

ABSTRACT

Alongside politicians, civil servants hold a significant position in the administrative process of policy design and execution, and thus are influential to its outcome. Therefore, it is important to understand how they perceive their position, to what and whom they feel loyal, as well as how their perceptions are shaped. This research focuses on the factors impacting the formation of civil servants' role perceptions, using bureaucratic politics theory to explain how organizational structures contribute to shaping bureaucrats' perceptions of their work.

This study uses qualitative and quantitative methods of research, leaning on secondary analysis of interviews with senior civil servants. Using qualitative analysis, this research first creates a hierarchy pyramid reflecting the power dynamic between the governmental ministries, dividing them into dominant and subordinate groups. Then, it identifies three overarching role perceptions: loyalty to either the minister, the public, or professionalism; as well as nine sub role types within those. Finally, the research examines the effect of the ministries' positioning within the governmental hierarchy on the formation of civil servants' loyalties and role perceptions, using quantitative analysis.

As a key finding, the analysis presents several differences in the perceptions of bureaucrats from the two groups, as officials from the dominant group were more inclined to perceive their role in terms of loyalty to professional values, relating to different sub-categories of this perception. In comparison, the overarching perceptions of loyalty to the minister and to the public interest did not show significant differences between the two groups, as all officials leaned towards the role of loyalty to the general public over serving the ministers agenda. Additionally, many bureaucrats tended to hold a complex attitude, identifying with several perceptions simultaneously.