

1. Introduction

1.1 THE REFORM OF PUBLIC MANAGEMENT IN NAPOLEONIC STATES: ISSUES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Since the 1980s, a wave of reforms of public management has swept across the world. A larger and larger, and fast-growing, literature in the field has addressed questions about the nature of such a phenomenon, the scope, the reasons for change, and the effects (Aucoin, 1990; Barzelay, 2001; Dunleavy and Hood, 1994; Ferlie *et al.*, 1996, 2005; Hood, 1991, 1998; Kettl, 2000; Lynn, 1996; Olsen and Peters, 1996; Peters, 2001; Peters and Savoie, 1998; Pollitt, 1993; Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2004). However, the empirical bases for such studies appear to be unbalanced: whilst some countries¹ have received great attention from academics, think tanks and practitioners alike (countries like Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom, where the New Public Management – NPM – originated, together with the USA and other Anglo-Saxon² or North European countries, like the Netherlands or the Scandinavian countries, sometimes proposed as an alternative to the Anglo-American ‘managerial’ model³) the study of public management reform in other countries has apparently been relatively neglected.⁴

This book provides an account of the reforms of public management in five European (and EU member) countries: France, Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain. The rationale of this book is to contribute to fill such a gap by providing a comparative study of the reforms in these five countries. The ambition is to revisit a number of topics of theoretical interest in the scientific debate in public management, including: the ways the national politico-administrative context affects the dynamics of public management reform, and the influence of Europeanization on public management reform; the ‘compatibility’ of the NPM and other ‘global’ paradigms of reform (like the ‘New Public Governance’: Osborne, 2006) with the basic premises of the administrative systems of the countries in the Napoleonic tradition (intended as a contribution to the larger debate on the compatibility of global paradigms outside the countries where they originate, and particularly of NPM outside the Anglo-American world); the characteristics and evolving features of such a tradition; and the direction

of reforms, and specifically whether the idea of the Neo-Weberian State (NWS) as an emerging model of reform of the public sector in continental European countries (proposed by Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2004, pp. 99–101) may effectively describe and/or interpret the direction of reforms in such countries.

Preliminarily to discussing the contribution the study of public management reform in Napoleonic states may provide to the research in the field of public management, and defining the specific research questions addressed, some definitions of the terms employed are necessary. First, what is intended by public management reform? In general terms, we make reference to the definition proposed by Pollitt and Bouckaert (2004, p. 8): ‘Public management (PM) reforms consist of deliberate changes to the structures and processes of public sector organisations with the objective of getting them (in some sense) to run better.’ The concern with the search for the best use of resources in pursuit of objectives subject to change characterizes ‘management’ as a ‘new’ way of conducting the business of the state as opposed to traditional ‘administration’ (Dunleavy and Hood, 1994), more concerned with the review of law in an area of public life, its enforcement, and the making of decisions on cases that are submitted to the public service. Thus the two fields (public administration and public management) cover more or less the same territory, but traditional public administration is more concerned with the preparation and enforcement of law, and the regulation of public powers in the relationship of the public sector with citizens, whilst public management puts emphasis on the employment of (scarce) resources in the pursuit of given objectives (collectively determined through liberal-democratic procedures, in democratic polities). Efficiency (the ratio of outputs produced to inputs employed), effectiveness (the adequacy of outputs to produce given effects) and sustainability (the long-term viability of the levels of outputs delivered and the ensuing long-term impact on the needs of the community which is served by public sector organizations, directly or indirectly through the regulation of the provision of services,⁵ so that policy demands are adequately interpreted and policies delivered⁶) are central concepts in public management. Conceptually, it is on that basis that we will analyse the nature and kind of ‘change’ determined by the reform of public management. However, the measurement of these ‘final results’ of public management reforms, in the terms of improved (or worsened) efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability, is a very difficult task. We will thus resort to the definitions of process and system changes employed by Pollitt and Bouckaert (2004, pp. 122, 128), and – going back to the definition proposed above – we will consider the changes in the processes through which public sector organizations are run, as well as the

structural changes that occurred to the public sector as the ‘intermediate’ but very important effects of public management reforms that are to be explained (the *explananda*). The ways in which civil servants are recruited, appointed, evaluated and promoted (e.g. whether it is based on seniority or on ‘performance’) and the modalities whereby services are delivered to citizens (e.g. with or without the adoption of a citizen’s charter setting the standard levels of the services and the sanctions if public organizations fail to live up to the promised levels) are examples of process changes that may be in the range of the effects produced by public management reforms. Similarly, the replacement of the direct provision of services by ministerial structures through the establishment of ‘public agencies’ or other semi-autonomous organizations for running public services is a change in the structure of government. It is these kinds of change – or the absence of change if proposed reforms fail to be implemented or even to be enacted – on which we will focus in the search for explanations of the dynamics of the reform of the public sector.

The definition proposed is broad enough to encompass both the formulation of the public management reform packages (the policy decisions in the public management policy domain) and the implementation of the reform packages, as well as the larger transformations occurring in the running of public sector organizations. One way of focusing the analysis is that of distinguishing between the formulation of reform packages and their implementation. In this respect, the definition of public management *policy* proposed by Barzelay (2001, p. 14) is extremely useful: ‘Institutional rules and organisational routines in the areas of: expenditure planning and financial management, audit and evaluation, organisation and methods, labour relations, and procurement that guide, constrain and motivate the public sector.’ Such definition explicitly confines the analysis to the pre-decision and decision phase of what is conceptualized as a policy process, thus ‘enabling’ the application of the conceptual tools of public policy (and political science) to the analysis of a specific policy domain: the public management policy domain. Public management is not necessarily a policy domain in every period in any country, but it may become such when changing the rules and routines of the whole government (at the government-wide level) in the areas above specified becomes an issue high on the governmental agenda and in a sustained way, as has occurred in Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom since the 1980s. Quite obviously, what happens after a bill has become a law is much more than the mere application – or dis-application – of the prescribed rules and procedures; indeed many significant decisions still have to be made (Bardach, 1977; Elmore, 1979; Pressman and Wildavsky, 1973), but the conceptualization of public management reform as a policy domain,

and the articulation of the policy cycle in distinct phases (pre-decision, decision, implementation – following for example Kingdon, 1994), is a ‘useful fiction’ for the analysis of episodes of reform whose outcome to be explained is at one level the making of authoritative decisions in the areas above identified and at another level the changes in the processes and structures of the public sector determined by the implementation – if any – of the enacted reform packages. This book has the ambition of encompassing the whole of the policy cycle of public management reform: we thus examine both the results of attempts at reforming the public sector in terms of policy decisions in the areas above identified and the results in terms of process and system changes.

It should also be noted that we consider reforms that are ‘government-wide’ in scope, cross-cutting a large part if not all sectors of the public service. Sectoral reforms, however important, are considered only insofar as they entail a more cross-cutting reform of public management. Thus, to mention an example, the reform of the education sector that occurred in Italy in 1998–99 and profoundly changed the management of schools at all levels, primary as well as secondary (it transformed the role of the headteacher from a professional *primus inter pares* into a manager, by assigning headteachers broader powers on the management of resources and formally including them in the category of civil servants holding a position of ‘manager’), is not directly considered, but only as part of the range of effects of the reforms of the civil service that occurred in 1993 and 1998 and that modified the powers and functions – together with the modalities of appointment – of civil servants holding a position of ‘manager’ (see Sections 2.2 and 3.3).

In the first instance, we employ the term ‘reform’ (of public management) and use it before a term like ‘modernization’, because the latter may denote, at least implicitly, that changes in public management *necessarily* lead to ‘improvement’ (another term in itself used in public sector reform) – assessed against the backdrop of a previous state of affairs that thus becomes implicitly deemed as ‘outdated’. Of course the term ‘reform’ also entails a specific type of change, i.e. beneficial change towards a ‘better’ state of affairs in the future: the term ‘reform’ is deeply rooted in the politics of improvement (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2004, p. 15), not just in the Anglo-American world but also in public debate in the countries studied in this book. However, reform ‘has become a more sober, yet still explicitly political term’ that refers ‘to the reshaping of something which is already there (*reform*)’ (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2004, p. 15). We consider this notion to be particularly appropriate to the countries we investigate, since the dynamics of public management reforms have very much depended on the nature and the dynamics of the politico-administrative context within

which they took place. At the same time, however, the use of the term 'modernization' for qualifying the trajectories of management reforms may better clarify one of the basic findings of this research work: that there *has* been change in these countries, sometimes considered as 'reluctant' or 'resistant' to management reforms, and that, to some extent, such change is of the type that we would denote positively as 'modernization'.⁷

The above considerations explain (or at least attempt to explain) the first part of the title of this book. Before we move on to the discussion of why we studied these five countries and in what sense they form a 'cluster' that is worth investigating in a comparative way for the advancement of the study of public management, we dwell briefly on some of the basic theoretical assumptions that underlie this research work. In the above use of expressions like 'explanations of the dynamics of the reform of public management', 'analysis of reform outcomes in terms of policy decisions' or 'explaining the changes in the processes and structures of the public sector determined by the implementation of the reform packages', we have implicitly taken on board a number of the assumptions of traditional 'mainstream' social science that concentrates on the identification of the 'causes', most often referred to as 'independent variables' (though the usage of the term is sometimes criticized: see Abbott, 1992a and 1992b, and in the field of public management the works by Barzelay – 2001 and 2003 – based on the narrative method) capable of explaining most or all of the variance of the dependent variable, the effect that is to be 'explained'. The first step in this approach is the clear definition of the concepts employed, the starting point for the identification of the variables and their operationalization (Sartori, 1970). As Pollitt puts it: 'The hope is to find empirical regularities, and then identify the underlying causes of these patterns so that empirical generalizations – and, ultimately, predictions for other, similar situations – can be made' (Pollitt, 2004, p. 324). The empirical evidence is assumed to be 'out there', waiting to be uncovered, classified, measured, predicted, and so on. This is exactly the point from which another broad stream of families of theories departs: interpretive/constructivist approaches emphasize that most or all social artefacts are constructed and constantly reconstructed in minds and texts, though 'these fluid processes are by no means necessarily random . . . Translations, borrowings and reform attempts are extensively moulded by the agendas and understandings of the powerful' (Pollitt, 2004, p. 326). Researchers of such a stream will be extremely attentive to the ways reform processes are narrated in public discourses, to the representations that are provided about how the public sector works or should work, and to how meanings are constructed and reconstructed, especially after changes in political majorities and other junctures at which major shifts in power occurred.

As is discussed in closer detail in the Section 1.2, the author of this book tends to take a 'lay' approach towards the employment of theoretical sources; a fairly eclectic usage of theories and approaches is employed, even within the mainstream social science camp within which this research work is broadly situated. A word has to be said, however, concerning the meaning of 'explanation', a term that recurred quite often in the above paragraphs: by explanation we mean any type of 'explanatory proposition of a generalizing type' (Giddens, 1984, p. xviii), aimed at the unveiling (at least to a certain degree and very often with a number of important limitations attached) of the causal texture of a phenomenon to the purpose that a number of queries about or stirred by that phenomenon may be cleared up: 'how' and 'why' questions about the phenomenon that have the potential of enlightening the comprehension of similar or comparable phenomena. Thus a better understanding of how and why given dynamics of public management reform unfolded in Italy, or in France, Greece, Portugal or Spain, or in the cluster as a whole, may provide a contribution to the social science-based study of public management reform – even though no law-like proposition can be derived from that understanding.

We can now turn to the 'object' of study and consider the five states considered, which we put under the label of '*Napoleonic*'. The issue is that of the 'family of nations': if and to what extent a number of countries have traits in common *concerning the public administration*,⁸ that distinguish them from other clusters of countries. One useful notion to resort to, to elaborate on this idea, is that of *administrative tradition*. The administrative tradition may be defined as 'a historically based set of values, structures and relationships with other institutions that defines the nature of appropriate public administration within society' (Peters, 2008). Each tradition is defined in terms of the specific features it assumes with regard to some dimensions considered as defining: the relationship of the state to the society; the role that societal actors can legitimately play in making and implementing public policies; the relationships between politics (politicians) and administration (civil servants); the conception of the civil service; the relative weight of management and law in defining the fundamental tasks of administration; the relative value given to uniformity (equality); and accountability (Painter and Peters, 2009; Peters, 2008). The sets of questions that arise when considering the Napoleonic administrative tradition that characterizes (characterized?) the five countries studied in this book are twofold: on the one hand, whether and to what extent the common heritage has influenced the reform of public management in these countries; on the other hand, whether and how administrative reforms have led to transformations of the features of this tradition,

what these transformations are and, at a more speculative level, whether contemporary administrative systems in the five countries considered still reflect a clearly identifiable common underlying tradition (the Napoleonic tradition in its embodiment of the 2000s) or whether it has to a larger or smaller degree evaporated. As a terminological consideration, it may be noted that we also employ the expression ‘Napoleonic state’: it is intended as just a way of referring to the five countries investigated – what we make reference to is the features of the *public administration* of such countries, whilst of course the expression does not entail that there is any kind of ‘Napoleonic’ heritage affecting the broader form of the state.

Another term needs discussion in this context, given the set of countries examined: ‘Latin’. The Latin culture of these countries is quite obviously to be included in the list of the factors influential on the dynamics of public management reform as well as on the same reception of the Napoleonic tradition. Hofstede (2001) proposes a framework for analysing the *organizational* culture: a specific dimension that may be considered to be affected by the broader *societal* culture of the peoples involved, possibly even more so in public sector organizations which at the country level tend to be homogeneous in terms of provenance of staff (unlike other organizations such as, for example, multinational companies, it is quite unusual, even in the EU of the free circulation of people, to find any foreigner in the civil service of a country). The work of Hofstede provides the conceptual paraphernalia for important streams of research on the influence of culture on public sector reform (Bouckaert, forthcoming). Though the term ‘Latin’ obviously does not apply to Greece, the five countries seem to form a relatively homogeneous cluster (as has been observed in another work, Ongaro, 2008a) in terms of important variables of the cultural analysis elaborated by Bouckaert (forthcoming) on the basis of the work of Hofstede (2001), a cluster clearly distinguishable from the other countries examined by Bouckaert. We will deal indirectly with the issue of the ‘latin culture’ of these countries in the search for explanations of the dynamics of public management reform by encompassing societal factors (Chapters 5 and 6).

A last point, for purposes of clarification, is that it should be noted that we have not employed the notion of ‘Mediterranean’ countries, sometimes used in comparative studies in public administration and public management for indicating collectively these five countries,⁹ for the main reason that this is, all in all, nothing more than a geographical concept – geographical concepts may have some significance in comparative studies, as they have in classifying administrative traditions (Painter and Peters, 2009), but they are by themselves insufficient for characterizing the influence of the ‘context’ on public management reform.

But why study the reform of public management in these countries? As noted in comparative works (Barzelay, 2001, Chapter 1; Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2004, Chapter 1), there are 'global' pressures that have enhanced the potential for change in public management, including: fiscal and budgetary constraints; the modifications of citizens' expectations; the spread of global ideologies about how the public sector should be organized (NPM¹⁰ and later the 'New Public Governance': Osborne, 2006); forms of coercive policy transfer in public management promoted, among others, by international organizations like the OECD or the World Bank. Moreover, there may be a number of reasons why, once started, change is continuous over time (on the logic of continuing change, see Peters, 2001, Chapter 7). Moreover, for member countries of the European Union (as well as for accession countries and others influenced by the EU even though formally not belonging to the EU), Europeanization processes may be drivers of change. Such global pressures should have produced their effects globally – however, such effects have been studied much more in some countries than in others, an unbalance which in itself may provide a motive for the study of these countries.

More specifically, following the arguments elaborated by Painter and Peters (2007, 2009), we put forward some reasons why studying public management reform in the five countries considered may be worth while. First, the ideas of the New Public Management and other reforms of the public sector have often assumed that the same reform agenda can be used to improve public management almost anywhere, the main rationale being that bureaucracies are conceived as being ultimately very similar, if not identical. International organizations like OECD-PUMA¹¹ and consulting organizations have contributed to spreading a common ideology of change in public organizations. Further, some processes of change, such as Europeanization and globalization, may be assumed to lead to convergence among administrative systems (Kettl, 1997; Knill, 2001). However, 'Although there is some reason to think that public bureaucracies are similar, there are equal or better reasons to think that they are distinctive, and that their distinctiveness is likely to persist even in the face of the pressures for convergence' (Painter and Peters, 2007). Thus the detection of the elements of distinctiveness and their permanence in the face of pressures for convergence is a first reason why the study of public sector reform in countries that are under-represented in comparative studies in public administration and public management may prove valuable, in order to discuss broader questions about the extent of the penetration of the NPM and other paradigms of reform, and the likely effects. Moreover, if we assume that NPM is not just a set of doctrines about the organization (broadly intended) of the public sector, but more radically a theory of governing,

then the challenges the NPM poses to countries in the Napoleonic tradition are especially significant, probably paralleled, at least in the 'Western world', only by the challenges it poses to countries in the Germanic tradition (the latter being obviously outside the scope of the book).

By studying a set of countries relatively under-represented in literature, this contribution assumes the perspective of 'public management as (on the way towards) normal science' (Hood and Peters, 2004). Questions that can be addressed by studying these countries regard, for example, the understanding of how 'global' NPM actually is, or what can be the scope of the NWS (is it a model that also 'holds' in explaining the trajectory of reform of French-model-based European countries?). Moreover, the analysis of the influence of Europeanization on administrative reforms, a topic of growing interest in both European studies and public administration, may benefit from the consideration of five EU countries.

Another set of reasons for studying these five countries together and considering them as a cluster belonging to the same tradition is the importance of understanding reform and reform capacities. In this book we have attempted to identify similarities and dissimilarities in the reform trajectories of the Napoleonic countries, looking at common and distinctive features of their politico-administrative systems. But comparison of these countries *as a cluster* – contrasted with the trajectories in, for example, Anglo-American, or Germanic-continental, or Scandinavian countries – requires in our view a higher-level grouping of basic features of administrative systems, as countries in different administrative traditions seem, in the first place, to display characteristically different reform agendas and issues. The grouping and classification of national administrative systems according to different traditions, which can be done deductively or inductively, or through an iterative process combining both, can prove highly valuable for conducting comparative analysis. The ability to hold some variables constant and to highlight significant differences based on a rigorous classification of different traditions provides a key entry point to comparative analysis of a variety of phenomena, such as administrative reform and policy capacity. The contextualization of reform in each particular national historical setting requires inquiry into what came before to create the conditions in which a specific reform is being attempted. Again, clearer delineation of the precise character of different traditions and their unfolding as living systems of thought and practice will aid in understanding the appropriateness, effectiveness and overall impacts of different reforms in particular contexts. Rigorous application of the notion of administrative traditions thus calls for a fruitful combination of comparative analysis with historically contextualized reform narratives (Barzelay, 2001).

Besides the purpose of comparison between clusters of nations, we

would also consider the possibility that such a kind of clustering may be relevant to the study of policy transfer¹² in the field of public management. We would propose, with the status of a tentative proposition to be tested,¹³ that public management policies may be easier to interchange within countries belonging to the same administrative tradition than across traditions. This is not to argue about what drives policy transfer (a complex range of factors: a review is in Rose, 2001; see also Dolowitz and Marsh, 1996, 2000), but that the feasibility of the transfer is higher within the same tradition, owing to the similarities in the context. Thus, policy makers and policy entrepreneurs in the field of public management operating in these countries might benefit from enhanced knowledge about the dynamics of reforms in the other countries of the cluster.

Focusing on the case which is investigated in most depth in the book, i.e. Italy, and that represents the starting point of the broader comparative investigation, a number of further reasons may be put forward for studying public management reform in Italy. Italy is a case of 'politico-administrative context in motion': it has been characterized since the biennium 1991–92 by the radical and apparently endless transformation of the political system (with the disappearance of governing political parties and the displacement of much of the political class), a phenomenon that has probably no parallel in the Western European countries over the last two and a half decades (the period of 'global' public management reforms¹⁴). Thus Italy is a good case for investigating the effects of ongoing radical transformations of the politico-administrative system on public management reform. If we assume that politico-administrative change demands change in public management, then the first (empirical) question is whether there has been change in Italy, or whether reforms of the public sector have been purely superficial: in historical institutionalism terminology, the question is whether there has been change of a radical kind through disruption of the old equilibrium and transition to a new equilibrium, or whether path dependency has prevailed and there has been no or limited change, or else whether there has been change through accumulation of small changes. The answer we propose is mixed: there *has* been change, partly in the form of punctuated change occurring through disruption driven mainly by political turmoil (and articulated into two major reform cycles, in 1992–94 and 1996–99) and partly through accumulation, not so much in the simple version of linear addition of small changes leading to a more significant change (Pierson, 2004; Pierson and Skocpol, 2002), but in the more articulated way of certain mechanisms like layering and conversion (Streeck and Thelen, 2005) being at work in combined ways at different levels and in different parts of the public sector (this point is developed in Section 1.2 and in Chapters 2 and 5). The overall impacts of reforms seem

to point to some significant degree of (process and system) change in the public sector, but this change is patchy, both within each level of government and throughout the levels of government. However, the evaluative claim that radical political change has not led to equally radical administrative change (Kickert, 2009) holds, and a number of explanations can be provided about why this occurred: factors ranging from the consequences of too high and continued political instability to the effects of a harsh majoritarian system leading to reversals of reforms carried out by previous governments, to a wide range of characteristics of the institutional setting that seem to point to an unfavourable environment for sustained reforms. However, though broadly speaking the context is 'unfavourable' to NPM-inspired reforms, we also contend that the institutional setting, both in its history-rooted features and because of its dynamics during the period of observation, also contains rules and structures that generated opportunities that provided leverage for policy entrepreneurs active in public sector reform to effectively conduct reform interventions.

Before turning to the definition of the research questions addressed in this book, some elements are proposed for tentatively discussing a preliminary question about whether contemporary administrative systems in the five countries considered reflect a clearly identifiable common underlying tradition (why these five countries may be located, however problematically, in the same administrative tradition). This discussion could first be conducted in historical terms, that is, considering whether and to what extent the Napoleonic model penetrated the public sector of these countries; in other words, has the Napoleonic French model¹⁵ spread beyond its southern border in such a way and to such an extent that a set of countries has come to characterize a 'family of nations', in the sense of an administrative tradition? This point – a thorough discussion of which lies outside the scope of this book – is not unproblematic. A quick overview points to the following elements. First, there is a country – France – that provides the pattern. The question thus concerns whether and to what extent the other countries we include in the tradition may actually be ascribed to it. The public sector of Italy was to an important extent shaped according to the features of the Piedmont state (the *Stato Sabauda*, from the name of the ruling kings in Piedmont): under the leadership of Camillo Benso, the count of *Cavour*, the Piedmont state succeeded in the nineteenth century in unifying the various states that populated the Italian peninsula. The Piedmont state provided the pattern for the new Italian state (Sepe *et al.*, 2003). The Piedmont state, in turn, had been shaped by its conquest by the French army during the period of Napoleon Bonaparte, and its elites were deeply interconnected and profoundly influenced by the elites of the powerful bordering state (Piedmont, located in the North-West of Italy, borders France).

A partly similar story is that of Spain. The 1812 Spanish constitution was shaped by the French invasion; moreover, during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries there were profound interconnections between the Spanish and the French elites (Parrado-Diez, 2008).

Regarding Portugal, as argued by Corte-Real:

the French influence on the process of building up a new liberal and Constitutional State is a well established fact and is acknowledged by Portuguese constitutionalists and administrative law professors, such as Jorge Miranda (Miranda, 1996) and Freitas do Amaral (Amaral, 1996). . . . Following the liberal revolution (1820), in 1821 the King was forced to return from Brazil and (against his will) to swear to uphold the new Constitution (1822), which was inspired by the liberal ideals that French influences had introduced all over Europe. In the interpretation elaborated by Rebelo de Sousa (1999), a well known professor of law, 'with the 1820 Revolution, the framework principles of the Constitutional State reached Portugal, in a version that was French rather than English'. (Corte-Real, 2008)

However, over time, subsequent state reforms dissolved a number of institutions of the Napoleonic state in Portugal (like the figure of the prefect, which does not exist any more in Portugal, whilst it is still a key figure in the administrative landscape of the Italian state).

More problematic is characterizing Greece. The modern Greek state was established in 1830. According to Spanou:

The organization of the newly formed Greek state was conceived along the lines of the Napoleonic model. In terms of formal structures, this included (a) a system of administrative law, involving the strong distinctiveness between public and private sector; (b) a centralized administrative apparatus and a career civil service; and (c) a de-concentrated departmental administration under the authority of the prefect as the representative of the centre. Further, the central role of the state in integrating society and the emphasis on law, formality and uniformity typical of the Napoleonic tradition (Peters, this issue) have equally been part and parcel of the approach to state organization. [However] the formal structures introduced then experienced an uneven and fortuitous development, having to adjust to a different socio-political and cultural environment and they never really acquired the efficiency and prestige of the French prototype. (Spanou, 2008)

From the above picture, it emerges that there seem to be three sub-clusters of countries in the Napoleonic administrative tradition: France, the pattern and still now the purest embodiment; Italy and Spain, about which it may be debated whether regionalization especially as well as other transformations since the 1970s and the 1980s moved them away, but which all in all were originally shaped by the Napoleonic model and (as illustrated in Chapter 7) they are still profoundly characterized by this

tradition; and Greece and Portugal, about which it is to some extent problematic whether 'originally' they were shaped by this administrative model (though undoubtedly influential over the modern Greek and Portuguese states) as well as it being in some respects problematic as to what extent features of the Napoleonic tradition are still present. Overall, however, it seems sensible to treat the five countries as a cluster, and explore it through the conceptual lenses employed in other studies of the reform of the public sector in Western countries, thus contributing to the development of the comparative analysis of public management reform.

We can now formulate the research questions addressed by this book. The first research question is as follows: What explains the dynamics of public management reform in Italy? The question is broad in order to include both the formulation of the public management reform packages (the policy decisions in the public management policy domain) and the implementation, as well as more broadly the bottom-up transformations of public management. Addressing this question develops the preparatory work for addressing the second research question: what explains the dynamics of public management reform in the five countries in the Napoleonic administrative tradition: France, Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain?

The work then moves to more speculative terrains and discusses the question about what implications can be drawn more broadly for the comparative study of public management reform. We address this question in a research agenda-proposing fashion, by considering what suggestions can come to actual and potential research agendas in public management from the results of this comparative study.

On the same speculative terrain is grounded the fourth research question: what theoretical issues of public management/public administration can be discussed on the basis of the analysis of reforms in the Napoleonic states? The questions addressed concern, first, a set of issues about the Napoleonic administrative tradition: is a set of transformations from an original pattern of the Napoleonic administrative tradition detectable in the countries considered? What are these transformations? And what are current features of the countries in the Napoleonic administrative tradition? And, at a more speculative level, do contemporary administrative systems in the five countries considered reflect a clearly identifiable common underlying tradition (the Napoleonic tradition in its embodiment as of the 2000s)? A second set of questions concern the directions of reform, and the topic of the Neo-Weberian State as a model of reform for continental European countries: is the NWS the direction (omega) of reforms of Napoleonic states? And is it feasible, and desirable, for such countries to aim towards the NWS? And, particularly, are there aspects

of the public sector of such countries that are problematically compatible with the NWS? Is the overall model/paradigm consistent with the socio-political and politico-administrative context of these (potentially) recipient countries? And what does the analysis of public management reform in these countries tell us about the question as to whether the overall NWS model/paradigm is consistent with the EU multi-level governance framework?

1.2 THEORETICAL SOURCES AND METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

A fairly eclectic approach has been employed in resorting to theoretical perspectives for the explanation of the dynamics of public management reform in the countries examined. Major theoretical sources include, first of all, *historical institutionalism*: the very basic idea, which is quite simple (indeed ‘deceptively simple’:¹⁶ Peters, 1999, p. 63), is that institutions, once formed, shape the range of possibilities and have a continuing and largely determinate influence over the choices that will be made at all levels and phases of the policy cycle (a coherent statement of the approach was originally elaborated in Steinmo *et al.*, 1992; see also Pierson and Skocpol, 2002; Thelen, 1992, 2003; and Thelen and Steinmo, 1992). This is not to exclude the possibility of a course of evolution, but within a historical institutionalist perspective the range of possibilities for that development will have been constrained by the formative period of the institution (path dependency being another way of characterizing the concept: Krasner, 1984). Historical institutionalism is quite a natural approach to resort to in dealing with the demands of comparative public administration and the explanation of differentiated responses by different public systems to common global pressures;¹⁷ historical institutionalism also appears to be an obvious reference in the understanding of administrative traditions, in this case the Napoleonic administrative tradition. Within this framework, it has been argued, there are difficulties in explaining change other than of the kind usually referred to as ‘punctuated change’: in other (and quite simplistic) words, either a major external shock or the accumulation of significant pressures provides a ‘fracture’ in the existing set of institutions, or the possibilities of change, other than very limited and incremental, are scarce. Indeed, the case of Italy at the beginning of the 1990s seems to provide evidence of change through a major breakthrough. However, this is hardly the case for the other countries considered, as well as being problematic to apply to Italy over the entire period considered (1992–2008): since there seems to be evidence of change, also of the kind we would

assess as radical, in the countries considered, one approach for explaining it is resorting to other theoretical perspectives, and combining them with historical institutionalism for providing a more thorough explanation of public management reform in Italy and the other Napoleonic countries. Also within the perspective of historical institutionalism, however, Streeck and Thelen (2005) and Pierson (2004) provide two sets of conceptual tools for explaining change other than punctuated change. Streeck and Thelen identify a number of mechanisms through which gradual – but ‘real’ – change may occur: layering (layering is defined as ‘the creation of new policy or institution without eliminating the old’) and conversion (formal reform, replacement or elimination of an existing policy or institution) are the two mechanisms to which we have resorted in explaining trajectories of public management reform in Italy (Chapter 5; see also Ongaro, 2009a) and the other countries, combined with other social mechanisms like diffusion (Parrado-Diez, 2008). Other mechanisms include displacement (discovering and activating alternative institutional forms that did exist before, but were considered deviant), drift (gradual and sometimes unplanned adaptation of institutions) and exhaustion (the institution gradually loses its purpose and, though formally still in place, it ultimately breaks down). All such mechanisms have been applied in a combined way to the study of change in political institutions in Italy over the last decade (see the September 2007 special issue of *West European Politics* edited by Bull and Rhodes, and the editorial introduction in particular: Bull and Rhodes, 2007). The analysis of such mechanisms may provide the conceptual resources for explaining how change may occur even within path dependency, and not exclusively through a series of punctuated equilibria interrupted by abrupt radical change at critical points. In a partly similar vein, Pierson (2004) observed that the slow accumulation of small changes over time may lead to radical change even in the absence of strong external pressures: accumulation (the accumulation of a series of small changes can ultimately lead to a more profound type of change, such as has occurred in Greece in areas like the administration–citizens relation – Spanou and Sotiropoulos, 2009) and threshold (slow incremental change reaching a critical threshold beyond which radical change suddenly occurs) are mechanisms to resort to in explaining change even under conditions where path dependency is deemed to provide a decisive influence – and, as observed by Peters (1999, p. 65), historical institutionalism entails that a path must be followed, not that change is entirely absent: the formative period of the institution constrains the range of possibilities for development, but does not impede it *sic et simpliciter*.

The range of mechanisms employed in the analysis may be complemented by the broader analysis of *social mechanisms* (Hedstrom, 2005;

Hedstrom and Swedberg, 1998): the social mechanisms approach provides a range of conceptual tools for studying the causal texture of the unfolding of episodes of change, including for the purposes of the present book episodes of public management reform (Barzelay and Campbell, 2003; examples of applications of the social mechanisms approach to the study of public sector reform in Italy are Mele, 2007, 2008; and Ongaro, 2006a).

The social mechanisms approach is a recently revived theoretical perspective to the study of collective social phenomena; Elster (1989) and Stinchcombe (1991) interpret social mechanisms as the ‘building blocks’ of an advocated middle-range theorizing which, in their opinion, can provide an important contribution to revitalizing the study of social phenomena.¹⁸ Social mechanisms can be defined (Hedstrom and Swedberg, 1998) as unobserved analytical constructs that provide hypothetical links between observable events:

Assume that we have observed a systematic relationship between two entities, say I and O. In order to explain the relationship between them we search for a mechanism, M, which is such that on the occurrence of the cause or input, I, it generated the effect or outcome, O. The search for mechanisms means that we are not satisfied with merely establishing systematic covariation between variables or events; a satisfactory explanation requires that we are also able to specify the social ‘cogs and wheels’ (Elster, 1993, p. 3) that have brought the relationship into existence . . . a mechanism can be seen as a *systematic set of statements* that provide a *plausible account* of how I and O are linked to one another. (Hedstrom and Swedberg, 1998, p. 7, emphasis added)

In a similar way,¹⁹ and explicitly citing Hedstrom and Swedberg, McAdam *et al.* (2001) define social mechanisms as ‘delimited sorts of events that change relations among specified sets of elements in identical or closely similar ways over a variety of situations’. Social processes (McAdam *et al.*, 2001, p. 24) are regular sequences of such mechanisms that produce similar (generally more complex and contingent) transformations of those elements.²⁰ Concatenation of mechanisms is central in understanding change processes: “[M]echanisms seldom operate on their own. They typically concatenate with other mechanisms into broader social processes” (Gambetta, 1998, p. 105), and “[E]xplanations of most concrete social events or states require resort to several elementary mechanisms; one is not enough. Sometimes, these mechanisms counteract one another, and sometimes they work together” (Hedstrom and Swedberg, 1998, p. 21).

Social scientists make use of a number of well-known mechanisms.²¹ Among the most famous ones there is probably the mechanism of self-fulfilling prophecy;²² in the number of social mechanisms employed in the present work, there are actor certification and diffusion. Certification (McAdam *et al.*, 2001, p. 145) refers to the validation of actors, their

performance and their claims by external authorities;²³ presumptions about the behaviour of role occupants by influential authorities may affect the definition of what is 'appropriate behaviour' by actors in key positions for determining public management reform to occur; with an example illustrated in closer detail in Chapter 2, the dynamics of the two major policy cycles in the area of public management that occurred in Italy in the periods 1992–94 and 1996–99 were affected to an important extent by the way given behaviours by key officials in the public administration department and the economy ministry were 'certified' by the prime minister, the minister for public administration, and other authorities. The mechanism of diffusion²⁴ has been considered at different points for explaining the kind of change that occurred at the level of individual public sector organizations in Italy (see also Section 5.3) and Spain; the significant degree of change that occurred in Spain during the 1990s at the level of individual public sector organizations in the face of the substantive failure of the reforms at the macro-level may to an important degree be explained through the combined effects of the operating of the mechanisms of diffusion and layering (Parrado-Diez, 2008), as will be discussed in closer detail in Chapter 6.

Other social mechanisms have been employed at various points in the analysis of change processes: with regard to a specific but important reform like devolution in Italy, accounts about how such a process unfolded resort to the influence of the mechanisms of attribution of threat, brokerage, and appropriation of mobilizing structures for explaining change as well as the absence of change (Ongaro, 2006a). In this story, individual agency performed a central role in determining which social mechanisms were triggered in given situations. We would claim more generally that human agency is not an eliminable component in the explanation of the dynamics of administrative change, as it is of change and stability in society in general (Giddens, 1984, pp. xxii–xxiii). Whilst it is well beyond the aspirations of this book to revisit the sociological fundamentals of such an assumption, we will consider and explore the function performed by policy entrepreneurs (Kingdon, 1984 [1994]) and innovators in public sector organizations at all levels (intended *à la* Moore, 1995) in the unfolding of episodes of reform in public management. Policy entrepreneurs are defined (following Kingdon, 1994) as advocates who are willing to invest their resources – time, energy, reputation, money – to promote a position (a 'solution' for a given policy problem) in return for an anticipated future return, which may come in the form of policies of which they approve, the satisfaction from participation, or personal aggrandizement in the form of job security or career promotion; policy entrepreneurs can be in or out of government, in elected or appointed positions, in interest groups or

research organizations (on entrepreneurs in the public management policy domain, see Barzelay, 2001, Chapter 6).

In interpreting the behaviours of actors, following March (1988, 1999; see also Burke, 2002, Chapter 5 in particular), we will resort both to the perspective of the logic of consequentiality and to the perspective of the logic of appropriateness, assuming they more often combine rather than being alternative in explaining change processes in the public sector (Baez and Abolafia, 2002; Barzelay, 2003, Chapter 6; Ongaro, 2006a). The logic of consequence assumes that decision makers make choices among alternatives by evaluating their consequences in terms of prior preferences (March, 1999, pp. 14–15). As to the logic of appropriateness, it is a logic according to which (March, 1999, p. 44) ‘The actor is seen as a collection of identities that dictate appropriate action in particular situations. The problematics of choice are seen as lying in the definition of the salient identity and the classification of the situation’ (see also March and Olsen, 1989, 1994, 1996). Rules of action are derived from understandings of things, from self-conception and conception of society, and from images of proper behaviour. Fulfilling an identity through following appropriate rules involves matching a contingent set of rules to a contingent set of situations (and adapting identities, rules and capabilities to changing situations): ‘[An] appropriate action is one that fits the situation, given the agent’s evoked identity’ (Barzelay, 2003).

This work combines a more ‘conventional’ approach grounded in institutional analysis and based on interpreting the *explananda* intended mainly in terms of dependent variables to be explained by identifying the independent variables responsible for variation of the dependent variables, with the kind of processual analysis (grounded in the works of the sociologist Abbott – 1992a and 1992b) represented especially by the works produced in the American academic community of political scientists and based on the production of analytical narratives for the explanation of the outcomes of complex change processes mainly intended as explanatory propositions of a generalizing type (example of works whose analytical framework has been applied to public management include: Kingdon, 1984 [1994], and Baumgartner and Jones, 1993, as applied by Barzelay, 2001 and 2003, to the study of public management policy processes). We consider these two approaches to be complementary, not antithetic – though aware that this point is to some extent problematic; hopefully, this work may provide an illustration of the validity of this assumption about the complementarities of the two approaches.

A number of theoretical frameworks for the study of the policy cycle are employed and applied to the public management domain, both on policy formulation (Baumgartner and Jones, 1993; Kingdon, 1984 [1994])

and on policy implementation (Elmore, 1979, 1985; Hill and Hupe, 2002; Pressman and Wildavsky, 1973).

Last but not least, this work has been profoundly shaped by the Italian academic discipline of the *economia aziendale*, the Italian ‘equivalent’ of the management discipline, which assumes as the object of analysis the principles and the criteria that determine the functioning of the ‘units’ in which the economic activity takes place²⁵ (be it a business, a public entity, a not-for-profit organization or a family), and specifically the *economia delle aziende pubbliche* (the Italian public management discipline), which investigates the economic dimension of the individual institutions of the public sector and their economic relations (Borgonovi, 1984, pp. 21–22 in particular, drawing on Masini, 1979, pp. 10–13 and 18 in particular; more recently see Borgonovi *et al.*, 2008). In terms more familiar to an international audience, such an approach may be considered²⁶ as having deep conceptual interconnections and elements in common with the institutionalism in organizational sociology, where the absence of the label ‘new’ before ‘institutionalism’ refers to a much stronger continuity of the centrality of the concern with institutions and their features in the development of this research tradition over the twentieth century, as ‘opposed’ to the displacement of old institutionalism that occurred especially in political science in the Anglo-American world, where institutionalism was largely replaced over the 1960s and 1970s by a concern with individualistic assumptions – about the utility function or the socio-psychological characteristics of individuals (central respectively in rational choice theory and in behaviouralism; see Peters, 1999, Chapter 1 in particular). Maybe to a certain extent the relative insulation from global trends of this research tradition may have had an influence in determining such continuity, although it would be a caricatural depiction of the Italian university world to attribute to a form of insulation – a sort of ‘provincialism’ – this continuity, which has in our view its roots in the conscious adaptation, or at least ‘filtering’, of new theoretical perspectives on the basis of a consolidated research programme and tradition, a sort of ‘core set of assumptions’ *à la* Lakatos.²⁷ In this stream of literature, whose roots are in the writings of Gino Zappa (1927; Zappa *et al.*, 1949), public management is intimately connected to the general theory of management (business administration and management). It is this approach that significantly shaped the concern with focusing the level of the individual public sector organization(s) which permeates the book, and is particularly evident in the specific focus adopted in Section 4.2 centred on the analysis of change in individual public sector organizations. The distinction between the analysis of the public sector in its entirety – macro-level – and the analysis of change at the level of individual public sector organizations is widely employed in the study.

Regarding the methodological aspects of the work, the analysis at first focuses on the case of public management reform in Italy (about which the author of this book has the highest level of knowledge in the set of five countries considered), which is treated as an exploratory case for generating explanatory propositions about the dynamics of reforms. Public management reform in Italy over the period 1992–2008 (the period of observation) is at first analysed as a *comparable* case study (Ragin, 1987), which in the second part of the book becomes the starting point for the development of the *comparative* study of public management reform in France, Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain. What is analysed is experiences ('slices of history') located in time–space – though with slightly different periods of observation since both the starting and end points and the internal periodization of each country case is defined on the basis of the consideration of the politico-administrative dynamics inherent to the specific country case. The research design is a multiple case study,²⁸ which we denote as comparative, considering 'country' as the unit of analysis, each case being characterized by multiple sites: the cycles of reforms affecting the areas of public management in the given country.

A description of the overall trajectory of public management reform for each country is reported, starting with Italy and then expanding to the overall set of countries. By 'trajectory of public management reform' is intended the route from a given state of affairs in the status of public management systems (starting point) to an end point (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2004, pp. 65–66). Trajectories (and the broader scenarios they define, composed of the trajectory as well as the starting and end points) may be employed prospectively (the end point is a desired state of affairs in the future that someone is pursuing – usually a smaller or larger component of the political and administrative elite of a country) or retrospectively, to describe the actual route covered in the reform of public management systems of a country – which is what is done in this work. Concerning the contents and scope of the reform, the categorization employed is as follows: financial management trajectory (it includes the contents and process of budget formulation as well as the accounting systems); audit and performance measurement trajectory (the actors, forms and procedures of auditing public sector organizations; the contents of the information about performance of public sector organizations, and their use); personnel reform trajectory (the features of the civil service in terms of the distinctiveness of norms and rules regulating the civil service; the processes whereby civil servants are recruited, evaluated, promoted and rewarded; the procedures of appointment and removal and the decision powers of managers; the responsibility on personnel management and training); and trajectory in organization (encompassing both the overall macro-level

configuration of the public sector, in terms of degrees and modalities of specialization and the instruments and mechanisms of coordination, as well as in terms of the extent of vertical and horizontal decentralization, and the micro-level configuration of the organizational design at the level of individual public sector organizations²⁹).

The above categorization is a quite conventional one.³⁰ The main purpose for resorting to such a common, 'mainstream' approach in describing the trajectory of public management reform is that it may facilitate the development of cross-country comparative analysis, first of all within the cluster considered in this work, as well as potentially for comparisons with other clusters of countries, thus hopefully facilitating the utilization of the findings of this book in the generation and accumulation of knowledge in the field of public management.

Regarding the processes through which such trajectories unfolded, stylized narratives of some of the main episodes of reform are presented for Italy (or recalled, when such types of studies are available) and analysed.

As to the sources of empirical evidence, a combination of sources has been employed. Starting from the case of Italy, besides the systematic review of the English and the Italian literature on public management reform in Italy,³¹ the findings of a number of research projects on the reform of the public sector in Italy in which the author of this book has been engaged over the last decade provide an abundant harvest of empirical evidence together with the opportunity to elaborate on many of the conceptual lenses employed in the present study.³² Important empirical sources were provided by research works conducted by several teams at SDA Bocconi School of Management and Università Bocconi, including the reports of research projects conducted within the frame of three networks of SDA Bocconi with regional, provincial and municipal governments throughout Italy; the reports of the *Osservatorio sul Cambiamento delle Amministrazioni Pubbliche* (Observatory on Change in Public Administrations) of SDA Bocconi School of Management have also provided valuable evidence. The direct involvement (in my capacity of project coordinator or invited expert) in a number of institutions (including the public administration department of the Italian Presidency of the Council of Ministers and the observatory on administrative reform of the Lombardy regional government) at different times and during the unfolding of various reform processes has significantly contributed to the development of my knowledge of the functioning of the governmental system on which this book draws extensively. The continuous encounters with practitioners involved, in different capacities, in the process of public management reform in Italy allowed me to be exposed to the important

'test' of how models and hypotheses resonate with the experiences of those who have been directly involved in the reform process.

The part on Italy draws also on a number of previous publications in journals (Fedele and Ongaro, 2008a; Fedele *et al.*, 2007; Ongaro, 2004, 2006a, 2009a; Ongaro and Valotti, 2008) as well as edited books in the Italian language on different aspects of management reform in Italy (Bellini *et al.*, 2008; Ongaro, 2006b, 2008a; Ongaro and Valotti, 2002, 2005). The research work conducted for the publication of the Italian edition of the Pollitt and Bouckaert authoritative book *Public Management Reform: A Comparative Analysis* was the starting point of this endeavour.

Regarding the reconstruction of the trajectories in the other countries, and their analysis, it is based on extensive literature review as well as joint works with prominent scholars in the countries considered; such works produced, *inter alia*, the special issue of the *International Journal of Public Sector Management* on public management reform in Napoleonic countries (volume 21, issue 2, 2008). The symposium on administrative reform in Southern European countries in the journal *Public Administration* (edited by Walter Kickert, forthcoming) has provided important inputs. A research project on coordination in three policy sectors in France gave me the opportunity to do in-the-field investigation in one of the other countries considered.

1.3 PLAN OF THE BOOK

This section provides an overview of the book. Since the ultimate proof of the pudding is in the eating, I do not want to delay the meal much longer: thus, this overview is quite brief and intended to provide the reader with the *fil rouge* of the book. Part I of the book is devoted to explaining the dynamics of public management reform in Italy, the case which is explored in more depth and that provides the starting point of the comparative analysis. Chapter 2 illustrates the politico-administrative context in motion in Italy over the period of observation: since 1992, when the crisis of the political system started, till the beginning of 2008, when the fall of the second government of Romano Prodi, following the collapse of the centre-left coalition, occurred. The main episodes of reform are then schematically narrated, with a focus on the policy formulation phase, and an overview of the reform trajectory in Italy is reported.

Chapters 3 and 4 go into the details of the trajectory of reform, with a focus on the implementation of the reform process, thus providing a comprehensive account of the relatively under-investigated phenomenon of the dynamics of public management in Italy. Chapter 3 examines

the reforms in the main management systems: financial management; audit and performance measurement; personnel management. Chapter 4 focuses on the organization of the public sector at both the macro-level of the overall configuration of the public sector and the level of the organizational designs of individual public sector organizations. Macro-level analysis adopts two basic conceptual frameworks for ordering the empirical evidence: the *decentralization* framework (the extent and forms in which the trajectory is characterized by an increased, or decreased, level of decentralization of the public sector) and the *specialization and coordination* framework (the extent and forms in which the trajectory is characterized by an increased, or decreased, level of specialization, both in terms of number of tasks and in terms of policy functions – formulation, execution, monitoring, evaluation – and the set of instruments for coordination and their underlying mechanism, whether based on hierarchy-type mechanisms (HTM), market-type mechanisms (MTM) or network-type mechanisms (NTM) (Thompson *et al.*, 1991). The second part of Chapter 4 turns to the organizational designs at the level of individual public sector organizations and illustrates the trend towards increased variety of organizational solutions in the Italian public sector landscape.

Chapter 5 undertakes the task of providing candidate explanations of the dynamics of public sector reform in this country, thus addressing the first research question about explaining the dynamics of public management reform in Italy. First, the influence of politico-administrative factors on public management reform in Italy is illustrated. The analysis encompasses a range of factors: the political party system and its transformations over the 1990s and the 2000s, the characteristics of the civil service (the bureaucracy), the legal system and the influence of legalism, the broader societal setting and the influence of social capital. The cumulated effect of reforms is another aspect of central importance, and a model for interpreting it is elaborated and discussed (Section 5.3). The final part of the chapter turns to explain how episodes of reform unfolded, by combining the perspective of the logic of appropriateness with the perspective of the logic of consequences (March, 1999; March and Olsen, 1989) and investigates how rational actors operated within the evolving politico-administrative context of Italy and affected the course of the main episodes of public management reform.

In Part I, Italy is treated as a comparable case; in Part II the task of developing a comparative analysis of public management reform in all five countries is carried out. In Chapter 6, an overview of the trajectories of reform in the other countries in the Napoleonic administrative tradition is outlined. Trajectories regarding financial management, performance measurement and audit, the civil service, and organization are outlined.

After examining the broad traits of the trajectories in France, Greece, Portugal and Spain, the explanations provided in Chapter 5 for interpreting the dynamics of public management reform in Italy are revisited and tentative generalizations about the factors affecting public management reform in these countries proposed. It emerges that the conventions of governance, which are generally majoritarian in the five countries considered, with Italy representing the case most problematic to classify, do *not* explain the relatively limited amount of public management reform. A combination of factors encompassing the very conception and the traits of the civil service, including the system of *corps* and *grands corps*, the interconnection between political and administrative careers, legalism, and some characterizing traits of the civil society may provide crucial elements for the understanding of the dynamics of public management reform in the Napoleonic states. The related questions about the future paths of research that might ensue from this analysis are outlined, and six agendas of research in the field of public management that might benefit from the systematic inclusion of the Napoleonic countries are delineated.

Chapter 7 moves towards a more speculative terrain, by looking both backward and forward. On the one hand, it examines the legacy of history in shaping the administrative system, hence the available paths for reform, and by adopting the lenses of the notion of administrative tradition it discusses transformations and stability in the Napoleonic administrative tradition. On the other hand, it considers the direction of reforms, and particularly the issue of whether a model of reform, both in a descriptive/interpretive and in a normative form, is emerging for the five countries considered; the discussion of the fascinating idea of the Neo-Weberian State (NWS) proposed by Christopher Pollitt and Geert Bouckaert as a possible interpretation of the trajectories of reform of continental European countries is developed alongside considerations about whether the NWS is alternative or complementary – or whatever else – to the New Public Management and the New Public Governance intended as ‘global’ models of reform. The NWS is discussed also within the framework of the EU multi-level governance, which in our view represents a major challenge to the way we must think of the Neo-Weberian State.

NOTES

1. We confine this brief overview to the Western world – though the administrative tradition notion (Painter and Peters, 2009) employed in this book is a well-suited conceptual instrument for going beyond such a limitation.
2. We can mention just a few of the most famous studies of such a huge – and fast-growing – body of literature: Aucoin (1995); Boston *et al.* (1996); Campbell and Hallighan

- (1992); Savoie (1994); Schick (1996); and Zifcak (1994); this list is obviously nothing more than a clue to the width of this body of literature.
3. Studies include, *inter alia*, Christensen and Lægveid (2001, 2007); Kickert (1997a, 1997b); Pierre and Peters (2000); and Premfors (1991, 1998) – again, just a clue to a vast body of literature.
 4. It may be questioned why: answers might be searched for in the presence of linguistic barriers in countries where English is spoken to a more limited extent as a second language, in the relative closeness of academic communities of public administration and public management, which may be relatively less ‘globalized’ than others, in the very interest elicited by one country or another as an intrinsic case (it may be noted that an Anglophone country like Ireland is much less studied than the NPM countries) and/or as an analytical case – the argument being that ‘more change’ occurred in NPM countries, less in other countries, and that thus the former are in a sense more interesting to study, though, as we shall see, this assertion holds only to a certain extent since change in public management did occur also in other countries.
 5. We adopt a quite conventional definition of these key concepts in the vocabulary of public management and reform (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2004, pp. 106–107).
 6. Pierre (1995) conceives of the public administration as the key output linkage of the state towards civil society. Metcalfe and Richards (1987) put emphasis on public management as managing through (networks of) organizations.
 7. Such a claim has an evaluative nature that requires qualifications: according to what criteria, what empirical bases and what interpretive lenses the assessment is made (see also Barzelay, 2001, Chapter 4, on standards of argumentation in public management). This task is executed throughout the book; as an illustration, to consider one example, the transformations that could be observed in the area of the administration–citizen relationship, particularly in Greece, Italy and Portugal, seem to have in many respects modified the position of the citizens intended as *administrés* (subjects, in a position of subordinates in the face of the state as the expression of the public interest) into ‘normal’ citizens (by Anglo-American or North European standards). In Greece reforms have ‘endowed citizens with procedural rights to contest and hold the public administration accountable (e.g. access to documents, justification of administrative acts, deadlines for response by public services, protection of personal data, rights to appeal etc.). Independent authorities (such as the Ombudsman or the Independent Authority for the Protection of Personal data, mentioned above) took the task of safeguarding these rights. Again, even though citizens may remain uninformed about their rights, and bureaucratic delays hamper the effectiveness of the intervention of independent authorities, the legal and institutional armoury available to the Greek citizen today in his or her contacts with the state is without precedent in modern Greek history’ (Spanou and Sotiropoulos, 2009). Similar stories can be found in Portugal (Corte-Real, 2008) and Italy (Chapter 3). This transformation from *administré* into citizen may be partly rhetorical, but at least to some extent may be deemed to have been beneficial: in this sense, it has been ‘modernization’ of the public sector.
 8. ‘Common traits’ refer to the administrative system of the countries considered. Countries sharing such traits might also have a number of other features in common – cultural, linguistic, societal at large, as well as the political institutions – but this is not necessarily the case, and it is however a topic outside the scope of this study.
 9. Including, it may be noted, Portugal (!).
 10. Intended as a set of doctrines about the organization of the public sector (Barzelay, 2000).
 11. The name of the Public Management (PUMA) unit of OECD has changed – but that was the name during the 1990s when it undoubtedly contributed to spreading NPM doctrines not just in OECD countries, but worldwide.
 12. Policy transfer may be defined as ‘the conscious adoption of a public policy from another jurisdiction’ (Dolowitz and Marsh, 1996).
 13. A task outside the scope of this book.

14. Some parallels may possibly be drawn with the aftermath of the transitions to democracy in three other Napoleonic countries, Greece, Portugal and Spain, which occurred in the decade before the period of 'global' public management reform.
15. Including its elements of continuity with the previous *ancien régime*.
16. We fully agree with Guy Peters (1999, p. 63) that put in this way the concept of historical institutionalism is deceptively simple. First of all, it is difficult to separate this version of institutionalism from the others. Second, and concerning more directly the substance of this theoretical perspective, the influence of institutions on policy processes and outcomes must be distinguished from the results of 'normal' incremental patterns of policy making that can be found in most industrialized democracies (Steinmo *et al.*, 1992). Third, 'institutions' could and should be intended in a broad way, encompassing the role that ideas can play in shaping policy processes (Hall, 1992).
17. Limitations to this simple conception of historical institutionalism and the necessity for much deeper conceptual sophistications apply: Peters, 1999, Chapter 4.
18. This approach has strong roots in sociology, as illustrated by Boudon (1991), revisiting the work of Merton, who originally defined social mechanisms as 'social processes having designated consequences for designated parts of the social structure' and argued that the main task of sociology was to identify mechanisms and establish under what conditions they 'come into being' 'fail to operate' and so on (Merton, 1968, pp. 43–44).
19. Stinchcombe (1991) sheds further light on the point by arguing that mechanisms are 'bits of theory about entities at a different level (e.g. individuals) than the main entities being theorised about (e.g. groups) which serve to make the higher-level theory more supple, more accurate, or more general'. An alternative, complementary definition is that of Schelling (1998, p. 32): 'a social mechanism is a plausible hypothesis, or set of plausible hypotheses, that could be the explanation of some social phenomenon; the explanation begins in terms of interactions between individuals, or between individuals and some social aggregate'.
20. In (neo-)institutionalist approaches, social mechanisms and their concatenation are interpreted as affected by the institutional context: institutions affect the triggering or inhibiting of social mechanisms, thus influencing the concatenations of social mechanisms at work, which provide part of the explanation of differences in trajectory and outcome of the type of social processes under investigation.
21. Though, unfortunately, a catalogue of social mechanisms does not exist yet, even if it would be most probably welcomed, as claimed by Gambetta (1998, p. 103).
22. The basic idea of the self-fulfilling prophecy (we follow Hedstrom and Swedberg, 1998, elaborating on Merton, 1948) is that an initially false definition of a situation evokes behaviours that eventually make the false conception come true. The key example that Merton uses to illustrate his argument is a run on a bank. If a rumour of insolvency somehow gets started, some depositors will withdraw their savings. Their withdrawal will strengthen the belief in the rumour, partly because the withdrawal may actually hurt the financial standing of the bank, but more importantly because the act of withdrawal in itself signals to others that something indeed might be wrong with the bank. This produces even more withdrawals, which further reduces the trust in the bank, and so on.
23. McAdam *et al.* (2001) employ diffusely the mechanism of actor certification in explaining the dynamics of contentious politics.
24. Diffusion (see Parrado-Diez, 2008, p. 232) 'operates through mechanisms of *benchmarking*, learning, knowledge transfer and the like. It causes that particular institutions take the shape and practices of other organisations of the same environment. According to Bezes and Lodge (2006: 28), "those processes arise because of resource-dependence, legitimacy-seeking mimicry or professional consensus reasons"'.
25. And allow the achievement of the economic ends, which in turn are instrumental to the ultimate institutional ends (in public sector organizations, or in families, or in not-for-profit organizations) or may be part and parcel of the institutional ends (in businesses, organizations oriented to the creation of economic value).

26. All the limitations to any attempts at interpreting in a few words the interconnections between such wide research traditions apply.
27. A recent recognition of this stream of research has come in 2008 from the decision of the Public and Non-Profit Division of the Academy of Management (AoM) to establish the 'Carlo Masini Award' for the best innovative paper in the field of public management and management of not-for-profit organizations. Carlo Masini was one of the founders of the Italian school of public management: in the scientific profile of the scholar, on which the decision of the board of the Public and Non-Profit Division of the Academy of Management was based, we can read this summary presentation of the Italian school of management: 'This approach is based on the following assumptions: (i) that society is organized in different institutions: family, government, the firms as well as the Not For Profit sector; (ii) that each institution contributes to the general goal of society's progress in different ways in which historical, cultural, religious, socio-psychological, ethical, legal, technical and economic aspects interact and are blended; (iii) lastly that this common goal is achieved through intermediate goals as companies develop wealth and distribute it to the various stakeholders. At the same time the family and government (through the public administration) satisfy private and collective needs, saving part of this accumulated wealth, using it for private and public investments that in turn speed up economic growth as a condition of human, social and civil progress. . . . Unfortunately, when Carlo Masini's thought and publications were developed, Italy was a "closed economic system". Before the Second World War, because of the fascist regime and after the Second World War as Italy was focused in the social, political and economic recovery progress. Also because English was not so diffuse in Italy, Carlo Masini's theories could not be spread abroad even if some of his scientific paradigms were ahead of their time: stakeholders, the system approach and the idea of long term economic viability for example.'
28. A small-N analysis, i.e. a systematic comparison of a limited number of cases – King *et al.*, 1994 – employed for the construction of analytic generalizations (Yin, 1994).
29. In the Italian school of management the operations of an organization, and hence the management systems it employs, are usually classified in a partly different way: it is distinguished between operations of measurement operations of management and operations of organization (Airoldi *et al.*, 1994, p. 82).
30. It should be noted that some cross-cutting elements of public sector reform in many countries, like 'administrative simplification' or the development of e-government, are not directly addressed.
31. It may be noted that the literature review is not reported as a separate section but distributed in the text where relevant.
32. The list includes, *inter alia*, the following research projects (in brackets the function performed in the project and the period when the research work was executed):
 - An analysis of the models of coordination in three policy sectors of the Italian government (innovation and research; environment; immigration) (role: project leader; year: 2008)
 - An analysis of the models of specialization and coordination in the Italian central government: a static comparative analysis (within the COBRA international research network) (project leader, 2006–07)
 - An analysis of the Italian system of Non-Departmental Public Bodies (within the COBRA research network) (project leader, 2006–07)
 - The development of models of analysis of the international relations of the institutional, economic and socio-cultural Italian regional systems (project leader, 2006)
 - Reforming the public sector through the 'agency model': an organizational analysis of ten Italian public sector executive agencies (project leader, 2005)
 - Logics and tools for improving accountability (and effectiveness) in the public sector (project team member, 2005)
 - Evaluating the impact of devolution: an end users' perspective (project leader, 2004)

- Public-private partnership for the territorial development of the Lombardy region (project leader, 2004)
- A comparative analysis of devolution in Italy, Spain and the UK (project leader, 2004)
- An organizational analysis of the impact of devolution in the Lombardy region (project leader, 2003)
- Accountability in the public sector: notions and the effects of contemporary public management reforms (project team member, 2002)
- An analysis of management issues in devolution processes (project leader, 2000-02)
- The internationalization of regional and local governments: a strategic management framework of analysis (project leader, 2000-02)
- 'Best practices' in management control systems in Italian local and central governments (project team member, 2000-01)
- Concepts and tools for process re-engineering and management in the public sector (project team member, 1999-2002).