

TRAINING MODELS FOR PUBLIC SECTOR SERVANTS: THE EXPERIENCE OF FRANCE AND BULGARIA

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Introduction

Undoubtedly, the establishment of strong, hierarchical state institutions with strictly defined duties, authority and responsibility of each position is impossible without competent and qualified staff. For this reason the importance of public sector servants' training is widely observed in scientific literature. The topic has been studied by many eminent public administration scholars all over the world such as J. Jabes (1997), B. G. Peters (1989), Chr. Demmke (2004), A. Rosenbaum and John-Mary Kauzya (2006), etc. There are also Bulgarian authors who have made significant contribution to this field such as M. Atanassova (2017), M. Lambovska (2018), N. Arabadgiiski and others. Moreover, it has grown into a tradition by now for international organizations in the field of public administration such as the Network of Institutes and Schools of Public Administration in Central and Eastern Europe (NISPAcee), the International Association of Schools and Institutes of Administration (IASIA), the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA), etc. to organize conferences and other high-level academic events in the framework of a Trans-European Dialogue in Public Administration (TED) in order to provide a forum for exchanging and debating ideas among experts, scholars and practitioners regarding the topic of research.

In fact, some researchers share the view the training of civil servants can be regarded as a condition, which ensures the viability of public organizations. Thus it is necessary to establish a training system, which will maintain the ability to respond effectively to the challenges of the environment (Dolidze, 2017, p.156). For Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries, which after 1990 began with fundamental reforms in many areas, including the public administration and civil service, building a system for development of professional skills and qualifications of employees in the government administration has been a key priority. This is in line with the understanding that a professional civil service is the cornerstone of an effectively performing public sector. Considering that, it is not surprising

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that civil service reforms in CEE countries in the last two decades have focused on training as an important tool that would increase the professionalization and decrease politicization of civil service.

To a great extent the established system of public administration and its traditions determines the choice of the training model considering the political and administrative context of a particular country. Obviously, on one hand, there is a linkage between administrative traditions and choices of politicians and bureaucrats in selecting approaches and conducting administrative reforms and, on the other, the existence of legacy effect of certain administrative traditions is of particular relevance for the new EU member countries from CEE. Research carried out by Painter and Peters (2010 cited in Staronová, 2017, p. 180) view administrative traditions as multidimensional, allowing various lenses for classification, such as geographical, historical and cultural considerations. A comparative study of models and traditions of public administration (Kuhlmann and Wollman, 2014) reveals the different administrative systems and reforms, but in general various authors have reached to "an agreement on main ones, such as Eastern administrative culture with additional subgrouping in it and the communist administrative tradition, which combines one-party rule with a unitary bureaucratic state, with overarching political control as system of party supervision".

The existence of different models and traditions of public administration suggests the existence of different approaches to reform civil service and develop training models for public sector servants. In general, most countries have to make a choice between two alternative approaches – between the new public management (NPM) or competitive and Weberian, career or professional systems. In turn, the chosen approach to a large extent determines and has an impact on the training delivery method for the state sector. For the purpose of this study three basic models of training are identified: centralized, semi-centralized and decentralized. This classification is based on a recent research of a Georgian scholar, who outlines and highlights the major characteristics of these schemes (Dolidze, 2017, pp. 155-156). The centralized model is mostly used in the states with strong bureaucratic institutions and implies that the development of civil servants, including training and qualifications, is controlled by the government, and, in some cases, by a concrete state agency, which has the authority to provide the whole cycle – including needs assessment, development and planning of training modules, as well as monitoring and quality control. The decentralized scheme is advocated by the NPM approach and is based on the contractual delivery of training by non-governmental providers. Training and capacity building needs are determined by particular agencies or employees, and training providers selected on the basis of a free market – the best quality at the best price. The semi-centralized scheme is based on the cooperation between

the government and private actors. Both sides have clear roles in the training process, the government carries out planning, monitoring and quality control, sets the standards and develops the overall policy as well as selects the training providers among non-governmental actors, such as educational institutions and private training organizations.

Different countries have experienced at least one of these three models in their past and present and this study does not have a research question to compare and describe which of the above training models is the most effective for increasing the stability of the public administration and establishing a professional career service, staffed with competent and qualified employees. The scope of the study is restricted to the centralized model of training in the career system of administration, introduced and established in many European countries such as France, Germany, Spain, Slovenia, Romania, Bulgaria etc. The classical bureaucratic civil service system will provide the theoretical framework.

As the system of the Bulgarian administration qualifies as a career model which has similarities with the French model it is appropriate to compare the French and Bulgarian civil service and to focus the comparative analysis on the national training systems and institutions for training civil servants in both countries. In order to compare and examine the training of civil servants in France and Bulgaria the classical bureaucratic civil service system provided the theoretical framework.

The aim of the study is to reveal that civil servants' training is a significant element of the career system and an important precondition for effective public administration and governance with a long-term impact. The study pursues four objectives. First, to describe the career model of civil service and explain its key features as many countries in Europe, including France and Bulgaria, have adopted it. Second, to examine the centralized model of training and present different approaches to training civil servants from a comparative perspective based on the experience of France and Bulgaria. Third, to present a case study of the training program, which is considered a benchmark for training government administration executives, using an interprofessional approach. Fourth, to analyze the model of training civil servants, established in Bulgaria, and to provide better knowledge about it based on the assumption that a national model can only be adequately understood if it is contrasted with – that is, compared to – other models.

In this regard, the major thesis in the study is that the modern world requires more effective training of public administrators, who will have to be sensitive to new approaches to governance and have ability to meet new and more complex challenges. This new reality places greater pressure on governments to put in place effective programs for training public administrators and achieve greater excellence in public administration training.

A systemic approach has been adopted and different research methods and instruments are used in the study: personal observations and discussion panels, literature review, comparative analysis, documents and a bank of longitudinal data on the strategic issues of training civil servants in the selected countries.

The model of the career system in European context

Dramatic changes happened in the political, economic and social systems of many countries during the last decades of the 20th century. Some of these changes were stimulated, underlined and shaped by two major developments. As suggested by A. Rosenbaum (2006, pp. 11-12) these are globalization and decentralization, which place many new demands on public administrators, and especially upon those who educate and train them. Moreover, governments all over the world have been made to be more responsive to the popular will, which, in turn, places significant new pressures and expectations upon civil servants. These demands challenge the professionalism, capability and, in some cases, even the ethical standards of both elected government officials and civil servants.

Similar views and concerns about civil service are shared and expressed in the studies of many European scholars. Research carried out by Chr. Demmke (2004, p. 25) found that in the the beginning of the 21st century the "old administration" no longer fits with changes in technologies, delegation and decentralization, financial pressures, internationalization, demography and modern governance and these trends have become the determining factors of change in the public service.

In this study the term "old administration" is used to describe the classical model of administration which was thought to be the best way for organizing the public sector work and undoubtedly worked well for a long time. It does not have a single, coherent intellectual foundation but has been considered the most successful theory of management in the public sector. As suggested by O. Hughes (2003, p. 17) the traditional model of public administration, in general, is characterized as "an administration under the formal control of the political leadership, based on a strictly hierarchical model of bureaucracy, staffed by permanent, neutral and anonymous officials, motivated only by the public interest, serving and governing party equally, and not contributing to policy but merely administering those policies decided by the politicians".

It is well-known that this model of public administration was established in many European countries in the 19th century and since the beginning of the 20th century they have developed specific civil service systems, which later were further specified and developed into sophisticated and complex organizational structures. The general concept of this model is that the state is separated from society and citizens, and civil servants are linked to the authority of the state

and cannot be compared to employees in the private sector. This explains why this group of public employees is seen as an agent to uphold the rule of law, to implement government policies, to have high standards of integrity and to work for the common interest. To enable the civil servants fulfil their functions, they need a protected employment relationship, so that a job for life and a secure career path are intended to protect them from social and political influences and help them perform their duties in a neutral manner. This means that the civil servants should not do the task of politicians' fighting.

Traditionally, the special organizational features should both guarantee the neutrality of the civil servant and make him/her a loyal servant of the state. The general understanding is that a bureaucratic organization can and should guarantee a maximum of stability and efficiency and the consequence is the development of specific civil services structures. A number of characteristics are attributed to a "bureaucrat" and a bureaucratic organization. It should be noted that, for example, the salary is not measured as a wage in terms of work done, but accordingly to "status", which is linked to the kind of function (the "rank") and, in addition according to the length of service. As a rule, the official is set for a career within the hierarchical order of the public service and he/she moves from the lower to the higher positions. From here stems the argument for hierarchical organizations, careers, the principles of seniority and the introduction of ranks. However, there are researchers who believe that traditional features have produced as many benefits as damage. For instance, the principle of seniority has a demotivating effect for younger and talented officials. Better qualifications have led to civil servants who are more qualified, flexible and self-confident and who would not accept simply the taking and giving of orders. As for the principle of stability, it limits mobility, because the organization has little contact to the wider (public and private) sector. In addition, factors such as subordination and rigidity (in the sense of organizing bureaucracies too strictly into careers) conflict with demands for flexibility, democracy and responsibility.

All this has led to changes in the classical civil service system and some countries have moved away from the pure bureaucratic model. Despite many changes, however, classical views about the role and tasks of the public service are deeply grounded in the centralized and unified public administration which is clearly separated from the private sector. Here, considering an ideal type changes in the national civil service systems can be better understood if they are arranged in a scale between the career system and its opposite, the position system. This classification is linked with the basic assumption that when organizing the civil service and determining the status of the civil servants, the countries can basically choose between a classical career system and position system.

An academic study of D. Bossaert and Chr. Demmke (2003, pp. 15-18) reveals the distinguishing features of a career system. It is very typical for a

career system that applicants enter the service in the first post of a specific career path and within this career, he/she can then be promoted in accordance with legal requirements, take up new posts and rise through the pay scales. Entry to a specific career requires a minimum educational standard as laid down in statutory regulations (e.g. university degree and completion of a training period) and the successful completion of a test (e.g. state examination) or competitive selection procedure (e.g. concours). Thus, career systems create (different) hierarchical forms of organization and generally, following a period of training, entrants to a career are appointed for life. The key characteristic elements of a career system can be summarized in the following way:

- Public-law contract and appointment of civil servant.
- Only appointed to a first post and specific statutory educational requirements for the career.
- Limited recognition of professional experience from the private sector.
- Remuneration systems laid down by statute (advancement on seniority principle).
- Job for life and code of conduct for civil servants (including special disciplinary law).
- Work process based more on rules and targets; emphasis on accuracy, fairness and rule of law; subordination of performance principle.
- Special pension systems.

The career system and its opposite, the position system, present the two extreme forms and each country has to decide which one to adopt. In reality, the national civil service model is somewhere between these two extreme forms. The decision to adopt one or other model is directly connected with national tradition and the role given to the state in its relationship with society. The more the idea of the state contrasts with that of society, the more likely it is to decide to adopt a classical career system. The reverse is true when a decision is made to adopt a position system. The illustration of this classification is presented on Table 1.

Table 1. Career system and Position system

Career system			Position system
France, Germany, Spain	Poland	The Netherlands	Sweden
Romania, Bulgaria		Estonia	

Source: Bossaert, D., Chr. Demmke, (2003), Civil Services in the Accession States, New trends and the Impact of the Integration Process, European Institute of Public Administration, Publication Service, EIPA, the Netherlands, p.17.

As the Table 1 illustrates the distinction between the two systems can be differentiated on a number of points. First, the regulations in a career system often apply solely to civil servants with a public-law contract, (i.e. there are countries, where the main elements of the career system do not affect all public service employees). Second, classical elements of the career system are also applied in countries using a position model and this often affects specific sectors such as the military, the custom service or the police. Third, the conditions of service for top civil servants are very different and in some countries either a distinct Senior Civil Service is introduced or positions for top civil servants are awarded for a specific period following specific selection procedures. Finally, the two systems differentiate themselves still more in the national model concerned. This explains why, for example, Estonia has decided in favour of a variant of the civil service which has similarities with the position system of Sweden, whereas Bulgarian and Romanian systems qualify as a career model which has similarities with the French model. The desire to return to old and traditional roots, origins and constitutions in many countries plays a part in shaping and defining civil service law.

The decision to adopt one or other model in most cases is very closely linked with the country's own national tradition, its own national way of thinking, its civil service culture and internal political constellations. This is particularly noticeable in the case of Estonia and Bulgaria, because these two countries have decided to adopt different models for the civil service, which are closely connected with their history, national tradition, civil service culture and (to some extent) geography. Estonia is strongly influenced by the Nordic models and Bulgaria by France.

For many countries another important factor to adopt the career system is its efficiency. In the 20th century it was Max Weber (in "Economy and Society"), who found out that the bureaucratic state and its structural elements, which in the 21st century are applied in many countries with a career system is the most efficient form of organization. Even today, principles such as the official hierarchy, the career path, professional qualifications, rule-based decision-making processes and the office as a profession constitute the basis of the professional civil service in many countries. One of the key differences between the civil servant and any other citizen in a career system is that the civil servant is involved with the preparation and execution of the government's programme. For this reason this position determines special rights and duties and professional requirements which differ from those of an employment relationship in the private sector. For example, the duty to enforce laws and maintain the rule of law requires some knowledge of constitutional and administrative law. At the same time the duty to remain neutral is another basic obligation arising from the enforcement function. To enable civil servants to fulfil their functions, they need a protected employment relationship, which means a job for life and a secure career path to protect them from social and political influences and help them to perform their duties in a neutral manner.

Therefore, the career system is not so much performance-oriented, as security, equality and protection-oriented.

In general, a national system with classical paths, in which there is a hierarchical structure for groups of civil servants and civil servants gain advancement in accordance with the seniority principle, is a typical career model. When a civil servant is accepted into a career, he/she is not being engaged for a particular post but is entering the first post in a career path. Depending on educational level and educational requirements, careers can generally be classified vertically as there is often still a qualification-related differentiation accordingly to professional group. A major disadvantage of this career model is its internal barrier to mobility between the private and public sector on one hand, and on the other, between careers and within careers. It is therefore clear that as the public administration differs from private organizations and businesses in terms of tasks and objectives, employment in the civil service and the training of staff must be covered by a special employment relationship which takes particular account of impartiality.

Earlier researches on this topic from a comparative perspective (Bossaert and Demmke, 2003) found out that most of the European countries seem to be influenced more by the model of the career system than by the position system, when reforming their civil service. Civil servants' training is a significant element of the career system, because it is widely recognized that training is an important precondition for effective public administration and governance with a long-term impact. At the same time, it can be accepted that training is not a miracle cure by which all management and administrative problems can be solved (Kroukamp, 2006, p. 88). But certainly, training has become a major issue in human resource management, one of the human resources development practices which, in an integrated manner, can be used to obtain meaningful change and renewal. Obviously, it assists the government to develop the professional capacities of public servants and to promote institutional change.

The truth is that designing and implementing a training model is not an easy job as the core competencies needed in the public sector have evolved and changed in a number of ways as a result of the changes taking place at the national and international levels, requiring new skills and behaviour among public officials at all levels. For this reason the research analysis will focus on the national systems of training civil servants in France and Bulgaria from comparative perspective. Despite the differences between France and Bulgaria in regard to their history, national tradition, civil service culture etc., they both share a common feature with the adoption of the career system.

The French Civil Service and its national system of training civil servants

In a comparative research carried out J.A.Chandler (2000, p. 56) the Fifth Republic, at least its earlier days, was described as the Civil Servants' Republic. Today researchers in public administration describe the French system as a good example of the implementation of an HRM modernization policy on a career system and it includes over 4 million civil servants ruled by statute and divided into three parts – state civil service, local civil service and hospital civil service – ruled by common legislative principles and different regulations (Meininger, 2003, p. 20).

The principle of equity is a key factor in the French civil service. The French recruitment system is based on this fundamental principle: equal access to all government jobs. This value is based on article 6 of the French Declaration of human and citizen rights and article 1 of the French Constitution. The principle justifies the concept that the entrance examination is the common law access route to the civil service, guaranteeing that all candidates are treated equally.

The training system for senior civil servants is based on the established division of the France civil service – state civil service, local civil service and hospital civil service. The initial training system for senior civil servants in France is organized by the government administration itself. This system can be accessed with a quality university degree or with significant professional experience, after passing an entrance examination. The government sets the conditions to be satisfied to pass an entrance examination. The training system differs slightly for the three sectors of the civil service:

- The route for central government civil servant roles is organized per Ministry and per segment, in view of passing an entrance examination and receiving training. The Ecole Nationale d'Administration (ENA) recruits and provides interministerial training exclusively for administrative roles. Specific schools exist for the legal system, government funding, national education, culture, the police and military services. Following the training period, graduates are allocated to the different Ministries, i.e. to the prefectures (regional representation of the central government administration).
- The hospital-based civil service has its own unified training and entrance examination system for hospital and nursing home directors. The training programme is led by the EHESP, which is also a university (this situation is exceptional), to the benefit of all. Following the training course, trainees apply for positions pre-reserved for this purpose.
- The local civil service has its own unified structure for professional training via the Centre National de la Fonction Publique Territoriale

(CNFPT), a shared structure operating exclusively to the benefit of local government administrations, which finance these structures without other contributions. Entrance examinations are organized either by the CNFPT itself for executives, or by local bodies supporting the local government administrations (management centres) for other staff. Trainees which successfully pass the entrance examinations are listed on a "green list" and must then seek their own position by applying to local government administrations, which act as independent employers, unlike other civil service sectors.

Public service schools are frequently part of a network of associations: the Réseaux des Ecoles de Service Public (RESP). Companies in the private sector, political and professional associations also propose training services, which administrations can purchase based on the rules applicable to government orders. The largest local government administrations also organize internal training sessions, to complement the former.

In order to understand better the French Civil Service it is necessary to highlight the importance of the 'great corps', because the only way to be a senior civil servant is to become a member of such a corps (for example, the Council of State, the Diplomatic Corps, the Prefectoral Corps and others of a more technical vocation such as the Corps of Mining Engineering). The position of the corps is at the very heart of the French State because French government ministers, including the Prime Minister and the President, are each assisted by the so-called minister's cabinet and many of the positions in cabinets are filled by great corps members. In addition, the arrangement of a French ministry is organized in a number of directorates, each headed by a Director-General and the membership of these bodies is frequently supplied by the great corps. Consequently, the most senior civil servants in France are recruited through ENA.

Before sitting an examination for admission to the ENA, the student will first have attended university, more often studying law or politics in Paris. After that follows a two-year training period at the ENA and only the most successful graduates (about the top 25 per cent) are eligible to fill vacancies in the non-technical great corps. Not surprisingly, most of ENA graduates have gone into politics and in total the ENA has provided the Fifth Republic with two of its five Presidents and six of its 14 Prime Ministers. The very strong influence of the ENA for long explains why the graduates of the ENA were once described as 'these princes who govern us' implying that they constituted a network, something like a spider's web stretched over the map of France, comprised of people who had been formed by the School and imbued with a particular and shared view of government and the role of the State (Chandler, 2000, p. 57-61). For over half a century the ENA alone has produced over 5,000 graduates. Today in France there are many business schools and business programs at universities but private

employers still prefer to recruit for the most senior private sector appointments members of the great corps, because the private sector values highly the quality of their education and intellectual ability. Recently the syllabus at the ENA has been modified in order to cover contemporary management techniques as information systems and performance evaluation.

Looking at the local level in France it is more appropriate to speak about local administration instead of local government. The reason is that there is a view of the overall machinery for the governing of France as a whole, of which the system of local administration forms an integral part. This explains the accepted role of the prefect in French central-local relations. Prefects are senior civil servants, generally graduates of the ENA, answerable to the government in Paris, but actually working and operating in the provinces, based in the departments, and part of whose responsibility has been to exercise a power of tutelage or supervision over their department and the communes within its borders.

However, the French government launched an extensive decentralization process in 1982. This process granted local government administrations the power to collect taxes, invest and manage a wide range of local public services. On this basis, the elected assemblies of municipalities, départements and regions can reach decisions without need to obey the authority of prefects, representing the central government, who simply check compliance with law, in general. Since the start of the decentralization process, institutions have been consolidated and the number of local civil servants has climbed significantly. The number of regions has dropped from 22 to 13. In 2014 the overall budget of local government administrations represented 220 billion euro. To accompany the decentralization process a local government administration level was created by a law of 1984 and the administrations at local level have employed around 2 million local civil servants.

As a national public institution Centre National de la Fonction Publique Territoriale (CNFRPT) was created by the law of 1987 to help local civil servants to improve their skills via training. This structure is directed by an executive board consisting of the elected representatives of the various levels of local government administration and civil servant representatives in the form of unions. The CNFPT is funded by a local government contribution equal to 0.9% of personnel expenses, based on shared resources. The CNFPT naturally manages the initial training of directors in local government administrations: local directors as per the status created in 1996. The directors are intended to occupy executive roles in local government administration with more than 40 000 inhabitants. At this stage, the CNFPT created the in-house Institut National des Etudes Territoriales (INET), which is set up in Strasbourg, to manage this training programme. INET personnel are civil servants.

The contribution paid by local government employers for CNFPT personnel training represents the main source of funding for the institution's actions. The financial management of the institution is subject to the government accounting system and the associated rules. The INET initial training programme for local directors has been upgraded over time and has extended the scope of the skills covered by its post-examination initial training programme for senior executives in local government administrations. For the purposes of this study it is necessary to present a case study of professional training program for local government administration in France, provided by the INET.

The program for the initial training of local directors is based on professionalization, alternating between internship periods with a local government administration and classroom-based modules at Strasbourg. Trainees are led by current executives or private agencies specialized in local government management. Each trainee is assisted with creating their own career plan, aiming to be recruited after completing their period of training. The training programme is part of the specific context of a public service provided by local government administration in France and related characteristics:

- Local democracy: the main difference between a local government administration and the local office of a central government administration is that income and expenses are voted on by a political assembly voted into office by the inhabitants of the area in question. Direct work with elected politicians is a typical feature in the work of local directors. Consolidating ties between citizens and their elected representatives is a major priority in the operations of local government administrations.
- Local public services: as decentralization laws are enacted, the main local services are transferred to the competencies of local government administrations (managing public spaces, utility and drainage networks, childhood services, social actions, relations with associations, etc.). Work in the field with inhabitants, ensuring local roots, is another key feature of the role of directors. Social and territorial cohesion, accessibility and the quality of local services are all priorities for a local public service.
- Governance: within a given area, public actions are adapted to form ties with other government operators and socio-economic players. Leverage effects are boosted when government administrations manage to combine their actions to the benefit of the population and regional dynamics. Promoting these ties is part of the assignments of local directors.
- Managing large teams: the public services provided by local government administrations are deployed by a large number of staff with a wide range of skills (234 professions have been listed). With 70% of staff providing services in the field, 20% playing an intermediate role and 10% in management roles, directors (3,000 individuals) are necessary allocated

to positions where they manage large divisions or general management positions on a short to medium-term basis. Local directors are expected to be involved in social dialogue, transversal tasks and structural management.

- Depleted resources: the government funding crisis is affecting local government administrations, for which income drops each year, while public service needs are increasing. Directors must be effective managers, familiar with budgetary and government ordering processes, managing human resources and controlling.

The training itself is organized based on permanent interaction between the various in-house CNFPT components, INET operators and external partners. The faculty and administration of the program are defined by their fundamental commitment to public service. They are in all their activities (teaching, training, research, technical assistance, and other service activities) at all time committed to the advancement of the public interest and the building of democratic institutions.

The recruitment strategy for the training programme is laid down in a decree. All individuals entitled to be recruited, subject to meeting conditions and obtaining the best results in the entrance examination. The entrance examination programme is based on a fundamental public service values: written admission tests on the challenges facing contemporary society, public law, the economy, government funding; verbal admission tests on European or social questions, local government management and law, and an interview to determine why the candidate wishes to work for a local government administration and their suitability for these positions, languages (cross-border areas). The entrance examination jury consists of local civil servants and elected politicians, all of whom reflect their priorities of the public service.

The programme provides professional training and for this reason no internal university research unit exists in the INET. However, the INET attempts to distribute its output to help spread knowledge in the field of local public actions and monitors university works in the field. The training programme is based on altering classroom-based modules and periods of immersion in local government administrations. Professionalization targets exclusively focus on local public services. The training programme includes 5 internships on this base: 1) A period of observation with a managing director for a local government administration. This period also includes one week with a local public service in contact with public service users; 2) A theme-based internship; 3) A group internship with several trainees, matching an order submitted by a local government administration; 4) An advanced course with a local government administration, a central government administration, or a partner of a local government administration in France or Europe; and 5) A professionalization internship, which frequently provides an opportunity to prepare for a new position with the future employer.

The training programme is based on two main lines. First, to ensure that the trainee directors acquire the skills they need to direct teams and, second, to contribute to the management of local public actions. The training programme includes three stages – integration, professionalization and specialization – alternating training periods with internships in local government administrations. The table below illustrates the stages of the training program.

Table 2. Stages of the training program for local government administration

The stages of the training program	Targets and priorities
Introduction	Assimilate the priorities, structure and contributors of local public actions. Understand how local government administrations function. Assimilate the fundamentals of managing human resources, finances and logistics.
Professionalization	Apply and evaluate public policies, including European aspects. Develop an interinstitutional approach to public actions. Understand management basics. Understand project management. Develop a personal career plan.
Specialization	Reinforce management skills. Highlight skills and experience in view of recruitment. Develop specific skills for the target position.

Source: Institut National des Études Territoriales (INET), In Centre National de la Fonction Publique Territoriale (CNFRPT), France at www.inet.cnfpt.fr

These stages comprise the following pathways: government funding; human resources; management; local culture; public policy pathways; European pathway; methodological support; ENA-INET local module. The teaching methods used for these pathways include, in addition to a few classes, multiple case studies and role play situations, conferences, round tables, feedback, field surveys, the involvement of elected politicians and local directors, site visits, independent works, as well as teamwork. In addition, the wide range of backgrounds of the leaders used – government administration executives, consultants, experts and university lecturers, elected representatives – ensure that the training provided is well balanced. Altering between theory and internships in a professional pathway ensures that internships play a key role in the training programme. The duration

of internships and the responsibilities granted during these periods are also progressive, ranging from a 4-week observation period to 12 weeks of hands-on professional experience. This approach allows trainees to put knowledge and skills learnt in training into practice, and then to refer to the experience gained in internships to extend their knowledge and take things a step further.

During the eighteen months of training at the INET, trainee local directors, on the one hand, acquire and/or improve the key knowledge they need as local executives, as well as methodological and analysis tools, and on the other hand, carry out assignments in the field, ensuring up-close contact with the actual situation in the region. The periods of professional immersion provide opportunities for government administrations to take an objective and yet detailed view of specific issues. The principle of altering between classroom learning and period in local government administration is one of the founding features and strengths of the training programme.

The presented case study shows the important role of training senior civil servants for the local government administrations in France. The structure of the program and its implementation demonstrates that the INET reflects the values of local public services and promotes an understanding of the general interest, while offering training in local development. Obviously, the INET is the benchmark for training local government administration executives using an interprofessional approach. This approach develops hands-on skills to ensure that civil servants with responsibilities not only become experts in local administrations, but also executives able to take into consideration all factors in their political, economic, social and environmental context in view of local, sustainable and participation-based development.

The public administration reform and the system of training civil servants in Bulgaria

The reform process in Bulgaria *de facto* started with a reform program, which was formulated as building, not reforming, the administrative system. The first Public Administration reform program was announced by the government in its 1998 Strategy for Building a Modern Administrative System. Achieving the goals of the strategy passed through the adoption of the Law on the Administration (1998), the Law on Civil Servants (1999) and a package of additional law and secondary legislation that provided for the establishment of modern administration. The establishment of a professional civil service started with the implementation of the adopted laws. On this basis, administrative management is entrusted to the secretary-generals who are civil servants, but the ministries are managed in all aspects by ministers and their cabinets of political appointees, including vice-ministers. The administrative posts are classified into managerial, expert and

technical posts. Managerial positions cannot be filled by labor contract. Members of ministerial political cabinets are excluded from the civil service. Also excluded from the civil service and subject to the Labor Code are employees with technical functions in the administration. There are specific statutes that regulate the judiciary, police, diplomatic corps, and other branches of public administration.

The government that came into power in 2001 moved the reform higher up on the government's agenda by adopting a new Strategy for administrative modernization. Its focus was on civil service training, administrative service delivery and strengthening capacity for implementing Bulgarian and EU law. A year later the Strategy was updated and an Action plan for its implementation was developed. All this went in parallel with the development of a number of other programs and projects aiming to improve the Bulgarian administration.

In 2002 the importance of training in the government administration was highlighted by the adoption of a Strategy for Training of Public Administration Employees, the focus of which was improving the professional skills and qualifications of administrative employees and developing the capacity of the Bulgarian civil service. In line with the Strategy the training programs are oriented to career development and professional development. In reality, the two types of training describe the model of civil service training in Bulgaria. The role of training has been gradually increasing in the following years and the official statistics (presented on Table 3 below) for the last five years gives arguments to support this statement.

Table. 3 Trained employees in the Bulgarian administration

Year	Total number of trained employees	Total number of training courses	% of the type of training
2013	52 274	8 520	33.2% specialized training
2014	55 423	9 447	28.4% specialized training
2015	45 811	7 477	39.6% specialized training
2016	43 971	8 009	43.9% specialized training

Source: Annual Reports on the State of the Administration at <http://www.strategy.bg/Publications/View.aspx?lang=bg-BG&Id=81>

What makes the professional development of the civil servants in Bulgaria specific is that it consists in raising their skills and qualifications in performing their official duties. The Civil Servants' Act regulates an obligation of the recruitment bodies to provide the necessary conditions for professional development

(professional qualification and re-qualification). This type of training is expressed in rank promotion (horizontal development of the civil service) with no chance of position in the hierarchy. But it is considered that the vocational training secures the necessary professional development of the administration and guarantees their professional competence, independence and political neutrality. Generally, vocational training for professional development of the employees is required for two reasons. First, when it is a case of preparation for an early promotion in rank (individual training), and second, there is a need for additional knowledge and skills as a result of a change (updating, development) in the job description (individual training or training for specific categories of employees, effected by the changes).

In contrast to professional training, career development is related to the promotion of the employees in position (the vertical promotion within the civil service) and occupation of higher position in the hierarchy. Positions in the administration are occupied through service or labor legal relationship, based on determined requirements and criteria, and connected with the specific type of activity, expressed in a system of functions, duties and competencies, elaborated in the job descriptions. The management position in the administration can only be occupied by service legal relationship, i.e. only by civil servants. The expert positions can be occupied by service or labor legal relationship. It should be noted that the Unified Classifier of the administrative positions distinguishes between a position and profession. Hence, occupying a position based on service legal relationship depends on the acquired rank, i.e. on one's professional qualification.

The purpose of the training for career development is to secure the sustained and continuous performance of the civil service by means of preparation of its employees to occupy positions and perform the related activities. A specific feature of the civil service model in Bulgaria is that the new appointed employees enter the administration with no prior special training on the specific functions and activities and subsequent movement to higher expert or management positions. Therefore, the main role of the training for career development is to adapt the skills and qualifications of all newly appointed employees to the principles and practice of the administrative work (introductory training and preliminary internship of the newly appointed). The introductory training and the internship provide for initial general preparation and initial special preparation for the administrative structures or positions, when such a requirement exists for the newly appointed employees. The training also provides for the preparation of the employees for applying for or occupying a new position in the administration (the individual training is an option in this case), but if it is a case of occupying first management position in the administration this type of training is compulsory.

In Bulgaria organizing and performing the civil service training has been assigned a public institution, which was created for that purpose. The Institute

of Public Administration (IPA) was established in 2000 as part of administrative reform in the context of forthcoming EU accession and its original name was Institute of Public Administration and European Integration (IPA EI) to indicate its key role in public administration training and preparation for the EU membership during Bulgarian negotiation process. The Institute has a status of an executive agency under the Bulgarian government and its creation and functioning is based on legal acts such as Civil Servants Act and 82 Decree of the Council of Ministers. Since it was established the capacity building of the Institute has been supported by the Bulgarian government, state budget and various international projects.

In its short history the Institute of Public Administration as a national state institution has been providing centralized trainings for the civil servants from all levels (central, regional and local) of public administration in Bulgaria. The administration of the Institute has been staffed with employees, most of whom are training managers, responsible for designing, planning, organizing, implementing and evaluating training programmes for civil servants in different fields. Based on various agreements the training activities of the Institute are supported by a number of training providers from public and private sectors, experts and specialists on different topics. The Institute also works in a close partnership with the Bulgarian government and the National Body of Operational Program "Good Governance in Public Administration", funded by the European Structural Funds.

The focus of all its activities is on increasing the professional skills and qualifications of civil servants through trainings in order to develop a modern, effective and citizen-oriented system of public administration, capable to work in the conditions of EU membership. Given this context, it is necessary to underline the key functions of the Institute, which can be grouped in the following way:

- To contribute to the professional development and career promotion of public administration employees;
- To plan and perform public administration training needs analysis in order to provide adequate trainings;
- To play a major role in the process of research, development, promotion and transfer of innovations and practices of "good governance" for modernizing the administration;
- To increase the capabilities of the administration to develop and implement projects in the framework of EU funds;
- To provide both assistance in implementing quality management systems in the administration and consultation services for better decision making in the public administration activities.

Based on the data provided by the Institute, two groups of training programs can be identified. The first group includes compulsory training programs for career development and the second group offers specialized training programs

for professional development. No specific data was officially published about the number of employees been trained by the Institute during the years. According to the publications on the website of the Institute the civil servants in Bulgaria have a great interest in the trainings offered by the organization. The fact that supports that statement is that in 2014 the Institute implemented more than 1000 trainings and about 21 000 public administration' employees were trained.

In regard to the compulsory training, it is centrally financed by the state budget via a fund. The compulsory training aims at forming of common administrative and leadership knowledge and skills, needed for the effective performance of the public service. Three main training programs are created by the Institute for that purpose: Introduction to Civil Service Training Course for newcomers in public administration; Training for new manager: The challenge to govern for employees appointed for the first time at a managerial position; and Training for Good Governance Leadership, designed for high level civil servants.

In contrast to compulsory training programs, the training for professional development includes a variety of specialized programs and courses across different fields and topics of interest of the public officials. The Institute has created eight training programmes which cover various training courses for professional development such as: Good Governance / Public Management; Public Policies and Legal Regulations; Effectiveness of Budgetary Decisions; EU Program / Bulgaria in EU; Local Self Government specialized training program for local administration; E-Government; General Competences / Computer skills; and General Competences / Foreign Languages Training. It should be noted that the Institute also organizes tailor-made trainings according to the specific training needs of the administrative units.

During the years the Institute of Public Administration has developed a successful cooperation with European training institutions and in partnership with them; the institute organizes benchmarking events between Bulgarian and European specialized institutes in order to share experience in training civil servants for a good management and performance. Two of them – the European Institute of Public Administration in Maastricht, the Netherlands and École Nationale d'Administration in France – have very strong traditions and are very successful in training administration. Hence, the French experience in training civil servants can be very useful and productive for the Bulgarian administration. From a comparative perspective, in regard to training both countries – France and Bulgaria – pursue similar objectives but they implement different approaches. As it has not yet fully demonstrated in Bulgaria, it is expected that institutions providing learning opportunities for public administrators will facilitate the integration of knowledge (information, concepts, theories and methodologies) together with skills and values, into the learners' practice in a participatory and reflective manner.

Conclusion

There is a firm agreement among scholars and researchers all across the world that the rapidity of change and complexity in the modern globalizing world requires more effective training of public sector administrators. The serious concern about training required for effective public administration certainly represents a further step in the process of building excellence in public administration education and training. The truth is that there are many cases, especially for appointment to senior positions, when a certain level of education is required, but a person's ability to effectively administer a public policy or governmental program cannot be measured solely on the basis of a diploma or the degree achieved at graduation.

Needless to say, training of civil servants at various administrative levels is very important for the realization of an accountable, transparent, efficient and effective public service. Whatever the administrative system of a country, these characteristics have to be taken into account in the development and training of civil servants. They have to be effective and their attitude towards global and environmental changes has to be in harmony with the realities in their countries. All public administration training programs must start from this framework. Among various institutions of education, public administration schools and institutes often have been considered the best means of solving training problems. These schools and institutes can fulfil a number of functions such as training at various levels, research, consultations, in-service training and publishing books and periodicals.

In France a general principle of recruitment is based on competitive exams and the most senior officials are recruited through *Ecole Nationale d'Administration*, technical or specialized schools (police, health, finance). The presented program in this study, managed by a special public institution is considered the benchmark for training local government administration executives using an interprofessional approach. This approach develops hands-on skills to ensure that civil servants with responsibilities not only become experts in local administrations, but also executives able to take into consideration all factors in their political, economic, social and environmental context in view of local, sustainable and participation-based development. The principle of altering between classroom learning and period in local government administration is one of the founding features and strengths of the training programme. A major advantage of this approach is that, on the one hand, the trainees acquire and/or improve the key knowledge they need as local executives, and methodological and analysis tools, and on the other hand, they carry out assignments in the field, ensuring up-close contact with the actual situation in the region.

In Bulgaria training of civil servants has been considered a key instrument for reforming and modernizing of the administrative system since the start of

the reform process in the end of XXth century. But the reality is that the reform has not provided yet a modern, effective and citizen-oriented system of public administration, capable to work in the conditions of real EU membership. Consequently, there is a strong need to rethink the significant role of training in this process.

A specific feature of the civil service model in Bulgaria is that it is possible for new appointed employees to enter the administration with no prior special training on the specific functions and activities and in this case training is of great significance, because it places particular emphasis on adapting the skills and qualifications of these employees to the principles and practice of the administrative work. All the centralized trainings for the civil servants from all levels (central, regional and local) of public administration in Bulgaria are provided by the Institute of Public Administration. This is the national state institution for training civil servants that provides the training programs for career development and professional development. These two types of training describe the Bulgarian model of civil service training. The training activities are supported by a number of training providers from public and private sectors, experts and specialists on different topics. In addition, the Institute has a successful cooperation with European specialized institutes, including French ones, which have very strong traditions and are very successful in training administration.

The research findings prove that the French experience in training civil servants would be very useful and productive for the Bulgarian administration if it is necessary to give the national state institution a stronger structure by reviewing its training programs, methods of training, the status of its training personnel and its institutional relations to the government. The results from this study are expected to stimulate much discussion on matters related to enhancing the quality of public administration training in Bulgaria. Certainly, the dominant trend for rapid changes and the complexity of the problems which public administrators face in the contemporary world present profound new challenges for all those who are committed to public administration education and training.

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TRAINING MODELS FOR PUBLIC SECTOR SERVANTS: THE EXPERIENCE OF FRANCE AND BULGARIA

Abstract

The issue how civil servants are trained, and the need to facilitate their learning as well, is one that is becoming ever more crucial to the future of good governance and administration. Without question, the increased demand for competent and qualified public administrators raises the stakes for effective public administration training even higher.

The truth is that training is not a miracle cure for solving all management and administrative problems, but it is one of the human resources development practices which, in an integrated manner, is used to obtain meaningful change and renewal. Training assists the government to develop the professional capacities of public servants and to promote institutional change. Certainly, designing and implementing a training model is not an easy job, because the system and practices of training should appropriately address the increasing demand for high-level, up-to-date knowledge and skills. In order to achieve this, new approaches need to be explored.

This study seeks to deal with the meaningful role of training civil servants by examining from a comparative perspective the national training systems and institutions for training civil servant in France and Bulgaria. In doing so, the political and administrative context of each country is considered, because the choice of the training model is greatly determined by the established system of public administration and its traditions. The reason for choosing these two countries is because the system of the Bulgarian administration qualifies as a career model which has similarities with the French model.

Key words: career system, training of civil servants, national system of training, models of training.

JEL: H1, H7, I2.