

# Senior Civil Service Training System in Taiwan: Reflection on International Trend

Kun-I Liu\*

Thomas C. P. Peng\*\*

## Abstract

This paper analyzes the scope and structure of Taiwan senior civil servants and supervisory positions, the development of training system, and the training programs. Based on the global trend in senior civil servants training, the paper evaluates the current Taiwan training system. The paper suggests the following reform issues: radical transformation of basic values and concepts of senior civil service training, coordination mechanism between CPA and Civil Service Protection and Training Commission (CSPTC) be strengthened, establishment of the senior civil service training policy based on Asian-Pacific and Global framework, and strengthening of the cross boundaries management capability of senior civil servants.

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\* Associate Professor, Department of Public Administration and Policy, National Taipei University.

\*\* Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, National Taiwan University. Associate Research Fellow, Inst. of Euro-Am Studies, Academia Sinica.

## Introduction

Outstanding leaders or leader group is a key factor in organizational excellence. There is always a close relationship between smooth governmental functioning and excellent leadership in the civil service system. In democratic countries, public policies will always be decided by the ruling party. But based on the possibility of regime change, the effectiveness of government will still rely on the stable and sound system of civil service. In turn, the civil service system must rely on the integrity and excellence of high-level leadership. How to nurture and train senior-level civil service leadership, in fact, is one of the important issues of the current government (Peng: 2005).

In recent years, due to the rapid change of national and international environment, strong demand of improving government capabilities, the training of senior civil servants have been getting increased attention. Development programs for senior civil servants and senior management training are gradually planned and implemented by the government. Various conferences and research projects are organized and carried out. Examination Yuan, which is the civil service legal gatekeeper according to the constitution, passed a “Civil Service Reforms Plan” in June 2009. The fourth project of the Plan is to “strengthen high-level civil servants training system, and to strengthen senior civil service.” Mid-term (ending June 2012) goals of the project include the establishment of a special senior supervisory management system (that is, Senior Civil Service, SCS ) and senior civil service training system. Almost at the same time, Central Personnel Administration (CPA) of Executive Yuan on September 7, 2009, with the approval of Executive Yuan, announced a comprehensive high-level public officials training package. The training program aims at different levels of civil servants, central and local governments, and domestic and foreign training. The training program also includes “top executive leadership seminar” (domestic) and “globalization and leadership workshop” (overseas). Is the present stage of development of high-level civil service training system able to adequately respond to the actual needs of the government? In the face of globalization challenges, whether the present training system good enough? This paper will explore the global trend of senior civil servants training of advanced countries and review Taiwan’s case.

## The Scope of Senior Civil Servants and Supervisors

There is no clear definition about the scope of Taiwan senior civil servants and high-level supervisors in the legal documents. According to the Civil Service Reforms Plan of Examination Yuan, supervisory positions above Grade 11 are within the scope

of high level supervisors. However, CSPTC defines senior civil servants as public officers ranking Grade 10 and above.

According to the Ministry of Civil Service's data, as of January 8, 2010, the number of various types of high-level civil servants, which include the executives, judges, prosecutors, police officers, customs officers, transport officers and medical personnel, is 10,033 people. This number includes 5,149 supervisory positions and 4,884 non-supervisory positions. (See Table 1)

Table 1: Senior-level Civil Servants by grades

Grades	Administrative Agency				Judges		Police		Custom		Transport		Medics		Total
	Central		Local		Prosecutors		Sup.	Non-Sup	Sup.	N.S	S.	N.S	S.	N.S	
	Sup.	Non-Sup	Sup.	Non-Sup	Sup.	Non-Sup									
14	120	35	2	0	161	358	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	<b>678</b>
13	180	87	16	0	23	118	7	0	0	0	27	0	223	75	<b>756</b>
12	639	412	47	32	45	166	28	6	3	0	4	6	44	15	<b>1,447</b>
11	1,066	796	361	127	57	366	80	13	25	0	162	187	33	33	<b>3,306</b>
10	1,202	1,469	396	220	6	198	64	78	81	40	28	47	17	0	<b>3,846</b>
Sub-T	<b>3,207</b>	<b>2,799</b>	<b>822</b>	<b>379</b>	<b>292</b>	<b>1,206</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>317</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>10,033</b>
Total	<b>6,006</b>		<b>1,201</b>		<b>1,498</b>		<b>278</b>		<b>149</b>		<b>461</b>		<b>440</b>		

Again, according to the Civil Service Reforms Plan of Examination Yuan, the number of high level supervisors is 3,355, which include executive organizations, judges, prosecutors, police officers, customs officers, transport officers and medical personnel. (See Table 2)

Table 2: Senior levels supervisory positions by grades (includes deputies)

Grades	Administrative Agency		Judges	Police	Custom	Transport	Medics	Total
	Central	Local	Prosecutors					
14	120	2	161	2	0	0	0	285
13	180	16	23	7	0	27	223	476
12	639	47	45	28	3	4	44	810
11	1,066	361	57	80	25	162	33	1,784
Total	2,005	426	286	117	28	193	300	3,355

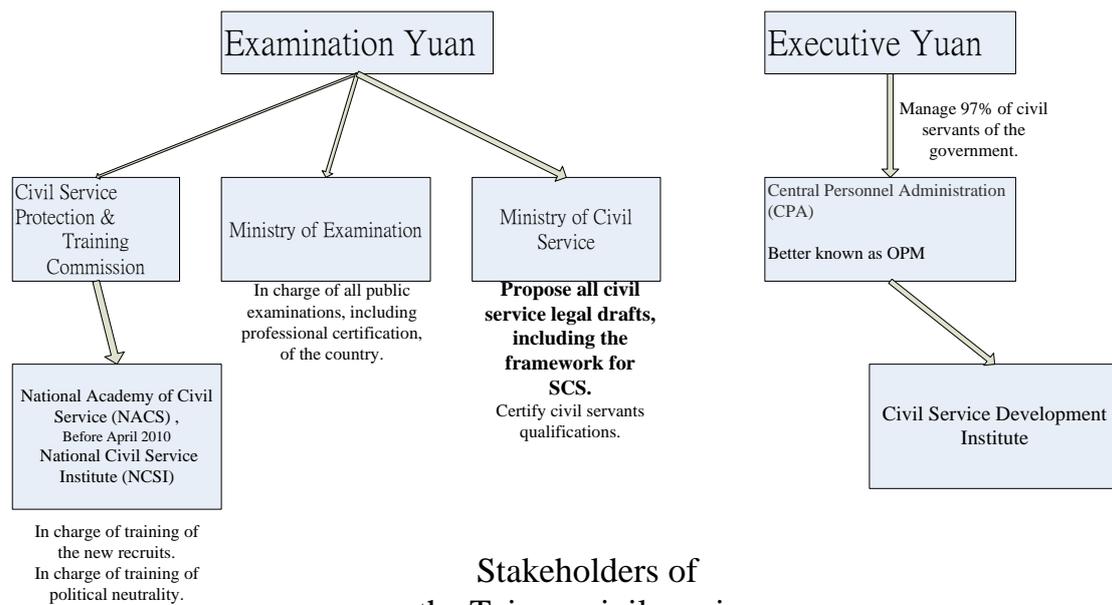
It worth noting that during the “Seminar on the System Design of Senior Civil Service”, held in May, 2010 and organized by Taiwan Association for Schools of Public Administration and Affairs (TASPAA), there was consistent call for a small size of the senior civil service by the professionals as well as scholars. Director of CPA Wu responded at the time that Grade 12 and above supervisors can be included in the Senior Civil Service for the initial stage. Ministry of Civil Service’s SCS planning report on the establishment of Senior Civil Service also recommended that SCS should include only Grade 12 and above supervisory positions during the first stage and expanded later as defined by the Civil Service Reforms Plan (Ministry of Civil Service, 2010: 69).

Based on the SCS experiences of OECD countries, the Ministry of Civil Service’s planning report includes only positions of central government and excludes certain civil service positions. The current count of the number of planned SCS positions will then be 774, which includes director, deputy director, and staff leader of different levels, and not including positions of local government and judges/prosecutors.

Generally speaking, the Ministry of Civil Service’s Planning Report adopts loose definition about the targeted trainees. For example, National Academy of Civil Service (NACS) organized a special class for senior civil servants of 40 persons in expect that 2 to 3 times of expected vacant positions need to be trained in advance. On the other hand, CPA’s leadership class permits only the most qualified to be included as the trainees.

## Training Vision of Senior Civil Servants

Unlike other democratic country’s constitutional system, Republic of China’s current five-power constitution maintains a unique governmental system. In terms of civil service training system, there is a dual track training mechanism. The major training institution is the Civil Service Development Institute (CSDI) of CPA. And the other organization is the NACS of CSPTC of the Examination Yuan. The present bilateral relationship between the two bodies can best be described as the following diagram.



Through rounds of negotiations between Executive Yuan and Examination Yuan, a murky line was drawn to separate the training jurisdiction. Examination Yuan is charged with the training of the new recruits, promotion, and political neutrality. The rest part goes to Executive Yuan.

## Senior Civil Servants Training by Executive Yuan

CPA implements a Competency Enhancement Program for Mid-High Level Public Officials since 2003. The trainees include three levels of public employees (in Taiwan, Grade 1 is the lowest and Grade 14 is the highest) that belong to leadership (Grade 12 and above), management (Grade 10 to 11) and practice (Grade 9 director) categories.

The operation logic is that leadership training will focus more on the leadership and less on implementation. For the practice level training, the emphasis is just the opposite.

Two day seminar classes for leadership and management trainees were offered during 2008 and 2009.

Beginning from May 2008, the current administration initiated 15 classes of foreign seminars for Grade 9 and above supervisors. There were 150 public officers joined the project.

Beginning from 2011, a program to send public officers to study abroad for master and doctoral degrees was implemented. The similar program was terminated 18 years ago.

In addition to the above programs, CPA maintains constant senior civil servant classes for different topics or type of public officials for 4 weeks learning session. The topics include nation building, national strategy, female leadership, and national development.

Beginning from 2011, CPA sent some senior civil servants at Grade 12 and above to foreign countries to study specific policy issues for no more than 3 months.

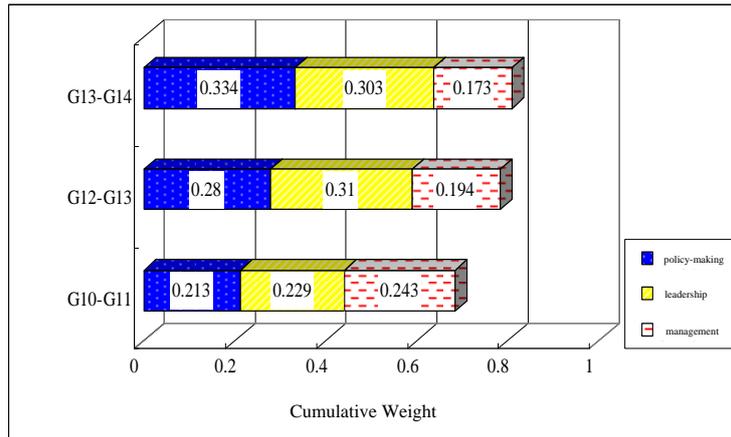
Judging from the multiple and various types of training programs that currently implemented, the training system of CPA is in full speed and unprecedented in the country's history. There are five distinct traits of the training system:

1. Based on Competency Enhancement Program for Mid-High Level Public Officials, training design is to expand to the SCS system.
2. Training programs have become systematic and constant in terms of the training program frequencies.
3. The leadership classes have been extended from 4 or 5 weeks to 6 weeks to cover more emerging issues.
4. Increased programs for foreign learning groups.
5. Short term foreign study for Grade 12 and above public officers.

## Senior Civil Servants Training by Examination Yuan

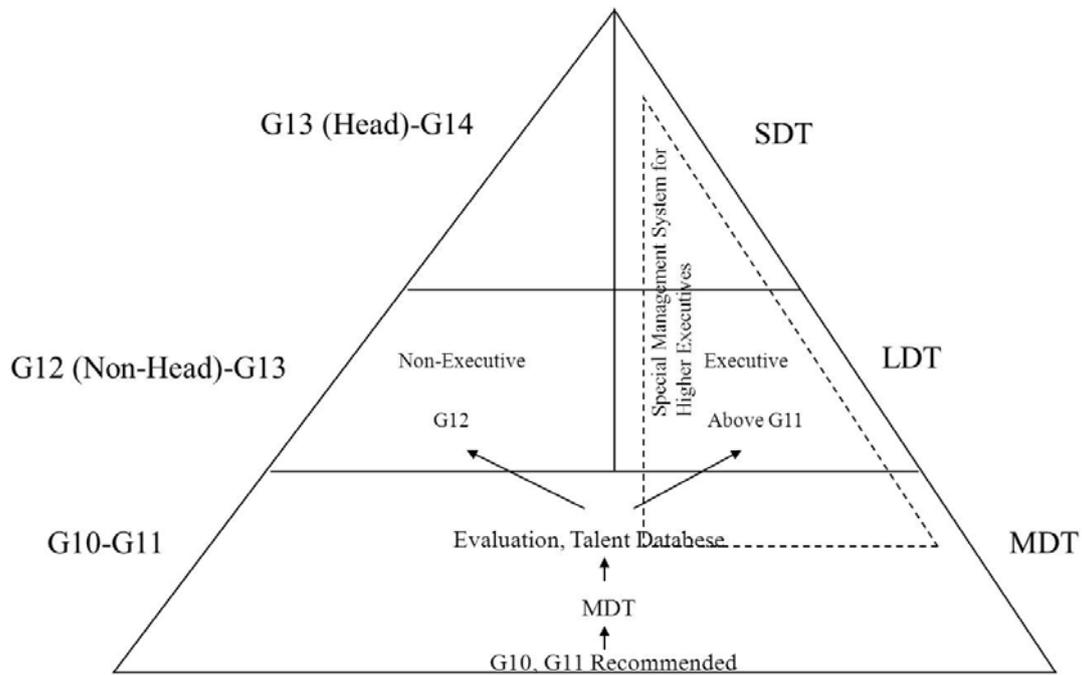
There are two stages for the Senior Civil Servants Training by Examination Yuan. The first stage is between 1996 and 2009, during this stage, CSPTC was formally established and in charge of senior civil servants training that is not under the jurisdiction of Executive Yuan.

Beginning from 2010, CSPTC was aggressively implementing training program and set up a task force to decide the content of senior civil servant competencies. A research project identified four dimensions of the core competency: policy-making capability, leadership, management capability, and personality. The weighting combination of the four competencies is shown as the following diagram.



There were 58 senior civil servant selected to 3 classes organized by the CSPTC. In 2011, the class was opened to professors, NGO supervisors, and industrial leaders. On-line classes and learning are encouraged. CSPTC and its subordinate NACS are setting up cooperative relationship with variety education institutes, domestic and abroad. Training methods are widely differentiated, which include lecture, case study, action learning, role playing, workshop, and field survey.

The critical issue for CSPTC is that, although CSPTC has more human resources to plan and implement more diversified training sessions and classes, it will always face the difficulty of the intake of trainees. It is a bold design that CSPTC will systematically train all qualified Grade 10 and above public officers and count those trainees into the talent pool that only through this training channel they can be considered as the candidates for the planned SCS members. It remains to be seen that what kind of negotiation about the form and substance the future SCS will be reached between Executive Yuan and Examination Yuan.



## Global Trend of Senior Civil Servants Training

Based on the literature and the practices of United Kingdom, United States, France, Japan, Korea and Singapore, the following trend of senior civil service training can be identified:

1. An integrated training institute to concentrate the training resources for senior civil servants

All advanced countries establish their national institutes to nurture their leaders in the civil service. After the case of Ecole Nationale d'Administration (ENA) of France, there are National Government School of UK, Civil Service College of Singapore, Federal Executive Institute of US, Central Officials Training Institute (COTI) of Korea, Public Service Training Institute of Japan. Dual track system for senior civil servants training undoubtedly will waste huge training resources and cause unavoidable tension between training institute and among trainees. If the future SCS system covering members not only from Executive Yuan and the dual track for senior civil servants training remain untouched, the integrity of the SCS system will be greatly compromised, if not totally paralyzed.

2. Emphasis on the coordination between training program and appointment

The general international trend is the strong bond between talent development and appointment/succession plan. Position-based civil service systems put more emphasis

on the competitive edge SCS members possess. The SCS systems generally operate with tenure and contract system.

### 3. Decentralized training system requires individual/departmental initiatives

Although all SCS systems have the tendency to develop unified training program for their members, many decentralized training systems require individual/departmental initiatives in demanding customized courses in order to enhance training results.

### 4. Diversified training programs that integrate practices and theoretical training

Training methods are greatly diversified that include case study, lecture, test, digital learning, on-site visit, and field survey. Remote and online learning are greatly utilized. These training methods and channels are widely adopted to improve cost/benefit ratio and learning efficiency.

### 5. Internship and field visit are widely adopted

Internship and field visit are widely adopted as important ingredients of the training for senior civil servants around the world. Internship can be implemented in different formats, such as domestic as well as foreign trainees, or internship in the government or industry. ENA is famous for the dispatch of trainees to foreign countries, while UK sending trainees to EU units.

### 6. International learning

Globalization phenomenon has prompted all senior civil servants to study and know the intricacies of the international affairs. EU countries have to establish training programs for UK senior civil servants other than the well established European track of Fast Stream program. Almost every country needs to improve the international learning of senior civil servants by either offering courses or sending them to foreign countries to study.

## **Reflection and Reform Recommendation**

Senior civil servants are the backbone of the entire civil service. In order to accommodate the fast changing society and international competition, many advanced countries have established unique SCS systems to nurture the leadership group in the last three decades. The Republic of China government, following the global trend of SCS system, has decided to establish such a new personnel system. It is preparing the legal document necessary for the enacting process. Since training system will be a vital part of the new system, critical review of the current practices seems to be a timely necessity.

Although much effort has been devoted to the training of senior civil servants as the above mentioned, there are some fundamental shortcomings need to be addressed:

First, political leaders failed to realize the importance of the senior civil service training that training funding was not well supported in the Congress.

Second, numerous departmental projects of sending public officers to study abroad failed to realize the maximum benefits that an integrated training plan can achieve.

Third, training for the senior civil servants needs to broaden its coverage on cross boundary management issues to cope with the challenges from popular demand and globalization. Some reform recommendations are proposed as follow.

1. System value changed to demand-driven design of the training

Based on the experience of the advanced countries, training of senior civil servants should be designed to reflect the needs of specific individual or agency. However, the current training in Taiwan prone to stress the importance of short courses, training menu of the training institute, and the amount of training in terms of individuals participated and amount of courses offered.

2. Improving the function of coordination among training institutes

Although the government has a coordinating mechanism for all the training institutes in place, the real operation of the mechanism has much to be desired. It is suggested that the following steps should be taken to improve the coordination. The dual track training system should work closely to eliminate the tension and wasted investment of the training resources. The redundancy of training should be critically reviewed and eliminated, such as the redundancy of trainees, courses, equipments, and facilities. In order to correct the redundancy of the dual track training system, it is suggested that CSDI of Executive Yuan focuses on the training of policy planning, management, and implementation, while NCSI of Examination Yuan focuses on the training of core competencies.

3. Establishing training policy of Asia-Pacific and global framework

In the past decades, Taiwan encounters much difficulty in joining and participating international policy making and discussion arena due to the tension across the Taiwan Strait. The training of senior civil servants seems reflect the international reality that leaders of the civil service do not possess the necessary competency in dealing with the international environment. The situation has been greatly improved in the recent years, especially after the Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (abbreviated ECFA) was signed by China and The ROC government in 2010. In order to correct

the deficiency of the past decades, training courses and field surveys about the Asia-Pacific countries and effects of globalization are much needed.

#### 4. Enhancing the training of cross boundary management capability

Due to the fast changing reality of the modern internet society, rapid response of the government has become a vital goal of public administration. The traditional paradigm of departmental specialization has to be radically modified to reflect the instant popular demand. Within this context, the training of senior civil servants has to cultivate the capability of cross boundary management of policy planners. The training should be issue oriented and be realistic and practical. In order to achieve the benefits of various perspectives from different organizations, the trainees should come from different departments.

## Conclusion

Globalization has changed the world in an unprecedented way that building administrative capacity has become an urgent task for all countries (Farazmand, 2009). The training of senior civil servants has to reflect the challenges posed by the globalization and international competition. Under the condition that dual track of senior civil service training can not be corrected any time soon, the Taiwan training system still have much room for reform. In order to establish a new and well designed SCS system, the corresponding training system should be well planned at the moment.

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