1. Introduction

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It is the aim of the study *The State at Work* to take stock of the historical development of public services, shed light on employment in the most important public task areas and illuminate the distribution of public employment between national and sub-national governments. We seek in addition to analyse in depth, special dimensions of public service systems such as part-time and female employment, ethnic and language representativeness, the social stratification of systems including the situation of administrative elites, and finally the way public service systems in the ten countries under scrutiny are managed. As set out in the introduction to Volume I, our work is informed by modern concerns regarding the so-called 'waning of the state', the emergence of the concept of 'governance' and the impact of the New Public Management (NPM) reform agenda.

The summary chapter to the Volume I set of country reports draws tentative comparative conclusions regarding the above concerns. The contributions in this second volume elaborate upon these dimensions in detail comparing the situation in the ten countries under scrutiny.

PROJECT DESIGN

In selecting the countries represented here, we started with two basic considerations. First, we found it necessary from the beginning to compare federal and unitary states. Our reasoning was, among other more obvious typological interests, that the degree of centralization might induce different management challenges that would have a bearing on the reform inclinations in national governments. Federal states represented here are the USA, Germany, Canada, Australia and Spain. Second, we found it reasonable to compare public services in countries with different political cultures, in particular countries that went along the path of stateless, minimalist welfare traditions such as the USA and Commonwealth countries in contrast to Nordic and Continental European countries based on public law traditions and the notion of rather strong states, reflecting

Table 1.1 Design: countries and contributors

Polity Family		Federal		Unitary
Anglo Countries	USA AUS CAN	Peters Nelson Gow/Sutherland	UK NZ	Hogwood Gregory
Non-anglo countries	G ESP	Derlien Alba/Navarro	FRA DK SW	Rouban Christensen/Pallesen Pierre

welfare regimes other than the Anglo-American family. Thus the design depicted in Table 1.1 emerged (with contributors indicated).

The research work on which this two-volume study is based, started in 1994, initially funded by the Transcoop Program of the Humboldt Foundation and a matching fund of the University of Pittsburgh. It resulted in the pilot study by Derlien and Peters (1998) concerning public service development in the USA and Germany. Subsequently, conferences in Bamberg, Germany (1998), Sandbjerg, Denmark (1999) and Glasgow, Scotland (2000) were organized to bring together an international research team to extend the study to eight additional countries.

DATABASE

Any project attempting to provide comprehensive comparative information on a subject such as ours encounters substantial difficulties. To a great extent we were all at the (not so tender) mercy of the official statistics of our respective countries. We all attempted to be as diligent as possible both in identifying the sources of our data and the definitions of particular entries, especially when they differed from the agreed-upon definitions of the project. It was agreed to begin the time series of data as early as possible after the Second World War. As is pointed out in the chapter on long-term trends (Jørgen Grønnegård Christensen and Thomas Pallesen in this volume), detailed data have been available in most countries only since the beginning of the 1960s, while the 1950s can be covered only with rough aggregates. Furthermore, it turned out that statistical data for some aspects we are interested in were not always available and where available, were often difficult to compare, for instance statistics of employment by policy areas or employment along ministerial demarcations that underlie frequent changes. Further, not only did the statistics formally change, with some

entries disappearing and others appearing, but in some cases the countries themselves changed. For example, the significant changes in the Spanish polity from the 1970s onwards and the unification of Germany in 1990 required careful attention to the details of what was being measured and in relationship to what. Due to the time it takes to bring so many researchers together in a single project, the latest data we were aiming at were for 1998, and then as the project drew along, for 2000. The important thing has not been to put together an up-to-date collection of comparative statistics but rather to make a first and serious step towards paving the field for systematic comparative analysis applying a public employment perspective. In addition to the set of quantitative data and qualitative information all Volume I country reports should contain, some of the comparative chapters included in this second volume are based on more specific information collected from project members in bilateral communication.

CONTRIBUTIONS IN THIS VOLUME

Jørgen Grønnegaard Christensen and Thomas Pallesen summarize public employment trends with special attention to differences between periods of public employment growth, stagnation and decline and variation between policy areas. Their work encountered a theoretical problem because even if differences in government employment are expected to be great between for instance the Nordic and other countries, the tax structure and hence the fiscal base of government also varies among these countries, including differences in the form of the official compilations. Such cross-national differences raise the question of what variations in the structure and size of public employment actually reveal about government and its performance of public tasks. Part of the variation may be due to some countries having opted for organizational and financial solutions that do not question governmental responsibility for social welfare, but place less emphasis on pure public sector provision of these services. In the latter model, public employment will be smaller, without implying a smaller public sector in economic or regulatory terms. Thus the employment figures tell only part of the story about the role of government and its true size in economic and political terms. It turned out that it is difficult to reject or confirm the hypothesis that government funded but privately delivered services entirely fill the gap between the high public employment in the pure public sector model of the Scandinavian welfare states and the more modest level of formal public employment in continental Europe and the Anglo-American countries. The authors therefore distinguish three models of public service provision organization: pure state, pure market and a grey area. They note that

historically grey sector institutions also played an important role in the Scandinavian health and social care sectors. With the expansion of the public sector in the 1960s and 1970s and the consolidation of local government areas, these alternative organizations were squeezed out and replaced by pure public organizations, generally run by local governments. The authors conclude that when the cross-national comparison of public employment patterns in this way is expanded to cover a historical dimension as well, it is even more evident that part of the differences found in official statistics are artefacts. Only by including an analysis of the regulatory, financial and organizational aspects of the public sector is it possible to grasp the proper role of government in the private and public labour markets.

Helen Nelson analyses how public employment is distributed across the levels of governments in unitary and federal systems. A general conclusion is that in both cases privatizations occurred chiefly at the national level of government and that cutbacks were less severe at sub-national levels. Continuing responsibility for the delivery of large social programmes accounted for continued growth at most regional and/or local levels. The pattern is particularly in evidence in federations where the bulk of the responsibility for the delivery of labour-intensive programmes – including police services – has been located traditionally at the state and more often the local level. In Chapter 4, B. Guy Peters examines regional government employment more closely and in Chapter 5, Jon Pierre delivers an in-depth analysis of local government employment.

Silke Heinemann in Chapter 6 investigates the widespread acceptance of part-time employment in the public sector since the late 1960s. A primary reason for the adoption of part-time work was the necessity to deal with labour shortages and to encourage women to enter the labour market. In the European countries, part-time employment remains predominantly a phenomenon of working mothers with school-age children. The parallels in the emerging patterns of female and part-time employment are evident in comparative perspective. Both are complex phenomena, depending on an interaction of different economic, social and political factors. After identifying policy areas and level of government where women constitute a noticeable share of public employment Heinemann goes further into the problem of the statistical under-representation of women in specific areas and strata of the public services. Finally, equal opportunity measures as well as supportive social policy provisions for female public employment are inspected.

The problem of representativeness is taken up in yet another respect in Chapter 7: language and minority racial and ethnic status pose a problem in countries with multi-ethnic societies and in immigration societies such as

the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Iain Gow and Sharon Sutherland examine the public services in these countries focusing on their composition and the extent of group representation overall and within the various status levels. They identify three types of policy: anti-discrimination; equal opportunity measures to promote access by minority groups; and affirmative action, stipulating some form of equality of result through various preferential schemes.

In Chapter 8, Hans-Ulrich Derlien and Luc Rouban deal with the public service as a social system. They pull together information from the country reports regarding the internal specialization and stratification of public services. This internal focus on the public services is complemented by two macro-sociological perspectives, one concerning the prestige of and trust in the public service and the other relating to the administrative elite and their interaction with the political and economic environments. Although in increasingly more countries the public service is regarded by the population as a normal segment of the labour market, public servants themselves may nevertheless display an '*esprit de corps*'. However, as was obvious from Volume I, public service systems are far from being socially homogeneous. Besides the legal basis of employment that in a number of countries distinguishes between the core of civil servants and the rank and file members, the chapter examines the professional differentiations related to educational training and policy area of employment. Third, in all systems there is a hierarchical differentiation of positions in and between offices and a concomitant vertical social stratification which is likely to overlap with the legal basis of employment and the professional differentiation. Finally, training and recruitment of the public service elite and their relationship to the economic and political subsystems of society are addressed.

In Chapter 9, Jørgen Grønnegaard Christensen and Robert Gregory compile and compare the ways in which personnel policy is administered and the changes the systems have undergone in this respect. Is there a trend from uniformity of national personnel policy to diversity due to decentralization and fragmentation within the systems? For in all countries seemingly radical reforms have been undertaken in the public sector impelled by a paradigmatic shift away from traditional civil service conventions in favour of ideas embodied in the New Public Management approach. The rules regulating the recruitment, careers and pensions of public employees, as well as the framework within which salaries and work conditions are settled for the public sector labour market are compared. To the extent that NPM reforms have been implemented, the authors discuss whether these reforms were inspired by the new and common rationale or whether changes are due to nationally and sector specific factors that have induced political decision-makers to review traditional public personnel policies.

REFERENCES

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