



Politico-administrative relations in top civil service

Report

EGPA/IIAS – Study group on personnel policies project

FREYA SCHREURS, WOUTER VANDENABEELE, TRUI STEEN, MARLEEN BRANS



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1 Introduction

1.1 Framing the topic

Politico-administrative relations are of growing importance. The changes in public administration that have been taking place during the last decades, especially under the New Public Management paradigm (see e.g. Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2004), have had an impact on the landscape of politico-administrative relations. The way policies are formulated and put into practice has changed from a strictly Weberian bureaucratic dichotomy (Weber, 1972) to more hybrid types of working practices (Aberbach, Putnam & Rockham, 1981; 't Hart & Wille, 2002, Brans 2003). The Weberian dichotomy as a model implied that policies were developed by politicians and implemented by civil servants, operating with strict division of tasks and without overlap in the functions. In practice, however, this politico-administrative relation has undergone several changes. More hybrid forms of relations have risen. This implied that the roles of civil servants and political executives became more interlinked in the policy process. Moreover, all sorts of advisors, experts or assistants entered the field. This has changed, or at least influenced, the politico-administrative relations as well.

The aim of this project is to interlink the existing, but fragmented knowledge on politico-administrative relations. This is relevant for increasing the general knowledge on public organization and to gain insight in the way policy processes are structured. Shifts in politico-administrative relations differ in the EU member States, which as a consequence led to distinct outcomes. The first research question investigates whether politico-administrative relations can be positioned in an all-embracing typology that presents the situation in the 27 EU-member states as realistic as possible.

The second research question concerns conditions under which politico-administrative relationships are effective and efficient. We argue that each type of politico-administrative relation, no matter where positioned in the typology, can be optimal or effective. However, according to the field in which they are positioned, the desired presence of certain conditions makes relationships more efficient or effective than others.

To increase the use and understanding of these conditions, a last research question investigates the operationalization of these mechanisms into indicators. These indicators will help to make the relationship more transparent and support efforts for making them more effective and/or efficient in practice.

1.2 The field of politico-administrative relations - an overview

1.2.1 Definitions and descriptions

This report requires well-defined definitions. Firstly, concerning the civil service, the scope of this project are top officials or senior civil servants. These are the highest rank in the hierarchy of the civil service. Senior civil service¹ is a term which distinguishes the senior from general civil service. As the term ‘senior civil service’ may differ in the EU-member states, we stress that this term is analogous to top civil service. Moreover, when we use the term ‘administrator’ or ‘official’, we refer to the top civil servants. A formal definition of the senior civil service can be derived from the OECD study (2008, p. 17).

“A Senior Civil Service (SCS) is a structured and recognised system of personnel for the higher non-political positions in government. It is a career civil service providing people to be competitively appointed to functions that cover policy advice, operational delivery or corporate service delivery. The service is centrally managed through appropriate institutions and procedures, in order to provide stability and professionalism of the core group of senior civil servants, but also the necessary flexibility to match changes in the composition of Government by using appropriate due processes.”

This definition was amended by the EIPA study (EIPA, 2008, p. 4) into the following definition:

“SCS is a system of personnel for high and top level management positions in the national civil service, formally or informally recognised by an authority, or through

¹ Further abbreviated as SCS

a common understanding of the organisation of such a group. It is a framework of career-related development providing people to be competitively appointed to functions that cover policy advice, operational delivery or corporate service delivery”.

The latter definition differs from the previous OECD definition as it does not emphasize the necessity of a structured personnel system. In addition, it takes into account that recognition by an authority can be formal or informal. The latter definition further adds that among ‘higher non-political positions’, the focus is on management positions within the hierarchy. Finally, it excludes that the service is centrally managed as in many countries, there is no centralised management of the SCS.

Secondly, the term ‘political executive’ refers to the leading politicians of the executive branch. This term is broader than purely Ministers as it also contains other players, such as ‘junior Ministers’ in the UK. Politico-administrative relations refer to the relationship between top officials and political executives, and not between top officials and members of parliament.

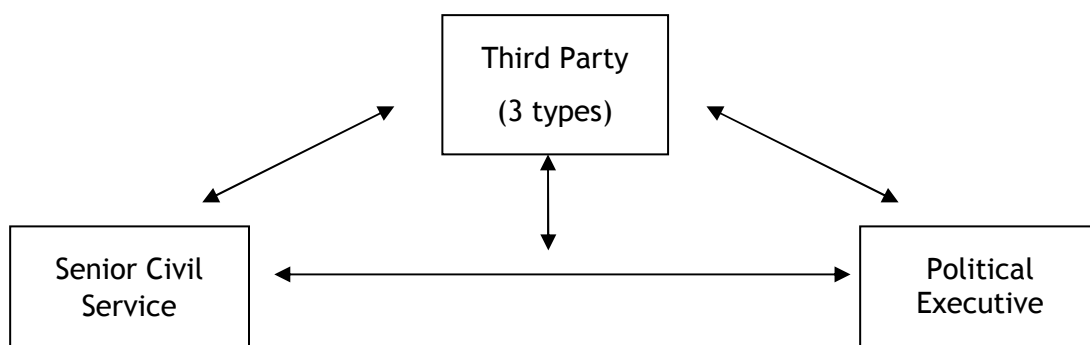
Lastly, ‘third party’ is a summarizing term that refers to all kinds of structurally employed advisors or assistants next to the civil service who have a share in designing public policy and potentially influences the relationship between top officials and political executives. There is no connection to the magnitude of this party. This ‘third party’ differs from country to country and it is beyond the scope of our project to describe type of politically appointed personnel in detail. However, a categorization into three types will be made, based upon the essential tasks, their size and the extent to which this party has a share in policy making. This method of inquiry enables us to observe the leverage of this third party in the policy process and the way they moderate the interaction between politicians and civil servants.

1.2.2 The model in general

Figure 1 outlines a diagram of politico-administrative relations. The relationships are indicated by double arrows. This scheme visualizes the mutual relationship the

third party holds in regard to the politico-administrative relations. The model shows that - even in its is simplified form - there is more to the relationship than the mere interaction between the individual political executive and its administrative counterpart (Svara 2006; Aberbach and Rockman 2006). However, it is beyond the scope of our project to investigate the relationship between senior civil service and third parties or between political executives and third parties.

Figure 1: Model of politico-administrative relations



2 Relations between top civil servants and political executives

The politico-administrative environment was briefly outlined in the first paragraph. Now the question arises how to approach the relation, knowing that there are different manners to observe it. The next part will firstly investigate how the relation can be approached as an institution. Subsequently, we follow the approach of Christopher Hood, who has defined politico-administrative relations as bargains. Thereupon we turn to our approach of this topic: the focus on the policy cycle on which our typology is based. Theories linked to our approach will be outlined and the typology will be broadened by involving a “third party”. Lastly, we engage in an exemplar mapping of four countries in the typology.

2.1 Different approaches to politico-administrative relations

The institutional approach is a first approach to the topic. The way institutions are defined and features thereof are applicable to politico-administrative relations. Scott (2001) identifies the following five conceptions that summarize what institutions stand for.

1. *“institutions are social structures that have attained a high degree of resilience”*
2. *“institutions by definition connote stability but are subject to change processes, both incremental and discontinuous”*
3. *“institutions are transmitted by various types of carries, including symbolic systems, relational systems, routines and artifacts”*
4. *“institutions operate at multiple levels of jurisdiction, from the world system to localized interpersonal relationships”*
5. *“institutions are composed of cultured-cognitive, normative and regulative elements that, together with associated activities and resources, provide stability and meaning to social life”*

(adapted form Scott, 2001, p. 48)

The first bullet point requires little explanation. Politico-administrative relations are social structures as they take place in a social environment between two or more partners and a certain structure is designed for the way they operate. Moreover, institutions are man-made (Offe, 1995, p. 52). This aspect is also found in the social construction, inherent to

politico-administrative relations. The high degree of resilience refers to the fact that institutions are path dependent: once a certain path was decided upon, the relation is likely to be following the same line of action and to reproduce itself. Legacies of the past thus influence - even stronger, limit - the current range of possibility (Nielsen et al, 1995, p. 5). This is closely linked to the second bullet item. Politico-administrative relations are stable in their operation, but are subject to changes in the constellation when for example a civil servant retires, moves to another job or when elections shuffle the cards of minister posts. However, the essence of a relation is preserved by certain 'common understanding', which indicates the stability of the institution. This brings us to the third bullet point. Implicit, symbolic carriers whereby institutions are transmitted to another relation assure follow-up. This is in line with the path dependency of the second point. In the politico-administrative relations, we can think for example of working practices, daily or weekly routines which ground the functioning of the relation. Moving to the fourth bullet, it is obvious that politico-administrative relations take place at different levels. There are politico-administrative relations at local level or at national level. Our report focuses on the top level of civil service and their connection with politicians.

The last bullet requires the most clarification. It indicates that there are different 'pillars' of institutions - outlined by Scott (2001) as the cultured-cognitive, normative and regulative pillars - but de facto, these are just three different glasses to interpret a sociological phenomenon, such as the politico-administrative relations. Grossly spoken, these three glasses are consisting of a continuum whereby the extremes are standing for a formal, resp. informal way of observation. The formal extreme corresponds with the regulative pillar, referring to 'firm' features such as the conventions, based on laws, standards and rules which typify institutions. Applied to politico-administrative relations, some laws or regulations for example establish the statute of the senior civil servants. At the other extreme, the informal or rather 'soft' aspects are stressed, which are represented in behavioural patterns, symbols, customs or unwritten conventions. These are the implicit, 'taken for granted' aspects, corresponding with the cultural-cognitive pillar. Politico-administrative relations are also bound up with it: some unwritten conventions between politicians and civil servants construct a 'shared understanding' that impacts the functioning of their relation. In between these extremes, the normative pillar is positioned; it encloses normative rules and values that apply in institutions. Values are standards which point out what the desired situation should be, norms designate how this situation can be reached. In the politico-administrative relation, political executives and

senior civil servants also pursue a specific goal. They want to obtain certain policy outcome, indicating what they want to realize in the society at large.

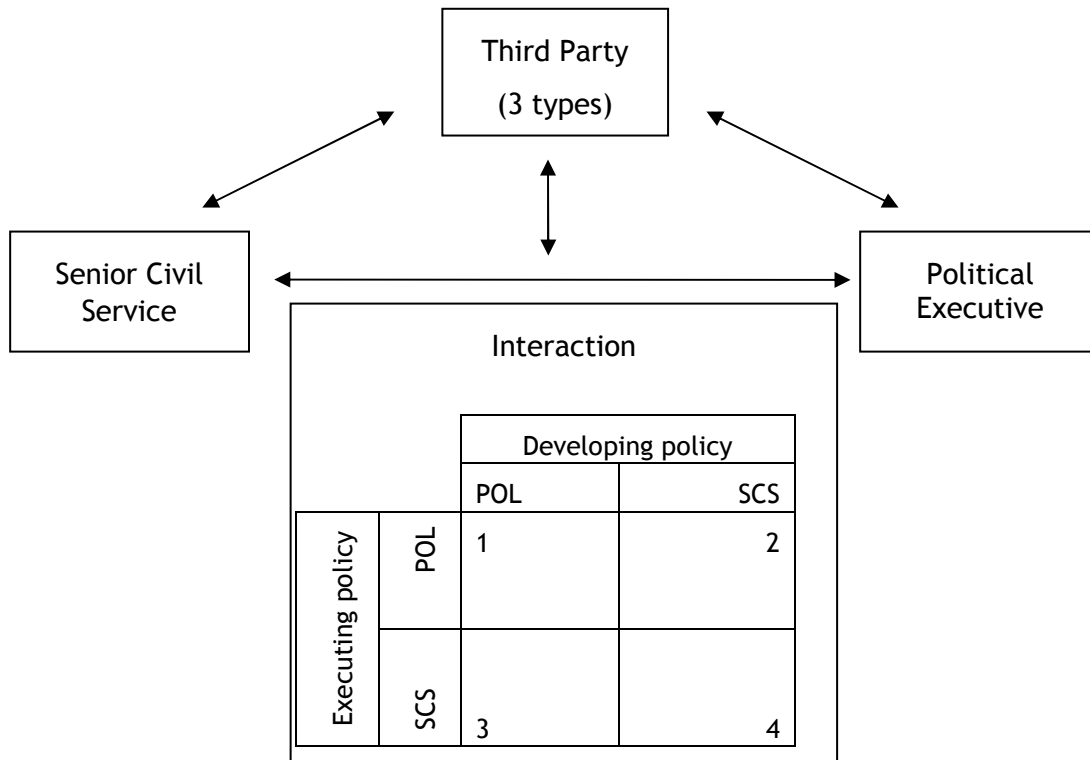
In short, the institutional point of view is useful to examine politico-administrative relations. Another way of interpreting the relation between political executives and civil servants is via a bargain. The concept of a bargain was first developed by Schaffer (1973) and further expanded in the work of Hood (2000, 2001) and Hood & Lodge (2006). Hood defined such a public service bargain as “a real or constructive deal concluded between public servants and other actors in the political system over their respective entitlements and duties and expressed in convention or formal law or a mixture of both” (Hood, 2000, p. 13; Hood, 2001, p. 181). Both parties thus give up something in order to obtain certainty on another, desired aspect. Politicians give up their right to hire and fire or remunerate public servants at will, but they gain political loyalty and some form of competence of their public servants. Public servants give up their right to blame or express opposition to the ruling regime in public, but they gain a place in the administration with responsibility and rewards, tangible and/or intangible (Hood & Lodge, 2006, p.8). Different types of public service bargains exist which tally with the idea of formal and informal aspects of institutions. The systemic bargain represents the formal part, the pragmatic bargains represents the informal part. The systemic bargain is imbedded in a constitutional settlement or in another way formally expressed in a convention. The pragmatic type is distinguished from the systemic bargain because it is a rather informal understanding. This is thus linked to the informal part of an institution (Hood, 2000; Hood, 2001). These two sorts of bargains are further elaborated on by Hood and Lodge, and different types are distinguished, but this it is beyond the aim of the research.

2.2 Our approach: a focus on the policy cycle

To further supplement our review of politico-administrative relations, we supplement the preceding perspectives with one more additional line of thought, which will help to clearly identify the concept and its characteristics. Our point of departure for typifying politico-administrative relations is based on the policy cycle. That cycle consists of several steps: agenda setting, policy formulation, policy decision-making, policy implementation, policy evaluation (Howlett & Ramesh, 2003; Mitnick, 1980). In search for clarity and comparability, in this study we split up the policy cycle into two parts: developing policy and implementing policy. These two dimensions are the base for the typology-matrix. We outline whether political executives or senior civil servants have the greatest leverage in

developing and executing policy. These dimensions are not dichotomous; they are a continuum. At the extreme of each continuum we find administrators only or politicians only engaged in the specific phase of the policy cycle. None of the countries is positioned in the strict extremes, as those positions are theoretical ideal types.

Figure 2: Model of politico-administrative relations, including the interaction



As discussed higher, the policy cycle is the point of departure for our typology. We have constructed the typology based on a 'general stage' of developing policy on the one hand, and executing policy on the other hand. In this simplified division, developing policies consists out of the following tasks:

- agenda setting (*deciding what the issues are*)
- problem defining (*defining what causes the problem*)
- formulation of policy (*defining what the solution to the problem is*)
- policy preparation (*budgeting, providing evidence-based data...*)
- making concrete decisions (*deciding what policy options to take*)

Executing policies consists out of the following tasks:

- policy implementation (*executing the policy options, including managing the process and the people*)
- policy maintenance (*continuing carrying out a specific policy*)

Figure 3: politico-administrative relations based on the policy cycle

		Developing policy	
		POL	SCS
Executing policy	POL	1	2
	SCS	3	4

Who is the dominant actor in the stage of executing policy (based on the autonomy that top officials have in executing policy)?

Who is the dominant actor in the of policy development (based on the amount of leverage that party has in policymaking)

In each stage, the predominance goes to the political executive or the senior civil service. The aim is to be as general as possible and indicate which party is the most dominant at both dimensions: either political executives or senior civil servants. However, we emphasize once more that these axes are not a dichotomy but a continuum. There can thus be a dominance of one party, but not to the extent that the other party is totally negated. The next question is then how to interpret ‘dominant actor’ on the axis.

On the developing policy axis, pointing out the dominant actor is based on the leverage that party has in policy making. We outlined above that developing policy consists out of different steps. As the leverage in each step can differ, the positions on the axis are

informed by the aggregate leverage of senior civil servants and political executives. This offers an option for differentiation on the general developing policy axis. The more there is a movement towards the extremes, the more the leverage of that party is emphasized. However, it is also possible to evolve towards the centre of the typology.

Because executing policy is considered a core task for the civil service, this axis does not allocate the dominant actor based on 'how much' political executives or top officials do. It is a continuum based on the degree of autonomy that top officials have in their role of implementers of policy. The more there is a movement towards the bottom of the typology, where the senior civil servants are positioned, the more autonomy top officials have in executing policy and the less political executives interfere. As a consequence, the dominant actor is the senior civil servant. On the other hand, the more there is a movement towards the top of this continuum, the more autonomy top officials lose during the implementing policy phase and the more political executives interfere in policy implementation. As a consequence, there is a movement towards a politicized system and the dominance lies with political executives.

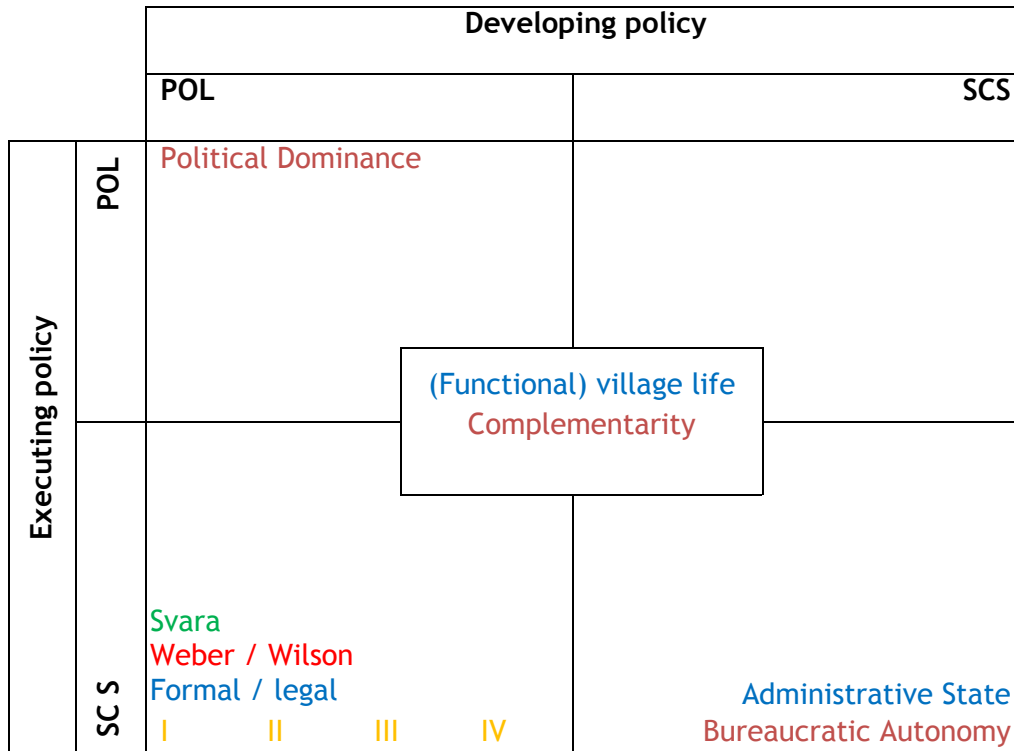
The outcome of this typology-matrix is four different quadrants of politico-administrative relations. Although two countries may be placed in the same quadrant, between these two countries differences may also be discerned. This typology enables to position countries at different places within the same quadrant. Quadrant 1 shows a highly politicized system, the opposite is quadrant 4 which is a technocratic system. Quadrant 3 is what we call the "classical" system. This does not mean that the system is conservative without any modern features; it only points out that this system comes closest to the so-called Weberian or Wilsonian conceptualisation of politico-administrative relations. Quadrant 2 is a rather unrealistic quadrant: because development of a policy takes place prior to implementation, it is unusual that in the developing policy stage the senior civil servant is the dominant actor, whereas in the executing policy stage the political executives are dominant. The expectation reads thus that at the extreme of quadrant 2 (top right), no or almost no countries will be positioned and if they are countries positioned in there, they will lean closely to quadrant 1, quadrant 4 or towards the centre of the typology. In case the tendency is to converge towards the centre, politico-administrative relations are characterised by cooperation and the absence of dominance of one party. In that case there is a simultaneously tendency of 'bureaucratization of politics' and 'politicization of bureaucracy' (Aberbach, Putnam, Rockham, 1981, p. 19).

We are aware of the simplification this method of inquiry brings along. Firstly, it is a rather rough method to split up the policy cycle into two parts and the typology does not grasp the whole policy cycle: policy evaluation and change - assessing whether a policy has been successful and possibly revising it - is not included. Secondly, this matrix leaves out other actors that may have a share in policy making. In answer to the first criticism, we argue that a more detailed method is impossible within the scope of this project. Concerning policy evaluation, it is less relevant to split up ascendancy of political executives or civil servants on policy evaluation, as this is situated outside the time perspective of the matrix. Therefore, the analysis would gain clarity if the element is left out. Also policies are often evaluated by external actors (think tanks, consultants...) Moreover, policy development and implementation are not seen as indivisible wholes, but as consisting out of several steps. Concerning the second criticism, indeed some players are left out of the matrix, even though they might have huge leverage. In Figure 2, the double arrow between the politico-administrative interaction and third party indicates the possibility of a mediating influence of this party. This will be deepened in paragraph 2.4

2.3 Theories of politico-administrative relations applied to typology-matrix

As the topic of politico-administrative relations has been of great interest for many years, many researchers have offered theories to typify politico-administrative relations. Even if their typologies differ because of the distinct focus, there are interfaces between them. We will briefly discuss some of these theories. Note that these theories describe ideal typical extremes. In reality, politico-administrative relations in a country will seldom be positioned into strictly one extreme.

Figure 3: theories of politico-administrative relations



In the theory of **Aberbach, Putnam & Rockham** (1981) the point of departure is the **allocation of tasks**. The authors outline four images, based on who does what in designing public policy. In all four images, they argue that administration is solely authorized to implement policy. For that reason, the four images are placed at the bottom of the executing policy axis. The difference between the images is based on the influence of both political executives and officials in developing policy. In the first image, **I policy-administration image**, the authors argue that all is done by the political executive and that civil servants do not participate in policy development. For that reason, this image is placed at the extreme corner left and it overlaps with the **Wilsonian or Weberian classical distinction** (Wilson, 1887; Weber 1972). However, according to Aberbach, Putnam & Rockham, this is an unrealistic image. In the second image, **II facts/interest**, the influence of the administration is bigger because of the input of facts and knowledge that they offer in developing policy. IN the third image, **III energy/equilibrium**, apart from offering facts and knowledge, also a promotion of citizens’ interests becomes a task in which administrators are involved. Lastly, in the **IV hybrid image** all the roles of politicians and civil servants are overlapping and there exist a tendency towards ‘bureaucratization of politics’ and ‘politicization of administration’. In general, domination in the developing policy stage according to Aberbach, Putnam & Rockham ranges from ‘sole politicians’ -

which is at the extreme left - towards 'doing all together', which is the middle of the typology.

Next, [Svara's model \(1985\)](#) is positioned in the figure. He developed in 1985 the [dichotomy-duality model](#). This model was based on the [policy cycle](#), in which he distinguished four spheres: mission, policy, administration and management. To position this in our field, the first two (mission and policy) are linked with developing policy while the latter (administration and management) are rather synonymous with executing policy. In the mission and policy phase, the roles are predominantly assigned to politicians, in the latter rather to administrators. Moreover, Svara (1985, p.224) outlines that responsibility for the extreme functions is largely dichotomized, meaning that mission is a predominant responsibility for the political executives while the leverage of the administration is greatest in the management functions. Yet in the policy and administration spheres, the activities are to a greater extent shared between political executives and civil servants. As developing policy is thus mainly, but not totally, a task for the political executives and executing policy is chiefly a task for civil servants, this model is not positioned in the extremes, but more towards the middle of the quadrant at the bottom left.

Next, the theory of [Peters \(1987\)](#) is positioned in the field. Peters outlines five different ideal models based on [modalities of relationship](#). One of the underpinning features for developing the different models is the 'dominant partner in the relationship', which we can use to position Peters' ideal types in our matrix. Firstly, the [formal/legal model](#) is equivalent to the Weberian or Wilsonian view on politico-administrative relations. It is also equivalent to the policy/administration image of Aberbach, Putnam & Rockham (1981). Therefore, it is positioned at the bottom left. Subsequently, Peters argues that in the [village life](#) and [the functional village life](#) there is no dominant actor since the actors are equal. The interaction is based on mutual interest for good cooperation and best policy outcomes. Therefore these are positioned in the centre of the model. Note that the difference between the village life and the functional village life is based on other features of the Peters typology². The [administrative state](#) is positioned in the extreme at

² The difference between village life and functional village life is based on the feature 'style of interaction'. All other features are equal. In the village life, the style of interaction is based on mutuality. The

the bottom right because of the absolute dominance Peters allocates to the civil servants. They overrule the politicians because of the expertise they have in policy affairs. It is not possible to position the **adversarial model** in our matrix because the dominance of a party is variable.

Svara (1999, 2001) offers a new typology in which complementarity between politics and administration is the central point. The base for this typology is on the one hand **administrative independency** and on the other hand **political control**. Both can be either low or high. As a consequence there are four possible outcomes of politico-administrative interactions. Although these two dimensions are not neatly consistent with the dimensions of our typology, we argue there are similarities on which the positioning of the Svara dimension in our matrix is justified. High political control leans more toward a dominance of political executives, while high administrative independence leans toward a dominance of civil servants.

A situation of **political dominance** is present if simultaneously administrative independency is low, because of the close watch of the political executive on the administration and the strict instructions they offer, while obviously political control is high. This is positioned at the top left. The opposite is a situation of **bureaucratic autonomy** in which low political control and high administrative independence is present. The civil servants back out of the eye of politics and hold on to the helm. The dominant actor is thus the senior civil servant, and this is clearly positioned at the bottom right. Next, a situation of low political control and low bureaucratic independency is called the '**laissez-faire**' or '**political impasse**'. As there is not really a dominant actor, it is impossible to position this in our field. Lastly the situation of **politico-administrative complementarity** is present when both political control and administrative independence are high. It is a situation in which both political executives and civil servants are dominant because they have mutual respect: political executives have respect for the expertise and knowledge of the top officials and these officials in return have respect for political priorities and they are loyal. Therefore, this option is placed in the middle of our typology. According to Svara, this is the most

functional village life is a subset of the village life and can be seen as several distinct village life models, which are based on different expertise (Peters, 1987).

desirable situation. Note that this is equivalent to the functional village life or village life modelled by Peters.

2.4 The influence of a ‘third party’

The interaction and the existing theories we outlined earlier do not grasp the total picture of politico-administrative relations. ‘Third parties’ are a prominent actor in top political positions. They are engaged in the fulfilment of political executive’s responsibilities and have a share in the policy process. Therefore, it is necessary to observe the politico-administrative relations in regard to that third party. Several names for this party apply and the leverage in policy making differs between countries, according to the states culture and civil service tradition (Connaughton, 2008, p. 163 - 166). Functions of this party might range from upholding relations with the party, other ministers or other players, helping with policy proposals and advising on current topics, writing speeches to taking care of ministers public appearances. In general, there are three roles for this third party: strategic advisor, media advisor and technical advisor (James, 2007, p. 10 - 11 and a provisional OECD report 2010, p. 11). Based on this classification, we identify three general types which grasp the reality of most countries. However, we do not intend to say that the third-party identification is similar in all policy-domains and in every case in a particular country.

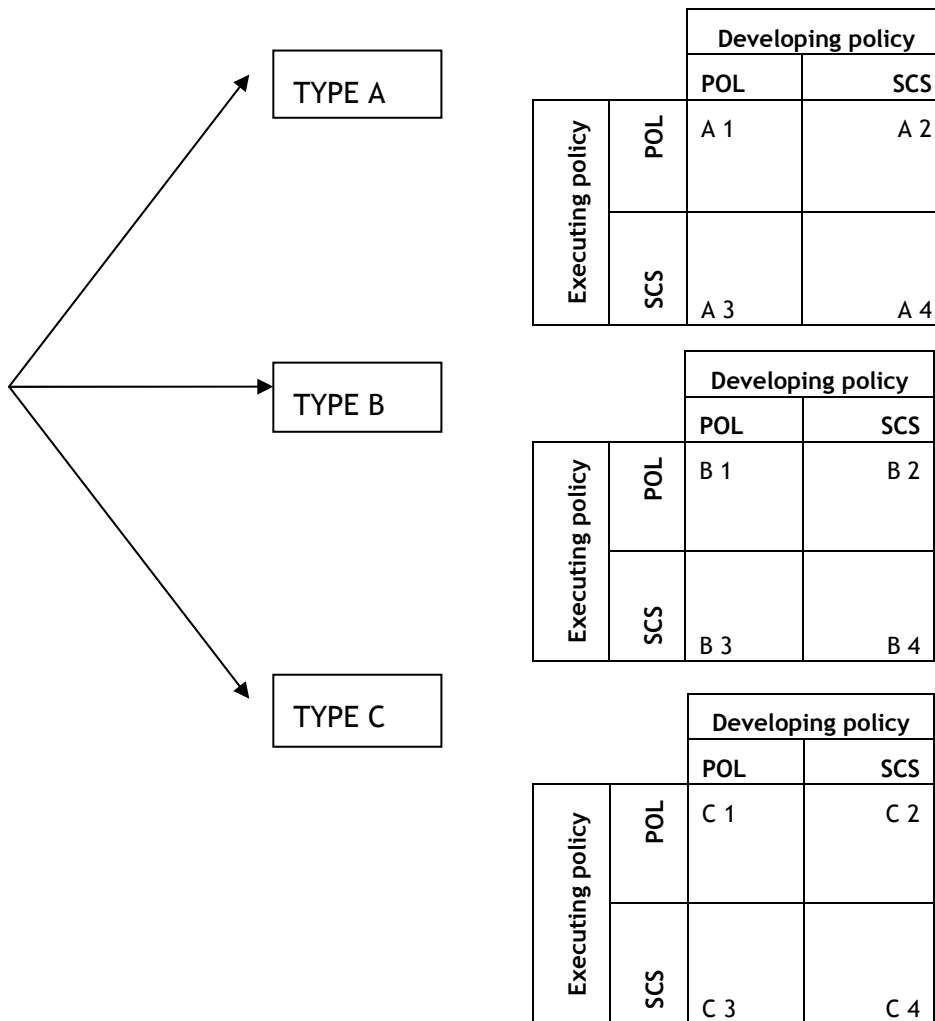
In the first type (type A), the third party is a strategic advisor. In most cases there is just one advisor per political executive, but exceptions can be made for e.g. the Prime Minister who is sometimes allowed a few more advisors. The strategic advisor has a close relationship with the political executive, which is expressed in the essential “appointment of trust” they uphold personally to the Minister (James, 2007, p. 8). The main task of these advisors is to offer advice and therefore to be a strategic partner. This partner is also referred to as a generalist. As a consequence, the role of technical or media advisor is subordinate and the third party has a great leverage in the policy process and in shaping the political-administrative relationships. The political hue of the advisor is in most cases important (Peters, 2001, p. 328 - 329) and there is a risk that civil servants consider this party as a threat to their work. In Westminster traditions - represented in the European Union by the UK and Ireland - these advisors are often called political advisors or special advisor. (Richards and Smith 2004)

In the second option (type B), the third party consists of a press or media assistant. Just as in type A, in most cases there is only one assistant appointed to each political executive, but exceptions can be made for e.g. the prime minister. The assistant has less leverage in the policy process or the shaping of the politico-administrative relations as the main task is coordination and assisting, and thus being a media advisor, rather than delimiting the political course or being a strategic partner. The political hue of the advisor is also of importance and there is not really a risk that the civil service considers this party as a threat to their work. In most of these cases, James (2007, p. 11) however notes that an overlap can exist between the generalist (type A in our classification) and this media advisor. Strategic advisors are in fact also sometimes involved in briefing the media on policy matters on behalf of the political executive. However, the main difference between type A and B is that the assistant in type B is less considered with strategic political steps and is less involved in party political matters. The coordination function is more dominant than the leverage in policymaking. The recent introduction of the political assistants in the Netherlands is a prominent example of type B advisors (Vancoppenolle et al, 2010).

The last type (type C) is present when the third party consists of a technical expert. Contrary to the limited number of advisors in type A and B, here most often we find there is more than one expert, often represented in a ministerial cabinet (Peters, 2001; Connaughton, 2008, p. 171). The main function of the technical experts is to provide policy advice based on the expertise they have in a certain domain of competence, such as e.g. competence in law. Therefore their leverage in policy making is greater. Even though the main task is to be a technical advisor, their role in helping to develop the strategy of policy and upholding relations with media, interest groups and other department is also important. Typically a ministerial cabinet consists of a mixed group of political advisors and detached civil servants. Top officials might therefore consider them as a help, but also (as they are often substantial in numbers) as a threat since they might crowd out the expertise of the top official. Belgium and France fit type C; they have a culture of ministerial cabinets, represented by both senior civil servants and technical advisors (Brans, Pelgrims & Hoet, 2005, 2006; Elgie, 2001, p. 40).

Combining the two-dimensional model (cfr. Figure 2) with the typology of third parties leads to 12 types of politico-administrative relations. In practice, however, some of the windows will be irrelevant.

Figure 4: Model of politico-administrative relations, including third parties



2.5 Illustrative mapping of example countries

Next, some countries are positioned in this typology. Note that this is only an illustrative mapping, in order to provide an example of how individual countries can fit into the typology. In this mapping of four illustrative countries - Belgium, the Netherlands, France and the United Kingdom - we hope to illustrate the process of positioning the countries in the matrix.

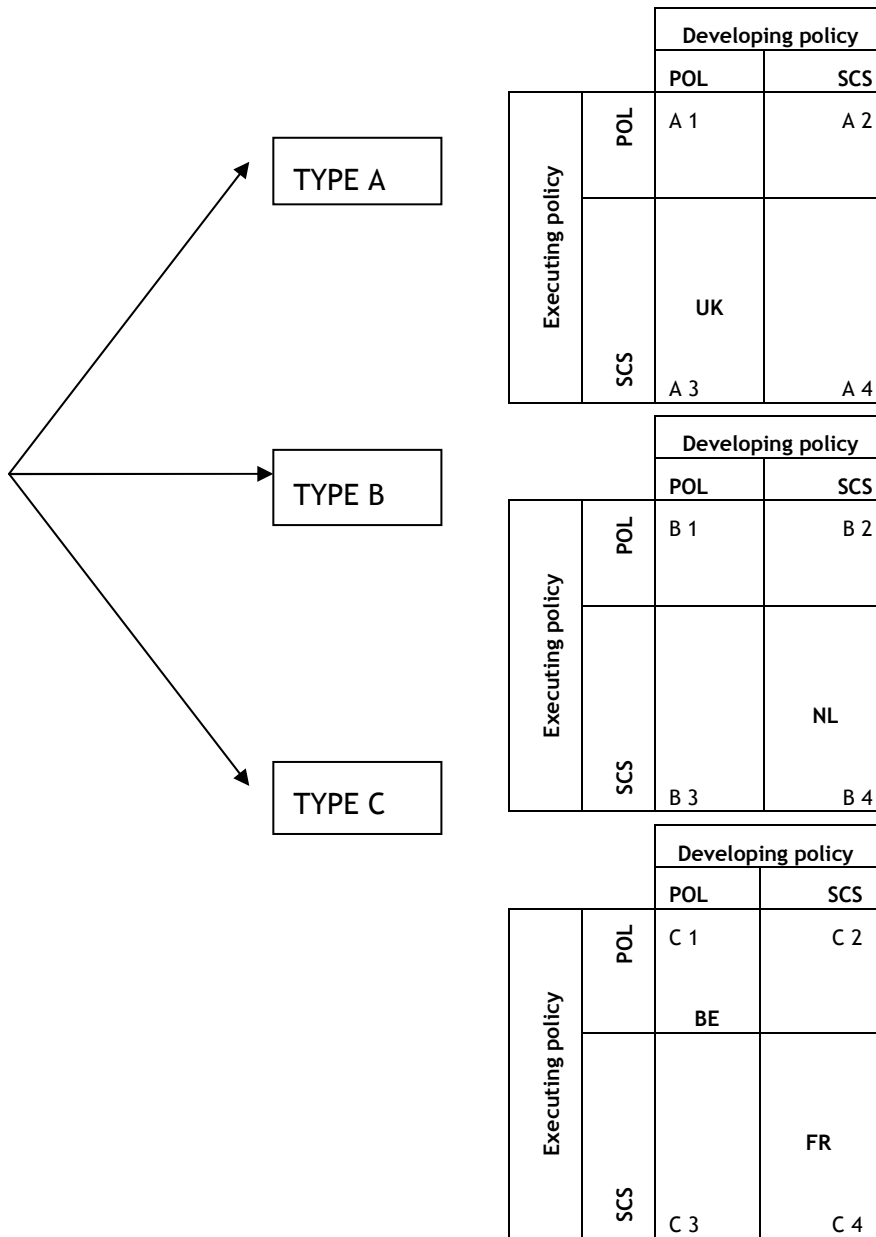
BELGIUM (BE) has a culture of ministerial cabinets (Vancoppenolle et al, 2010, p.4). Therefore, Belgium is in first instance positioned in type C. These ministerial cabinets consist of a substantial number of advisers and they have a strong position in policy making. Belgian government ministers and their advisers have greater leverage in policy

development than civil servants. This indicates a positioning towards the left side of the typology (thus field C1 or C3). Brans, Pelgrims & Hoet (2005, 2006) position Belgium in Peters' (1987) formal/legal model - which corresponds with quadrant C3. In our scheme, Belgium is an example of quadrant C1 as Brans, Pelgrims & Hoet (2005, 2006) also argue that the cabinets have also developed a relatively great share in executive tasks. Therefore, the total process of policy making is traditionally characterised by politicisation, which would support the positioning in quadrant C1. However, politico-administrative relations in Belgium are not positioned in the top left corner, which indicates a confined involvement of the senior civil servants in the process. We have added an arrow downwards in the scheme to indicate efforts in the last decade to increase the leverage of the senior civil service in the policy process (Brans & Steen, 2006).

THE NETHERLANDS (NL) have since recently a culture of political assistants. As a result the Netherlands are positioned in type B. However, the influence of that third party in policy making is more limited than their counterparts in type A or C, such as e.g. the Belgian cabinet. Furthermore, because of the absence of political appointees, such as political advisors that exist in type A or C, Dutch civil service is a more autonomous and powerful bureaucracy that plays a rather direct and prominent role in policy formation such as drawing up policy options and negotiating with societal actors (OECD, 2008, p.92-93; Vancoppenolle et al, 2010; De Vries, 2001). As a consequence, the Netherlands fit into field B4. A slight nuance can be outlined: Brans, Pelgrims & Hoet (2006, p. 61) argue that the Netherlands overlap with Peters' functional village life. Thus, within the field B4, they are not positioned in the extreme corner, but rather towards the centre.

FRANCE (FR) has a system of ministerial cabinets, alike in Belgium. So France is positioned in type C. Elgie (2001, p. 40) points out that France is a technocracy, in which policy making is dominated by people who solve problems based on their technical knowledge. This indicates the impact that the cabinet has in policy making. According to the OECD-report (2008, p.65-67) the top officials have gained considerable leverage in policy-making during the last decades. This is because the senior civil servants occupy prominent positions in ministerial cabinets. Thus, France is positioned in quadrant C4. Peters (1997) argues however that France can be positioned in the village life as top officials and political executives are not in conflict. As the village life is positioned in the centre of our typology, we indicate this by drawing an arrow towards the centre.

Figure 5: Model of politico-administrative relations, including preliminary mapping



The **UNITED KINGDOM** (UK) has a relatively recent culture of special advisors whereby every Minister is allowed one or two special advisors (except the Prime Minister who is allowed to have more). According to that feature, the UK fits into type A (OECD, 2008, p.112). Furthermore, the UK is positioned in field A3. We base ourselves here on a recent OECD-report (Matheson et al 2007, p.27). There it is argued that Westminster systems (with the UK being the principal example of a Westminster system) are closest related to the Weberian idea of bureaucracy - which indicates a positioning in quadrant 3. The report also mentions that in the UK Ministers seldom interfere in management issues. Therefore, the actual implementation of that policy is a primary task for civil servants. The same

report outlines that political advisors have great leverage in policy development. However, the civil servants' leverage in providing evidence-based data is substantial (OECD, 2008, p.112). This thus indicates a movement in quadrant **A3** towards the centre line (between A3 and A4) as the influence of SCS in policy development is indicated as well.

3 Preconditions for ‘good politico-administrative relations’

The second research question is stated as follows: what are the conditions under which politico-administrative relations are as optimal as possible and as a consequence create good policy outcomes? In search for an answer, we outline four essential preconditions or ‘guidelines’ which will lead to ‘good relations’. The first ‘guideline’ is to acquire *trust and loyalty* in the other party, resulting in a mutual respectful relationship. Building on this first precondition, the second guideline holds that both parties should agree that the *goal* of their cooperation is serving the public interest. Thus, there has to be a sort of goal consensus. Thirdly, both parties need correct *information* and this information should be as symmetric as possible divided between civil servants or political executives. The last two guidelines imply that hidden agendas are best to be avoided. Lastly, the focus goes on public servants’ *competencies*: some competencies have to be expected of public servants so that the policy outcomes can be achieved and frustration caused by incompetency is avoided.

These guidelines derive from several models of interaction between public servants and politicians : the Polarismodel (Nieuwenkamp, 2001), principal-agent theory (Pratt & Zeckhauser, 1991; Waterman & Meier; 1998) and the dimensions of public service bargains (Hood & Lodge, 2006). The guidelines apply to every quadrant of the typology-matrix, but there are subtle differences. Depending on the positioning, some of the conditions are more decisive than others, or other aspects of the conditions are stressed. Consequently, a relationship can be optimal in every quadrant, as long as the decisive factors are taken into account.

We deem it necessary to stress once again that this report doesn’t have a ‘political agenda’. It merely has the intention to be an academic discussion on optimal practice-oriented relations. This implies that all the diverse situations in the EU-member states can function in an optimal manner. The guidelines are based on theoretical insight and we avoid every normative implication for country-specific cases.

3.1 Mutual trust and loyalty

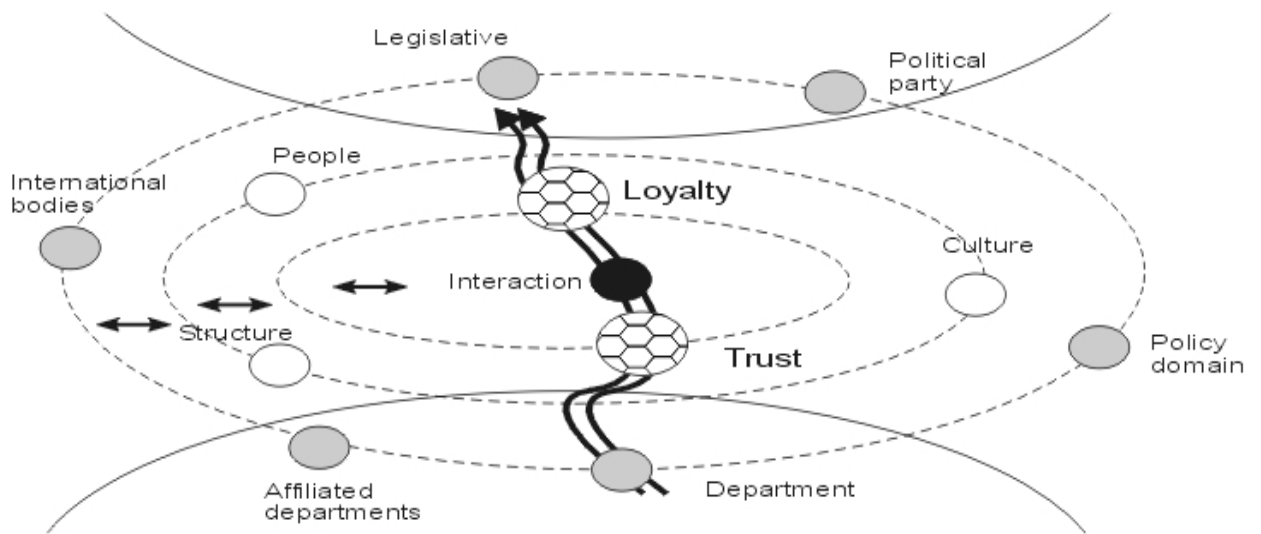
The first - and often argued most important - condition is mutual trust and loyalty. Politicians and civil servants cannot work together unless trust rules in their interaction. Trust is important in every quadrant of our matrix, even if there is a political dominance (quadrant 1) or an administrative dominance (quadrant 4). Trust and loyalty appear at the core of the Polarismodel, as the key to overcome principal-agent problems and as a dimension in public service bargains (see below). The following paragraphs deepen the aspect of trust in a relation.

3.1.1 Towards the core of the Polarismodel

Dutch research developed an exploratory model, which was called the POLARIS model (Nieuwenkamp, 2001, p. 157 - 158). 'Polaris' stands for POLitico-Administrative Relations (Figure 6). This model assembles critical factors that influence the politico-administrative relations and outline necessary conditions for a successful relationship³. The factors deduced out of interviews with senior civil servants and politicians, are positioned in the model in such a manner that some are more significant than others. Successfulness is at the core of the model. Three circles are constructed around that core, encompassing the critical factors for success. The distance between the core and the circle indicates the importance of a specific factor. Obviously, the most important factors are situated in the first circle which is the closest to the core. The factors mutual trust and mutual loyalty are positioned here. The second circle consists out of personal, structural and cultural factors. Environmental factors, more specifically factors out of the political environment such as networks, other departments, party politics or international actors, are located in the last circle. These factors do not influence the successfulness of politico-administrative relations directly; they influence the structural or cultural aspects, which are part of the second circle.

³ The criterion which was used to indicate a successful cooperation was the following: " a cooperation between political executives and the top civil servants is successful when it contributes to the supply of high quality and realistic products, such as notes or legislation, to accomplish social welfare and public outcomes (Nieuwenkamp, 2001, p. 168).

Figure 6: Polaris model



The first circle indicates the importance of mutual loyalty and trust. The idea of trust is closely linked to the norms and values which live throughout the politico-administrative relations. It is the expectation of one party that the other party will adhere to the norms and values they share. The mutual aspect has to be underlined as well; trust has to come from both sides in the relationship. In case one actor, whether political executives or civil servants, acts in an untruthful manner towards the other party; s/he runs the risk of disloyal counteraction. These so-called tit-for-tat actions create an undesirable, self-reinforcing situation which risks that the relationship comes into a downward spiral.

Mutual trust in concreto means that the political executive and civil servants can expect from each other that they are loyal, confident with the stream of information, open about the goals, avoid hidden agenda's or expedient action, do not hide information or provide wrong information, and are competent to carry out a job (Nieuwenkamp, 2001, p. 169 - 196). These are the main features for trust and we continue unravelling these by drawing on the principal-agent theory in the next paragraph.

3.1.2 Trust to overcome principal-agent problems

The principal-agent theory, developed in economic science, is a theory about contractual relationship between two parties: the principal and the agent. The principal is an actor who has to be served by an agent. The contractual relation can be a formal one, which is written down in a convention, but the relationship can also be more informal or "soft", via an oral convention (Mitnick, 1973; Mitnick, 1980; Pratt & Zeckhauser, 1991; Waterman & Meier, 1998).

Albeit simple in the essence of the theory, two problems can arise in its practical application and disturb relations. Firstly, information asymmetry or adverse selection can be present. The agents most often possess more information and have superior knowledge on the subject than the principals. A problem arises when the agent is not willing to give all information to the principal when needed or when incomplete or incorrect information is provided. This is the problem of hidden information. The second problem concerns goal conflict. Principals and agents can disagree on either the goal that has to be reached or how this should be done. This 'hidden action' is the unfavourable situation in which the principal cannot predict the action and attitudes or the pursued goals of the agent (Arrow, 1991; Le Grand et al, 2008, p. 32 - 35). These two assumptions plead thus for a trustful relationship. The problem of hidden information and hidden action will be less likely to occur if there is mutual loyalty and trust between the parties, even if there is information asymmetry .

The conflicts of hidden information and hidden action are assumed to be problems that often occur in principal-agent relations. However, Waterman & Meier (1998) relax those basic assumptions, arguing that principal-agent relationships do not always entail these problems in practice. Firstly, it is not always the case that agents have more information than their principals. Secondly, goal conflict is not always present: principal and agents

can operate in a situation of goal consensus as well. Thus, only in case there is goal conflict, and this is combined with agents having a lot of information and principals possessing little information there is a significant principal-agent problem⁴.

How does the idea of principal-agent relations and the potential problems of hidden information and hidden action relate to our typology-matrix, and what guidelines for good relations can be derived? We will give more information for each quadrant, arguing that every quadrant is a principal-agent relation, but following the line of thought and 'relaxations' of the assumptions of the principal-agent theory of Waterman & Meier (1998), the principal agent problem does not occur in each quadrant.

First, it is necessary to define principals and agents in regard to politico-administrative relations. The agent is the person who serves the principal by implementing the policy lines that the principal has set out in the developing policy stage. In other words, the principal is the actor that is dominant in the developing policy stage, while the agent is the one who is dominant in the executing stage. In quadrant 3, this is very straightforward: political executives are principals, civil servants are the agents. In quadrant 2, the relationship is a reversed one, indicating that the political executive becomes the agent and the administrator the principal. In reality, this is unrealistic, although one can think of situations in which this would occur -- an exoert bureaucracy a with politicians who for electoral reasons want to be very much involved in implementation. In quadrant 1 and 4, the roles of the principal and the agent are similar.

⁴ This is only of of eight potential situations outlined by Waterman & Meier (1998); these eight are:
goal conflict & principal (P) having a lot of information, agents (A) having a lot of information
goal conflict & principal (P) having a lot of information, agents (A) having less information
goal conflict & principal (P) having less information, agents (A) having a lot of information
goal conflict & principal (P) having less information, agents (A) having less information
goal consensus & principal (P) having a lot of information, agents (A) having a lot of information
goal consensus & principal (P) having a lot of information, agents (A) having less information
goal consensus & principal (P) having less information, agents (A) having a lot of information
goal consensus & principal (P) having less information, agents (A) having less information

Figure 7: Principal-agent theory in the matrix

		Developing policy	
		POL	SCS
Executing policy	POL	1 No Principal-Agent problem as dominant actor is political executive in both instances	2 Reversed Principal Agent Relation possible If there is goal conflict and the political executive (principal) has more information than the senior civil servant (agent)
	SCS	Principal-Agent Problem possible If there is goal conflict and the senior civil servant (agent) has more information than the political executive (principal)	No Principal-Agent problem as dominant actor is the senior civil servant in both instances 4

Quadrant 3 is best related to the previous description of principals and agents: civil servants are an agent to their principals, the political executive, because they implement the policy lines that were set in the developing policy stage. As a consequence, the guideline for countries positioned in this quadrant is to take notice of the principal-agent theory and the possible encountered problems. Checking if a principal-agent conflict is likely to occur can be done by following the argumentation of Waterman & Meier. First, one has to verify whether a goal conflict is presented. Are the targets that have to be reached by carrying out a certain policy supported by the top civil servants? If not, there is a problem: top public servants might set out and delegate wrong policy lines as they do not support the goal or the way the goal has to be achieved. Secondly, is a conflict likely to occur because the level of information of the civil servant is higher than that of the political executive? If this is the case, a principal-agent problem can occur once again. If one of the conditions or both is occurring, reciprocal trust and loyalty is the key to overcome the conflict: political executives have to rely on the loyalty of their public servants and the administrators have to be honest about their information.

The same line of conduct applies to quadrant 2, however the principal-agent theory is reversed. As mentioned higher, this quadrant is rather unrealistic because development of policy comes before the implementation; it is unusual that in the developing policy stage the senior civil servant is the dominant actor, whereas in the executing policy stage the political executives are dominant. However, the principal-agent problems of information asymmetry and goal conflict can occur in theory if there is goal conflict between the two parties and the political executives possess more information than the senior civil servant.

In quadrant 1 - as for quadrant 4 - principal-agent problems do not occur, because the political executive, resp. administrators is the dominant actor in both stages. A hidden agenda of the counterparty will thus not really cause problems. However, a necessary precondition for good relations is the level of information possessed by the principal: a lot of information is needed to make correct decisions and to be credible to his agents. The information level of the agents is of lesser importance. The guideline for quadrant 1 and 4 is thus to make sure that the principal has much information to avoid poor performance in politico-administrative relations.

3.1.3 Loyalty: a key dimension of Public Service Bargains

Next to principal agent-problems, public service bargains can also shed a light on conditions that might improve the return of politico-administrative relationships. The concept of public service bargains has been discussed earlier in this report. The key idea behind the public service bargains is the existence of a real or constructive deal concluded between public servants and other actors in the political system over their respective entitlements and duties which is expressed in a convention, formal law or a mixture of both (cfr. supra 2.1; Hood, 2001, p. 181).

Here, we focus on specific aspects of the bargain which were explored by Hood & Lodge (2006): reward, competency and loyalty as key dimensions of public service bargains. First we examine loyalty as a dimension of the bargain (the loyalty bargain), as this is closely linked to mutual trust, which we identified as an important factor for success or failure. The competencies will be discussed in point 3.2 (the competency bargain). In contrast, the reward dimension is not further developed in this report, as this would involve much additional information that could not be covered within the scope of this research.

According to Hood & Lodge, there are four kinds of loyalty bargains. These four represent distinctive views on loyalty. However, it has to be stressed that they are not mutually exclusive, meaning that it is possible that different forms of the loyalty dimension are applicable to one situation in real life. The dimensions fit our typology-matrix well. According to the position one occupies in the matrix, there is thus a different sort of loyalty which can be linked to our typology.

Figure 8: Loyalty bargains in the typology

		Developing policy	
		POL	SCS
Executing policy	POL	Jester bargain	Executive bargain 1 (reversed) 2 3
	SCS	3 2 1 Executive bargain	Judge bargain

Partnership bargain

We start with the most straightforward one: the **executive bargain**. The public servant is loyal because of a specific brief which was given to him/her by a superior to meet the policy targets. In this bargain, civil servants' freedom is restricted as there are limits, imposed by a superior person, on what they are allowed to do. This type of loyalty can be found in quadrant 3. As the development of policy is situated dominantly at the political executive, the administrator is merely a servant - in the literal sense of the word - to the political executive. There is thus a hierarchical line of control in which the political executive is superior to the public servant. Hood & Lodge point out that there are various forms of executing policy, depending on the amount of discretionary space the civil servant receives. Moreover, being loyal to a superior person and executing what that person wants, does not necessarily imply that the agent is a passive player. There are

different degrees of autonomy and thus the agent can have more freedom to operate or not. In our matrix, this is visualized by the blue line on the implementing policy axis⁵. In a first type, the political executive sets goal targets but the public servant receives freedom to decide how s/he wants to meet those targets. A degree of goal congruence is needed (cfr. earlier: principal agent problem) to avoid a disturbed relationship. In a second type, the public servant works at “arm’s length from their superordinates with freedom to operate within their sphere unless the superordinate chooses to intervene or exercise a veto” (Hood & Lodge, 2006, p. 121). In a third type, the public servants have very limited discretionary space and they follow orders by their political superior. It is obvious that the less discretionary space the civil servant has, the more dominant the political executive becomes.

As stated in the principal-agent theory, quadrant 2 is the reversed situation of quadrant 3. Therefore, the executive bargain applies for quadrant 2 as well, however the relationship is reversed as the political executive executes what the public servants have decided upon in the developing policy stage. That is why in our model, there is a reversed executive bargain illustrated on the executing policy axis, including the various degrees which are visualized by the line. The reversal implies that instead of expecting executive loyalty of the civil servant, this expectation applies now to the political executive. However, as stated earlier, this quadrant stays rather unrealistic.

Continuing with the **partnership bargain**. Hood & Lodge (2006, p. 166) argue that “public servants in this bargain have no formal existence apart from those they serve and they have no sphere of autonomous action”. Public servants work together with the political executive and are loyal to this political executive. Within this bargain, there are also variants. A first one is the ‘serial partnership loyalty’ indicating that the public servant is loyal to the political executive, independent of the person that actually fits that post. When there is a change of minister posts, the public servant thus stays loyal to the next minister in charge. Secondly, there is a ‘personal loyalist’, in which the civil servant is loyal to the person at the political executive post and not to his/her successor. This

⁵ In 2.2 we explained how the implementing policy axis has to be read. This axis is a continuum based on the degree of autonomy that top officials have in their role. Thus, this fits the degrees of autonomy outlined by Hood & Lodge in their executive policy stage well.

subdivision in serial or personal loyalist is not made in our typology-matrix. One of the consequences of the partnership bargain is that the civil servant enjoys some degree of anonymity. The political executive expects that the civil servant is respectful and does not speak about the actions undertaken in public. However, civil servants have a 'conversation right', which is a right to be heard for their views on a specific policy. For that reason, this bargain is positioned at the centre of the matrix. It indicates that both parties are influential in designing policy and there is no real dominant actor. A fruitful relationship positioned at the centre of the matrix exists whenever there is a partnership bargain, including neutrality of the public service and mutual respect, with limited power of the public servant.

Thirdly, there is a **judge bargain** in which the public servant is a semi-autonomous player who is loyal to some higher entity. This higher entity can be the department, the law, the constitution, the state or the people at large (Hood & Lodge, 2006, p. 112). In contrast to the previous loyalty bargains, the civil servant is not an executive agent, doing what the political superior wants. Neither is the civil servant a partner, without any formal existence apart from the political superior. Rather, the civil servant is an autonomous player with a certain dominance vis-à-vis the political executive. Therefore, the judge bargain corresponds with quadrant 4 of our matrix as civil servants dominance is stressed in the developing policy and the executing policy stage.

Lastly, there is a **jester bargain**. The role of the public servants is very confined in this bargain. The civil servants are expected to be loyal to the ruling group political executive. They must accept the lines of control and the given authority structure. As a consequence, the political executive knows that the power base is absolutely at his or her side. However, the public servants can be witty or critical to the policy lines of the political executives. Apart from that license they have, public servants can do nothing more than implementing policies. In our matrix, the jesters are located at the absolute top left in quadrant 1 where there is a dominance of the political executive. However, the term 'jester' gives the impression that this type of bargain is outmoded and is not applicable to the contemporary situation. Hood & Lodge acknowledge that jester bargains only apply to a few situations. We stress as well that they do not apply to all countries in quadrant 1.

Which guidelines for optimal relations can be derived from these public service dimensions? The lesson drawn is that the political executives may expect loyalty of the top

civil servant, but that being loyal can be differently fleshed out. So the guideline should be to make sure that your civil servant acts in accordance with the loyalty that was given to him or her based on the bargain that was agreed upon. The typology-matrix shows for each quadrant what loyalty bargain(s) should be decided upon for creating an optimal relation. Moreover, bargains are not mutually excluding one another. For example, it is not since the judge bargain is primarily allocated to quadrant 4, that executive bargains are not applicable at all there. When the executive bargains are applicable, the political executive must expect that the senior civil servant will execute the policy lines without protest, whereas in jester type bargains the public servant's prominent, and often only, role is to be critical on the political executive's ideas. In the partnership bargains, the political executives expects that the civil servant thinks along on policy lines, rather than being critical towards the policy ideas of the executive. And in the judge type, political executives should acknowledge that their civil servant is also loyal to a higher entity than just the person (as is the case in the other bargains).

3.2 Competency

Mutual trust was argued to optimize politico-administrative relations. This guideline was further explored in a second and third guideline, recommending the possession of correct and sufficient information for the most dominant actor, resp. agreeing on specific goals, both to overcome principal-agent problems. Here we outline another precondition, arguing that the politico-administrative relation will be optimized when public servants possess some essential competencies. But what competencies are decisive? An answer is discovered by studying the competency dimension of the public services bargains (Hood & Lodge, 2006, p. 86-108). As we did with the loyalty dimension in the previous paragraph, we outline the four "Hood-and-Lodgian" competencies and link them to the quadrants of our matrix, arguing that depending on the quadrant some competency dimensions are of greater importance than others. Once again, we stress that it is not because we link one of the dimensions specifically to one of the quadrants that another aspect is not of importance at all. Rather, some competencies are considered being a more critical condition than others.

Lastly, it has to be stressed that we deal here with civil servants' competencies. While also competencies of politicians are required for 'good relations', it is beyond the aim of the study to outline these. Competencies have to be regarded in a very broad sense. They not

only concern what the public servant has or needs to have in terms of skills, experience or ability, but it also they concern a certain attitude.

Figure 9: Competency bargain in typology

		Developing policy	
		POL	SCS
Executing policy	POL	(Sage bargain)	Sage bargain
	SCS	Deliverer bargain Wonk bargain	Sage bargain Wonk bargain

The **deliverer bargains** imply that a public servant has the ability to achieve the desired results. This is primarily important in quadrant 3 as the dominant policy-implementer actor is the civil servant, who has to deliver vis-à-vis his or her political superior. The public servant has to be able to execute the policy lines that were set out in the developing policy axis. It implies as well the ability to find creative solutions to implement the policy in the best possible way within the given constraints. Contiguously, it concerns the possibility to manage the related department effectively. The top public servant thus has to be a manager as well. The management ability of the public servant is of growing importance under the New Public Management Era. Being a good manager and policy implementor involves that different and sometimes conflicting roles have to be incarnated in one person. In short, civil servants under the deliverer bargain need the ability to make things happen on their own or by working with others in ways that are not fully prescribed in some manual (Hood & Lodge, p. 98).

‘Making things happen’ requires not only a creative ability to find solutions and manage effectively. Inextricably bound is the need for some sort of technical knowledge to understand what has to be done and how. Hood & Lodge (p.93) refer to this as ‘Fachkompetenz’ skill or the **wonk bargains**. These are of critical importance in quadrant 3 because the civil servant is the dominant executive actor who will not succeed without

any technical knowledge or expertise. This ‘Fachkompetenz’ corresponds to Webers point of view (Weber 1972): he argued that the best way to rule a state was to acknowledge that the political executive sets out the lines and civil servants execute these lines. However, this is only possible when public servants are recognized for their knowledge and expertise that underpins the bureaucracy. As outlined in the previous chapter (cfr. supra 2.3), Max Weber’s view corresponds with quadrant 3 in our matrix. So the importance of work bargains in quadrant 3 is not surprising. However, quadrant 4, representing the technocracy, also needs a strong form of work bargains. In this quadrant, the state is ruled by experts, who are the civil servants. Without technical knowledge and sound judgement civil servants cannot make good decisions.

Thirdly, the **sage bargain** is an intuitive skill in political counsel whereby one is able to look at the political situations in an unpredictable or unconventional way. It is a political ‘feeling’ rather than a real skill. It cannot be schooled or taught in class, it is in fact an innate quality (Hood & Lodge, p. 100). The sage bargain contains three central qualities. Firstly, it is the ability to judge political positions. Secondly, there is an intuition to evaluate political risk and to think forward by not only drawing on rational sense, but also using political sense. The third quality of the sage bargain is the heresthetic or “the ability to form political coalitions by finding another dimension on which the groups will form coalitions” (Hood & Lodge, 2006, p. 101-102). Sage types of bargains are of importance especially in case the public servant is a dominant actor in developing policy. In quadrant 4, we have already outlined that public servants need technical competencies. But technical knowledge alone is not sufficient. The need for a political intuition to assess a situation in the future is of great importance as well. In quadrant 3, the higher political and even philosophical “touch” is not required from the public servant for optimal relations, merely executing is expected here. Sage bargains are also important in quadrant 2. Here, civil servants are expected to have a moral insight on which the notions of their policy lines are based. The other competencies - work or deliver - are not necessary for them as the political executive takes care of this (however, as mentioned before this type of relationship is rather uncommon).

In general, we have not acknowledged some specific sort of competency for the public servants in quadrant 1. As political executives are very dominant and closely involved in both developing and executing policy, the public servants do not really need a specific quality in se. The only quality that might be desired in quadrant 1 is the sage bargain.

However, it is to a lesser extent required than in quadrant 2 or 4. Sage bargains correspond with civil servants' jester loyalty (cfr. previous point): the only ability that political executives can expect of the civil servants is some political feeling for strategic purposes. However, in the figure the word sage bargains is put between brackets because of the limited importance it holds here compared to quadrant 2 or 4.

Hood & Lodge outline 4 dimensions of bargains. A critical reader without a doubt had noticed already that one bargain is not set out here: the '**go-between bargain**'. This is the ability to move between different 'worlds' and to 'think outside the box'. It represents the importance of efficiently networking which contemporary society highly needs as well. We do not associate this bargain with one of the quadrants explicitly as it does not match our view of dominance in the policy cycle.

3.3 Link to the typology in general (including type A, B, C)

So far, we have described the critical preconditions - loyalty, information, goal and competency - in accordance with the matrix. However, the general typology consist of a broader typology, including type A, B and C in which the matrices are imbedded (cfr. Figure 5). Type A is the advisor, closely linked to the political executive and helping delimiting the political and strategic course. Type B corresponds to the media advisor, a spokes(wo)man, upholding relations with other players such as the media or interest groups. Lastly, type C is the expert, who possesses particular knowledge or experience in a certain area important to the political executive. It is beyond the scope of our study to ascribe the preconditions outlined above individually to the types of 'third party'. However because of the existence of this party, some of the guidelines are of greater or minor importance to the top civil servant. So the third party can moderate the relation: they can have an influence on the relationship by reinforcing the preconditions or mitigating them. The question then is, how does the third party influence the guidelines which were set up for each quadrant?

Regarding the **principal-agent theory**, the question runs what the influence of the third party is concerning goal conflict and information asymmetry. Can the third party help preventing the occurrence of principal-agent problems or will its presence cause a greater risk? As the principal-agent problem only occurs in quadrant 2 and 3, we will only regard these quadrants. Type A is in charge of delimiting the strategic course, therefore this third

party will not augment information problems between political executives and civil servants. However, A-types can have an influence on the target that has to be achieved. As they help the political executive setting out a possible direction, not only the goal of the policy but also the popularity of the politician is important. Therefore, when certain decisions are taken, the civil servant can be sceptical to execute them because they imply political strategy as well. Thus, one should be vigilant on goal conflict between civil servants and the political executive. Type B does not facilitate a principal-agent problem: the function of this advisor is to communicate policy lines to other stakeholders, but he or she have less leverage in the politico-administrative relation in se. Where the strategic advisor in type A might influence goal congruence, the technical expert in type C can influence the information level: he or she can broaden the information level of the political executive and therefore decrease the risk of a principle agent problem in quadrant 3. Type C's are thus extremely helpful in case the political executive is dominant in the developing policy stage.

The form of loyalty or the specific competency guidelines for good working practices were found to be dependent on the positioning in the matrix. Can the presence of the third party expand the importance of the expected loyalties and competencies of the public servant? Starting with the **loyalty** dimension of public service bargains, the presence of third parties - irrespective of A, B or C - do not influence the executive loyalty or the judge loyalty. The civil servants are merely expected to loyally execute the policy line, resp. to be loyal to the 'higher entity' (e.g. the law) independently of what type A, B or C does. In contrast, the partnership loyalty can be influenced by the third party. Partnership loyalty implied that there is an integration of politicians and administrators without a dominance of one over the other. With the presence of a type B third party, it is expected that the partnership loyalty is stronger, because of the limited interference of the media advisor on policy issues in the politico-administrative relation. On the contrary, the presence of type A and C can undermine the partnership loyalty: these third parties interfere more prevalent in the politico-administrative relation because of their close involvement in the strategic course, resp. the information level, and as a consequence, these advisors can set limits to the integration between politicians and civil servants. Lastly, jester loyalty - which appeared in the first quadrant - is influenced by types A and C as well: public servants will act more censorious when the third party is strategically close to the political executive (under type A) or the policy creation (under type C). The presence of type A and C potentially reinforces that the administrators feel more

threatened and as a consequence will behave more critical than under the assistants who stay out of designing policy, such as represented in type B.

Concerning the **competencies**, the deliver competency of the public servant in quadrant 3 is not subject to presence of a strategic, media or technical advisor. Work competencies or top officials technical insight to know how things should be done, were of importance in quadrant 3 and even more in the technocratic quadrant 4. These competencies are of greater importance in case there is a type A or B advisor. In type C, expertise is positioned with the technical advisors as well, which makes public servants less dominant in this respect. So, top officials' technical knowledge is of lesser importance in case a technical advisor is also in the field. Lastly, the sage bargain or civil servants' moral insight to assess future political outcomes is of greater importance under types B and, to some extent also type C. In those cases, the media or technical advisor is less concerned with future courses, contrary to A-types of advisors. Strategic partners are more involved with a moral insight: they keep an eye on political directions. Inextricably bound up with it is a capacity to assess a future political situation. Thus, when type A applies in a country, top officials sage competence is of lesser importance than when type B or C applies.

4 Indicators to operationalize the politico-administrative relationship

Much ink has been spilled about the use of indicators in policy or management processes (McDavid & Hawthorn 2006; Perrin 1998; Hattry 1999). Eversince Frederick W. Taylor used his stopwatch to measure labor output, management as well as policy experts have applied the old adagio 'the numbers tell the tale' to most of their activities, albeit in successful or less successful ways. However some caution is warranted when gauging the results or outcomes of management or policy processes.

First, the role of environment as a significant moderator cannot be stressed too much. What has been measured in one situation, is not necessarily the same in another, even similar, but not exactly the same situation. Before doing so, one should take care that there is sufficient compelling evidence that measurement errors and their variance - its reliability - as well as the relationship between the indicator and the concept one wants to measure - its validity - is exactly the same. In particular in cross-national comparison, but also in different institutional environments, this requirement is a daunting task which is only fulfilled in rare instances. Therefore, it is a bad idea to use indicators and measures as representing the reality in every conceivable dimension. It is an even worse idea to compare the scores between various cases, assuming that these measures are comparable, and to attach consequences to the scores that have been obtained - the infamous process of benchmarking.

However, measurement and the measurement process are not useless. Measurement is still able to provide us with information of what is going on, but one has to acknowledge that this information is incomplete. It may therefore be useless in comparison, but it can still be informative on trends, evolutions and processes within a given and constraint environment. Its uselessness in comparison is equal to its usefulness in telling (parts of) stories. As a reduced piece of information, it may be able to tell at glance what otherwise would have take much more time and effort. However, it is necessary to account for the lack of reliability and validity in the measures and indicators that are used. Therefore, measures and indicators should be used as (self-)diagnostic tools, rather than coercive policy instruments, which would invariably induce gaming or other unwanted types of behavior (Hood 2006; Moynihan 2009).

A way of achieving such an approach is to match the purpose of the measure to its actual use. If a measure is conceived as a self-diagnostic tool, it should be used in that way. For the topic addressed in this report, this means that data should be collected and by those actors involved (the political executive and the senior civil servants), but not by others. This however does not mean that an oversight unit, as the Central Personnel Office, the General Accountability Office or others could not assist in the data-collection, but the initiative, as well as the utility, should lay with the main actors.

Equally, the selection of the indicators should be up to the main actors. The concepts and factors to guide this selection are provided in this report, but a definitive list is not included. As both the reliability and the validity are a matter of discussion, this discussion should not be avoided and actual indicators should be decided based upon mutual agreement, with sufficient leniency for both parties. After all, the purpose is to tell stories, not to benchmark. There is therefore no harm in letting both parties decide which indicators illustrate reality best - as they are best suited to determine this.

An example of such a process could be the way the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), together with the General Accountability Office (GAO) and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in the United States assisted in the data-collection for the indicators of the Human Capital Framework, a system for assessing the progress of federal departments and agencies made in implementing strategic human resources management as part of the President's Management Agenda during the (second) Bush presidency (GAO 2000 & 2003; Vandenabeele et al 2004, Vandenabeele and Hondeghem 2008). OPM employed a number of desk officers, which acted as liaison officers for particular departments or agencies. This ensured that the desk officers, although OPM officials, were very knowledgeable regarding local matters and thus best suited to interact with the agencies or departments. They were, at least to some extent, not only committed to OPM, but also to their target institutions. Also, agencies and departments could decide themselves which indicators they would use to 'tell their story'. A list of several dozens of indicators was developed by OPM, and the agencies and departments would for each dimension, select which indicators they would use. Such an approach would create both a basis of support for implementation of a measurement system as well as confidence that the purpose of the measures do not shift from auto-diagnosis to control.

As stated above, no definitive list of indicators will be provided in this report. However, the steps to collect the data, as well as some guidelines for selecting the indicators will be discussed. A first issue is that there are various types of indicators.

A first type is the indicators that can be used to assess the particular quadrant a relationship should be situated in. To this end, indicators should be developed that measure the respective roles of the political executive, the senior civil servant and the third party. These form the basis of an aggregate score that determine in which exact quadrant the particular relationship is situated and therefore assists in the first part of the diagnosis.

Concept	Dimension	Suggested indicators
Role of political executive	Relative dominance (overall)	Eg. Who is - according to [actor] - the most dominant actor ?
	Role in policy development	Relative dominance in : Eg. ... agenda setting (deciding what the issues are) Eg. ... problem defining (defining what causes the problem) Eg. ... formulation of policy (defining what the solution to the problem is) Eg. ... policy preparation (budgeting, providing evidence-based data...) Eg. ... making concrete decisions (deciding what policy options to take)
	Role in policy implementation	Eg. Relative dominance in : Eg. ... policy implementation (realizing the policy options) Eg. ... policy maintenance (continuing carrying out a specific policy) Eg. Degree of autonomy of senior civil servant in policy implementation
Third party	Size of third party	Eg. Approximate number of advisors Eg. Different titles advisors can have
	Role of third party	Eg. What is the general leverage of the third party in the policy

		<p>process</p> <p>Eg. What is the knowledge of the third party regarding the policy domain</p> <p>Eg. To what extent and how strong is a political affiliation of the third party</p> <p>Eg. Which tasks are carried out by the third party</p>
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Table 1 : Possible indicators for diagnosing the type of relationship

Based upon this assessment, a second set of indicators can be developed to measure the extent to which particular preconditions, associated with a specific positioning in any of the quadrants are fulfilled. These can act as standards of success to which the relationship should strive. Again, indicators should be selected based upon agreement, rather than upon directives from politics or an oversight agency. The context can have particular features which might illustrate the characteristics of a relationship much better than predefined and general indicators. Therefore, only descriptions are provided instead of suggested indicators in table 2. It is up to those that are part of the relationship to come up with sound evidence or answers to these questions. The answers on these questions provide a status and a path for improvement in order to fully optimize the individual relationship between the political executive and the senior civil servant. Aggregating this information can render a more general but less accurate oversight picture of these relationships.

Quadrant	Standard of success	Description
Quadrant 1	Jester loyalty	Is the civil servant a sounding board ?
	Sage competency(limited)	Is there sufficient political judgment and political sense?
Quadrant 2	Mutual trust	Is there mutual trust between all parties?
	Executive loyalty (reversed)	Is there agreement about the goals?
	Sage competency	Is there sufficient political

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		judgment and political sense? Is there herestecy ?
	Influence of third party on loyalty (only type A)	Does the third party enhance or decrease goal conflict ?
	Influence of third party on loyalty (only type C)	Does the third party reduce or increase the information discrepancy ?
	Influence of third part on competency bargain (only type A)	Does a strategic advisor reduce the for political judgement ?
Quadrant 3	Mutual trust	Is there mutual trust between all parties?
	Executive loyalty	Is there agreement about the goals?
	Deliverer competency	Is there sufficient creativity and management efficiency ?
	Wonk competency	Is there sufficient 'Fachkompetenz'?
	Influence of third party on loyalty (only type A)	Does the third party enhance or decrease goal conflict ?
	Influence of third party on loyalty (only type C)	Does the third party reduce or increase the information discrepancy ?
	Influence of third party on competency bargain (only type C)	Does the third party reduce the need for information from the civil servant (wonk)?
Quadrant 4	Judge loyalty	Is there loyalty to a higher entity ?
	Sage competency	Is there sufficient political judgment and political sense? Is there herestecy ?
	Wonk competency	Is there sufficient 'Fachkompetenz'?
	Influence of third party on competency bargain (only type C)	Does the third party reduce the need for information from the civil servant?
	Influence of third part on competency bargain (only type A)	Does a strategic advisor reduce the for political judgement ?

Table 2 Questions to be asked for optimizing the relationship

Finally, when considering improvement, it would pay to distinguished between end-state or strategic target indicators and progress indicators. The former measure the extent to which desirable preconditions are fulfilled and the targets are achieved. The latter measure the progress that has been made since the last measurement point. A good progress score may reflect a better This distinction allows the process to be monitored intensively and provides the opportunity to capitalize on positive progress, even if the desirable end-state is not yet achieved.

5 Conclusion

This report aimed to provide information on how the relationship between political executives can be optimized, as this relationship is crucial in creating policy outcomes. As such, it tried to summarize findings of a body of knowledge regarding the triangular relation between politicians, civil servants and advisors and to provide guidelines of how to put this knowledge to practice.

Based upon the policy cycle, a summarizing typology of possible relationships between these three actors has been developed, taking into account both the roles of the civil servants and the political executive, as well as the moderating role of the third party. This first part includes pre-existing models as developed by Weber, Wilson, Svava, Aberbach et al and Peters - to capitalize on a body of knowledge that has been developed over more than a century. This should enable individual actors to position themselves in any of the quadrants of the typology. As an example, four countries have been mapped to illustrate how these relationships (in general) can differ.

This first step of the analysis should provide information for determining which critical success factors can be applied to optimize the politico-administrative relationship. For each type, standards of success have been determined, based on principal agent theory, the Polaris model and on the public service bargains theory of Hood and Lodge. These standards have subsequently been translated into several questions that can be asked to assess whether the relationship can be optimized for a particular relationship.

Although the politico-administrative relationship is only a small cog in the wheel of a functioning system, it is nevertheless an important one. By presenting the results of this study, we hope to have helped in providing information on how to optimize this relationship, and thus providing some grease instead of sand into the great and complex machinery of government and governance.

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