Civil service careers in small and large states: the cases of Estonia and the United Kingdom

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CIVIL SERVICE CAREERS
IN SMALL AND LARGE STATES:
THE CASES OF ESTONIA AND THE UNITED KINGDOM

by
Tiina Randma

A Doctoral Thesis
Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the award of
Doctor of Philosophy of Loughborough University

February 1999

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Civil service careers in small and large states: the cases of Estonia and the United Kingdom

Abstract

The main objective of the thesis is to analyse the development and structure of civil service careers in small and large states, taking Estonia and the United Kingdom as case studies. In the first part of the thesis, different disciplinary perspectives on careers are examined, including public administration, management, organisation theory, labour economics, sociology and psychology. A distinction is made between career, job and network systems in civil services, as frameworks for career development. Careers are analysed from two perspectives: individual and institutional. Mobility within and between organisations is given special attention, leading on to an investigation of boundaryless careers. The findings from different perspectives are drawn together to develop an integrated approach to civil service careers. The thesis also takes account of broader societal changes that have substantially affected the understanding of careers in the 1990s by increasing their diversity. The case studies in Part II draw on documentary materials and interviews with civil servants in the United Kingdom and Estonia to identify similarities and differences in the characteristics of the development of careers in these two countries. The thesis shows how the reforms in the British and Estonian civil services in the 1990s have affected the way in which institutional and individual careers have evolved. An important objective of the thesis is to analyse how the size of states influences career opportunities and structures. In Part III, differences between larger and smaller countries are shown to be not merely quantitative but also qualitative. The size of the state appears to have a number of implications for the development of civil service systems and for career management within them. The findings suggest that traditional bureaucratic models may not be well suited to the small state context, as smaller institutions may have difficulty in developing stable structures with formalised career paths. Network organisations can, however, offer an opportunity for small states to develop further their civil services by providing a large degree of flexibility in career management.
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Acknowledgements

My PhD studies at Loughborough University were made possible by a PHARE/ACE grant (No. P95-3141-S) for the period 1995-98. I should also like to express my gratitude to the British Council for a scholarship awarded in 1995 and to the Estonian Science Foundation (grant No. 3265 in 1998) for their financial support.

Many people have contributed to the thesis in a variety of ways. First and foremost among them is my supervisor Professor Linda Hantrais of Loughborough University. This thesis would not have been possible without her constant help and guidance. She has been a source of encouragement, criticism and support throughout my PhD studies by providing invaluable advice on both the content and structure of the thesis. I am also indebted to her for commenting on the style and language.

Secondly, I should like to thank Dr. Paul Byrne, my director of research, for his valuable comments, which helped me to clarify my own thoughts and to avoid errors of interpretation. I am grateful to Dr. Barbara Bagilhole, Dr. David Lilley and Dr. Mark Webber who gave advice as panel members. Their constructive comments were helpful in enabling me to make improvements to specific chapters at key moments in the development of my work.

Thanks are also due to all the interviewees in the UK and Estonia. Many civil servants not only gave up their time to speak to me on more than one occasion, but they also supplied key documents. Among them, I am particularly grateful to Ray Durrant of the Cabinet Office for being an excellent host and for his invaluable assistance in arranging interviews with British civil servants. I am grateful to the British Embassy in Tallinn for arranging my short-term appointment in the Cabinet Office. I appreciated the help given to me by many people in the Cabinet Office in gaining a better understanding of the British civil service.

My colleagues and students at the University of Tartu have been an invaluable source of help, encouragement and advice. The main intellectual inspiration for this and much of my past and future work lies with my great friend and adviser Professor Wolfgang Drechsler, who may disagree with me over various points in the thesis. I am indebted to him for his unquestionable expertise in public administration and his constant support in my ‘compartmentalised life’. I would also like to thank Tammo Esta, Kristiina Tönnisson and Tiina Vares for helping to gather materials on the Estonian civil service, Külli Viks for checking factual data, and Heli Aru for assistance with the American literature. I should like to express particular gratitude to Professor Marju Lauristin who provided valuable information and advice about study opportunities in Loughborough.

The thesis could not have been completed without the encouragement and support of several people who were not directly associated with its substance. I should like to thank Jean and John Burnard for creating a friendly and supportive atmosphere in ‘my second home’ in Loughborough. And finally, I have been fortunate to have unwavering support and encouragement of Daimar Liiv and my parents over the past three years, which were vital in enabling me to bring the thesis to conclusion.
Introduction

The concept of a career can be universally applied to all people and all forms of organisations. The justification for conducting academic study of careers is to learn substantially more about why both individuals and organisations act as they do. Careers represent opportunities and constraints. The ability to look ahead in terms of career prospects may provide a real source of inspiration and value for some people; for others, it may be a source of anxiety, discontent or even despair. The problems associated with careers for organisations are not necessarily the same as those faced by individuals. Organisations may have very rigid internal labour markets or, alternatively, they may not be at all concerned about career management. The main objective of this thesis is to analyse different approaches to careers by examining the approaches of various disciplines, including public administration, organisation and management studies, economics, sociology and psychology. Careers are analysed in two ways, firstly, institutionally, by describing the progression through a series of related jobs within a particular organisation or occupation; secondly, individually, by describing the sequence of positions through which individuals pass in the course of their working life. These two approaches are studied in the context of the civil service, thus enabling a number of the special features of public administration to be incorporated into the research. The aim is to analyse the integration of individual and institutional perspectives in careers and to draw conclusions about the development of careers in the civil services of the United Kingdom and Estonia.

Virtually every area of social research reflects particular substantive problems in a given society. Research into careers is country-specific, as it is influenced by broader societal, cultural and economic factors. In addition, public administration differs from country to country. Two countries – the UK and Estonia – have been selected for the case studies in this thesis to provide greater insight into civil service careers in two different national settings. Conducting cross-national studies in the civil service is complicated by the need to gain access to official materials and by the ability to understand them in original languages. Estonia is the country of origin of the author of the thesis. The UK was chosen because of its civil service traditions, and particularly because of the British civil service reform in the 1980s and 90s, which is
seen as a pioneer in the field, and has provided an incentive for other countries to modernise their civil services. Both the UK and Estonia are developing open systems in their civil services, which provides an opportunity to observe the impact of the reform process in different countries. The cases of the UK and Estonia illustrate how careers are structured and developed in large and small states. The objective is to find out whether individual and institutional careers differ in large and small states, and to examine the reciprocal relationship between the development of careers and of civil services.

The thesis draws on the available studies of civil service careers in English and Estonian. Research into civil service careers in the UK and Estonia is, however, complicated by the fact that the majority of career studies have been conducted by American scholars, which may have influenced the understanding of careers by giving them an 'American flavour'. Both institutional and individual career development may vary between American and European countries due to different historical, cultural or economic factors, which raises questions about the transferability of theories developed in one country to the context of other countries. An attempt is made in the thesis to assess the applicability of American theories to the UK and Estonia by conducting case studies. The author acknowledges that, by confining analysis to studies in English and Estonian some significant studies in other languages may have been missed.

Defining a 'career' is not easy. Wilensky (1960, p. 554) has described the term as 'a succession of related jobs, arranged in a hierarchy of prestige through which persons proceed in an ordered, predictable sequence'. Bird (1994, p. 326), in contrast, defines careers as accumulations of information and knowledge embodied in skills, expertise, and relationship networks acquired through an evolving sequence of work experiences over time. In this context, work experience constitutes the primary mechanism by which careers can be identified. The nature or quality of a career, according to Bird, is defined by the information and knowledge that are accumulated. Within the disciplines of psychology, sociology, political science, economics, history and geography, Arthur et al. (1989) identify eleven separate descriptions of what
constitutes a career. Common to all of these definitions are characteristics of work experiences occurring over a span of time.

Among the more widely cited conceptualisations of careers is that of Hall and Associates (1986), who define a career as a sequence of related work experiences and activities, directed at personal and organisational goals, through which people pass during their lifetime; these experiences are partly under their control and partly under that of others. Beckhard (1987) suggests that there are four distinctive features in this approach that account for its wide acceptance. First, it contains a long-term perspective, extending beyond the current satisfaction and performance of individuals. Second, the definition focuses on both objective or external aspects of career (activities), as well as on subjective or internal aspects that accompany these activities (experiences). Third, it views career effectiveness from a variety of perspectives, as something that does not consist merely of attaining socially-sanctioned positions or ranks, but also involves realising goals that are important to individuals themselves. Finally, this definition explicitly recognises that career outcomes are the joint result of individual efforts and of outside forces over which the individual does not have complete control. This comprehensive description of a career from Hall and Associates (1986) provides a useful basis for examining careers in the thesis.

The terms career development, career planning and career management are sometimes subject to confusion and to different interpretations. For the present study, the definitions by West and Berman (1993) are used. Career planning is the establishment of personal career goals and developmental activities to achieve individual career objectives. The term refers to a process whereby individuals become aware of their skills, interests and values, set goals and establish plans for achieving their goals. Career management refers to a set of specific institutional activities in the field of human resources that aim to improve organisational effectiveness by providing resources and assistance in developing individual talents. The distinction between career planning and career management is that the former addresses individual career needs, while the latter addresses career needs according to the imperatives of organisational effectiveness.
Career theories usually adopt either individual or institutional approaches. Proponents of the individualistic model argue that individuals are the main actors determining career direction. By contrast, the institutional model contends that careers are an aspect of the structure of an organisation and are determined by organisational policies and internal labour markets. Career development is a process whereby these two models become integrated, and the nature of the relationship between the two is made transparent. Career development is an organised, interactive process between individuals and organisations. It involves individual career objectives and development plans in the establishment of the policies and procedures of organisations. It is a planned effort to achieve a balance between the individual's career needs and the organisation's requirements. Leibowitz et al. (1986, p. 4) characterise career development as an ongoing programme linked with the organisation's human resource structures rather an event at a single point of time.

Different approaches to careers are reflected in different types of literature. Sociologists, psychologists, political scientists, researchers of public and business administration and economists have all been interested in studying careers. Therefore, conceptions of careers are many and varied, representing different and sometimes conflicting views of individuals and organisations. In the research into careers, the methods of study range randomly from clinical counselling through attitude surveys to economic modelling. In general, the differences between these approaches stem from three related methodological sources. First, theories and research into careers are derived from different paradigms. Second, their units of analysis and levels of interest differ. And third, methods of observation and measurement vary.

Different dimensions of careers have often been examined individually, especially in studies of the public sector. The aim of the thesis is to bring different perspectives together and to provide an integrated approach to civil service careers. To this end, the first part of the thesis examines the different ways in which careers have been conceptualised by individual disciplines.

For psychologists, the subject of study has been the individual. Careers are viewed as lifelong work-related psychological experiences. Psychological approaches
characterise internal processes involving aspirations, individual perspectives, career attitudes, interests, perceptions, expectations and behaviour. According to Hall (1976), a psychological approach to careers looks at both the antecedents of the career behaviour (personality, ability, aspirations, choices) and the consequences or outcomes of this behaviour (career satisfaction, mid-career change, career plateau) over a person's life span. Psychologists are concerned with basic individual processes such as choosing a career and person-occupation fit, which leads to adjustment of the individual in the career role. Individual-level career research suggests that individual attributes, choices, attitudes and behaviour are related to the experience people have with their work careers in different settings. For example, in some of the earlier studies by psychologists, Hall (1971) and Schein (1971) were particularly interested in the changes in self-identity as careers unfold. Psychological perspectives have centred on individual behaviour as it relates to socially desirable career paths. Careers are conceived as paths to personal growth and success that may cross both occupational and organisational boundaries. However, psychologists have tended to neglect the considerable limitations of organisational, economic and social factors for the individual. Psychological theories of careers are generally premised on the notion that individuals have a moderate degree of control over their destiny in the process of choice, despite external obstacles and conditions of inequity. Choice is regarded, at least potentially, as a transitive and reasonably manageable, though complex, operation.

Organisational career theorists, by contrast, concentrate rather on situational influences in the organisational career environment that affect a wide range of outcomes beyond adjustment (performance, job mobility, organisational commitment, changes in values, identity and work-family interactions). Sociologists have been interested in the occupation, socialisation into the occupation, and mobility patterns across and along occupational clusters. For instance, in an early study Miller and Form (1951) showed that, in general, careers reflect a continuous process of adjustment to the social and occupational environment through socialisation. Martin and Strauss (1956) viewed the organisational system of positions as the basis for the authority structure which provides individual members with defined routes for satisfying their career needs. Sociologists have tended to pay little attention to the
question of occupational choice because they feel that, by the time class, gender, religion, race, nationality, education, family and area of residence have played out their respective parts, not only has the range of individual choice been severely restricted, but also individual expectations. Sociologists are more interested in how institutional factors such as formal rules, informal norms, and supply and demand shape the settings in which individuals work. Sociological theories of careers thus assign greater weight to institutional and impersonal market forces that constrain decision making and fulfilment of career aspirations. This, however, leads Gottfredson (1996, p. 180) to claim that the major weakness of sociological career theories is to treat individuals as identical psychologically.

Ignorance of individual differences is also characteristic of economic theories of careers. According to the economic perspective, emphasis is on forecasting and monitoring the flow of individuals (or skills) through the organisation. Economists view organisations as labour markets, examining internal and external job mobility in terms of their probabilities and costs. A number of economists (for example, Doeringer and Piore, 1971; DiPrete, 1987a) have analysed organisational mobility in terms of internal labour markets. The mobility of individuals between positions is viewed as a function of external economic forces and internal cost/benefit and supply/demand ratios. The main concerns of the economists are the conditions under which the internal labour market operates, expands or contracts, and how rates of mobility can best be predicted, given certain economic constraints. However, economists do not recognise that careers are not perfectly sealed off from broader environmental and individual factors.

Scholars of public administration have traditionally viewed careers as 'resource allocation' or as a long-term organisational reward accruing from commitment and effort for deserving members. The ideal model of bureaucratic careers was described by Max Weber. In his model, the structure of the organisation itself constitutes an organisational career, where officials can move upwards along pre-designed advancement channels. Upwards mobility, contingent on both ability and seniority, is correlated with increases in the amount of responsibility, prestige and pay. The total movement is governed and regulated by the bureaucratic organisation, based on
individuals meeting specific requirements for recruitment and promotion. The more bureaucratic the organisation, the more weight is given to impersonal universalistic criteria such as seniority and contractual provisions. From a traditional administrative point of view, mobility of individuals is functional for the organisation's survival and efficiency. Movement of individuals is centrally regulated by the institution which uses it as a control mechanism over individual work behaviour.

Since the end of the 1980s, force of circumstances and political ideology have combined to push governments towards administrative reforms and modernisation in many countries. The progressive acquisition of functions by government and the enlargement of the public sector as a whole during the 20th century have created management problems. Innovation in public administration has not kept pace with the increasing scale, scope and complexity of modern government. Therefore, traditional concepts of public administration are being called into question, and interest is growing in the application of ideas of New Public Management. In the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, as well as in several European countries including the Nordic states, the Netherlands, Italy, Austria, Ireland and the UK, reform initiatives are well underway. The strategies and detailed objectives of these reforms vary from country to country, but they spring from a common background of adverse economic conditions and governmental overload. Governments are under pressure to control their expenditure and to be more efficient and flexible in managing the limited resources available. The changing environment does not exclude the traditional concerns of public administration, but it does demand new answers to old questions.

As authority and responsibility for human resource management previously held by central agencies are being delegated or decentralised in all countries which reform their public administrations (Auer et al., 1996), the need for human resource skills throughout the bureaucracy increases significantly. Moreover, Metcalfe and Richards (1987) argue that as many of the major problems in public management are people problems, the real changes have to be people-based. One of the main human resource issues in public administration is how to organise civil service careers. The problem that public administration reform initiators are facing is how to change career policies according to the changes in the civil service environment.
As conventional public administration is solely based on the administrative approach to careers, the need is growing to consider other aspects of careers (psychological, sociological, economic) to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the public sector. This calls for an integrated approach to civil service careers which will result in more flexible and diverse career patterns in the public sector. However, attempts to move toward an interdisciplinary approach to civil service careers have been rare. No systematic research has been conducted into the interaction between individual-level and organisation-level determinants and their effect on civil service systems. In the past, the individual, the occupation, or the organisation served, by and large, as mutually exclusive units of career analysis. Consequently, each of the traditional career models helps to explain different, though probably related, parts of the variation in careers. The distinction has resulted in gaps in knowledge about the antecedents and consequences of careers. In view of these weaknesses, a more comprehensive integrated approach is needed to deal with some of the basic questions that have been neglected by research into careers and public administration to date.

The first part of the thesis forms the basis for an interdisciplinary approach to civil service careers. Psychological, sociological, economic and administrative theories of careers are analysed in order to provide an integrated framework for the study of civil service careers. In Chapter 1, different civil service systems are examined with particular emphasis on career development. Careers in classical and modern public administration are analysed from both institutional and individual perspectives. In Chapter 2, an institutional view of careers is provided through an analysis of careers from a management perspective at organisational level. General management concepts are considered with reference to the broader context of organisational development. Strengths and weaknesses of internal labour markets are analysed together with the consequences following on from the establishment of strict career systems within organisations. Mobility in and between organisations is given special attention, leading to an investigation of boundaryless careers. The analysis of psychological career theories in Chapter 3 introduces individual approach to careers by presenting views about career planning from an individual perspective, by analysing the motives behind career choice and career change, career satisfaction and
commitment, and by emphasising the diversity of individual careers. In the final chapter of Part I, the aim is to provide an integrated approach to careers by combining institutional and individual perspectives to civil service careers and considering broader changes in society which have substantially affected the understanding of careers.

Part II of the thesis provides an analysis of the empirical research into the civil services of the UK and Estonia by examining previous studies of these countries and documentary materials (Chapter 5), and carrying out case studies (Chapter 6). The differences in the two national professional cultures are explained by societal factors, including approaches to public administration in the two countries and the processes of change in professional activity. Emphasis in the historical overview of the British and Estonian civil services is on their development during the period of 1988-98 when both countries carried out major changes in their civil services. The countries studied are different in their historical, cultural, political and economic backgrounds, and in size, which makes their comparison difficult, but nonetheless feasible, and of considerable interest for analysts of civil services, careers and small and large states.

The research was conducted in the form of case studies, each involving detailed interviews with civil servants which provided a basis for further analysis. The case studies were carried out from both institutional and individual perspectives using the integrated approach which is central to the thesis. The qualitative analysis of the case study material allows conclusions to be drawn about similarities and differences in the development of civil service careers in the UK and Estonia. In addition to the interviews, literature review and the study of documentary materials, the author drew on field observations during a short-term appointment in the British Cabinet Office and on consulting experience in the State Chancellery of Estonia.

An important objective of the thesis is to identify features of the size of states which affect both institutional and individual careers. The aim of Part III is, thus, to draw attention to the peculiarities and differences in civil service systems and individual career opportunities in the UK and Estonia, which may be attributable to the difference in size. Interest in small states as a separate field of study is still at an early
stage of development. Therefore, most of the literature on the civil service and careers concerns large states. Previous research into small states consists of studies in sociology, education, labour economics and politics of states with a population of under 2 million inhabitants. Theories about small state administration usually examine two areas: the size and management of the civil service. The thesis focuses on management issue as a broader concept in career studies. Previous studies of European, American, African and Asian small states, examined in Chapter 7, suggest that differences between large and small states are not merely quantitative; essential qualitative differences can also be found, which affect institutional as well as individual careers. The smaller size of the civil service influences all parts of civil service systems: recruitment, performance appraisal, in-service training and development, labour turnover, job characteristics and career development. In Chapter 8, theories on small states are tested using the empirical research into the Estonian civil service.

In general, two broad questions are raised in the thesis. Firstly, how can an integrated perspective on individual and institutional approaches to civil service careers be developed with reference to fundamental civil service reforms? The traditional model of administrative careers is challenged by arguing that the institutional structure of civil services should allow for more flexibility and diversity of career patterns in order to accommodate individual approaches to careers. Secondly, what are the similarities and differences between small and large states in the development of an integrated approach to careers? Smallness of the civil service has implications for the civil service systems in small countries as well as for career management within these systems. Small countries have limited human resources and limited career opportunities. Therefore, the question is raised as to whether traditional bureaucratic models suit the small state context, as smaller institutions may be unable to develop advanced internal labour markets with formalised career paths. A working hypothesis for the thesis is that the administration of a small state needs to be considerably more flexible than that of a large country. Such a hypothesis calls into question the appropriateness of closed career systems, and highlights the potential of more open systems in the civil service of small states.
Careers in small civil services have not previously been systematically studied. The thesis thus examines the underdeveloped theme of small state administration with the focus on the integrated approach to careers. The aim is to analyse whether career theories developed in large states are applicable to a small state context and, thus, to make a contribution to the comparative analysis of large and small state administration.
PART I  CIVIL SERVICE CAREERS FROM INSTITUTIONAL AND INDIVIDUAL PERSPECTIVES

Part I of the thesis provides an interdisciplinary approach to civil service careers. Chapter 1 analyses the ways in which civil services can be organised and the role of careers in different civil service systems. Career, job and network systems are examined with particular emphasis on career development in these systems. The second chapter is based on sociological and economic studies of careers and provides an analysis of institutional research into careers. Chapter 3 introduces individual approach to careers by presenting different views about career management from an individual perspective. Careers are often studied from a civil service, institutional or individual point of view. In Chapter 4, an analysis is provided of how these different approaches intermesh. The aim is to find an optimal match between institutional and individual perspectives on civil service careers, which would lead to an integrated approach to the understanding of careers.

The chapters in Part I are based on previous studies in public administration, sociology, psychology, economics and management of careers. The great majority of these studies have been carried out in large states; therefore, Part I provides a framework for the analysis of institutional and individual careers in large states, which is subsequently applied to civil service careers in small states in Part III.
Chapter 1  Careers in different civil service systems

'Career' is a central term in describing the organisation of civil services. The history of civil services is very much a history of civil service careers. Management of civil servants and their careers has been an important policy issue in civil service reforms for centuries all over the world. Careers are an important core in the development of civil service systems to the extent that these systems can be evaluated according to the way career issues are resolved.

In their comprehensive study of the fifteen EU member states, Auer et al. (1996) have distinguished between closed career and open job (position) systems in civil services. In career systems, recruitment takes place only for entry positions, for which specific diplomas and a particular educational background are needed; there is no recognition of professional experience outside the public sector; formal recruitment procedures and compulsory training periods for beginners exist; civil servants are provided with permanent tenure, lifelong employment and a set promotion system based on seniority; opportunities for mobility are limited and restricted; statutory remuneration scheme and set progression in pay are used. In job systems, by contrast, entry to mid-career jobs is allowed; no specific diplomas are required, but specific skills set as requirements for particular posts; professional experience outside the public sector is recognised; there are no formal selection methods or compulsory training periods – private sector recruitment methods are used; civil servants are not provided with permanent tenure guarantees, set progression or seniority systems – employment conditions are similar to those in the private sector; broad opportunities for mobility exist; performance-related pay based on individual performance is used (adapted from Auer et. al., 1996, pp. 129-30).

Despite the importance of issues concerning career management in civil service studies, it has been argued by Ridley (1983, p. 179) that careers in the civil service have been an under-researched field. He claims that many textbooks are virtually silent on the subject of promotion. For a long time, the traditional notion of a lifetime career in the civil service was not questioned; other civil service issues, such as
recruitment and training, were thus attributed more attention by analysts. Attitudes towards civil service careers have become more diverse in the 1990s. However, the main problems that civil services face have basically remained the same: what is an appropriate structure and size for an organisation, how can costs be controlled, efficiency maintained and civil servants made responsive to change? Answers to these questions have been sought in different approaches to the career development of civil servants.

Chapter 1 provides an overview of how studies in public administration have contributed to the research on careers. Different civil service systems are examined by analysing advantages and disadvantages of career and job systems. The Senior Civil Service requires special attention since it constitutes a distinctive class of civil servants at the top of a hierarchical organisation. In addition, careers of civil service generalists and specialists are distinguished in order to focus on differences in their structures. In the last section of Chapter 1, a network system as a relatively new concept in the organisation of civil services is examined. This provides an interesting alternative to the classical conflict between career and job systems, as network systems aim to offer a mixture of both traditional civil service systems.

Career systems

Career systems have existed in many European countries since the 19th century. However, they were for a long time taken for granted, idealised and described from a positivist point of view. A career system is, to a large extent, based on traditional models of bureaucracy. According to the Weberian ideal model of bureaucracy, employment of civil servants is a profession set apart, following a different path because it requires specific qualifications and skills and expects its members to uphold specific values. The civil service involves a political dimension, the subordination to specific rules and a civil service ethos. The American scholars Huddleston and Boyer (1996, p. 133) have noted that work in the public sector requires far more political acumen, bargaining ability, and sensitivity to diverse constituencies than does private employment. Most importantly, it requires a
particular commitment to the public service and the attitude that the work involves more than meeting a certain goal or deadline. Career distinctiveness in the civil service is thus the result of the unique qualities civil servants are expected to possess: political sensitivity, the ethics of bureaucrats, technocratic skills, and an understanding of a number of disciplines. The traditional model of public administration maintains that the only way these qualities can be promoted is through the development of a career system which should be clearly identifiable and isolated from other careers. Ridley (1983, p. 179) has characterised a civil service career as a way of making a livelihood, a profession, one’s course through life. Therefore, the bureaucracy in the classical sense involves the idea of a closed civil service based on career distinctiveness.

With reference to the special status of civil servants, it can be argued that the relationship between a civil servant and his/her employer is more than signing a mutually binding contract, as is common in the private sector. A relationship simply based on an employment contract would reduce civil servants to the status of salaried employees, who would primarily be interested in the monetary rewards from their work (Garner, 1995, p. 30). Instead, the relationships between civil servants and the state are said to be of a higher ethical quality. People in a career system might expect to spend their entire working careers with the same employer and in return they would receive lifelong tenure and a high social status. Cultural factors may also play a role in how such officials identify themselves. Ridley (1983) argues that in countries with a strong state tradition, state service may have a special social status, recognised by the public as well as by officials. According to the ideology of career systems, lower grade civil servants, who may earn less than highly qualified manual workers, could still experience a feeling of moral superiority, because they have the privilege of serving the state. Strong state traditions can thus be considered as a prerequisite for developing a well-functioning career system.

In a career system, civil servants are members of a service rather than holders of particular jobs. This means that, for career civil servants, working in a particular post can be merely incidental and is not of such great importance as the general status of a civil servant. When a career civil servant is asked about his/her employment, the
typical answer would be 'I am a civil servant' rather than 'I am a lawyer' or 'I work for the Ministry of Defence' (adapted from Ridley, 1983). This distinction is more than a formality: it reflects a different view of a career. A career civil servant is likely to display a general civil service perspective rather than carrying narrow professional or departmental values.

One element of Weber's ideal-type bureaucracy is that it constitutes a career which is described as a system of regular promotions. Career systems have built into them a notion of a 'career contract'; a legitimate expectation of promotion within the civil service. A career civil service thus offers its members both continuity of employment and scope for advancement. Endorsement of a 'career contract' means that the main responsibility for career development rests with the employer (the state): it is the duty of the state to develop its servants' career, to guarantee regular advancement and to protect the general career interests of civil servants. It is no accident that career systems have been defined as collections of policies, priorities, and actions, where organisations use their power to manage the flow of their members into, through, and out of the organisation over time (Lane and Wolf, 1990, p. 47). The higher the degree of centralisation and standardisation, the easier it is for the state to direct and control careers of civil servants.

A career system has an explicit meaning when used in its traditional sense. The Australian scholar Halligan (1991, p. 346) has summarised the main principles of a career system based on the Northcote-Trevelyan reforms in Britain in the 19th century and the Weberian model of bureaucracy: recruits to the public service are selected by open, competitive and written examinations; entry to the public service occurs at the base grades with most recruitment amongst recent graduates; promotion is by merit and is generally confined to insiders; public servants are entitled to tenure, rights to permanent salary and annual leave. Furthermore, the other important characteristics of a career system are independent and non-political control of recruitment and conditions of employment, protection of civil servants' rights by regulations which discourage recruitment of outsiders, and protection against dismissal. In a rational-legal bureaucracy, universalistic rather than particularistic criteria are used.
An important attribute of a career system is the uniformity of the civil service. A unified service is described by a harmonised hierarchical structure of positions throughout the civil service, with universal classification of salaries, promotion by merit, a promotion appeals system and a distinctive system for retirement and pensions (Halligan, 1991). On the one hand, universal rules throughout the civil service enable retention and strengthening of the ethics of bureaucrats, the development of an overwhelming civil service culture, prestige and distinctiveness of civil service employment. On the other hand, the distinctive ethics of bureaucrats and a common civil service culture reinforce the integrity of the service.

Uniformity can be best attained and reinforced through central management of a civil service. Therefore, the degree of centralisation is usually high in the countries which use career systems as demonstrated by Auer et al. (1996) in their study of the fifteen EU member states. This is expressed through centralised personnel management in central personnel offices as an important prerequisite for the development of a career system. For example, universal rules of recruitment, promotion, career management, tenure, mobility, pay and grading apply throughout the civil service. Although the degree of centralisation varies, in countries with a career system general service conditions and procedures are fixed centrally and implemented in a more or less decentralised way by individual units of government.

The person, not the position, is the main criterion in administering personnel in a career system. An individual is first recruited to a certain rank and then assigned to a position classified by rank, not vice versa. Tenure is also based upon the rank, not on the position, held by the individual. Individuals are selected not just for a specific position but on the basis of their long-term potential for careers in the civil service. Therefore, the purpose of a career system is to identify potential senior executives early, on the basis of competitive examinations which stress their general knowledge and/or competence as appropriate to professional bureaucracy. The fundamental criterion for recruitment is the level of education. Officials are recruited to the service at the start of their working lives with a commitment to a career within the civil service. The competition of mid-career entrants is excluded. The recruits start from the bottom level of the hierarchy and usually pursue their entire careers within the
civil service where they are moved regularly up the organisational hierarchy and given in-service training. Career systems have also been generous in providing benefits and social guarantees, in part to compensate for lower salaries and to motivate long-term employment. The effect of tenure is that there are people in the organisation who have dealt with certain problems, people and institutions. They become carriers of institutional memory. Therefore, in the conventional public administration model, turnover is minimised and employment security is paramount. Internal promotion, as is characteristic in a closed system, takes place without competition from outside. The career usually ends with the retirement from the civil service, often even from the same department which the official entered at the beginning of the career.

Career development also involves rotation of assignments and secondments. The service-wide mobility means that civil servants can be moved to any posts in the public sector for which they are qualified, involving both vertical and horizontal mobility. They can move from one type of work to another, sometimes between central and local government and other public (rarely private) organisations. Mobility widens the views of civil servants on the public service as a whole, and it limits the risks of narrow sectoral or departmental views. It encourages the willingness and ability to co-ordinate or integrate policies, which is a particular asset for top civil servants. According to Leemans (1987), it is easier to encourage mobility in countries with a centralised civil service system, which is a strong argument for a career system.

The traditional European view described by a number of authors (Ridley, 1983; Auer et al., 1996) has favoured closed career systems: ideologically, because this emphasises the special character of state service; practically, because it allows the state to develop its own administrators. The role of career management differs from country to country and, accordingly, in the extent to which individuals are expected to plan their own careers. An ideal career system enables individuals to develop their potential through regular promotion initiated by the institution rather than the individuals themselves. Career development within the civil service is a complex issue. The scope of the civil service is broad, which makes the task of managing civil service careers extremely complicated. It involves the need for long-term planning of
multiple functions that government has to perform, at the same time as fulfilling advancement expectations of career servants.

Civil service jobs are usually divided into a number of vertical and horizontal classes. These classes constitute distinct career groups (top management and middle management, routine office work, support services, various professions). Generally promotion barriers exist between the classes. Ridley (1983, p. 184) argues on the basis of a comparative study conducted in European countries that, as a result of horizontal and vertical groupings, the members of each group may regard certain posts as their territory, thus jealously guarded against promotion from other branches of the service, to say nothing of outsiders. Therefore, groupings exist of senior officials who are against any competition and who are very powerful in their struggle against any reform that would threaten their positions. Protection of their positions can been formalised through conditions for particular posts, such as a law degree, twenty years of management experience, or the introduction of examinations to move from one group to another. Closed structures strengthen the position of most groups, except the very lowest, because each class in turn is protected against competition from below. Closed professional groupings protect members against competition from other branches of the service as well. Such barriers to promotion and lateral movements can be contrary to the best interests of public administration because the strict organisation of career groupings in the career civil service may in the end allocate civil servants into certain cages from which they can not move out. The barriers limit deployment of staff, create internal rivalries, shorten job ladders, exclude open competition for vacancies and may encourage stagnation.

Career systems place emphasis on seniority and clear and stable hierarchy as the means of sustaining predictable career paths and rewards. Seniority and merit are the two dominant formal criteria for promotion in the career system. However, Leemans (1987) claims that, in reality, seniority tends to prevail over merit except perhaps for the top echelons. The reasons explaining the preference for seniority in the practice of personnel management are evident. In big public bureaucracies rules tend to become standardised and procedures become routinised. Seniority is an easy factor to handle as it can be developed into an objective criterion for promotion. When seniority has
been accepted as a part of the bureaucratic culture, individuals do not easily feel they are being treated unfairly when this criterion is used. However, American scholars Peters and Savoie (1994, p. 423) argue that universal criteria such as seniority are not related to individual performance: rewards are based on longevity rather than performance by which the incentives for good individual performance are sacrificed.

While no country operates a straight seniority system, something close to it can be found. In some countries, those declared competent for promotion are promoted in order of seniority. The extreme case is Japan where, after promotion, subordinates of the same age as their new manager must resign (Borins, 1986). Usually, regulations define the number of years officials must have spent in the service and in their present grades to qualify for a promotion. Ridley (1983, p. 189) argues that restrictions of this sort may enhance career prospects of average officials by limiting competition from younger people who can be cleverer or more dynamic than they are. The knowledge and skills of young and bright officials can be underutilised which leads to their dissatisfaction. One way to overcome this problem is to create special fast-stream career tracks for young and promising civil servants which enable them to use their potential. However, the absence of discretionary posts from which officials may be displaced and the fact that there is no movement out of the service means that appointees to key posts are generally older. This may lead to the concentration of public employees in certain age groups according to their grades and cause ageing problems at the top.

A closed entry system, within which senior posts are exclusively open to those officials who have come up through the ranks, has the effect of denying opportunities to talented and experienced outsiders who might have a lot to offer the service, while insulating civil servants themselves from potentially positive outside influences. Hennessy (1989, p. 513) has described such a system as the 'velvet drainpipe' characterised by slow and often over-regulated and confusing selection processes. Career prospects near the top are usually limited by having to wait until a person in a higher position retires. Public employees may reach their career plateaus quickly due to a combination of limited career mobility and short advancement hierarchies. In this regard, long-term tenure could be equated with the presence of career plateaus. In
career systems, high level but plateaued civil servants have job security and they may be paid well; however, they may dislike their jobs because their careers have essentially stalled in terms of promotion, salary increases, responsibilities, rewards for performance and advancement. This means that the government may not meet the requirements of a 'career contract' by offering regular promotion opportunities to its servants.

Career systems presume long hierarchies and a large number of steps in career ladders in order to satisfy expectations of advancement. Thus, a career system can succeed only in relatively large systems or organisations which can afford to develop a sufficient number of ranks within their internal labour markets. It also requires a high degree of stability and standardisation in structures and particular jobs so that career moves can be predicted long in advance. Permanent ranks and positions make a system look fair and transparent; however, permanency excludes the flexible creation of new positions and changes in the current ones. Therefore, it can be argued that static organisations and permanent position requirements are very difficult to maintain in an increasingly dynamic environment and in the context of continuous civil service reforms in many countries. Even if organisational structures could be held constant for a few years, it would lead to rigidity and inflexibility in the way that the civil service works. Instability in organisational structures and career ladders, however, raises questions about the possibility of predicting and, thus, promising promotion as the main component of a 'career contract'.

The traditional career model described above is on the decline in Europe and in the rest of the world, although it is still maintained in some countries such as Belgium, France, Germany and Spain (Auer et al., 1996). According to Halligan (1991, p. 347), a traditional career system can be judged to be obsolete if three main conditions pertain: 1) principles are no longer applied uniformly across the levels of the service; 2) it is no longer a closed system but is more open and the positions are more competitive; 3) public servants are recruited from outside at advanced stages in their careers and employed on contracts. Another reason for calling into question the traditional design of public administration arises if the civil service provides long-
term employment security and benefits but still faces problems of attracting sufficient numbers of well-qualified individuals and retaining people already in place.

The ideal bureaucrat has been characterised in the scholarly works of Confucius, Plato, Max Weber, and Woodrow Wilson as able, industrious, loyal, and selfless, whereas the popular attitudes toward bureaucrats tend to see them as dumb, lazy, malevolent, and/or venal (Niskanen, 1973, p. 3). Ridley (1995, p. 18) argues on the basis of his study of European and American civil services that public administration organised on the career principle of lifetime service 'encourages elitist attitudes: a degree of arrogance that comes with official status; a lack of contact with citizens employed in other sectors or not employed at all; and thus a lack of sympathy for their individual problems'. Consequently, it can happen that the two sides who sign a 'career contract' cannot meet the conditions of the contract. Civil servants are not provided with sufficient advancement opportunities, while government cannot be sure whether it can rely on its best recruits in the long run. Civil servants may have only a limited identification with the service and may move from public to private employment when career opportunities arise, as is demonstrated in Chapter 6 by British and Estonian civil servants. Government may thus recruit stagnant, poorly motivated and idle civil servants who cannot follow the high standards of the civil service ethos. This may be the case in countries which do not have long traditions of the state and the prestige of civil service employment and which have not developed high prestige of public employment and a special social status which goes hand in hand with a distinctive position in a society. Therefore, in these countries government would be an obvious loser if 'career contracts' were developed for civil servants.

Job systems

Career and job systems are designed on the basis of different frameworks around which individual components of civil services (recruitment, promotion, training, mobility) are developed. An open job system is the opposite to a closed career system. Both systems have their advantages and disadvantages and several countries try to combine the positive characteristics of the two. However, as Auer et al. (1996)
demonstrate in their study of the fifteen EU member states, each country follows either a career or a job system in practice, and their individual components are very complicated to combine.

There are a number of reasons why governments should want to develop a job rather than a career system. Firstly, countries which do not have a long state tradition, high prestige or a distinctive social status for the civil service, such as most Eastern European countries, cannot build their civil services upon a long-term 'career contract' between an official and the state, although they may adopt some elements of a career system. Secondly, countries which have not developed a centralised civil service with strong central personnel management rely on decentralised administration where departments have their own career policies based on job systems. Thirdly, job systems are found especially in smaller countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland), although there is no evidence that the size of the country determines the sort of civil service system in operation. Fourthly, several countries (Australia, Italy, New Zealand, the UK) which have experienced a closed career system in the past, decided to change the system in 1980s or 90s. The analysis of the fourth group of countries is the most interesting because it provides material for comparison between different systems.

Kettl et al. (1996, p. 31) argue on the basis of a large-scale research project carried out in the US that the rate of social change has created a culture shock for government agencies: their staff, and their management systems are rooted in assumptions of stability and permanence. On the one hand, reductions in the public workforce and budget cuts have replaced expectations of job stability and lifetime employment. On the other hand, a number of career civil servants have not performed according to the requirements of the government. Therefore, by restructuring the public sector, governments aim to give public managers greater authority and responsibility like their counterparts in the private sector, and hold them accountable for the results. Consequently, the typical dilemmas of public administration between centralisation and decentralisation, and between flexibility and control have become key issues in the management of the civil service. In order to achieve greater efficiency and accountability of the service, traditionally centralised procedures such as career
management have been decentralised in countries such as Sweden, the UK and the Netherlands.

Decentralised personnel policies reflect a turning away from selection based on long-term career potential to a narrower focus on job-specific skills, where position classification centres attention on the work assignment of the individual (the job or position), and the status of that assignment relative to other assignments in the organisation. According to Halloran (1967, p. 89), a position is considered to be an abstract entity separate from the employee, and is a group of duties and responsibilities which require the services of one employee. Therefore, in job systems positions are established, rather than the personal factors of individuals filling them. A job system is based on a rank-on-position approach to the civil service, while a career system attributes a rank to a person. Accordingly, recruitment and promotion methods can be quite narrowly focused on the requirements of a specific position in a job system. Government units may prefer such a system since it permits a better match between immediate agency needs and applicant skills than does a classic career system. Decentralised recruitment systems also allow immediate managers to participate in the selection process in order to achieve a better match between a position and an individual.

Different civil service systems affect the way civil servants identify themselves. In a job system, officials are not recruited to the civil service as such but are appointed to specific vacancies that arise. It is not so important as in the career system to be a member of the service in the first place. Alternatively, officials may consider themselves as members of particular departments (as a result of decentralisation policies) or more often, as representatives of certain professional groups. Thus, in a job system an official will say 'I am a Doctor' or 'I work for the Ministry of Health' rather than 'I am a civil servant' (adapted from Ridley, 1983). It is the occupancy which confers the civil service status.

The more administration is seen as a collection of posts with a variety of work specifications, as in job-oriented systems, the greater the responsibility that is left to officials to develop their own careers. Job systems encourage individuals to take
responsibility for their careers, thus reducing the responsibility of the state to take care of its servants’ advancement. Contrary to a ‘career contract’ in the career system, a job system leaves no room for a duty of the state to protect the career interests of its servants. Both upwards and lateral movement depend largely on personal initiative. People are expected to apply for vacancies they find suitable, and they can be supported by their immediate managers in doing so.

One of the most important characteristics of a job system is its openness as opposed to the closeness of a career civil service. Ridley (1983) has argued that a job system is closely associated with open systems, because it emphasises equality of opportunity and avoids the elitism of a career path separated from the rest of the community; in practice, because recruitment to posts is on the basis of job evaluation, it stresses work efficiency. Organisations can assign either insiders or outsiders to any position in the open system. Individuals are chosen for vacancies on the basis of post-related qualifications, and the mere fact that someone is already a civil servant does not give an advantage in recruitment or promotion. The extent to which vacancies are advertised varies, but they must be announced in a government bulletin available to the public. Often vacancies are announced in newspapers and professional magazines. Thus, an open system provides broad access by the general public to public employment opportunities allowing them to enter at basically all levels of the civil service. Yet, the classical attributes of the civil service, such as neutrality, merit and independence from politics, are still valued.

An open system accepts and often encourages in-and-out movement between sectors and organisations. Although some people can spend their working lives within the civil service, there may also be a good number of ‘in-and-outers’. The ‘in-and-outer’ system has its advantages which are similar to any kind of mobility. It broadens the horizon of civil servants by allowing them to mix with people from other sectors. It introduces fresh ideas and new blood to the service. An open system may well bring in people who have not been disillusioned by the system and who can work for the public interest for several years and then return to their previous careers. It can attract new people who can be proficient in dealing with new technologies or management practices and could carry out reforms if needed.
Successful recruitment from external markets and retention of existing members of the work force depend on several labour market issues, such as the relative attractiveness of the civil service and specific conditions of public employment. In some respects, the attractiveness of the public service is dependent on factors which are outside the control of individual organisations, such as public attitudes toward the civil service and toward government in general. Because traditional civil service incentives, such as long-term tenure, are absent in a job system, the competitiveness of pay, benefits, and working conditions are important considerations in the retention of current workers and the attraction of the necessary talent and skills to the organisation. For example, Trevelyan (1856) feared more than a century ago that without competitive rates of pay, the British civil service could end up with the 'dregs of all other professions'. Traditional career systems assumed that working conditions and excellent pension schemes, together with the distinctive status of civil servants, allowed the state to employ good people at pay levels below the market rates. However, with the removal of tenure and other employment conditions as well as the distinctiveness of a career system, the civil service is expected to pay its officials according to the market rates if it wants to attract high calibre people.

It can be argued that, by attributing a rank to a position rather than a person, a job system does not pay as much attention to the development of officials as does a career system. In practice, it may be the other way round. A career system relies on (mostly centrally) established procedures which create universal development rules for all officials. Managers may blindly follow the rules rather than deal with staff development. By contrast, a job system produces an organisational structure which stresses individual career tracks, thus in practice being accommodating more to the needs of individual officials than rank-on-person systems. Consequently, career development and the retention of good officials may be given much more thought in job systems. While careers are usually developed by centralised personnel units in career systems, immediate managers have much more responsibility for staff development in job systems.
A manager in a job system is responsible for retaining good people without having to rely on service-wide tenure. Therefore, organisations in a job system develop their own procedures for recruitment, appraisal, training, mobility and promotion (Auer et al., 1996). They may establish their own rules on tenure or roll-on contracts if they find them appropriate. This means that in a job system officials may also spend their whole lives in the civil service. However, their opportunity to do so depends much more on their actual performance. Performance-based evaluation offers substantial incentives for high-quality work. Successful officials may gain much from a transformation to a performance-based management system: greater flexibility in doing their jobs, greater job satisfaction, and performance incentives. However, these incentives are counterbalanced by substantial risks, including the loss of a job or a contract if the work is not of sufficiently high quality.

Job systems allow much more flexibility and instability in organisational structures than career systems. In a career system the organisation should have a permanent and transparent structure to enable officials to see how their careers can develop. A job system provides more opportunities to change structures and accommodate to changing environment. While a career system is directly defined as enabling officials to move 'up', it requires tall organisations with several steps in the hierarchy. By contrast, job systems are usually associated with flattening of organisational hierarchies. As a job system provides fewer opportunities for upward movements but still encourages mobility, lateral appointments, secondments and rotation are used. A decentralised job system usually involves fewer barriers to movement and fewer career groupings than does a career system. Boundaries still exist between the political and bureaucratic components of the government on the one hand, and between the public and private sectors on the other. This makes job movements faster and more flexible. There is more emphasis on merit and quality rather than on seniority, which enables younger professionals to advance more quickly and to use their knowledge and skills in appropriate posts. In career systems the principle is that officials should not be promoted to a higher grade unless they are judged capable of filling the entire range of posts associated with that grade. In job systems, an official must meet the requirements of the particular post s/he wants to move to. Consequently, a job system may in fact support more mobility than a career system.
Although job systems provide more flexibility in career development, flexibility may make systems less transparent and more difficult to understand for their members and the public.

Job systems do also reduce career opportunities for insiders. Their career prospects are limited by the fact that promotion involves competition with outsiders. Possibilities for mid-career entry provide officials with an unpredictable element of competition when planning their careers. Another factor limiting career opportunities derives from the specialist-oriented character of the job system. The shift in recruitment procedures from a generalist to specialist focus, following the requirements of certain positions, changes the character of new recruits. A job system may encourage the overspecialisation of the civil service which could be characterised by limited career paths to a particular profession or occupation. Careers can also be attached solely to a certain government bureau or agency because specialised skills may not be readily transferable between agencies. While government units may prefer a specialist focus in recruitment and promotion decisions, the question which remains is whether this approach is constructive strategically. In the long run, due to the change in organisational structures, particular positions and job requirements may give an advantage to generalists over specialists.

The main problem which derives from a job system is the fragmented character of the service, which has its negative side-effects in both political and administrative spheres. Too much decentralisation directly threatens a common civil service culture and the ethics of bureaucrats. If central government contains loosely connected internal labour markets, every government unit develops its particular culture and work habits in the long run. If hiring processes are decentralised and accordingly varied, it is hard to strengthen government-wide long-term objectives. Fragmentation affects mobility, and thus requires much more co-ordination between departments in order to adjust the rules (sometimes including grades and salary systems) of different government units. Decentralisation and a high degree of discretion may also create the opportunity for abuse by individual departments and their managers. Close connections with the private sector may create more opportunities for corruption.
Preventing abuse requires rules, but written rules hinder discretion. The only sensible solution is to try to find a reasonable balance between discretion and rules.

Reforms in the civil service from career to open systems signify a change in culture from routine bureaucratic responses to public demands to an enterprise culture based on performance and different incentives. Mascarenhas (1993, p. 325) argues, on the basis of a comparative study of administrative reforms in Australia, Britain and New Zealand, that shifts are occurring from a civil service based on experience, depth of knowledge, and loyalty, to one that is result-oriented and based on managerial skills, corporate plans, and performance agreements. He claims that the change to managerialism is the fundamental basis of the functioning of the civil service and may weaken the civil service’s distinctive character. Opening the door to the appointment of outsider industrialists to top posts cuts across promotion on merit alone and introduces an element of chance in career prospects.

A ‘career contract’ demands a commitment from civil servants and offers tenure in return. The interdependence of tenure and commitment to the service is a fundamental question in public administration. Job systems have been accused of turning over greater administrative authority to men and women with little experience in public employment and too little commitment to the civil service (Huddleston and Boyer, 1996, p. 134). It has been argued by Ridley (1983, p. 194), on the basis of the study on the British, French and German civil services, that it is hard to know whether more would be gained in efficiency by open recruitment than would be lost in morale by interference with career prospects. Commitment and morale are not automatically tied to a career system. Consequently, it is very complicated to provide an assessment of the direct and indirect costs of career and job systems.

Both career and job systems have their strengths and weaknesses. The question remains to what extent it would be possible to combine the advantages of both systems and whether any elements of the systems are mutually exclusive. On the one hand, job-oriented systems offer career prospects to civil servants to make their careers within the public service. On the other, career systems take account of job requirements. For example, in the Netherlands, despite the ‘open’ system, recruitment
is rather closed in reality (Van der Meer, 1997, p. 59), so that government employment is in practice more or less lifetime employment. A person recruited for a specific post also pursues a particular career, but these paths are not formally laid down at the time of entry. The 'non-formalised' careers are more the rule than the exception, which can have substantial implications for career management. Very few studies analyse 'real' situations in a range of countries. Therefore, it is very difficult to make generalisations about the differences between 'ideal' systems and national realities.

**The Senior Civil Service**

The Senior Civil Service (SCS) requires special attention in research into civil service careers. This is because, in most countries, regardless of the civil service systems in operation, the SCS constitutes a distinctive class of civil servants. From the career perspective, senior civil servants compose the top of a civil service hierarchy, and they are the officials who often interact with politicians. They directly influence the development of the civil service culture and ethics of bureaucrats. Huddleston and Boyer (1996, p. 132) claim that higher administrators view themselves above all as guardians of the broad public interest. They identify not with the narrow perspectives of an agency or profession but with the central idea of public service in order to promote the professional quality and shared ethical standards of officials. The goal of the SCS is to have a cadre of highly professional generalists. In career systems, a senior civil servant must, for example, be able to perform all the duties that might be expected of an official in a high grade.

Whereas a career system is unified by its centralised organisation, the fragmentation of the service constitutes a particular problem in job systems. Therefore, countries with job systems are especially concerned with developing a SCS which shares common values and thus protects the unified character of the service. Despite prevailing principles of decentralisation in job systems, in some countries (Italy, the Netherlands, the US) higher civil servants are appointed to the general service of the state. This means that each department develops its own autonomous human resource
policy, which does not apply to senior civil servants who are managed centrally. A particular emphasis in the SCS is on horizontal mobility because career ladders are limited and upwards mobility within the SCS cannot happen very often. Mobility programmes for the SCS contribute to the development of better co-operation throughout the civil service, promotion of the common civil service culture and adaptation to the advanced functions and requirements of management. It also enables senior civil servants to identify with government and the public sector in general and not with a particular department or a profession.

Senior civil servants may be governed by different rules for recruitment, promotion and conditions of service compared to other officials. It is in the SCS where the career and job systems can be closely mixed. In open systems, the SCS may stay closed to outsiders or, alternatively, some positions in the SCS may be allocated for insiders only. In closed civil service systems, recruitment for the SCS takes place by definition among civil servants. However, although career systems tend to be over-regulated, the procedures can be less formalised at the upper levels. A greater element of discretion is related to the selection of senior officials than in promotion lower down the hierarchy. For example, advisory and policy-making posts can be formally categorised as discretionary appointments. According to Ridley (1983, p. 185), a considerable number of posts may be filled without the need to follow the competitive merit system. Therefore, even career systems which aim at reducing elements of patronage to a minimum may accept the filling of the most important civil service positions according to other criteria than merit. The extent of discretionary positions affects career distinctiveness which is an important element in the ideal-type career bureaucracy as described above. Discretionary posts can be considered as the gift of ministers which may undermine the ethos of a civil servants by providing a quick way to obtain an influential position in the civil service. This creates a particular problem in closed systems where seniority and permanency are highly valued. The use of discretionary posts may have less serious consequences in open systems which allow lateral entry.

Coherent policy-making requires a political identification of some senior officials with their ministers and may accept the non-permanence of some appointments as a
consequence. An American career executive McFee (1992, p. 27) describes the American system where candidates for SCS appointments can be drawn from outside the civil service and need not have the qualifications required of higher civil servants. He claims that the number of political appointees tends to increase if politicians come to power with distrust and hostility toward the career bureaucracy. Such a distrust has led to a conversion of several positions from career to political status and the addition of a number of new non-career jobs.

The nomination of political appointees to upper level positions affects careers within the civil service because it introduces an element of uncertainty into promotion prospects. It can be argued that every top job filled by a political appointee is one job fewer open for a civil servant. Political appointees create an artificially low ceiling on the career paths for the bureaucracy's long-term officials. According to Richardson (cited by Pfiffner, 1987, p. 63), the creation of political posts reduces the opportunities for career people to rise to positions of responsibility, amputates the career level and thus reduces the attractiveness of the career system. This applies to every country, which uses political appointments in its civil service.

Discretionary appointments are much more flexible than classical bureaucratic employment in so far as people can be appointed for a short time for particular projects and temporary tasks without following lengthy procedures of recruitment as civil servants. Thus the extent of discretionary appointments does not only indicate the politicisation of the civil service, but also the need for more flexibility in otherwise rigid career systems. However, the extent of politicisation and use of discretionary positions can only be properly understood in the context of the development of each system and particular socio-political situations.

Specialists and generalists in the civil service

The relationship between generalists and specialists is an important topic in research on civil service careers. In the broadest sense, it indicates the extent to which public programmes are staffed and directed by professional administrators as opposed to
administrative professionals. Whether a system is generalist- or specialist-oriented determines the type of individuals recruited into the system, the type of educational prerequisites for selection, the type of in-service training provided, and the degree of mobility within the system. Most importantly, it influences the values prevalent in the system and sets a basis for organisational culture.

Attitudes towards specialists and generalists are strongly influenced by civil service systems. Whereas a career civil service is oriented to a single occupancy 'civil servant' or 'public administrator', a job-system unites many different professions. It can thus be said that a career system is primarily generalist-oriented and a job system specialist-oriented. In fact, both systems employ generalists and specialists, the difference is determined by their relative numbers and importance. On the one hand, with the increasingly widespread job-oriented view on the civil service and other social, organisational and technological developments, the importance of specialists can be expected to increase. On the other hand, the civil service is becoming so complex that it may be increasingly difficult to be competent in a wide range of areas.

Despite the growing importance of specialists, they have been a target of severe criticism during the history of the civil service. A number of scholars (for example, Tullock, 1965; Kearney and Sinha, 1988) have found that an increasingly specialised public service tends to act in accordance with its narrow self-interests, losing sight of its duty to respond to the public interest. The principal complaint about professions in government services is that they hinder bureaucratic responsiveness. Each profession has its own world view and work ethics, gained through the education, experience, socialisation, and specialised knowledge of its members. Such a professional approach may not match public interest. Specialists may have difficulties in taking a broad view of the needs of the civil service as a whole.

Career management of any civil service system has the task of finding the best way of developing careers for both generalists and specialists as equally important members of the service. Whether a system is specialist- or generalist-oriented determines a whole range of personnel policies, career management included. Generalists are usually recruited to the whole service for their general knowledge and skills.
Specialists are hired because they possess the qualifications needed for a certain post for which they apply and, as long as they remain in the service, they are expected to remain in this field.

In traditional career systems, groups of specialists have been strictly separated from generalists and from each other. Specialists have generally been employed in separate hierarchies. In career systems, specialists may be regarded as strangers or trouble-makers in a generalist-oriented service. Although a job system provides more flexibility and more often accepts specialists, they can still be confined to their narrow professional ranks. Thus, specialists have significantly fewer career opportunities than generalists, as is also clearly indicated in the case studies of Estonian and British civil servants in Chapter 6. The specialist hierarchies do not reach the senior levels, they end at the top of a professional hierarchy, which is lower than generalist hierarchies. Specialists have thus little prospect of being promoted to the most senior positions in the service. In addition to limited promotion potential, lateral movements are restricted. Cross-departmental mobility is easier for those who possess strong administrative capabilities and backgrounds, and who are not closely related to specific programmes. Therefore, cross-departmental mobility decreases as professionalism increases. Consequently, the specialist hierarchies are narrow and low at the same time, and provide little opportunity for both vertical and horizontal movement. This raises an important question concerning specialists and generalists in the civil service: should and could there be movement across the boundaries between different career tracks? Both career and job systems recognise the need for mobility and movement in the civil service. Therefore, integrated hierarchies can be introduced in which specialists and administrators work alongside each other or special bridges are used to cross either vertical or horizontal boundaries.

There are a number of hidden barriers which are built into the traditional career systems, which were originally developed with generalists in mind. For example, Ridley (1983) argues in his study of the British civil service that generalists fill such positions in the government, which allow them to broaden their experience more effectively than the positions historically filled by specialists. These posts allow generalists to build up their reputations by displaying their talents to those responsible
for promotion; they also allow them to establish contacts which could help later in their careers. Personnel management, for its part, has an interest in developing the potential of promising officials for the Senior Civil Service, which is generalist by its nature. On the one hand, if some civil servants are identified early in their careers for special treatment and given the most interesting jobs, the prospects of those deprived of such opportunities can suffer. On the other hand, if a system recruits and rewards specialists, career development promotes narrow specialisation further, without paying much attention to general management competence. For example, if someone is consistently rewarded for being a computer expert or an economist, rather than a leader or executive, that person will still be a computer expert or economist when s/he becomes a manager.

Although generalists and specialists have been managed separately, often in isolated hierarchies, in traditional bureaucratic organisations, boundaries between the work of generalists and specialists have become more open and obscure as these groups become more interdependent. The profession of public administrator has been considered as that of a generalist in traditional European bureaucracies (Ridley, 1983). However, the question could be asked, whether being a public administrator is a specific profession in itself. On the basis of their study on the American civil service, Kearney and Sinha (1988, p. 572) argue that dual streams of professionalism have developed: the invasion of public administration by the professions, and the professionalisation of the vocation of public administration. If administrators are considered as professionals, it means that they bring the values and knowledge of this profession into a broader, administrative sphere. Therefore, one could argue that professional norms and the public ethos of public administrators help to place professional administrators’ behaviour within the context of public interests so that professional and civil service values and goals do not necessarily conflict. Professional values do not exist in isolation, they take shape and change in a dynamic environment.
Network systems

A relatively new concept developing mainly in the private, but also in the public, sector is the network system. Although the development of network organisations started in the mid-1980s based on the early writings of the three American scholars Miles, Snow and Coleman (1984, 1986), the network approach was relatively unknown in the public sector until the 1990s. However, civil services in several countries (the Netherlands, the UK, Italy, the Nordic states) have more or less unconsciously introduced individual elements of a network system, which is supported by an increasing need for co-ordination of government activities. As an interesting mixture of career and job systems, a network system undoubtedly deserves attention at a time of civil service reforms which are questioning the appropriateness of traditional systems for the modern world.

As there is no empirical evidence of the existence of a well-developed network system in the public sector, it is difficult to analyse its advantages and disadvantages. However, attempts have been made to design a model on the basis of the knowledge of how current civil services function and the theoretical framework of network systems.

Leemans (1987) presents a number of possible causes for the changing role of American civil servants, which can be attributed to European countries as well, as demonstrated by several scholars (Kooiman and Eliassen, 1987; Metcalfe and Richards, 1987; Jabes and Vintar, 1995; Lane, 1997):

- **Expansion of government tasks which has strengthened the role of civil servants**
  This leaves much room for civil servants to make an imprint on policy making and policies based on their own views of society and their own values.

- **Increased discretion as a result of the reduction in hierarchical organisation**
  Thus not only the command structure between minister and civil servant has become looser, but also that between the head of an organisation and his or her subordinates.
Consultative mechanisms between civil servants and society

Civil servants discuss and negotiate with representatives of societal groups in their own policy sector. This provides civil servants with an opportunity to listen to the wants and demands of groups in society. The development of consultative arrangements has resulted in vast and complex networks of mechanisms for consultation and co-operation between government departments and representative organs in society.

This is a new approach to the role of civil servants, especially if compared with a closed system and its encouragement of a distinctive and rather isolated status for officials. Much of the current work of the civil service (perhaps even more in the future) occurs through a broad network of partnerships. The ideology of the network system derives from the understanding that every organisation has routine tasks and functions which are performed in a relatively stable way; in addition, public organisations have important strategic objectives. These functions can be called the organisation's core functions. According to the network approach, the government needs a strong core, but it does not need to produce all its goods and services itself. Therefore, the civil service can be based on organising government services rather than delivering them. As Kettl et al. (1996, p. 56) put it, preserving the focus on mission and effectiveness, rather than 'circling the wagons', is the job of officials inside the public service. It means that a public organisation performs only its core functions and outsources those activities which can be performed more quickly, more effectively, or at lower cost, by others. This can be done either by any other government institution, private company, non-profit organisation or individuals. Such arrangements help to reduce the number of civil servants, decrease administrative costs, develop flatter organisational structures and make public organisations more flexible.

The government's role as 'arranger' means replacing the traditional but outdated organisational pyramid with a more operational structure. In terms of contingency theory, the goal is to match organisational structure to tasks. Routine, stable, predictable and well understood tasks are best matched with a rational-legal bureaucratic structure. However, non-routine and unstable tasks may be best suited to
a less formal type of structure, such as a network organisation. Therefore, some parts of the modern public sector may take the shape of a flexible network rather than a rigid hierarchy.

In countries with open civil service systems (Italy, the Netherlands, the Nordic countries, the UK, the US, New Zealand) there are additional causes for close linkages between different sectors. Staff in the private or non-governmental sector may move to the public service, and especially to government units in the policy sector to which their previous employers were related. On the other hand, civil servants may be recruited to their partner organisations in private or non-governmental sector. These movements can be temporary as well as permanent.

Civil servants in network systems can be divided into two different groups: core and periphery. Management of the core is more related to career systems, and management of the periphery is based on a broadly open and flexible system of employment. Civil servants in a relatively small core enjoy a special status that clearly distinguishes them from other groups of people who deliver public services. The core is employed full-time and the keyword describing its status is 'permanency'. People in the core have the typical qualities of career civil servants: they are highly educated and possess broad generalist knowledge. As in career systems, the rank of core staff is based on their individual qualities, competencies, and achievements (rather than on positions). They are carefully selected people who enjoy longer contracts than anybody else, but who can be fired in cases where they do not live up to the high expectations placed on them. Thus, the government's core comprises a cadre of top career officials which is permanent, but core staff do not necessarily have permanent appointments.

Those appointed to the core are charged with upholding public trust and protecting the public interest. Core staff are carriers of fundamental values which define public service. It is up to the core to develop and maintain the civil service culture, the ethics of bureaucrats and the unity of the service. Core servants are also the holders of organisational memory. They are expected to know the intricacies of the laws and regulations, remember who were allies and enemies in the past, and know whom to go
to for help in central agencies or in Parliament. Thus, the responsibilities of the core are very much the same as the tasks of senior civil servants, which supports the idea that senior civil servants are managed separately from others. However, being part of a core adds a number of duties, among which co-ordination is one of the most important. Officials in the core are expected to co-ordinate among themselves and with the periphery. This means the ability to build up their own communication networks over the years, dealing with the same organisations, people and issues. Their task is to set, pursue and evaluate strategy and adjust it if necessary.

A civil service core can be governed by a single set of personnel policies which provides flexibility in appointment, deployment, compensation and separation. The culture of performance may be built up through career development, through lateral movements such as cross-departmental and cross-sectoral mobility, secondments, on-loan arrangements, and rotation through different work in central and local government, as well as the offices of outside contractors. This gives them a broad perspective on what public service involves. As the core composes a relatively small group of individuals, upward movement can be quite rare and not always expected. The problems that the core official faces do not follow organisational boundaries; so the government’s institutional memory experts need to cross these boundaries in their careers and in their thinking. Their task is to provide the civil service with intelligence to understand and interpret the information that comes in from the outside partners.

Handy (1989) recommends creating network organisations in the form of a shamrock with three leaves. The first leaf, and the most important for continuity and organisational survival, contains a core staff. They are highly skilled individuals who are expected to make a major commitment to the organisation and derive much of their sense of identity from it. The second leaf is contractors, specialised people and organisations, often outside the organisation, who serve a variety of needs, including supply, distribution, and routine control functions. The third leaf is the contingent labour force which consist of part-time and temporary workers. The logic behind the three leaves is that they enable an organisation to get a richer picture of its environment and respond flexibly to opportunities and threats without a lot of overheads and bureaucracy.
Atkinson and Meager (1986, p. 17) claim that one aim of network systems is to remove the uncertainty about job security from one group of employees (core) by letting fluctuations affect a buffer group of workers (periphery). Employment therefore expands and contracts with changes in the buffer group, but is stable among the core group. Although the core of a network system is undoubtedly the most important part of the civil service, the importance of the periphery cannot be underestimated. Atkinson and Meager (1986) suggest the following types of periphery for British public and private organisations in the future:

- individuals and organisations who work closely with the core staff on several tasks and who are relatively loyal to the core. They are likely to have long-term or roll-on contracts and well-established partnership with the core;
- individuals and organisations who are less closely linked to the core. They may have specific specialist skills not found in the core staff and its close collaborators. They may also have contracts with a number of organisations which need their knowledge and skills for fixed periods. Therefore, these positions are of a short-term nature and tied to short-term contracts.

Peripheral staff are seen to be composed of specialists and experts in their precise fields. They have substantial freedom from public sector rules that limit their ability to compete. Consequently, they do not enjoy the same protection as core staff. They have responsibility for their own training and career development. However, as close collaborators are expected to develop long-term contracts with the core, their partners in the civil service may provide them with training and career development by enabling them, for example, to rotate in and out of government offices. Employment conditions of peripheral organisations and individuals are otherwise very close to those in the private sector. It is open to discussion as to whether only core staff should be called civil servants or whether this status could be extended to some of those in the periphery.

The network approach to the civil service is not a completely new one, although no country has used it in its pure form. However, it has been discussed in the US (Kettl et al., 1996) and in the UK. For example, the document called *Working Patterns*
(Treasury, 1987) in the UK was very much based on the network system. A two-tier civil service was proposed, with a core civil service that would enjoy job security and career prospects, and a peripheral civil service that would be employed on a wide range of conditions of employment. These were intended to permit the introduction of temporary contracts; zero hours contracts, which would mean people being available for work but with no guarantees; annual hours contracts; wide-spread part-time employment; fixed-term contracts; and provision for home working (Treasury, 1987, para. 7.1). The benefits that were supposed to follow from new working patterns of this kind were said to be the opportunities given for the better use of new technology (Treasury, 1987, para. 3.14), the greater ability to respond to fluctuations in workload, the enhanced capacity to adapt to new demands in the labour market (Treasury, 1987, para. 2.4), and ability to recruit staff with scarce skills (Treasury, 1987, para. 3.21).

Although the differentiation between departments and agencies can be understood as a two-tier system, Working Patterns has not been fully introduced in practice. No clear distinction is made between the core and the periphery.

The main problem in developing network systems is related to defining the core. A number of questions need to be answered in order to develop efficient and responsible network systems. What exactly is the core competency in the public sector? Is the core 'key', 'critical' or 'fundamental' or a combination? How is it possible to determine strategically, rather than in the short-term or on ad hoc basis, which activities to maintain internally and which to outsource? How is it possible to assess the relative risks and benefits of outsourcing particular functions of government? What is the impact on the labour market of enacting 'insecure' jobs?

Within a network organisation there is a constant trade-off between flexibility and control. Core competencies are the activities that require rigid control and protection. However, contracting out is related to several problems in the public sector as it is connected with a number of risks in delivering public services. If an organisation contracts out substantial amounts of work and depends heavily on temporary employees, it becomes more difficult to institutionalise routines that have apparently been effective. In addition, outsourcing may create a loss of cross-functional skills. The interactions among skilled people in different functional activities may develop
new insights or solutions. Outsourcing would make such cross-functional interaction less likely. Nevertheless, it can be argued that if the organisation consciously ensures that its core interacts constantly and closely between themselves and with outsourced experts and provides secondment opportunities, its employees’ knowledge base can be much greater than if all the functions had been carried out in-house.

One of the main problems in personnel management of network organisations is related to employment conditions in both core and periphery. Retaining the core of the career civil service and, eventually, developing alternative working patterns in the periphery may well create two classes of employees: the ‘haves’ and the ‘have nots’. DeFillippi and Arthur (1994, p. 312) argue that the portability of skills, knowledge and experience inherent in the network system may be more readily facilitated when accumulated health and pension benefits are also portable. This is especially the case for peripheral workers who may work part-time for different employers or be self-employed. This causes fundamental changes in traditional civil service salaries, bonuses, and mainly social guarantees.

Peters and Savoie (1994, p. 421) have discussed the suggestion that decentralisation would mean a move towards simpler organisation, with government departments and agencies concentrating on their core businesses. Yet, moving towards network systems does not mean that management of public organisations could be simplified. On the contrary, network organisations are much more complex and create new and more comprehensive tasks for their managers. An effective human resources system recognises that many people responsible for providing public goods work elsewhere, quite often outside the civil service, doing jobs that government has decided not to do itself. In this way, the outside contractors are responsible for how well the government’s work is done. Civil servants manage government programmes, but this increasingly means managing the networks and partnerships which produce most public services. Thus, network systems require careful planning over a long period to develop a cadre which could successfully manage such complex systems.

Network systems offer a challenge to the traditional separation between career and job systems. Analysis of civil service careers is dependent on the design of the civil
service system under study and general trends in the development of civil services. The management of senior civil servants, and specialists and generalists, in particular, varies from one civil service system to another. Civil services in Europe have been strongly influenced by traditional models of bureaucracy, which have led to the development of closed career systems with lifelong careers and a distinctive status for civil servants. Traditional models have been increasingly called into question in the 1980s and 90s, and open systems are becoming more widespread in civil services as demonstrated by Auer et al. (1996) and exemplified by the Estonian and British civil services, which are the subject of the case studies in this thesis.
Chapter 2 Institutional approaches to careers

Management is generally defined as 'getting things done through other people'; public management involves 'getting things done through other organisations' (Metcalfe and Richards, 1987). Even in decentralised public management, several links exist between the organisations which may affect policies and management practices. Different kinds of management techniques and expertise are needed to design and develop management systems which work effectively across organisational boundaries.

Sociologists, economists, organisational theorists and researchers of management have contributed to the study of careers in different ways. Most studies on institutions have been carried out in large North American private sector organisations. Their findings cannot be directly transferred to the study of public organisations of different size or to different national contexts. However, several private sector career studies can usefully be analysed from the perspective of the public sector, and the possible application of American findings to other environments is worth considering.

It is difficult to generalise from theories and practices of organisations. Although public sector organisations are often analysed as an entity, they may differ significantly in their range of work. The structure and behaviour of institutions is determined, at least in part, by the character of the institutions themselves, their predominant cultures and the characteristics of the policies they administer. Organisations also vary in size, growth rate, geographical dispersion, divisional structure, and their allocation of occupations and of hierarchical grades within occupations; including relative size per grade and the number of levels within grades. Organisations have a different impact on careers, since individual behaviour occurs in labour markets that are structured differently.

Nevertheless, several aspects in the lives of organisations are similar. This concerns the interdependence of institutional factors in particular. In this chapter, career management and its relationship with other organisational issues are studied. Firstly, general management concepts are analysed to provide an overview of management
theories and practices. Career development is studied within the framework of solidary and material incentives. Secondly, internal labour markets are examined. They constitute a central issue in studies of institutional careers. This is followed by a critique of highly formalised career structures and the rigidity of internal labour markets. Fourthly, vertical and horizontal mobility within organisations is studied with emphasis on institutional barriers to mobility. Management of the diversity of careers is a relatively new concept in management theories. However, it deserves attention when designing institutional careers. Finally, boundaryless careers are analysed. Boundaryless careers are very much the opposite to classical internal labour markets, since they involve (and encourage) career moves across organisational and sectoral boundaries. In sum, Chapter 2 aims to provide an overview of a variety of ways in which organisational careers can be structured and managed.

General management concepts

According to several studies (Naisbitt, 1985; Kooiman and Eliassen, 1987; Metcalfe and Richards, 1987), management practices have become more complex in all developed countries since the beginning of the 1980s. This affects also traditional career ladders and career management in general. In developing human resources policies more emphasis is being placed on flexibility and responsiveness to changing environments. An emerging trend in large, bureaucratic organisations tends to be decreasing reliance on control through the fixed chain of command and an increasing tendency to rely more on indirect control (Elcock, 1991; Peters and Savoie, 1994; Lane, 1997). Indirect mechanisms are based on various incentive schemes that also have explicit career implications. Organisations are more or less attractive to employees depending on the incentives they offer. According to Clark and Wilson (1961, p. 134), incentives can be classified in two main categories: material and solidary incentives. Dominance of one or the other determines the basis for career management in organisations.

Material incentives are tangible rewards that have a monetary value or can easily be translated into such rewards. Organisations which provide material incentives offer
material rewards for their members in the form of wages and salaries. Such organisations are usually highly flexible in their activities, as material incentives can be easily altered. Solidary incentives are intangible: the reward has no monetary value and cannot easily be translated into one that does have such a value. Solidary incentives may vary widely. They may include training and career opportunities provided by organisations. Clark and Wilson (1961) claim that solidary incentives mostly derive from the act of associating with the organisation and include socialising, the sense of group membership and identification, the status resulting from membership and the maintenance of social distinctions. Members of such organisations may be less interested in money or other material rewards than in additional institutional prestige, publicity or good fellowship. Prescribed promotion tracks and institutionalised advancement possibilities can also be characterised as typical solidary incentives. Organisations that rely above all on solidary rewards can be less flexible than organisations relying on material rewards. This is because solidary incentives presume a high degree of stability and relatively rigid organisational procedures.

From the literature it can be concluded that public and private organisations use both types of incentives. However, it is important to identify which incentive is predominant, since different civil service systems focus on different types of incentives. While a career system relies very much on solidary incentives, emphasising a distinctive status and membership of the civil service, a job system pays more attention to material incentives. The rigidity of solidary incentives may be one reason for moving from career to job systems. By developing open systems, lifetime career security in the civil service is replaced by more fixed term and/or roll-on contracts which allow more flexibility. With the movement to more open and flexible systems and, accordingly, the fall in the relative importance of solidary incentives, employment conditions are being reviewed in countries carrying out structural civil service reforms, as described in Chapter 1. In order to have a realistic chance of attracting and maintaining highly talented people, public service pay, benefits, and working conditions are expected to be reasonably competitive, although the motivators of the civil service, such as the contribution to the public good and
socially meaningful accomplishment (Buchanan, 1974; Gabris and Simo, 1995), compensate for salary disparity to a certain extent.

It would be wrong to claim that systems which rely predominantly on material rewards are not interested in retaining their work force. Even though employees are not awarded long-term tenure, organisations are likely to be interested in keeping a motivated and stable personnel. The stable work force represents institutional memory and programme competence and is the carrier of organisational culture. Turnover involves high monetary costs, associated directly with recruitment and training of newcomers. Therefore, it is important to ensure that civil service jobs remain attractive to insiders. Moreover, the more attractive these jobs become, the more outsiders want them (DiPrete, 1987b). Accordingly, the quality and size of the outside pool of candidates is likely to grow.

One solidary incentive which is broadly used in both closed and open systems is training. Training opportunities enable organisations to attract relatively well-qualified individuals to positions that are not well paid, and to motivate existing personnel. For example, DiPrete (1987b, p. 132) has found that American public organisations with the greatest amount of in-house training are most likely to fill their vacancies with insiders. Agencies that make less use of in-house training instead prefer to hire already qualified outsiders instead of promoting insiders. This corresponds with findings by Wholey (1990, p. 37) on American private companies which suggest that both formal and informal training as well as career mobility positively affect job security because they are an employer’s investment in employees, an asset the employer does not wish to lose. These findings may apply a decade later and in other countries.

Several authors (Leibowitz et al. 1986; Mayo, 1991) argue that career development programmes in public and private organisations are supposed to lessen turnover among personnel, to help people find new challenges and to assess their fit with their current jobs. Career development programmes may thus serve as motivators or solidary incentives for members of organisation. West and Berman (1993, p. 288)
characterise institutional career management as a combination of the following activities:

- analysis of organisational tasks and skills; involving examination of the match between job tasks and employees' skills with the purpose of improving the match;
- assigning the right people to particular jobs; by matching capabilities of employees with the requirements of the job;
- supporting the climate for continuous learning; through the creation of an organisational culture that encourages continuous development of skills and knowledge;
- providing feedback to employees; through immediate performance evaluation, with the purpose of achieving its improvement;
- encouraging job rotation; by transferring people across assignments to increase their skills;
- establishment of fast-track schemes; through planned and accelerated career development aimed at ensuring adequate skills and experience for higher level jobs;
- creation of job enrichment possibilities; involving designing motivational factors into work;
- establishment of mentor programmes; by using supervisors and senior personnel as career counsellors.

The description of career development by West and Berman (1993) covers different aspects of institutional management of careers and raises a whole range of issues that are involved in career development programmes. Leibowitz et al. (1986, p. 7) claim that the benefits of a career development system are twofold: both organisations and individuals can profit from it. For an organisation, it means better use of skills, increased loyalty, dissemination of information at all organisational levels, better communication within organisations as a whole, greater retention of valued people, an improved public image as a people-developing organisation, clarification of organisational goals, more realistic staff and development planning, and an expanded talent inventory for special projects. Organisations may also benefit from increased job motivation and satisfaction on the part of their personnel.
One component of a career development programme is succession planning defined as identifying particular individuals as possible successors to specific posts and for future openings to key positions (Leibowitz et al., 1986; Mayo, 1991). When succession planning is informal, it typically begins and ends with an individual manager identifying and developing his or her replacement. However, what informal succession planning fails to consider are possible organisational changes, structural adjustments, or changing requirements for a manager's job. A formal succession management process generally includes examination of the strategic plans of an organisation (or a particular field of activity), including human resource forecasts, changes in the structure of the organisation, or in particular tasks, training and development of personnel. The formal succession management process benefits from taking organisation-wide needs and plans into account, and gaining greater credibility among employees who feel part of the process. Thus, ideally, career management is part of broader strategic planning in an organisation.

However, formal succession planning involves the danger of becoming too rigid. The creation of new jobs and changes in old positions cannot always be foreseen, as will also be shown in the case studies of the Estonian and British civil services in Chapter 6. Organisations that regularly restructure and reallocate executive responsibilities may find it difficult to identify specific successors for specific jobs in the future. Even if the job title remains the same, the substance of certain position may alter significantly over time, demanding different competencies, personal qualities and experience. Therefore, meaningful succession management is flexible and regularly considers organisational changes. Even in relatively stable organisations, it can in no way be 'automatic'.

Distribution of labour within an organisation has implications for the careers of staff members. Shifts in occupational distribution can alter patterns of recruitment, mobility, employment and retirement. The use of job ladders and formal personnel procedures for promotion decisions is common to both public and private bureaucracies. Career patterns in organisations can be characterised in a number of ways:
• The ‘spoils system’
This system was widespread in European and American civil services until the 19th century (for example, in the UK, until the endorsement of the Northcote-Trevelyan reforms in 1854). In the spoils system positions are allocated on the basis of such qualities as sex, education, race and party or family membership (or other forms of nepotism). The spoils system can be associated with a ‘political system’, where career advantage is transacted on the basis of sponsorship, leverage, coalition-building, and power-broking (Nicholson and Arnold, 1989).

• The ‘rigid ladder’ (or ‘internal labour market’)
Progression through ranks or roles is time-tabled and more or less automatic for people who perform at an acceptable level. Development of internal labour markets is based on the Weberian model of bureaucracy, and is most developed in traditional career systems.

• The ‘human capital’ model
Individuals are selected and allocated according to a rational matching of their qualities and the requirements of positions (Barney and Lawrence, 1989). Development of this model has been strongly influenced by the humanist school of organisation theorists in the 1970s (Katz and Kahn, 1978).

• The ‘tournament system’
A cohort competition takes place for advancement at successive levels, with losses having the characteristic of being sudden and irreversible (Rosenbaum, 1989). The ‘tournament system’ is a typical private sector model of careers, and is also used in civil services based on job systems.

Internal labour markets

A pattern involving a ‘rigid ladder’ is characteristic of the traditional civil service model, which is developed through tightly structured internal labour markets (ILMs). Jobs in bureaucratic organisations are, at least formally, products of an organisation’s position classification system, which describes the tasks to be performed in each job. Such a system sets out skill requirements for different positions and provides guidelines for assigning jobs based on their level of difficulty, responsibility and
requirements. A position classification system typically groups jobs into hierarchical ladders which contain jobs in the same line of work but with differing levels of skill and responsibility. These job ladders, accordingly, define lines of promotion. In an ideal ILM, individuals would be recruited at the bottom level of a job ladder and move up as they gain more skills and experience. Althauser and Kalleberg (1981, p. 130) have specified in their study of American organisations that the concept of an internal labour market includes any cluster of jobs that have three basic structural features: a) job ladder(s), with b) entry only at the bottom, and c) movement up this ladder, associated with the progressive development of knowledge or skills. Slocum (1974, p. 78) defines a career line as consisting of ‘a graded series of related positions leading from the entry position to the pinnacle followed by retirement on a pension’. Development of ILMs tends to support the idea of a ‘Japanese career’, lifelong employment within an organisation.

In a tightly structured ILM, entry and exit are governed by institutional rules. Ports of entry are the connections of ILMs with the outside world. The relationship between promotion lines and ports of entry is self-evident: ports of entry usually correspond to the beginnings of ILM’s promotion lines. DiPrete (1987b, p. 120) argues on the basis of the study carried out in the US federal government that individuals on job ladders have an advantage over outsiders in competition for vacancies on the ladder; outsiders are typically channelled into entry positions at the bottom of ladders. Career trajectories depend upon starting conditions, especially the distribution of educational credentials and the distribution of available positions. While new recruits clearly experience the effects of external labour markets, mid-career workers are relatively protected by the closed character of ILM. The main feature of ILMs is their tendency to provide job security for their members. Therefore, job ladders are expected to provide a solidary incentive that reduces employee turnover and allows an organisation to develop a stable, committed and high-quality work force. DiPrete (1987b, p. 121) claims that those who have supported the creation of ILMs and the separation of career lines in the civil service, hoped that this would improve the quality of public administration by facilitating the recruitment of recent graduates and by controlling the flow of personnel from lower level to administrative positions.
Organisations may have only one career line or several career lines (one for administrative personnel, and others for professional groupings, or one for lower level, and another for upper level personnel). The question of how many career tracks need to be created is a central issue in civil services. Once all specialists are taken into account, the number of potential career lines increases substantially. In some generalist-oriented systems, it would be sufficient simply to identify a single non-administrative track that would involve all specialist groups. However, as career lines are meant for organising career development and mobility plans of different groups of professionals, a single non-administrative track may not be rational in the management of different specialist groups in organisations.

In addition to a number of career lines, several other questions need to be answered when designing an ILM. At what level of the civil service will the tracking take place? According to what criteria will civil servants be recruited to a particular career line? Will certain top jobs become the exclusive preserve of members of one track or another? How easy will it be for a civil servant to move from one career line to another horizontally? What are the other horizontal and vertical boundaries between different lines? These questions indicate how difficult and complex it is to establish a well-functioning ILM. Insufficient analysis of the ILM at the design stage of the organisational structure may cause serious problems once it has been put into practice.

Most studies on ILM policies consider vertical rather than horizontal movement (Althauser and Kalleberg, 1981; DiPrete, 1987a, 1987b). Vertical movement takes place usually within one job ladder, while horizontal movement requires more flexible mobility policies. Upwards mobility is also in line with what individuals expect from career ladders. As most institutional research on ILMs has been done in the US, examples which illustrate the functioning of ILMs are mostly American and concern large organisations. It has been suggested by Steinberg (1975) that careers developed within ILMs provide more opportunities for advancement over the course of the working life than is true of careers which evolve in non-ILMs. This is because of the lack of competition for promotion from outside. This finding has been further supported by Althauser and Kalleberg (1981) who argue that, once an individual has gained a foothold in an ILM, a range of moves from one job to another are possible.
In contrast, those who work within non-ILMs do not enjoy a long series of job shifts as a result of accumulated knowledge. It is questionable whether these findings still apply.

A number of factors can affect advancement opportunities in organisations:

- Firstly, the shape of the organisational pyramid influences the speed and range of promotions. Traditional organisational pyramids tighten at the top, which substantially reduces promotion opportunities in the higher ranks. The trend for flattening organisations in Europe and America (Metcalf and Richards, 1987; Elcock, 1991; Kooiman and Eliassen, 1993; Kettl et al., 1996) makes the organisational pyramids even lower.

- Secondly, promotion opportunities are strongly dependent on rates of organisational growth (Keyfitz, 1973). At times of rapid growth people are able to move up more rapidly. However, DiPrete and Soule (1986, p. 299) argue that the smaller the number of vacancies to be filled, the higher the proportion that are filled by promotion from within the organisation. Thus organisational growth could result in a decrease in the proportion of vacancies filled by internal promotion, as it would probably increase the absolute level of opportunity for lower level employees. This is because the pool of inside candidates can be small and insufficiently skilled compared with the pool of outside candidates, who can be recruited at the mid and top ranks of the organisation during a period of rapid growth. This finding of DiPrete and Soule (1986) was also tested in the study of the Estonian civil service described in Chapter 6.

- Thirdly, advancement opportunities are also affected by the relative quality of internal and external candidates and the tightness of the external labour market (DiPrete, 1987b).

In well-developed ILMs, job ladders are part of the administrative rules and procedures which make ILMs an institutional reality. Job ladders are the basis for the allocation of pay, training and promotions. In turn, development of well-structured ILMs is central to bureaucratic control in differentiating the work force and providing incentives for compliance with organisational requirements, as well as inducements to remain in the organisation. Edwards (1979, p. 21) has claimed that the defining
feature of bureaucratic control is the institutionalisation of hierarchical power. Work becomes highly stratified, each job is given its distinct title and description, and impersonal rules govern promotion. An individual is told 'you are stuck to the organisation and you can ascend up the ladder' (Edwards, 1979, p. 21). Therefore, the elimination of the formal distinctions between career lines or the intensification of mobility programmes across boundaries influences administrative control over personnel decisions.

Critique of rigid career structures

The assessment of the appropriateness of career ladders in an organisation is a complicated and time-consuming task, as long-term consequences of ILMs may occur once recruits move up the hierarchy. It is questionable whether organisations can provide regular upward movement for their personnel, and whether rigid ILM structures are appropriate for a changing environment. DiPrete (1987a) argues that ILMs can be rational responses to situations in which uncertainty is high. Indeed, ILMs tend to make organisations more stable and isolated from outside influences, which can be an advantage. However, stability may become a major disadvantage if organisations want to adapt to the changing environment. Consequently, rigid career ladders may lead to the stagnation of an organisation and its personnel in the long run. Avoidance of inflexibility and stagnation is a reason why strict career lines containing several boundaries can rarely be found in job or network systems which aim to achieve more flexible adaptation to the environment.

Nicholson (1993, p. 1370) claims that it is common for organisations with well-developed ILMs to lure career entrants with two promises: unlimited opportunities for development and a good life at the top. At the same time, the design of hierarchies offers an inverse ratio of positions at upper level; even in the flattest structures, the pyramidal model still applies. Career advancement is increasingly difficult as recruits progress through an organisational pyramid. Each time an individual advances, the number of unsuitable (lower-graded) positions increases, and the number of desirable (higher-graded) future positions decreases. This means that the closer an individual
gets to the top, the more likely s/he is to have a dead-end job from which further movement is difficult. This explains why Lewicki (1981) has criticised closed labour markets by stating that 'people who were recruited with a career contract, then moved laterally, laid off, or forced to retire early, experience their loss of status or employment in relational terms: they were seduced by their companies and then betrayed, jilted and abandoned' (Lewicki, 1981, p. 17).

Experience of both European and American public and private organisations indicates that there are increasingly limited prospects for advancement in organisations due to flattening structures, decentralisation and financial cutbacks. As opportunities for upward career moves diminish, employees quickly reach their career plateaus. A career plateau is a point in a career where the likelihood of additional movement up the organisational hierarchy is very low due to the imbalance between advancement motives and available promotion opportunities within the organisation. Nicholson (1993, p. 1369) has defined career plateaus as perceptions of limited advancement possibilities, overlong duration at a single organisational level, and a lag behind the implicit timetable of age-grade norms in a hierarchy.

The American scholars Rosenbaum (1979) and DiPrete and Soule (1986) claim that there is a strong relationship between the probability of promotion and tenure. The probability of promotion declines with tenure, as employees pass the optimum point in their careers for the promotion to take place. The policies governing promotion in organisational labour markets condition outcomes such as employee commitment. However, plateauing of those people who have usually reached higher levels of ILMs may result in having disappointed people at senior levels, who ironically, are in charge of morale and high ethical standards in the civil service. They may stay in their positions for years, which not only reduces their motivation but also blocks careers for those at lower levels. It can be argued that the existence of ILMs supports the creation of career plateaus because it encourages individuals to stay with organisations for their whole careers.

Besides diminishing advancement opportunities, ILMs have barriers limiting shifts between certain sets of jobs. Schein (1971) defines three types of boundaries: firstly,
hierarchical boundaries which separate the hierarchical levels from one another; secondly, inclusion boundaries which separate individuals or groups differing in the degree of 'centrality' within the organisation; and thirdly, functional boundaries which separate different departments or functional groupings. Job ladders differ in their extent and shape. Some ladders may end at relatively low grades, while others extend to the top of the organisation; thus the grade level of the top jobs within occupational series may vary substantially. The rigidity of career lines varies as well. On one ladder, jobs may be distributed so that it is easy to move from one level to another. On another ladder, the advancement may be much more difficult.

Career ladders exist in a relationship to other career lines in an ILM, with which they share horizontal boundaries. DiPrete and Soule (1986) claim that movement across these boundaries is one of the main problems ILMs face, because the rigidity of an ILM may not allow such cross-boundary movements. Therefore, belonging to one or another job ladder may very much determine an individual's career chances in ILMs. It has been argued by DiPrete and Soule (1986) that ILMs structure opportunity by linking positions into job ladders of varying size, and creating boundaries between these ladders. Both intra- and inter-organisational boundaries have implications for vertical and horizontal mobility. Doeringer and Piore (1971) maintain on the basis of their study of American organisations that ILMs are divided into mobility clusters, that the institutionalisation of clusters limits movement across cluster boundaries, and that the structure of mobility clusters in many organisations has been an important form of discrimination. This is based on their belief that different career lines or clusters may provide different career opportunities. Previous studies of ILMs will also be examined in the case studies of the British and Estonian civil services in Chapter 6.

Professional (specialist) career ladders which operate in parallel and could be very different from one other and from administrative ladders constitute an important factor influencing both upward and lateral mobility. An ILM by its nature encourages individuals to stay in their particular ladders and to improve their ladder-specific skills. Thus, the process of professionalisation can be seen as both boundary creating and boundary maintaining in an organisation. It can be also said that professionalisation of ILMs widens the distance between specialists and generalists.
As professional ladders do not usually reach the top of an organisational pyramid, switching from one career ladder to another with a higher ceiling can be seen as a (sometimes the only possible) chance for career advancement for professionals. Advancement for lower level people ultimately depends on their ability to cross a boundary between different job ladders. DiPrete and Soule (1988, p. 27) claim that low job-ladder ceilings in the US federal bureaucracy are a major reason why people would want to shift ladders. Consequently, it is reasonable to hypothesise a negative relationship between opportunities on an individual's job ladder and the probability of job-ladder shifts.

Specialists usually possess quite specific skills which make job-ladder shifts more likely for administrative personnel than for professional staff. Considering that it is quite difficult, if not exceptional, to switch ladders in ILMs, rigidity of career lines provides disadvantages for professionals who may not be able to enjoy such broad training and mobility prospects as generalists. However, Biddle and Roberts (1994, p. 82) in their study of American scientists and engineers emphasise the discontinuity associated with the switch from the professional to managerial track, and from responsibilities the professional feels qualified to handle to responsibilities for which the professional may be not prepared. Rewarding specialists by moving them into management may cause mismatches of skills, values and motivations that are costly for both organisations and employees. Specialists may also not be interested in such advancement. The findings of Biddle and Roberts (1994) were confirmed by the studies of Estonian and British civil servants described in Chapter 6.

In order to overcome the deficiencies of career mobility, organisations may introduce so-called bridge positions between different career lines to surmount career barriers as suggested by Mayo (1991). Bridges can be created between lower-level and upper-level, or between professional and administrative career ladders. Bridge positions are meant to provide a move out of traditional dead-end positions which may result from too low or narrow career ladders. Alternatively, it can be argued that there should not be barriers at all to prevent movement from one career line to another, which, in turn, calls into question the rationale of ILMs. The latter corresponds to the finding of DiPrete and Soule (1986) that tasks required from one career line do not differ much
from those of other career line(s). DiPrete and Soule (1988, p. 27) claim that, in some American organisations, job ladders correspond more to conventional distinctions between jobs than to major skill differences. Such findings demonstrate that jobs can be allocated into groups without careful analysis, and borders between different groupings within ILMs are not always rational.

Ideal ILMs may assume that job ladders completely control job mobility. While idealised conceptions of ILMs suggest that career movement in bureaucratised organisations invariably occurs along formally defined job ladders, DiPrete (1987a, p. 441) recognises that actual career trajectories are only imperfectly constrained by formal job ladders, and mobility does not exist solely within divisional (or organisational) boundaries. DiPrete (1987a) distinguishes between formal structure and behavioural structure. He claims that formal structure and behaviour need not be completely congruent in practice, even in highly bureaucratic organisations. This indicates that, in fact, more flexibility is possible within ILMs, although flexibility may make otherwise transparent and predictable career paths (an advantage of ILMs) more ambivalent.

Mobility in organisations

Career mobility is one of the central issues in career development and in broader organisational policies. The importance of career mobility to employees has been demonstrated by a number of empirical studies on North American organisations, which have found a positive association between mobility and identification with work (Lodahl and Kejner, 1965) and the organisation (Lincoln and Kalleberg, 1985). Wholey (1990, p. 52) argues that opportunities for mobility increase the individual’s attachment to the organisation. Employers invest in employees to develop their skills by providing them with job security and moving them through a number of positions where they can expand their skills. Lincoln and Kalleberg (1985) claim that this is associated with more positive perceptions of the fairness of the organisational labour market and, apparently, also with higher personal satisfaction and commitment. These findings imply that the investment by the organisation in human resources generally
benefits employers: they are associated with greater employee attachment to the organisation, more positive perceptions of the organisation by employees, and more satisfied and committed people (Wholey 1990, p. 55).

Hall and Schneider (1973) describe four main dimensions of career mobility:

- **Amount of mobility**
  The total average amount of mobility differs between various types of organisations. Some organisations allow for more movement than others. For example, where jobs are standardised and work processes are similar across jobs, staff are more transferable, costs of retraining are relatively small, and mobility can enrich work experiences; mobility may be high.

- **Rate of mobility**
  The relative speed with which individuals change their roles is constrained by certain organisational and individual factors. A high rate of mobility can be expected, for instance, where the internal and external labour markets are active. Low rates of mobility are expected to characterise employees with specialised tasks or those with a greater need for stability.

- **Direction of mobility**
  Organisational mobility is not confined to movements up a hierarchical structure, but consists of a mixture of both horizontal and vertical changes. An individual can move in three directions within an organisation: vertical movements (across hierarchical boundaries), radial movements (across inclusion boundaries), and circumferential movements (across functional boundaries). The two latter types can be also called horizontal movements. Directions of mobility are assumed to depend on organisation-level factors, such as the channels available for movement and their structural constraints, and on the career practices prevailing in the organisation.

- **Initiator of mobility**
  Job movements are initiated either by an individual or by an organisation, which accounts for different mobility patterns. Where individuals perceive personal effort to lead to desired mobility, career self-management may be possible. Organisational control over employee mobility, by contrast, leads to lower levels of career mobility initiative, as can be found in rigid ILMs and career systems.
Individual career theories (Holland, 1973; Super, 1980) postulate that occupational mobility is determined primarily by the characteristics of individuals and by the mobility choices taken by them. But organisation theory proposes that the characteristics of the organisation influence individual work behaviour and, therefore, essentially determine career mobility patterns. The shortening of hierarchies and reduction of promotion opportunities discussed earlier in this chapter necessitates more horizontal moves in organisations. Although ILMs are built with vertical advancement in mind, the limits on upward mobility makes it necessary to pay more attention to the other directions for mobility within organisations. This, however, requires changes in the overall ideology of careers in ILMs. Career development should not mean so much vertical movement but horizontal mobility. Rather than steady progression up the career ladder, often with a single employer, the modern pattern is ‘zigzag’ careers. This enables an organisation to be more reliable in meeting the conditions of a modified ‘career contract’, by providing employees with regular opportunities to acquire new skills and experience through horizontal rather than vertical movement within the organisation.

Lateral moves involve a change in responsibilities and functions, and can also provide experience for growth without changing existing structures, pay scales or status in the organisation. Horizontal mobility can occur at any level of the organisation. It offers new challenges in a work environment where upward mobility is not possible. It also provides opportunities to transfer skills to a new area and avoid becoming stagnant, bored or plateaued. The movement of employees through a series of jobs ensures the availability of broadly skilled employees to staff other positions in the organisation, and ties employee interests to the organisation. Movement through several positions, rather than only upward mobility, is also important for motivational purposes. Thus the general benefits of career mobility can be accomplished within the existing personnel structure with simple changes and minimum disruption.

In addition to the initiative and interest in mobility shown by both the organisation and its members, horizontal mobility involves some costs, the most significant of which is the redesign of career paths within the organisation. The most substantial
method of redesign affects career ladders within an organisation by allowing individuals to move freely across boundaries. Insofar as incentive systems affect organisations and their members, they can also be revised with horizontal mobility in mind. Rewards are usually linked to upward movement. Salary systems in particular, irrespective of whether levels are merit, skill or performance based, generally tend to follow a hierarchical pattern in an organisation. However, reward systems can be linked to a variety of developmental possibilities: for example, horizontal moves, temporary experimental moves, enrichment moves. If increased pay and other rewards were linked only to upward movement, individuals as well as managers would be encouraged to view career development solely in this direction. Rewards for other types of moves might involve better working conditions or public recognition, which could help change the way careers are conceptualised in people’s minds, and make the expectations of both organisations and individuals more realistic.

Management of diverse careers

It is debatable whether the presence of ILMs in organisations encourages or discourages equal employment opportunities. According to DiPrete and Soule (1986, p. 296), upward mobility programmes in the civil service in the US have aimed to increase overall efficiency through better utilisation of human resources. It has also been assumed that women and minorities would benefit most from ILMs because they are concentrated in lower level positions. This is why promotion from within an organisation has been considered to serve the interests of women and minorities who would not otherwise have access to many higher positions. DiPrete and Soule (1986, p. 296) also note that the upward mobility plan was part of a broader equal employment opportunities programme in the US, and was, therefore, seen as an integral part of equal opportunity affirmative action. Upward mobility programmes included the identification of under-utilised talent, the creation of bridge positions and the use of on-the-job training to prepare able lower-level employees for promotion. DiPrete and Soule (1986, p. 296) claim that employees who previously were not judged to be deserving of promotion were classified as promotable under new policies of upward mobility.
However, several arguments can be raised against the women-friendly practices of bureaucratic ILMs. In a diverse work force containing people of different age, gender and nationality, and with various needs and interests, equal treatment may not lead to fairness of organisational practices. As bureaucratic organisations rely on universal criteria, it is debatable whether standardised rewards are universally beneficial. It can be also questioned whether standardised bureaucratic rules, such as rigid career ladders, have been created with exceptions in mind or whether they are based on mainly male experience of uninterrupted upwards careers. As career systems theoretically place rank on a person, it could be assumed that they would accommodate the diverse needs and interests of individuals. In reality, in a career civil service with strict ILMs, the organisation’s mission is focused, firstly, into areas of functional specialisation, secondly, into job classifications, thirdly, into qualifications for the position. Only then does the system identify an individual. Thus, rank-on-person systems are unable to accept cases which are beyond their fixed rules and procedures. Consequently, they may become extremely rigid in accommodating officials’ needs and preferences.

According to traditional models of bureaucracy, a well-ordered system requires universal rules in order to regulate social behaviour. Therefore, it may discourage family and close personal relationships from distracting, confusing or otherwise threatening the objectivity of bureaucratic decisions. Contemporary research into organisations increasingly emphasises differences among employees. Universal criteria of bureaucratic organisation and ILMs may not be the best way to deal with opportunities for all groups of personnel. Larwood and Gattiker (1987) argue that the theory of career development needs to be ‘roomy’ enough to allow for more flexibility to accommodate family responsibilities. The establishment of institutionalised policies for women, such as certain career bridges, may exclude other cases; for example, men who would like to be more flexible in matching their work and family responsibilities. Classical rigid ILMs presume a strict division of labour and allow little flexibility in changing job descriptions and the division of labour in order to provide opportunities for flexitime, job-sharing, part-time work, unpaid leave and other flexible work arrangements. For these reasons, the loosening of rigid structures
and procedures helps to accommodate people's diverse career paths. Classical steady career tracks from the point of entry into an organisation till retirement may suit neither women nor men.

The probability of advancing on a job ladder depends on the level of opportunity available for such advancement. An individual's advancement rate can be affected by the nature of his/her relationship with the organisation. Civil services usually recruit most officials on a full-time basis; they rarely employ so-called irregular employees who may work part-time, share a job, or may have a temporary or otherwise indefinite job. In some cases, irregular working conditions may be identical to the working conditions experienced by regular officials, for example, they may enjoy similar advancement opportunities. In other cases, however, they may be very different, including different task assignments, pay, opportunities for promotion, involvement in decision-making and so on. ILMs may allow only for full-timers to advance as an ILM traditionally consists of a grouping of full-time jobs. In this case, fewer career tracks may be available for irregular workers. Supervisors and co-workers may also unconsciously exclude part-time officials from key decisions and important aspects of work projects, as a kind of 'punishment' for being absent from the office. Even when advancement for irregular officials is possible, it may be slower than for regular officials. This is because part-timers may acquire on-the-job training at a lower rate, or their progress may be hampered by formal personnel procedures. DiPrete and Soule (1988, p. 33) argue that, sometimes, American officials who do not take temporary leave during the probationary period may have a better chance of being promoted. This suggests that a career in an ILM may substantially depend on steady full-time employment, and other cases may be at a disadvantage.

There are a number of reasons why institutions may be interested in encouraging alternative work arrangements and thus providing irregular officials with equal advancement opportunities. With the increasingly complex tasks which civil services face, it may be useful to split jobs in order to deploy the expertise of several people rather than one. It has been found by Ezra and Deckman (1996) that flexitime increases productivity and morale, while reducing the amount of absenteeism, truancy, and use of overtime. The use of alternative work arrangements may enable
people to reconcile the needs of their private life, in particular their family life, with their work. The reason for irregular employment is also job enrichment through providing greater scheduling flexibility for positions which are monotonous and difficult to fill, and it enables more efficient use of equipment. This corresponds to the opinion of those authors (for example Mayo, 1991; Wilkinson et al., 1997) who claim that flexibility is advantageous not to only employers but also to employees. In addition, part-time employment and job sharing can be instruments for reducing unemployment by providing jobs for a larger number of people, thus increasing the number of persons employed in the public service while keeping the amount of work (and posts) stable. Therefore, stabilisation or even the increase in the number of people working for the civil service can be combined with a reduction or stabilisation of public personnel expenses.

Alternative work arrangements require a number of distinct institutional policies to accommodate different conditions of employment. Therefore, it would be difficult to implement universalistic criteria in bureaucratic organisations allowing different groups in organisations to have their own rules and personnel practices. The presence of institutional boundaries between different career ladders make it even more complicated to cross the boundaries if it means movement from temporary, fixed-term, or part-time position to a full-time career position or vice versa. Developing good personnel practices involving diverse work arrangements requires a lot of effort, flexibility and good will from organisations and their members.

**Boundaryless careers**

Until the 1980s, a single and unitary approach to personnel management was often considered to form a basis for well-managed organisation. However, a single approach to management may be inconsistent with the interests of either organisations wanting to employ people under different conditions, or individuals whose interests and needs vary in terms of working conditions. Decentralisation of large organisations makes intra-organisational career opportunities less challenging and, therefore, may increase cross-boundary moves. It may be rational to legitimise previously
exceptional cross-boundary moves and accept the idea of boundaryless careers. Boundaryless careers are very much the opposite to strictly regulated and hierarchically-oriented ILMs. While ILMs are focused on mainly upward mobility within the boundaries of organisation, and horizontal mobility is intended for intra-organisational movement, boundaryless careers cross borders between organisations and introduce inter-organisational mobility.

Studies of organisations in the 1970s and 80s assumed a stable rather than changing environment and focused on intra-organisational rather than inter-organisational issues. Research tended to emphasise single organisational settings and hierarchical movements within them. Studies of employment emphasised a single, relatively stable organisation and lifelong careers within one organisation. A particular interest of both European and American scholars of the 1980s was to explain the success of Japanese organisations, which led to the idealisation of large organisations and lifetime employment within a single organisation. Large organisations were believed to offer their employees a stable environment in which they could rely on support from an organisation in developing several aspects of their lives.

From the mid-1980s, scholars of organisational research started to emphasise more dynamic environments and their implications for organisational policies. Vertical coordination was gradually losing its importance, and attention to horizontal coordination has increased substantially. As a result, the assumption of stable contexts associated with organisational careers has become obsolete, and traditional assumptions about employment have been questioned. Hirsch (1987, p. 46) notes that yesterday's rules, promises, and pleas to climb the organisation's career ladder are suddenly transformed into today's uncertainty. Dalton (1989) suggests that our reliance on organisations is such that we want them to be simple when in reality they are complex and dangerous. Organisations are dangerous if we expect things from them they cannot deliver and where the expectations include: that hard workers will be taken care of; that people who make promises will be around to fulfil them; that specialised knowledge or past achievement means future security; and even that career pathing by career development specialists is plausible (Dalton, 1989, p. 106).

Another approach, elaborated in Kanter's (1989) work, views careers from the standpoints of reputation and employability, and through them emphasises the
mobility of personnel in a changing mix of organisations. Instead of criticising lost career opportunities in single organisations, people can discover new possibilities for inter-organisational moves. Organisations can be seen as a bigger network which involves external labour markets. A focus on building a reputation in the course of a career can enhance employability, regardless of the changing fortunes of a single employer (Kanter, 1989). Such reputation-building requires access to external labour markets and organisations, as provided by network employment arrangements. This would give rise to a 'checkerboard career' (Peters 1992, p. 220), which unfolds freely between organisations. The checkerboard vision of the career may be reinforced by employers who prefer 'to have energised individuals ... for two or three exciting years ... rather than 25 dull years' (Peters, 1992, p. 120). As the specialised nature of professional work is growing, its transferability between employers supports boundaryless and dynamic employment arrangements. These are shifting toward a more horizontal rather than vertical division of labour.

It is debatable whether these kinds of changes are relevant to the public sector. Alternatively, public organisations may find it useful to expand their ILMs. However, boundary crossing can be expected to increase at senior levels of highly skilled and policy-making jobs to compensate for the reduction in the number of potentially qualified employees. Civil servants face problems of limited careers, unkept promises of a 'career contract', career plateauing, redundancies and early retirements. Boundaryless careers may provide a tool to reduce these problems for both organisations and individuals. Civil servants are even more affected by the above-mentioned problems than private sector employees in countries where civil services have been traditionally based on closed systems. Changes in the public sector have been slower, and public organisations traditionally provide more stability than private businesses. Nevertheless, similar processes of inter-organisational movement have occurred since the 1980s with the increasing introduction of open systems in civil services. The presence of an open system is an important prerequisite in developing boundaryless careers.

Boundaryless careers may have several meanings. Arthur (1994, p. 296) has tried to provide different definitions to boundaryless careers. According to him, the most
well-known definition of boundaryless careers describes movements across the boundaries of different employers. Another meaning is when careers draw validation and marketability from outside the present employment. A third meaning is when careers are sustained by extra-organisational networks or information. A fourth meaning is when traditional organisational career boundaries, hierarchical reporting and advancement principles are broken. And a fifth meaning is when a person rejects existing career opportunities for personal or family reasons. A theme common to all these meanings is that of independence from, rather than dependence on, traditional organisational career principles.

The different definitions listed above enable the conclusion to be drawn that employers are expected to be ready to attract and retain people in a situation where individuals may change jobs frequently, willingly move laterally, and take increased responsibility for developing themselves and their careers. Individuals can be employed in mixed job ladders, which could also offer prospects for further cross-boundary movement. It is likely that boundaryless careers provide opportunities for people to be involved in different tasks inside and outside a particular organisation through various schemes, such as rotation, secondments, on-loan arrangements, working for more than one organisation at the same time. This, in turn, encourages organisations to use alternative work arrangements such as job-sharing, part-time work or flexitime.

Although boundaryless careers provide a number of new challenges, they create new problems as well. Florida and Kennedy (1990) assert that boundaryless careers may occur at the cost of competitiveness for the host organisation. A high degree of mobility among skilled personnel undermines management’s commitment to provide in-service training. Rapid turnover of skilled individuals deprives the organisation of organisation-specific know-how which cannot be easily or quickly replaced. Fragmented organisations lack workforce stability to build long-term know-how and institutional memory. More frequent transitions lessen the employees’ accountability for the longer term implications of their decisions. Moreover, transitions increase corruption or leaking of confidential information and thus make organisations vulnerable. People may experience careers in which their loyalties are divided
between two or more simultaneous employment affiliations, which result in career conflicts. For instance, people may see their futures being more dependent on their knowledge and skills and invest resources in improving them as a priority. Organisational affiliations become unclear, which creates particular problems for the civil service by running counter to traditional civil service values.

According to Miner and Robinson (1994, p. 360), boundaryless careers encourage organisations to focus on how to enhance variation processes without losing the value of consistency, that is how to find a balance between change and continuity. One way to find such a balance is through the use of network organisations, which provides diverse opportunities for mobility in the periphery, and ensures stability and traditional civil service values through more permanent core staff. Network systems provide an opportunity for flexible structuring of organisations by allowing the creation of new jobs, changes in the balance between occupations, and changes in job content through expansion for some groups, and contraction and systematisation for others. Network systems make it possible to exchange a rigid and pre-defined system of job-classification for a more flexible one. Such an approach also allows redefinition of job boundaries without rigidly specifying tasks and job content. If boundaryless careers are going to develop further, previous rigid career ladders become meaningless. By making the division of labour and individual job descriptions more flexible, it is possible to split up one job into a number of tasks, and accordingly, to encourage part-time work, flexitime, job-sharing and a variety of other work arrangements.

Network organisations clearly require corresponding changes in the broad field of personnel policies and practices. They assume the presence of a number of personnel policies: for core and different periphery groups. Core staff are managed in traditional ways by using solidary incentives, whereas management of periphery is based on material incentives. Individuals at the core of an organisation have a modified ‘career contract’ which aims at horizontal rather than vertical mobility. Those at the periphery have a transactional employment arrangement mainly based on material rewards. While the periphery constitutes a clear ‘tournament system’ of career development (Rosenbaum, 1989), career management of the core aims at a ‘human capital’ model.
(Barney and Lawrence, 1989). Therefore, a network organisation is able to use radically different approaches to career development at the same time: psychological and transactional contracts, and also 'tournament' and 'human capital' models.

Network systems enable the development of mobility between the core and periphery. On the one hand, recruitment to the core can be conducted through peripheral groups of individuals. Although core work does not have peripheral equivalents, peripheral workers who have contractual relationships with the core are still familiar with the peculiarities of a specific core job. On the other hand, core staff can be seconded to the periphery or move there permanently. As functional flexibility and knowledge of different fields are required of the core, an institution can only support movement between core and periphery in both directions. Such a two-sided mobility can enhance relationships between different parts of a network. Networks operate more effectively when member organisations voluntarily behave as if they were all part of a broader organisation sharing common objectives and rewards, career development included.

Management of careers can be very complex in network organisations where different personnel policies are developed and their interrelations managed. No universal rules exist which can be applied to every member or organisation over a long period of time. Instead, organisations constantly revise their career policies in order to fit in with their environments. Networks require continual enhancement if they are to operate smoothly and effectively.
Chapter 3  Individual approaches to careers

The counterpart to organisational career management is individual career planning, describing the personal efforts made by individuals to advance their own career goals, which may or may not coincide with those set by their organisations. Individual career planning concerns career choices and compromises, job and career changes, satisfaction or dissatisfaction with careers. Individual careers have been mainly researched by psychologists with the aim of providing individual career counselling.

The concept of an individual career can be examined from two different perspectives, described by Hughes (1937). He distinguishes between objective and subjective careers. The objective career is a series of positions or offices (statuses) that a person holds over time. An objective individual career is publicly observable and definable; it is the way the person's career is perceived by the public at large. An objective career involves extrinsic measures such as occupational grouping, responsibility, pay and prestige. Other indicators, which are used by outsiders when measuring achievement, are the type of employer and the relationship of the position to top management. By contrast, a subjective career is an individual's view of his or her career experience: `the moving perspective in which the person sees his [sic] life as a whole and interprets the meaning of his various attributes, actions and the things that happen to him' (Hughes, 1937, p. 403). The subjective individual career can only be understood in terms of the individual's own frame of reference. It refers to intrinsic measures such as satisfaction in the job, interests and feelings about occupational environments. The subjective career of a particular person involves experiences, hopes, accomplishments, fulfilment and expectations. Viewing careers this way allows people to see the possibilities for challenge and growth in the subjective career, which may be more difficult in the case of an objective career.

The subjective career is generally the individual's own interpretation of his or her career situation. The objective career refers to institutional – organisational or societal – interpretations of the same career situation. This dual focus, on both the internal and external, provides a good framework for looking at the links between individuals and
organisations. Although the structure of careers is a very important issue for the civil service in different countries, only the objective career has been given attention in studies of the civil service and public institutions. Analysis of subjective careers has been of secondary importance in the research into, and practical management, of institutional careers or civil service systems. Awareness of individual career theories, individual career planning and compromises, the role of a career in an individual’s life, sources of job satisfaction and reasons for career moves can be used to optimise efforts in building up institutional career systems or developing internal labour markets.

Chapter 3 provides an overview of how studies of individual careers have contributed to the understanding of careers in general. Similarly to the studies of institutional careers, the majority of studies of individual careers are based on the research of Americans employed by large organisations. Individual careers have been more systematically studied than institutional careers, which has led to the development of different schools of individual career theorists described in the first section of the chapter. This is followed by the examination of individual career planning and development, emphasising the importance of individual responsibility for career development. Career commitment and satisfaction are important elements of subjective careers, which are difficult to analyse ‘objectively’. For example, not all people are interested in promotion, as assumed in the ‘objective’ structuring of ILMs. The chapter concludes with an analysis of the diversity of careers, by demonstrating that individual career needs and interests can be very different.

Career theories from an individual perspective

Holland's theory of career development is one of the most widely used career theories; it was an important landmark in the study of careers from a psychological perspective at the time when it was developed in the 1960s. It deals with the factors influencing career choice and is based on the concept of congruence, or the fit between the individual and the environment. Holland (1973) sees vocational interests as an expression of personality and believes that 'people search for environments that will let them exercise their skills and abilities, express their attitudes and problems and roles' (1973, p. 14). Holland (1958, p. 336) argues that occupations represent a way of life, an environment rather than a set of isolated work functions or skills. Focusing on the choice or series of choices made by a 'developed' person in a 'developed' situation, Holland (1966; 1973) assumes a dynamic quality in occupational choice, viewing it as a process in which people seek environments which are congruent with their personalities. An individual's behaviour is determined by the interaction between personality and environment.

However, both individuals and environments change over time. A person's interests, individual needs, and environmental options change with age, family status, and other factors. Thus, an initially congruent career choice may become incongruent, either because of changing circumstances or changes in an individual. In Holland's theory, a person is viewed as a relatively stable entity who moves in and out of environments rationally, only when the perceived fit is no longer optimal. Holland (1966) assumes that 'developed' people make choices in 'developed' situations. The theory does not therefore, adequately cover less consciously made career choices and more unstable and ambiguous environments. Holland's theory corresponds to conventional career theories, which assume predictable, measurable and stable environments. This was a typical perception of the world when his theory was developed in the 1960s. It can also be said that Holland's theory reflects a relatively narrow dimension of the person: confined to his or her interests. Wants or needs are not part of the theory. In addition, because it considers only the person and the work environment, Holland's theory cannot fully explain career decisions; it does not take into consideration other factors, such as labour market, institutional career policies and family needs, which may substantially influence career decisions.
Van Maanen (1977, p. 5) argues that, in the individual approach to careers, two classes of theories exist. One class is called the differentialist view and can be represented by Holland's theory. This perspective places primary emphasis on the diversity of talents, abilities and psychological endowments of individuals. Differentialists have concentrated, by and large, on searching for personality correlates of occupation. In contrast, another class of theories deals more with a developmental perspective introduced by a well-known psychologist, Super (1975). His view implies that occupational choice is not something which occurs at a single point in time, but rather represents an evolving sequence of individual decisions. Super's theory (1975, p. 21) is based on the idea that career development progresses through a series of stages. Super (1981) argues that people differ in their abilities and personalities, needs, values, interests, traits and self-concepts. Individuals are qualified, by virtue of these characteristics, for a number of occupations: vocational preferences and competencies, the situations in which people live and work, and hence their self-concepts, change with time and experience. This makes career choice and adjustment a continuous process.

While Holland concentrated solely on the work role, without considering the other roles that an individual has to fulfil, Super et al. (1996, p. 128) claim that the work role, albeit critical in contemporary society, is only one among many roles that individuals occupy. A person's multiple roles interact to shape each other reciprocally. Thus, individuals make decisions about work-role behaviour, such as occupational choice and organisational commitment, within the circumstances imposed by the arrangement of social positions that give meaning and focus to their lives. Accordingly, the same job holds different meanings for two individuals who live in different situations. Super (1981, p. 37) also emphasises the importance of situational influences such as geographic, historic, social and economic conditions in which the individual functions. He argues that 'the individual pursuing a career may be viewed as being in the centre of the scene with the situation around pushing him up or pressing down' (1981, p. 37). Thus, Super's term of 'situation' is much broader than Holland's 'environment'. Accordingly, Super's theory allows for a much more dynamic approach to a person's life and tries to explain career choices from a more
complex perspective. However, it does not consider labour market issues in depth or institutional matters which may, in turn, influence individual careers.

The theories of Holland and Super are characteristic of the period when they were developed. They cannot be analysed separately from the broader context of society and, particularly, employment practices of that time. In the 1970s, it was much more common to pursue a career with one employer or in one area of activity. Compared to Holland and Super, Gottfredson (1981) expresses a more complex view of careers. One reason may be that she was the first sociologist to develop a comprehensive theory of individual careers which enabled her to combine sociological and psychological perspectives. According to Gottfredson’s model of circumscription and compromise (1981), specific occupational aspirations arise through the progressive elimination of alternatives. Gottfredson (1996, p. 184) claims that adolescents and adults distinguish occupations along a few major dimensions: masculinity/femininity, occupational prestige level (overall desirability) and field of work. Gottfredson’s theory is concerned with both the content of career aspirations and their course of development. Therefore, it combines the concerns of trait and factor theories, such as Holland’s, and those of developmental theories, such as Super’s. Gottfredson’s theory differs significantly from others considered so far in that it views career development as an attempt to implement, primarily, social factors and, only secondarily, psychological factors. The theory thus emphasises the public, social aspects (gender, social class, intelligence) rather than the more private, personal elements (values, personality, family), which are the principal focus of other psychological career theories.

The vocational behaviour of individuals has been conceptualised by theories which form a continuum: from specific career choice (for example, Holland’s theory), at one end, to life-span career (for example, Super’s theory) at the other. Gottfredson’s theory of circumscription and compromise is an approach that attempts to integrate these two poles of the theoretical spectrum. However, none of the above-mentioned career theories pays much attention to broader social factors, such as situation in the national labour market, the economic pressures, availability of particular jobs, creation of new jobs and institutional influences on careers. In addition, none of these
Individual career theories has been analysed in the context of civil services and their different career models.

**Individual career planning and development**

Attitudes to the responsibility for career management changed radically in the 1980s and 90s in Europe and the US. Before the 1980s, the common practice was to rely on organisations to develop careers and move people through institutional career paths. This was especially characteristic of those public and private organisations which had developed well-structured ILMs and career systems. Kerckhoff (1976) argues that individuals were 'allocated' into slots or positions in the world of work rather than making well-informed, deliberately planned choices. Once 'allocated', it was often difficult for individuals to switch to another 'slot' or influence their own careers in other ways. This corresponds to a situationally determined career described by Watts (1981, p. 242), who distinguishes between situationally determined careers and self-determined careers. The situationally determined career is one where job changes are due entirely to economic or other situational forces, with no sign of any individual motivation or direction. The self-determined career is the opposite to this, where significant job changes have resulted not from environmental pressures but from personal desires for new experiences in work or leisure, or simply for economic gain.

Since the 1970s, the understanding of careers has changed with the recognition that individuals can take more responsibility for their own careers. Although this attitude started to develop in career theories in the 1970s, it reached organisational and individual practice only in the 1990s. Countries that have developed open systems in their civil services (the Nordic states, the Netherlands, the UK, Switzerland, Iceland, the US) increasingly rely on individual responsibility for careers. Hall (1976) has described careers as 'protean'. The term is taken from the name of the Greek god Proteus who could change shape at will, from fire to a wild boar to a tree and so forth. He argues: 'The protean career is a process which the person, not the organisation, is managing. It consists of all the person's varied experiences in education, training,
work in several organisations, changes in occupational field and so forth. The protean career is not what happens to the person in any one organisation.’ (Hall, 1976, p. 201)

Individuals are responsible for initiating their own career planning. It is up to them to identify their skills, values and interests and to seek information about career options. Rose (1989, p. 226) argues that individuals are entrepreneurs for themselves, shaping their own lives through the choices they make among the options open to them. This means that it is no longer possible to blame an organisation and its rules for unmet career expectations or to expect a guaranteed career path to be laid out for an individual. Hirsch (1987) has noticed the increasing tendency of individuals to protect themselves against dependency upon organisations. Career investment through continuous training and the acquisition of new experiences and contacts provides an alternative to organisational dependency. If individuals count on the fact that they are responsible for their own careers, the significance of the subjective career over the objective career becomes more important.

Self-management of a career assumes the development and implementation of a personal career strategy. Hall (1976) suggests that people are likely to experience psychological success when they are able to set challenging goals for themselves, determine their own means of attaining goals and are successful achieving them. Hall (1971) claims that attainment of career goals or career satisfaction shows the ability to act effectively upon the environment and, therefore, leads to enhanced self-esteem at work, which will consequently enhance career commitment and job involvement. Gould (1979) finds that individuals who do more extensive career planning also achieve a higher rating on a career effectiveness scale for salary, career involvement, identity and resolution. There are, therefore, a number of reasons for individuals to adopt a proactive orientation to their careers and to perceive career planning as an ongoing process if they are to have satisfying careers. However, being responsible for one’s career may become a broader social problem for people who do not show much initiative, or who are not ambitious, energetic, dynamic, practical or eager constantly to look for new job opportunities. Some people may, for example, be better off leaving their career management to their employers.
One of the most important decisions in an individual’s life is a career choice. People make more or less conscious career choices. Individual career choice represents the sum of multiple inputs and experiences, including type of education, work experience, career counselling and guidance, access to and availability of jobs, and personal connections. For example, it has been found by Watts et al. (1981) that the occupation of parents, which generally determines social status and access to different opportunities, is indicative of the level and the type of career which the child will enter at the end of schooling. The term ‘civil service families’ is used to describe the similarity of careers within families. However, family influences in career choice may be weaker in societies undergoing rapid social change.

As career choice is initiated by a person where institutional factors may have only indirect effect, institutions may affect job choice rather than career choice. All career theories ultimately try to predict occupational fit, and in that sense are all person-environment oriented. Holland’s theory has the capacity to predict the ease with which a choice is identified, how well it fits the individual, and the persistence and stability of the choice once implemented. Super’s theory has room for a number of career choices in a person’s life according to the developmental stages of the individual. And Gottfredson’s theory considers the broader social environment of career choices.

A career choice is different from and broader than a job choice. Individuals seek jobs for reasons other than those which prompt them to choose careers. A job signifies a narrower, and possibly a temporary decision which takes place within a person’s career parameters. Consequently, public sector motivation, if it exerts any influence at all, does so in the context of shaping broader career goals rather than specific job choices. In countries with career systems, entry to the civil service can be considered as a career and a job choice at the same time. A job in the civil service is characterised by being that of a civil servant rather than that of a member of a particular profession, as described in Chapter 1. In open systems, however, organisational entry is related to a job rather than a career choice. It can be argued that, with the decline of lifetime careers within a single organisation or system, as shown in Chapter 2, the first job choice is becoming less important, since flexible employment practices in open
systems can accommodate both job and career changes. A person's decision to enter a particular organisation or a particular field can, however, be an important factor for future career achievement. The organisation's potential for growth may affect the individual's career progress over a substantial period of time. Likewise, some professions may develop faster than others and may provide more career opportunities within professional boundaries.

For an individual, organisational advancement may be the defining characteristic of a career, a reward, a stage in life, or a goal. The fact that a person holds a specific job within a specific organisation, however, cannot be readily attributed to a career choice made years previously or to any other single factor. The motives for a person continuing working in a certain position, may be quite distinct from those she started with. Although Holland (1958, 1959, 1966) believed that people choose careers for their whole lives, Gottfredson (1981, 1996), Hall (1971, 1976, 1985, 1990) and Super (1975, 1981, 1990) have considered broader developmental, situational and social factors in career development. They find that motives which may make certain jobs or professions look attractive change over time.

A number of authors have emphasised the importance of early years in individual careers. Several career theorists (Hall, 1976, Super, 1980) argue that the experience gained earlier in a career will shape attitudes and behaviour later on. Hall (1990, p. 429) finds that the first year in an organisation is a critical period for learning; the more challenging the person's initial job assignment is, the more successful (in terms of salary and promotions) the person will be five to eight years later. Nicholson and Arnold (1989) demonstrate that graduates may only realise after a number of years that an earlier missed opportunity has set them on an irrecoverably lower career trajectory. Larwood and Gattiker (1987) have found in their study of American corporate hierarchies that advancement opportunities are facilitated by entering the career ladder at the highest possible level. Mergenhagen (1991) claims that the greatest movement across occupations occurs during the earliest years of a person's work history. Younger workers make fewer career-specific investments that may lock them into a particular occupation or career path. DeHoog and Whitaker (1990, p. 367) also confirm that younger public managers are more likely to leave than older
managers. Rosenbaum (1984) argues that promotions are more frequent at the beginning of a career. Similarly, Nicholson (1993) claims, on the basis of the study of 4,000 American managers from various levels of pyramid structures, that promotion opportunities diminish rapidly with the time spent in an organisation. He finds that early stalling is fatal in a tournament system: being a loser diminishes chances for all types of job moves (both internal and external). Nicholson argues that this is the main reason why most clearly plateaued people have less desire to quit than other groups. Promotion not only leads to higher salaries but opens the prospects of further advancement within the organisation as well as beyond organisational boundaries: the rich may get richer in such an open tournament system.

Kanter (1977) proposes that people who have few career opportunities behave differently from people with more career opportunities, where opportunity relates to expectations and future prospects for mobility and growth. She claims that those with high opportunity levels have high aspirations, are more attracted to high-powered people, are competitive, and are more committed to organisations and to their careers. They value their competence and become impatient or disaffected if they do not keep moving. By contrast, those in low opportunity positions limit their aspirations, often seek satisfaction in activities outside work, and have a horizontal rather than a vertical orientation. They find ways of creating a sense of efficacy and worth through personal relationships, resign themselves to staying put, and are concerned with extrinsic rewards. Those with high opportunity behave in ways that generate more opportunities, which in turn produce further inducements to prove their high aspirations. This means that the advantages which allowed employees to move rapidly to their present positions will generally continue to benefit them in the future. By contrast, a supervisor may interpret an individual’s slow progress in the past as indicating limited future potential.

The career development of individuals may take different shapes. A linear career serves as a classical model of career development. Driver (1980) has described a linear career as one which reflects the idea that the career is a progression of upward moves within a field or organisation. There may be some moves across organisations or fields, but the main idea is that of steady advancement or upward mobility. A linear
career means that an individual makes an early commitment to a career field and holds it for life. Minor moves may occur representing professional development, but no major shifts. Driver (1980) identifies a spiral career. Here, the career is seen as a cyclical process with major changes every seven to ten years. The person becomes established in one area, becomes bored, explores other areas and then moves on as typical in open systems. Spiral patterns of careers can become more common as organisations become flatter and organisational change increases. A linear career, by contrast, is more rigid, less adaptable to change and provides fewer advancement opportunities in lower hierarchies.

Career changes do not correspond to the idea of a linear career which is based on steady advancement within an organisation with no horizontal or unexpected vertical moves. However, whereas spiral careers can accommodate career moves, boundaryless careers expect people to change careers, jobs or employers. As the number of career changes is growing, much attention has been paid to the positive and negative effects of career transitions. The extent to which people look forward to a transition and the assessment of the gain or loss from the transition are likely to be dependent on the magnitude and desirability of the event. Nicholson (1987) and Louis (1980) have postulated that the greater the degree of difference between the old and the new roles, the more the 'transitioner' has to cope with and the more potentially disruptive the transition is. Bruce and Scott (1994) claim that transition outcomes range from highly desirable factors (improved job performance and greater organisational adjustment) to some negative outcomes (inadequate role adjustment and strain).

Antonovsky (cited in Bruce and Scott, 1994) suggests that the individual's sense of coherence plays a part in a career change. People with a strong sense of coherence are capable of perceiving both the loss and the potential gains from a transition. According to Bruce and Scott (1994, p. 35), controllable events are those over which the individual has a determining influence on their occurrence, their speed of occurrence and their outcomes. Control over the transition may limit undesirable consequences because the transitioner has some influence over the 'stressor'. In a similar fashion, events which are voluntary are likely to be viewed as having potential
positive career or personal gains for the transitioner. This speaks for the importance of individual responsibility for careers rather than organisational control over career development.

The traditional notion of a career as something that occurs within a single organisation or that consists of an obvious sequence of positions is increasingly questioned today. Levinson (1986, p. 7) has noted that people spend almost half their lives exploring possibilities for change in the self and the world. New jobs and new careers are appearing, for example in information technology, public relations and telecommunications. Since organisations have limited advancement opportunities as demonstrated in Chapter 2, careers quickly plateau for most people. Sometimes the only way up is to get out of one organisation and into another. The best way to advance a career is to change jobs. Individuals entering the labour market today will most likely undergo several career and job changes regardless of their initial desire for a one-job, one-career life.

It is arguable whether mobile careers with frequent changes facilitate a more rapid accumulation of skills than bounded careers. People seeking to maximise career opportunities outside their present employment are likely to discover a greater number of opportunities. The task and context-specialised individual is more vulnerable to social and technological change and organisational or professional boundaries, and thus more likely to experience plateaued careers and/or loss of employment. Less vulnerable are those people who have pursued opportunities for cross-training and retraining and have thus accumulated more flexible skills and knowledge. Therefore, boundaryless careers facilitate the accumulation of skills and experience which cannot be achieved by non-mobile organisational careers. Besides, careers can be characterised not only as progressions of work experiences but, increasingly, as the accumulation of information and knowledge. This change in focus shifts emphasis away from work experience per se and toward the information and knowledge that is created as a result of work experiences.

Work arrangements in the 1990s are more flexible than in traditional employment (Holland, 1958, 1959, 1966, 1973), allowing for a variety of work experience.
Although modern approaches to careers encourage career changes and accept career interruptions, the above-mentioned problems of career transitions are still of concern. Moreover, a number of new problems arise. People who move out of the work force may risk their skills becoming obsolete, leaving them with limited future opportunities. One way to experience psychological success over the ups-and-downs of career changes is to cultivate adaptability. Hall and Associates (1986) refer to this as a 'meta-skill', since it enables people to accommodate to new tasks and relationships and to incorporate new roles and responsibilities into their personal identities. Schein (1977, 1978) focuses on the development of career anchors as a means of developing individual careers and reducing risks associated with career changes. Career anchors are viewed as a syndrome of motives, values and self-perceived competencies which functions to guide and constrain an individual's entire career. Career anchor is the term Schein uses to describe the occupational self-concept. Career changes may take place on the basis of individuals' career anchors: individuals develop their employer-specialised qualifications as well as knowledge and skills of particular professional career anchors. This enables people to be highly valued by their present employers and to develop potential for cross-organisational movements at the same time.

*Career commitment and satisfaction*

Both career satisfaction and commitment are important elements of subjective careers. Individual commitment contains two broad aspects of: organisational commitment, based on the degree of attachment to and identification with the organisation; and work (career) commitment, involving the relative importance of the work role to an individual. Work or career commitment is a broader term than organisational commitment, since the latter depends mostly on a specific organisation. Work commitment signifies a generalised attachment to work and career. Hall (1971) first made the distinction between commitment to a job, an organisation, and a career in the early 1970s. He suggested that these are independent constructs: for instance, a person can be weakly committed to his/her current job and to the organisation in which s/he works, yet strongly committed to his/her profession. Commitment can be
studied at several relational levels: commitment to the organisation, to the specific job, to the supervisor, to the career and to the idea of work itself.

Material and solidary incentives described in Chapter 2 are closely linked with the commitment of officials. There is a difference between exchange-based commitment and moral or psychological commitment. March and Simon (1958) argue that exchange commitment refers to utilitarian gains from the employment relationship. The organisation provides inducements to the employee in return for contributions from the employee. As long as an official is satisfied with the inducements/contribution ratio, s/he is committed to the organisation. Thus the exchange-based commitment is closely related to the availability of material incentives. Psychological commitment, however, is not so directly related to classical solidary incentives; rather, it aims at the flexible use of different non-material incentives. Psychological commitment has been defined as non-instrumental, affective attraction to the organisation by the employee (Buchanan, 1974). It refers to identification with organisational goals and values. Several characteristics have been identified as elements of psychological commitment, including job challenge (Buchanan, 1974), supervisor-subordinate relations (Katz and Kahn, 1978), promotion opportunities (Landau and Hammer, 1986; Gaertner and Nollen, 1989), and the importance placed on the needs of individuals (Buchanan, 1974). At the time of a movement from closed to open systems in the civil service, the commitment to the civil service as such may decline. Although the job system supports flexibility in organisations, it places more emphasis on exchange relationships between officials and institutions than does a career system. Therefore, it is very important to develop the above-mentioned forms of psychological commitment in contemporary organisations in order to promote a more solid, stable and reliable basis for the commitment of civil servants.

Opportunities for promotion represent a key work incentive. Promotion is valued by individuals because it can improve earnings and status, and provide new challenges. Promotion can be interpreted by the individual as evidence of organisational support. Gaertner and Nollen (1989) argue, on the basis of their study of American private and public organisations, that psychological commitment is higher among employees who
believe they are being treated as resources to be developed rather than commodities to buy and sell. In turn, if people believe that the organisation is committed to them, their attachment to the organisation will be greater. Gaertner and Nollen (1989), therefore, claim that promotion from within the organisation and employment security are positively related to psychological commitment. People who believe there are internal career opportunities and who see that the organisation is trying to provide employment security are more committed to the organisation than those who do not believe the organisation is trying to provide secure, career-oriented employment. Gaertner and Nollen (1989) conclude that employees who have longer service with an organisation are more committed to the organisation than other employees; longevity per se contributes to psychological commitment. As also noted by Pfeffer and Cohen (1984, p. 553), both the employee and the organisation benefit from work arrangements that have 'good continuity properties'. Individuals with more tenure may have stronger identification with the values and goals of the organisation and more willingness to behave with organisational goals in mind.

Job satisfaction is an intrinsic and motivational factor in a job; it is relevant for an individual's subjective view of career success. Locke (1969) has described job satisfaction as a function of the perceived relationship between what one wants from one's job and what one perceives it as offering. Cherniss (1991) believes there is a significant correlation between job satisfaction and career commitment on the basis of a study of American public service professionals. Career commitment can be enhanced by a challenging work experience, positive professional development experience, a supportive organisational climate and interesting work. Katz (1977) suggests at the high time of ILMs in the 1970s, that work satisfaction is more associated with promotion fairness than with skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy or feedback from the job. According to Katz, enriched roles, together with appropriate career paths (both horizontal and vertical), are more likely to achieve and sustain the desired level of work satisfaction. Following on the conclusions of Katz, individuals who work within ILMs might be expected to display higher levels of work and organisational commitment and satisfaction than people in non-ILMs. ILMs, characterised by considerable job security and elaborate job ladders (Althauser and Kalleberg, 1981), have been identified as extremely effective
commitment-inducing mechanisms by many authors (Edwards, 1979; Rosenbaum, 1984; Lincoln and Kalleberg, 1985; Gaertner and Nollen, 1989; Loscocco, 1990).

Although the evidence can be found of a positive correlation between individual satisfaction and commitment, and promotion opportunities, the presence of highly formalised ILMs and employment security can also be sources of dissatisfaction. According to Chemiss and Kane (1987), such factors as autonomy, variety, feedback from the job, and task significance are strongly correlated with job satisfaction, particularly for professionals of a particular field who usually have a strong need for intrinsic fulfilment. During the 1970s, promotion became so widely accepted as a key work incentive that individuals may still view it as an entitlement which heightens their frustration when it is denied to them. This particularly affects traditional career systems where promotion has been routine for civil servants, and the public service has, therefore, been regarded as a good place for advancement. On the one hand, Lane and Wolf (1990, p. 128) argue that careers became the mechanism through which self-actualisation was possible in a bureaucracy. On the other hand, diminishing upward mobility in flattening bureaucracies makes public sector motivation particularly vulnerable. Kanter (1977) claims that, unless organisational tenure is directly tied to upward mobility, it will not enhance commitment to work. Therefore, flattening structures, slow-down in promotions and career plateauing may worsen commitment and morale. In cases where organisations are unable to follow ‘career contracts’ in career systems and provide their members with regular movements upwards, individuals may experience dissatisfaction with both their jobs and careers.

Most decisions on career changes involve making compromises. The need to compromise can be attributed to the fact that characteristics of the attainable occupational alternatives do not necessarily match the individual’s image of an ideal career. Rhodes and Doeringer (1983) propose a model to explain determinants and processes of career change. In their model, the motivation to change comes primarily from job or career dissatisfaction. Thus, any determinant of dissatisfaction can be a cause of career change. For example, a study carried out among American young civil servants by Naff and Van Rijn (1990) shows that an overwhelming majority of young professionals believed that the civil service did not present enough opportunities for
career advancement. Moreover, they ranked ‘desire to improve career opportunities’ as the major reason for leaving government service, well ahead of other reasons such as the desire to earn more money, or to find more meaningful work; poor morale, insufficient use of personal skills and abilities.

DeHoog and Whitaker (1990) distinguish between ‘push’ and ‘pull’ factors in their research into why American city managers change jobs. Their work suggests that turnover may not necessarily be due mainly to dissatisfaction with the job experience or with more attractive offers from outside. It is most likely the combination of the two. ‘Push’ factors include being made redundant, being asked to resign or retire early, being made so uncomfortable that the individual chooses to resign, an unsupportive work environment, and work dissatisfaction. ‘Pull’ factors are linked to career advancement, salary increase, more prestige (organisation or the job itself), the desire to be part of or to manage a larger unit (sometimes with a broader or taller ILM), the desire to experience something new, a change of work culture, family reasons or simply a personal challenge. The motivation behind career moves may not be more money or higher status, but instead can be the opportunity to learn new things or use previous knowledge, which cannot be applied in the current work. These factors make people more likely to be open to new job offers, more likely to receive them, and more likely to accept them.

Turnover is a complex issue which is influenced by structural variables such as the labour market, personal and non-work characteristics. Of particular interest is the way in which the rules governing movement within and between labour markets affect the commitment of individuals who are at different career stages. On the one hand, March and Simon (1958) claim that people who have been with the organisation the longest have built up the greatest investment, heightening their organisational commitment. On the other hand, Lane and Wolf (1990, p. 141) argue that individuals may come to the job with an interest in investing themselves in it, but what they find on the job may either enhance or dampen their work ethics. Hall (1990, p. 433) argues that career success not only breeds success but can also lead to failure in the long run by stifling exploration and change. Thus, the problem associated with career advancement can be the routine which develops through earlier experiences of
success. With no place to go and discomfort with the place in which they are, people can lose motivation. The disappointment and feelings of failure connected with the recognition of having a plateaued career lead to a number of negative consequences for both plateaued persons and their organisations. Typical consequences of plateauing highlighted in research include stress, intention to quit, hostility towards the organisation, lowered aspirations, withdrawal, and goal displacement (Stout et al., 1988). Having a plateaued career can lead to a lack of incentives to keep up with current issues in the organisation, or to develop the skills necessary to meet additional tasks on the job.

The age distribution within an organisation produces an implicit career timetable, by which people may use their perceptions to determine whether their careers are on or off schedule. A person's standing in a status hierarchy is related to the perceived or actual norms for his or her age group. It means that, for any career level, people can be identified who are ahead of schedule, on schedule, or behind schedule. Stewman and Konda (1983) argue that the environment created by the actual age distribution of an organisation is what influences people. Lawrence (1984) claims that the longer individuals remain in the same job, the more likely they are to perceive themselves as 'behind time'. Therefore, whenever people perceive themselves as 'behind the schedule', they can be considered as 'plateaued'. In a study of managers between the ages of 35–39 in British private sector companies, Sofer (1970, p. 273–4) found high sensitivity to the career timetable. Managers were clearly aware of where they should be in their careers at given ages and showed considerable concern if they were 'behind the schedule'. This finding shows that in addition to being well aware of age expectations in their organisations, people are concerned about how their progress fits with their career timetables.

It has been widely debated whether public sector employees have different motives regarding their work expectations in comparison to people working in the private sector. A number of authors (Frederickson and Hart, 1985; Zussman and Jabes, 1989; Lane and Wolf, 1990; Perry and Wise, 1990; Gabris and Simo, 1995) claim that there are specific motivational factors which affect civil servants. The question has been discussed for decades as to whether public sector employees have a higher need to
serve the public and a lower need for monetary rewards. For example, Perry and Wise (1990) suggest that people choosing public sector occupations are motivated by career needs which are substantially different from those associated with the private sector. Public motivation consists of the desire to serve the public interest and loyalty to the government or belief in social equity. Lane and Wolf (1990) confirm that that the opportunity to participate in the public service is a powerful motivator for public sector workers.

Motivation of civil servants is affected by the mix of more complex factors than motivation of private sector employees. The social and political environment of the civil service shapes organisational culture and directly affects the level of enthusiasm that individuals bring to their jobs. Motivation of civil servants is dependent on national factors such as the perceived importance of public administration by the public or the status of civil servants in society, which differ from country to country. Societal attitudes about work in the public sector and about people who perform that work have a significant impact on how public servants perceive the value of their occupations. For example, Perry and Miller (1991, p. 562) suggest that individual motivation is responsive not only to individual rewards and direction, but also to contextual factors, such as public approval and agency performance. Therefore, public confidence has a significant effect on individual motivation. Relations between civil servants and the public affect competence, performance and motivation. In addition, public confidence develops as a result of the intersection of politics and administration, not just administrative performance alone. Therefore, the quality of politicians is significantly and directly related to public confidence in the civil service.

In many respects, motivational needs are similar in the public and private sectors. For instance, advancement through promotion is an important motivational factor in both public and private sectors. This includes increased recognition, improved self-esteem and willingness to take on more responsibility. Gabris and Simo (1995) suggest that public, non-profit and private sector employees are very similar with regard to needs such as monetary rewards, advancement, meaningful work, feeling wanted, making a difference, having social responsibility, taking risks and having job security. They argue that the lower one goes in any organisational hierarchy, the higher the
probability the most powerful motivational forces will be group relationships, concern for monetary incentives, job security, fringe benefits, decent treatment by management and good working conditions. If differences do exist between public and private sector motivation, they are most likely to occur in key decision-making and professional management positions high in the hierarchy. Therefore, Gabris and Simo (1995) claim that public sector motivation, if it does exist, probably exerts only a slight influence on career choice. Consequently, in the larger scheme of things, public sector motivation may be so inconsequential in terms of why people initially choose and continue working for the public sector that, even if it could be identified and measured, the value added by this knowledge would be superfluous. It can also be argued that, if it were possible to identify people imbued with public sector motivation, and to use this knowledge in recruitment and promotion decisions, it would largely homogenise the public work force by bringing together people who think alike, and thereby undermine the internal diversity that is crucial for creative thinking and innovation.

Diversity of careers

Career advancement is one of the most important criteria people use to evaluate quality of life and to assess their sense of fulfilment. Individual approaches to careers focus on subjective careers, which means that a career is first of all an individual accomplishment. Thus, regardless of its shape, a career must be considered through the eyes of the individual. Poole et al. (1993) argue that subjective criteria of success are more important predictors of individually perceived success than objective criteria. Individuals feel differently about their accomplishments compared to what outsiders might expect. Individual perceptions of career achievement are based upon interpretations of events or situations within their contexts. Individuals develop success criteria for self-evaluation from comparisons with peers, relatives, friends, supervisors and so forth. The formulation of these criteria is also influenced by the individual's own position in society. Consequently, objective career advancement and individual perceptions of career achievement (subjective career) are not always identical.
People in organisations are not necessarily oriented towards hierarchical rewards. Individuals may want other rewards from their careers than simply promotion upon promotion. Time-off, a challenging job, an opportunity to learn and develop new skills may be just as important for both men and women. Research by Derr (1986) suggests that people have different orientations to career success. For those concerned with getting ahead, the primary objective is upward mobility. Others seek to be secure or strive to be free and autonomous. Finally, there are those who want to balance and combine personal and family life with career achievement. Although these career orientations may represent individual differences in temperament, aspiration and needs, Derr’s research suggests that career priorities can also change in response to life experiences. During different career stages, individuals may change jobs, relocate, become more or less willing to get promoted and express more or less satisfaction or commitment to their jobs or organisations. This contradicts Holland’s (1958) theory, which assumes that individuals make only one or a few choices in a career or are consistently conveyed or impelled by personal characteristics toward an occupation which is, in some way, appropriate to their personalities. However, an increasing number of researchers (Super, 1975; Hall, 1976; Van Maanen, 1977; Gottfredson, 1981) agree that various social and situational factors may influence career choices even more than personal characteristics.

Definitions of work, non-work and careers are changing all over the world. Mirvis and Hall (1994) argue that before the 1980s and even in the 90s, transitions from home to work, from one assignment to another, from one organisation to another looked abrupt, frenzied and fractious. The tendency was to associate a career with paid work and to draw sharp distinctions between people’s work and non-work lives, which was and sometimes still is, to a large extent, based on the male understanding of full-time continuous careers. However, a broad understanding exists among contemporary career theorists that work careers can be analysed only by understanding a person within the total life space, including the many roles the individual plays in life. In the early 1980s, Sonnefeld and Kotter (1982) developed a model of careers which includes three basic areas of a person’s life space that can change over time: work experiences, non-work experiences, such as family or
hobbies, and individual personality characteristics. These three areas are interdependent: aspects of each influence the other two. Several advantages accrue from this career concept. Firstly, it opens up new ways of thinking about work over time. And secondly, it enlarges what can be called the career space. A more elastic concept of a career acknowledges that work and non-work roles overlap and jointly shape a person’s identity and sense of self. Openness to contradiction and flexible movement becomes a major asset in life choices and transitions, because it gives individuals the greatest number of options for responding to their internal needs and to the external environment.

Individual career patterns are dependent on such factors as age, gender, education, skills and ability. For example, Bielby and Baron (1983) argue that as people’s level of education (also skills and knowledge) increases in developed countries, their mobility between organisations increases, thereby decreasing job tenure and organisation tenure. Age is an important determinant of career opportunities in organisations. In the developmental approach (theories of Super; 1975, 1981, 1990; and Hall, 1971, 1976, 1985, 1990), age and life-career stages serve as central themes. A number of studies focus on differences in career issues caused by age. For example, Doering et al. (1983) argue that older workers have greater needs for security and affiliation, higher levels of internal motivation and job involvement, and less intention of leaving the organisation. Bielby and Baron (1983) and DeHoog and Whitaker (1990) claim that younger individuals tend to be less attached to their jobs, organisations and careers than older people.

People’s needs and interests vary according to their gender, marital status, living arrangements, and whether or not they have children. Many authors (Martin and Hanson, 1986; Ornstein and Isabella, 1990; Guy, 1993; Ezra and Deckman, 1996) claim that women respond differently to careers. Larwood and Gattiker (1987) propose that any understanding of the careers of men and women requires consideration not only of family and competing demands external to the work environment, but also of phenomena that may distinguish between men and women. Ornstein and Isabella (1990) argue that the career stages identified by Super simply do not apply to women. They claim that Super’s model of career development was
constructed for men whose careers are fundamentally continuous, beginning after formal education and ending in retirement. Few interruptions occur in this pattern for men over their careers. Several authors (Larwood and Gattiker, 1987; Guy, 1993) have shown that more women move ahead irregularly, rather than gradually and systematically, as is more common for men. Women's careers are less predictable than those of men. DiPrete and Soule (1988), in turn, claim that people with irregular employment status advance more slowly than full-time employees. The study of women's career development may, therefore, be inherently more complex because of the differences in socialisation, performance of dual roles and the more complicated combination of attitudes, role expectations and behaviours it entails.

Part-time work is becoming more popular among men and women in both private and public sectors. For example, between 1987 and 1997 the number of non-industrial part-time staff in the British civil service increased from 24,900 to 55,000, Although the number of part-time staff is generally greater at junior levels, increasing numbers of senior staff are also working part-time: 17% of women at Grade 6 and 7, and 12% of women in the Senior Civil Service. Men use irregular working patterns more rarely, but the number of male part-timers is also increasing (Cabinet Office, 1997). The growing number of people who work part-time indicates that people are either becoming less interested in traditional continuous and full-time careers or that there are not so many full-time permanent jobs available in the labour market as in the past. In both cases, the implication is that the importance of diverse employment opportunities is increasing.

More flexible definitions of careers give people the freedom to change their career orientations over the life course. Substantial differences in career interests and career success refer to the experience of achieving goals which are personally meaningful to the individual rather than those set by parents, colleagues, supervisors, friends, organisations or society. This concept cannot be associated with precisely defined jobs, professions, career paths or ILMs. Boundaryless careers, however, are marked by a variety of tasks corresponding to the need, periodically, to redefine professions. People integrate varied experiences into a self-picture through different work experience. The development of boundaryless careers provides new opportunities for
those who are interested in working part-time, in having temporary employment or career breaks and a high degree of career mobility. More varied work experience, in turn, helps in coping with complexity and change in a dynamic environment. People acquire new skills as they move around the boundaries of organisations and otherwise adjust to changes in the labour market. However, for some people, periodic and unpredictable changes in their employment status, and the degree of membership in an organisation (or civil service) are bound to create confusion, disruption and stress due to changing assignments, work groups, work location, and the possibility of unemployment. The likely result is fragmentation and loss of identity. The two broad groups of people can be identified in this respect: those who look forward to more frequent changes in their employment, and others who value the stability and predictability of their statuses.

Mirvis and Hall (1994, p. 367) argue that it seems likely that many factors which have supported and reinforced feelings of psychological success in careers, including job security, increasing levels of income, and the status that derives from a person’s position and employer, will be less accessible in the future. People may also have fewer stable attachments in the workplace and in mobile communities through which to gauge who they are and what they might become. Hence, individuals will have to re-examine their career aspirations and look to other sources of personal meaning to avoid career failure. Facing the unpredictable future of individual careers makes individuals ready for career and job changes rather than becoming entrenched in outdated expectations of long organisational tenure and lifetime career security.
Chapter 4  Integrating institutional and individual approaches to civil service careers

One of the main problems in research into careers has been the lack of interdisciplinarity. While psychologists have mainly focused on individual approaches to careers, sociologists and economists have often ignored the findings of psychologists and have concentrated on institutional careers. Scholars of public administration have studied civil service careers without paying much attention to research on institutional or individual approaches to careers. Thus, these fields have to a large extent each developed their own approaches to careers. Discussion of careers has rarely involved scholars from different fields and interdisciplinary perspectives have, thus, been neglected. The lack of communication between the disciplines of psychology, sociology, economics and public administration has produced a situation where career studies in different fields rarely take account of findings from other fields. The absence of credible data and of comprehensive analyses of careers contributes to problems in management of personnel and poor utilisation of resources by organisations. Viewing the world from either individual or institutional perspectives raises a few conceptual problems, but taking a view which combines both perspectives, complicates the issues. When put into the context of the public sector, which has been developed in relative isolation from the other sectors of society, the analysis would seem to become unmanageable.

Some psychologists and sociologists have tried to achieve syntheses of institutional and individual approaches to careers. Blau et al. (1956) were the first to seek to develop an interdisciplinary view of careers. They identified four personal and four social characteristics which determine occupational entry. The personal characteristics were biological conditions, personality development, socio-psychological attributes, and immediate determinants such as occupational information and values. The social characteristics were: physical or geographic conditions, historical change, socio-economic organisation, and immediate determinants, such as demand and functional and non-functional requirements. These personal and social influences were seen as meeting at the point of entry into the labour market. Subsequently, a number of
scholars, for example Hall (1976), Van Maanen (1977), Schein (1978) and Mayo (1991), have analysed careers from both individual and institutional perspectives. However, these interdisciplinary studies of careers concentrated on the private sector; much less research has been done on public sector careers. The findings from research into individual and institutional careers have, to a large extent, not been applied to civil service careers. Civil services have developed according to their own logic, which primarily derives from their traditionally closed nature as described in Chapter 1. With the opening up of civil services, the need is increasing for interdisciplinary approaches to careers to support the career development of civil servants, which requires a better understanding of complex, interrelated and diverse career models.

Previous chapters have provided an overview of thinking on careers from administrative, institutional and individual perspectives. In Chapter 4, the aim is to analyse the interdependencies of these perspectives. Firstly, development of thinking on careers is examined by distinguishing between the ‘classic’ and ‘modern’ models of careers, based on the trends in career development described in Chapters 1, 2 and 3. Secondly, a synopsis is provided of larger societal changes, which have affected both institutional and individual approaches to career theories and practical career management. In the third section, the aim is to construct a balanced view of career development, based on the integrated approach to careers, combining institutional and individual perspectives. Particular attention is paid to network organisations, as they provide flexibility and enable smooth adaptation to changes. Finally, development of civil service careers is examined with reference to changes in institutional and individual careers. In sum, Chapter 4 provides a conclusion for Part I of the thesis by emphasising the need for an interdisciplinary approach to careers.

*Development of thinking on careers*

Until the 1970s and largely also in the 80s, a career was considered mainly from an institutional point of view. Career theories were based on the observation of objective careers, without paying much attention to individual subjective careers. Thinking on careers has moved towards a more balanced view, which tends to support an
interrelated approach to career development. How individual careers developed within organisations was, and still is, largely a consequence of organisational structures and strategies which were analysed in Chapter 2. This implies that individual career patterns may take their forms as much from the structures in which they are embedded as from individual preferences and styles. However, individuals may not be satisfied with the career patterns prescribed by organisations that are, to a large extent, standardised according to thinking on objective careers. In the 1970 and 80s, as a result of the influence of the 'humanistic school' of organisational theory, the importance of individual careers increased substantially. Institutions and their managers started to admit that all individuals did not have the same career and life aspirations, and that career success depended more or less on the subjective perceptions of individuals, as found in Chapter 3. Gradually, a more balanced view of careers developed in the 1990s, which aims to match both individual and institutional interests and career needs. Therefore, the general dynamics of studies of careers has moved from purely institutional views to being influenced by individual perspectives of careers. Subsequently, institutions have increasingly considered subjective careers in order to achieve a better match between institutional and individual needs and interests.

As public sector organisations are characterised by a greater inertia than the private sector, changes in thinking on careers have been slower in the public sector and, thus, civil services in several countries are still based on the traditional institutional management of objective careers, and often on assumptions of lifetime career security within one organisation or system, as shown in Chapter 1. Therefore, practices in the past, which applied to most private sector careers, may still be valid for public sector careers. The question remains whether the public sector is so different that it has to develop careers according to its own logic, or whether civil service careers will follow the changes in the private sector after a time lag.

Not all institutions see career management in the same way. Organisations may either value formal institutional perspectives on careers or be more accommodating to individual differences. Similarly, organisations may either place more value on stability and the continuous employment practices of full-time staff, or develop more
diverse employment practices. In discussing career development, organisational theorists have largely taken one of two positions. The first position, which might be easily labelled the 'classic' or 'old' model, sees careers as a system of narrow and tightly defined jobs and ILMs, with rigid boundaries between functions, one-way communication systems, vertical mobility within the system from the bottom to the top of the organisation, evaluation, promotion, planning, and decision-making systems controlled at the top, and policies which tightly monitor working hours, time off, good behaviour, disciplinary processes and work rules. Traditional ideas on employment value stability, full-time employment, hierarchy, clearly defined ranks and jobs. The 'modern model' emphasises continuous adaptation of organisations, and thus of their career policies, to a rapidly changing environment and, therefore, follows a much more flexible understanding of careers. It is based on pluralistic employment patterns allowing alternative work arrangements, cross-functional and cross-organisational moves, with emphasis on horizontal rather than vertical mobility, horizontal communication, and organisational change rather than stability.

Lane and Wolf (1990, p. 127) argue in favour of the 'old model' of careers that, in organisational life, the positive dimension of the career concept provides the locus and means for individual self-actualisation within the framework of organisational culture and individual employment security. Stable and transparent career paths, together with job descriptions, job posting and recruitment, transfer and promotion policies, offer valuable information for employees on job opportunities. However, as shown in Chapter 3 and by all the theorists writing about individual careers, individuals will not always respond as expected to organisational 'objective' career paths. People do not behave as if they were iron filings attracted to the magnet of upward mobility. Van Maanen (1977, p. 164) claims that, unless organisations can construct career paths which accurately reflect and reward the changing interests and abilities of their members, they are likely to run into problems when it comes to getting the right people in the right places at the right time. Hence, if career paths are seen as inappropriate to the people passing through them, it means that the overall performance of the organisation will suffer.
The development of different individual career theories can also be matched by classic or modern approaches to careers. Despite acknowledgement that a career is a dynamic concept, traditional career research has focused on continuity and stability. For example, Holland's (1958, 1959, 1966, 1973) theory supports the idea of a classical career system, by seeing a career choice based on personality characteristics. It allows little change in the career interests of individuals, and values career stability, without giving sufficient consideration to the dynamics of the environment. Therefore, it encourages individuals to stay with the same employer, once a good fit between personalities and environments is found, for most of their working lives. Accordingly, it supports the idea of developing lifetime career practices by institutions. In these respects, Holland's theory is well suited to the practice of LLMs and so-called 'Japanese careers', career systems in civil services and in the private sector. Developmental theories (Super, 1975, 1981, 1990), while not rejecting the matching approaches (Holland, 1958, 1959, 1966, 1973), treat them as an insufficient basis for career guidance. This is because studies of the life span and life space have made it clear that occupational choice or assignment is not something that happens once in a lifetime, on leaving school or university, but a process that starts long before school-leaving and continues long afterwards. These theories hold that people and situations develop and that a career decision tends to be a series of mini-decisions of varying degrees of importance. Accordingly, Gottfredson (1981, 1996), Hall (1971, 1976, 1985, 1990) and Super (1975, 1981, 1990) have developed much broader perspectives on career development by considering the wider social environment. Their views on individual careers tend not to support pure career systems, as they allow for a more dynamic approach and for changes in individual careers. All theorists of individual careers, Holland included, attach value to differences in individuals, therefore, their approaches emphasise subjective careers and support pluralistic employment practices rather than highly standardised rules and procedures within organisations.

Conventional ideology on careers can be challenged in many respects. The 'old model' of careers is associated with a linear career model where organisational practices and career structures stress the importance of continuous employment. It is assumed in the classical model that individuals work full-time without interruptions
and that this work pattern is necessary for a successful career. The opportunity costs
associated with not working, having career interruptions or working part-time can be
very high in organisations which are built on the basis of linear careers (ILMs).
Newman (1994) states that the systemic organisational barriers to the classical
approach to careers manifest themselves as differential career ladder opportunities
(linear careers), limited access to professional training, limited access to informal
networks, lack of mentors, veterans’ preference and perceived lack of compatibility.
The classical career model ignores the unique needs of members of the institution and
also attaches little significance to needs external to the work environment. The
development of organisational career ladders is based on objective careers, which do
not consider differences such as age, gender, family and non-work needs. In the old
model of careers, jobs are fixed and people are asked to adapt. If someone does not
exactly fit the requirements of the job, the person is required to change. Consequently,
institutions take the responsibility for developing careers for individuals. The
influence of the overall career system orientation causes individuals to believe that
careers are automatic devices which simply happen to individuals within
organisations, once they have made the investment in educational preparation and
have progressed beyond entry-level positions.

However, allowing organisational ‘ownership’ of the planning of an individual’s
career can be seen as undesirable because it restricts the individual’s sense of his or
her own personal purpose and direction. Moreover, old employment practices do not
fit with the needs of organisations either, since more flexibility is needed in
organisations as their environments change. The modern view of careers accepts that
successful careers can also be built when individuals work part-time or interrupt their
careers. Non-traditional jobs and flexible hours can benefit not only individuals but
organisations as well, and they may prefer to provide alternative working
arrangements for economic reasons. A balanced view of careers assumes finding a
compromise between individual and institutional needs, taking into account questions
of supply and demand, for which both individuals and institutions are expected to be
flexible in their approach. The process whereby both individuals and organisations
manage careers assumes the acceptance of their reciprocal needs and interests, which
do not always match each other.
Classical institutional policies do not completely neglect individual interests. For example, career systems have been identified as those which attribute rank to a person rather than a position. This should mean that people are more highly valued than positions or structures in organisations. For example, Lane and Wolf (1990, p. 127) argue that, in a career context, the advancement of self becomes the legitimate focus for organisational involvement. The workplace provides opportunities for personal growth and the concept of a career suggests that individuals use public employment as a place to grow. However, by placing rank on the person, organisations take responsibility for individual careers. In order to manage the careers of a larger group of people, organisational policies and regulations are created on the basis of objective careers. These, however, cannot follow individual needs and interests, which may mean that organisational career policies adopt the attitude that ‘one size fits all’, which in the end may not fit anybody, as also shown in the case study of the British civil service in Chapter 6. Job systems, on the other hand, may look very formal and inhuman at first sight as people are sought to fill certain positions. However, these systems allow much more flexibility in accommodating to diverse individual needs, because individual jobs can be designed separately from an overall system, as already demonstrated in Chapter 1.

The importance of individual subjective careers in career and position systems can be demonstrated by analysing how exceptional cases (which contrast 'objective careers') are dealt with in the two systems. All organisations deal with exceptions to their standardised policies, because people may have interests or needs which do not match organisational assumptions. In career systems, a whole system has to be changed in order to accommodate people who, for example, cannot work full-time. This can lead to the creation of new formal rules. The same applies to the creation of new, and especially temporary jobs, which can be difficult to arrange flexibly in rigid career systems. Once created, they may become a part of a formal system, and it will be difficult to abandon temporary jobs. Currently flattening organisational structures can be seen as a consequence of the development of highly bureaucratised organisations until the 1970s and the 80s, which produced new permanent jobs and levels in the
command chains, and, thus, made organisations very tall, which, in turn, resulted in inefficiency in both private and public organisations.

Institutional rules and structures clearly cannot cover all possible exceptions in subjective careers. In job or network systems, by contrast, only one or a few jobs need to be rearranged, for example by allowing a person to work flexible hours. Similarly, new jobs can be flexibly accommodated in the existing system without having to place them into grades, ranks or levels. Therefore, although career systems place rank on a person, they are a long way off accommodating individual needs and interests. Whereas job systems, by placing rank on position, are better able to accommodate individual differences. Open systems are, therefore, much more flexible in using alternative working arrangements, such as part-time employment, job-sharing or career breaks. Job and network systems facilitate mid-career entry and career change, which, once again, demonstrate their flexibility in meeting the needs of different groups of people.

Changes affecting careers

The number of exceptions to linear careers has increased in the past few decades. The need for a more flexible understanding of careers is caused by individual and institutional, as well as demographic, changes. The increasing diversity of individual careers is influenced by a number of factors:

- The ageing of the work force
  In the EU member states, the 20-29 age group will fall by 20%, and the 50-64 age group will increase by 26% over the period from 1995 to 2015 (European Commission, 1997a).

- The increasing number of women in the work force
  Women have accounted for nearly 80% of all labour force growth in the EU since 1980. In some countries - Ireland, Italy, Sweden and the UK - the figure reaches almost 100% (ILO, 1998).

- The increasing importance of part-time employment, especially for women, younger and older people
In 1990 27.5% percent of women were working part-time; the level increased to 31.5% in 1996 (European Commission, 1997b). Female part-time employment was most widespread in the Netherlands (66% of female employment) and in the UK (44%) in 1994 (Eurostat, 1997a). In Denmark, Finland, Sweden and the Netherlands, 40% to 57% of those aged 15 to 20 had a part-time job. Across the EU, of the employed people of 65 years and over, 40% and more were working part-time in 1997 (Eurostat, 1997b).

- **Higher levels of education**

  The average education levels for the younger age cohorts in the EU are significantly higher than for the older cohorts, indicating the general increase which has occurred over time. In 1995, nearly 70% of both men and women aged 25–29 had at least upper secondary level qualifications, while only just over half of men and only 36% of women aged 55–59 had similar qualifications (European Commission, 1996).

- **Opportunities for early retirement**

  Early retirement is possible in civil services of all EU member states, it is most widely used in the Netherlands, the UK, Belgium, Denmark, Finland and Germany (Auer et al., 1996).

These factors influence the way organisations want and are able to design their career policies. In addition, a greater variety of life styles is more readily available today than ever before. As the possibilities expand, so do the difficulties of choosing between conflicting social, organisational and individual demands and aspirations. Therefore, issues at the intersection between work, family and leisure roles are crucial for understanding career dynamics. Johnson and Duerst-Lahti (1992) argue that the structure of careers and the nature of work need to be reconceptualised, so that a person’s career is placed more fully in the context of his/her entire life, rather than pretending it is the whole of life. People may be willing to devote more time to their families, hobbies and leisure, and thus be more flexible in their working arrangements. This is particularly important in a situation where individual careers are tending to be concentrated into a smaller proportion of the lifespan as a result of later entry into the work force and earlier exit. A successful life is no longer defined solely in terms of work outcomes, such as promotion and salary, but in terms of both work...
and non-work outcomes. For example, Ezra and Deckman (1996) indicate, on the basis of the study of American civil servants, that the more satisfied people are with their balance between work and family, the more satisfied they are with their jobs. However, rather than expecting workers to succeed as both worker and family member, the 'traditional' career model, described above, has tended to think in terms of forcing people to make a choice, rather than helping them to manage both work and family successfully. 'Modern' views on careers recognise that to expect employees to make such a decision is unrealistic. Family concerns have an impact on the workplace, and family relationships cannot be confined to a particular place at a particular time; they play an important role in individual careers.

Family responsibilities are not the sole non-work factor affecting work careers. Other non-work issues, such as hobbies or leisure, may be just as important. For example, some people may acknowledge that their current job will most probably not lead to upward mobility; they are willing to live within its constraints and opportunities and maintain an adequate enthusiasm to perform effectively, while seeking personal fulfilment in other ways than through upward mobility. The plateaued employees in particular may want to put work into perspective in their lives by creating other goals outside their careers, and devoting less time and energy to their work careers. To accommodate this development organisations need a broader definition of life and personal success. At a time of flattening organisations and limited advancement opportunities, organisational policies may even want to encourage alternative opportunities for self-actualisation and success outside careers, and to consider this as a part of their outplacement or motivation programmes.

The values surrounding work, life and leisure are changing by giving more importance to the overall quality of life, as contrasted with the more traditional and narrower definition of professional success in terms of climbing the organisational ladder (Hall and Associates, 1986; Leibowitz et al., 1986; Kanter, 1989; Mayo, 1991). Hall and Associates (1986) argue, on the basis of their study of American people, that the shift in individual values also affects individual career planning: people search for self-fulfilment in their work, rather than simply working for pay; they look for freedom of choice and control over their lives. According to Hall and Associates
(1986), an increasing emphasis is being placed on personal growth and fulfilment, lifestyle experimentation and individualism. Traditional organisational concepts equating work with pay, dependence on the organisation for security and stability, and gratification are, thus, being called into question. Increasing levels of education can also change traditional attitudes towards careers. Highly educated people are more concerned about following their own needs rather than those of organisations: they are more willing to take responsibility for their careers rather than blindly following organisational career paths or ILMs (Leibowitz et al., 1986). With the increasing levels of education, the diversity of needs and interests of people is growing, thus calling for more pluralistic institutional approaches to employment.

The number of women in the work force in EU member states has increased over the past decades, as indicated earlier in this section. As shown in Chapter 3, the linear career model does not fit women as well as men. Bureaucratic models of employment were designed at a time when there were substantially fewer women in the work force. It can thus be argued that bureaucratic organisations with their universal rules, which are designed for continuous employment and linear careers, are not women-friendly. As an increasing number of women enter the work force, the shortcomings of this conventional, male model become apparent. Since women use alternative working patterns, such as part-time work, more than men (as reported earlier in this section), more pressure is exerted on organisations to extend such opportunities. However, these issues do not concern women only. Johnson and Duerst-Lahti (1992, p. 81) suggest that marital status and the presence of children, not just gender, shape part-time employment, and that alternative work arrangements could also become more attractive to men as husbands and fathers.

The ageing of the work force in EU member states means that it is increasingly important to analyse the interests and needs of older people. As older workers are less inclined to move or retrain, this segment of the work force is not so flexible in adapting to changes as younger people are (see Chapter 3). Consequently, motivation will also change: what seems challenging or stimulating to people in their twenties may look very different to them in their forties and fifties, as also shown by Super (1975) and Hall (1976, 1990). This presents an important dilemma for personnel
management: on the one hand, adaptability to change in society and organisations is needed, and on the other hand, the ageing work force is looking for stability and employment security. Organisations will not be in a position to realise the benefits to be gained from employing older workers unless they make serious efforts to increase flexibility in their working conditions to adapt to the needs of older employees, and unless they learn to manage a potentially less adaptable work force.

A number of broader factors may also influence institutional careers. Changes in society such as technological development, information technology in particular, have caused the need for new jobs to be created and/or current structures to be revised, for the division of labour and job descriptions. Over time, some jobs are more likely to survive while others are eliminated (Naisbitt, 1985). Jobs may be either discontinued on an individual basis, or whole groups of jobs can be destroyed through broader processes of reorganisation or cutbacks. For example, Miller (1989) claims that nearly half the jobs in the US are transformed or replaced every five to eight years. It can be argued that greater stability is characteristic of the public sector. However, the changes in society obviously affect all organisations, regardless of whether they belong to a particular sector, although different organisations may be affected to a different extent. In this context, the concepts of a ‘job for life’ and ‘predictable career paths from graduation till retirement’ are becoming obsolete in both private and public sectors and are unlikely to return. Demographic changes in combination with organisational and individual changes means that individuals can no longer assume that, if they are loyal and competent, the organisation will take care of them and ensure a lifelong career within its structures. This may also suggest that institutional career strategies and choices made with long-term objectives in mind may fail to materialise for individuals. Thus, organisations may be well advised to avoid making career promises which cannot be kept.

The focus in career research and practice with regard to career management is gradually shifting from stability to dynamism, from a single job and career pattern to a multi-job and multi-career pattern, and from narrow specialisation to flexible specialisation, requiring continuous retraining. The modern approach to careers directs attention away from factors that have traditionally been of interest to career
researchers – types of positions held, length of employment – towards more abstract factors such as the relevance of knowledge to the organisation, how work experiences are integrated, and how the knowledge accumulated can be applied in new ways or for new employers, leading to new experiences. Changes in institutions and their environments lead to growth in the proportion of people who undertake career transitions. The reality for most individuals is that they will change employers several times in their working lives. Transitions may result in a change of job or profession, or a change of orientation to work while continuing in the same job. Therefore, it is essential for individuals to be proactive in the management of their careers. Gray et al. (1990, p. 47) argue that individual career planning is important for several reasons: it provides and allows individuals to maintain self-determination and control over their intended work and non-work experiences; it contributes to better occupation-job-organisation-sector decisions that may greatly enhance job mobility and progression through successive career stages; it may significantly ease the individual through various life stages and facilitate the development of meaningful non-work roles that complement career roles.

Balanced career management

Career development in organisations is becoming more complicated due to the need to adapt to changes described in the previous section. To achieve adaptability, organisations become more dependent on their employees and their abilities to learn and adapt. Interest in career development at the organisational level stems from the recognition that improved efficiency, profitability and organisational growth depend upon improved utilisation and development of human resources (Kooiman and Eliassen, 1993; Kettl et al., 1996). Several American and European authors (Hall and Associates, 1986; Leibowitz et al., 1986; Mayo, 1991; Kooiman and Eliassen, 1993) recognise the need for organisations to create special career development programmes to match people with jobs that fit their diverse skills, needs and values. This creates the need to use multiple approaches and strategies for particular personnel policies, and reward and recognition systems to provide individuals with greater flexibility in accommodating their diverse internal and external career-related needs. More
individualised career policies, systems, and management practices allow more flexibility in motivating people with different needs.

Career management has traditionally been described from a purely institutional point of view: encompassing organisational processes and actions (Leibowitz et al., 1986; West and Berman, 1993). However, the definition of organisational career management can also include individual preferences. Mayo (1991) argues that career management is the design and implementation of processes that enable the careers of individuals to be planned and managed in a way that optimises both the needs of the organisation and the preferences of the individuals. This provides four different viewpoints of the context within which working relationships are established: 1) the individual’s view of his or her own needs and interests; 2) the individual’s view of the organisation’s needs and interests; 3) the organisation’s view of the organisation’s needs and interests; and 4) the organisation’s view of the individual’s needs and interests. A balanced approach to career development from both institutional and individual levels needs to take into account these four views and to try to find the optimal relationship between them.

Responsibility for career management lies both with individuals and with the organisation that employs them. Both parties are supposed to share various obligations in managing careers, rather than a career being considered as the sole responsibility of one or the other. Orpen (1994) has found in his study of American organisations and individuals that individual career effectiveness is greater when organisational career management schemes exist along with career management by individuals, and when both organisations and individuals manage careers, with neither side neglecting their part of the joint responsibility. Both organisational and individual career management are positively related to each other, and to individual career success. Responsibility for career development may shift even more to individuals in the future because organisations may not be able to plan the careers of their employees, since it will be very difficult to chart out prospective career paths and steer people through prescribed developmental sequences in a changing environment. It can be argued that, because of the changing nature of organisations, and because people expect to have several employers in the course of their careers, it
is pointless to invest much effort in career management from both the individual and institutional points of view. Many current structural trends, such as flatter organisations, changes in the division of labour and job design, and increasingly decentralised units, are unhelpful to institutional career management.

The classical model of careers emphasises institutional career development. Thus, greater self-management of careers is built on a fundamental shift from paternalistic control in organisations to greater autonomy of individuals. If individuals are to achieve a more balanced view of career management, they will need to take a more active role in developing their careers. However, on the one hand, institutions may find it difficult to recognise and accommodate different individual needs and interests within their institutional policies. The transfer from classical to modern career practices assumes that organisations and their top management are ready to waive their rights to move people as they want to, to leave more responsibility for individuals and to create more pluralistic employment policies and alternative programmes to serve the diverse needs of their members. On the other hand, not all individuals may be ready to take more responsibility for their own careers and may perceive such a freedom as an inconsiderate attitude of the part of organisations. Consequently, achieving balanced career management requires not only substantial changes in institutional policies but also changes in the broader organisational culture.

At the heart of flexible career management is the need to individualise the way the organisation is managed by accommodating differences and providing choices whenever possible. Policies and practices can be used to create options and flexibility within the organisation so that they can be individualised through decentralised management. Due to the long history of traditional top-down policies, implying management by control, and engendering little trust among middle- and lower-level managers, upper management has used policies as a central tool. The modern approach emphasises broader policies providing wider choice where organisational policies have either more options or less specific parameters (Mayo, 1991). Being flexible in the way organisations view work roles, work/family issues, part-time work, flexible working hours and career breaks is a part of their becoming more flexible in structures, staffing and the distribution of work. The focus on matching people and
jobs means matching a variety of different individuals, their knowledge, skills and work preferences with job characteristics and demands. Matching involves paying attention to both the objective and subjective sides of work and people in order to individualise job profiles and careers.

*Career mobility and network organisations*

Career mobility is an area where the needs and interests of individuals and institutions interact. Career mobility allows organisations to increase the motivation of their staff, to direct people to the places where they are needed in the organisation and to provide them with a broader understanding of the organisation’s work as discussed in Chapter 2. Individuals become mobile if they are looking for greater variety in work, advancement and self-fulfilment, as indicated in Chapter 3.

Traditional career systems in both public and private sectors emphasise vertical mobility, as shown in Chapters 1 and 2. In addition, lateral mobility is an institutional mechanism to move people between jobs and to provide them with a broader outlook of the organisation before promotion to the upper levels. In career systems, people on a certain grade are able to perform most jobs at that level which makes rotations and on-loan arrangements relatively easy to organise. Mobility in career systems is also eased by central career management and predominantly institutional management of careers with little interest in individual preferences. By contrast, open systems concentrate on specific jobs which makes movement between positions more difficult. The fact that job systems usually exist in decentralised settings may also diminish the scope for mobility. However, job systems can be more flexible than career systems, allowing organisations to design jobs based on the particular knowledge or skills of individuals, while also developing individual career paths if necessary.

Network systems provide an interesting combination of flexibility in open systems and mobility within closed systems, thus combining the qualities of both systems. They are characterised by a great degree of flexibility and adaptability to changing
environments, largely due to their multiple employment patterns and to cross-boundary mobility. The pluralistic employment opportunities offered by network organisations range from relative security and long-term employment at the core to fixed-term specialist appointments at the periphery. Peripheral work itself allows very wide scope for alternative work arrangements, thus accommodating the needs and interests of different employee groups and attracting people with diverse needs and interests to the organisation.

Atkinson and Meager (1986, p. 3) in their study of British public and private organisations distinguish between two aspects of organisational flexibility: numerical and functional flexibility, which both characterise network organisations. Numerical flexibility is the ease with which the number of individuals employed can be adjusted to meet fluctuations in the level of demand; and functional flexibility is the ease with which the tasks performed by individuals can be adjusted to meet changes in the nature of that demand. The flexible organisation deploys peripheral groups as required to achieve numerical flexibility; these groups act as buffers which insulate the core group from numerical variation and thus provide employment security for core employees. Such employment security is found to underpin the functional flexibility of the core group. Similar issues, as examined by Atkinson and Meager (1986), are thoroughly studied by Kettl et al. (1996) in US public organisations.

According to classical career theories, career success has been equated with movement up the organisational hierarchy. By contrast, modern career theories tend to define career success through horizontal movement and the match between work and non-work aspects of life. Bird (1994, p. 341), for example, argues that boundaryless careers may encourage people to adopt a more holistic way of thinking about their work. Individuals in boundaryless careers may be more likely to see connections between their work and non-work lives because the repeated transitions break down the mental mindset that becomes established when people are locked into established structures and routines. If the key components of success can be understood as the opportunity to follow interests, expand skills, and create experiences that allow self-development, opportunities for accomplishment may be available at any one level of an organisation. Therefore, institutional career strategies are not expected to be 'up or
out’ but ‘up, around or out’ so that lateral moves, spiral or steady-stage careers are also involved.

Moving out of the organisation gets a new meaning in network organisations. In the classical understanding of careers, seniority with one employer was valued, and career or job changes were considered undesirable. In network systems, a career move that leaves behind both status and title is not presumed to be a move downwards, but a move outwards. Such a widening of horizons may be significant in developing a career. It may mean demotion in title and/or salary but promotion in experience and potential. As an individual has inside knowledge of one organisation, s/he has important qualities to offer other employers, particularly partner organisations. Therefore, in some cases, the job-changer can be seen as someone in demand rather than someone with an unstable employment pattern. People’s know-how, self-direction and learning abilities may serve as core competencies in network organisations, which is why these organisations search for personal adaptability. Both public and private sectors benefit from people who understand another sector.

Boundaryless careers bring greater autonomy for individuals and wider discretion. Individuals clearly become more responsible for career direction and progression. It can also be said that boundaryless careers and network systems constitute the means that bind people and organisations together. Krannich and Krannich (1986, p. 45) distinguish between two types of networks: one which consists of established groups and organisations, and which is called a formal network; and another that individuals create by themselves and which is called an interpersonal network. Networking at individual level may involve intra-organisational, inter-organisational, professional and personal relations. Individuals may capitalise on the reputation of the organisation to gain access to new contacts, or to pursue new job opportunities. People may strengthen their positions in a present or different organisation through the unique relationships forged with key constituencies in the organisation. Individuals may also use network access to gather career-relevant rather than employer-relevant information. In these instances, an organisation’s network serves as a distinct resource for the individual’s career, rather than for the organisation itself.
However, several authors (for example Mintzberg, 1985; Pfeffer, 1989) argue that people use networking not only to promote their individual career concerns, but also to promote departmental or organisational concerns. Individuals add value to the organisation by creating information through their work experiences. Job rotation, secondments, career moves and the development of networks within the organisation and outside are ways in which individual careers can be shaped to serve the organisation’s information needs. Individual networks may become social networks at the level of the organisation, and define inter-organisational dependencies and exchange relationships. As Grey (1994) puts it, friends become transformed into ‘contacts’ and social activity becomes ‘networking’. This way a career becomes a concept which regulates several forms of social contacts both inside and outside the organisation. Consequently, network relations simultaneously serve the career interests of individuals and the strategic interests of institutions. Both sets of interests are affected by the flow of information and influence, as well as by direct career movements.

Research into organisational careers has traditionally focused upon the processes whereby individual identities, values and interests are matched to the requirements of their employment. Boundaryless career identities are loosely tied to their employment setting. It is arguable whether employment in network organisations is associated with distinctive competencies that are more linked to occupational identities than to organisational career identities. Hall et al. (1986) call the development of personal identity another ‘meta-skill’ needed to experience psychological success over the course of a career. The challenge of the boundaryless career is to integrate more experiences into a person’s sense of self. Mirvis and Hall (1994, p. 378) argue that a person’s identity deepens not only through cumulative work experiences and career achievement, but also through ‘work’ as a spouse, parent, and community member, and especially through ‘work’ on one’s identity. In their opinion, the boundaryless careers give people the freedom and flexibility to find greater balance in their lives.
Development of civil service careers

It is very difficult to generalise from studies of career achievement and success across employers and situations. The classical question is whether public sector careers can be developed on the basis of the same assumptions as private sector careers and whether the development of institutional and individual careers discussed above affects the thinking and management of careers in the public sector. As civil service careers have not been studied to the same extent as private sector careers (especially from psychological, sociological and economic perspectives), it remains to be shown whether the same theories can be applied to the public sector or whether specific career theories are needed.

Several reasons can be evoked for arguing that public sector careers are becoming more like private sector careers. The huge gap between distinctive civil service careers in closed career systems and more flexible private sector careers is diminishing with the opening up of civil services. Some of the changes in society are affecting both public and private sector careers. Organisations which do not accommodate to these societal changes may easily become losers in the labour market by having to recruit people who are not wanted elsewhere. The analysis of changes in society and of the dynamics of the public sector is necessary to judge whether the classical values attributed to civil service careers still apply. For example, Stevens (1995, p. 13) claims in his study of the British civil service that the present generation of recruits does not have the same commitment to the public service as their predecessors who are now in senior positions. Greater mobility both into and out of the civil service encourages the development of personal career strategies rather than fostering the commitment to public service.

Classical civil services were designed to ensure the continued, high-quality daily operation of government as discussed in Chapter 1. Traditional systems placed particular value on stability and predictability in insulating public administration from politics. Personnel rules emphasised permanence of employment in order to develop and maintain civil service values. Kettl et al. (1996, p. 91) argue that such continuity is invaluable, but its strength is also its weakness: protection against political
interference has, over time, created expectations of tenure and lifetime employment. These expectations derive even from the words used to initiate people into the civil service. Terms such as ‘career appointment’, once attained, become an entitlement that can be cancelled only with the greatest of difficulty. The bias towards permanence certainly serves the goal of continuity, but it no longer fits the reality of public administration from which stability and predictability have disappeared.

Accordingly, traditional career systems no longer offer a satisfactory solution to today’s civil service problems. They were designed for a hierarchically organised and authority-driven administration which relies on clear and stable organisational structures, universalistic rules and close control. Uniform rules were designed to provide equitable treatment. However, they fail to produce understanding of the subjective careers of individuals for which they were intended. These rules were built with traditional linear careers in mind, which did not consider cases of irregular careers. Originally, bureaucratic rules assumed public administration to be a stable place: rules were meant to guarantee continuity, security and stability. Thus they fail in quickly changing circumstances. Kettl et al. (1996, p. 9) claim that, however well these systems once operated, they are ill-suited to the task of managing an uncertain, chaotic, competitive and complex civil service today. Old rigid and rule-based bureaucratic structures work poorly in an environment undergoing constant change. Public sector organisations need considerable flexibility to match the basic rules with their own missions and management processes.

Rules that are too rigid can be a problem not only in the public sector, but also in the private sector. A gap exists between the rules of the systems, based on the assumption of hierarchy, and the demands of emerging systems, based on flexible networks. Both public and private organisations are increasingly likely to be flat and loose in structure, organised around missions and values. Technological change supports and perhaps causes the movement towards more flexible public administration, which may ultimately result in an electronic or virtual civil service. Public sector organisations are likely to move from fixed organisational structures to boundaryless relationships based on a common interest in implementing programmes. Rigid regulations are unable to promote effective management of networks in either the
Public or private sector. Private sector organisations have been more enthusiastic in changing their rigid regulations (Kooiman and Eliassen, 1993; Kettl et al. 1996), which, to a great extent, is associated with the modern view of career management, which supports the movement of people across organisational boundaries. Public organisations are more affected by organisational inertia and their already established culture and structures (Pollitt, 1990; Lawton and Rose, 1994). However, it is as important for public organisations to adjust to changes in society in order to find a balance between protection of fundamental values and flexible management. Flexibility of the civil service is associated with open systems, which are bound together not by rigid rules and formal structures but by flexible networks of information, programmes and people.

A greater degree of mobility of individuals can strengthen relationships between the civil service and private and voluntary sectors in society. Leaving the civil service does not necessarily mean going into a profit-making business, primarily oriented to market values. Numerous organisations outside the civil service perform similar functions to the civil service. In several cases, especially in consulting firms and non-profit organisations, classical public sector functions are performed by private organisations. As governments privatise as well as contract out public services, some of the most interesting and rewarding public service jobs can be found in the private sector rather than in public agencies. Non-governmental public service institutions provide job and career alternatives for individuals primarily oriented toward public service careers. These organisations can become a periphery of the civil service. Peripheral organisations may be comprised of trade and professional associations involved in influencing public policy, contracting and consulting firms with government contracts, non-profit organisations performing public service functions, foundations providing resources to other peripheral groups, research organisations engaged in public-related research, political support groups and international organisations and groups. Together these institutions comprise an interrelated network of job and career opportunities. Mobility between the civil service core and periphery may improve their co-operation and quality of services.
The more complex civil services become, the harder it is to find any one organisational scheme which works better than another. The future of bureaucracy and the future of governance depend on attracting, motivating and retaining a high-quality and high-performing people to the civil service. Meanwhile, at a time of rapid change in the public sector, modern practices in the civil service can be easily misunderstood. The perception that the civil service is not a place for particularly long and, even less so, lifetime employment does not change quickly. The civil service culture is still strongly influenced by those who joined the civil service decades ago under different conditions. Consequently, new recruits may have the same expectations about employment security and advancement through fixed ILMs, which turn into dissatisfaction when not fulfilled. On the one hand, civil services may attract people who value incentives that modern civil services cannot provide. On the other hand, people who might be interested in new practices may be unaware of the changed employment patterns in the civil service.

Traditional models of the civil service emphasised hiring of well-educated people with high potential, without paying much attention to retention of people. Classical civil service systems relied on a guaranteed tenure but did not use other means to motivate and challenge their employees. Modern career practices in open systems require much more attention to retaining good people and motivating them. Even if civil services are able to attract an adequate number of qualified people in the labour market, institutions confront the question of labour turnover. Being competitive in the labour market means that public sector organisations provide comparable incentives to those in the private sector, including in-service training and a wide range of employment opportunities. In expressing concern for the needs of different groups and family values, the civil service is able to attract and retain better people in a competitive labour market. Moreover, the civil service as often a country's largest employer and carrier of certain values is generally expected to provide a model for the private sector in introducing advanced approaches to pluralistic employment patterns.
Conclusions

Part I has examined a wide range of approaches in explaining careers. Chapter 1 described the development of careers in different civil service systems by distinguishing between career, job and network systems. Closed career systems have been shown to be associated with traditional models of bureaucracy, which are being turned into open systems in several countries in the 1990s. Chapter 2 focused on institutional management of careers by analysing advantages and disadvantages of internal labour markets. Until the end of the 1980s, priority was given to vertical mobility and continuous careers with one employer through hierarchically oriented organisations. Such an approach to organisational career management was increasingly criticised during the 1990s: the majority of authors writing on the subject recommend horizontal mobility within organisations and mobility between organisations and sectors. Chapter 3 examined subjective careers of individuals with emphasis on their diverse needs and interests. Whereas the focus was on linear full-time careers in the 1960s and 70s, more complex views of careers have appeared since the 1980s, recognising pluralistic employment patterns and individual responsibility for career management. Chapter 4 provides an interdisciplinary approach to careers by combining the findings from previous chapters. Consequently, 'old' and 'modern' models of careers are distinguished. The 'old' model is based on the assumptions of permanency of careers and stability of organisations, which enabled the development of highly formalised career policies in organisations in the form of closed career systems in civil services. The 'modern' model, by contrast, emphasises unstable environments and, therefore, the need to adapt to change flexibly, which concerns both individuals and organisational structures and policies. More flexible employment practices are found to afford a better match between institutional and individual needs and interests. Job and network systems correspond to the 'modern' model of careers since they provide more flexibility and openness than traditional career systems. Much attention has been paid to network systems throughout Part I since they offer a mechanism for combining flexibility and continuity in the management of civil services.
Analysis of careers in Part I is based on studies of large states, most of which were carried out in the US. Although countries, sectors and particular organisations may differ widely, these studies provide a basis for the research into civil service careers in the UK and Estonia, presented in Part II. Individual and institutional careers in small states are examined in Part III to examine whether the large state theories described in Part I can be applied to small civil services.
PART II  CIVIL SERVICE CAREERS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM AND ESTONIA

The second Part of the thesis provides an analysis of the empirical research carried out into the British and Estonian civil services. In Chapter 5, particular emphasis is placed on the dynamics of the development of the two civil services. The purpose of the Chapter is not to undertake a comparison of the British and Estonian civil services but rather to present background information for the analysis of civil service careers in the two countries. Chapter 6 analyses the fieldwork carried out for the case study from both institutional and individual perspectives. At this point, an attempt is made to compare the development of British and Estonian civil service careers and to distinguish characteristics that influence civil service careers in large as compared to small states.

While the British civil service has been studied by scholars all over the world, the Estonian civil service has developed in relative isolation from scholarly interest. The British civil service has been thoroughly analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively. Estonian sources consist of a limited number of mainly unpublished papers and findings from inconsistent surveys. No reliable statistics exist on the Estonian civil service, and the data that have been collected are not always easily accessible. It is, therefore, very difficult to present a full account of the history and current development of the Estonian civil service. Consequently, the two case studies presented here are confined to an analysis of similar issues located in different frameworks, and are based on bodies of information that are of unequal weight. In both cases, the available data have been supplemented from firsthand accounts. In the Estonian case, personal contacts and familiarity with the Estonian system have made it possible to provide a detailed account of a hitherto relatively under-researched area. In the case of the UK, the fieldwork, conducted by an ‘outsider’ provided an opportunity to collect information about the attitudes and behaviour of civil servants at a time when the British civil service is undergoing considerable change.
Chapter 5 Development of the British and Estonian civil services

Chapter 5 is divided into two divisions. Firstly, the British civil service is examined. Important milestones in the history of the service such as the Northcote-Trevelyan Report (1854) and the Fulton Report (1968) and their implications are analysed. Particular emphasis is placed on the Next Steps reforms in 1988-98, and the changes in human resource management and civil service careers within these reforms. In the second division of the chapter, the Estonian civil service is studied by examining its history, the development of the service during the first Republic in 1918-40, and the implications of the Soviet rule for public administration. A more thorough analysis is provided of the period from 1991-98 by studying the development of the Estonian state and its civil service during the years of independence.

The British civil service

The British civil service is one of the most researched civil services in the world. Several authors have devoted articles and books, and sometimes their whole lives, to studying the administration of the UK. The British civil service has attracted particular attention since the mid-1980s when major reforms began. However, the roots of the modernisation of the contemporary civil service date back further in the history of the British civil service.

British civil servants are employed at the discretion of the Crown and, thus, are often called servants of the Crown. This definition covers the staff of all government departments and agencies, but it does not include employees in the wider public sector such as local government, education, the health service and other public organisations. The civil service is regulated by codified rules, but, unlike such codes in several other countries, they do not have the status of law. The organisation of the civil service rests on the well-established convention that the rules will be applied. The main document regulating the civil service is the Civil Service Order in Council.
The origins of the modern civil service lie in the court servants who accompanied England's Saxon monarchs on their travels around the country. Early public servants were appointed through patronage and they lost their positions when their patron lost his. From the sixteenth century onwards a tradition of permanency was gradually introduced into the service, but still without uniformity. Until the end of the eighteenth century, government offices were considered to be the property of their occupier. Positions were often held for life and could be passed on by the holder on his death. The pattern at the end of the eighteenth century was that of a large number of departments which were all staffed as separate units and managed in different ways.

Northcote-Trevelyan reforms

At the end of the eighteenth century, parliamentary commissions began to recommend the abolition of the patronage system, and the introduction of salary scales, pensions, promotion on merit, sickness benefits and a common grading system. This was unusual at a time when employees were considered to be personal servants. However, real reforms were initiated only after the Northcote-Trevelyan Report on the Organisation of the Permanent Civil Service in 1854.

The Northcote-Trevelyan Report was a significant landmark for the British civil service, and it has also influenced the development of the civil services throughout the world. Together with the Prussian bureaucracy (which served as the reference for Weber's observations), the Northcote-Trevelyan Report formed a basis for the ideal civil service.

The Northcote-Trevelyan Report identified patronage as one of the main reasons for the Service's inefficiency and public disrepute. It recommended recruitment by open competition, promotion on merit, annual increments, and the division of work into two classes: 'intellectual' and 'mechanical' tasks. The Report also suggested the introduction of a system of examinations to provide the public service with efficient officials. It laid a basis for the career system by promising promotion and the highest
prizes in the service if officials gained the required qualifications. Another aim of the Report was to change the fragmentary character of the service by providing a uniform standing for first appointments, opening the way to promotion of public officers to staff appointments in departments other than their own, and making the services of the lower ranks of clerks available at any time in any office. The Northcote-Trevelyan Report defined the qualities of the British civil service, including recruitment through fair and open competition and promotion based on merit.

The first significant step in putting the reform into practice was the establishment of the Civil Service Commission in 1855 to carry out improvements in recruitment. Independent Civil Service Commissioners were appointed to reduce patronage and corruption by testing the qualifications of the candidates to be appointed to junior posts in the civil service. The Commission worked out a system of open competition based on set educational standards and established a service-wide grade system in order to unify the civil service. The power of the Treasury and the Civil Service Commission over staff and departments increased substantially by having the right to approve the rules relating to the age, health, character, knowledge and ability of civil servants.

During the late nineteenth century, several characteristics of a bureaucracy were established. Westminster gradually approached the Weberian model of an ideal bureaucracy by introducing the following values: integrity, impartiality, objectivity, loyalty (to the Cabinet or Minister), proficiency in administration, anonymity and accountability through Ministers to Parliament.

*The British civil service in 1914-1968*

The First World War added considerably to the responsibilities of the civil service and caused a substantive increase in the number of civil servants, which was subsequently reduced to the pre-war level at the end of the war (Cabinet Office, 1994b). However, as the war affected the responsibilities of the service, it became necessary to improve the machinery of government after the war. The Whitley
Committee proposed a new grading structure to meet the changing conditions: an administrative class for those working on policy formulation, decision-making and regulations; an executive class for the organisation and direction of government business; and two clerical classes for implementing 'mechanical' tasks. The broad structure of the civil service was thus established for the next fifty years. It was also recognised that career mobility was important for generalist policy advisers at the top of the service, a belief which has been maintained (Fry, 1986, p. 541).

Scientific and professional staff were not affected by the reorganisation. It is widely considered in Britain that generalists rather than specialists are suitable for administrative work. The successful administrator therefore needs to be detached from any particular field and able to find a balance between different interests (Ridley, 1979, p. 48). Thus the recruitment, pay and conditions of service of professional staff continued to be a matter for particular departments with no service-wide grades or career ladders for professionals.

The Second World War brought the civil service similar problems to those of the First World War: due to an increase in the responsibilities and the size of the civil service. However, the number of civil servants was not reduced after the war; the civil service continued to expand (Cabinet Office, 1994b). New technical and specialist classes were created with their own (often limited) career structures. Standardised rates of pay and other conditions of service as well as centralised recruitment were introduced for professional and technical classes. Thus the civil service was divided into classes, both horizontally (between higher and lower levels in the same broad area of work) and vertically (between different skills, professions or work areas). Civil servants were recruited to a particular class, and this determined their prospects and the range of jobs on which they could be employed.

All civil servants entered the administrative class of the civil service at the bottom level, after finishing their university education. According to Ridley (1983, p. 194), the British middle class tended to make early life choices between the civil service, the army, the church, the professions, business, technology and academia. These formed different worlds with relatively little mobility between them. Even within the
civil service, a clear separation was made between generalists and specialists with little interaction.

The British administrative class has been described as rather elitist, coming from quite homogeneous social and economic background (Mascarenhas, 1993, p. 321). Over the years, criticism developed of the administrative class, its distance from other spheres of life and expansionist nature, on grounds of its predominantly Oxbridge backgrounds (Tyson, 1988). By the mid-1960s the civil service had substantially grown, and it had become a relatively unstructured confederation of different organisations because of government’s inability to manage such a large system (Pyper, 1995). There was a general recognition of the need for a fundamental review of its structure, recruitment and management.

The reforms following the Fulton Committee Report

The Fulton Committee issued its Report in 1968 (The Civil Service: Report of the Committee on the Civil Service 1966-68). It criticised Whitehall for being ‘amateur’ and claimed that civil servants did not know enough about industry and commerce because specialists were not fully utilised. It recommended that preference be given to applicants with ‘relevant’ degrees and suggested that specialists should be given more encouragement to make it to the top of the hierarchy. The Fulton Committee commented on the lack of career planning and motivation, the small reward for initiative and the absence of clear accountability. It recommended that more rights should be delegated for personnel policies to departments, more resources should be devoted to career management and greater mobility should be encouraged between the civil service and other sectors.

The main finding of the Fulton Report was that the division into ‘administrative’ and ‘executive’ classes hindered the work of the civil service. The existing grading system was strongly criticised for decreasing the efficiency of the service by placing barriers in the way of able civil servants in promotion and by making it difficult to transfer staff between posts. The Report therefore recommended that the class system should
be replaced by a single, unified grading structure covering the entire service. Consequently, the civil service’s class structure was reformed in 1971. A unified structure, known as the Open Structure, was established at the administrative level of the service. In addition, the executive and clerical classes were merged with the three lowest grades of the administrative class to form a new administration group. In abolishing the class structure, this reform removed all the horizontal barriers to promotion. It was not, however, a unified grading system as recommended by Fulton, because the vertical barriers between specialists and generalists were retained. Thus, the main recommendation by Fulton was never implemented. Civil servants claimed that they were not ‘amateurs’ but specialists of administration and, accordingly, the proposal to favour ‘relevant’ degrees was rejected. Dowding (1995, p. 21) claims that, all in all, the Fulton Report was a failure, since its execution was left in the hands of those whom it criticised, it was implemented patchily and without conviction.

The British government sought to change the civil service through organisational reforms. A new Civil Service Department was created as a central personnel policy-making unit under the Head of the Home Civil Service in 1968. This was followed by the establishment of a Civil Service College in 1970. In the years immediately following the publication of the Fulton Report, a range of governmental functions were given to departments and agencies. The new job appraisal and career development policies led to the creation of a specialised career development function in the civil service. Research into manpower planning was also undertaken, so that, for example, computer software was developed to help plan promotion, recruitment and retirement policies (Tyson, 1988, p. 50).

An examination of the range of human resource policies provides ample evidence to show that personnel policies in the civil service were in advance of those found in most of the private sector in the early 1970s. The civil service had had an equal opportunities policy since 1961; assessment centre techniques had been initiated by the War Office, recruitment and promotion were based on competition (Tyson, 1988). The new work on career and manpower planning therefore added to already advanced personnel policies. The civil service eventually became a model for British private sector firms for management of large organisations and hierarchies.
However, by the end of the 1970s, the Civil Service Department had become less identified with reform and more with maintaining the status quo (Dowding, 1995). Tyson (1988) argues that the capacity of civil servants to resist change and the in-built bureaucratic inertia enabled senior officials to agree to change while silently resisting it. The reform of the grading structure did not improve, and little progress was made with recruiting non-Oxbridge candidates. Departments were slow to adopt new ideas. The convention that ministers are responsible for running their own departments made it difficult for the Civil Service Department to impose policy changes uniformly (Tyson, 1988).

On coming to power in 1979, the Thatcher administration introduced a series of reforms which sought to reduce the size of the civil service and make it more efficient. Sir Derek Rayner was appointed to advise the Prime Minister on ways of eliminating waste and improving efficiency in central government. The establishment of the Efficiency Unit (1979) and introduction of the Financial Management Initiative (1982) called for accountable management, thus moving from traditional process orientation towards output orientation in the civil service. The Civil Service Department was abolished in 1981. The Treasury regained control of responsibility for civil service manpower, allowances, pay and pensions, with the aim of controlling the costs and size of the civil service and improving efficiency. At the same time, the Management and Personnel Office which was established in the Cabinet Office, was left with the responsibility for recruitment, training, appraisal, promotion, performance management and welfare. The decision to split responsibilities in this way can be questioned, since it is not rational to separate pay from the other broad policy issues of personnel management.

Throughout the civil service reform process, financial and personnel arrangements have been closely associated with each other, which was emphasised by the Financial Management Initiative and also indicated in the Cassels Report of 1983 (Review of Personnel Work in the Civil Service: Report to the Prime Minister by J.S. Cassels). The Report concluded that line managers should be given greater autonomy over such personnel matters as recruitment and that staff should be appointed to specific jobs,
not to grades. Hence, it supported the position system over the career system. In addition, career development was seen as the responsibility of individuals, not of management. Somewhat controversially, the Cassels Report made it clear that 'the civil service is a career service, i.e. its staffing policy is primarily based on recruiting people as they leave the education system and retaining them in the civil service until they retire' (Cassels Report, para. 18).

In 1987, the Management and Personnel Office was reconstituted as the Office of the Minister for the Civil Service, and a number of functions were transferred to the Treasury (recruitment, conditions of employment). Essentially this meant that all personnel management issues went to the Treasury, except management development, training, equal opportunities, promotion, appraisal, discipline and welfare.

The Next Steps reforms

In 1988, Sir Robin Ibbs and the Efficiency Unit published a Report, entitled Improving Management in Government: the Next Steps Report to the Prime Minister, which became a significant milestone in the development of the British civil service. The Report found that the civil service was too big and too diverse to be managed as a single entity. The Report also claimed that the civil service did not place enough emphasis on results, and that senior staff were not sufficiently trained to increase the quality of services. Ibbs and the Efficiency Unit discovered that operational efficiency had a low priority among senior civil servants, compared with giving policy advice to ministers.

The Ibbs Report argued that the freedom of the individual manager to manage effectively and responsibly was severely circumscribed in the civil service. Not only were there controls on resources and objectives, but also on the management of resources. The Report indicated that
decisions on recruitment, dismissal, choice of staff, promotion, pay, hours of work, accommodation, grading, organisation of work, the use of IT equipment, are all outside the control of most civil service managers at any level. The main decisions on rules and regulations are taken by the centre of the civil service. This tends to mean that there are structures to fit everything in general and nothing in particular. The rules are therefore seen primarily as a constraint rather than as a support; and in no sense as a pressure on managers to manage effectively. (Ibbs Report, 1988, para. 11)

It was also reported that 'the advantages of an all-embracing pay structure are breaking down, the uniformity of grading frequently inhibits effective management and that the concept of a career in a unified civil service has little relevance for most civil servants, whose horizons are bounded by their local office, or, at most, by their department.' (Ibbs Report, 1988, para. 12) The Report thereby indicated that, while officials often had a strong loyalty to their local office, few could relate equally to the civil service or even to their parent department.

The main recommendation of the Ibbs Report was that the executive functions of the government should be separated from the policy-making role in order to break down the monolithic, centrally controlled management structure. The executive functions of government, as distinct from policy advice, should be carried out by agencies which were to be headed by chief executives. Agency management should have as much independence as possible in deciding how to meet their objectives, while remaining accountable to ministers. The British Government was of the view that service delivery could be improved by a structural reorganisation of the civil service, and it encouraged agencies to adopt some private sector practices to make managers more responsible and increase the efficiency of the civil service. The framework documents published about the civil service reform in the UK made it clear that employment status for agency staff would not change and that they would continue to be Crown servants.

The reforms were not carried out in all departments at the same time or to the same extent, because not all departments were ready to obtain more autonomy in their work (Dowding, 1995). This indicates a major dilemma for government. What should the role of the centre be when the intention is to carry out reforms designed to make
departments relatively independent and more responsive to their own needs? The Ibbs Report suggested that the reform should be managed from the centre. However, a few authors (Tyson, 1988) comment that, it is ironical that a centralised approach should be used to implement a reform which has decentralisation as one of its main objectives.

Ridley (1983, p. 179) has argued that until the 1980s, the British civil service was closer to the ideal of a career system than any other western democracy. The Swedish civil service model with its pure job system influenced the Ibbs structure (Fry, 1988, p. 433), and the Next Steps reforms threatened the bureaucratic self-interests of the career civil service. For the first time in the modern history of British government, it was, and is, a matter of a serious debate whether or not there should continue to be a career civil service. The civil service, senior positions included, have gradually advanced from a closed system to an open system, allowing outsiders to compete for the highest positions in the government hierarchy. The British civil service reform constitutes an example of transferring from a career system to a job system. It can be argued that it was the proposal for abandoning the career civil service that made the Ibbs Report so important.

*Human resource implications of the Next Steps reforms*

As the aim of the thesis is to study civil service careers, particular attention is paid here to the human resource implications of the Next Steps reforms. The decentralisation of personnel management gives departments and agencies substantial independence in deciding their personnel management policy. They have autonomy on such matters as recruitment, promotion, equal opportunities, training, pay, probation and appraisal policies, and whether their chief executives are appointed through open competition.

Senior officials, who formerly saw their roles mainly as policy advisers, are now expected to give a higher priority to managing resources and improving departmental performance, which in the past was perceived as peripheral to their advising
functions. Open competition has become the normal method for recruiting chief executives. Moreover, chief executives are on personalised, fixed-term contracts, as are some other senior staff, and occasionally even junior staff. Members of the Senior Civil Service are given explicit, written employment contracts by their departments, in most cases for indefinite terms, but with specified periods of notice. This shift has two personnel management implications. Firstly, open competition provides a mechanism whereby people not assimilated into the civil service structure can be brought into key positions. Secondly, the individualised, short-term job tenure of chief executives and some other staff conflicts with the traditional public administration values: the collective, long-term culture of the civil service, where a permanent 'career for life' is the norm. The establishment of contracts, although indefinite and roll-on, raises clearly the question about the job security of civil servants.

Departments and agencies have developed promotion systems where vacancies are advertised either within the department, across the civil service or through fully open competition. People apply only if they are interested in the job, and the job is in the place they want to work, as also shown by the case studies with British civil servants in Chapter 6. Direct managers are involved in the selection process. It is widely recognised that every civil servant is responsible for his or her own career. While a traditional strength of the civil service has been the flexibility and adaptability of staff to work across a wide range of posts, current career policies emphasise the need of every civil servant to obtain in-depth knowledge of a particular area of government work, called 'career anchors', to complement generalist skills. Promotion is not guaranteed following a certain number of years in the service (seniority), but progression is based on performance and concrete achievements (Chapman, 1994).

These arrangements may be common outside the civil service, but inside it they are quite revolutionary, because they replace the old promotion system whereby people were recruited and promoted by those who were not going to be their direct managers. Successful candidates were put onto a waiting list to fill vacancies as they arose, regardless of whether it was at the time, in the place or of the type of work wanted by the individual. The new arrangements also weaken the concept of a unified civil
service, as any post in the civil service can, in theory, be filled by any eligible civil servant or outsider. However, the *Career Management and Succession Planning Study* (Cabinet Office, 1993) makes it clear that the traditional values of the British civil service could be combined with more flexible approaches to careers.

One of the most distinctive characteristics of the British civil service is its experience of attracting and developing the best university graduates through the fast-stream scheme. Fast-stream entry is designed to recruit people with potential to reach the highest levels in the civil service. Management of fast-streamers was fully centralised with the establishment of a fast-stream scheme in 1983. Although in the course of the Next Steps reforms more responsibilities were transferred to particular departments, fast-streamers are still recruited centrally. Authors such as Chapman (1994, p. 604) have argued that a common recruitment scheme for all departments seems likely to produce results that are better than departments could achieve individually. However, departments are made responsible for developing individually tailored training for their recruits, and especially for ensuring that they acquire transferable skills.

Fast-stream graduates, consequently, face much more insecure career paths than their predecessors. Mobility of fast-streamers can become more difficult with the increased decentralisation and diversity of employment patterns in the civil service. The *Civil Service: Continuity and Change, White Paper* (Cabinet Office, 1994c) made a commitment to better development of staff, affirming: ‘The Civil Service needs to make better use of its most important resource – the staff – by providing the prospect of a career with a good employer, offering challenge and reward.’ However, the rapid pace of change and the wide range of reforms raise problems for recruiting and retaining good people in top civil service jobs, as the traditional civil service incentives such as job security and advancement possibilities decrease. The White Paper (Cabinet Office, 1994c) also makes it clear that ‘civil servants of the future are likely to have had or to expect to have outside experience. There will be more movement in and out of the Civil Service at all levels’. With the increasing movement in and out of the civil service, it is questionable whether the fast-stream scheme under the open civil service makes sense at all, as fast-streamers will have to compete with their counterparts from the private sector for the highest positions in the civil service.
From another perspective, the fast-stream scheme with its excellent training opportunities may become a starting point for careers in sectors other than the public service.

Another important Next Steps change in the personnel policies was the removal of Treasury control over pay policies. The Treasury controls the size of the wages bill, although agencies and departments have their own pay systems. The new flexible pay agreements provide performance-related pay, and special pay additions where there are particular recruitment and retention difficulties. In several cases, the pay of the chief executive of an agency is tied to the achievement of its key objectives. Managers are given the right to change pay rates to reflect regional variations in the labour market and the diversity of work in the civil service. It is clear that both departments and agencies have moved some distance from traditional civil service pay and personnel management practices. As agencies develop their own pay systems and as their cultures diverge, it will become increasingly difficult for staff to move around departments and/or agencies. Even the ‘substance’ of previously standardised grades may be different as departments also establish their own grading systems.

Mobility in the civil service has been greatly valued as a support for the development of a common civil service culture since the beginning of the twentieth century. The aim of mobility is to promote the exchange of ideas and experience and to provide civil servants with a broader outlook on the civil service and society. Moreover, the use of secondments and on-loan arrangements enables departments and agencies to make their work more flexible in completing fixed-term projects and other temporary tasks. The Career Management and Succession Planning Study (Cabinet Office, 1993) confirms that ‘departments should give continued priority to schemes which provide for interchange between the Civil Service and other sectors’, and the Development and Training for Civil Servants (Cabinet Office, 1996) states that ‘secondments and non-executive appointments into the Civil Service will continue to be encouraged. Such exchanges contribute towards better communication and a better mutual understanding of the needs of government and business. But, just as importantly, they bring fresh insights, specialist skills and different attitudes into the process of government itself’. However, different kinds of on-loan arrangements,
secondsments and other forms of temporary transfer from a permanent employer to another public or private sector organisation are likely to become highly complex as differences between departments and agencies increase, an issue raised in the interviews with British civil servants examined in Chapter 6.

Temporary movement out and early resignation were almost unknown in the higher levels of the British civil service until the 1980s. However, during the 1990s, government departments announced staff cuts in response to ministerial demands to reduce the size of the civil service and develop flatter management structures. As a result of efficiency measures starting in 1979, the number of civil servants which peaked at 748,000 in 1976, fell below 500,000 in 1996. Civil servants who have been made 'redundant' have received outplacement support: departments have signed contracts with outplacement companies, and civil servants have been put in touch with alternative employers. The Civil Service College provides outplacement training programmes, so that public sector employees will be equipped with transferable skills that will help them to find a job in the private sector.

In the 1980s and 90s, significant changes occurred in the career patterns and expectations of British civil servants. Previous career expectations are being adjusted, and civil servants face uncertain futures, as clearly demonstrated by the case studies of British civil servants in Chapter 6. On the one hand, recent changes have made it necessary to re-evaluate careers and sometimes whole lives. On the other, individual members of staff have gained more responsibility for the development of their own careers, and line managers have gained more responsibility for choosing their own staff. However, the question remains as to whether the 'freedom' of departments, agencies and managers is theoretical or a reality, and whether, by breaking up the unified civil service, civil servants' attitudes and their ethos will be affected in the long-run. According to Dowding (1995, p. 71), the major thrust of the Next Steps programme was the break-up of the unified civil service. Dunsire (1995) has described the characteristics of traditional public administration, identifying as one of the main features that 'employment practices including promotions, grading, salary scales and retirement are standardised throughout the public service' (p. 27). These standard terms and conditions have been eroded by delegation of responsibility from
the Treasury and Cabinet Office to departments and agencies. The processes of decentralisation, delegation and devolution constitute a movement away from the traditional, centralised and unitary civil service towards what has been described as a much looser federation of reasonably discrete organisational entities, each with its own ethos and sub-cultures (Pyper, 1995, p. 181). Thus the future of the civil service ethos as one of the main motivators in the civil service is being called into question. It can also be argued that, within a smaller and more diverse civil service, even the term 'civil servant' might become meaningless. Government employees are likely to identify themselves with their particular agency or department rather than with the civil service as such.

The aim of the Civil Service: Continuity and Change, White Paper (Cabinet Office, 1994c) was to maintain a balance between the traditional values of the civil service and the concepts of New Public Management by distinguishing between two sets of values: continuity and change. The values identified in the Northcote-Trevelyan Report, such as political impartiality, high standards of honesty, fairness and objectivity and recruitment on merit, remain valid, although they are applied in a very different and much more diverse environment. At the same time, the establishment of a new unified Senior Civil Service (at Grade 5 level and above since April 1996) aims to form a cohesive group at the top of the civil service able to retain the traditional civil service values, including the unity of the service. It is debatable whether the aims of continuity and change are contradictory. However, although the Next Steps' reforms started a decade ago, it is still difficult to analyse their impact. So far bureaucratic inertia has been strong enough to enable traditional practices in the civil service to continue, such as regular promotions, mobility and training. Moreover, not all departments and agencies have introduced the reform initiatives at the same pace. The transfer from a closed to an open system of civil service is increasingly affecting civil service careers and the debate about its strengths and weaknesses remains an important issue.
THE ESTONIAN CIVIL SERVICE

In Estonia, it is not possible to talk about deep historical traditions of the state and the gradual emergence of modern forms of government. The historical development of the Estonian civil service has meant for centuries the dominance of the civil services of the states occupying Estonia. The exceptions are the two periods of independent statehood, 1918-40 and 1991 to the present. This division provides an overview of the development of the Estonian civil service, with particular emphasis placed on the period 1991-98.

The Estonian civil service before 1940

From the beginning of the 13th century, political power in Estonia belonged to the German crusaders and the King of Denmark. In the wars of the 16th century, Estonian territory was divided between Denmark, Sweden, Russia and Poland. In the 17th century, the King of Sweden ruled Estonia and, in 1710, Estonia was incorporated into the Russian Empire. Civil servants of that time were elected according to their loyalty to the ruling power. However, the privileged position that the German nobles had occupied since the 13th century was also recognised by the Russian state and, thus, further solidified. Until 1918, power at local level in Estonia was implemented by the German nobility. The administrative and judicial power in self-government was also exercised by the German oligarchy. Despite a 'period of national awakening', from 1860 to 1885, Sootla and Roots (1997, p. 3) claim that the official language for government offices was German until the 1880s, and Russian from the 1880s until the rise of the Republic of Estonia in 1918. Venna and Higgins (1994, p. 1) argue that, at the end of the 19th century, almost all public transactions were conducted in Russian, and Russian citizens were appointed to senior administrative posts. Consequently, there was no justification for speaking about Estonian public servants as a self-identified social and professional group.

The independent Republic of Estonia was proclaimed by the Estonian Representative Assembly in 1918. According to the Constitution adopted in 1920, Estonia was a
democratic parliamentary republic. The Constitution provided for a one-chamber parliament and accorded the executive branch only limited power. All German or Russian legal acts which were not changed by new laws remained in force. Some continuity was ensured in the civil service as well. The development of the civil service during the first Republic was dominated by a highly legalistic approach, which was understandable since the civil service had to be established for a new state. The Civil Service Law (1925), Law on the Composition of Government Offices (1927) and Law on Civil Servants Pay (1935) were adopted by Parliament. The development of Estonia's own administrative law was influenced by the research of Professor A. T. Kliimmann of the University of Tartu, who later became a founder of the Institute of State Officials which functioned until the Soviet occupation.

The Civil Service Law divided state employees into statutory civil servants and contract employees. Civil servants were recruited on a permanent basis. The general requirements for becoming a civil servant were stipulated by law (Estonian citizenship, knowledge of the Estonian language, education, minimum age and health). However, in recruiting civil servants, competence, honesty and loyalty to the state were essential. Examinations were conducted to assess these qualifications. Priority in recruitment was given to those enrolled for military service and to people included in the pool of civil service candidates (the so-called 'reserve' of civil servants). No open competition was required by law. Civil servants enjoyed public support which expected lawfulness, social guarantees, competitive salaries and promotional opportunities. Although a number of career principles were involved, the civil service system was open. It was possible for anybody aged over twenty with primary education to enter the civil service, even at the top ranks.

*The Estonian civil service under Soviet rule (1940-91)*

The Republic of Estonia was occupied by and annexed to the Soviet Union in 1940. The state institutions that had been established by the first Republic of Estonia were replaced by new ones compatible with Communist ideology and Soviet bureaucracy. During the Soviet period, the administrative system of Estonia can be characterised by
a number of specific features. Sootla and Roots (1997, p. 3) describe the system as over-politicised: political loyalty had high priority, and strict ideological control was exercised over personnel and decisions. The civil service was not 'professional' in that it did not depend on specialised training and competence, and did not operate in accordance with high ethical standards. The professional ethics of bureaucrats was equated with commitment to the Communist ideology. The main form of in-service training was party-political training. As knowledge of the Estonian language was not required, the Russian language prevailed in communication both inside and outside public offices.

Strategic decision-making took place not in Estonia but in Moscow. This laid a basis for extremely centralised administration of the public sector, which did not take account of historical, regional or cultural differences, and did not consider the differences between ministries. Decisions on implementation issues were taken in Estonia, but mainly by the Communist Party rather than state institutions. Employees of state institutions were not supposed to serve the country's citizens but to carry out instructions from the Communist Party. No incentives were given to make public offices more efficient or to involve citizens or civil servants in discussions on the improvement of the provision of services. The outcome of Soviet traditions, written and unwritten rules and practices was alienation of officials from citizens and of citizens from the state.

Sootla and Roots (1997, p. 3) argue that radical changes took place in administrative personnel in the 1940s and 50s. The majority of civil servants of the Republic of Estonia were forced to leave the service. Top civil servants were exterminated, while many of the medium-level clerks were sentenced and jailed. Jobs in the new administrative apparatus were, to a large extent, filled by Russian-speaking officials from different parts of the Soviet Union who were not familiar with local traditions, language and culture. Titma (1996, p. 53) claims that, in order to ensure that the entire ruling apparatus remained loyal to the Soviet Union, Moscow shipped in more than 100,000 Russians during the 1940s to fill the ranks of the nomenklatura. A number of ethnic Estonians born and brought up in Russia were also sent to Estonia to take up administrative and managerial jobs. The third group of post-war recruits consisted of
Red Army veterans who had proved their loyalty to the Soviet regime. These groups filled a number of key administrative, industrial and political positions in Estonia until it regained its independence. However, by the mid-1960s, the increase in the number of people of local origin in the bureaucracy resulted in greater acknowledgement of local interests and in the development of limited aspirations to contribute to the development of Estonia under the existing regime. Sootla and Roots (1997, p. 5) argue that, while in the 1950s the local officials clearly represented Moscow’s interests in Estonia, after the 1960s several officials increasingly started to represent Estonia’s interests in their contacts with Moscow.

During Soviet rule, it was not necessary to establish a specific legal status for people working for the government because the majority of institutions and companies were owned by the state. People in the government worked under the same conditions as other employees and were subject to the general employment act. The state itself was not an employer as such. Each ministry and administrative agency was an independent employer, and people had contracts with their respective organisations. The civil service under the Communist regime was composed of people who entered at an early age at relatively low levels in the hierarchy and spent their working lives in the civil service. Formal education from a university, technical or pedagogical institute enabled graduates to enter the civil service at higher ranks, which was a crucially important advantage because promotion opportunities were limited and depended largely on seniority. However, a number of officials with only elementary or secondary education also managed to work their way up to the top through civil service ranks.

Titma (1996, p. 68) argues that, being a member of the Communist Party was an obligation an individual had to fulfil at a certain point in his or her professional career. Anyone whose party loyalty was questioned had to face the prospect of losing future career security. In general, job security was very strong under the Soviet system: people had no fear of losing their jobs and becoming unemployed. Communist ideology also did not encourage mobility between jobs and employers, it was usual for people to have lifetime employment with just one employer. It was almost impossible to fire an official because of poor performance. Performance appraisal was merely symbolic and was based mainly on the assessment of ideological
matters. In extreme cases, a compulsory transfer was made to a comparable position. Sootla and Roots (1997, p. 4) claim that a variety of reasons were used for dismissing officials, such as divorce, marriage to a foreigner and church attendance by officials or their relatives.

The civil service system offered a clear example of a patronage system with no regard for principles of merit. Promotion was carried out in line with a combination of seniority and loyalty to Communist ideas. Sootla and Roots (1997, p. 4) point out that, to succeed in public office, personal loyalty to an immediate supervisor was as important as loyalty to the regime. Lauristin (1997, p. 38) argues that a career was not viewed as the result of individual achievement but depended on ‘being moved forward’ by someone else’s mighty hand, as a result of obedience to official ideology and personal loyalty to the master. Social mobility above the level of rank-and-file workers was, as a rule, directly related to official recognition of an individual’s political virtues. Open competitions and competitive examinations were completely unknown in the Soviet era. Civil servants had no specific status or social guarantees, staff were to a large extent dependent on their supervisors’ whims, and their opinions might sometimes override legal norms. This caused selective implementation of legislation depending on whose interests were involved and on instructions received from the leaders of the Communist Party. Patronage and prevailing ideological principles were the main reasons for the civil service’s inefficiency and public disrepute. Principles based on merit were absent from the civil service until the beginning of the 1990s. All these factors led authors on the subject (Drechsler, 1995; Titma, 1996; Sootla and Roots, 1997) to argue that Soviet bureaucracy and administrative culture have caused many of the problems that the Estonian civil service is facing at present.

Estonian public administration since 1991

On 20 August 1991, Estonia declared its independence from the Soviet Union, marking the end of 50 years of Soviet occupation. It was necessary to build up the state, its legal, political and economic structures virtually from scratch. As Lauristin
and Vihalemm (1997, p. 100) explain, the first task after the break with the Soviet Empire was to establish constitutional order, the second was to achieve financial sustainability, and the third was to gain control over Estonian territory. There was (and still is) the need for restructuring and downsizing the old structures on the one hand, and for creating the new structures required by an independent state. In this respect, the development was different from that in Central and Eastern European countries which already possessed the attributes of independent statehood. The state structures inherited from Soviet Estonia were neither comprehensive – because many functions belonged to the central government in Moscow – nor compatible with new demands. Therefore, in addition to the reshaping of political and economic institutions, the new government had to reform the administrative apparatus itself.

In 1991-92, important preconditions for independent statehood were established: the Constitution, national currency, diplomatic relations, tax, customs, national defence and border-guard systems. The Constitution of the Republic of Estonia was adopted on 28 June 1992. It determined the principle of legal continuity of the Republic of Estonia and reflected the idea of legal restoration. The Constitution establishes parliamentary democracy, a weak presidency, the clear separation of powers, the rule of law, and basic human and social rights for all residents of Estonia. During the first democratically elected parliament, the aim was to institute the rule of law in order to move away from a system based on personal relationships and political manipulations characteristic of the Soviet era. The first free elections in September 1992 brought to power a coalition led by the Isamaa (Pro Patria) party. Its central slogan was ‘Clean up the Place’, which meant that leaders from previous times had to be dismissed. Titma (1996, p. 67) has criticised the slogan, arguing that, in a small nation such as Estonia, the exclusion of professional people (judges, police, civil servants, managers) from the operation of society would mean the loss of their crucially important expertise. Nevertheless, the intention behind the slogan was carried out to a large degree in the emerging private sector, but a large part of public administration remained untouched by deep-seated reforms, since Estonian governments did not pay much attention to civil service issues in the early 1990s.
When analysing the development of the Estonian civil service, account has to be taken of the fact that the revolutionary events of the early 1990s were happening simultaneously at all levels of the Estonian society. Together with the restitution of Estonia’s statehood and establishment of its own public administration, the newly created (restructured) government organisations had to guarantee the normal functioning of society and the carrying out of radical reforms in numerous areas of life (monetary reform, property reform, land reform, privatisation, return of unlawfully expropriated property to legal owners, drafting of new legislation). Hence, within a very short period of time, a huge number of extraordinarily complicated and time-consuming tasks had to be implemented. During a decade of independence, the Estonian private sector has made considerable progress towards becoming a market economy. The public sector has had more difficulties in adapting its structures. While facilitating reforms in other sectors, the Estonian civil service itself has remained systemically unreformed. By the end of the 1990s, it is evident that the development of the civil service is far behind the economic reforms initiated, and it may act as a brake on continuing economic reforms and further stabilisation.

Everything associated with the state had a bad reputation during the Soviet era. The administrative culture, the ethics of bureaucrats and attitudes formed under Soviet rule are very difficult to change. Many of the paradigms and stereotypes of this period have survived. Drechsler (1997, p. 7) claims that ‘in Estonia, there is still far too much traditional, Soviet-style bureaucracy. If the Soviet Estonia lives on anywhere, it is often in the branches of public administration that come into contact with citizens and other people’. He (1995, p. 112) argues elsewhere that

Estonia’s most serious problem is probably that there is no prevailing state identification on the part of her citizens. There is no étatisme at all, not even a concept of state. While this might actually sound attractive to the opponents of ‘state’, it leads to serious problems that Estonia cannot afford. These include the lack of automatic loyalty of the citizens, co-operation within the government, or true respect for legal or administrative decisions. (Drechsler, 1995, p. 112)

For Drechsler (1995, p. 116), this is a transitional phenomenon, so the fundamental challenge to Estonia still remains restoration or creation of the concept of the state.
The lack of broader objectives for developing the state and society as a whole and corresponding strategies have caused the underdevelopment of government institutions and the civil service. According to the Constitution, the executive power rests with the government, which exercises that power directly through ministries and government agencies. However, the objectives and activities of government organisations are not well designed and sometimes not well known by the larger public and civil servants themselves; the distribution of power among state institutions is not fixed substance-wise but only formally. The formation and restructuring of ministries and agencies do not have an explicit internal logic, for their real functions and scope of activities have been weakly analysed. Therefore, the reform of government institutions has mainly been a mechanical reshuffling of existing institutions by reducing their functions or merging them. The spheres of power of different government organisations do not always link into one another. There are ‘grey areas’ between them, which are not covered by any government unit. The distribution of power is, therefore, frequently dependent on individuals, and spheres of influence are subjective. They can be extended or narrowed down according to the pressure of interest groups and lobbying, or what an influential person is interested in administering, as shown in Chapter 6. Consequently, administrative performance is inconsistent and inefficient.

The reform of public administration in Estonia has mainly been associated with the reform of local government. Therefore, the reform has adopted a ‘negative’ stance towards the development of central government, the civil service included. As the result of the reform, a number of responsibilities have been transferred from state to local authorities; privatisation and contracting out are adopted as a device to reduce the role of the public sector. Whereas a shift has occurred towards greater decentralisation, the centralised nature of decision-making still continues to be a fact of everyday administration. The great majority of decisions are taken by a minister personally, including daily operational decisions with an apparent reluctance to delegate responsibility. Control over the state budget is not well developed, which hinders the introduction of more advanced decentralised budgeting techniques. This, in turn, limits the use of decentralised personnel management in the public sector.
As administrative reform has remained in the background, in contrast to economic reforms, the organisation of administrative development has been neither rational nor consistent. In 1995, a Ministerial Committee for Public Administration Development was established as a highly formal unit to discuss single issues of administration. The Committee was restructured in 1997, when the Cabinet Committee on the Administrative Reform was created under the leadership of the Prime Minister. The new Committee has met very rarely and has discussed broad questions of public administration without having had a major impact on the functioning of public administration. In addition, several government units are engaged in various aspects of the administrative reform: the Ministry of Finance is responsible for the development of the central government organisation, finance, grading and salary systems; the Ministry of Justice is responsible for the development of public law; and the State Chancellery is responsible for the development of civil service training. There have been a number of discussions on whether the central management of public administration should be concentrated in the State Chancellery, Ministry of the Interior or Ministry of Finance. In July 1995, the Department of Public Administration Development was established in the State Chancellery with the aim of co-ordinating public administration in Estonia. Because its purposes were poorly defined and due to problems with staffing (the lack of committed and qualified individuals), the Department was discarded early in 1996. In 1998, a new Public Administration Bureau was established in the State Chancellery, but had not started its work by the end of 1998. Civil service issues were thus managed in a very fragmented way, with imperfect co-ordination between different government units.

In the winter of 1997, three ministers of the acting government produced a radical proposal to make the public sector more efficient. It indicated the seriousness of the problem and, for the first time in the history of independent Estonia, drew the attention of a larger audience to the urgent need for public administration reform. As a result of this proposal, the Expert Committee on Public Administration Reform was established in June 1997 with the aim of working out a general strategy for administrative reform in Estonia. The Committee was led by a minister without portfolio, Peep Aru. The outcome of the Committee's work is the Aru Report (1998),
entitled *Avaliku halduse arendamise alused* (A Concept for Public Administration Development).

The ‘Concept’ states that the public administration reform is aimed at creating an efficient, citizen-oriented civil service. The main themes, proposed in the ‘Concept’ for the achievement of this goal are the following:
- decreasing the role of the state through privatisation and contracting-out;
- increasing the policy-making competence of central government;
- improving the quality of the civil service.

By the beginning of February 1999, the ‘Concept’ had not had any noticeable impact on the development of Estonian public administration. The ‘Concept’ presents a rather simplified view of administrative reform and includes neither a broad strategy for its development nor an action plan for the reform. Opinions have been expressed in the Estonian press that the original proposal of the three ministers was more comprehensive than the ‘Concept’ under discussion, and that the ‘Concept’ would not have any substantive outcomes.

As central initiatives for civil service development have not produced any fundamental change, very diverse working methods and levels of development in government organisations have occurred. The problems caused by the instability, inefficiency and negative image of central government have created a situation where government institutions have tended to become more and more reactive, and civil servants are increasingly susceptible to different initiatives for administrative reform. As no clear conception of government structures and functions has been elaborated, the absence of a basic consensus over policy directions has made the activities of government organisations unstable: frequent sporadic attempts at reform have created quite a tense atmosphere in the administration and resistance to further changes.

Estonian public employment is regulated by a legal framework adopted in 1995-96, consisting of the Public Service Act, the Government of the Republic Act and the State Public Servant Official Title and Salary Scale Act. However, the legal aspects of the civil service development have often been overemphasised. The aim has been to
establish rules rather than to achieve results and plan efficient ways of doing so. The problem also lies in the selective implementation of laws because of a general disregard for laws and regulations inherited from the Soviet time. As Estonian administrative tradition is still based on Soviet culture, the new legislation has altered the general legal framework but not the civil service culture. A good legal basis is definitely an important, but not sufficient, condition for successful public administration. Too legalistic an approach may lead to bureaucratic inefficiency as a result of following purely legalistic criteria, without adopting a more comprehensive approach involving quality of service, efficiency and effectiveness.

*Development of the Estonian civil service*

The development of the Estonian civil service has been influenced by the civil services of Germany and the Nordic countries, and also by the administrative culture inherited from the Soviet time. At the beginning of independent statehood no strong bureaucratic restraints existed in Estonia to endanger administrative reforms, as in countries with long civil service traditions and well-established administrative cultures. However, Estonia has not taken full advantage of the opportunity to establish a contemporary civil service. Ideas behind civil service development have been derived from different visions and opinions but not from systematic knowledge and analysis. If one examines the range of policies and the expertise and advanced techniques available, ample evidence can be found to show that personnel policies in the Estonian private sector are well in advance of those in the public sector.

Tremendous changes have occurred not only in the laws and structures governing the Estonian civil service but also in its personnel. Estonia had 24,000 civil servants in 1997, and the number has steadily increased despite the intentions of the government to reduce it. Officials have left the service, and new staff have been recruited during the reorganisation of ministries, and due to political changes. Turnover has been high, especially in 1992-93. In the absence of official statistics, questionnaires and surveys conducted in the Estonian civil service have to be relied on for data or trends. According to Venna and Higgins (1994, p. 12), the proportion of newly recruited staff...
varied from 13% to 75% in different ministries in 1991-93. Sootla and Roots (1997, p. 5) have found that, by spring 1994, 73% of Estonian top officials had held their positions for less than three years. Altogether, 37% of civil servants were replaced during the first years of independence. At the same time, the number of young officials grew rapidly: 31% of employees of the Ministry of Finance, 28% of employees in the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Defence, and 48% of the staff in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were under the age of 30, while the Minister of Foreign Affairs was 28 and the Prime Minister was 33 years old in 1994. Titma et al. (1998, p. 126) claim that less than half of those employed by the government in 1992 remained in the same occupation in 1997.

However, neither the remaining civil servants from the Soviet past nor the incoming officials have been able to develop professionalism and the other qualifications required from a contemporary civil service. The Soviet civil service experience turned out to be of no use whatsoever, and conflicted with the needs of a contemporary civil service. Tallo (1995, p. 127) argues that, for incoming top civil servants, trust was more important than competence, and most of the higher civil service appointments were made not according to a scale of competence but on the basis of party loyalty. This created the danger that, with a change of government, the top positions in the civil service would change as well, although they were designed to provide continuity.

The development of the Public Service Act (PSA) started in 1993 with the intention of defining the legal status of civil servants under new circumstances. Prior to the adoption of PSA, some informal discussions took place, but they were not institutionalised. The next stage of discussions began after it became evident that the financial and organisational aspects of PSA had not been taken into account. In sum, no clear strategy was settled on for the development of the civil service. Since it is unclear what kind of civil service would best meet the interests of the Estonian state, it is also difficult to work out a personnel policy for civil servants, principles for recruitment, promotion, pay and training. When the PSA came into force on 1 January 1996, everybody employed by central and local government agencies automatically received the status of public servants, without passing any examinations or assessment. Consequently, PSA has more impact on newcomers to the civil service.
than existing civil servants. However, PSA is a significant landmark in the history of the Estonian civil service, despite its shortcomings. It determines the abolition of the patronage system and the introduction of recruitment and promotion on merit, competitive examinations, salary scales, regular appraisal and common grading throughout the civil service. The PSA is based on the principles of a position system with a few elements drawn from a career system.

Personnel management in the civil service is, to a large degree, decentralised in Estonia. Every ministry and executive agency is responsible for the recruitment, promotion, performance appraisal and work organisation of their officials. Government organisations are free to decide upon their personnel management within the general legal framework. The exception from the decentralised system is the senior civil service. The Estonian civil service has centrally organised open recruitment, competitive examinations and performance appraisal at the senior level to provide the service with highly competent officials elected on the basis of merit. Open competitions are mandatorily announced in Riigi Teataja (a collection of legal acts which are openly available), and often in daily newspapers. Senior civil servants are appointed, evaluated and promoted centrally through the Competition and Evaluation Committee of Higher Public Servants at the State Chancellery. All other officials are recruited and evaluated by the Competition and Evaluation Committees of every ministry or executive agency. In practice, medium-level positions are sometimes filled through open competition as well, although it is not mandatory as with the senior civil service. Government organisations also have autonomy in the areas of training, probationary periods and promotion.

Civil servants are recruited on a permanent basis as a rule; fixed-term contracts are used for temporary staff only. Rolling contracts are virtually unknown. Working conditions are highly standardised, with limited opportunities for a more personalised approach. Job security is high, dismissal is very unusual and puts enormous financial pressure on ministries. Performance appraisal schemes provide for dismissal in cases of unsatisfactory performance, but it is not possible at the time of writing to predict the effects, since the periodic performance appraisals are due to start in 1999-2000.
Civil service grades and salary scales are settled centrally for all civil servants. The State Public Servant Official Title and Salary Scale Act defines three basic civil service categories (senior, intermediate and junior levels), and job and salary classification for each category. The Act leaves a relatively large amount of discretion for every government organisation to define a salary rank for each job. As a result, salaries differ considerably between government organisations, and the centralised salary system cannot be characterised as consistent or transparent, as different ranks are not defined clearly. In addition to their salaries, civil servants have a number of benefits depending on their seniority, academic credentials and language skills. However, the civil service commands low prestige, and the level of remuneration is not competitive with salaries in the private sector. Professionals in the public sector are paid less well than those in the private sector when factors such as qualifications are held constant. It is difficult to recruit newly qualified staff, partly due to the very low unemployment rate in the country (1-3% in 1991-97).

The Public Service Act leaves recruitment open for all posts in the civil service, the senior civil service included. Serving officials are not given an advantage in competition for vacancies, but they are always welcome to apply. Every civil servant is responsible for his or her career. However, this is not a conscious government policy, but rather the inability of the state and ministries to deal with the career development of civil servants. Departments as sub-units of ministries are generally quite small: occasionally, there are about 10-15 people in one department, but some departments have only 1-3 members of staff. Career ladders consist of 2-4 levels, and some levels may not be filled. Little movement occurs between ministries; there is no policy on mobility, rotation, secondments or on-loan arrangements.

The Estonian civil service is at the initial stage of development. By the end of the 1990s, civil servants were becoming aware of their status in society. Increasingly they were tending to stand up for their interests and resist more radical changes. Civil service reform cannot be developed independently, but is a part of a broader administrative reform and the concept of state. Estonia is going through a critical period for the development of the state in which the lack of a well-prepared
administrative reform is becoming a major barrier for further development of the economy.

Careers in periods of transition

Changes in Estonian society have clearly affected the situation in the labour market. A quickly developing private sector has created an enormous number of new jobs requiring new qualifications and providing interesting opportunities for people. The transition period has created new forms of life, new social relations and new structural constraints for personal failure or success. Titma and Helemäe (1996, p. 37) argue that the idea of a job providing opportunities for career advancement was not supported by official propaganda during the Communist regime, since the concept was alien to Communist ideology. The idea of a career was thought to be negative, and to have an individualistic and egoistic connotations, which led to the devaluing of all aspects of careers. In the Soviet period, people had little incentive to work hard. They placed a high value on the possibilities for personal development and self-expression at work, the opportunity of pursuing a career was much less important.

A number of scholars have divided the population in transition countries between 'winners' and 'losers'. Lauristin (1997, p. 40) argues that certain groups seem to be among 'losers' not only in Estonia but in all of Eastern Europe: pensioners, workers in big industries and agricultural areas as well as the old intelligentsia. For people who had not been accustomed to think of themselves as competitors in the labour market or elsewhere in public life, this new situation of uncertainty and risks was one of the main causes of 'transitional cultural shock' (Lauristin, 1997, p. 38). Manning (1997, p. 4) divides the people in the Estonian public sector into three large groups. The first involves 'old line thinkers' whose career development took place under the former Communist system. At the opposite extreme are the 'young entrepreneurs' who have a higher level of education. In the middle is a third group, the 'transitional generation' who started their careers under the old system, but are now faced with an entirely different set of career circumstances. The winners within these groups are
experts in learning and adapting to new terms and concepts, while the losers are unwilling or unable to adapt to new styles of doing their work.

The shift from a planned to a market economy has created many career opportunities, and a great deal of uncertainty and ambiguity regarding the types of careers available. Transition periods can be characterised by an extensive growth of organisations. DiPrete and Soule (1986, p. 299) argue that, in the circumstances of economic growth, people are able to move up very rapidly. The pool of internal candidates is relatively small compared with the pool of outside candidates. Therefore, organisational growth may result in a decrease in the proportion of vacancies filled by promotion, even though it would probably increase the absolute level of opportunity for lower-level employees. Titma et al. (1998, p. 127) argue that there is substantial evidence of extensive mobility in the five years between 1992 and 1997, with few standard barriers based on education or the divide between white- and blue-collar workers. The high degree of occupational mobility in the first five years of marketisation in Estonia is clear evidence that the market is re-evaluating people's skills and abilities. Shake-ups in the private and public sectors cause uncertainty, but they create new opportunities for non-senior staff and young people. Changes allow them headroom to grow and develop.

Economic growth has created a glut of workers with a certain level of experience, who compete for a limited number of jobs requiring similar education and experience. On the one hand, a growing number of highly educated, highly motivated people are seeking top jobs, which are largely held by people far from retirement. These positions are unlikely to become vacant for a very long time. On the other hand, fast developers may plateau for years in their current positions after rapid career movement early in their careers. Consequently, transition periods provide many opportunities which may result in unfulfilled career hopes, career plateaus and dissatisfaction for many people.

The development of civil service careers in periods of transition is further influenced by the ambiguity in the concept of the state. In a period of increasing career opportunities and frequent career changes, the public sector may face the situation
where 'winners' in the labour market move to the private sector which can provide competitive salaries and greater growth prospects. This may leave the public sector with 'losers' from transition which, in turn, may become a great barrier to designing and implementing administrative reform. Well-developed public personnel policies may help to avoid such a situation and make the civil service an attractive place for the best people in the labour market.

Conclusions

Chapter 5 provides an overview of the evolution of the British and Estonian civil services, with particular emphasis on their development in the 1990s. Although the histories and traditions of the two civil services differ in many important respects, their development in the 1990s shows several common features. Both countries have been moving towards job systems based on the openness of the civil service and decentralised personnel management, which distinguishes the British and Estonian civil services from several other European states, namely Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Greece and Spain, which operate closed career systems (Auer et al., 1996). While much attention has been paid to the preparation and implementation of the civil service reform in the UK, reforms in Estonia have been more sporadic. The development of Estonian public administration has been strongly affected by large-scale change and other substantial reforms in society, which has meant that the development of the civil service has not been a priority for government.

Chapter 5 provides background information for the study of civil service careers in Chapter 6. Several issues raised in Chapter 5, such as structural changes in civil services, decentralised career management, the development of open systems, career mobility, responsibility for career management and stability vs change, will be tested in the next chapter. While the analysis in Chapter 5 is based on previous studies and
documentary materials, Chapter 6 examines the attitudes and behaviour of British and Estonian civil servants with regard to ongoing civil service reforms, and the implications of these reforms for the management of careers.
Chapter 6  Case studies of British and Estonian civil service careers

Generalisations cannot easily be made about civil service careers across countries because they are determined by a large number of factors which differ from one national context to another. Chapter 5 identifies differences in the historical development of the British and Estonian civil services, but finds similarities in the outcomes of the civil service reforms being implemented in the two countries in the 1990s. The overview provided of the development of open civil services based on job systems in both countries affords a general framework for further analysis of civil service careers. The intention in Chapter 6 is to conduct a comparative analysis of career development in two countries with similar civil service systems but very different sizes of civil services. Case studies were conducted in the UK and Estonia to provide empirical evidence for the two main research questions in the thesis: firstly, how careers relate to individual and institutional needs and interests in two countries at different stages of political and economic development, using an integrated approach to the analysis of careers; secondly, how careers differ between small and large states.

The chapter starts with the description of the research methodology for designing and analysing the case studies. The analytic procedure led to the identification of two main themes. In the first subdivision, the issues which represent the most widespread attributes of civil service careers described in Part I are analysed. Changes in civil service careers and in the responsibility for career development in the UK and Estonia are examined. Mobility within the civil service and between public and private sectors are considered. The second subdivision examines civil service careers in small and large states. Six key features are identified which distinguish careers in small civil services from those in large states. The differences between civil service careers in small and large states are further analysed in Part III.
Research methodology

The empirical research was based on a study of ministries (Estonia) and government departments (UK) on the one hand, and individual civil servants in these organisations on the other. The case studies were designed on the basis of an extensive literature review presented in Part I, which helped to identify important factors influencing careers. Documentary materials from both countries were carefully explored to gain an appreciation of the overall context of civil service careers as well as recent changes in career policies. In addition to the literature review and the study of documentary materials, the author drew on field observations during a short-term appointment in the British Cabinet Office in 1997 and on consulting experience in the State Chancellery of Estonia in 1997-98.

Prior to the interviewing, fairly informal discussions with officials were conducted with the aim of obtaining information about the concerns of civil servants regarding their careers, and to design the general framework for the in-depth interviews. Altogether 31 discussions were held in the UK and 23 in Estonia in the preparatory stage of the case studies.

The research was conducted as a series of case studies, each involving detailed, and in some cases repeated, interviews with civil servants, which provided a basis for the analysis. Interviewing was chosen as the primary data collection method for three reasons. First, it is well suited for an exploratory study where the goal is discovery rather than verification (Cronbach, 1975). Second, interviewing is also appropriate for providing detailed accounts of the long-term process of development of people and organisations, and to identify the dynamic nature of events. Third, interviewing is an effective method for gaining access to some of the important beliefs and assumptions that guide people’s behaviour and affect informal processes in organisations.

The study involved semi-structured interviews for which interview guides were prepared on the basis of previous research and discussions. The interviews were conducted between July 1997 and January 1998. The original panel consisted of eight people from Estonia and eight from the UK. Individuals were selected for the in-depth
interviews after the initial screening. Due to the exploratory and analytical nature of
the study, random selection of subjects was not used. The goal was to achieve a
purposeful variation among respondents selected because of their varied experiences.
In a few cases, the interviewee was chosen from among discussants in the earlier
batch. Since institutional and individual approaches to careers may differ, two sets of
interview guides were prepared (see Annex 1). Four people from both countries were
selected to reflect individual views and four were chosen to provide institutional
views on careers. Because of the small size of the sample, it was not possible to use
quantitative analysis to assess the relationship between different career issues. The
small number of in-depth interviews did, however, provide a sufficient basis for
raising problems and analysing individual and institutional careers, but it does not
allow broader generalisations to be made.

The Estonian respondents can be characterised as follows:
- female, aged 48, Head of Department
- male, aged 44, Head of Department
- female, aged 52, Head of Department
- female, aged 59, Head of Department
- female, aged 37, Head of Department
- female, aged 27, Senior Specialist, Financial Analyst
- male, aged 26, Senior Specialist, Lawyer
- male, aged 32, Senior Civil Servant, Adviser

The following British civil servants were interviewed:
- male, aged 52, Head of Branch
- female, aged 45, Head of Branch
- female, aged 31, Head of Branch, fast-streamer
- male, aged 59, Head of Branch
- female, aged 43, Senior Economist
- male, aged 29, Economic Adviser, fast-streamer
- male, aged 35, Senior Executive Officer
- female, aged 39, Senior Executive Officer
Each interview lasted for 1.5-2 hours, and all were carried out by the author. In conducting the interviews, an attempt was made to maintain informality while covering a standard set of questions. It was agreed with interviewees that their names and organisations would remain anonymous. Therefore, the remarks quoted in this chapter are not attributed. Interviews consisted of open-ended questions to allow the interviewees to tell their personal stories and give their own account of organisational policies. They were asked to feel free to express their feelings, views and opinions. If the interviewees did not spontaneously describe their career experiences in detail, the interviewer probed further to elicit more information about their work experiences and attitudes.

The questions used in the interviews, as well as spontaneous probes, were guided by two theoretical frameworks. The first was based on the integrated approach to careers analysed in Part I of the thesis. The second reflected previous research on small state administration examined in Part III. In addition to these theoretical frameworks, a specific a priori focus of the study was to analyse the understanding of respondents and their attitudes towards ongoing civil service reforms in their countries, and the implications of reforms for their careers. In this context, follow-up questions were particularly valuable in the interviews carried out in Estonia, because the amount of information available about civil service systems and the role of careers within these systems was considerably less than in the UK. On occasions, the interviewer was asked to explain specific terminology relating to the civil service. At the end of the interviews, all respondents were asked to complete a questionnaire which elicited factual information about their careers and the career policies of their organisations.

The interviewees who were asked about their individual careers were chosen from the same institutions as those where career policies were examined. Respondents worked either in the lower ranks of the senior civil service or in the upper ranks of the medium level. In the UK, half of the respondents came from Grade 7 (heads of branches); a few served as Senior Executive Officers and specialists on the economists track. In Estonia, the interviewees were either heads of departments or served in high positions in the medium level of the civil service (as senior specialists).
The selection of quite well-established individuals provided an opportunity to explore their previous careers. It was expected that individuals would have faced career choices in their lives and thought about the future of their careers. Respondents came from different gender and age groups. One British and two Estonian respondents were under 30 years old, while two British and two Estonian interviewees were over 50 years old. As recommended by Baron and Bielby (1986), the aim was to interview an approximately equal number of women and men in similar positions to offset gender effects which might be due to women holding different positions compared to men. In the UK, interviews were conducted with 4 male and 4 female respondents, the Estonian interviewees comprised 3 men and 5 women. All respondents possessed a university degree, although their work experience differed considerably. For instance, some interviewees were pure specialists (2 in the UK and 2 in Estonia), whereas others were generalists (6 in the UK and 6 in Estonia).

The study of individual careers addressed the following areas: 1) career history (jobs held, changes in responsibilities, work settings, reasons for making career or job changes, reactions to job and work situations); 2) current attitudes, career commitment, work motivation and satisfaction, job involvement and security; 3) individual plans for the future and career expectations; 4) career opportunities for different groups of people (generalists vs. specialists, public vs private sector experience); 5) promotion and career mobility, responsibility for career management; and 6) attitudes towards institutional career policies, work organisation and civil service reforms. Individuals were asked to fill out a detailed form describing their educational background, previous positions and employers. In addition, individual curricula vitae were requested.

In the research on institutions, official materials were carefully studied, such as white papers, policy papers and normative acts concerning career issues either at organisational or state level. Interviewees were selected from among those senior civil servants who worked on institutional career policies. Usually, they were heads of personnel units who represented organisational views on career development. In the UK, the Cabinet Office, Treasury, Department of Education and Lord Chancellor’s Office were chosen. In Estonia, the State Chancellery, Ministry of Finance, Ministry
of Education and Ministry of Social Affairs were selected. The first part of the study of institutions concentrated on current civil service reforms and the role of careers within these reforms. The stability and flexibility of institutions were discussed. In the second part, the respondents were asked to analyse previous and current career policies of organisations they were familiar with. The third part explored various areas of career management, such as responsibility for careers, recruitment and promotion, career mobility, tenure and competitiveness of the civil service within the labour market. The fourth part focused on the work organisation and the division of labour within organisations. Individuals representing their institutions were asked to fill out a written form about the general characteristics of their departments and departmental career policies.

Although individual and institutional approaches to careers were handled separately, the selected 'individuals' also spoke about organisational policies, and representatives of institutions gave several examples from their own personal experience. The interviews, therefore, provided a more integrated approach to the analysis of careers than was originally expected. Despite the concern that the interviewees might be reluctant to speak openly because of the nature of their positions, most were very communicative and sincere. The author was aware that both construction and subjectivity might occur. Based on attribution theory, Feldman (1989) has argued that, when using a retrospective approach, people will try to justify their past career decisions and, especially, career choices. They may also fail to connect choices made several years ago with their current perception of their careers. Most respondents had already developed a career mainly within their current organisations. However, they sometimes sought to present themselves as having a much stronger record than was actually the case. As some of the British and Estonian interviewees on institutional career policies were also the initiators, designers and implementers of these policies, they sometimes expressed excessive loyalty to specific institutional career policies. To avoid possible bias, an attempt was made to validate statements by comparing individual and institutional perspectives.

Respondents in both countries were not used to being asked questions about their individual careers and institutional career policies, which caused some inconsistency
in answers. Many Estonian and British respondents claimed that it was either the first or one of very few occasions on which they had been questioned about their own careers and career policies of their employers. At the time of the interviews, both countries were in the midst of civil service reforms, as shown in Chapter 5. The Estonian interviewees were obviously affected by the unstable environment and unpredictable future. The British civil servants were, however, better informed about the changes; they had a broader overview of what was happening and of how the civil service reform was affecting their careers.

Each interview was transcribed from tape recordings and written notes and summarised. In some cases, transcripts were discussed with the respondents to clarify their answers. In the first phase of the analysis, the summaries were examined, and the main areas of interest identified. In the next phase, the summaries were re-read and areas of interest marked. In order to maintain the integrated approach to careers, different sections of the summaries were not considered separately. The summaries were analysed qualitatively following the grounded theory approach discussed in Part I and Part III of the thesis. Reflections on individual and institutional careers were compared in the context of the main questions of the study.

The analysis of case studies is presented here in relation to two major themes: firstly, development of careers and career mobility in the British and Estonian civil services, and secondly, a comparison of civil service careers in small and large states.

*Development of civil service careers and career mobility*

The understanding of civil service careers in the UK and Estonia has changed since the late 1980s as part of broader administrative reforms in both countries. Respondents were asked to analyse the dynamics of career development and changes in the responsibility for careers. As mobility constitutes an important part of career studies, attention was paid to mobility within the civil service, and between public and private sectors.
Consequently, the following areas in the British and Estonian civil services are examined:

- changes in civil service careers;
- responsibility for career development;
- mobility within the civil service;
- career mobility between public and private sectors.

**Changes in civil service careers**

Interviews with British and Estonian civil servants revealed the scope and depth of changes that have taken place over the period from the mid-1980s to the late 90s. Interestingly, although British and Estonian civil service careers have evolved in very different environments, common features can be found. Both civil services have moved from centralised to decentralised management, from stable to more dynamic careers, from institutional to individual responsibility for careers. Two British civil servants described changes in civil service careers in the following terms:

I chose a career as a civil servant to help the people but also because the advertisement showed that this was a career, this was a ladder. Up to 10 years ago I would have expected by the time I retired to have got into one of the senior civil service grades. Now the prospects for a lot of people like myself of getting to that level have dropped considerably. When I joined in 1968 as a Clerical Officer, I was told on my first day: You look to be a reasonable sort of prospect. 40 years we look after you and you can expect to make Higher Executive Officer by the time you leave. By the time we reached the late 1970s, I had done less than 15 years and was well past being Higher Executive Officer. In 1979 we all knew that the good days were gone and our career aspirations were coming down across the whole service. Some people have left as a result of that. (British, male, aged 59, Head of Branch)

I do not think in the future people will be looking in the same way to the civil service in career terms. In the past, people like me – I joined in the 1970s – had the expectation that we would work in the civil service until we were 60. I recognised a couple of years ago that a lot of ambitious people who joined at the same time as I, had to reconsider their career expectations. It will be tempting for the civil service to attract people for much shorter terms, perhaps 3 or 5 years, to do specific jobs. They may work some periods in their life in public and other periods in the private sector. Perhaps a few years in the civil service will be contributing to a part of somebody’s career rather than having the entire career in the civil service. (British, male, aged 52, Head of Branch)

An Estonian civil servant who had also served in the state apparatus during the Soviet time expressed her views on the dynamics of careers in the following way:
Ten years ago the civil service operated as a closed system where career changes were basically unknown. The civil service has now opened up, labour turnover is much higher than in the past, young people have reached quite high positions. We have to work much harder than we used to; there is much more work to be done than ten years ago. (*Estonian, female, aged 59, Head of Department*)

British civil servants in particular expressed their concern about career security. However, all interviewees in both countries agreed that career security made people too relaxed in their jobs. Respondents were very critical of previous practice in the British civil service:

People are expected to work a lot harder than they did 10 years ago. You hear these people saying: Oh, I remember around the 70s work was wonderful. I think that was because there were too many people doing too little work. In other words, there used to be a huge comfort factor in working in the civil service. Even if you had someone who was not quite up to his or her job, there were all sorts of little niches here and there. People could be put into jobs where they did not have to do very much and where they could not cause very much damage. They just kept that work until they retired. Now the civil service is shrinking and there are more and more people after fewer vacancies. With restructuring and trimming down all of those little niches have disappeared. (*British, female, aged 45, Head of Branch*)

Job security was the thing that sold the civil service to a lot of people 20 years ago. People have become rather cocooned by the security of the civil service. Therefore the idea of leaving the civil service is somewhat frightening even though private companies pay you a lot more money. (*British, male, aged 35, Senior Executive Officer*)

Similar views were expressed by an Estonian civil servant who had also worked in the private sector:

There is certainly more job security in the public than in the private sector. But I think it is not good, because serious mistakes are easily forgiven. Performance is not as important as in the private sector. I do not know anybody who has been fired from the civil service because of poor performance. I actually do not know anybody at all who had been fired from the public sector, this would be a very exceptional case. (*Estonian, male, aged 44, Head of Department*)

All British and Estonian civil servants recognised the problems of closed career systems and were very realistic about the shortage of promotion opportunities and problems of career plateaus. Individual respondents claimed that a lifetime career with one employer would become boring and decrease their motivation. They were ready to change jobs and careers and expected their employers to accept that.
Civil service careers used to be considered careers for life. I do not think they can be, because there is such a plateau at Grade 7. It is difficult to get anywhere after that. If people see no way, they start looking wider. So it is still possible but it is increasingly difficult to have a civil service career for a life. And I am not sure that is what I would want. I do not want to be a civil servant all my career. I do not see myself here in ten years’ time. (British, male, aged 29, Economic Adviser, fast-streamer)

Career plateaus seem to be a particular problem for experienced civil servants in the UK, and for both older and younger officials in Estonia. In the UK, career plateaus have been associated with the decreasing size of the civil service. An experienced civil servant described the situation as follows:

There are quite a lot of those who are currently in their late forties and very early fifties who feel that they are trapped and going nowhere in terms of progression. And they can be a difficult group to manage over the next 5, 10 years because they will get disaffected, demotivated. We have made it easier in most departments by having early retirement schemes, which have allowed some of these people to get out. We have helped some people to leave but there are still a fair number of people who expected to get further than they have got and realise they are not going anywhere. (British, female, aged 45, Head of Branch)

Estonian civil servants were very realistic about their limited career opportunities, which are reinforced by the relatively small size of public organisations. An experienced civil servant explained:

There are officials who have been in the same positions for decades. There are basically no promotion opportunities, the majority of civil servants are already on the highest possible rank. For the majority of civil servants, it is fair to say that it is most likely that they may never move upwards within the same organisation and they actually even do not expect that. (Estonian, female, aged 52, Head of Department)

Another Estonian senior civil servant drew attention to the problem derived from transition and rapid growth of organisations described earlier in Chapter 5.

A number of young people have made a very quick career in recent years. They have reached the senior civil service and have nowhere to advance any more. I predict that in a few years these people will lose motivation which may become the biggest problem for us. It is obvious that these very capable people want to advance and so it is very likely that they will leave the civil service. (Estonian, female, aged 37, Head of Department)
Both British and Estonian civil servants were asked to express their views on different civil service systems. All British respondents were very critical about a career system and clearly favoured an open civil service.

You do not want a civil service which is staffed solely by career servants that move their way up just through age, by valuing the seniority higher than brightness as typical for career systems. If you can bring in people on different levels as in open systems, you bring in different skills, knowledge and experience which are very much needed in the civil service. (British, male, aged 59, Head of Branch)

The Estonian respondents also supported open systems. One department head summarised the views of other respondents as follows:

The more open the civil service, the more the state can gain from it. Civil servants need broad knowledge and experience. Instead of limiting the opportunities through a lifetime career with one employer, we should actively support those people who want to get many-sided experience in both public and private sectors. (Estonian, female, aged 48, Head of Department)

Estonian and British civil servants were of the opinion that both institutions and individuals benefit from open systems discussed in Chapter I. They recognised problems of job security, but they still clearly favoured the recent changes in civil service careers based on the introduction of job systems. In both countries, trends in civil service careers described in Part I, and particularly in Chapter 4, were supported by different groups of civil servants.

Responsibility for career development

Far-reaching changes have occurred in the way in which responsibility for careers is organised in both countries. In recent years, individuals have gained much greater responsibility for their own careers. In the UK, line managers and their staff members agreed that the main responsibility for career development rests with individuals. In Estonia, careers are also up to individuals, not because of a conscious policy in the civil service, but mainly because of ad hoc development of career policies.

An experienced British civil servant described the responsibility for careers in the past as follows:
When I joined the civil service 15 years ago, we had a planned career structure ahead. In the old centralised career management there was a personnel division with numerous staff. And it was very much the case that the personnel manager would make a decision, come to you usually once every 4 years and say: 'It is time you moved to such and such a place'. Therefore, it was very unusual for individuals to make their own decisions about what they would like to do and where they would like to go. It was a very prescriptive system, civil servants knew that they were looked after, moved around like pieces on the chess board in a way. It was a sort of nannying attitude towards civil servants. (British, female, aged 39, Senior Executive Officer)

A British personnel manager looked at the same issue from the point of view of the personnel unit:

The personnel unit had a succession plan, not necessarily a very sophisticated one. We frequently found that individuals whom we put into the posts did not enjoy or could not cope with their jobs. And managers suffered as well because they had no choice to say anything about the individuals coming to work for them. They were just given somebody and it appeared later that the new person did not fit into the section or was not able to do the job correctly. (British, male, aged 52, Head of Branch)

British civil servants were thus very critical about the previous practices of centralised career management. They were more optimistic about the current policy which gives more responsibility to individuals to develop their careers. One civil servant claimed:

Career development is now very much self-centred rather than department-centred. People recognise that their careers are something which is a personal matter and which may well include periods of time in different organisations and sectors. The responsibility for a career and mobility rests with an individual. By applying for a job, you get more control over your own destiny: what exactly you want to do, who your colleagues are, where you are located, how your work is organised, whether you want to move at all. People in the civil service are probably still helped more in career management than they would be in the private sector. I expect to be able to discuss my career and training with a line manager but it is up to me really to make decisions. (British, male, aged 35, Senior Executive Officer)

British line managers who were interviewed were also very positive about decentralised career management which leaves more responsibility to them to choose whom to hire and whom not. A British line manager explained:
There has been a move away from the centralised process towards a view that career development is something where individuals should not be controlled but helped by the management. There is a saying: ‘You can take a horse to water but you cannot make him drink’. That’s a bit like that. People have to make decisions themselves. I prefer the decentralised system because it is much more flexible. I have got a much wider pool of people to choose from and much more say in the selection process. I can decide whom I want to interview and the criteria on which the selection takes place. (British, female, aged 45, Head of Branch)

There are no centralised career policies in the Estonian civil service. Estonian respondents are also convinced that their careers should not be managed centrally in the future and that career development is primarily an individual matter. An Estonian civil servant argued:

The more the state wants to regulate its officials' careers, the more the state is responsible for them. This diminishes the responsibility of individuals. Sending people mandatorily to other ministries would be like expatriating them to Siberia. I am of the opinion that a career is a personal matter. Career policies cannot be very strict and standardised, they should rather be open to the diversity of interests and needs of individuals. (Estonian, female, aged 37, Head of Department)

However, individual respondents in Estonia expected their line managers and personnel departments to show more interest in career development than they currently do. Individuals do not feel that they are given sufficient help.

Line managers are not interested in career management. They have often so many other responsibilities that the careers of their staff are a very low priority. Line managers are usually interested in retaining their staff but they do not see career management as a tool for that. Instead, they pay attention to material awards. Salary is usually a much more important incentive for people as everybody knows that career opportunities are very limited and people do not complain about it. (Estonian, male, aged 26, Senior Specialist, Lawyer)

An Estonian line manager explained the same issue from a manager's point of view:

It has not happened that a line manager offers a promotion within the department to an individual. Management of a ministry does not rely on promotion from within the ministry. They prefer to get somebody from outside, either from other ministries or from the private sector. That is why they do not care about the development of current staff. (Estonian, male, aged 44, Head of Department)

Estonian line managers are not active in career management. They think less about the civil service as a whole than about the particular department and its interests:
I do not know a manager who would recommend his or her staff member to another department or ministry. It is very difficult to find a good person and once you have got one, you try to keep him or her at any cost. (Estonian, female, aged 48, Head of Department)

My direct supervisor wants to have me here as long as he is in this post, which is like an informal agreement between us. (Estonian, female, aged 27, Senior Specialist, Financial Analyst)

In sum, both Estonian and British respondents prefer to have individual responsibility for career development rather than centralised career management. This corresponds to the general trends in career development described in Chapters 2 and 3, whereby individuals are expected to take more responsibilities for their careers in the future. While British civil servants view their departments as supporters for their career endeavours, Estonian officials complain that their organisations are not sufficiently interested in their development.

**Mobility within the civil service**

Career mobility is highly regarded in the UK and Estonia. While cross-departmental mobility has a long tradition in the British civil service, Estonian officials are not used to organised efforts initiated by ministries to promote mobility. Respondents in both countries expressed similar attitudes towards cross-departmental mobility:

One of the strengths of the civil service is that you can do a huge range of entirely different jobs while still working for the same employer, the same employer being the government. I feel sorry for people who have worked for the same department all their lives because there is a whole world out there. (British, female, aged 31, Head of Branch, fast-streamer)

People can outgrow their jobs and need to take on something else beyond the skills they already possess. Inter-departmental mobility helps to postpone reaching career plateaus and increases work motivation. (British, male, aged 29, Economic Adviser, fast-streamer)

Movement is particularly important at the higher levels of the civil service. As opportunities for promotion and horizontal movement are limited within one ministry, one should look beyond the organisational boundaries. (Estonian, female, aged 37, Head of Department)

The positive thing for a manager is fresh ideas. A reasonable turnover of staff generates new ideas and just bringing in somebody new generally makes you think about what you do and how you do it. (Estonian, female, aged 52, Head of Department)
Job mobility helps you to gain a broader picture of the civil service, to get a better understanding of what other people and other departments do. Mobility throughout the civil service helps to build up contacts between different departments, makes it easier to co-ordinate different issues. *(British, female, aged 43, Senior Economist)*

Interviewees in the UK and Estonia agreed that it would be ideal to change jobs either within the civil service or across the public and private sectors every two to five years. All respondents were ready to change jobs and careers several times during their lives.

I would say three to five years would be normal for what I regard as normal for posting at executive grades. After 5 years in the same job people will become bored and stale. At lower levels and support grades, probably two years is enough because the work is extremely routine and repetitive. *(British, female, aged 45, Head of Branch)*

The longer you stay the more difficult it will be to move out. And once you get beyond 5 years you can make yourself unemployable in anything other than what you are doing. *(British, male, aged 28, Economic Adviser, fast-streamer)*

It is normal to work 2-3 years in one job. During the lifetime, individuals should change jobs about ten times. *(Estonian, female, aged 27, Senior Specialist, Financial Analyst)*

I do not think that people should spend too much time in one job or even in one organisation. I would not imagine myself working for the same organisation for more than 5 years even if I would get a promotion within a ministry. *(Estonian, male, aged 26, Senior Specialist, Lawyer)*

Although both British and Estonian respondents were generally very positive about mobility at both individual and organisational levels, they pointed out the following counter-arguments to mobility:

If people move about all the time, we lose corporate memory. We lose expertise. We have got more instability with mobility which means worse service to customers. *(British, male, aged 52, Head of Branch)*

The downside of job moves for managers is that you lose experience, people take along training they have got in the ministry, which affects effectiveness and efficiency; and there are also economic considerations. *(Estonian, female, aged 59, Head of Department)*

In Estonia, several other problems with mobility occurred because of the lack of conscious mobility policies and *ad hoc* development of inter-ministerial relationships. Estonian civil servants drew attention to the following issues:
It is mainly due to inertia and old habits, that career development is not considered as a management tool. Line managers as well as personnel units are overloaded with their existing tasks, they are not willing to undertake new responsibilities and to initiate new programs. It is less trouble to keep people in certain posts rather than to move them around and create complicated mobility schemes. (Estonian, female, aged 48, Head of Department)

The turnover in the ministry is very high. We have lots of work with hiring new people and training them. Cross-ministerial mobility is more meant for stable organisations. We do not have enough people to organise it here. (Estonian, female, aged 37, Head of Department)

Ministries are separated from each other. There is a rivalry between ministries and sometimes clear opposition. People know very little about what is done in other ministries, how their work is organised and what they actually do. It has happened that other ministries recommend somebody whom they want to get rid of. If you cannot trust your colleagues in other ministries, it makes a huge barrier to cross-ministerial mobility. (Estonian, female, aged 52, Head of Department)

Next Steps reforms in the UK have also affected cross-departmental mobility, which has decreased for a number of reasons. The British respondents were quite sceptical about the future of cross-departmental mobility.

There is much less movement between departments than there was 10-15 years ago. In the past, there was always lots of attention paid to both moving around within departments and moving around inter-departmentally. Now there seems to be more specialising than in the past. The need to move around is much reduced because you do not need broad experience, you want to get a lot of detailed experience in one area. (British, male, aged 35, Senior Executive Officer)

What limits movement around departments is that staff are loath to move into an area which they think might be market tested. One of the issues that stops people moving around is the concern of job security. (British, female, aged 45, Head of Branch)

I think that the difference between the centralised and decentralised career management is that people did move sideways more when it was centrally controlled. They do not volunteer to move sideways most of the time when they are in control of their own destiny. (British, male, aged 52, Head of Branch)

On the one hand, career structures are becoming less rigid, which allows for more flexible mobility between departments. On the other hand, several problems of horizontal cross-departmental mobility derive from decentralised pay and grading structures. British civil servants described how new pay and grading policies affect their careers in rather contradictory ways:
The statuses and grades will disappear. We have something like 900 jobs in the department which are compressed into a handful of grades. Instead of having rigid steps, it will be much more a gentle slope. There has been a lot of criticism in the civil service in the past that the career system relied on these strict steps. With the new system we have fewer steps on the career ladder and fewer boundaries for mobility. As you do not have to follow rigid steps in a hierarchy, it is much easier to move within and between departments. (British, female, aged 31, Head of Branch, fast-streamer)

As a result of decentralised personnel policies, it is not as easy to move around from department to department as it used to be. In the past, all departments had staff on the same grade structure, so you could move from department to department while the salary scale remained the same. But now the grading structure has become up to the department; therefore, it is not automatically granted that if you go from one department to another, the pay scale remains the same. Staff do not know what one grade in one department is in comparison to the grade in another department. We try to monitor that but we cannot override what departments want to do with their own staff, how they want to organise their work. (British, male, aged 52, Head of Branch)

Career mobility is quite differently described by generalists and specialists. In the UK, specialist groups are separated from generalists up to Grade 7, whereas in Estonia they are jointly managed throughout the civil service. Despite such a difference, British and Estonian specialists face similar problems. Specialists tend to have fewer promotion opportunities than generalists. In Britain, there seems to be a clear bottleneck for specialist development at Grade 7.

There used to be more opportunities, more spaces for rising. So it used to be easier for economists to get promoted. Now specialists and generalists are promoted together from Grade 7 upwards. Once you get to the senior civil service, any distinctions between specialists and generalists disappear. Certainly promotion boards are looking for administrative skills, which economists do not really have. Generalists are more like natural leaders, I think this also why they are recruited. So when it comes to these kinds of exercises where one has to demonstrate authority and leadership skills in meetings and presentation skills; there is naturally a bias against economists. (British, male, aged 29, Economic Adviser, fast-streamer)

Above Grade 7 there is very little. Beyond that, the specialism is actually going to stand in your way rather than help you. One spends a long time at Grade 7. And once you are stuck at Grade 7, there is nowhere to go. There are not many specialists at the higher grades. (British, male, aged 59, Head of Branch, former statistician)

Although there are different specialists working for the Estonian civil service, most jobs are multi-functional, which means that more emphasis is put on generalist knowledge and skills. Narrow specialists are rare and they are difficult to recruit and retain. Increasingly tasks which require narrow specialist skills are contracted out.
Most jobs in the ministry do not require very specific knowledge. Narrow specialists basically do not have career opportunities within one institution, their career development is extremely slow. It is quite usual that we only need one specialist in a certain field. If this person wants to develop, there are two possibilities: 1) s/he should change the job, become an administrator; 2) s/he should leave the current organisation and make a career somewhere else. (*Estonian, female, aged 27, Senior Specialist, Financial Analyst*)

Sometimes very narrow specialists do not have any other opportunities in Estonia to deal with their professions. In these cases the main motivator for them is the opportunity to deal with their professionalism. If there are similar fields in the private sector, the civil service must make huge efforts to retain them. (*Estonian, female, aged 52, Head of Department*)

We are interested in involving outside experts who work on short-term contracts. There are very few specialists in certain areas and sometimes we cannot hire any of them. In some cases, I see contracting out as a single opportunity to involve top experts in decision-making. We gain very much in quality of decisions if we hire outside experts. We have got a very good network of experts in different fields. (*Estonian, male, aged 44, Head of Department*)

Both British and Estonian respondents liked the idea of mobility within the civil service. Despite several problems related to mobility, in specialist fields in particular, they were convinced that mobility is useful for both individuals and the civil service as a whole, thereby confirming the findings about individual and institutional careers in Part I.

**Career mobility between public and private sectors**

Although all respondents agreed that specialists have fewer career opportunities within the civil service, there was also an understanding that specialists can more easily move to the private sector than generalists. Better opportunities to move between the two sectors are considered as a reason for developing certain specialisms in the public sector. The British and Estonian respondents found it important to build careers around certain ‘career anchors’ such as those described in Chapter 3.

Economists have many job opportunities outside the civil service as well. We lose roughly half of our graduate recruits either before or just after they get their first promotion. The wastage rate for economists is much higher than it is for administrators. Good economists are very marketable outside. (*British, female, aged 43, Senior Economist*)
People do specialise even though they recognise that it is going to take them to a certain level in the civil service. What is happening progressively more is that people are staying within their specialisms. For instance, people specialise in IT and build a career particularly in this area. They may move from department to department or to the private sector but it will be within that specialism. (British, female, aged 39, Senior Executive Officer)

In order to increase your value in the labour market, people are trying to develop expertise in certain areas so that they would be able to take this along to a new place as a portable skill. They are recognising that if they specialise in accounting or personnel, they develop qualities that can also be used in the private sector. (Estonian, male, 32, Senior Civil Servant, Adviser)

Career opportunities within the civil service are limited not only for specialists but also for generalists. That is why mobility between public and private sectors is increasingly common in the UK and Estonia. Development of the above-mentioned career anchors helps people to move in and out of the civil service.

You can acquire generalist skills in the civil service and if you want to specialise, you can. Working for the civil service is a good start to a career because you get many useful contacts and gain a lot of skills you can use in lots of other jobs. (Estonian, male, aged 26, Senior Specialist, Lawyer)

My experience here in the Treasury is an advantage up to a point. The private sector is very keen to buy in someone who knows the way the Treasury thinks about the economy: they would pay good money for someone who has got this kind of experience. (British, male, aged 29, Economic Adviser, fast-streamer)

In addition to the advantages that the civil service has in the labour market, there are also a number disadvantages which make people with civil service experience less marketable in the private sector. Both British and Estonian civil servants were concerned about the poor image of civil servants. Some respondents thought that civil service experience has a value in the public sector only and it could not benefit the private sector.

Civil servants have the image of being tea drinkers who sit around all day drinking tea. It does not put me in a very strong position when I would like to get a job in the private sector if I have the image of having spent 15 years drinking tea. (British, female, aged 45, Head of Branch)

There are lots of people who have a value to the civil service but not outside. The civil service does not really provide qualifications which are marketable outside. They tell you outside the civil service that they want private sector spirit, not public sector spirit. They want to see the evidence of some certificate or professional qualifications and the fact that you have been developing pension policy calculations is not their interest at all. (British, male, aged 35, Senior Executive Officer)
For a generalist job there is no direct equivalent outside. As a generalist the key skill you have is government, how everything fits together. And there are not many organisations outside which need that skill. (Estonian, female, aged 59, Head of Department)

A young British civil servant confessed:

Private firms do not want someone who is too institutionalised, too much of a civil servant. Short-time civil service experience is an advantage in the labour market but after a while it becomes a disadvantage to stay longer. I think I have probably passed the best time to move. I think I would be considered too much a bureaucrat by now. (British, male, aged 29, Economic Adviser, fast-streamer)

Although both British and Estonian civil servants are sceptical about how marketable civil servants are in the private sector, they agree that mobility between private and public sectors would benefit both sectors.

Civil service experience would benefit an individual career at any point in person’s career. It would be great if people outside the civil service had a better idea how the civil service operates. (Estonian, male, aged 26, Senior Specialist, Lawyer)

People who come from the private sector to upper levels obviously make progression within the organisation much harder. But on the whole they bring new life, new ideas, new knowledge and skills in, which is good for the organisation. (British, female, aged 43, Senior Economist)

We should encourage people to move in and out of the civil service. Otherwise they would become narrow-minded specialists who cannot cope with broader issues in society and adopt to changes. For example, moving from the Ministry of Education to the schools and the other way round. Such movements would benefit both schools, the ministry and individuals. (Estonian, female, aged 48, Head of Department)

We have quite a strong secondment programme where we have people coming into the department and others going out and getting 2 or 3 years experience in private companies. And we find that exchange very valuable because of bringing in the good elements of business practice and administrative experience. People in both sectors benefit a lot from it through seeing different cultures. (British, male, aged 52, Head of Branch)

British and Estonian respondents favoured mobility between public and private sectors, thus supporting boundaryless careers described in Chapter 2. They agreed that such movements are beneficial for both sectors and individuals as also shown in Part I. However, the interviewees were critical of the image and limited skills of civil servants, which do not make them very marketable outside the civil service.
This section of the case studies demonstrates that countries with very different traditions, of different size and at different stages of development but with not wholly dissimilar civil service systems may display similar patterns in the development of civil service careers. The main issues in career development examined in Part I were expressed in similar terms by the British and Estonian civil servants. They mentioned: the advantages of open systems and drawbacks of closed ones; individual responsibility for career development; decentralised personnel management; advantages and disadvantages of career mobility; concern about decreasing job security, less predictable careers, fewer promotion opportunities and the presence of career plateaus; the poor image of civil servants as a barrier for cross-sectoral mobility; fewer career opportunities for specialists within the civil service but greater marketability in the private sector. The analysis of attitudes towards the development of careers in the 1990s revealed that civil services in both countries are in the process of undergoing major cultural change as a result of structural reforms. In addition to recognising similarities in the development of British and Estonian civil service careers, a few differences were identified: fewer career opportunities for generalists and less attention paid to institutional career management in Estonia.

Civil service careers in small vs large states

Interviews with British and Estonian civil servants revealed a number of issues, which can be associated with differences in the size of states and their civil services. Several authors (Bacchus and Brock, 1987; Clarke and Payne, 1987; Bray and Packer, 1991, 1993) have demonstrated in their studies that careers in small and large states differ. Previous studies of small states are examined in Chapter 7, and careers in small and large states are analysed in Chapter 8 on the basis of the case studies with Estonian and British civil servants. The following factors, which are different in small and large civil services, were identified through the interviews:

- recruitment and retention of staff;
- management of rare specialists;
- the multi-functional character of jobs;
- the personification of jobs;
• the importance of informal relationships and networks;
• sources of instability in the civil service.

Recruitment and retention of staff

The size of a state affects several aspects of the civil service, from recruitment to retention of staff. The main recruitment problems in small states derive from the small pool of qualified candidates. Similarly, a small size of public organisations creates promotion problems. Often a very limited number of officials who are suitable candidates for promotion may be available inside an institution. All the Estonian respondents emphasised the need for an open system with the possibility of lateral entry in order to broaden the circle of candidates.

There must be the possibility to enter the civil service at the senior level. Otherwise the pool of good candidates would remain very small. This is extremely important with specialist jobs but also with generalists. (Estonian, male, aged 32, Senior Civil Servant, adviser)

If I wanted to promote anybody from my staff of six people, I would face serious problems. I do not have people doing similar tasks. Everyone in the department has a specific task, each of them is specialist in a particular field and has already been promoted to the highest possible level. We have had a number of vacancies, but nobody has been promoted from inside. (Estonian, male, aged 44, Head of Department)

Usually vacancies cannot be filled through inside promotion. There are two reasons for this. First, we do not have appropriate people in the ministry. Second, if we have anybody, he or she is already involved in some important or specific job. The circle of people who could be promoted is very small. We know specialists of certain fields all over Estonia. Sometimes it happens that there are only one or two people who have some experience in a certain field and they are already doing very useful jobs outside the civil service. (Estonian, female, aged 52, Head of Department)

As public organisations are smaller in small states, their structures are much flatter having only two to four steps on the career ladder. Therefore, promotion opportunities are very slim. Estonian interviewees claimed that the great majority of people who join the civil service should not expect to get promoted.

We cannot promise promotion to anybody who is hired. This would be a lie and would create lots of dissatisfaction later. (Estonian, female, aged 48, Head of Department)
Theoretically it is possible to get promotion once or twice, then you are at the very top already. A few people can raise three levels, but this is already very exceptional. It may happen that a good person skips a level and becomes quickly a senior civil servant. In some cases a career can be very fast but more often it is extremely slow. (Estonian, male, aged 32, Senior Civil Servant, Adviser)

Flat organisations and the limited pool of people cause particular problems in recruitment and promotion, which lead to a great number of plateaued people in small civil services on the one hand, and a shortage of qualified candidates, on the other.

Management of rare specialists

One particular characteristic of a small civil service is the presence of single specialists in different fields. British respondents did not mention problems with rare specialisms: usually at least two to five people were doing a similar job within one department. In Estonia, by contrast, all respondents named several jobs in their ministries filled by a single specialist. They also pointed out professions, which were unique within the civil service and which were conducted by one person. Estonian respondents expressed the following views:

I am working on an international classification of jobs and I am the only one in Estonia who knows about it. I do not know what happens if I leave, because there is no kind of training available; it has taken years for me to learn the job by doing it. (Estonian, female, aged 59, Head of Department)

Almost all specialist positions are filled with only one or two people. For example, there is only one person who deals with drugs, only one who deals with AIDS, only one who works on orphans, and one who works on equal opportunities. About half of these rare specialists are truly indispensable in their positions. We would run into serious problems if any of them were to leave. It has happened that, when a specialist leaves the ministry, the whole function of the ministry is abolished because there is no replacement. (Estonian, female, aged 37, Head of Department)

The main problem which derives from the need for a small number of specialists in certain areas is their training. As several specialist fields are neither covered by the educational system in Estonia nor by courses in specific areas, ministries often have to provide very basic on-the-job training.
There are great problems with providing training for rare specialists. These people come with different educational backgrounds, not with specific education. We cannot afford to provide courses for just one or two people. If there are similar jobs in the private sector, we send our people on courses originally meant for private sector professionals. It is better than nothing. A few people have received their specialist training abroad. (Estonian, male, aged 44, Head of Department)

We have several positions where we need only one or two specialists in a certain field. We spend much more time and money on their training than on training generalists. Specialists need special courses, often abroad. But the ministry cannot function without them and so we have to cope with such a situation. Sometimes generalists get less training and less attention because of this imbalance. (Estonian, female, aged 37, Head of Department)

Management of rare specialists in small states constitutes a problem which is unusual in large states. Rare professionals are difficult to be hired and trained. They are likely to have dead-end jobs without advancement perspectives.

The multi-functional character of jobs

On the one hand, a specialist area can be so narrow that it is not enough for a full-time job. On the other hand, a small number of people have to cope with a large number of tasks. This leads to the prevalence of multi-functional jobs in small civil services, which is less usual in large states. The British respondents claimed to be doing various tasks within one field (such as personnel or finance), but they could not name a case where one person performs a range of very different tasks. In contrast, all Estonian respondents emphasised that they performed very different tasks, or their colleagues did so:

I do several extra tasks in addition to my main job. Although I formally work for the budget unit in the ministry, I am also responsible for in-house training. As I am one of a small number of people in the ministry who speak fluent English, I deal with all kinds of EU projects. Since we do not have an IT consultant in the ministry, people always come to me to ask about computer-related things, so that sometimes I feel as if I were a software consultant. At first, these tasks were meant to be one-off events but as I gained experience in doing them, they have now become a part of my regular job. (Estonian, female, aged 27, Senior Specialist, Financial Analyst)

I would say that about half of the staff are multi-functional. I am a lawyer for the ministry and a personnel manager at the same time. If I were to leave and my successor were not a lawyer by training, the job would be split up into two parts and perhaps some other task would be added to the personnel job. (Estonian, female, aged 48, Head of Department)
To my mind multi-functional officials are required for about 60% of positions. Only junior civil servants may have the luxury of working with only one specific task. I deal with job descriptions in the ministry and with the analysis of government expenses in general. I am also responsible for the organisational development of the ministry. (Estonian, female, aged 52, Head of Department)

The fact that jobs in small civil services are so often multi-functional causes a number of problems with the division of labour and job descriptions. The interviews showed that, while in Britain actual jobs usually match their job descriptions, the situation is quite different in Estonia. Multi-functionalism of jobs creates problems in drafting job descriptions, which tend to be very general to allow for more flexibility in incorporating extra tasks.

When I got a job in the civil service, I first had very few responsibilities. But I gradually started to get all kinds of extra tasks which were quite far from what my job description said. I might say that now I deal with everything that is not a historical task for somebody else. All new tasks in the ministry end up on my desk. (Estonian, male, aged 32, Senior Civil Servant, Adviser)

We have very broadly designed job descriptions to allow flexibility. We do not want to change job descriptions all the time, so we write them in a way that emerging tasks could be included easily under existing jobs. When we started writing job descriptions, some units drafted very detailed descriptions. Later they realised that they needed to change them very often, and now most jobs in the civil service are described in very vague terms. Job descriptions are very formal papers indeed. (Estonian, female, aged 59, Head of Department)

Multi-functionalism requires lots of flexibility from both individuals and organisations. People are used to undertaking new tasks and learning new skills. However, they cannot acquire in-depth knowledge in any particular field as they have to obtain some professionalism for all tasks required.

The personification of jobs

One area where great differences between large and small states can be found is the extent of personification of jobs and units in the civil service. Multi-functionalism of jobs in small civil services creates the possibility of re-allocation of tasks when mobility of personnel occurs. This makes it difficult to ensure stability and continuity in the division of labour. Estonian respondents claimed the following:
My previous supervisor got a promotion and I was offered her position. She took with her several responsibilities that she used to do in the past. She is a lawyer by training and I am not, therefore, all kinds of tasks that had something to do with law were transferred to her new job description. She also took with her some tasks that she really enjoyed. Consequently, the job that I got was substantially different from the one that I originally expected to have. (Estonian, female, aged 27, Senior Specialist, Financial Analyst)

When some people have left the ministry, the usual way of handling it has been as follows. If there is nobody in the ministry to be promoted to this position, the position will remain vacant for a while. I know cases where some jobs have been vacant for more than a year. Responsibilities for that position are then allocated to other people in the ministry. This is done temporarily but very often it remains the same after the vacancy is filled. When a new person is hired, it can be a completely different job from the one left by the predecessor. (Estonian, female, aged 48, Head of Department)

All Estonian respondents maintained that, as a rule, tasks are allocated and job descriptions are written with specific individuals in mind. Thus, mobility of people may require a revision of the overall structure of an organisation. Personification of jobs affects management positions in particular. It can also happen that the mobility of influential persons causes changes in the objectives of a ministry or a particular unit.

Tasks are often allocated to specific persons not to jobs. Job descriptions are written with specific people in mind. It is a regular practice that, with a promotion or with a new person coming in, a job description is reviewed. There are no specific career ladders in the ministry: it is not possible to create one because promotion always depends on individuals. (Estonian, male, aged 44, Head of Department)

Structural units and their responsibilities have been designed according to who is head of a unit and who are the other people within this unit. I remember two departments which were created for certain people. We wanted to hire a good person and in order to attract him, we had to create a new unit for him to be managed. I know one case when the new unit was created and there was a head of a unit with no other staff in it. (Estonian, female, aged 52, Head of Department)

One ministerial unit was first headed by a very broad-minded generalist who wanted to make the unit into the most important unit in the government. When she left, the new head was recruited who was a specialist. He narrowed down the functions of the unit to the extent that it was questionable whether the unit was needed at all. This shows how much depends on the person who leads a government unit, especially if it is a newly founded unit and it is unclear what its functions will be in the future. (Estonian, female, aged 37, Head of Department)
In extreme cases some government units may become personalised to the extent that the head of that unit does not want to leave his or her job even if s/he is offered a promotion. For example, one department head got an offer to become a head of administration of another ministry. He did not want to leave his current unit but he wanted to get a very high post in an influential ministry. Consequently, he agreed on the promotion but only on the condition that 'his department' would be transferred to another ministry so that he would remain in charge of his former responsibilities. (Estonian, male, aged 32, Senior Civil Servant, Adviser)

British respondents recognised a few cases where the personal characteristics of civil servants had influenced particular jobs, but this was much less important than in the Estonian case. All British respondents were convinced that people can and must be separated from particular jobs and tasks. British civil servants said the following:

There are certain parameters within which we work, which we are bound to. So I think if I moved on, there would not be changes in my current job. It is not possible to shape the job in any way. There is, however, a bit of flexibility for change in support areas and people do make changes over time. (British, male, aged 35, Senior Executive Officer)

Usually there is a ministerial objective to be met, which tends to keep continuity even if staff turnover is quite high. Objectives should not change simply because an individual has moved on or wants to do a specific task. If objectives were constructed around a particular individual or even two individuals they would probably not be very good objectives. (British, male, aged 52, Head of Branch)

A high level of personification makes jobs and units very unstable in small civil services. Jobs and government units are related to particular individuals. It is, therefore, extremely difficult to design internal labour markets and to predict career moves.

The importance of informal relationships and networks

Personal relationships in small civil services do not only affect organisational structures, they also influence flows of information and decision-making. All British respondents agreed that personal relationships do not, and must not, affect organisational career decisions, and that all civil servants must have access to impartial information about career opportunities. Estonian respondents claimed that there were no formal promotion procedures in the ministries, and that information about vacancies was shared informally. As in the Estonian administrative culture,
relationships between people are highly personal, recruitment and promotion decisions can more easily be associated with personal contacts. Labelling this as nepotism or patronage may represent a simplified approach to the limited manpower of small states. Estonian respondents described information sharing in the following way:

We do not have many people in the ministry, so we know each other very well. If a position has become vacant, people get to know about it through mouth-to-mouth information. Usually department heads communicate with each other to fill a vacancy. Some of them inform their staff, others not. (Estonian, female, aged 27, Senior Specialist, Financial Analyst)

Information about vacancies is shared throughout the ministry but it is not a formal procedure. Sometimes we announce vacancies in the ministerial information bulletin but this is not mandatory. Vacancies are occasionally known about in other ministries as well, which happens through the informal network of personnel managers. (Estonian, female, aged 52, Head of Department)

Other ministries may recommend a person they want to get rid of. However, this is found out very easily as we always know somebody else in the same ministry who provides us with additional information. There is a well established network between personnel managers. It is informal but we know and trust each other. (Estonian, female, aged 48, Head of Department)

All the Estonian respondents emphasised the importance of informal networks within and between ministries and other government offices. Cross-ministerial mobility may greatly contribute to co-operation between ministries.

I know most lawyers of other ministries, we have something like an informal network since I remember many of them from the university. We have our own clan. (Estonian, male, aged 26, Senior Specialist, Lawyer)

If someone leaves to go to another ministry, it may influence the relationship between two ministries. We keep sharing information and sometimes we co-ordinate our work on similar topics. There have been cases where a person leaves to go to another ministry and, consequently, a qualitatively new network will appear. It would not happen, if we did not have these personal contacts. (Estonian, male, aged 44, Head of Department)

There are good and bad sides of close personal contacts in small civil services. On the one hand, the objectivity of personnel decisions can be questioned. On the other hand, close personal contacts and informal networks enable better collaboration between government organisations.
Sources of instability in the civil service

The Estonian and British civil services are both undergoing periods of far-reaching change. Respondents in the two countries described structural changes and their influence on career management in very similar terms. According to British respondents:

We are a very fast moving department. All is changing: shape, size and what we are about. There are very few areas in this department which have got a long history. Whatever I might identify now as being perhaps an interesting area of work may not exist in a year’s time. (British, female, aged 31, Head of Branch, fast-streamer)

The structure of this department is revised constantly. You cannot plan changes in departmental structure because they happen overnight, sometimes two or three times a year. Job descriptions are also changed every year. (British, male, aged 35, Senior Executive Officer)

Estonian civil servants were also concerned about continual changes:

The structure of the ministry is under constant change. Units are moved from one ministry to another. Some departments and jobs are being created, whereas others are abolished. The number and character of jobs is also changing. (Estonian, male, aged 32, Senior Civil Servant, Adviser)

Jobs in the civil service change very often. I do not see that one job can become boring since there are so many changes all the time. It creates some confusion in the ministry but, on the other hand, it maintains interest in jobs and avoids people plateauing. (Estonian, female, aged 27, Senior Specialist, Financial Analyst)

British and Estonian respondents were very critical about their current organisational structures and grading policies, which has led to a serious imbalance in career management. Surprisingly, the problems were quite similar. Interviewees of both countries had experienced upgrading of certain positions with the aim of attracting or retaining good people in their organisations.

Some of us have already found that posts which are currently graded as Higher Executive Officer should not really be at that level. Over the years there has been some abuse of the grading system. Managers have decided that they want somebody at this particular level whereas the job really ought not to have been at that level. We have noticed a lot of mismanagement of positions in this department when doing job evaluation. (British, female, aged 45, Head of Branch)

Upgrading of civil service positions seems to be a regular practice in the Estonian civil service.
There are practically no promotion opportunities at the top of ministries. We have created new posts at higher levels to motivate people. An individual is promoted to a higher position and his or her previous position is meanwhile abolished. Responsibilities will remain the same, but the salary will be increased. In cases where somebody leaves the civil service, the position is abolished and a new position is created at the lower level to give the newcomer the possibility of being promoted. Sometimes, however, the position will remain at the higher level. This has had its consequences for the general structure of the civil service where the majority of people work at the upper levels regardless of their actual responsibilities, and the number of junior civil servants is relatively small. (Estonian, female, aged 52, Head of Department)

Usually line managers try to pay their personnel according to the highest possible salary ranks in order to retain people. That is why most people in this ministry get the highest possible salary. This has led to a situation where promotion opportunities are extremely rare and salaries cannot be raised either. There are no incentives left to reward good work or improved performance. (Estonian, male, aged 44, Head of Department)

Both countries are in the process of trying to implement reforms, but additional sources of instability can be found in the Estonian civil service. The personification of jobs and institutions creates an in-built instability in small civil services. Instability can be further reinforced by insufficient emphasis on planning, analysis and management control (Bray, 1991a, p. 513), a finding confirmed by this study. Although the British interviewees did not mention problems of planning and analysis, these were clearly articulated by the Estonian respondents.

I am head of one of the biggest and most important departments in the ministry and I understand that, ideally, I should spend a lot of time on strategic planning. However, I do not have enough time for that: strategic planning is left for the weekends or, sometimes, I think about it when driving my car. (Estonian, male, aged 44, Head of Department)

We have very close relationship with the similar departments in other European countries. Compared to them, we have fewer people for the same number of tasks. It is not surprising that we have only one person to cover responsibilities that are shared by three people in larger countries. It is obvious that they can spend much more time in analysing things. We have to make decisions very quickly without thorough analysis. (Estonian, female, aged 59, Head of Department)

Although reforms are going on in both British and Estonian civil services, Estonian organisations have additional sources of instability. The high degree of personification of jobs and units, and problems with planning, analysis and control make the management of civil services very complicated, especially during the reforms.
Conclusions from the case studies

The interviews with British and Estonian civil servants revealed a number of interesting issues. The findings are consistent with previous research in many respects. The study confirmed the need for an integrated approach to careers, which emerged from earlier studies and was examined in Chapter 4. The interviews showed clearly that individual careers cannot be examined without looking at institutional career management, and vice versa. As the integrated approach to careers is increasingly being adopted in research in the private sector, the study provides evidence of how it can usefully be applied in analysing civil service careers. While management of civil service careers has traditionally been based on objective careers, as shown in Chapter 1, the interviews illustrate the importance of subjective careers in the theory and practice of public administration. The study did not find any substantial differences in the understanding of careers at individual and institutional levels. All the British and Estonian respondents recognised the possibility of conflict between their individual and institutional interests. However, they analysed their personal careers and institutional needs and interests in parallel, with both perspectives in mind, as suggested by Mayo (1991) (see Chapter 4).

Despite their very different cultural, historical, political and economic backgrounds, the Estonian and British civil services are facing similar problems. Respondents from both countries described changes in their civil services which had taken place during the last 10-15 years. In both cases, the management of the civil service has become more decentralised, and career development has increasingly become the responsibility of individuals rather than institutions; instead of a lifetime career with the same organisation, career and job changes were discussed as an important feature of the contemporary world. Interviews with British and Estonian civil servants confirmed the distinction between the ‘old’ and ‘modern’ career models summarised in Chapter 4.

Perhaps the most common theme that emerged in considering different career opportunities was associated with the small number of positions at the top of
organisations, as also discussed in Chapter 2. Respondents in both countries claimed that their civil services did not offer enough promotion opportunities to prevent people from plateauing. This is a particularly difficult problem for British specialists and for Estonian specialists and generalists. In order to remedy the problem, the interviewees suggested developing cross-departmental mobility and encouraging movement between the public and private sectors, on the understanding that the civil service should not constitute a person’s whole career but only part of it. This corresponds to the development of boundaryless careers described in Part I. The British and Estonian respondents commented in similar terms on the advantages of cross-sectoral mobility, and on problems concerning the prestige and marketability of civil servants in the private sector. No attempt was made to analyse responses according to the age, gender or seniority of interviewees, and their comments did not reveal any differences in attitudes towards career development and civil service reforms that could be explained by age and gender in either country.

The interviews suggested that one difference between the British and Estonian civil services is that relatively little attention is given to institutional career management in Estonia. In Britain, management of civil service careers has a long tradition. Career development is considered as an important issue in the civil service as expressed by a variety of career programmes, such as fast-stream, secondments, on-loan arrangements, early retirement, outplacement and mobility schemes. By contrast, Estonian institutions have not paid much attention to career development. Institutional management of careers is very much regarded as a secondary problem to which neither time nor resources are devoted. While British civil servants expressed their views about the civil service as a whole, despite the possible fragmentation described in Chapter 5, the Estonian respondents placed the interests of their particular ministries or units above the interests of the civil service.

The last section of the analysis draws attention to the fundamental differences in the Estonian and British civil services, which are likely to be attributable to the difference in size of the two countries. The small size of the population in small states raises issues about the labour market, education and training, and leads to difficulties in recruitment and retention of people in the civil service. As the civil services in small
states have to cope with similar problems to those in large states, a great number of
the jobs are multi-functional by nature, and the number of people available to fill
them is also much smaller. Jobs, structures and even the objectives of government
offices are often built around individuals. Personal relationships and networks
influence personnel management to a much greater extent in small compared to large
countries. This provides different patterns of career management and greater
instability in small civil services. Problems relating to the small size of the civil
service are discussed further in Part III in the context of previous research on small
state administration.

Part II has presented a snapshot of two systems in transition. Both Estonia and the UK
are implementing structural reforms in their civil services, which have brought about
changes in civil service cultures in both countries. The case studies demonstrated that
attitudes towards careers and career expectations have changed in both countries
during the 1990s. While, in Estonia, the civil service reform is part of a major reform
process in a society undergoing a period of transition, the British civil service reform
is taking place in a relatively stable environment. This leaves open the question
whether problems in the Estonian civil service are all caused by the smallness of the
state, or whether the Estonian civil service is substantially influenced by broader
issues of transition. This topic is analysed in greater depth in the next two chapters.
PART III  CAREERS IN SMALL VS LARGE STATES

Part III of the thesis analyses differences in civil service careers which can be attributed to the size of the state. Increasing interest has been shown by researchers in small states, and gradually a better understanding is developing of the qualitative differences between larger and smaller countries which have an impact for the management of organisations. The UK and Estonia represent states of very different size. One aim of the thesis is to examine the consequences of the size of a state for institutional and individual perspectives on careers. Findings from empirical studies of Estonian and British civil service careers described in Part II are analysed using the integrated approach to careers presented in Part I. General characteristics of small states are presented in Chapter 7, drawing on previous studies of small states, sociology, education, labour economics and political science. Chapter 8 provides an analysis of issues concerning careers in small and large states and examines the applicability of different civil service systems in the context of small states.
Chapter 7  Small vs Large State Administration

In addition to displaying considerable differences in historical, cultural, political and economic backgrounds, Estonia and the UK are very different in size. Researchers disagree on how best to distinguish between large and small states. Population size is usually taken as the main criterion for distinguishing between large and small states, although common alternative or supplementary indicators are surface area and the size of the economy. The population of the UK was 58,977,000 in 1997, compared to 1,458,000 in Estonia; the area of the UK is 241,752, and of Estonia 45,227 square kilometres; the population density was 244 inhabitants per square kilometre in 1997 in the UK, and 32 in Estonia. GDP was 785.2 billion pounds in the UK and 2.9 billion pounds in Estonia in 1997, which produces 13,314 pounds per capita in the UK, and 1,989 pounds per capita in Estonia. From an administrative perspective, states have been described as small if they have fewer than 1 million, 1.5 million or 2 million inhabitants. According to the two latter criteria, Estonia can be considered as a small state in administrative terms.

Interest in small states as a separate field of study is still at an early stage of development, although the first studies of the specific issues facing small states were carried out in the 1950s and 60s (Fox, 1959; Robinson, 1960; Benedict, 1966). Most of the literature on the civil service and careers concerns large states, and most of the scholars (including those who are researching small states) come from large states. Therefore, comparative studies tend to analyse the distinctive characteristics of small states by pointing out their specificities in relation to large states. Most studies on small states concern either the politics or economics of small societies. There is some overlap with public administration, but not much of the literature deals with the peculiarities of small state administration and careers in small systems. The best known authors to have conducted research on small states are Benedict (1966), Jalan (1982), Bacchus and Brock (1987), Clarke and Payne (1987), Lowenthal (1987), Sutton (1987), Bray (1987, 1991a, 1991b) and Baker (1992). The main findings from their studies are discussed in the following sections.
Complexity of small state theories

The large difference in size between the two countries in this study makes it possible to focus on the size of the country and its labour market as a primary factor in the analysis, and to consider historical, cultural, political and economic factors as being of secondary importance. For this reason, these other factors are not analysed in depth in the thesis. The main objective is to draw attention to the peculiarities and differences in institutional and individual career opportunities in the UK and Estonia, which may be attributable to the difference in size of the two countries. However, it is important to realise that other factors than size of population substantially affect both individual and institutional careers, and it is thus not always easy to distinguish between the features of individual small states that are reflections of small size, and those which relate to the specific cultural, economic or other characteristics of a particular state.

Small countries are not simply smaller versions of large countries. As the case study of Estonia reported in Chapter 6 suggests, a small country has its own characteristics which may look strange or unusual in a large-state context, but which shape its institutional structures and individual choices. One characteristic of a small system is that it engages relatively few people in its activities. People produce ideas and, if the number of individuals involved is limited, then the generation of ideas may also be limited. Therefore, small countries are less likely than large states to develop in-depth theories in different fields because of the shortage of qualified people and necessary resources. In such circumstances, there is a strong temptation to rely on borrowed ideas from larger systems, on the assumption that ideas analysed and tested in that context will be applicable to the conditions of the small system. As small states have a limited internal research capacity, the advice of well-qualified specialists from large states can be highly appreciated.

As with any cross-cultural transfer, lesson-drawing may be particularly problematic for states of different size. Whether transfer is more problematic between states of different size than between states of similar size has yet to be demonstrated. The special circumstances of small systems may mean that an idea which applies in a large state cannot be transferred to another context. For instance, consultants and specialists
from large states may assume that the necessary support services are available to pursue specific areas of interest, and they may not understand the multi-functional nature of jobs or the importance of personal relationships in small states. To use a medical analogy, the patient’s physical and behavioural characteristics may not be the same as those of the donor. Public administration is a particularly sensitive field in which local conditions need to be very carefully studied.

Another problem relates to the degree of development of a country. To a great extent, the focus on transfer from large to small states is due to the influence that large countries can exert through their foreign aid to (small) less developed countries or through their historic relationships. Although small states exist which are among the richest in the world (such as the United Arab Emirates, Iceland, Bermuda, Luxembourg, Qatar), the majority of small states are among the less developed countries in relation to the world economy (such as Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Bhutan, Maldives). Consequently, problems of development can be easily confused with the specific characteristics of small states. For example, Benedict (1966, p. 32) claims that the underdeveloped countries, even the large ones, are socially characterised by personal role-relationships. Montgomery (1986) argues that a paradox of administration in the developing countries is that, although the bureaucracy may be the dominant political and policy actor because of the weakness of countervailing forces, there is typically a great reluctance to make decisions and to take action. According to Montgomery (1986), this is a consequence of too much latitude for administrators, who lack guidance in decision-making and, therefore, experience high levels of uncertainty. These characteristics of less developed countries have been attributed to small countries by a number of authors (Benedict, 1966; Clarke and Payne, 1987; Bray and Packer, 1991), as discussed in later sections of this chapter. Similar characteristics were also found in the study of Estonian civil servants, described in Chapter 6.

Montgomery (1986) suggests that issues of development should not be underestimated when studying small states. Heady (1984, pp. 281-5) in his comparative research into public administration summarises the administrative shortcomings which are especially important for developing countries:
• the basic pattern of public administration is imitative of Western systems rather than indigenous and, therefore, not well suited to local needs;
• the developing bureaucracies are deficient in the skilled human resources necessary for development programmes;
• they are not production-oriented in their activities, for example they are characterised by corruption, the dominance of non-merit considerations in personal decisions, and the role of government as employer of last resort;
• there is a large discrepancy between norm and reality which creates a gap between expectations and realities;
• the bureaucracy has operational autonomy in policy making and a near monopoly of technical expertise.

According to Heady's analyses, several of the problems of public administration in developing countries and small states overlap. The smallness of a number of developing states may, in turn, affect understanding of development issues. An important question which is at the heart of the problems and policies in small countries is whether any identifiable characteristics or consequences are associated with size per se. This is a question which certainly requires further analysis.

It is important to distinguish between the size of a state and the size of a society in the development of small state theories. The majority of contemporary studies of small states refer to Benedict (1966), who has noted that the main criteria of size for 'territories' ('states') are area and population, whereas the criteria of size for 'societies' are the number and quality of role-relationships. He pointed out that small societies do not exist only in small states, for they may also exist in large states that have high degrees of segmentation. Nevertheless, most of the literature considers states as political units without paying enough attention to smaller societies, which may exist within larger states (for example, minority groups, islands and other relatively isolated and/or closed labour markets or communities within larger states). Benedict (1966) claims further that, just as it is possible to have a small-scale society in a large state, it is also possible to have part of a large-scale society in a small state. He presents Luxembourg and Monaco as two examples of states, which are closely related to neighbouring states and thus are not considered as small societies by him.
Consequently, although the theories of small states used and developed in this part of the thesis refer to certain 'states', the same characteristics may apply to small 'societies' within large states, and may not apply to small states which are parts of larger societies.

Small countries themselves differ widely: any generalisations therefore need to be expressed in very broad terms, and must be subject to many qualifications. Jalan (1982, p. 7) argues that generalisations regarding the problems and potential of small economies as a group should be avoided as far as possible because differences among countries within the group could sometimes be as marked as intra-group differences. Generalisations cannot, therefore, be made in respect of appropriate policies that could be applied in all small countries, since policies of different sectors depend on the particular circumstances of each country. However, Jalan (1982, p. 13) concludes, summarising different studies of small states in the Commonwealth and the United Nations, that 'the problems and constraints in a large number of small countries are common enough to permit at least a few broad conclusions in regard to their policies.' Selwyn (1980, p. 945) has distinguished between three possible approaches to the utility of small state research. Firstly, small countries as categories should help in understanding particular country problems, that is they should be used analytically; secondly, these categories should be useful in making forecasts of the likely social or economic trends in particular countries, that is, they should be useful predictively; and thirdly, they should throw light on possible or appropriate policies for particular countries, that is, they should be useful normatively.

*Small societies and 'managing intimacy'*

An important characteristic of small states is that personal relationship play a much greater role than in large societies, as noted in Chapter 6. Benedict (1966) has also shown in his study of the social anthropology of small societies, that people in small societies grow up within an interdependent network, where each person plays several roles; thus nearly every social relationship serves many interests. Consequently, relationships in small societies seldom concentrate on a single act or specific function,
but tend instead to be functionally diffuse and to last for a long time, though their specific content changes over the course of the life span. The 'personalism' of small states may also have other consequences, which according to Sutton's (1987, p. 15) study of small member states belonging to the United Nations, can be summarised as follows:

- the role of the individual takes on greater significance;
- the individual, as a member of a group, is more susceptible to pressures, both internal and external;
- politicians exercise greater influence over administrators, frequently based more on personal than on party factors;
- senior administrative and political office holders have more direct contact with the man in the street and, accordingly, there is less of the aloofness traditionally associated with a bureaucracy;
- top political leaders are more likely to communicate directly with one another and directly oversee the actions of their lieutenants;
- there is less functional specialisation among politicians, and both they and senior administrators are likely to accumulate roles;
- politics may be less than a full-time job, constituting either a means to promote other interests or an avenue of mobility into other areas in a situation of limited economic opportunities;
- criticism of political leaders and senior administrators may be muted, often informal, but where it does appear, it is likely to be personal in form and strident in tone.

Benedict (1966) has argued that role-relationships are affected by population density, which is positively correlated to the intensity of personal relationships. In a small society individuals interact with each other over and over again in a wide range of social situations. In small societies the decisions and choices of individuals are influenced by their relationships with other individuals in many contexts. For example, it may be difficult to fire an inefficient employee for incompetence because the official in charge of firing may have to deal with the person being fired in different roles in the future. Therefore, it can be said that in small states impersonal
standards of efficiency and performance are modified by the relationships between the individuals involved both directly and indirectly.

Parsons (1939, 1951) has characterised such role-relationships, which he terms 'particularistic', as being affectively charged: there are strong positive or negative attitudes between persons involved in them. Such role-relationships extend over a considerable time-span and the roles involved are usually ascriptive. Benedict (1966, p. 26) argues that the standards of judgement in the role depend on who the person is rather what s/he does. Judgements are characterised by personal relations. This model can be contrasted with a model stressing impersonal relations. Parsons terms such role-relationships 'universalistic' because they are based on more or less fixed standards and criteria. The incumbent of such a role treats all others with whom s/he comes in contact in this role-relationship in terms of universal categories. The roles are functionally specific and the role-relationships are affectively neutral. Benedict (1966, p. 26) notes that standards of judgement are based on criteria of achievement, what a person does rather who s/he is. It is performance and efficiency, not hereditary qualities, that are relevant.

These are polar models, and it is obvious that both sets of features are characteristic of most role-relationships which could be placed along a continuum. Benedict (1966, p. 27) suggests that in a small-scale society, where the total social field is small, relationships tend towards particularism. Richards (1982, p. 158) argues on the basis of his research, which particularly focused on the Faroe Islands, Malta and the Isle of Man, that the very fact of smallness means a tendency to greater particularism in society. For example, in large societies civil servants aim to treat citizens uniformly, they apply universalistic standards in accordance with special public administration regulations. Their relationships with the citizens are most likely to be neutral (Benedict, 1966), whereas in small societies civil servants may develop more personal relationships with citizens. It can be argued that the problems of personal role-relationships occur in large-scale societies too, but in such societies it is always possible to bring in outsiders. In small-scale societies there are no outsiders. They must be imported from another society.
Speaking about a strong network of personal relationships or great social cohesion in small states does not always mean social harmony or common goals. Benedict (1966, p. 33) claims that the affectivity of such roles can be negative as well as positive. Accordingly, people in small societies tend to develop either strong positive or negative relationships with each other. However, Lowenthal has introduced the term of 'managed intimacy' (1987, pp. 38-9) to characterise small states in his comparative study of European, African and American large and small states. He argues that inhabitants in small states learn to get along, whether they like it or not, with people they will know in many contexts over their whole lives. Lowenthal is confident that this is why they become experts at muting hostility, deferring their own views, containing disagreement, and avoiding dispute in the interests of stability and compromise. He argues that, in large societies, it is easier to disagree with people you most likely will never meet again, but in small states two of you may share a long mutual history and expect to get involved in countless ways in the future. Not simply the small size of the state but the complexity and durability of most relationships foster sophisticated modes of accommodation.

Education and labour markets

All states have their own civil services, including even tiny island states. The civil service plays an important role in small states since it is one of the biggest employers (Bray and Packer, 1991; Baker, 1992). Bacchus and Brock (1987, p. 3) note on the basis of their study on the small states of the Commonwealth, that, in small states, the size of the civil service expressed as a percentage of the total population tends to be disproportionately large. Public sector activities in general are relatively important in small states. The relatively large size of the civil service affects the labour market of a state and also reinforces the importance of the government. Nevertheless, because total population is small, the civil service clientele is small as well. The small number of people for whom public services are provided makes it difficult for the administration to enjoy economies of scale. However, the purpose of this study is not to analyse the relative size and costs of small public administration, but rather to concentrate on management of small civil services.
Despite the relative size and importance of public administration in small states, the absolute size of government agencies and the civil service as a whole is still much smaller in small countries, which means that different qualitative problems arise in the composition and management of civil services in small and large countries. Human, financial and material resources in small states are limited. Bray and Packer (1993, p. 237) demonstrate that the majority of small states in Europe, Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and the South Pacific also have very limited natural resources. This means that, perhaps even more so than in larger states, human resources are critical for national development. A survey by Bennell and Oxenham’s (1983, p. 27) on development plans in small island states found that all the countries researched ranked shortage of high-level manpower among their most serious problems.

Small states, like their larger counterparts, want their civil services to have competent and committed administrators and professionals. Irrespective of size, civil services require a minimum number of skilled personnel. However, there are several specific issues which make human resource management more complicated and more challenging in small states. A small population and a small labour force mean there is a small pool of human potential, and facilities for the development of human resources may be highly limited compared to larger countries. Small states are likely to have a narrower spread of labour skills. Bray and Packer (1993, p. 28) argue that small states have less manpower capability, even if the proportion of specialists in certain fields in the labour force equals that in larger states.

All countries, regardless of their size, have problems in matching the output of the education system with the manpower needs of the economy. Even in large countries with large economies, selecting and targeting a particular occupation is becoming increasingly difficult, as a number of occupations are emerging and current jobs are changing rapidly, which was also demonstrated in Chapter 4. This affects small states to an even greater extent because their labour pools are smaller and, thus, it should be more difficult to match people with jobs. Bacchus and Brock (1987, p. 9) claim in their study of educational development of the Commonwealth states that a curriculum which is based on specific knowledge and skills may be desirable in large countries to
produce specialists in various fields. In a small concentrated economy, however, it is not appropriate to focus the curriculum on one or two areas of professional activity. Small systems tend to be open and flexible and, therefore, according to Bacchus and Brock (1987, p. 9), a broadly based curriculum is desirable and the direct application of specific skills is problematic in small countries in the long term.

Bray and Packer (1991) draw the conclusion from their study of European, African, Asian and Carribean small states that the small size of the labour force is likely to have major implications for education and training policies. The need for a small number of specialists makes the cost of education very high. The limited number of professionals in the civil service makes it economically inefficient and academically impractical to provide professional training locally. In large countries, individuals can get a basic professional education and then develop it further in specialised areas through professional in-service courses. In small countries, it may be inefficient for organisations to train and retrain their few specialists in a particular field. Therefore, employees in small states may have no more than their broad basic education and may lack any professional training in their more specific field of work. Another possibility is that civil servants whose work requires specialised professional knowledge and skills may have received their academic education in a specialist field. However, their employer(s) may be unable to arrange further training for only a small number of professionals whose knowledge and skills may need to be updated, which, in the long term, may lead to stagnation of professionals.

Both training programmes and conditions of employment differ between small and large states, as shown by a number of authors (Bacchus and Brock, 1987; Farrugia and Attard, 1989; Bray and Packer, 1991). Large-scale systems can accommodate an element of waste, whereas for small systems it may be dangerous for their survival. This presents an interesting dilemma for small states: on the one hand, matching people with jobs is extremely important, but on the other hand, small states cannot afford to have spare resources and to develop larger pools of qualified specialists from which to draw their human resources. Overseas training offers an attractive alternative for the shortage of local professional training, as it provides an opportunity to study the specific subject, meet other professionals in the same field, upgrade qualifications
and share ideas with colleagues. In small states, an individual who receives additional resources for personal development may be the only one among very few who can be given such an opportunity. Thus, obtaining professional education abroad may equip trainees with valuable skills, which may make a small number of professionally trained individuals indispensable for their country and very hard to replace for their organisations. Therefore, the system depends very heavily on the successful training and further utilisation of this small number of individuals. However, in addition to the relatively high cost of training abroad, such programmes are usually focused on preparing individuals for very specialised roles, and can be irrelevant for small nation states, where a multiplicity of professional roles are usually performed. Such training can lead to personal and professional expectations that can be fully realised only if accompanied by extensive and expensive support services, which most small states cannot afford.

Small states differ from large ones in their educational development and the consequences which stem from it. Small states tend to have small ‘educational fraternities’, which may be more influential than similar groupings in large states because a small state is likely to have only one or two universities or professional schools which teach certain fields. This helps to build up a strong identity in terms of educational background and, sometimes, in particular fields of study, which was also shown in Chapter 6 when describing the ‘lawyers’ clan’ in the Estonian civil service. Interpersonal linkages within the fraternities may heavily influence further workplace relationships, affecting recruitment, promotion and other decisions. This applies to the larger states as well. However, the extent to which fraternity relationships are important in small states is greater, as claimed by many researchers into small states (for example Lowenthal, 1987; Sutton, 1987; Bray and Packer, 1991; Baker, 1992).

Politics and public administration

One area of conflict between conventional theories of public administration and the realities of small states concerns the traditional view that bureaucracies should be politically neutral. According to this view, the role of administrators is merely to
implement the policies determined by the politicians. While this model may be questionable in large states, it is especially questionable in small states. Several studies (Murray, 1981; Sutton, 1987; Bray and Packer, 1991) have shown that, in small states, civil servants can be more influential policy-makers than their colleagues in some large states who can also be involved in policy-making. Moreover, moving between politics and the civil service can be a normal practice in small states. As there are few specialists in a certain public policy field in a small state, the same person can deal with his/her specialism as a politician one day and as a civil servant another day. This corresponds to a civil service model called 'functional village life', developed by Peters (1987), which assumes a certain integration between civil service and political careers.

Politics and public administration are closely tied to each other in small states, which has been characterised as a fact of small system life by Sutton (1987). Often no clear distinction can be drawn between policy-makers and civil service practitioners: all those who work within a small system are in a position to influence it directly. In addition, people in small states can be so closely bound together that they cannot maintain totally separate and discrete roles. Sutton (1987, p. 16) notes, on the basis of small states in the Commonwealth, that small countries retain political leaders longer in office than elsewhere: they have much greater security in office than their colleagues in large countries. This may be due to the avoidance of conflicts and importance of personal relationships within an office, which may be stronger than party ties and alleviate the problem of shortages of qualified leaders. A greater amount of mixing between politicians and civil servants and stronger personal networks beyond political ties are perceived to be normal.

People in small states are more or less known to each other so that ministers, high government officials, influential businessmen or politicians can be more easily accessible, either formally or informally at public and cultural events, receptions and so forth. This has not been tested empirically but several authors (Bacchus and Brock, 1987; Sutton, 1987; Bray and Packer, 1993) have noted the point. It has also been observed by Bacchus and Brock (1987, p. 26) that, in small Commonwealth states, ideas, views, requests and complaints are communicated to the appropriate people
more quickly and, most likely, personally, which is unlikely to be the case in large states. In small states, people know the abilities, the needs and the peculiarities of each other and act accordingly. This makes a small government apparatus a comprehensive informal network. Increased direct accessibility to politicians can also mean that even junior civil servants may have direct access to politicians with regard to civil service matters.

The small size of the state has its advantages and shortcomings in administration. On the positive side, small size means that administrative processes are personalised, government officials may possess individual responsibility for their community, in addition to institutionally regulated responsibility. Interpersonal communication may help to make information flows and decision-making faster. Although decision-makers in small states can more easily identify resources and constraints, and can have a strong personal influence over the whole system, administrators may be inherently cautious and conservative, knowing that, if their actions go wrong, they will be unable to conceal their mistakes. This may apply to large states as well, particularly at the local level. However, avoiding mistakes is particularly important in small societies where many role-relationships overlap, as demonstrated by several authors (Clarke and Payne, 1987; Lowenthal, 1987; Bray and Packer, 1991, 1993).

Managing change

Previous chapters have paid attention to civil service reforms which have been undertaken in several European countries. This raises a question about the management of change. There are benefits as well as problems relating to change and innovation in small systems. On the one hand, planning of change can be personalised and tailored to specific needs. On the other, small states can be considered to be quite conservative and sceptical about innovation.

Small systems may have the advantage of being more responsive to innovation, because smallness provides a degree of nearness and accessibility with respect to involvement and management that is simply not available in larger systems. Clarke
and Payne (1987) argue that, in small states, it may be possible to communicate rapidly with the head of the department in a ministry, minister and MP in the same afternoon. Once a decision has been made, the speed with which it can be implemented across the whole system can be much greater than in a large state. However, several authors (Bray 1987, Clarke and Payne 1987) have confirmed that, just as a small state could carry out a reform very quickly, the possibility also exists of moving in the wrong direction with the same speed. The probability of taking decisions without thorough analysis is great because little attention is paid to planning in small states (Bray, 1991a, p. 513), a point also discovered in the interviews with Estonian civil servants, reported in Chapter 6. Consequently, small states are as vulnerable because of wrong decisions and inappropriate innovations as they are open to more positive forces.

Bacchus and Brock (1987, p. 20) suggest that the relatively small numbers of people involved in formulating policies in small Commonwealth states has led to a much closer identification of ideas with particular individuals. In small societies, it may well happen that only people who have gained popularity for some reasons are able to present and carry through new or crucial ideas and guarantee the acceptance of an idea. Unknown persons may come up with excellent proposals, but nobody may take them seriously. As a consequence, it is possible that alternative policies are not evaluated according to the merit of the proposal but rather the acceptability of the proposer or the person who assesses the proposal. As a result, policies can become personalised to an extent which is less likely to appear in larger systems. Bray (1991a, p. 513) argues on the basis of his large-scale study of small states that, because of interrelatedness, inhabitants of small states have virtually no impartial authority; neither civil service nor the judiciary can escape from the influence of political leaders.

Lowenthal (1987, p. 35) has noted in his study of European, African and American states that one feature of small states is conservatism and adherence to tradition. Settled conservatism stems from inherent avoidance of conflicts and a caution born of long experience with resources whose exploitation is severely limited by scale. Therefore, experimentation is difficult in the small system; even when the necessary
resources are available, it is likely to be conducted in the public view and under the
eyes of critics. While citizens of large states hear about political programmes through
the mass media, people in small states are, in addition, informed through their
personal networks. The policy-making and implementation process cannot remain
anonymous in small states. Therefore, civil servants may not be prepared to take risks
or make non-routine decisions without reference to supervisors. The transparent
nature of small societies may make some administrators very careful to protect
themselves by always operating 'according to the book' in a highly formal way. The
knowledge that failure will be so public adds to the inertia and stagnation. It is better
to do well what is accepted than risk poor performance with new methods, the
introduction of untried skills, the promotion of changing values and attitudes or
recruitment of radically-minded people. Sutton (1987, p. 19) observes that avoidance
of decision-making may thus in itself become routine, with the result that crisis, when
it looms, will be proportionately larger. Bacchus and Brock (1987, p. 24) argue that
the small system calls for professional and political courage which must be sustained
through personal contact and confidence.

Small states can also be substantially affected by migration. As demographic
fluctuations can be much more serious in small states (Lowenthal, 1987, p. 36), large-
scale migration may have very serious consequences for the whole country. However,
the smallness of a country encourages emigration because of limited career
opportunities, limited professional advancement, boredom and limited resources.
Migration is often selective, and results in the loss of relatively energetic, skilled,
innovative and well-educated individuals. This leads to the serious consequences of
brain-drain. It can, however, be argued, that although the sudden loss of a number of
professionals in a small state may strain the state's stability, emigration and the return
of emigrants may become an established routine, a normal part of a life cycle of
organisations. Migration requires a specific approach to human resource management
and may hold a risk which small states with their scarce resources cannot afford.
Multi-functionalism in small states

Civil services in small states are directly influenced by the limits of small labour markets. Small states need most of the basic types of specialist personnel required in large states, but they need them in smaller numbers, as was also shown in the interviews with Estonian civil servants reported in Chapter 6. The small scale of a system requires multiple roles and duties on the part of its administrators. Civil servants are expected to cope with multigrade and multi-disciplinary duties. Certainly a degree of multi-functionalism is also required of officials in medium-sized and large civil services. However, according to Bray (1991a, p. 513), multi-functionalism becomes more important as the scale diminishes.

Efficiency of public administration has been the main concern of many scientists and practitioners in different states (Murray, 1981; Kersell, 1987). Kersell (1987), summarising Murray (1981), notes that, in small states, improved efficiency might include eliminating some government activities altogether, scaling down some or most government activities, scaling down particular jobs and allowing individuals to work on more than one task, and organising teams to undertake particular projects. Managers in a small system are expected to cover a very wide range of activities. The multiple roles of senior administrators can, however, become obstacles to their overall performance. The specialist administrator may devote more attention to one or some areas of his or her particular specialisation compared to others. When this official is a specialist in any one area (for example finance or law), it is likely that his/her specialised interest will take priority over the generalist functions, as was also shown in the case study with Estonian civil servants in Chapter 6. Bacchus and Brock (1987, p. 22) argue on the basis of their study of small Commonwealth states, that, where key officials have expertise, there will be development; where their skills are lacking and specialist knowledge limited, there will be a tendency to stagnate. Therefore, the small system may find it very difficult to make long-term decisions.

Bray (1991a, p. 513) has found that some specialist functions in the civil service are less common in small states but more common in the larger ones. These include planning, inspection and guidance. However, the fact that a ministry does not have a
special unit or job specifically labelled as responsible for a particular function does not necessarily mean that this function is not undertaken at all. For example, if the department of planning does not appear in the organisational structure, planning can be a part of responsibilities of different departments and their senior staff. However, the interviews with Estonian civil servants showed that the senior officials cannot devote much time to planning and analysis (Chapter 6). The functions of planning, inspection and guidance constitute part of a typical multi-functional job in a small state organisation, which may cause several problems. Larger organisations can provide some of their members with time, free from day-to-day pressures and demands, to give to the careful analysis and strategic planning of further courses of action. People in small systems who are expected to analyse future trends and identify emerging needs can be engaged in the daily routines or in coping with current crises and immediate demands. Therefore, forward thinking and analysis of needs have to find a place in gaps during daily business, which was also confirmed by the study of the Estonian civil service.

In addition to the problems with educating and training of professionals, their further development is limited by resources and the shortage of communication with other professionals. Selwyn (1975) argues that officials in small developing countries may lack the professional interchange and stimulation which is provided in large countries by associations, publications, conventions and so forth. Professionals live 'in a condition of professional loneliness' (Selwyn, 1975, p. 141). Traditionally, specialists perceive themselves in occupational rather than organisational terms. In small states, however, the term of 'specialist' is more vague. It can be argued thus, that specialists may define themselves more as members of an institution than in large states. On the one hand, this can benefit public administration, where there is a classical problem of integrating specialists into the broader civil service context, as shown in Chapter 1. On the other hand, it can decrease the quality of professional decisions. The development of professionals requires a critical mass of professionals in the same field in order to provide the necessary networks, communication and development of knowledge and skills. In small states, therefore, the development of professionals has serious limits of scale, because professionals cannot develop in relative isolation.
However, demand for professionals may be low in small states as well, as relatively small organisations may not be able to provide sufficient specialist work to hire a full-time professional, as noted in Chapter 6 in the case of Estonian civil servants. Benedict (1966, p. 32) states that the specialist in a small country must be a jack of all trades with the possibility that s/he may be master of none. Firth (1951, p. 47) finds there is less room for specialisation of roles in a small-scale society. Even when specialist techniques are acquired, there is simply not enough work for an individual to earn his or her living by the specialisation alone. For example, a public organisation may have to hire an archivist, although there is little work to be done. Therefore, high unit costs can be found in public administration in small states, where specialised staff must be employed despite the fact that their professional knowledge and skills are not needed for full-time jobs. This may also create problems for manpower planning. If only one person is trained for the job but that person is for some reason not available, then the state will be left without an important service. But if two people are trained to allow for this situation, then there is a danger that one will not actually be needed. Such a situation would cause considerable dissatisfaction to the individual, as well as being a waste of resources. Contracting out and the use of part-time work may be helpful in resolving problems concerning the demand for professionals.

The accomplishment of various tasks can, however, broaden perspectives and widen insights into the many facets of the system, rather than restrict concerns to the narrow sphere of specialisation. The major drawback of multi-purpose functions of officials is that their work becomes extremely diffuse when they have to switch from one role to another quickly and continuously. It means that they simply cannot concentrate on their subject speciality. The necessity of sharing time and attention with many other aspects besides their main concerns can undermine their effectiveness. The multiple-function role can also be wasteful of mental and physical energy since it involves changing rapidly from one task to the next, from one decision-making process to another, from dealing with one group of people to another in assignments that can be totally unrelated. However, it can also be argued that people in small states have thus obtained experience of combining different jobs and moving between different types of jobs. They may also be more adaptable to change and ready to undertake new tasks.
and acquire new skills and knowledge. This is what 'modern' organisations expect from their employees and what boundaryless careers are about, as described in Chapter 4. Consequently, small states may have several advantages compared to large states in introducing modern network systems and mobile careers.
Chapter 8  Civil service careers in small and large states

Complex relationships among various individuals and sub-groups in the population of a small state provide a challenge for institutions and their leaders in managing people and their careers. Individual careers may also develop differently from those in large states due to the lesser degree of specialisation and limited promotion opportunities, as argued in the previous chapters. The smallness of the civil service has implications for civil service systems in small countries as well as for career management within these systems. It is debatable whether traditional bureaucracies designed to match the needs of large states suit the small state context, since smaller institutions are unable to develop advanced internal labour markets with formalised career paths. Network organisations may, however, provide a possible way forward for small states and their civil services.

This chapter examines administrative, institutional and individual career theories developed in large states, and described respectively in Chapters 1, 2 and 3, in the context of small states. Several differences have been noted in the thesis between careers in small and large states, and more specifically between British and Estonian civil servants. Consequently, the relevance of conventional bureaucratic models to the civil services of small states can be called into question. Chapter 8 concludes with an assessment of the design of small civil services and proposals for developing civil service careers in small states.

Institutional career development in small and large states

Public organisations in small states face some personnel issues which are significantly different from those of larger bureaucratic organisations, such as multi-functionalism of jobs, the importance of personal relationships and the employment of specialists. Conventional bureaucratic systems, as argued by Weber, assume that individuals perform discrete functions in discrete posts organised in a hierarchy. This approach requires that organisational objectives must be defined, individual tasks identified, and individuals appointed to carry out those tasks. According to the classical theory of
organisations, the strategic objectives of an organisation form a basis for organisational structure, and suitable people are chosen to fulfil different tasks in such a structure. Individuals are expected to match defined jobs, their performance is assessed according to previously agreed requirements, and the lines of control and accountability operate in such a way as to ensure that tasks and overall policy are carried out effectively.

The situation in small states tends to be more fluid. In small systems, it is vital to be able to use all available skills, since the pool of human skills is limited, as shown in Chapter 7. The traditional approach to organisations rigidly structures institutional functions, which creates compartmentalisation and makes it difficult to utilise fully individual strengths and competencies and to design more flexible career paths. As individuals play multi-functional roles in small systems, it is necessary to invent appropriate ways of grouping organisational functions together. Therefore, in small states the tendency is to adapt structures and jobs to people rather than to fit individuals into formal organisational frameworks, as also reported in Chapter 6 by the Estonian respondents. New structural units and departments may have to be created for influential and/or highly needed individuals. Although this may also happen in large states, its frequency is greater in smaller states because of particularistic roles and the limits of the labour market. On the basis of several studies of small states all over the world, Murray (1981, p. 253) claims that, while, in large societies and big administrations, individual officials are able to design jobs in a particular way, in small states jobs are moulded by individual officials to a degree, and with effects that provide a significant contrast to large societies. These differences were also identified in the British and Estonian case studies analysed in Chapter 6.

Career theorists (such as Van Maanen and Schein, 1977) have noted that the static view of organisations socialising employees into fixed systems seems to overlook the degree to which employees modify the organisations (both public and private) in which they work. On the one hand, it can be argued that organisations cause career effects. On the other hand, careers may also cause organisational effects. Especially in small labour markets, organisations or units can prosper or die because of career moves. Due to individual influences on organisational structure (and sometimes even
on organisational objectives), the boxes in an organisational chart may need some change as certain people move in and out, up and down in the organisation. Structures which are organised around individuals are unstable, as was also found in the interviews with Estonian civil servants reported in Chapter 6. Organisations face the dangers of constant reorganisation and of posts being created merely because talented or influential individuals happen to be available or because some individuals have acquired specific professional education or specific skills that the government is keen to use. This may easily lead to constant structural revision, and an extremely unstable work environment, which, in turn, makes it complicated to plan human resources, promotion and career moves within an organisation.

In classical bureaucracies, it is essential to define the nature of individual jobs, which is usually done through job descriptions. In small states, it can be very difficult to define jobs and draw up realistic job descriptions, especially if jobs are multi-functional by nature and require a high degree of flexibility from the person conducting them. Organisations may also lack specialists to draw up specialist job descriptions. When a new post is created, for example as an expert on cultural heritage or public relations officer, nobody may be available with sufficient professional expertise to draft a proper job description and objectives for the job. Murray (1981, p. 194) claims that sometimes specialists are, therefore, recruited according to very vague criteria and are left to determine their own duties as they see fit.

Consequently, in small states individuals can sometimes be as much role-makers as role-takers. The whole character of the job may be designed by the individual job holder as several Estonian interviewees claimed in the study of the Estonian civil service. This gives them full responsibility for their own jobs. However, it may also cause problems. The range of responsibility of an individual official gives him/her room for manoeuvre. A job description written by and for a single person who does a particular job can be highly biased and shaped to fit the person, not the job in general. Organisations can do very little to prevent such a situation. The relative shortage of talent in small states requires some flexibility in job definitions. It may thus be more desirable to define positions around the skills and competence of individuals rather
than to define ideal jobs for people who do not exist. According to the traditional model, such a personalised approach constitutes 'bad' administration; in practice this is a feature of administration in small states.

The fact that jobs are tied to particular persons who design their own jobs causes a number of problems in recruitment and promotion. No previously defined positions may exist. Therefore, it is very difficult to match a person's skills and knowledge with (sometimes missing or inadequate) requirements for the position. There can also be a lack of qualified people competing for a job. By contrast, different skills and knowledge may accumulate in large organisations and, therefore, staff competencies can be better matched to the greater variety of tasks to be performed. Slavenski (1986) observes that mismatches between people and jobs can lead to career development problems for the individual, expensive turnover, lower productivity, and the lack of potential leadership in the organisation. Recruitment and promotion procedures are further complicated by the social environment of small states. Personal relationships, political influence and family ties can create severe pressures and, according to Bray and Packer (1993, p. 87), senior officials in small states may sometimes envy the more impersonal frameworks that are possible in larger states.

In both small and large states, there is a serious danger of appointments being influenced by personal connections. As a result, the values of merit in public service selection and promotion as well as the overall image of the civil service may be adversely affected. The possibility of recruitment and promotion decisions being influenced by personal relationships is greater in small states because of the higher level of particularism, and due to the number and inter-relatedness of role-relationships in small states, as already shown in Chapter 7 with reference to Benedict's (1966) work. Bray and Packer (1993, p. 87) claim that, in order to avoid the influence of personal connections on recruitment decisions, ministries in small states often establish detailed procedures for recruitment and promotion, and may be attached to them even more rigidly than would be their colleagues in larger states. Human interactions are too close and personal to allow even hints of preferential treatment. For example, it may be ruled that interview panels must never include close
relatives or former colleagues of applicants. However, this can make it difficult to form an interview panel in small systems.

Organisations in small states have to recruit staff from small pools. A small state has small manpower resources and there may be a shortage of skilled manpower, especially of specialists. Due to the shortage of domestic labour, individuals may be offered employment even when they lack qualifications and aptitudes for the jobs they are expected to perform (Farrugia and Attard, 1989, p. 60). One way to enlarge the labour pool is by employing foreigners. It has been claimed by several authors (Boyce, 1989, p. 4; Fergus and Tomas, 1989, p. 12) that total reliance on the domestic pool of labour causes more problems than it solves, and in most situations it is desirable to undertake at least some recruitment abroad. Private sector organisations may be in a better position when it comes to hiring foreign specialists, since civil service laws may often allow only the recruitment of citizens. Therefore, it can be argued that civil services of small states may need to reconsider the approach to the hiring of non-citizens, as immigration provides highly skilled and qualified individuals. Lane and Wolf (1990, p. 176) suggest that 'recruitment of foreign nationals should be facilitated, particularly in occupations that need rare qualifications. This would be a modest effort when compared to the trend in private corporations which find that they are engaged in a world-wide competition for the scarcest resource of all – talent.' It is understandable that several civil service positions, especially those of very senior and policy-making character (and in particular departments such as Foreign Affairs or Defence) can mainly be filled by citizens of the state in question. However, rational recruitment practices might be expected to consider the involvement of non-citizens in most positions in the civil service.

In small states, opportunities for upward mobility are limited, because the public sector is smaller. Small ministries may find it difficult to develop smooth career paths due to a small number of senior positions. In addition, it may be extremely difficult to develop career ladders for specialists, as there may be only a few of them in each particular field as demonstrated in the interviews with Estonian civil servants in Chapter 6. Changing a career from specialist to generalist may, in turn, cause
problems that are particularly relevant to small systems. Individuals may spend much
time and effort obtaining the specialist skills that are needed for government in a
small state. Therefore, a career move to a different area may be considered as waste of
resources for small organisations or small civil service systems (Bray and Packer,
1991, p. 88). For example, if a good statistician is promoted to the position of head of
department, nobody else may be able to replace him/her in the former position.
Similar cases were described by Estonian civil servants during the interviews reported
in Chapter 6. Thus, an individual’s long tenure in a certain position may be explained
by his/her good fit to the job. It cannot be assumed that, when an individual with
certain qualifications retires, the next person in line of promotion will have the same
qualifications. Therefore, it would not be appropriate to rule that a senior
administrator must have a degree or knowledge or skills in a particular field and that
people with other qualifications should be excluded. The assumption that it is very
much up to a person to shape the responsibilities of a position, in turn, questions the
need for job descriptions.

Promotion can be carried out according to different criteria. It may be based on
seniority, number of years worked in a certain position or level or performance
appraisal. Employee appraisal is being used increasingly in civil services all over the
world, and it usually plays an important role in making career decisions for
institutions. Small organisations may have particular problems in the appraisal of
specialists. If there are only one or two specialists in the whole country, obviously
nobody is available with a strong professional base to evaluate how good the
professional is. Several authors (Boyce, 1989, p. 5; Bray and Packer, 1991, p. 89)
argue that, in some instances, this has allowed individuals to get away with poor
performance and inappropriate behaviour. Moreover, as one of the tasks of appraisal
is to give feedback to an individual and to raise his/her motivation and self-fulfilment,
this situation would lead to dissatisfaction for an individual professional who feels
that nobody adequately appreciates his/her professional knowledge and skills.

Even in large societies, a well-known bias in evaluation is to grade most staff as
‘average’ (Lawton and Rose, 1994). Supervisors do this partly because it avoids
confrontation with those who deserve negative rankings. In small and highly
personalised states, the need to avoid confrontation is even stronger due to the importance of ‘managing intimacy’. Bray and Packer (1991, p. 89) explain that supervisors who give their subordinates negative rankings are still likely to meet these individuals regularly in a wide range of professional and social settings. It has been found by Farrugia and Attard (1989, p. 75) that giving positive evaluation to weak individuals is used more often in small organisations and small civil services than in large institutions. The pressure to grade most people as average or higher than they actually deserve reduces the value of the whole appraisal exercise.

Efficient management of public organisations in small states represents a complicated case for long-term planning to minimise the possible problems in organisational structures and the division of labour caused by promotion and mobility. Management of multi-level organisations with multi-functional jobs, employing multi-functional individuals, is an important issue in the design of models through which small civil services can meet their needs. Therefore, flexibility is the keyword for the management of organisations in small states.

The individual approach to careers in small and large states

The characteristics of individual careers of civil servants may also help to explain differences in small states compared to large ones. Civil service practices and the peculiarities of small organisational cultures affect individual careers and vice versa. People in small societies may have different attitudes towards their individual careers, which have their roots in strong personal relationships, the limited opportunities for advancement in small labour markets and the need to carry out multiple tasks at the workplace. As a greater variety of jobs and ways of life are available in large-scale societies, individuals have more alternatives. In a small-scale society choice is limited, alternatives are few, and the career choice of an individual may have a considerable impact in the development of a society.

Individual career theories, as well as institutional approaches to careers, have been developed in and for large countries. No career theories provide a sufficient analysis
of particularism or multi-functional roles that are relevant to careers in small states. However, the notion of environment or situation as important attributes in influencing individual careers, developed in several career theories (Holland, 1959, 1966, 1973, 1985; Super, 1975, 1980, 1981, 1990), can also be applied to small states. Holland (1985) argues that people search for environments that will let them exercise their skills and abilities, and express their attitudes and values. Super (1981, p. 37) defines situational influences as geographic, historic, social and economic conditions in which the individual functions from infancy through adulthood and old age. He views an individual pursuing a career as ‘being in the centre of the scene with the situation around pushing him up or pressing down’. Super (1981, p. 27) suggests that ‘work and life satisfactions depend on the extent to which an individual finds adequate outlets for abilities, needs, values, interests, personality traits and self-concepts’. Super et al. (1996, p. 135) argue that the fit between the traits of the person and the traits required in the environment predict adjustment outcomes. The primary outcomes of a good fit between a person and an occupation are job success, satisfaction and stability.

Such views by individual career theorists contribute to the understanding of career choices and changes in small states. For example, it can be concluded that some professionals in small states may search for a professionally more fulfilling environment abroad rather than doing more or less multi-functional generalist jobs at home. However, a number of factors in Holland’s theory do not fit to the small state context. The relevance of a ‘linear career’ can be questioned in small states where organisations cannot provide linear career ladders for people and it is very likely that individuals may have to change their jobs and careers a number of times during their lives. It is important to take into account the constraints of the labour market, especially the structure of employment opportunities. As discussed in Chapter 7, limited educational opportunities and situations in the labour market play a considerable role in careers in small states. In the research into careers in large states it is possible to identify the social and biological ‘givens’ over which people have little or no control (socio-economic background, gender, ethnic origin), and those which people are, at least theoretically, able to achieve even if in socially defined circumstances (education, employment). In small states, however, the limited
education and employment opportunities can also be considered as social 'givens' over which people have little or no control. Consequently, neither Holland's nor Super's theories can be readily applied to small states.

Gottfredson's theory of circumscription and compromise, however, may be more suitable to the context of small states due to her emphasis on accessibility of jobs in the labour market. According to Gottfredson (1996, p. 187), an individual's preferred occupations are not necessarily realistic or attainable. Individuals are, therefore, expected to evaluate the accessibility of occupations when choosing which vocational alternatives they actually pursue. Gottfredson calls aspirations 'realistic' when they are tempered by knowledge of obstacles and opportunities, and 'idealistic' when aspirations are not fitted into the context. She describes the 'social space' of careers, by which she means the range of alternatives in the map of occupations that the person considers acceptable through the process of circumscription. This zone of acceptable alternatives may be large or small but reflects the individual's view of where s/he fits, or wants to fit, into society. An occupational aspiration is the alternative that the individual happens to prefer at a particular time, and it may change as individuals adjust their perceptions of suitability and accessibility.

Compromise is the process by which individuals begin to relinquish their most preferred alternatives for less compatible but more accessible ones. Gottfredson (1996) claims that individuals may discover that they will be unable to implement their preferred choices. In a sense, they reverse the choice process and reconsider their less preferred alternatives, perhaps even possibilities that they earlier ruled out as unacceptable. Whereas circumscription is the process by which individuals reject alternatives they deem unacceptable, compromise is the process by which they abandon their most preferred alternatives. Compromise means adjusting aspirations to accommodate an external reality, which is particularly important in the situation where opportunities are more limited, as in small states. According to Gottfredson (1996), the barriers and opportunities in implementing different aspirations include, for example, the local availability of particular kinds of education and employment. Therefore, the process of compromise is a part of Gottfredson's theory which makes it a reliable approach for large states but particularly suitable for the context of small
states, as compromise may be especially important in career decisions in small labour markets. Gottfredson (1996, p. 187) also argues that compromises can be very painful when the choice is among alternatives the individual deems unattainable. The prospect of taking an unacceptable job (a major compromise), which is likely to happen in small labour markets, can deeply threaten the self-concept.

Individuals in small states may have several dilemmas in their career choices which are likely to be either unknown or not so important to people in large states. Gati (1993) argues that the larger the difference in preference between the optimal alternative and the best attainable alternative career choice, the larger the additional compromise the individual must accept. It is easier to accept compromise involved in the move from the ideal, imaginary occupation to the optimal one than in the move from the optimal occupational alternative to the best attainable one, which, by and large, is the case of individual career decisions in small states. Based on previous research described in Chapters 6 and 7, a few major questions are provided below which individuals in small states need to bear in mind, when they are weighing up their career alternatives:

- whether to advance professionally in a more supportive environment (among other professionals in the same field, dealing solely with one's own area and not with multi-functional tasks) and work for a larger state, or stay in the home country and be less ambitious about one's own professional development;
- what to study in order to gain a sufficiently broad education which would support further cross-functional and/or cross-organisational career moves;
- whether to be 'loyal' to one's profession and education, or to move to another field when there is no opportunity for advancement in the original profession;
- whether to make oneself marketable in one's own country or abroad, i.e. would it be more sensible to develop subjective criteria (personal relationships, networks) within one's own country, or to focus on objective criteria (formal education, experience, knowledge and skills).

The scale of the overall labour market and the smallness of civil services in small states seriously limit opportunities for those people who either would like to spend their working lives within one system (for instance, in the civil service) or advance
within one profession. Chemiss (1991) claims on the basis of his study of American civil servants that high commitment is related to the possibility of doing interesting work during most of an individual's career. However, individuals in small countries may feel that their chances of professional growth are blocked, which may lead to professionally dissatisfied officials and a big gap between personal aspirations and the needs of the state. The limits of the labour market are greatest for highly educated and trained personnel, as there is a greater lack of professional career opportunities compared to those in larger systems. Highly competent individuals may also be disappointed by the lack of high quality support services and the need to undertake multi-functional roles instead of having a full-time appointment in their professional fields, as shown in Chapter 7. Therefore, individual career aspirations compared to the reality in such circumstances can lead to frustration among the most qualified individuals.

The balance between the aspirations of individuals and the needs of institutions may be more critical in small than in large systems, although there are increasing pressures in large states to reduce public expenditures (Metcalf and Richards, 1987; Kooiman and Eliassen, 1993). As Bacchus and Brock (1987, p. 23) note, in large-scale systems the balance can more easily be weighted in favour of the individual; the advantage of greater motivation justifies the 'waste' that results. They claim further that the small system must weight the balance in its own favour. The cost of in-service training can be justified only in terms of benefit to the system. However strong the case for an individual's personal needs and interests, the investment of time, energy and money will not be worthwhile unless it can be seen as a contribution to meeting organisational needs and development of the system. Therefore, in the same way as organisations in small states need to be flexible, so do individuals. Small-state conservatism encourages them to keep open many possible occupational options in case some fail, and to inhibit specialisation in favour of all-round competence.
Relevance of bureaucratic models to small states

The majority of career studies have been carried out in large states and in large organisations. As discussed in Chapter 7, small states tend to copy models from large states because of their own inability to carry out similar research and design appropriate policies. Barrett (1986, p. 202) argues that many of the administrative problems of small states are direct results of attempts to copy uncritically the administrative solutions of large highly developed countries by using their value systems of rationality as general standards. The application of conventional policies means assuming that society is organised into hierarchically structured bureaucracies. However, the actual bureaucratic organisation and administrative practices in small states differ from the rational bureaucratic model. One explanation is that they are operating a ‘scaled-down’ adaptation of standard approaches to administration. The literature on administration in small states is not so clear as it could be in identifying the administrative consequences of smallness. Yet, actual practice provides a source of experience and a guide to ideas about how to design an administration that is more appropriate for small states.

In addition to universal trends such as flattening of organisations, dominance of lateral movements over vertical mobility and bridging careers between generalist and specialist functions, small states have a number of additional features which are peculiar to their civil services. Smaller organisations have fewer levels in their hierarchies and, accordingly, fewer advancement opportunities, which became clear in the case studies of Estonian ministries described in Chapter 6. Accordingly, many people may reach the peak of their careers very quickly and then plateau. This results in dead-end jobs for many civil servants, which, in turn, may cause serious dissatisfaction and lack of motivation among individuals, as demonstrated in Chapter 3. This is one of the factors leading to brain-drain from smaller states to larger ones, and from smaller organisations to larger ones. Several authors (Bielby and Baron, 1983; Wholey, 1990) have noted that employees of large organisations have greater tenure than in small organisations. It can be argued that the smaller the civil service, the smaller the opportunities for a lifetime career within it because of the reduced number of career opportunities.
In general, scarcity of labour can positively affect the development of internal labour markets (ILMs), as described in Chapter 2, because organisations are likely to take action to manage critical resources when they are difficult to obtain. Pfeffer and Cohen (1984) argue that ILMs are more likely to be found in organisations facing greater labour scarcity. For an organisation having problems securing an adequate supply of labour, one way of responding is to increase its control over its labour force. Theoretically, introducing an ILM should encourage individuals to stay in the organisation and enable training in skills specific to the organisation, thus further providing a way of binding workers to the organisation. However, on the basis of American public organisations, the study by West and Berman (1993, p. 288) shows that large organisations are more likely than small organisations to achieve adequate results in job and individual career planning. Since size is positively correlated with characteristics that are thought to bring about ILMs, it is not surprising that ILMs are likely to be found in larger organisations (Pfeffer and Cohen, 1984). This leads to the conclusion that organisational size is significantly correlated with using classical institutional career development through formalisation and elaboration of ILMs.

Small organisations may encounter difficulties in securing smooth individual career paths. It may be extremely difficult to provide sufficient career mobility for their employees through ILMs, which increase the motivation of employees and their commitment to the organisation, as described in Chapter 3. Loscocco (1990, p. 58) argues that the positive impact of ILM membership on commitment results more from long career trajectories, which increase opportunities for promotion, than from the long organisational tenure associated with ILMs. Pfeffer and Cohen (1984, p. 559), when defining an ILM, pointed out that: ‘the organisation has promoted most employees with at least five years of service at least once’. While achieving promotion within every five-year period may seem overoptimistic in huge organisations, it is clearly unattainable in small systems where, as the Estonian case study shows, two to four possibilities of actual promotion exist over the standard career span.
There are also fewer opportunities for lateral mobility within a small system. While both vertical and horizontal differentiation are positively related to the structuring of organisational labour markets, their impact on mobility is negative. The greater the differentiation, the more limited are the opportunities to move to different areas. Wholey (1990, p. 42) argues that because one response to lack of opportunity is job exit, differentiation should also increase exit and decrease job security. This is a very relevant finding for studies of small states, since it demonstrates that ILMs without real career opportunities do not create commitment to an organisation. Selwyn (1975, p. 138) has noted that 'the situation of fewer career opportunities in small organisations can be exacerbated by an unnecessary profusion of cadres with rigid rules preventing movement from one cadre to another'. It can be concluded that both vertical and horizontal boundaries may constitute barriers to individual careers. In small civil services, where important organisational tasks are bound around individuals, institutions may find it sensible to have a flexible approach to organisational careers in order to deal with 'exceptional individuals' who otherwise could not be fitted into the strict rules of ILMs. For example, individuals with special education, talent or experience, which is rare in small states, can be provided with unusual career opportunities.

According to conventional practices, seniority and technical expertise gained on the job are the two main promotion criteria giving distinct advantage to older employees. This leads to the possibility of reaching the upper levels of organisations only at a later career stage. However, as up-to-date professional education can be rare in small states, the existence of young individuals who bring such qualifications to the organisation may lead to completely separate career patterns within the same organisation so that young professionals may obtain high positions very quickly.

The prevalence of full-time jobs constitutes an important element of traditional bureaucratic models in the civil service. In small states, creating jobs for the work of full-time officials involves grouping a number of different tasks together. The jobs thus demand a range of expertise which it is difficult to find in one person. Grading jobs into a certain number of levels, and assuming that only a particular sort of work is appropriate to each level, places a significant constraint on how a job can be
designed, and imposes a particular way of widening the range of tasks in an individual job, if it is to be a full-time job. If jobs are constituted on a full-time basis, with a wide range of responsibilities belonging to each official, a single hierarchical structure may be seen as satisfactory for the wide range of tasks. However, as jobs in small systems are of multi-functional nature, it would be much easier to split them up into a number of part-time jobs, which would allow hiring of experts in particular fields instead of employing one ‘universal professional’, as discussed further below.

In a typical pyramidal organisation the number of jobs located at the higher grades is smaller than the number of jobs located at lower grades. Although this is a widespread understanding of organisations, institutional structures in small systems may not take the shape of pyramids. Work of a specialist nature does not always permit a range of grades which would allow for a career structure. There can be a number of specialist jobs which cannot be allocated to certain grades or groupings and which exist on their own. These jobs are typically not part of any career ladder, as there may not be other jobs with similar functions in the same institution. Accordingly, these are dead-end jobs by definition. Compartmentalisation between generalists and specialists may create even more inflexibility which small states cannot afford. To some extent, overall careers in small states can be compared to specialist careers in the civil services of large states with their low and narrow career ladders, where more flexibility and cross-boundary movement are needed.

Grading of jobs, especially professional jobs, into a certain number of levels may give rise to peculiar problems in small systems. It can be argued that a certain degree of flexibility is necessary to allow for senior posts to be created, even if the work to be done does not justify it. Advancement opportunities could thus be created and individual commitment to the organisation increased. This is the practice in small states and their civil services where ‘artificial senior posts’ can be created for ‘important individuals’, as also reported in Chapter 6. Similar evidence has been found by Murray (1981, p. 249) in small states in the Pacific. In extreme cases, it can mean that senior officials do not have subordinates at all. In case where they are ‘promoted’, their previous posts can be erased from the organisational structure. Such a practice can be seen as the creation of individual ILMs to compensate for early
career ceilings of personnel. For example, 67% of the staff in the Ministry of Culture in Estonia were members of the Senior Civil Service as of 1997. The creation of senior posts may lead to an accumulation of high level positions in the civil services of small states, thus blurring accountability in organisations and the 'merit' of such procedures.

Promotional practices may not follow the formal merit principles widely accepted in large developed civil services, for example, by exempting employees from formal recruitment or promotion procedures by utilising 'temporary' appointments or other methods to avoid merit testing (Farrugia and Attard, 1989). A serious conflict can thus arise over the merit principles. Due to the shortage of human resources, small administrations may find it useful to have more flexible recruitment and promotion policies allowing fast and 'elastic' appointments of people who do not necessarily have all the qualifications required for the position. Promoting merely because a vacancy becomes available regardless of the qualifications of candidates can occur. It may be appropriate in such circumstances to make only a temporary appointment so as to avoid being burdened with a deadweight later on when better qualified candidates may become available.

Small civil services may also be accused of tolerating political interference in personnel decisions. Bray (1991a, p. 513) claims that multi-functionalism in small states also explains linkages between bureaucrats and politicians. Since, in small states, it is essential for many people to be multi-functional, this applies to mixing politics with bureaucracy as much as it does to other functions. Ouchi (1980) has argued that, in cases of interdependent tasks, there is a failure of bureaucratic control mechanisms, so that clan-like practices would emerge for efficiency reasons. This contradicts one of the main principles of classical bureaucracy which separates politics from public administration. Edwards (1979) states that only larger institutions are able to introduce bureaucratic control, of which an ILM is an integral part, because it is only in larger organisations that the manager does not know individual employees well enough personally so that s/he has to use impersonal mechanisms of control. In the particularistic environment of small states, however, it is questionable whether impartial control mechanisms could be introduced at all. It is very likely that
all civil servants from one ministry know each other personally and are linked through interpersonal or family relationships.

A neutrally competent, professional bureaucracy presupposes a personnel system based on universalistic (merit) criteria. Weberian-style bureaucracy offers the advantages of universalistic values to counter the dysfunctional elements of patronage. Ideal type bureaucracy is above all a form of organisation dedicated to the concept of rationality, and to the conduct of administration on the basis of relevant knowledge. This calls for a series of arrangements such as accountability to political leadership, recruitment based on formal qualifications, career orientation for professionals, specialised and differentiated roles, a well understood and stable hierarchy, well-defined spheres of competence, job security and other appropriate incentives. A key development in modern Western societies has been the depersonalisation of the state; in other words, the changing nature of state power away from the personal authority of particular rulers towards the exercise of an abstract and 'rational-legal' power.

The problems of implementing bureaucratic principles in small states may not stem so much from the design of rational-legal bureaucracy itself as from the inappropriate application and circumvention of its norms and procedures in small administrations. In small states it may be difficult for civil services to be impersonal. Parsons (1949, p. 191) argues that the consequences for individuals in small-scale societies are that individuals' 'total personalities are involved in their social relationships' making it less possible for them 'to abstract from the particular person' with whom they are in relationships. Richards (1982, p. 166) suggests on the basis of his study of the Faroe Islands, Malta and the Isle of Man that in small-scale administrations, people are more likely to display some degree of emotional commitment towards civic relationships as these are represented through or by people and represent values with which they can identify. Consequently, small-scale personal involvement contrasts with large-scale neutrality in respect of public affairs. The small society may find it more difficult to act in a purely bureaucratic way according to abstract rules and principles. Situations and decisions tend to be more personalised in societies where 'everyone knows everyone else' than in larger countries where greater anonymity prevails. People may,
therefore, tend to use informal means of communication. Selwyn (1975, p. 138) argues that this may result in a failure to record decisions and the reasoning on which those decisions were based, with resulting discontinuities which are inimical to efficient administration. Rationality requires consistency, which may be missing in the structures and work arrangements in small civil services largely based on the knowledge and skills of particular individuals. A fundamental issue in small states appears to be the modification of a Weberian bureaucratic model in which large size is a critical variable. If small states operate with bureaucratic models inherited from larger states and comprehension of the adjustments which might be desirable remains limited, small states may face severe problems in matching bureaucratic rules with their predominantly particularistic societies. As argued by Murray (1981), small states fail to adopt rational bureaucratic structures and administrative practices because to do so would involve creating an administrative machine that would neither match their resources, nor serve the needs of the states concerned.

Civil service systems in small states

A situation where traditional bureaucratic models of the civil service do not suit the context of small states provides these societies with the challenge of discovering their own approaches in developing their civil services. Different systems, as described in Chapter 1, offer a general framework of options for the development of civil services. Career systems are explicitly based on Weberian bureaucracy and, therefore, may not suit the more particularistic societies in small states for the same reasons as bureaucratic models in general are not directly applicable to small states. Assuming there is not enough opportunity for advancement within the small civil service to maintain public employees for long periods of time, lifetime employment may lead to quick career plateaus, not to increased commitment and loyalty to the public service as expected in classical bureaucracies.

Job systems may be closer to the needs of small civil services, as they provide for more flexibility, do not require the same degree of stability and consistency as career systems, and are more easily adaptable to changing circumstances. However, job
systems rely very much on precise definitions of jobs, which, again, calls into question their applicability for small states. Organising administration in small states involves dividing up the work into groups of tasks in a way that produces a job appropriate to a single individual and in which that individual can specialise.

Limited knowledge and skills in the labour force are at the basis of civil service systems in small states. As organisational structures, jobs and sometimes even organisational objectives are built around individual competencies, it would be rational to place a rank on a person not on a position in recruitment and promotion decisions. This presents a dilemma because 'rank-on-person' is characteristic of classical career systems, which for other reasons do not suit small states. Therefore, small states may find it necessary to develop civil service systems, which, on the one hand, allow them to concentrate on individual knowledge and skills as career systems, and on the other, provide flexibility and adaptability as job systems.

Small states require distinctive management styles for the operation of their public administration in highly personalised environments. Network systems might provide a suitable form of organisation, since they are established around a core group of individuals and allow for more flexibility through the periphery. A crucial factor in defining core competencies is human capital. The core consists of key members of an organisation, with rank placed on their qualities, competencies and achievements rather than their positions. Competencies tend to be sets of skills that cut across traditional functions and are multi-functional. Thus, on the one hand, network systems would suit the multi-functional character of jobs and individuals in small systems. On the other hand, as small state citizens are used to dealing with multi-functional tasks, they would be well placed to adapt to the core roles of an organisation. The nature of the work of core staff is dynamic, it involves changes in positions, movement between government agencies and peripheral groups. Small societies appear to be functioning according to the same principles as network systems to a large extent. Therefore, instead of fighting against personalism and particularism by introducing bureaucratic models, it may be more sensible to take advantage of the existing qualities of small societies and develop network systems which are built on similar features.
Establishing well-functioning network organisations can help small systems in providing their employees with career opportunities beyond their own limited structures. As Bakeaa (1991, p. 256) has noted, some individuals in small states may reach senior posts at a very young age, while others may find themselves almost permanently blocked because their supervisors are just a few years older. In small institutions in small states, careers may be more easily advanced through cross-boundary mobility rather than moving up the career ladder within one organisation or system. Career mobility between the core and a number of peripheral organisations, or between private and public sectors provides individuals with continuously challenging tasks and prevents them from plateauing, with its consequences for both individuals and institutions.

The development of network systems requires the establishment of partnerships between different sectors in society. On the basis of the analysis carried out in three small European states, Richards (1982, p. 166) claims that the dividing line between public and private concerns tends to become blurred in small states. From a broadly based analysis of European, African, Asian and Carribean small states, Bray and Packer (1993, p. 88) argue that several functions typical of the public sector in large states are either undertaken by the private sector or are not undertaken at all in small societies. Therefore, organisations in small states would benefit from being open by promoting linkages between public organisations themselves and between different sectors in order to take advantage of the existing opportunities and to make better use of manpower. Cross-boundary mobility would allow individuals to move around the civil service as well as use career opportunities in private and non-profit sectors. Organisations which are tied to each other through contracts and work force mobility may enjoy greater levels of inter-organisational co-operation due to their greater familiarity with each other’s cultures and capabilities.

According to the fundamental idea of network systems, the core consists of generalists, while professionals belong to the periphery. Such an arrangement can be very useful for organisations which may consider themselves too small to have specialist posts and/or undertake certain functions. They may prefer to subcontract these services to other public organisations or contract out. From the professionals’
point of view, network organisations may allow them to concentrate on their specialisms and practise their professional skills in several organisations at the same time instead of carrying out multi-functional tasks where their own profession may only play a minor role. Transferring specialist jobs to the periphery may, thus, encourage professionalism in small states. Professional networking plays an important role in bringing together individuals for the same field. Network systems can encourage specialists working together in consulting firms and enable their interpersonal communication and professional development.

One of the main problems in small administration is management of multi-functional jobs. Murray (1981) argues that, in the small states in the Pacific, it is striking how much 'improvisation' takes place:

Individual officials are formally assigned duties outside their ministry - an official may be a senior official in a ministry who serves also as a clerk to the High Court when the Court sits; or he may be a secretary to a ministry who is also a member of a board managing a utility. Alternatively on an irregular basis an official may be pulled out of a ministry to perform particular jobs - assisting a visiting mission, or translating the rules of procedure of the Assembly. Many of the arrangements made are peculiar to the situation and do not involve formally institutionalising an activity on a continuing basis. An individual serving in a particular ministry is simply given an extra job to do when someone is needed to do it, and when the job does not obviously belong to any one office. Many of the improvisations explicitly involve some form of institutionalisation - creating an office and a structure. Most commonly, new activities are assigned to an existing ministry, and the work is distributed among those in the existing hierarchy (Murray, 1981, p. 250).

These findings were confirmed by the study of Estonian civil servants described in Chapter 6. 'Improvisation' constitutes a departure from the idea that work is arranged in units appropriate to one full-time official operating within a single hierarchy, as laid down by classical Weberian principles of bureaucracy.

Network systems may also influence the design of multi-functional tasks and the management of working time. Full-time multi-functional tasks, especially those in the periphery, can be broken down into a number of part-time mono-functional tasks, again supporting specialisation and concentration in certain tasks instead of employing 'universal professionals'. The opposite to this constructive inventiveness is the practice of having full-time officials performing jobs that in reality require only
part-time inputs. Separating out multi-functional tasks can also be linked with the development of contracting out and the use of alternative working arrangements by introducing flexitime, job sharing, compressed working time and so forth. The feasibility of flexible work scheduling depends on how tightly structured the jobs are in a particular department. In small systems, where jobs are not very precisely defined, it can be relatively easy to develop alternative working patterns. Managing a large amount of part-time mono-functional tasks, however, needs careful co-ordination, which can be provided by the core of the network.

The challenge which the administrators in small countries face is how to capitalise on the advantages of close personal contacts in small societies. In small states, it can be said that organisations are represented within people rather than through formal institutions. Small organisations with few hierarchical boundaries support interpersonal relationships and informal networking. While formally set institutional communication channels dominate in large systems, more informal and personal relationships between people of different organisations and sectors of small states can support institutional pursuits in developing networks. The compactness of small societies makes for greater speed and efficiency of communication among people. Therefore, personalism in small societies gives small states an advantage in developing co-ordination mechanisms and network systems in their civil services. The fact that 'everyone knows everyone else' can greatly facilitate the smooth running of organisations and development of networks.

Members of the core are expected to undertake strategic, continuing responsibilities and to work together as a team directing and monitoring organisational policies. Due to the ability of small states' citizens to 'manage intimacy' by avoiding conflicts in interpersonal relationships, it may be easier to organise teams, thus supporting the development of an efficient core of the network organisation. Teamwork can help to break boundaries between separate tasks, functions and organisations, which corresponds with the multi-functional character of jobs. Such an approach to teamwork in the core may change the classical understanding of jobs as separate entities in an organisation. Murray (1981, p. 253) suggests that staff in the core should operate as a team without adhering rigidly to job descriptions and duty schedules.
Descriptions of individual positions can be replaced by a team job or task description and individual personal assignments. The area that is treated as specific to one individual official – and that official alone – can be thus reduced to a minimum. This is how officials can widen their range of duties across boundaries. Such an approach requires redefinition of job boundaries without specifying tasks and job content by using definitions such as: ‘this job entails a requirement to undertake any task within the general competence of the jobholder, as required by the organisation’. More general job descriptions emphasise key values and objectives rather than precise, predetermined duties. Moreover, Murray (1981) suggests that small states can simply employ good people and challenge them to do as much work as they can. Those who are known and trusted can be given a freer rein; in other words, concentrating on management of individuals rather than jobs. In civil services, the core consists of senior civil servants, so these are the people who are given freedom to define their own jobs and be jointly responsible for carrying out organisational policies.

Opinions differ on whether smallness is a constraint or a positive factor in developing civil services. The literature on small states tends to emphasise the negative aspects in their administration. Nevertheless, small states may not merely represent, to paraphrase Richards (1982), a hybrid or half-way house between primitive and modern systems of politics or administration. Small states have unique social, political and administrative characteristics, as demonstrated throughout the third part of the thesis and confirmed in the study of the Estonian civil service in Chapter 6. The form of administration in which the personal factor is so important is well recognised. The question remains whether, and if so how, different countries accommodate, exploit and regulate personal relationships in a way that facilitates effective administration and whether common patterns can be identified. Using a network approach to the development of civil services seems to be one area where smallness of a state provides several advantages enabling optimum use to be made of the assets of small size.
Conclusion

This thesis offers an integrated approach to civil service careers in small and large states. Thinking on careers has moved towards a more balanced view in the 1990s, which increasingly supports an interrelated approach to career management by combining individual and institutional perspectives on careers. Careers play an important role in the design of civil service systems. One of the reasons for the civil service reforms in the 1990s has been the need to revise career structures and review responsibility for career management. Changes concerning careers in the public sector have, however, been slower to take effect than developments in the private sector. The rigid employment patterns in the public sector make it difficult to attract highly qualified people with different needs and labour market interests. A central aim of the thesis has been to analyse the development of civil service careers with a view to identifying ways in which career policies in civil services might be improved, taking Estonia and the UK as case studies.

The first part of the thesis examines the different approaches to careers developed in political science, sociology, psychology, economics, public and business administration. Chapters 1, 2 and 3, respectively, analyse administrative, institutional and individual approaches to careers. Combining the findings from different disciplines leads to the elaboration of an interdisciplinary approach to careers in Chapter 4. The analysis in Chapters 6, 7 and 8 is based on an integrated perspective of civil service careers. The case studies of civil service careers in the UK and Estonia in Chapters 5 and 6 draw on documentary materials and interviews with civil servants in the two countries to identify the characteristics of career development. They highlight key changes in the two civil services, which have substantially affected civil service cultures in both countries during the period between 1988 and 1998.

In examining the development of civil service careers in the UK and Estonia in Part II of the thesis, a major focus is the comparison of characteristics that can be identified as dependent on the size of each country. The thesis goes on to provide an analysis of how the size of states influences career opportunities and structures. Evidence from previous studies of small states suggests that there are not only quantitative but also
qualitative differences in the management of organisations and individuals in small and large states. These differences are analysed in Part III of the thesis in the context of small and large civil services, with particular emphasis on the development of civil service careers.

In this conclusion, the key findings from the analysis of civil service careers are structured around the two main research questions in the thesis. Firstly, an overview is provided of the findings on civil service careers with reference to the development of an integrated approach to civil service careers. These conclusions have implications for the design of different civil service systems and the management of careers within these systems. Secondly, the findings focus on the development of small state theories, with particular reference to career management in small and large civil services.

*Careers and civil service systems*

This section summarises the main findings of the thesis on career development in civil services. The broader context of the development of civil services confirms the importance of adopting an integrated approach to careers. The 'old' and 'modern' career models are described within the context of the development of closed and open systems in civil services, illustrated by the case studies of the UK and Estonia. The characteristics of career mobility, boundaryless careers and network organisations are identified, and the section concludes by demonstrating how the thesis has contributed to research on civil service careers.

The starting point of the thesis is the understanding that the development of civil service careers is dependent on broader issues in different societies, such as political, cultural or economic factors, the development of public administration and the nature of the civil service system in particular, as reported in Chapter 1. The analysis of this broader context raises questions about the impact for public administration of the shifting balance between stability and flexibility. Contemporary organisations need more flexibility than ever before to adapt to change and cope with new problems in
rapidly changing societies, as clearly demonstrated in Chapter 4. While academics and practitioners of public administration are familiar with the problem of ensuring stability in the civil service, they are less familiar with those concerning flexibility. Whereas stability justifies the development of long-term plans and detailed programmes of activity, increasing flexibility involves adaptive efficiency, as argued by Metcalfe and Richards (1987). Flexibility of institutions and individuals depends on the adaptive reformulation of objectives and a speedy adjustment to environmental changes. In stable environments, organisations can be designed on the basis of long-term investments in rigid structures. In changing environments, temporary structures that are easy to change are more appropriate. Whereas the management of civil services in stable environments placed great emphasis on institutions, their rules, procedures and structures, managing for flexibility creates new demands for individual civil servants, and the successful functioning of public organisations depends increasingly on efficient human resource management. According to Naisbitt (1985), human resources provide the competitive edge in an information society. In a dynamic and fast changing world, the motivation and commitment of people are increasingly important for the organisations that employ them, which places strong emphasis on their career management, since career development is one of the key motivators for individuals, as argued in Chapter 3. The study of the British and Estonian civil services demonstrates that the two countries are in the process of revising their human resource strategies in the civil service, as reported in Chapters 5 and 6. Both have carried out far-reaching changes in their civil services in the period under study from 1988 to 1998. The changes aim to make civil servants more accountable, not only for their performance, but also for their careers.

Chapters 1, 2 and 3 provided an overview of how researchers from different disciplines – public administration, sociology and psychology – have approached careers. Although the objective of the thesis was to examine individual and institutional careers, it did not set out to prove that these two perspectives are independent of one another. Rather, the aim was to show that individual and institutional approaches to careers are interdependent and must be analysed together. Most of the literature on careers did not cross disciplinary boundaries until the 1980s, and presented either an individual or institutional approach to careers. In practice,
career development was mostly determined by institutional factors, as shown in Chapters 2 and 6. The diversity of individual careers demonstrated in Chapters 3, 4 and 6 raised questions about the adequacy of 'objective careers' as a basis for institutional policies. By contrast, taking account of 'subjective careers' through the introduction of pluralistic employment patterns, it is argued, leads to greater organisational efficiency. Chapter 4 concludes that research into careers, if it aims to be thorough and to provide a full understanding of careers, must integrate perspectives from different fields and provide a comprehensive picture of the complexity of career development. The same applies to the practice of career management. As suggested by Mayo (1991) in his 'four-dimension' model, presented in Chapter 4, efficient career management within organisations should take account of career planning by individuals; and individuals are expected to be aware of institutional career management. Together, these two dimensions constitute balanced career management.

The analysis of careers in the thesis has drawn mainly on American sources to build a framework for researching into the British and Estonian civil services. The case studies with British and Estonian civil servants confirmed that a number of the findings in the American literature applied to the development of careers in the two selected countries (for example DiPrete and Soule, 1986; DiPrete, 1990; Hall, 1990). The interviews with Estonian and British civil servants reported in Chapter 6 demonstrated that separating institutional and individual approaches is artificial and does not contribute to better management of careers. All the Estonian and British respondents analysed their individual and institutional careers from the integrated perspective, by considering both institutional and individual needs. Psychological, sociological, economic or administrative perspectives on careers would, therefore, seem to reflect the limited frame of reference of researchers or practitioners rather than an analysis of the reality of contemporary careers themselves.

The finding presented in the thesis on the importance of the integrated approach to careers supports the views in the literature on private sector careers since the late 1980s and 90s. Whereas the available literature is useful in explaining the integrated approach to private sector careers, it fails to demonstrate how theories about
institutional and individual careers can be applied to the civil service. The thesis argues that research into public administration has been developing in relative isolation from other studies of careers, thus separating administrative approaches to careers from the findings of other disciplines. Little progress has been made in linking the individual and organisational components described in Chapters 2 and 3 with an administrative approach (Chapter 1) to careers. A key finding in the thesis, supported by the case studies, is that not only private, but also public sector careers can usefully be analysed from an integrated perspective.

The identification of 'old' and 'modern' career models in Chapter 4 makes it possible to distinguish between the role played by careers in classical organisations and in contemporary systems. The 'old' career model refers to linear individual careers based on vertical upwards mobility corresponding to a rigid hierarchy and stable internal labour markets, and resulting in lifetime employment with one employer. The 'modern' career model emphasises horizontal and cross-sectoral mobility and flexibility to adapt to diverse interests and needs of people in both individual and institutional career management. Development of 'modern' career management is associated with decentralisation of human resource management. In centralised career systems, all matters related to people are considered to be personnel or human resource issues rather than questions for management. Centralised human resource management is based on highly formalised procedures and structures, and institutional responsibility for career management of employees. In decentralised systems, managing human resources is claimed as an important management priority: managers at all levels of organisations deal with the development of their staff by considering their 'subjective careers' in addition to organisational career management, even though the primary responsibility for career management lies with individuals.

The thesis also distinguishes between closed career systems and open job systems in civil services. Career systems present an 'old' model of careers based on an administrative approach, with no consideration of developments in institutional and, in particular, in individual approaches. The relative isolation of administrative theories and practices with regard to closed systems may be one reason why public sector organisations have been slower than private companies to abandon rigid career
structures and closed internal labour markets to accommodate flexible management of organisations and careers. Open civil service systems enable institutions to be more flexible in adapting to environmental changes and in accommodating the diversity of individual subjective careers, as demonstrated in Chapter 4. Consequently, the establishment of open systems in public administration contributes to the development of an integrated approach to civil service careers based on the 'modern' career model. The establishment of open systems is part of a broader concept of New Public Management, which deserves attention in making classical civil services more flexible and adaptable to changing needs and the interests of organisations and individuals.

Chapter 5 reveals that both the UK and Estonia are developing open systems in their civil services. The UK operated a classical closed career system until the end of the 1980s, and its Next Steps reforms provide a major structural change in the civil service from a closed to an open system. The Estonian civil service was also rather closed under Soviet rule, although it did not represent a classical career system but was rather a patronage system. The development of an open system began at the same time as in the UK in the early 1990s. Although the starting point for establishing open systems was very different in the two countries, both British and Estonian civil services face similar problems and challenges, as demonstrated in Chapter 6: movement from a centralised to decentralised personnel management systems; the replacement of institutional career development by individual responsibility for careers; limited career opportunities within civil services, leading to career plateaus; concern about the poor image and marketability of civil servants. The development of open systems distinguishes the two countries studied from several other European states which still operate closed career systems, such as Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Greece and Spain (Auer et. al., 1996).

Most of the chapters in the thesis focus on career mobility as an important factor in career development in different civil service systems. Career mobility is examined from different perspectives, which has made it possible to distinguish between three broad categories of mobility: upwards mobility within the civil service, lateral mobility within the civil service, and boundaryless careers, which cross the borders of
public and private sectors. Whereas closed career systems are orientated towards vertical careers with one employer, open systems allow, and sometimes encourage, lateral and cross-boundary mobility. Chapters 2 and 3 show that opportunities for vertical mobility are limited due to the tendency to flatten hierarchies and to the disappearance of stable organisational structures and career ladders. Organisations and individuals cannot, therefore, rely solely on upwards progression. Horizontal mobility, it is argued, extends opportunities for mobility within the civil service. However, outsourcing, decentralisation and greater specialisation restrict lateral mobility within a single system. Both vertical and horizontal mobility are found to be particularly difficult to manage for specialists, since their career paths are shorter and narrower. The study of Estonian and British civil services confirms theoretical findings about the limits to mobility within the civil service: opportunities for mobility are particularly restricted for specialists in the British civil service, and for both generalists and specialists in the Estonian civil service.

Boundaryless careers provide an alternative to limited career opportunities within one system. Network organisations offer an institutional form for boundaryless careers by supporting movement between public and private organisations, and thus, developing a better understanding and a greater degree of collaboration between different sectors. Network organisations, although proposed for the civil services in the UK (Treasury, 1987) and in the US (Kettl et al., 1996), have not been fully implemented in any country. However, theoretical writings on network organisations suggest that they have good potential for developing contemporary human resource policies in both public and private sectors. As openness of civil services is associated with a greater degree of decentralisation, the co-ordination between government functions is becoming increasingly important. By establishing a permanent core and developing diverse working patterns in the periphery, network organisations can provide a balance between stability and change in organisations. Network organisations with their flexible structures and career opportunities could alter both career theories and actual career patterns. The interviews with British and Estonian civil servants demonstrated that respondents in both countries support the idea of cross-boundary mobility and see this as a way of developing their careers.
In sum, the thesis has contributed to the body of research on civil service careers in a number of ways. Firstly, it demonstrates that the integrated approach is important not only in the private sector but also in the civil service: public sector organisations could, therefore, benefit from a comprehensive analysis of careers involving administrative, institutional and individual perspectives, as suggested in Chapters 4 and 6. Secondly, the thesis innovates by basing case studies of the development of careers in the British and Estonian civil services on an integrated approach. It demonstrates the interest of applying the analytical framework to countries in Western and Eastern Europe (Chapter 6). Thirdly, the distinction between the 'old' and 'modern' career models leads to the conclusion that open civil service systems, used in both the UK and Estonia, correspond to a contemporary view of careers (Chapters 4, 5 and 6).

The application of small state theories to the development of civil service careers

The second key research question in the thesis concerns the comparison of civil service careers in small and large states. As small states present a relatively new field of research, little evidence exists on the development of civil services and careers in small countries. All previous studies of careers had been carried out in large states. Although the organisation and management of ministries of education have been studied thoroughly in several small states (Farrugia and Attard, 1989; Bray, 1990, 1991a, 1991b; Bray and Packer, 1991, 1993), the development of civil service systems in small states, and the applicability of the experience of large states to small civil services had not previously been researched. The case studies of the British and Estonian civil services presented in Chapter 6, as well as a review of previous studies of small societies, labour markets and education in small states discussed in Chapter 7, form a basis for examining the management of civil services and careers in small states in Chapter 8.

The problems of the complexity of small state theories are recognised in the thesis. Although small states have been defined as those with a population of 2 million and less, Benedict's (1966) assumption has been used that the definition of small states
also involves small societies. Accordingly, similar issues may occur in small or relatively isolated societies in large states. In addition, Chapter 7 argues that several development theories coincide with small state theories, which creates difficulties in distinguishing between developmental factors and the size of the state as determinants. These two factors may act separately from one another, or the stage of development and size of the country may combine together. Most previous studies of small states have not focused on European states. The findings are, therefore, based on an analysis of the wider small state literature including African, Asian and American states and islands. The thesis examines whether these findings can be transferred to the European context. However, as Estonia is both a country in transition and a small state, it is difficult to separate out the relative importance of the two dimensions.

As Estonia had not been included in any study of small states due to its short history of independent statehood, the thesis provided an opportunity to test previous small state theories. The case studies of the development of civil service careers in the UK and Estonia reveal differences between civil services that might be attributable to size. A comparative analysis of the British and Estonian civil services in Chapter 6 identifies six issues in the Estonian civil service which are in line with previous research into small states, and in which it differs from the UK: greater difficulties in recruitment and retention than in large states; the presence of rare specialists and the complexity of their management; the multi-functional character of jobs; the personification of jobs; the importance of informal relationships and networks; and additional sources of instability in the civil service.

Both individual and institutional careers have their peculiarities in small systems, as also reported in Chapter 8. As organisational hierarchies are shorter and narrower in small systems, institutions provide fewer opportunities for career advancement and individual careers plateau faster than in large systems. Institutions in small states are also characterised by greater instability because of the personification of structures and jobs. Therefore, the relevance of traditional bureaucratic models is inappropriate for smaller systems. Instead, it is argued that small systems benefit from having flexible structures, a high degree of openness and cross-boundary careers for
individuals. Small states thus have additional reasons, compared to large states, for developing open systems in their civil services.

Chapter 8 also shows that the very characteristics that are peculiar to small systems help to build network systems. The development of network systems, thus, provides a challenge for small states, as they offer a model where the in-built characteristics of small states, such as 'managing intimacy', avoidance of conflicts, multi-functional jobs, personal relationships and networks, can best be used. The development of networks has several advantages for small states, since small societies function as networks themselves. The problem remains how to use these advantages consciously in developing relevant civil service systems and management practices in organisations.

The thesis provides a number of new insights into small states. Firstly, it takes account of similarities between theories of small states and countries in transition, thus pointing out the complexity of small state research (Chapter 7). Secondly, it tests previous findings on small states in the case of the Estonian civil service and confirms the validity of previous studies of other small states in several respects (Chapter 6). Thirdly, the thesis contributes to the research into careers in small states by applying the individual and institutional career theories developed in large states to a small state context, and by using an integrated approach in the analysis of careers in small states (Chapter 8). Finally, the thesis analyses the applicability of different civil service systems to small states by questioning the relevance of bureaucratic career systems to small states, by recognising the advantages of open systems and, by drawing attention to the characteristics of small states which correspond to the development of network systems (Chapter 8).

Concluding remarks

In evaluating the theoretical implications of the thesis, a number of areas can be identified which suggest avenues for future research. The conclusions about the development of civil services in states of different size are by no means
comprehensive, since this is the first comparative study of civil service careers in large and small states. The thesis focuses on the analysis of two important research questions and has tested them in two countries. Various aspects of civil service systems and small states have been examined, but several issues associated with these research questions could be examined in greater depth and in a wider range of countries. The empirical findings are based on a relatively small sample of British and Estonian respondents. Although the case study of Estonia confirmed previous findings from studies of education and labour markets in different small states, the conclusions derived from a study of one country cannot be directly transferred to other small states. Several issues require additional research before broader generalisations can be made for the theory and practice of civil service careers in small and large states. Further work could usefully be undertaken within each of the major areas examined in this thesis: career theories, civil service systems, small state theories and civil service careers in small states.

As recognised earlier in the thesis, most career theories were developed in North America: there is little empirical evidence on the development of European civil service careers. Career theories developed in North America need further testing in the context of European countries. This applies to institutional theories (for example, Althauser and Kalleberg, 1981; Leibowitz et al., 1986; DiPrete, 1987a, 1987b, 1988, 1990) and individual career theories (for example, Holland, 1958, 1959, 1966, 1973, 1992; Super, 1975, 1980, 1990; Gottfredson, 1978, 1981, 1996), as well as to the integrated approach to careers (Hall, 1986; Mayo, 1991, Kettl et al., 1996). Research into careers would benefit from comparative studies to distinguish between national factors and general trends in the development of careers. For example, the distinction between the ‘old’ and the ‘modern’ career models requires research in different countries to enable broader generalisations to be made.

Although the need for interdisciplinary research into careers is emphasised throughout the thesis, previous studies of civil service careers have mostly been conducted within the field of public administration, thus involving only an administrative approach to careers, described in Chapter 1. At a time of greater openness of civil services and the growing importance of motivation and commitment of human resources, as shown in
Chapter 3, a more integrated approach involving studies of institutional and individual careers would strengthen the understanding of civil service careers and have valuable practical implications for the design of civil service systems and career development within these systems. Further research is needed to provide a comprehensive analysis of civil service careers from an integrated perspective.

Certain career issues also require more detailed research, especially those which change in the course of developing the 'modern' career model. Clearly longitudinal research is needed to explore various aspects of institutional and individual careers in changing environments. For example, a study of ILMs over several years would shed light on their stability and/or dynamics, exceptions to linear careers and the creation of new steps and categories in career ladders. Open civil service systems provide a challenge for researchers interested in mobility: a study of the impact of decentralised personnel policies on mobility would, for example, help to identify opportunities for mobility between organisations with different human resource policies. In addition, the political environment in which civil service systems and careers develop needs to be analysed thoroughly to determine the extent of control that public organisations are able to exercise over the development of careers, and the impact and rationale of political decisions on career management in the public sector.

Relatively little attention has been paid by researchers to different civil service systems. Although the interest in civil service systems in different countries has grown substantially over the 1990s, and previous practices of closed career systems have been questioned, there is still a lack of comparative studies in different fields of public sector management, career management being one of them. The case studies of the British and Estonian civil service careers in Chapter 6 reveal that countries with different political, economic and cultural backgrounds may have common problems in the development of their civil services. Further East-West comparisons would contribute to the analysis of the impact of transitional factors on the civil service. Future research should also explore other factors that might be linked to career development in civil services. One particularly interesting area is the impact of the development of open civil service systems on social protection and the pensions of civil servants. Another attractive area for further research is the movement of labour
between the civil services of EU member states, and in particular, how closed vs open civil service systems in different member states affect that movement.

Previous studies of small states have examined very different national contexts in Europe, Africa, America and Asia. Although the thesis has identified themes and issues that are typical of small states, it should be borne in mind that small states exhibit great diversity due to different political and cultural factors. The problem raised in Chapter 7 of the interdependence between size and transitional status needs more exploration to distinguish between the different factors involved in the development of the civil service. A comparative study of large and small states which are at the same stage of development would add value to previous research. Scholars could usefully examine not only different states at a single point in time but also particular states at different points in time. Further research is needed to demonstrate whether size contributes to an understanding of problems to a greater or lesser extent than stage of development, different cultural, historic, geographic, political or economic factors. Further confirmation is required to show whether particular policy opportunities are available, or policy options closed, as a result of smallness. The thesis has raised points worth noting and exploring in the future in different small states to allow further generalisations and practical implications to be drawn out. For example, the potential of network systems in small civil services can be considered as an interesting area of study that needs to be tested in further research.

The distinction between small states and small societies (Benedict, 1966) adds a number of interesting aspects to the research into small states. A promising area for future research would be to explore how previous research into small states can be applied to small societies within large states, including small, relatively closed or isolated communities or areas (for example, minority groups or islands within large states). In practice, small labour markets can reproduce many of the features of labour markets in small states. It might be more appropriate to examine issues along a continuum of scale rather than by using sharp cut-off points in categorising size.

The thesis has several theoretical and practical implications for lesson-drawing. As civil services are opening up, they become more open to outside influences, the
experience of other states included. Whereas comparative analysis of different civil services would enable different states to learn from each other's experience, attention must be paid to the complexity of direct policy transfers from one country to another, especially if these countries are of different size. The thesis has demonstrated that, on the one hand, countries of different size, historical, political, economic and cultural backgrounds may face common problems in developing their civil services and may be able to draw some lessons from each other. On the other hand, findings on small states, confirmed by the case study of Estonia, suggest that small states may have much to learn from each other, even when they have sharply differing economies, cultures, histories and geographic locations.

As large states typically serve as models for small states (Farrugia and Attard, 1989; Bray and Packer, 1991), some large states may find it useful to analyse the theories and practices of small states if they are to manage members of small societies more efficiently within their states. Small civil services have valuable experience in managing flat organisations and plateaued people, which may also deserve broader interests. Such experience of small states could also be used in the management of small organisations in large states, and, in turn, small civil services may be able to learn lessons from the career management of small organisations in large states. In addition, as small states seem to have many preconditions for developing network systems as demonstrated in Chapter 8, they may provide models for establishing well-functioning networks and managing boundaryless careers.

Despite the fact that the case studies were limited to only two countries, the findings could be applicable to other countries in Europe and to other small states in the world. The thesis demonstrates that a truly integrated approach to careers in small civil services should not only combine disciplinary approaches, but also incorporate different dimensions of small state analysis.
Annex 1

Case studies of institutions: interview schedule

Career management

- What has changed in career management over the past ten years?
- Please describe the development of career policies in your department.
- Who is and who should be responsible for careers?
- Do you have responsibility as a manager for the career planning of your staff?

Public sector employment

- What do you think of the status of the civil service in the labour market? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the public sector? Why do people leave the civil service?
- How can good people be attracted into and retained in the civil service?
- Does a specific type of personality prefer working for the civil service?
- Do public and private organisations have similar management practices (career development particularly)? Future trends?
- How would a more open civil service affect civil service careers in the long run?
- How would the degree of openness affect the composition of the work force (age, gender)?
- How can high morale be developed in the civil service? Is tenure an important factor?
- What do you think of security of employment under current circumstances?

Promotion

- How is information about vacancies conveyed to staff?
- Do you encourage your staff to apply for new jobs?
- Do career ladders exist in your department? Are staff informed about them?
- Are there enough advancement opportunities for insiders?
- Are the results of formal staff appraisal considered in discussions of promotion within the department? To another department?
- Do interpersonal relationships affect recruitment and/or promotion decisions in the department?
- Do generalists or specialists have better career opportunities? In the civil service and in the labour market in general?
- What do you think of career plateaus in the civil service? How do you deal with plateaued civil servants?

Mobility

- What do you think of the mobility between departments, between sectors? Horizontal and vertical mobility? Is there enough mobility at present?
- Why is horizontal mobility needed?
• Do people like to move between departments/sectors? Why?
• If two key persons in your department were to move to another department, would it influence relationships between these departments? Is such a move likely to be useful or even harmful for your department?
• If heads of two divisions of the department were to leave the department, would this affect departmental policies or objectives?

Training

• Is the department (are line managers) interested in training staff? Does this mean that people have better career opportunities and may leave the department soon after finishing their training?
• Are you more interested in training in general skills or job specific skills for your staff?
• Do civil servants need specialist or generalist knowledge and skills? Future trends?

Work organisation

• What do you think of alternative work arrangements (part-time, job sharing, flexitime)? To what extent are they used in your department? Are they popular among staff? Do any central or departmental regulations restrict using alternative work arrangements?
• Are the career opportunities of part-timers the same as those of full-timers?
• Is contracting out practised in your department? Do you have any specific personnel policies for casual staff/consultants?
• Would you as a manager prefer to employ staff on a long-term or short-term basis? What are the differences in the personnel policies of long-term and short-term staff?

Division of labour

• How often is the structure of your department revised?
• How frequently do you revise job descriptions?
• Would you prefer to have more (or less) stability in the structure and division of labour in the department?
• Do employees follow precisely their job descriptions or do they take on extra tasks?
• Are there any specialist jobs in your department with just one or two persons doing them?
• Are there any individuals in the department who work on several tasks of a different nature at the same time? Multi-functional administrators? Please specify.
Future of civil service careers

- Do you see any way of improving career management in your department and in the civil service in general?
- Who do you think will be the ideal civil servant in the future? (education, knowledge, skills, personality). Future of profession?
Case studies of individuals: interview schedule

Career history and plans

• Why did you choose a career as a civil servant? Have you regretted your career choice?
• How have career opportunities in the civil service changed over past ten years?
• How did you get your current job?
• Do you plan your career and if so, how?
• Do you feel secure about your future in the civil service?

Public sector employment

• Do you personally prefer an open or closed civil service?
• How would it be possible to develop high morale in the civil service? Does it depend on tenure and long-term contracts?
• What is the status of the civil service in the labour market?
• Are public and private employers different? Advantages and disadvantages of both?
• Would you move to the private sector if you were offered a job with 200% of your current salary?
• Would your civil service experience be an advantage or disadvantage when applying for a job in the private sector?

Motivation and commitment

• What motivates civil servants to work for the public sector?
• Would you recommend to your children that they become civil servants? Why?
• Do you feel a sense of commitment to the civil service, your department, boss, work?
• Is there a certain 'civil service type' of personality? Please describe it.
• What should the department do in order to increase the commitment of its employees?
• How could the department attract and retain good people?

Career management

• Who is responsible for careers: an individual or a department?
• Would you like the department to help you develop your career?
• Do you expect your boss / personnel manager to be interested in your career development?

Promotion

• Are there any advancement opportunities in your department?
• Do you have enough information about the career opportunities in your department? Do you know what position/grade you will move to next?
• How is information about vacancies shared with the members of the department?
• On what basis are individuals promoted in your organisation? Does age or gender affect recruitment or promotion decisions? In what way?
• Does ‘being informed’ help people to advance? Please specify.
• Have personal relationships affected your career? Please specify.
• Are the results of a formal staff appraisal related to promotion? Should they be?
• Who have better career opportunities: generalists or specialists? Why?
• Does a career plateau exist? How do people cope with it? When would you consider yourself plateaued? Have you ever been plateaued?

Mobility

• How many career/job moves should individuals have during their lifetime if any at all?
• How long is it normal to work in one position?
• For how long do you expect to stay in your current position? What would you like to do then?
• Would you like to work for one department throughout your career and advance within a single department or would you prefer to move from one department to another? How frequently?
• Do you have more opportunities for upward movement within your current department, across departments or outside the civil service?
• What do you think of horizontal mobility within the department?
• What is your view on movement between departments? Between sectors? Are you ready to change jobs? Sectors? Careers?
• What is positive and negative about job moves? (learning new skills, getting used to a new department, obtaining new experience)
• If you were to leave your current job and move to another department, would it affect any of the current departmental policies or objectives?
• Would it be easy for you to find a satisfying job? Where?

Training

• How can you increase your opportunities in the labour market? Training?
• Do you have any idea who will be doing your job if you were to get a new job? Would you teach him or her your current job?
• Do you expect your employer to provide in-service training for you? What sort of training (general or specialised)?
• What kind of training would help you to move upwards within the current department? Outside the current department? Outside the civil service? Which type of training would you prefer?

Work organisation

• Would you like to make use of alternative work arrangements (part-time, job sharing)? Please specify?
• What should your employer do to provide alternative work arrangements?
• Have you ever had a career break? Did it influence your career opportunities?
Division of labour

• Does your actual work match your job description?
• Do you have any extra responsibilities?
• Does your work include different sorts of tasks? Please specify.
• Is there anybody else in your organisation who does a similar job as you do?

Future of civil service careers

• Can you describe the ideal civil servant of the future?
• How do you see the future of civil service careers? Of the profession of a civil servant?
Bibliography


