The Public Service Commission in Singapore:
An Evaluation of its First 50 Years

Jon S. T. Quah
Professor of Political Science
National University of Singapore
Singapore

The Public Service Commission in Singapore:
An Evaluation of its First 50 Years

Introduction

The Public Service Commission (PSC) in Singapore celebrated its 50th anniversary in January 2001. To mark this occasion, the PSC commissioned a local journalist to prepare a "coffee table" book on its achievements. This book was published and launched on December 21, 2001[1]. The many achievements of the PSC are detailed in this book but there is no attempt to evaluate the PSC objectively in terms of its strengths and weaknesses.

The PSC in Singapore has undergone many changes during its first five decades. However, this article focuses on two major changes: the change in the personnel management philosophy of the Singapore Civil Service (SCS) in April 1982, which resulted, *inter alia*, in the adoption of the Shell performance appraisal system for assessing senior civil servants; and the devolution of the PSC's functions to the Education Service Commission (ESC) and the Police and Civil Defence Services Commission (PCDSC) in 1990 and the 31 personnel boards in 1995. These two significant changes can be interpreted as attempts by the SCS to adopt useful and relevant techniques from the private sector in order to improve its performance. Thus, the first change in 1982 occurred during the emergence of the New Public Management in the United Kingdom in the 1980 s.[2]

This article is divided into four main sections. The following section describes the role of the PSC and its evolution from 1951–1989. The second section analyses the adoption of the Shell performance appraisal system by the SCS in 1983. The third section focuses on the devolution of the PSC's recruitment and promotion functions in 1990 to the ESC and the PCDSC and in 1995 to the personnel boards. The fourth section assesses the impact of the PSC's role in Singapore.

Evolution of the PSC's Role, 1951–1989

The PSC is the adapted version of the United Kingdom's Civil Service Commission in the former British colonies and was established to insulate the civil service from politics and to accelerate its localisation.[3] Similarly, the PSC in Singapore was established on January 1, 1951 to "keep politics out of the SCS and to accelerate the latter's pace of localization."[4] The second objective is no longer important as the localisation of the SCS was completed with the attainment of self-government in Singapore in June 1959. However, the primary aim of keeping politics out of the SCS remains relevant as the purpose of the PSC's programme as stated in the national budget is "to meet the staffing requirements of the government in accordance with

the merit principle."[5]

The PSC's evolution can be divided into three stages: (1) 1951–1982 when it was the major public personnel agency in Singapore; (2) 1983–1989 when the Public Service Division (PSD) was created to formulate and review personnel policies in the SCS to ensure that these policies would be implemented consistently in all the ministries; and (3) 1990–2001 when the PSC's functions of recruitment and promotion were devolved to the ESC and PCDSC in 1990 and the 31 personnel boards in 1995. The first two stages will be discussed in this section and, as indicated earlier, the third stage will be analysed in the third section.

Stage I (1951–1982)

The PSC is the gate-keeper to the SCS because it controls the quality of personnel entering the SCS by "keeping the rascals out" and attracting the most qualified candidates to apply for civil service positions.[6] Following the recommendation of the Trusted Commission of 1947, the SCS has been divided into four divisions according to their functions and educational qualifications, with Division I officers being honours year university graduates, Division II officers being general degree university graduates, Division III officers requiring a secondary school education, and Division IV officers requiring only a primary school education. During its first 31 years, the PSC's major function was the recruitment and selection of candidates for Divisions I and II appointments as Division III appointments and promotions from Divisions III to II were handled by selection boards appointed by it. Division IV appointments were selected by the relevant ministries and departments, but those selected must be approved by the PSC.[7]

The PSC has relied solely on interviews to select qualified candidates for the SCS. To be eligible for appointment to the SCS, a candidate must fulfil the six criteria of citizenship, age, educational qualification, experience, medical fitness, and good character (i.e., no criminal conviction). In other words, the PSC upholds meritocracy in Singapore by ensuring fair play and impartiality in recruiting and selecting candidates for appointments to Divisions I and II on the basis of merit. Similarly, civil servants are promoted by the PSC on the basis of official qualifications, experience and merit. Eligible candidates for promotion are interviewed by the PSC members and selection boards.[8]

The PSC's gate-keeping role is very important because of the multiracial nature of Singapore's population. In June 2002, the resident population of 3,378,300 in Singapore consists of 76.5 % Chinese, 13.8 % Malays, 8.1 % Indians, and 1.6 % Others.[9] The PSC maintains an impartial personnel system by ensuring that all the different ethnic groups, especially the minorities, receive equal treatment in the SCS. Members of the PSC are selected from the various races and the PSC treats all "ethnic groups equally by ensuring that only suitably qualified candidates can gain entry into the SCS."[10] Thus, in spite of the diversity of ethnic groups, languages and religions in Singapore, candidates are selected and promoted in the SCS on the basis of capability and not on the basis of their ethnic group, language spoken, religious affiliation or sex. In other words, the SCS does not have an affirmative action

programme.[11]

The PSC in 1951 consisted of three members and a small secretariat of nine persons to assist the members to perform their duties. In 1961, the PSC assumed responsibility for the disciplinary control of all civil servants from the Establishment Branch of the Ministry of Finance,[12] and for interviewing and selecting candidates for all scholarships, fellowships and training courses offered or sponsored by the government.[13] Needless to say, these two additional functions have increased the PSC's workload considerably. Consequently, the number of PSC members was increased from three to 10 and the size of the PSC secretariat was also increased from nine to 286 persons during 1951-1982.[14]

Stage II (1983-1989)

The PSD was established on January 3, 1983 for two reasons. The first reason was the great increase in the PSC's workload during 1951-1982. For example, the number of candidates interviewed by the PSC members and selection boards for appointments and promotions increased by nearly 19 times from 556 candidates in 1951 to 10,430 candidates in 1982.[15] Similarly, the number of disciplinary cases completed has also risen from 24 to 169 during 1957-1982.[16] A third indicator of the PSC's heavier workload is the rapid growth in the number of scholarships and training awards granted from 23 in 1963 to 847 in 1982.[17] Finally, a comparative study of the workloads of the PSCs in Singapore and Ceylon (now known as Sri Lanka) during 1964-1967, shows that the PSC in Singapore interviewed 58,712 applicants during this period, or nine times more than the 6,485 candidates interviewed by the PSC in Ceylon.[18] In short, as the growth in size of both the PSC members and the secretariat was inadequate to cope with the increased workload, the government created another organisation-the PSD-to help the PSC cope with its onerous burden.

A second and more important reason for forming the PSD was the sharing of the personnel management functions between the PSC and several agencies. Before 1972, the PSC shared the personnel functions with the Establishment Division of the Ministry of Finance, which was responsible for all civil service personnel matters not handled by the PSC. From 1972-1980, the personnel management functions in the SCS were dealt with by the PSC (which was responsible for recruitment, selection, promotion, training, transfer, disciplinary control and dismissal), the Establishment Unit of the Prime Minister's Office (which dealt with the career development and training of senior civil servants) and the Personnel Administration Branch (PAB) of the Budget Division in the Ministry of Finance (which took care of job classification and terms and conditions of service).[19] In April 1981, the function of career development and training of senior civil servants was transferred from the Establishment Unit to the PSC.

In April 1982, the government revised the salaries in the SCS to reduce the gap between earnings in the public and private sectors. During the same month, the government also announced its intention to change the SCS's personnel management philosophy to an employee-centred one, which would provide civil servants with a sense of commitment and the opportunity to develop themselves to their

fullest potential. This change in personnel management philosophy would enable the PSC to attract, motivate and retain talented individuals.[20]

Accordingly, a Personnel Management Steering Committee (PMSC) led by the PSC Chairman was appointed to implement the new philosophy in the SCS. The PMSC focused on these five aspects: recruitment, training, career development, succession planning, and matching the right person with the right job.[21] The PMSC requested the Management Services Department (MSD) to review the role and functions of the PSC and PAB to ascertain whether better direction and control of the SCS's personnel policies could be attained. The MSD found that while the PSC and PAB had consulted each other on a continuing basis, the sharing of the different personnel functions between them had caused these problems: divided policy direction of their roles, functions and authority; duplication of work; inadequate coordination; and inefficient use of manpower.[22]

More specifically, policy direction and responsibilities were divided, as the PSC was responsible for the career development and training of senior civil servants while the PAB was concerned with personnel matters affecting those in Divisions II, III, IV and the daily-rated employees. The second problem was the ambiguous definition of the roles, functions and authority of the PSC and PAB in training, secondment, no-pay leave and schemes of service. This ambiguity led to uncertainty and confusion among the staff of these two agencies regarding their actual responsibilities and authority. Thirdly, there was duplication of work, as unnecessary referrals to the PSC by the PAB for comments and agreement meant that the same case would have been examined by officers in both agencies. Fourthly, inadequate coordination between the PSC and PAB had resulted in lack of awareness of each other's plans and activities in training, and had also adversely affected the recruitment and retention of officers in certain schemes of service. Finally, as a result of the above problems, there was inefficient use of manpower in the PSC, the PAB, and those ministries and departments which had dealings with them.[23]

In view of these problems, the MSD recommended the creation of a separate central authority, which would be known as the PSD, to formulate and review personnel policies in the SCS and to ensure that these policies are implemented consistently in the various ministries. More specifically, the PSD would be responsible for all personnel policy matters concerning appraisal, posting, training, schemes of service, service conditions and welfare. The PSD would also provide such central personnel services as conducting pay research and administering the holiday bungalow scheme. All the functions performed by the PAB except those related to appointment, promotion and disciplinary control, would be entrusted to the PSD. This means that the PSC's role would be restricted to that of ensuring impartiality in the appointment, promotion and disciplinary control of civil servants, as stated in the Constitution. The MSD further recommended that the Deputy Secretary of the PSD should also serve as the PSC Secretary in order to enhance cooperation and coordination between the PSC and PSD.[24]

Thus, on January 3, 1983, the PSD was formed as the third division within the Ministry of Finance and the functions of personnel management in the SCS were

shared between the PSD and PSC.

The Adoption of the Shell Performance Appraisal System in the SCS

The SCS used the Staff Confidential Report (SCR) to evaluate civil servants annually during 1966–1979. The SCR was administered by the Establishment Unit of the Prime Minister's Office and it relied on such traditional methods of performance appraisal as weighted checklists, graphic rating scales, and descriptive essays.[25] The SCR required the administrators to evaluate the leadership, conduct, responsibility, oral expression, reaction to pressure, overall performance, fitness for promotion, and future development of their subordinates.[26] It was used to reward deserving employees and to identify personnel with the potential for assuming high office.[27] The SCR was replaced by the Staff Performance Report (SPR) in 1980.[28]

In 1982, a survey of 40 senior and mid-level civil servants found that the respondents were dissatisfied with three aspects of performance appraisal in the SCS. First, there was a lack of objectivity in performance evaluation because of the reliance on personal traits as a performance measure. Second, feedback was not provided on appraisal results as the SCR was a closed reporting system. Finally, there was also no emphasis on career development.[29] The need to redress these weaknesses contributed to the reform of the personnel management system and the SCR, which was initiated in 1981 with the invitation of personnel experts from Shell London to conduct introductory talks on Shell's personnel management system.[30]

In February 1982, a team of senior civil servants from Singapore visited Shell London to study its personnel management system.[31] Shell London was selected because "it is a large and successful organisation with an established reputation of having an effective personnel management system."[32] In his memoirs, former Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew revealed that he had "checked with corporate leaders of MNCs [multinational corporations] how they recruited and promoted their senior people, and decided one of the best systems was that developed by Shell, the Anglo-Dutch company."[33] He added that: "After trying out the system and finding it practical and reliable, I adopted it for our public service in 1983, replacing the British system we had inherited."[34] The study team recommended the improvement of the management of civil servants in Singapore by adapting Shell's personnel management policies, including its system of appraising performance . Shell's focus on identifying the long term potential of its employees was "deemed worthy of emulation due to its perceived applicability to the SCS and emphasis on personnel devel opment."[35]

As mentioned in the previous section, the PMSC was formed in April 1982 to adapt Shell's system of personnel management to the SCS's requirements. Accordingly, the SPR, which was subjective and trait-based, was replaced in October 1983 as it could not assess the potential of civil servants. The new appraisal system consisted of three components: a revised SPR; a Staff Development Report (SDR); and the potential ranking exercise (PRE), which was based on the Shell system.[36]

The revised SPR is an adapted version of that used by Shell and is "a record of

the discussion between a reporting officer and his subordinate on the latter's performance during the period under review as well as a plan of action for the ensuing year."[37] More specifically, it has several sections which provide information on the personal data on the subordinate, the review of his performance during the previous year according to the targets set, the extenuating circumstances affecting his performance, and issues dealt with during the discussion such as the officer's posting preferences and training and information provided on his general potential and possible next posting.[38]

Similarly, the SDR, which is a confidential record of a civil servant's potential as assessed by his superiors, is adopted from a similar report used by Shell.[39] The subordinate's potential is evaluated by his superior in terms of his possession of the four "HAIR" qualities of helicopter, analysis, imagination, and reality. These qualities were developed by J. Van Lennep and Herman Muller, who were commissioned by Shell Petroleum International to devise a new appraisal system to replace Shell's "ageing and increasingly inadequate" system.[40] The officer's short term potential is based on the likelihood of his promotion to the next grade. His long term potential is measured as the currently estimated potential (CEP), which "is the current estimate of the highest level at which an administrator can finally be expected to perform successfully, assuming unlimited opportunities."[41]

The SPR and SDR are administered during October to December of each year. However, the PRE is conducted separately during the latter part of each year. The PRE is adopted fully from Shell and is based on "the traditional method of rank ordering where administrators are ranked against their colleagues in accordance with the HAIR and threshold qualities" in order to obtain a CEP grading for each administrator for career planning and manpower development.[42] The CEP grades for an officer obtained from the PRE and SDR are treated as tentative and will only be considered as accurate if his CEP is consistent over several years. The panel conducting the PRE consists of between three to ten senior officers, depending on the number of civil servants being ranked, which varies from 12 to 50. An officer being evaluated must be known by at least two appraisers on the panel for four years.[43] Members of the panel must ensure that the ranking is "fair, that all views are considered and that the prescriptive definition of each quality is understood and adhered to."[44]

In short, the SCS adopted the Shell system of performance appraisal in 1983 as the SPR evaluates an officer's performance in terms of his level of efficiency and effectiveness, and the SDR and PRE are concerned with determining his CEP by examining his HAIR qualities.[45]

In 1996, 13 years after its introduction in the SCS, major changes were introduced to the Shell system of performance appraisal. The SCS's current appraisal system involves the joint completion of a Work Review Report by the officer and his supervisor on their views on the officer's achievements and progress during the year under review. The supervisor will identify areas for possible improvement for the officer and discuss with him the work targets and training plans for the next year.[46]

In addition, the supervisor has to complete a confidential Development Report to evaluate the officer's overall performance and long-term potential annually. The officer's performance is assessed on the basis on these eight criteria: teamwork, work output, quality of work, organisational ability, reaction under stress, sense of responsibility, service quality, and knowledge and application. Officers are graded on their performance in these areas in terms of five grades: A, B, C, D, and E. A grade "D" means that the officer is performing at the level required of his current position, but a grade "E" is unacceptable as the officer cannot meet the requirements of his current position.[47]

The officer's potential is assessed by means of the concept of CEP, or "an estimation of the highest appointment or level of work an officer can handle competently before his retirement."[48] For Division I and II officers, the CEP is assessed by examining an officer's helicopter quality (defined as "the ability and drive to look at a problem from a higher vantage point with simultaneous attention to relevant details") and his whole person qualities such as intellectual qualities (power of analysis, imagination and sense of reality), results orientation (achievement motivation, political sensitivity and decisiveness) and leadership qualities (capacity to motivate, delegation and communication).[49] An officer's helicopter quality defines his limits in terms of his intellect and sets the ceiling on his CEP. In contrast, his whole person qualities decide whether he could attain his CEP given his personality, character and abilities. For Division III officers, the assessment of their CEP is simplified by focusing on their intellectual qualities, adaptability and versatility, results orientation and supervisory qualities.[50]

A final change is the introduction of the key appointment likelihood (KAL) which assesses an officer's ability to occupy a key appointment as defined for his scheme of service. KAL is a useful way for describing further an officer's potential for such key appointments as a permanent secretary or school principal. The assessment of an officer's KAL has three benefits: it sharpens CEP assessments; it allows ministries to distinguish officers within the same CEP; and it identifies more clearly officers for succession planning.[51]

Devolution of the PSC's Recruitment and Promotion Functions

The third stage of the PSC's evolution began in 1990 with the devolution of its recruitment and promotion functions to the ESC and PCDSC. The creation of these two agencies was not only a response to the PSC's heavy workload but also an attempt to make the SCS more effective in competing with the private sector for talented personnel

In 1983, the PSC had delegated to permanent secretaries and department heads its authority to recruit Division IV officers and to confirm officers in all the four divisions. However, in spite of this delegation, the PSC's workload increased to a great extent during 1983–1989. Table 1 below shows that the PSC and the selection boards considered a total of 50,274 candidates for appointments and promotions from 1983–1989. During the same period, the PSC dealt with 1,148 disciplinary cases and

granted 1,543 scholarships and training awards.

In March 1990, the Constitution of Singapore was amended to help the PSC cope with its heavy workload by increasing its membership from 11 to 15, including the Chairman, and by creating two new sub-commissions — the ESC for education, and the PCDSC for the police and civil defence services. According to the then Minister for Finance, Richard Hu, this move was intended to "ease the current heavy workload borne by individual members, as well as to further improve the responsiveness and effectiveness of civil service personnel management." He also admitted that the government encountered difficulty in recruiting suitable candidates to serve on the PSC as it had "difficulty coping with its heavy workload, with members spending an average of 100 afternoons per year on commission matters."[52]

As the ESC would be responsible for more than 21,000 teachers and the PCDSC would deal with more than 10,000 police, narcotics, prisons and civil defence officers, the PSC would be left with the remaining 34,000 civil servants. The Finance Minister concluded his parliamentary speech by stressing that the formation of the two sub-commissions would "not only improve the image and staff morale of the services involved but also lead to more responsive personnel management" in the SCS.[53] Accordingly, on August 16, 1990, teachers in the Education Service, police officers of the rank of Inspector and above and other officers in the Police and Civil Defence Services came under the purview of the ESC and PCDSC respectively.

In January 1990, the PSC delegated to the permanent secretaries its authority to promote Division III officers from grade B to grade A in the various ministries.[54] It further delegated its authority to permanent secretaries in 1992 to promote Divisions I, II and III officers from the basic recruitment grade to the first promotion grade in 41 services according to stipulated guidelines and procedures. Accordingly, in 1992, the permanent secretaries promoted 429 officers consisting of 88 Division I officers, 110 Division II officers and 231 Division III officers. The ministries had also recom-

Table 1   Workload of the PSC in Singapore, 1983–1989

Year	Candidates considered for appointments and promotions	Disciplinary cases completed	Scholarships and training awards granted
1983	8,738	156	231
1984	6,933	161	173
1985	10,402	153	175
1986	6,414	174	215
1987	5,690	184	250
1988	5,512	154	238
1989	6,585	166	261
Total	50,274	1,148	1,543

Source: Compiled from data provided in *Public Service Commission Annual Reports 1983–1989* (Singapore: PSC, 1984–1990).

mended 2,087 officers in Divisions I to III to the PSC for promotion, of whom 1,314 candidates were selected.[55] From September 1, 1992, the PSC delegated its authority to recruit officers to Division III appointments to the permanent secretaries. Consequently, the ministries recruited 241 Division III officers and 420 Division IV officers in 1992.[56]

Thus, apart from reducing its heavy workload, the rationale for the PSC's delegation of its authority to the permanent secretaries of the above functions was to give the SCS "greater flexibility and responsiveness to external market factors."[57] This second aim assumed more importance in recent years and contributed to a great extent to the formation of the 31 personnel boards in January 1995. During June-December 1993, the PSC encouraged the ministries to initiate recruitment exercises for Divisions I and II appointments. Thirteen ministries took part and selected 173 candidates for Divisions I and II posts.[58] These moves resulted in the reduction of the PSC's workload in 1993, as Table 2 below shows that the number of candidates selected for appointments dropped to 1,289, and only 938 officers were considered for

Table 2   Workload of the PSC in Singapore, 1990–1994

Year	Candidates considered for appointments	Officers considered for promotion	Disciplinary cases completed	Scholarships and training awards given
1990	2,604	2,009	95	246
1991	2,602	2,290	127	228
1992	2,235	2,087	147	271
1993	1,289	938	121	244
1994	1,263	1,146	107	218
Total	9,993	8,470	597	1,207

Source: Compiled from data provided in *Public Service Commission Annual Reports 1990–1994* (Singapore: PSC, 1991–1995).

Table 3   Workloads of the PSC, ESC and PCDSC in selecting candidates
to the SCS, 1990–1994

Year	PSC	ESC	PCDSC	Total
1990	2,604	655	30	3,289
1991	2,602	6	102	2,710
1992	2,235	1,160	139	3,534
1993	1,289	1,272	147	2,708
1994	1,263	1,161	155	2,579
Total	9,993	4,254	573	14,820
(%)	67.4	28.7	3.9	100.0

Source: Compiled from data provided in *Public Service Commission Annual Reports 1990–1994* (Singapore: PSC, 1991–1995).

promotion during that year. In 1994, the number of candidates selected for appointments was further reduced to 1,263, but the number of officers considered for promotion increased to 1,146.

The creation of the ESC and PCDSC reduced the PSC's workload to some extent as it was no longer concerned with the recruitment and promotion of teachers, police officers and civil defence officers. However, if the PSC's workload in selecting candidates from 1990–1994 was compared with the workloads of the ESC and PCDSC during the same period, it can be seen from Table 3 above that the PSC has done the most work (67.4%), followed by the ESC (28.7%) and the PCDSC (3.9%).

On April 22, 1994, Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong informed senior civil servants attending the Administrative Service dinner that the government would be restructuring the centralised public personnel management system in Singapore to enable the SCS to compete more effectively with the private sector to attract and retain talented personnel. He defined the rationale for doing so thus:

> We inherited the present civil service personnel from the British colonial government. The provisions in the Constitution are 40 years old. They were designed for entirely different circumstances. ... Personnel management was highly centralised. Authority for recruitment, promotion, and discipline was vested in an independent Public Service Commission ... which the whole civil service. ... But in the circumstances then prevailing the system did work, and had its advantages. It maintained uniform and reliable standards throughout the service, ensured the integrity and impartiality of the civil service, and provided a workable distribution of manpower within the public sector.

> The situation in the 1990 s is totally different. ... The private sector now offers a wide range of attractive and challenging jobs. ... Far from being the primary or most sought after employer, *the civil service has in recent years had continual difficulty recruiting and retaining the talent it needs.* ... In these changed circumstances, the civil service personnel management system has serious shortcomings. *The centralised system is too inflexible to adopt the varying demands and circumstances of individual services. It over-emphasises relativities and uniformity of treatment. Too many layers of bureaucracy prevent us from properly rewarding and retaining outstanding officers. Promotions have not kept pace with expectations.* ...

> *The basic problem is that the civil service separates authority from responsibility.* This contradicts the basic management principle that managers should be given the wherewithal to accomplish their mission. ... [Unlike Chief Executive Officers in private organisations,] in the civil service, permanent secretaries have no final authority over recruitment, promotions, deployment or advancement. The PSC and PSD, which do, are not responsible for the performance of individual ministries or of the government. This separa-

tion is meant to safeguard the integrity of the service, but goes well beyond
what is necessary for this purpose.

*The grave consequence of this fundamental flaw is the continuing loss of talent
to the private sector.* ...But, despite the best efforts of all those involved in
civil service personnel management, the results are not satisfactory because
the system itself has been found wanting.[59]

Prime Minister Goh further cautioned that the SCS's personnel management
system had to be reformed "without compromising the high standards, integrity and
impartiality of the civil service." Referring to the successful experiences of
decentralising the personnel management systems of the civil services in Britain,
Malaysia and Hong Kong, he recommended that Singapore should follow their ex-
ample by decentralising personnel management in the SCS by devolving authority
from the PSC to the permanent secretaries and ministries.[60] He ended his speech by
reminding the senior civil servants that decentralisation meant "giving more respon-
sibility to line managers, faster promotions for good officers, but also swifter retribu-
tion for those who under-perform."[61]

The above changes were implemented by amending the Constitution to enable
the President, acting on the Prime Minister's advice, to devolve specified powers of
the PSC, ESC and PCDSC to a system of personnel boards consisting of civil ser-
vants to recruit, promote and discipline officers. The constitutional amendments
were passed by Parliament on August 25, 1994 and resulted in the creation of a
system of 31 personnel boards at three levels to take over the recruitment and pro-
motion of the following officers from the PSC, ESC and PCDSC in January 1995:

1. A special personnel board of four members to deal with all administrative
   service officers at superscale E 1 and below;
2. Six senior personnel boards consisting of 21 members to handle all Division
   I officers below superscale status; and
3. Twenty-four personnel boards made up of 103 members to take charge of
   Divisions II, III and IV officers.[62]

The special personnel board consists of these four members who have been
appointed by the President for two years: the Head of the SCS (Chairman), the Com-
missioner of the Internal Revenue Authority of Singapore (IRAS), the Permanent
Secretary, Prime Minister's Office, and the Permanent Secretary (Finance). The
composition of the six personnel boards, which consists of six members each, varies
according to the ministries and agencies under their purview. Each senior personnel
board is chaired by an appointed permanent secretary and consists of the other
permanent secretaries of the ministries covered by it. There are 21 members for the
six senior personnel boards as eight members serve on more than one board.[63] The
ministries have also formed personnel boards to handle Divisions II, III and IV offi-
cers in their schemes of services. Each personnel board is chaired by a superscale

officer under the permanent secretary, and consists of between two to four members, who are Division I officers, including one from the PSD. For the larger ministries, several personnel boards have been established.[64]

To ensure their smooth functioning, the 31 personnel boards are required to follow these four principles:

1. Promotion and advancement will continue to be based on merit;
2. Personnel boards must be able to exercise authority fairly and consistently;
3. The selection of members of personnel boards must be rigorous and stringent to preserve impartiality and high standards; and
4. Civil servants aggrieved by the decisions of the personnel boards can appeal to the PSC, ESC and PCDSC.[65]

With the devolution of their authority to recruit and promote civil servants to the system of personnel boards, the PSC, ESC and PCDSC remain in charge of these functions:

1. Recruitment to the Administrative Service and the Administrative Service (Foreign Service Branch);
2. Promotion of all officers to Superscale D and above;
3. Award of undergraduate scholarships; and
4. Disciplinary cases and appeals: the PSC, ESC and PCDSC are the final authority for appeals.[66]

Table 4 below describes the structure of the SCS's decentralised system of personnel management in terms of the various agencies and their responsibilities in 1995.

In 1995, the PSC delegated its authority to confirm or extend the probationary period of parliamentary officers and Division I officers in the Auditing Service; and its authority to promote Division I officers in the Auditing Service up to Auditor Grade III to the Auditor-General and the Clerk of Parliament.[67] However, the PSC, ESC and PCDSC were amalgamated into a single PSC on April 1, 1998.[68]

Table 4   Structure of the SCS's Personnel Management System in 1995

Organisations	Responsibilities
PSC, ESC, PCDSC	Superscale officers D and above
Special Personnel Board (4 members)	Superscale officers up to E 1 and Timescale administrative officers
6 Senior Personnel Boards (21 members)	Division I officers below superscale status
24 Personnel Boards (103 members)	Divisions II, III and IV officers

Source: Jon S. T. Quah, "Decentralizing Public Personnel Management: The Case of the Public Service Commission in Singapore," in Susumu Kurosawa, Toshihiro Fujiwara and Mila R. Reforma (eds.), *New Trends in Public Administration for the Asia Pacific Region: Decentralization* (Tokyo: Local Autonomy College, 1996), p. 502, Figure 48a.

No official reason was given for this reversal of the 1990 decision. The creation of the ESC and PCDSC in August 1990 was designed to reduce the PSC's workload by removing from its jurisdiction more than 31,000 teachers and police and civil defence officers. However, in spite of this change, the PSC's workload during 1990–1994 was still heavy as Table 3 showed that the PSC was still responsible for selecting 9.993 candidates (67.4%) of the 14,820 candidates selected by all the three agencies. On the other hand, the PSC's workload was reduced considerably by the introduction of the system of personnel boards in January 1995 as can be seen from Table 5 below. In short, the ESC and PCDSC were dissolved in April 1998 as they were ineffective in lowering the PSC's workload.

Table 5 Workload of the PSC in Singapore, 1995–2001

Year	Candidates considered for appointment	Officers considered for promotion	Disciplinary cases completed	Scholarships and training awards given
1995	70	45	83	231
1996	47	17	33	231
1997	53	16	45	214
1998	71	21	34	257
1999	96	24	37	332
2000	126	28	52	258
2001	126	9	59	253
Total	589	160	343	1,776

Source: *Public Service Commission Annual Reports 1995–2001* (Singapore: PSC, 1996–2002).

The Impact of the PSC

The British ruled Singapore for nearly 140 years, from its founding by Stamford Raffles in January 1819 to its attainment of self-government in June 1959. The legacy of British colonial rule was threefold. First, the British colonial government introduced meritocracy through the establishment of the PSC in January 1951. Second, this tradition of meritocracy was reinforced by the commitment to clean government through the introduction of the Prevention of Corruption Ordinance in 1937 and the creation of the Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau in 1952. Finally, the British also left behind a well-developed infrastructure of good roads and a sound communications system.

Has the PSC been effective during the last five decades? As indicated earlier, its *raison d'etre* was twofold: to expedite the localisation of the SCS; and to insulate the SCS from politics by ensuring that civil servants are recruited and promoted on the basis of merit. In terms of the first objective of localisation, the PSC has been effective as the SCS was localised with the attainment of self-government in June 1959.

However, the second objective of maintaining meritocracy in the SCS has in-

creased the PSC's workload during its first 38 years (1951–1989) through its assumption of the additional functions of disciplinary control and the granting of scholarships and training awards. In view of its limited staff and resources, the problem of the PSC's increasing workload was dealt with by the formation of the PSD in 1983, the creation of the ESC and PCDSC in 1990, and the system of personnel boards in 1995. Table 6 below demonstrates that the PSC's workload has declined considerably during 1990–1994 and 1995–2001.

Table 6 Workload of the PSC in Singapore, 1983–2001

Year	Candidates considered for appointments and promotion	Disciplinary cases completed	Scholarships and training awards granted
1983–1989	50,274 (72.3%)	1,148 (55.0%)	1,543 (34.1%)
1990–1994	18,463 (26.6%)	597 (28.6%)	1,207 (26.7%)
1995–2001	749 (1.1%)	343 (16.4%)	1,776 (39.2%)
Total	69,486 (100.0%)	2,088 (100.0%)	4,526 (100.0%)

Source: *Public Service Annual Reports 1983–2001* (Singapore: PSC, 1984–2002).

More specifically, Table 6 shows that 72.3% of the 69,486 candidates were considered by the PSC for appointments and promotion during 1983–1989. The number of candidates considered for appointments and promotion by the PSC dropped to 18,463 (26.6%) during 1990–1994 with the creation of the ESC and PCDSC. The PSC's workload in recruitment and promotion declined dramatically to 749 candidates (1.1%) after the establishment of 31 personnel boards in 1995. Similarly, 55% of the 2,088 disciplinary cases were completed by the PSC during 1983–1989, 28.6% during 1990–1994, and 16.4% during 1995–2001. In contrast, the PSC's workload in granting scholarships and training awards declined from 34.1% during 1983–1989 to 26.7% during 1990–1994, but it increased to 39.2% during 1995–2001. In short, while the formation of the ESC and PCDSC reduced the PSC's workload marginally, the introduction of the personnel boards in 1995 was much more effective in reducing the PSC's workload in recruitment and promotion.

The Search for Talent

In November 1979, Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew said that Singapore's continued success depended on its ability to convert the natural talent pyramid of its population into the expertise pyramid.[69] In August 1982, he contended that the combination of Singapore-born and non-Singapore-born talent was responsible for Singapore's success story. However, the problem was that the proportion of non-Singapore-born in the population had declined in recent years. To resolve this problem and to ensure that "the standards of leadership in the Cabinet and efficiency in the public service" would be maintained in the future, Lee proposed the recruitment of talented persons from other countries to supplement the Singapore-born talent.[70] Accordingly, the "search for talent" policy actually began in October 1980 when the Professionals Information and Placement Service (PIPS) and the Committee for

Attracting Talent to Singapore (CATS) were formed to help in the recruitment of foreign talent to Singapore.[71] This policy was only publicly announced by Lee in August 1982.[72]

In his recent memoirs, Lee wrote: "My experience of developments in Asia has led me to conclude that we need good men to have good government. ... The single most decisive factor that made for Singapore's development was the ability of its ministers and the high quality of the civil servants who supported them. ... It was Singapore's good fortune that we had, for a small, developing country, a fair share of talent, because our own [talent] had been reinforced by the talented men and women who came here for their education, and stayed on for employment or business opportunities."[73]

Table 7 below compares Singapore in 1959, when it attained self-government, and in 2001, in terms of several indicators. More specifically, it shows that Singapore's population has increased by 2.6 times and its per capita GNP has grown by 25 times during 1959-2001. Similarly, the proportion of the population residing in public housing has risen from 9% to 86%, and the government has increased its spending on education by 92 times during the same period. The two serious problems of unemployment and corruption have also been resolved. Indeed, Singapore's rapid economic growth and good record in solving the problems of public housing, traffic congestion, crime and corruption has attracted worldwide attention.[74]

The PSC has played an important role in contributing to Singapore's development since 1959 by maintaining the tradition of meritocracy inherited from British colonial rule through its ability to attract "the best and brightest" Singaporeans to join the SCS by awarding scholarships to the best students in each cohort. To compete for the best candidates in the labour market, the PSC offers attractive undergraduate scholarships to students with excellent results in their secondary school examinations to study at the local universities or prestigious universities abroad. After graduation, these "scholars" are required to serve in the SCS for a fixed number of years, depending on the duration of their scholarships.[75]

Table 7   Singapore in 1959 and 2001

Indicator	1959	2001
Size of Population	1.58 million	4.13 million*
Per capita GNP	S$1,330**	S$33,551
Unemployment Rate	5%	3.3%
Percentage in Public Housing	9%	86%
Government Spending on Education	S$63.39 million	S$5,801.03 million***
Extent of Corruption	Rampant	Minimised

* The size of the resident population is 3.31 million and there are 811,100 non-residents, who are mainly foreign workers.
** 1959 figure.
*** 2000 figure.
Sources: *Singapore Facts and Pictures 2002* (Singapore: Ministry of Information, Communication, and the Arts, 2002), pp. 8, 60–61; and Department of Statistics, Singapore at http://www.singstat.gov.sg

Table 5 above shows that the bulk of the PSC's workload during 1995–2001 involves the granting of scholarships and training awards. Indeed, of the 2,868 candidates considered for all its functions, 1,776 cases (61.9%) dealt with scholarships and training awards, 589 cases (20.5%) concerned appointment, 343 cases (12%) involved discipline, and 160 cases (5.6%) dealt with promotion. As the PSC no longer monopolises the awarding of scholarships and training fellowships in Singapore, it has faced increasing competition from the Singapore Armed Forces, the various statutory boards and government-linked companies, as well as the multinational corporations in recent years as they have also provided many attractive scholarships.

In November 1992, Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong concluded that meritocracy was the key to Singapore's success as "it is this practice of meritocracy in the civil service, in politics, in business and in schools, which has allowed Singaporeans to achieve excellence and to compete against others."[76] However, the PSC as the guardian of meritocracy in the SCS cannot claim full credit for Singapore's success. It would be more accurate to say that the PSC's insistence on merit and impartiality in recruiting and promoting qualified candidates in the SCS has been a major factor responsible for Singapore's success.

The PSC has succeeded in attracting the "best and brightest" Singaporeans to join the SCS and retaining them during its first four decades. However, as mentioned by the Prime Minister, the PSC could not compete with the private sector in the 1990 s in attracting and retaining talented personnel in the SCS because of the centralised nature of public personnel management in Singapore. The PSC's inability to compete effectively with the private sector in terms of offering competitive salaries and faster promotion led the government to devolve the recruitment and promotion functions of the PSC to the ESC and PCDSC in 1990 and the personnel boards in 1995 and to increase the salaries of senior civil servants and accelerate the promotion of "high-flyers" to minimise the brain drain from the SCS to the private sector.

Competitive Pay and Accelerated Promotion for High-Flyers

In its report, *Leadership for America: Rebuilding the Public Service,* the Volcker Commission contended that "the commitment to performance cannot long survive, however, unless the government provides adequate pay, recognition for jobs done, accessible training, and decent working conditions."[77] The Singapore government agrees with this view and since 1972 it has provided competitive salaries and favourable working conditions for civil servants.

During 1959–1971, there was a period of austerity and wage restraint as the newly-elected People's Action Party (PAP) government inherited a depleted national coffer and the private sector did not pose a threat to the SCS in terms of competing for personnel.[78] However, as the situation changed with the improvement of economic growth in Singapore in the 1970 s, the PAP government had to minimise the brain drain of talented civil servants to the private sector by reducing the wage-

gap.[79] Accordingly, in March 1972, all civil servants were given a 13th month non-pensionable allowance comparable to a bonus in the private sector to minimise the salary differences in both sectors.

The salaries of civil servants were further increased in 1973, 1979 and 1982 to stem the brain drain by redressing the disparity in pay between graduates working in the public and private sectors. However, these periodic salary increases failed to curb the brain drain from the SCS as can be seen from Table 8 below which provides details of the resignation rate of Division I civil servants in Singapore from 1971–1984. The average resignation rate was 3.9%, with the highest resignation rate of 6.9% in 1981 and the lowest resignation rate of 3.2% in 1984.

Accordingly, in March 1989, the Minister for Trade and Industry, Lee Hsien Loong, recommended a substantial salary increase for civil servants as the low salaries and slow advancement in Administrative Service contributed to its low recruitment and high resignation rates. He justified his recommendation in the following way:

> The need to revise salaries is most acute in the Administrative Service. ... Annual recruitment in the Administrative Service has declined steadily from a peak of 37 in 1974 to an average of less than 10 per year in recent years. ... There is no queue of qualified applicants seeking to join the Administrative Service. Many of those within the Service have left as soon as their bonds have expired, and some even sooner. Every one of those who were recruited in 1975 and 1976 has left. So have three-quarters of the 1977 and 1978 cohorts, and half of the 1983 cohort. As the economy boomed after the 1985 recession, able young officers quit for more attractive jobs elsewhere. ... From a peak in 1975 of 260 officers, it [the Administrative Service] has declined to 183 this year, down by 30%. ... The most successful of those who left the Service are earning 40% to 100% more than their contemporaries who stayed. ... Able civil servants are opting out and they are not being replaced fast enough.[80]

Lee further emphasised that as the government's "fundamental philosophy" was to "pay civil servants market rates for their abilities and responsibilities," it "will offer whatever salaries are necessary to attract and retain the talent that it needs." He also pointed out that the salary increase was "designed to catch up with several years of rising private sector incomes, and to make public service careers more competitive with the private sector." He concluded his speech in Parliament by promising that the government "will continue to carry out regular surveys of private sector salaries to stay competitive" as "paying civil servants adequate salaries is *absolutely essential* to maintain the quality of public administration which Singaporeans have come to expect."[81]

In January 1994, the salaries of ministers and senior civil servants were raised to keep pace with the private sector and to compensate for the reduction of medical benefits.[82] Three months later, Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong admitted that the

Table 8   Resignation Rate of Division I Officers in the SCS, 1971–1984

Year	No. of Division I officers resigned	No. of Division I officers in SCS	Resignation rate (%)
1971	142	2,826	5.0
1972	163	3,621	4.5
1973	205	3,874	5.3
1974	256	4,136	6.2
1975	259	4,633	5.6
1976	326	5,249	6.2
1977	293	5,479	5.4
1978	269	6,002	4.5
1979	307	6,430	4.8
1980	322	6,634	4.9
1981	474	6,912	6.9
1982	351	7,298	4.8
1983	309	7,754	4.0
1984	272	8,396	3.2

Source: Republic of Singapore, *Parliamentary Debates Singapore Official Report,* Vol. 45, No. 8 (18 March 1985), Appendix III, Table 2.

government's "policy of paying competitive salaries through periodic major salary revisions" was helpful but would "not solve our problem."[83] Accordingly, the devolution of the authority of the PSC, ESC and PCDSC for appointing and promoting senior civil servants to the 31 personnel boards in January 1995 was necessary not only to reduce the workloads of the three commissions, but also to enable the SCS to respond more effectively to the challenge of competing with the private sector in attracting and retaining talented personnel.

The PAP government found the method of increasing the salaries of ministers and civil servants periodically to minimise the wage disparity with the private sector cumbersome and potentially costly in political terms. To remove the need to justify future salary revisions for ministers and civil servants, it recommended in a White Paper presented to Parliament in October 1994 that their salaries be benchmarked with the average salaries of the top four earners in six private sector professions (accounting, banking, engineering, law, local manufacturing companies, and multinational corporations).[84] In short, the White Paper institutionalised the government's practice of periodic salary revisions as it enabled "the government to revise automatically public sector salaries in response to increases in private sector salaries."[85]

The Singapore economy recovered in 1999 with a growth rate of 5.4%, and wages in the private sector began to rise again. In June 2000, Deputy Prime Minister

Lee Hsien Loong informed Parliament that eight administrative officers had re-signed during the first six months of the year. Since attracting and retaining talent in the SCS "is quickly becoming a real problem," the government has to respond quickly by changing both the salaries and terms of service, as well as the incentives and rewards for those occupying public-service leadership (PSL) jobs *viz.*, the per-manent secretaries, deputy secretaries, chief executive officers of major statutory boards, and heads of key departments.

To reinforce the link between pay and individual performance, Lee suggested that a performance-related component be included in the total wage package of every civil servant. The benchmark was also broadened from the four top earners in six professions to the top eight earners in six professions. Table 9 below provides details of the salaries of selected ministers and senior civil servants arising from the

Table 9 Salaries of Selected Ministers and Senior Civil Servants
in Singapore, June 2000

Grade	Monthly Salary	Annual Salary	Revised Monthly Salary	Revised Annual Salary
Prime Minister	S$85,000	S$1.69 million	S$85,300	S$1.94 million
Minister Staff Grade II	S$48,900	S$1.13 million	S$55,700 S$49,900 S$44,600	S$1.42 million S$1.27 million S$1.13 million
Minister Staff Grade I	S$37,800	S$861,000	S$47,400 S$37,900	S$1.21 million S$968,000
Permanent Secretary Superscale B	S$28,000	S$638,000	S$39,800 S$28,800	S$1.01 million S$736,000
Deputy Secretary Superscale G	S$13,400	S$242,000	S$18,800 S$17,500	S$390,000 S$363,000

Source: *Straits Times*, June 30, 2000, p. 53.

June 2000 salary revision.

In addition to improving salaries, the 1994 White Paper also recommended faster promotion for promising civil servants by shortening the time interval between promotions. Thus, an officer is expected to become a Deputy Secretary at about 32 years and a Permanent Secretary at about 40 years.[86] Consequently, during the last few years the number of promotions in the SCS increased as between 17 % to 21 % of senior officers were promoted annually.[87] Furthermore, the introduction of fixed term appointments of 10 years for Deputy and Permanent Secretaries in 2000 would lead to upward mobility and enhance the promotion prospects for high-flyers in the SCS.[88] Indeed, according to Deputy Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, the limited tenure of the top positions in the SCS would also help to retain talented personnel by encouraging "young and capable officers to stay on in the [civil] service, in the realistic hope of reaching a PSL (Public Service Leadership) post."[89]

Conclusion

In sum, the PSC has undergone many changes during its first 50 years. During its first eight years it was concerned with maintaining meritocracy and accelerating localisation in the SCS. However, after the attainment of self-government and a localised SCS in June 1959, the PSC's *raison d'etre* was focused solely on ensuring meritocracy in the SCS. As the PSC has limited staff and resources, it has dealt with its increasing workload in two ways: (1) by sharing its workload with the PSD in 1983; and (2) by delegating most of its recruitment and promotion functions to the ESC and PCDSC in 1990 and the 31 personnel boards in 1995.

The PSC has maintained the tradition of meritocracy in the SCS by attracting the "best and brightest" Singaporeans to apply for civil service positions through the awarding of scholarships to the best students in their cohort. The SCS replaced the traditional performance evaluation method inherited from the British with the Shell Company's Performance Appraisal System in 1983, following the change in philosophy in public personnel management in Singapore. However, the adoption of the Shell system was inadequate in terms of accelerating the promotion of high-flyers in the SCS. With the devolution of its major functions of recruitment and promotion to the personnel boards in 1995, the PSC is now mainly concerned with the granting of scholarships and training awards. Even though it is facing stiff competition in recent years from the provision of scholarships by other public and private organisations, the PSC is still responsible for providing the most scholarships every year in Singapore.

Singapore's rapid economic growth since the 1970 s increased the wage-gap between the SCS and the private sector and resulted in a brain drain of civil servants. The PAP government responded to this problem by revising the salaries of civil servants periodically, beginning from 1972 until 1994, when the benchmarking of their salaries to six professions was introduced. Furthermore, to enable the SCS to compete more effectively with the private sector for talented personnel, the PSC's functions of recruitment and promotion were delegated to the ESC and PCDSC in 1990 and the 31 personnel boards in 1995. To retain talented personnel in the SCS, high-flyers are paid competitive salaries and promoted at a faster pace.

The special treatment given to the high-flyers or the scholar-bureaucrats (those recruited into the SCS by the PSC through the award of scholarships) is perhaps justified in the Singapore context to attract the "best and brightest" Singaporeans to join the SCS and to enable the SCS to compete effectively with the private sector for talented personnel. Indeed, these scholar-bureaucrats are among the major beneficiaries of PAP rule as they are members of the power elite and are well-paid and rewarded with accelerated promotion. In 2001, the 294 officers in the Administrative Service constituted only 0.5% of the 62,739 employees in the SCS.[90]

On the other hand, while the scholar-bureaucrats have benefited to a great extent from the PAP government's policy of accelerated promotion and competitive pay for high-flyers, this policy has also resulted in serious morale problems for the

majority of civil servants, who have been denied such rewards because they are non-scholars and low-flyers. While it is necessary to attract, motivate and retain the high-flyers (0.5% as most if not all of the scholar-bureaucrats are in the Administrative Service) in the SCS, it is equally important to ensure that the rest of the civil servants (99.5%) are not alienated by the tremendous disparity in salaries, fringe benefits and promotion prospects.

If this problem of morale is not resolved, it will have serious repercussions on the performance of the SCS in the long run. Indeed, a great deal needs to be done by the PSC and the SCS to improve the morale of the low-flyers and non-scholars. It is hoped that these two agencies will not take another 50 years to resolve this problem.

Acknowledgments

Notes

1 See Warren Fernandez, *Without Fear or Favour: 50 Years of Singapore's Public Service Commission* (Singapore: Times Media Private Ltd. for the Public Service Commission, 2001) and PSC, *Annual Report 2001* (Singapore: PSC, 2002), pp. 11 and 13.

2 For details of the New Public Management, see Patrick Dunleavy and Christopher Hood, "From Old Public Administration to New Public Management," in *Public Money and Management,* Vol. 14, No. 3 (1994), pp. 9–16; and Martin Minogue, Charles Polidano and David Hulme (eds.), *Beyond the New Public Management: Ideas and Practices in Governance* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 1998).

3 See A. P. Sinker, "What are Public Service Commissions for?" *Public Administration* (London), Vol. 31 (Autumn 1953), p. 206; and Jon S.T. Quah, "Measuring the Effectiveness of Public Service Commissions in the New States: Some Relevant Indicators," *Indian Journal of Public Administration,* Vol. 20, No. 2 (April-June 1974), p. 356.

4 Jon S. T. Quah, "The Public Bureaucracy and National Development in Singapore," in Krishna K. Tummala (ed.), *Administrative Systems Abroad* (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1982), p. 50. For a detailed analysis of the PSC's inception, see Jon S.T. Quah, "Origin of Public Service Commission in Singapore," *Indian Journal of Public Administration,* Vol. 18, No. 4 (October-December 1972), pp. 563–570.

5 Republic of Singapore, *The Budget for the Financial Year 1980/1981* (Singapore: Singapore National Printers, 1980), p. 78.

6 Quah, "The Public Bureaucracy and National Development in Singapore," p. 51.

7 Jon S. T. Quah, "Decentralizing Public Personnel Management: The Case of the Public Service Commission in Singapore," in Susuma Kurosawa, Toshihiro Fujiwara and Mila R. Reforma (eds.), *New Trends in Public Administration for the Asia Pacific Region: Decentralization* (Tokyo: Local Autonomy College, 1996), p. 494.

8 Ibid., p. 494.

9 See http://www.singstat.gov.sg/keystats/mqstats/mds/mds21a.pdf.

10 Paul Kang Eng Chye, *The Public Service Commission and its Role in Public Personnel Administration in Singapore* (B. Soc. Sc. Honours Academic Exercise, Department of Political Science, National University of Singapore, 1987/1988), p. 25.

11 See Jon S. T. Quah, "Equal Employment in the Singapore Civil Service," in Krishna K. Tummala (ed. 0, *Equity in Public Employment Across Nations* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1989), pp. 133–145.

12 *Annual Report of the Public Service Commission for the Year 1963* (Singapore: PSC, 1964), p. 2.

13 Quah, "Decentralizing Public Personnel Management," p. 495.

14 *Public Service Commission Annual Report 1982* (Singapore: PSC, 1983), p. 1.

15 *Reports of the Publio Service Commission for the Years 1951, 1952 and 1953* (Singapore: PSC, 1954), p. 2; and *Public Service Commission Annual Report 1982* (Singapore: PSC, 1983), p. 5.

16 *Report of the Public Service Commission for the Year 1957* (Singapore: PSC, 1959), p. 8 and *Public Service Commission Annual Report 1982* (Singapore: PSC, 1983), p. 18.

17 *Annual Report of the Public Service Commission for the Year 1963,* pp. 9 and 19; and *Public Service Commission Annual Report 1982,* p. 8.

18 Quah, "Measuring the Effectiveness of Public Service Commissions in the New States," p. 361, Table 1.

19 Lee Boon Hiok, "The Public Personnel System in Singapore," in Amara Raksasataya and Heinrich Siedentopf (eds.), *Asian Civil Services: Developments and Trends* (Kuala Lumpur: Asian and Pacific Development Administration Centre, 1980), pp. 442–443.

20 Jon S. T. Quah, "The Public Bureaucracy in Singapore, 1959–1984," in You Poh-Seng and Lim Chong-Yah (eds.), *Singapore: Twenty-five Years of Development* (Singapore: Nan Yang Xing Zhou Lianhe Zaobao, 1984), p. 302.

21 "Personnel Management in the Civil Service," *Management Development,* No. 36 (July-September 1982), p. 2.

22 Jon S.T. Quah, "The Management Services Department in Singapore: Its Evolution and Role as the National Management Consultancy Agency in Administrative Reforms," in *National Management Consultancy Services for Administrative Development* (New York: United Nations Department of Technical Co-operation for Development, 1988), pp. 64–65.

23 Veronica Quek, "The Public Service Division," *Management Development,* No. 38 (January-March 1983), p. 2.

24 Ibid., p. 3.

25 Lum Moe Sing, *Performance Appraisal in the Singapore Administrative Service* (B. Soc. Sc. Honours Academic Exercise, Department of Political Science, National University of Singapore, 1991/1992), p. 18.

26 Ibid., pp. 18–19.

27 Yeo Siok Peng, "Staff Appraisal in the Civil Service," *Management Development,* No. 36 (July-September 1982), p. 9.

28 Lum, *Performance Appraisal in the Singapore Administrative Service,* p. 22.

29 Lim Hui Din, "Performance Appraisal-Feedback on Our Weaknesses," *Management Development,* No. 36 (July-September 1982), pp. 11–12.

30 Lum, *Performance Appraisal in the Singapore Administrative Service,* p. 20.

31 Ibid., p. 21.

32 "Press Release: Personnel Management in the Civil Service," *Management Development,* No. 36 (July-September 1982), p. 2.

33 Lee Kuan Yew, *From Third World to First: The Singapore Story: 1965–2000* (Singapore: Times Editions, 2000), p. 740.

34 Ibid., p. 741.

35 Lum, *Performance Appraisal in the Singapore Administrative Service,* p. 21.

36 Ibid., pp. 23 and 25.

37 Ibid., p. 26.

38 Ibid., pp. 26–28.

39 Ibid., p. 29.

40 For the definitions of these qualities, see ibid., Appendix 7, pp. 110–112.

41 Ibid., p. 30, footnote 43.

42 Ibid., p. 32.

43 Ibid., p. 32.

44 Ibid., p. 34.

45 Ibid., p. 35.

46 *Appraisal in the Civil Service* (Singapore: PSD, Prime Minister's Office, July 1998), p. 7.

47 Ibid., p. 3.

48 Ibid., p. 4.

49 Ibid., pp. 4–5.

50 Ibid., p. 5.

51 Ibid., p. 6.

52 *Straits Times* (Singapore), March 30, 1990, p. 27. As the PSC Chairman is the only full-time member drawing a salary, it is difficult for the PSC to recruit other members who serve part-time and receive allowances for their services as they are usually prominent professionals with their own careers.

53 Ibid., p. 27.

54 *Public Service Commission Annual Report 1993* (Singapore: PSC, 1994), p. 21.

55 *Public Service Commission Annual Report 1992* (Singapore: PSC, 1993), p. 15.

56 Ibid., p. 5.

57 Ibid., p. 15.

58 Ibid., p. 3.

59 Goh Chok Tong, "The Civil Service: Meeting Challenges Today," in *Speeches: A Bimonthly Selection of Ministerial Speeches,* Vol. 18, No. 2 (March-April 1994), pp. 7–11, emphasis added.

60 Ibid., p. 13.

61 Ibid., p. 16.

62 Public Service Division, "Devolution of Personnel Management Authority in the Civil Service-Subsidiary Legislation and Composition of Special and Senior Personnel Boards" (Singapore: Press Statement, 16 December 1994), p. 1.

63 Ibid., pp. 2 and 4.

64 Willie Tan Yoke Meng, "Devolution of Personnel Management Functions: General Briefing to Union Leaders," (Singapore: PSD, 1994), p. 5.

65 Ibid., p. 3.

66 Ibid., pp. 2–3.

67 *Public Service Commission Annual Report 1997* (Singapore: PSC, 1998), p. 14.

68 *Public Service Commission Annual Report 1998* (Singapore: PSC, 1999), p. 9.

69 Lee Kuan Yew, "What of the Past is Relevant to the future?" in *People's Action Party, 1954–1979, Petir 25ᵗʰ Anniversary Issue* (Singapore: Central Executive Committee, PAP, 1979), p. 40.

70 Lee Kuan Yew, "The Search for Talent," in S. Jayakumar (ed.), *Our Heritage and Beyond* (Singapore: National Trades Union Congress, 1982), p. 18.

71 Ibid., p. 22.

72 Jon S.T. Quah, "Singapore in 1983: The Continuing Search for Talent," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 24, No. 2 (February 1984), pp. 178–179.

73 Lee, *From Third World To First*, pp. 735–736.

74 Jon S.T. Quah, "Singapore's Model of Development: Is It Transferable?" in Henry S. Rowen (ed.), *Behind East Asian Growth: The Political and Social Foundations of Prosperity* (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 105.

75 Jon S. T. Quah, "Sustaining Quality in the Singapore Civil Service," *Public Administration and Development*, Vol. 15, No. 3 (August 1995), p. 336.

76 Goh Chok Tong, "My Urgent Mission," Petir, no. 11–12 (November-December 1992), p. 15.

77 Paul Volcker, *Leadership for America: Rebuilding the Public Service* (Lexington: Lexington Books, 1990), p. 33.

78 Jon S. T. Quah, "Paying for the 'best and brightest': Rewards for High Public Office in Singapore," in Christopher Hood and B. Guy Peters with Grace O.M. Lee (eds.), *Rewards for High Public Office: Asian and Pacific Rim Cases* (London: Routledge, 2003), pp. 147–148.

79 Ibid., p. 149.

80 Republic of Singapore, *Parliamentary Debates Singapore Official Report*, Vol. 53, No. 6 (17 March 1989), cols. 378–380 and 382.

81 Ibid., cols. 382–383 and 396, emphasis added.

82 *Straits Times* (Singapore), December 4, 1993, p. 1.

83 Goh, "The Civil Service," p. 6.

84 Quah, "Paying for the 'best and brightest'," pp. 153–154.

85 Ibid., p. 154.

86 David S. Jones, "Recent Reforms in Singapore's Administrative Elite: Responding to the Challenges of a Rapidly Changing Economy and Society," *Asian Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (December 2002), pp. 80–81.

87 Ibid., p. 81.

88 Ibid., p. 81.

89 Quoted in ibid., p. 81.

90 Data provided by the Public Service Division in Singapore.