BUILDING A MORE EFFICACIOUS CHILEAN BUREAUCRACY: LESSONS FROM THE SINGAPORE CASE

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RESUMEN

Chile tiene un notable registro histórico de bajos niveles de corrupción. Sin embargo, el Estado chileno enfrenta problemas de modernización, como se refleja en los esfuerzos actuales de reforma. Este artículo ofrece un esbozo de ciertas características del servicio civil de Singapur, reconocido como uno de los más efectivos del mundo, para que sea considerado en el contexto de este proceso. El artículo examina brevemente los sistemas de Singapur en reclutamiento, evaluación y promoción y sistemas de formación. En comparación con Chile, encontramos importantes contrastes, incluyendo la existencia de un empleo permanente, altos niveles de competencia, que reflejan en una meritocracia medible objetivamente, una capacitación vigorosa, y un fuerte sentido de misión pública, respaldado por la capacidad de desarrollar una visión a largo plazo.

Palabras clave: Reforma del sector público, Meritocracia, Servicio civil, Singapur, Chile.

CONSTRUYENDO UNA BUROCRACIA MÁS EFICAZ EN CHILE: LECCIONES DEL CASO DE SINGAPUR

ABSTRACT

Chile has a remarkable record of historically low levels of corruption. The Chilean state, nonetheless, faces issues of modernization as reflected in current reform efforts. This article offers a sketch of certain features of the Singapore civil service, known by wide reputation as one of the most effective in the world, for consideration as part of this process. The article briefly examines Singapore's recruitment, evaluation and promotion, and training systems. In comparison with Chile, we find important contrasts including permanent employment, high levels of competition reflecting an embrace of objectively measurable meritocracy, vigorous training, and a strong sense of public mission backed by the ability to develop long-term vision.

Keywords: Public sector management, Meritocracy, Civil Service, Singapore, Chile.

INTRODUCTION

After corruption scandals during the Lagos and Bachelet Administrations in 2003 and 2008 respectively, a number of reforms were enacted. During the Lagos Administration, reforms included simplifying administrative procedures (Law 19.880); setting the level of remuneration of high-level officials to be more in line with the private sector and reducing the amount of undisclosed funds (Law 19.863), professionalizing the public service to develop long-term career trajectories (Law 19.882), and increasing the transparency of government procurement and concessions (Law 19.886). In 2006, the Bachelet Administration introduced a legislative package aimed to reduce corruption and to increase transparency the package was oriented towards lobbying, campaign finance, and conflicts of interest; increasing access to public information; deepening civil service reforms; and modernizing the comptroller general (Aninat et al. 2008: 192). Araya and Cerpa (2008) suggest that the New Public Management ideas have led to modernization of the public bureaucracy, especially under the democratic governments from the 1990s. These reforms fall into the area of strategic planning and priorities, as well as improving the quality of policymaking, however there are few details on the results of the reforms.

Martínez Puón (2012) points out that the senior levels of the civil service remain problematic for most Latin American countries, with uncertainty about whether to make them career tracks (potentially losing flexibility); continue, as in Chile, to make them political appointees (losing consistency, expertise, neutrality, and long-term planning); or to have som form of mixed system of both at the top levels. Perhaps the most serious reform was the setting up of the Consejo de Alta Dirección Pública (CADP) in 2003. CADP helps to fill top level positions, creating job descriptions and salary, calling for applications, and interviewing the candidates until a short list of up to 5 candidates can be presented by the hiring minister. For second tier employees, CADP creates a separate selection committee that interviews and ranks candidates for the DNSC director. The objective is to reduce the number of political appointees from 3.120 to 650; however recent efforts fell well short of the goal (Dowling 2007). Moreover, efforts have been made to increase the pay at this high level to more comparable salaries with the private sector. However interviews by the author in 2014 reveal some potential issues with the recruitment process. The foremost is that CADP does not have input into which candidates are chosen, it only screens selections for qualifications. The second is that the new system does not alter the fundamentally political nature of the appointment. The third is the likely resulting disjuncture between the upper level of the bureaucracy and the rest of the state. Perhaps most importantly,

the turnover of high level management with each new Administration means it is almost impossible to develop long-term vision, consistency, or expertise within the state. This is exacerbated by the fact that an increasing proportion, 60,4% (DIPRES 2013: 37), of bureaucratic positions are now on a contractual basis. While there is certainly some merit to the idea that permanency reduces incentives for employees to work hard, it also adds to the problem of inconsistency and the challenge to develop teamwork and expertise over the long-term. Moreover, it likely reduces the possibilities for innovation, as fear of speaking up or against chiefs or existing practices is heightened.

In terms of administrative positions, each Ministry fills its own positions, using a universal set of guidelines, including a *concurso* publically advertised in which candidates are invited to apply; an examination of qualifications; and an interview stage that includes a variety of functional and other variables at the discretion of the hiring committee (author interviews 2014). While administrative and assistant positions are paid salaries competitive with the private sector, professional and directorships are inferior, leading to turnover in these positions (Iacoviello and Zuvanic 2006: 156).

Since 2007, there has been a pay for performance system. In addition there are prizes for outstanding performance. These efforts reflect the embrace in Chile of the results based management (RBM) efforts that are part of the New Public Management movement. Such efforts were part of the 1998 Programa de Mejoramiento de Gestión. Yet, as Barría et al. (2013: 64) "…la definición de metas no es un éxito en sí mismo," reflecting the sense of frustration with reporting exercises. Iacoviello and Zwanic (2006: 148 & 155) conclude that existing mechanisms do not guarantee suitability and merit among public functionaries' rise up career ladders. They further remark upon dissatisfaction reported by employees' organizations related to inadequate remuneration and limited possibilities for promotion.

The lack of space for challenging conventional wisdom is further constrained by other factors. Observers decry the hierarchical nature of the Chilean bureaucracy, whereby there is almost no horizontal movement across agencies (author interviews 2014). The evaluation system is also problematic. Because of the personal relationship between the supervisor and employee, it is rare to see unfavorable evaluations. Therefore most promotions are granted on the basis of seniority. In general, employees get promoted only when the person above them in the hierarchy vacates a post (Barragán and Roemer 2001: 38). One of the few comprehensive contemporary examinations of the Chilean bureaucracy reaches some

interesting conclusions (Iacoviello and Zwanic 2006). They first point to the importance of the stable political and economic context for the bureaucracy. They suggest that even with the latest reforms, the ability for officials to use their judgment as well as to be rewarded for their performance is "not guaranteed" (148). Personnel classifications are rarely revised and there appears to be little vertical consultation with personnel about their appropriateness. The bifurcation of the civil service seems to privilege in great measure those who enjoy political appointment. Moreover, there is little response to deficits in skills in regard to new types of tasks. The ability to move personnel among different organizations is also circumscribed (150-151).

Training occurs on a regular basis in Chile via contracted courses with universities and other providers, however, there is no regular coordination between the public service and providers. Each Ministry develops its own training plan, reducing the possibilities for cohort effects, cross-fertilization, or efficiency in training for overlapping skills (author interviews 2014).

As Aninat et al. state (2008: 193):

> […] despite the ongoing effort to improve the capabilities of the state, the shoelace bureaucracy is still rigid and procedure-oriented, and wages at the professional and high-responsibility levels in the public sector are lower than their counterparts in the private sector. The shortcomings lead to lower performance and at the end of the day contribute to a lower quality of public policy.

This article offers a sketch of certain features of the Singapore civil service, known by wide reputation as one of the most effective in the world, for consideration as part of this process. The article briefly examines Singapore's recruitment, evaluation and promotion, and training systems. In comparison with Chile, we find important contrasts including permanent employment, high levels of competition reflecting an embrace of objectively measurable meritocracy, vigorous training, and a strong sense of public mission backed by the ability to develop long-term vision.

CONTEXT OF SINGAPOREAN DEVELOPMENT

Singapore may be the most interesting case of development in the world, going from an island state devastated by civil war in the late 1960s to a status on par with the world's most economically successful countries in three decades. While enjoying the advantages of being at the center of an important global trading route, Singapore's road was not easy. Extremely high population density and competing ethnic groups, namely Chinese

(76%), Malays (15%), and Indians (7%), as well as a lack of natural resources, are the most important issues. Directly behind the Singapore miracle is perhaps the world's most effective bureaucracy. Two general lines of explanation have been given for this success. The first is the charismatic leadership under Lee Kwan Yew (1959-1990) and the other first generation independence leaders. The second is related more to the systems and culture of the Singapore bureaucracy. Since the first factor is not something easy to replicate, we will focus in this article on the second.

Contrary to popular depictions based on economic theory, Singapore is a case that demonstrates state intervention is perfectly compatible with openness to investment and trade. Going back to colonial times, government was crucial for basic economic activity, such as managing the port. As Baker (2000: 207) states, "Without government intervention, Singapore's port would probably have choked on its own success." After independence in 1965, Singapore briefly followed an import substitution policy (Milne and Mauzy 1990: 133). There was some existing industry based upon the linkages created from rubber production and tin finishing of Malaysian exports. Chinese entrepreneurs ran several industries, including coconut oil, saw and rice mills, shipping lines, soap factories, cement, and banking (Huff 1994: 216-7, 225, & 287). This strategy was soon abandoned for an export development strategy focused on attracting multinational capital and expertise. According to Barr, Lee deferred to his top advisers in the Ministry of Finance, including Goh Keng Swee, Lim Kim San and Hon Sui Sen, who in turn were advised by Dutch economist Albert Winsemius, to develop the early economic strategy (Barr 2000: 145). The strategy reflected the highly dense concentration of poorly educated population (Huff 1994: 277). The government acted immediately after independence to improve infrastructure, particularly investing in a new major electricity generation facility, opening new airport, and vastly expanding the port. It also established Singapore Polytechnic to improve their skill level of workers (Huff 1994: 289-290). The government created a large pool of domestic savings through the Central Provident Fund (CPF), as well as a post office savings system that was voluntary but also tax-exempt. By the mid-1980s deposits in the Post Office Savings Bank exceeded those of all Singapore's commercial banks combined (Huff 1994: 336).

Singapore's government used State-owned enterprises (SOEs) as the main vehicle of entrepreneurship. At the outset of independence, SOEs provided a sense of stability as well as entrepreneurship for the island's economy (Chee 1991: 164). As Huff points out (1994: 331), the SOEs grew out of the inheritance of British statutory boards, such as the Singapore Harbour Board, and the takeover of former British military

facilities. The primary motivation behind starting state-owned enterprises was to accelerate the industrialization process, by moving into new industries that private investment capital would not or could not enter. These included, for example shipyards, airlines, the telecommunications network, and a series of industrial parks. The state owned enterprises were treated almost as if they were private companies. They lost money, they were allowed to go out of business. Where employees do not perform, they were fired. In short, state-owned companies were expected to compete as if they were private businesses, including turning a profit (Josey 1980: 83). The government used the 'Ministry of Finance Incorporated,' a legal entity established in 1969 as well as statutory boards, including the Development Bank of Singapore, as holding organizations for the new ventures, focusing on new industries that both private and foreign capital were reluctant and/or unable to enter into. In addition to the statutory boards, the government also runs Government-Linked Companies (GLCs). The largest of these is Temasek Holdings, which controls a large number of enterprises as an investor on behalf of the government. Temasek managed a portfolio of S$186 billion by 2010, and like other GLCs operates autonomously on commercial principles with a focus on long-term returns (Bhaskaran and Wilson 2011: 33; Sng 2011: 144). However, SOEs activity and government promotion have gone hand-in-hand with promotion of foreign investment in key enterprises. Foreign companies have been attracted by location, excellent infrastructure that is continually upgraded, government subsidized land and buildings, tax concessions, financial joint ventures, tariff protection and duty exemption, a lack of restrictions on profit and capital repatriation, and a highly literate and skilled workforce, with an emphasis on technical skills. Singapore opened promotion centres up in the financial centres of the North to promote interest in using it as an offshore manufacturing base. On top of this the use of English as the main language and a large expatriate population created a cosmopolitan atmosphere (Hwa 1991: 208-10 & 213-14).

While the leadership group was important in setting the strategy, the middle and lower levels of the bureaucracy actually implemented policies. The guiding economic branch was the Economic Development Board (EDB), established in 1961 to woo foreign investment. Foreign investment continued to be key to establishing new industries, and the EDB sought to reassure them of Singapore's political and policy stability, including tax incentives (Quah and Quah 1989: 107). The EDB was reorganized in 1968 leading to the creation of the Development Bank of Singapore, the Jurong Town Corporation (to develop industrial estates), and the National Productivity Board. SOEs have played a key role in pioneering a number of industrial ventures, including air and sea transport, merchant ships, and

joint ventures such as sugar refining and steel, areas where neither foreign nor local investors showed interest. In general, both SOEs and foreign firms, rather than local capital, have dominated Singaporean industries. Financing came in part through the channeling of savings through the aforementioned postal savings board (Yue 1989: 265-75).

As the nature of Singapore's economy has changed, with wage rates increasing to levels that make it uncompetitive for labor–intensive manufacturing, the government has responded with conscious efforts to transform the economy towards one based more on high-tech and specialized services. In the 1980s, the government strongly promoted Singapore as a leading place for financial services (Huff 1994: 343). In 1991, the government created the National Science and Technology Board (NSTB). The NSTB created the first National Technology Plan for Singapore in the same year. The plan set out quantitative goals for the percentage of research and development as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and targeted a certain percentage of research scientists and engineers to be developed within the population (Loh 1998: 49-51).

More important modern campaigns include serious incentive structures aimed at population control to keep families at 2 children or less. In addition, as most of Singapore resides in public housing (though designed with some ownership rights), the population is organized into residential councils that engage in participatory democracy (feedback) and help carry out the campaigns on the grassroots (Quah and Quah 1989: 111, 121, & 183).

Quah (2010: 5-8), gives the following as the key eight features of Singapore civil service:

1. Macho-meritocracy, referring to the enshrinement of merit as the sole basis for appointment and recruitment.
2. Competing with the private sector for the best, through offering scholarships to undergraduates were then required to serve or fixed number of years; through competitive salaries; from 1989, through accelerating the pace of promotions
3. Low levels of corruption, which he traces to the Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau.
4. Reliance on institutional and attitudinal administrative reforms, referring to the periodic shakeup of the civil service in order to improve its effectiveness.

5. Reliance on statutory boards for implementing socioeconomic development programs, such as housing, which relieves the burden on the civil service, allowing it to focus on administrative and regulatory duties.
6. Effective policy implementation, which he traces to political support for the effectiveness of the civil service and statutory boards, reliance on meritocracy in low levels of corruption, strict disciplinary control, and, in recent years improving computerization.
7. Improving service to the public, including a Central Complaints Bureau from 1960, the Feedback Unit from 1985, and the Service Improvement Unit from 1991.
8. Using policy diffusion to solve problems, meaning examining examples from around the world to find best practices before suggesting new programs or adjustments.

CIVIL SERVICE RECRUITMENT

The Singapore civil service personnel system derives from that left by the British in 1947. It has 4 separate divisions, organized according to skills, education, and responsibilities. As the top are "superscale" officers who are permanent secretaries and deputy secretaries. Timescale employees are professionals who report to them. Divison One is known as the Administrative Service and includes officers in high-level policymaking and administrative posts (Vallance 1999: 83). Below these are support staff.

Neo and Chen (2007: 162-3) note that Goh Keng Swee was the primary architect behind the civil service and its merit-based orientation. He prioritized intellectual and academic ability above experience, and so changed the orientation of the system away from the British premium on seniority.

The Public Service Commission (PSC) was responsible for recruitment for much of Singapore's history. The PSC is drawn from captains of industry, who are expected to have strong experience in judging character and capability (Neo and Chen 2007: 164). The Singapore Civil Service (SCS) was divided from 1947 into four divisions. Division I officers were honors year university graduates, Division II officers general university degree graduates, Division III required a secondary school education, and Division IV only a primary school education. The PSC was responsible for recruitment in this one, while selection boards managed Division III appointments and promotions from division II to III. Division IV

appointments were selected by the relevant ministries and apartments, but those appointments needed to be approved by the PSC. The PSC relied on interviews for appointment. From 1983, the Public Service Division (PSD) was established in order to reduce the workload of the PSC. The PSC interviewed 10.430 candidates in 1982 alone. The Personnel Administrative Board (PAB) was established in 1972 to handle job classification and the terms and conditions of service. By the 1980s, the PSC became responsible for the career development and training of senior civil servants in Division I while the PAB was responsible for the rest. A commission of inquiry found out that these two organizations did not coordinate things adequately, which led to the formulation of the PSD to become the central authoritative institution for personnel in 1983. The PSD took over all normal functions other than appointment, promotion and disciplinary control, which remains with the PAB. The PSC's role became restricted to ensuring impartiality in the appointment, promotion and disciplinary control of civil servants (Quah 2010: 75-8).

In 1990 the Constitution was amended to increase membership on the PSC from 11 to 15 and formed two additional sub commissions, the Education Service Commission (ESC) and the Police and Civil Defense Services Commission (PCDSC). In 1994, the powers of the PSC, ESC, and PCDSC were devolved into a system of 31 personnel boards with three levels designed to recruit and promote, and discipline civil service officers (Quah 2009: 53-54).

The public bureaucracy has two main elements, the civil service and a number of statutory boards. From the start, the government used the Public Service Commission to ruthlessly stress achievement criteria in hiring and promotion for the civil service. It openly disavowed the idea of seniority and possibility for personal favoritism. It embraced the notion of high salaries to reduce temptations for corruption and to attract high levels of talent (Milne and Mauzy 1990: 82-83). Politically appointed ministers set direction through high-level policies, while civil servants are left to work out the details on the ground (Milne and Mauzy 1990: 83).

There are approximately 80 statutory boards that perform a variety of functions. They are not subject to the same rigid regulations on budgeting personnel and other aspects of the normal civil service. The relevant member of the cabinet appoints members of each board, in consultation with Prime Minister. In these cases, as well, merit is a prerequisite. High-level civil servants often have cross-appointments on statutory boards (Milne and Mauzy 1990: 83-84). According to Quah (1987), there are three levels of management in each statutory board. At the highest level is a Board of Directors, including civil servants, businessmen, professionals

and trade unionists. The chairman is usually a Member of Parliament, a top civil servant or a distinguished person in the field, and is appointed by the Minister who has jurisdiction over the statutory board. The second level is a management team, including a general or executive manager who is also a board member, a secretary and the various departmental heads. The third layer is support staff. Statutory board members are not part of the Singapore civil service. Statutory boards are expected to be self-sufficient terms of their financial capability; they are run as private enterprises. The only difference is that they are subject to audit by the government (Quah 1987: 121-2).

Civil service ranking and promotion

One of the key features of the Singapore civil service is the principle of comparable pay with the private sector. Cheung (2005: 187) notes that there are two elements to civil service salary, a stable basic element and a variable element. The variable element is the part that is late to market fluctuations based on regular paper views as well as performance-related pay. A 1994 government White Paper enshrined the principle that civil service salaries should be paid to comparable private sector salaries. The policy has been controversial given the extremely high salaries of the top civil servants (Quah 2009: 54-55). The government has long recognized the importance of reducing the number of fringe/additional benefits in favour of cash, to increase transparency and reduce possibilities for corruption (Neo and Chen 2007: 363-5).

From 1966 to 1979, civil servants were evaluated using the Staff Confidential Report, which included a checklist, rating scales and description of performance. A survey of mid-level servants in 1982 found high levels of dissatisfaction with this system of performance appraisal. As a result a study mission when to Shell headquarters in London at the behest of Lee Kuan Yew who had read and understood that it had one of the best appraisal systems in the world. According to Quah, there were three key elements to this reform. The first was a revision of the performance report. The revised report contains a record of an ongoing discussion between an officer and their subordinate, including personal data, a performance review according to set targets, extenuating circumstances, and preferences as well as possibilities for future postings. Secondly a new instrument was developed called a Staff Development Report, which conducted the evaluation around four different factors: helicopter, analysis, imagination, and reality (HAIR). Helicopter refers to the ability and drive to look at a problem from a higher vantage point while simultaneously taking into account relevant details. These factors were developed by consulting experts J. Van Lennep and Herman Muller for Shell. The third instrument

was called the potential ranking exercise where administrators were ranked according to the same guidelines by their colleagues, namely a panel of 3 to 10 senior officers. In 1996, these arrangements were further amended. A work review report was added to give different views on an officer's achievements and progress for each year, and areas for improvement as well as targets and training plans for the following year. In addition, a confidential development report is submitted by the supervisor evaluating the officer's overall performance and long-term potential. This report contains letter grades from A through E with E being an unacceptable performance. In addition, the officer's long-term potential is appraised considering the aforementioned HAIR criteria, including filling out a key appointment likelihood report, identifying the possibility for the officer to manage a very high level position (Quah 2010: 80-82). Long-term potential is considered through the section "Currently Estimated Potential," by which a predicted job level and salary for the future are estimated, including the potential to reach high office (permanent secretary). This part is not shared with employees in order to reduce tensions should there be a negative assessment (Vallance 1999: 84 & 90).

In 1995, the system was completely reformed via constitutional amendments. The new system dissolved the old boards, and created a much more decentralized system. The new personnel boards include a special one of four members to deal with the highest level officers; six senior level personnel boards to handle Division I officers; and 24 personnel boards including 103 members to handle divisions to three and four officers. These decentralized personnel officers continue to be held to the highest standards of merit-based promotion. The new system allows for appeals by civil servants who are discontented with their reviews. On the whole, Quah suggests that meritocracy has been consistent, the introduction of differential pay for high level bureaucrats has created some disquiet within the ranks (Quah 2010: 86-88, 93).

Training

All (potential) administrative officers hired by the PSC begin with the Foundation Course, a 10 week courses designed to give basic concepts and skills of governance and public administration, as well as a strong background into the Singapore context. There is a community involvement component through which officers are posted to grassroots projects. There may also be short attachments at overseas posts and study visits. Middle managers also complete a 6 week Senior Management Program course, including management and media training. Senior officers go through a 5 week Leadership in Administration program. In addition, high caliber officers may receive postgraduate awards for further study. The training

programs also create a strong network of personal connections among the officer corps (Neo and Chen 2007: 358-9).

Once appointed, administrative officers are rotated through different postings; unlike those hired directly by statutory boards or ministries. Originally, officers had little choice, however, a more open bidding system was adopted from 2000 (Neo and Chen 2007: 360-1).

The Singapore government established the Civil Service College in 1993 to further improve the analytical and management skills of the Singapore civil service. It includes techniques such as scenario-based planning. It also offers the chance for developing networks among cohort groups in the future bureaucracy. It reports directly to the Prime Minister's office (Koh 1997, 127). In the typical enlightened fashion of the Singapore government, Lee Kwan Yew describes that civil service missions were sent abroad to study other examples of public housing as well as their outcomes (Yew 2000: 100).

These elements of bureaucratic orientation are reinforced in the education system. As part of Singapore's original strategy to attract outside investment, the government realized that it needed a well-trained workforce. Therefore Singapore students take examinations and ages 10, 12, 14, 16 to 18 that help place them within the education system, particularly deciding who will move on to higher education. In line with these values which place education as a high priority, ethnic minorities realized that access to education and thereby English was a road to social mobility (Baker 2000: 296). Here also, there is a strong emphasis on meritocracy and, in particular, distinguishing Singaporean students for their prowess in mathematics, science, and technology. It is equally interesting to note the continual and the system on instruction in "moral character, values, and social norms" as well as physical fitness are components of formal education (Milne and Mauzy 1990: 18, 22). In 1990, PM Goh introduced the Edusave program, designed to help strengthen the financial base of individuals to pay for education, and to equalize opportunity for all Singaporeans. In 1993, the government set up a $1 billion education foundation, with plans to expand into an eventual target of $5 billion. Income from the fund goes to a variety of scholarship awards based on academic performance and regardless of income (Thangavelu 2009: 233).

The role of the National University of Singapore is also quite important. It has a strong international reputation, and a graduate level program that trains many civil servant officers. The unit has a high publication rate for research in this area. One of the leading authors on the subject of corruption, Jon S T Quah, is a professor emeritus.

CONCLUSION: THE SINGAPORE CIVIL SERVICE AS A VEHICLE FOR DEVELOPMENT

Some important differences between the Singaporean and Chilean civil services deserve reiteration here. First, the civil service is based on a meritocratic model, rather than seniority. Competition for hiring and promotion is fiercely reinforced. Top positions are filled internally, giving the bureaucracy room for long-term strategic planning, consistency, and developing expertise. Unlike Chile, Singapore has been a one party dominant state, so responsiveness to political wishes has not been an issue. Second, the civil service enjoys a permanent status; top advisors are among the best paid in the country and so have little incentive leave. Third, recruitment and evaluation are done by objective means wherever possible. For recruitment, this means examinations. For evaluation, it includes a committee of experts from outside the functional unit, and competition at a higher level among units. Fourth, the Singapore system embraces training both internally and abroad. It explicitly trains the civil service to have civic values, including ethical and national interests. Meritocracy ultimately comes from quality and competition in the education system, however there is still a sense of elitism in Singapore.

There is something about the Singapore civil service that goes well beyond its economic leadership that distinguishes it from Chile. Perhaps more important is the fact that civil servants enjoy the highest degree of social prestige in Singapore society; they are considered the "best and brightest" of the society (Vallance 1999: 83).

Perhaps the key point is that Singapore's bureaucracy is seen as a vital instrument of development, and therefore it developed a scientific and long-term approach. While Singaporean bureaucrats are handsomely rewarded, they also exude a sense of collective responsibility and long-term vision, reflected originally in the leadership style of Lee Kwan Yew, that are hard to find elsewhere. Upon stepping down from his formal position of leadership, Lee gave 6 principles of advice to the incoming generation that reflect the philosophical approach and culture of the Singapore civil service (Chee 1989: 74):

1. Give clear signals, don't confuse people (avoid factionalism).
2. Be consistent: don't chop and change.
3. Stay clean: dismiss the venal (incorruptible government).
4. Win respect, not popularity, reject soft options.

5. Spread benefits, don't deprive the people (commitment to equitable growth).
6. Strive for success: never give up (keep cool in the face of great odds, political will is all important).

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