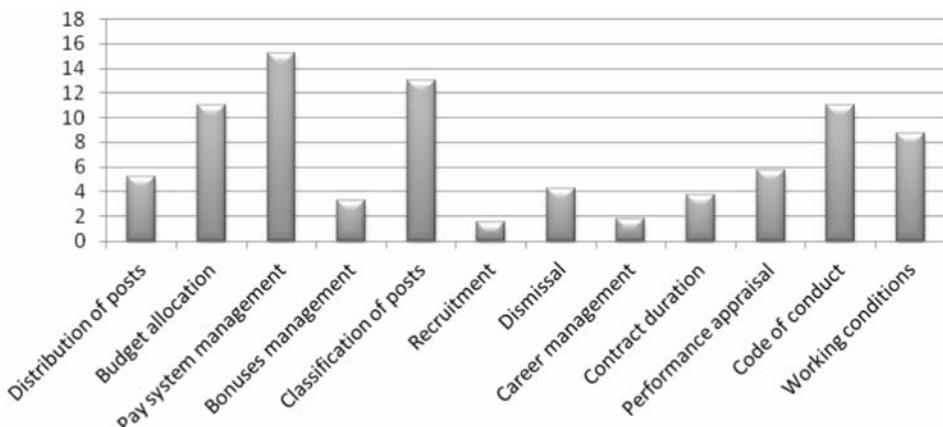


Figure 4. Centralization of core CSM functions in EU-OECD countries

Source: Compiled from OECD (2012) data

only” body and has responsibilities such as “providing leadership and guidance, providing advice on legal framework, designing the pay system, defining and controlling the payroll, standardizing recruitment and skills profiles, defining salary levels and benefits, providing training, promoting diversity and managing retirement and pension plans”. The Irish Public Service management division under the Department of Finance has essentially the same responsibilities, but is granted a policy definition role: “providing leadership and guidance, providing advice on legal framework, designing the pay system, defining and controlling the payroll, standardizing recruitment and skills profiles, defining salary levels and benefits, providing training, promoting diversity and managing retirement and pension plans”. HRM units granted the role of being “responsible for HR”, such as the Norwegian Department of Employer Policy and Agency for Public Management and E-government also share similar responsibilities: managing “HRM at the central/national level, providing leadership and guidance, providing advice on legal framework, designing the pay system, transmitting public service values, defining salary levels and benefits, promoting diversity.” The last category has more management responsibilities, but nevertheless, it is hard to distinguish the difference between the roles, which makes it difficult to use them as analytical categories.

As we can see from the graph, the most common role that the HRM unit performs is coordination. New Public Management ideas of letting managers manage are increasingly reflected in the way civil service management is organized and the role central structures play. Even international organizations such as OECD (1997) claim that the specific nature of the work undertaken by a particular agency requires that civil service management is decentralized and that central government organizations should play only a coordinating role. This is due to the fact that it is not always possible to rely on prescriptive ideas about the conduct of civil servants and more managerial discretion is needed for efficiency. Line ministries should in other words be authorised to “regulate the standards that are appropriate for those in that Ministry and to lay down procedures that are best suited to give effect to

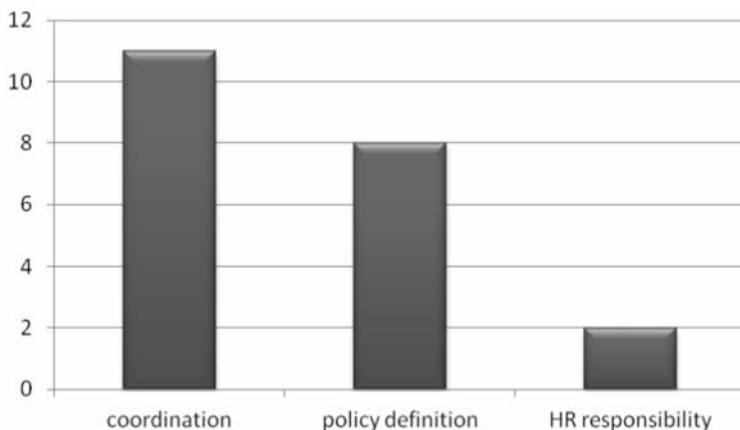


Figure 5. Decision-making competencies of HRM units in EU-OECD countries

Source: Compiled from OECD (2012) data

those standards" (OECD, 1997, p. 6), while central structures should be responsible for general rules of conduct, for example, in ethics, in order to ensure standardization.

This also confirms that the CCSMS are not particularly strong in de-politicization. This could be for two reasons. Either the NPM ideas of decentralized management are the "modus vivendi" of the civil service systems in these countries, or they prefer decentralization because it is more vulnerable to patronage practices. We may suspect that both explanations are true, since according to Kopecký et al. (2012), patronage is low in countries like Denmark, Great Britain or Sweden, but high in Southern and Eastern European countries. Nevertheless, *both* groups decentralize their civil service management to a large extent.

Structural accountability of central structures

The goal of the next section is to formulate categories of the second dimension of our typology—structural accountability. Structural constraints on the decision-making autonomy of CCSMS would manifest if the head of CCSMS were personally accountable to the government. The more accountable he is to the government, the less potential there is that the CCSMS will prevent patronage. This view has been inspired by the work of Christensen, who measured this type of autonomy by looking at the extent to which an agency is accountable to the supervisory board, the extent to which the supervisory board consists of government actors or third parties and the extent to which these parties are connected to the government.

Government can be expected to exert a substantial influence over civil service management if the head of CCSMS is directly accountable to it. Individual accountability (i.e. to a minister or prime minister) is generally more effective than collective accountability (i.e. to the council of ministers) (Thompson, 1993). For example, if a minister is held accountable for the agent's mismanagement, it is generally straight forward that he should leave office. However, if he is accountable to the council of ministers then it is less clear

who should resign. In Central and East European countries, and Western Balkan countries in particular, where coalition governments are predominant, the distinction between accountability to an individual or collective is important, because the latter is a weaker form of control since governments tend to be coalitions.

There would be slightly less government control if the government collectively nominated the head of CCSMS, i.e. he would be accountable to a council of ministers consisting of a coalition of parties. If the head was accountable to the legislature, he would enjoy even more structural autonomy, because the parliament is a collective organ consisting of opposition as well as coalition parties. It is difficult to imagine all parties working together to pressurize the head of the CCSMS into deciding in favor of patronage.

The head of the CCSMS is most independent when appointed by an apolitical authority, such as a board of professional bureaucrats. These members may also have an interest in patronage, but due to their non-political status, we expect there to be less of it than in the case of politicians. The CCSMS will probably be accountable to this board or directly to an administrative court if the board is not responsible for ensuring accountability.

Structural accountability of central structures in EU-OECD countries

It must be noted that no EU member state has either completely centralized or decentralized HRM issues (Demmke, 2004, p.121). They are usually distributed among a policy guidance body, an oversight agency which helps ensure fair and meritorious practices, and a financial control/monitoring organ (Nunberg, 1995, p. 15). In most countries, there is a “triumvirate” consisting of the finance ministry (usually for planning purposes), the government office (for strategy formulation) and an HRM expert body (for coordination and control). Sometimes, it is not a specialized HRM body but a fourth institution, an independent audit body that has the control function (*ibid.*).

The OECD (2012) categorizes CCSMS location within the government hierarchy. It uses the following types of location of HRM units: boards, independent agencies, dedicated ministries (such as public administration ministries), other ministries (such as ministries of interior, labor or finance), ministerial departments and government office departments. To a certain extent these overlap with our categories of CCSMS structural accountability presented in Figure 6.

Figure 7 shows the most common location of the HRM units in EU-OECD countries. The UK is the only country that has a board responsible for CSM, headed by the director of an HR unit under one of the government departments and only Sweden has an independent office responsible for CSM, according to 2012 OECD data. Most countries delegate CSM functions to an organization within the government hierarchy—either to the unit of a government office, a dedicated ministry or a non-dedicated ministry, such as the ministry of finance or interior.

For each category of CCSMS structural accountability, we included examples (Figure 6). CCSMS appear to be most independent in Sweden, represented by the Swedish Agency for Government Employers. The agency is a membership-based organization of government agencies. The governing body is an Employer Council made up of 250 members, who are heads—i.e. director generals, rectors and county governors. These appoint a 15 member

Figure 6. Structural accountability of the head of the CCSMS

Structural accountability of the head of CCSMS				
Category	Minister/Prime minister	Executive	Legislature	Judiciary
Examples	Head of CCSMS is appointed by the prime minister/minister or his deputy; he is the chief of a ministerial department/unit	Head of the CCSMS is appointed by the Council of ministers/Executive; he is the head of a bureau/agency	Head of the CCSMS is appointed by parliament; he is the head of a bureau/agency	Head of the CCSMS is appointed by non-political bodies
Countries	France (Directorate-General for Administration and Public Employment at the Ministry of Public Employment)	Netherlands (Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations)	Kosovo (Independent Oversight Board)	Sweden (Swedish Agency for Government Employers)
Patronage prevention potential	Weakest ----- Strongest			

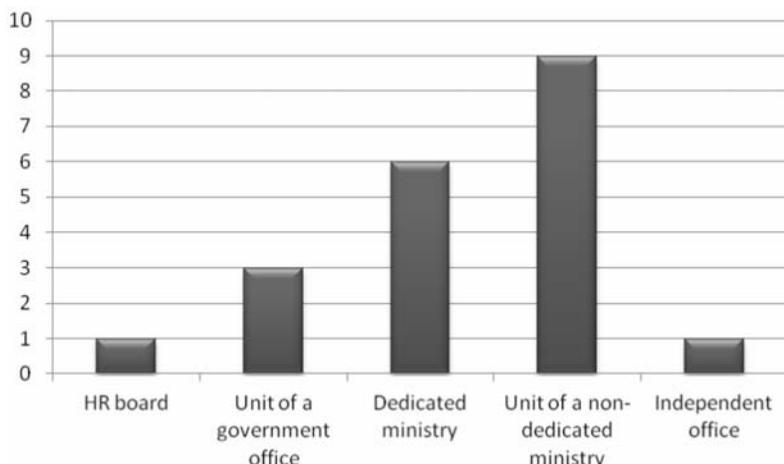


Figure 7. Location of the HRM unit in EU-OECD countries

Source: Compiled from OECD (2012) data

board, which appoints the executive head of the agency (SAGE, 2014). The executive is presumably accountable to the board and, like all public agencies, to the judiciary.

The CCSMS head would be slightly less independent if accountable to parliament. There was no case like this among the EU-OECD countries, but two in the Western Balkans. This is the case of the Macedonian Administration Agency or the Independent Oversight Board in Kosovo (Meyer-Sahling, 2012, p. 26). The chairman of the Independent Oversight Board in Kosovo is elected by the members of the board, who are appointed by the UN Special Representative for the Secretary General for Kosovo (IOBCSK, 2014), i.e. not by parliament. The board nevertheless reports to the parliament, which legitimizes our classification. It must be noted, however, that the board operates alongside the Department of Civil Service Administration under the Ministry of Public Administration. Therefore, to evaluate the CCSMS potential to prevent patronage, central structures involved in civil service management would have to be evaluated.

Even less independent are CCSMS whose heads are accountable to the executive. This means that they are appointed either by the council of ministers or, if the heads themselves are members of the government, they are appointed by whoever appoints the government. In the latter case, they report to the prime minister and are accountable to the government as a whole. This category of CCSMS is in practice represented by ministries dedicated to civil service management, such as the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations in the Netherlands (OECD, 2012).

The category most likely to be found in Europe is CCSMS whose heads are accountable to ministers or prime ministers' offices (or state chancelleries). This puts the CCSMS on the organizational level of departmental units or general directorates, whose heads are appointed by the minister or prime minister. An example would be the DG for Administration and Public Employment of the French Ministry of Public Employment (OECD, 2012).

Typology of central civil service management structures

By combining categories of CCSMS decision-making functions with degrees of structural accountability, we get twelve types of CCSMS (Figure 8). CCSMS with wide competencies and expansive structural autonomy are ones with the highest potential to de-politicize. The fewer competencies they have and the less structural autonomy, the lower the potential to de-politicize the civil service. The strongest type is therefore a control body accountable to the judiciary, whereas the weakest type is a consultative body accountable to the minister.

Even though these are ideal types, the categories they consist of have been constructed based on empirical observations of the CCSMS in EU-OECD countries. We therefore expect at least some of the combinations of the categories to be present in real life. If we take the Swedish Agency for Government Employers (SAGE) for example, we have stated that it is an independent body accountable to a non-political board or directly to the judiciary. In terms of decision-making competencies, according to the OECD HRM Profile for Sweden (2012), the SAGE “provides leadership and guidance, provides advice on legal framework, transmits employers' strategic policies and closes employment agreement with unions”. Hence, it has a coordination, rather than control function, since management of pay systems, budget allocation and number of posts is delegated to agencies (i.e. line ministries), as

Figure 8. Typology of CCSMS

		Structural accountability of the head of CCSMS			
		Minister/PM	Executive	Legislature	Judiciary
Decision-making autonomy	Control CCSMS	Control body accountable to minister/PM	Control body accountable to Executive	Control body accountable to Legislature	Control body accountable to Judiciary
	Coordination CCSMS	Coordination body accountable to minister/PM	Coordination body accountable to Executive	Coordination body accountable to Legislature	Coordination body accountable to Judiciary
	Consultant CCSMS	Consulting body accountable to minister/PM	Consulting body accountable to Executive	Consulting body accountable to Legislature	Consulting body accountable to Judiciary

Source: Author

are recruitment, career growth and dismissal. The SAGE could therefore be classified as a “coordination body accountable to the judiciary”.

In contrast, the Irish Public service Management Division under the Department of Finance also defines and controls payroll and manages recruitment (OECD, 2012), which would make it a “control body accountable to the minister”, since managing salaries and recruitment involves individual decisions. The French DG for Administration and Public Employment is also accountable to the minister, but it performs more of a coordination role (*ibid.*), which would make it a “coordination body accountable to the minister”.

The Independent Oversight Board of Kosovo is accountable to parliament as mentioned earlier. Its responsibilities include being the highest appeal body for civil servants, keeping an eye on the legitimacy of appointments of department heads and compliance with civil service law (IOBCSK, 2014). This suggests that the CCSMS may be classified as a “control body accountable to the parliament”, since dealing with appeals presumably involves altering decisions previously made at the individual level.

The Netherlands has a CCSMS that is a dedicated ministry accountable to the executive. According to the OECD (2012) HRM Profile, it mainly has a coordination function, which would make it a “coordination body accountable to the executive”.

There are rare examples of consultative bodies in EU-OECD countries as these assume a fairly weak function. Although the OECD HRM Profiles classifies Slovakia as not having a central HRM unit, in 2013 the Department of Civil Service and Public Service was established under the Prime Minister’s Office (PM Office SVK, 2014a). According to the Internal Regulations of the office (PM Office SVK, 2014b), the department drafts legislation on the civil and public service, analyzes the impact of legislation, outlines performance evaluation systems, administers collective agreements, etc. Its role is more to draft legislation and conduct analyzes rather than to engage in decision-making, whether at the organization level or the individual level. For this reason, we can classify it as having

an “advisory” function and the department as being a “consultative body accountable to the Prime Minister”.

These classifications illustrate that the majority of these types are likely to be found in real life as well. However, more thorough research on this topic is necessary to establish whether all types are represented in practice.

Conclusion

This article provided a typology of CCSMS based on two dimensions that affect its potential to de-politicize the civil service: decision-making autonomy and structural accountability. Decision-making autonomy concerns five core management areas: recruitment, remuneration, training, promotion and termination. We came up with three categories of CCSMS function: a control, coordination and consultative. While the first category has the strongest impact on preventing patronage, because it affects the individual level, the second has only a moderate impact, because it affects only the organizational level. The last category has the weakest impact, because it merely provides advice and does not intervene in decisions on either level.

Structural accountability reflects the constraints on making full use of decision-making competencies depending on who appoints the head of CCSMS. The head of CCSMS is most independent if accountable to a non-political body or judiciary and least independent if accountable to an individual politician. The strongest type of CCSMS is one with control competencies and accountable to the judiciary, whereas the weakest type has a consultative function only and is accountable to ministers.

The benefit of this typology is that it enables comparative studies to be made of CCSMS, which would not otherwise be possible since national civil systems vary in the number of organizations operating in the system and the scope of functions they perform. A tool that captures the relative strength of CCSMS (i.e. in relation to other organizations operating within the system) was therefore required. These types of CCSMS may be found in real life, since they were constructed using empirical observations of how different central structures participate in civil service management. However, further research is necessary to confirm this claim. Research of this kind would also enable us to see if de-politicization is one of the major roles of the CCSMS or not. So far, our preliminary results have shown that the most frequent type is one that coordinates work, i.e. makes decisions at the organization level, but at the same time is accountable to a minister or prime minister. This suggests that de-politicization is probably not the main role of these structures, as they are essentially political and, at the same time, they cannot impact on individual personnel decisions in ministries. Further investigation is therefore required to establish what the key role of the CCSMS is and if it is not de-politicization, then how is political neutrality ensured in the civil service?

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