

Special issue of journal 'Public Administration'

Distinctiveness of Administrative Reform in Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain.

Introduction

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1. Introduction

Southern Europe

In comparative studies of government and administration South European countries are underrepresented. International publications on politics, government, administration in Italy do exist in relatively large numbers, on Spain the numbers get smaller, and on Portugal and Greece such publications are almost nonexistent. Quite understandably Spain, Portugal and Greece during their dictatorships only played a marginal role in democratic Western Europe. After the dictatorships disappeared and after the transition to democracy, the interest of the international political and administrative science community has grown, but mainly in special topics like the transition to democracy, the integration into the European Union, and special policy areas. International publications about state, government and administration remain rare, even in the field of comparative politics and government, let alone in the scientific community interested in administrative and public management reforms.

The journal *Public Administration* has an explicit policy to stimulate publications from Southern Europe. Hence the invitation to native political and administrative scholars of the four countries to contribute to a special issue on Southern Europe and inform the journal's audience of the distinctive characteristics of reform in the respective countries.

Reform more than public management

In comparative studies of administrative reform much attention is paid to public management reform. Public management reforms are supposed to be a relative success in Anglo-Saxon countries, more pragmatic results are to be found in Scandinavian countries, and public management reforms are usually considered to be a relative failure in Southern Europe. Such a 'new public management'-stance is short-sighted. If one concentrates on Southern Europe, the study of reform should not be restricted to public management reform only, but be broadened up to state, administrative, civil service and otherwise public sector reforms, including amongst others also public management reform. In Spain and Italy regional decentralization was considered a much more important reform than public management. After the death of Franco the new democratic constitution of 1978 provided for regional autonomy by creating seventeen 'autonomous communities'. In Italy after the massive popular and political turmoil in the beginning of the 1990s (corruption scandals) regional decentralisation became a major political reform issue. And the transition to democracy in Portugal, Greece and Spain was of course much more important than administrative, let alone managerial, modernisation.

In this special issue on administrative reform in Southern Europe, the authors are asked not to restrict themselves to public management, but to broaden their perspective to include other sorts of reform as well.

West-East and North-South

In comparative studies of politics and administration two common cleavages are those between the Anglo-Saxon states and the continental European states (West-East), and between Northern Europe and Southern Europe (North-South). Northern Europe, particularly the Scandinavian group of countries, is often portrayed as large, well-run welfare states, where levels of public trust are high. South European states, by contrast, are stereotyped as bureaucratically inefficient with highly politicized administrations. Even though Spain and Italy have achieved substantial regional decentralization, Southern states are seen as operating in a more centralized way than the decentralized Scandinavian ones, and as being highly legalistic rather than managerial. This state tradition is said to be reinforced by a more hierarchical (high power distance) and individualistic culture in the South, in contrast with the strongly egalitarian and collective culture in the Scandinavian countries.

This special issue will go beyond such stereotypes on Southern Europe. The authors were asked to systematically explain the distinctive characteristics of the national reforms in their country in a socio-cultural and politico-economical context, and in the context of state, politics and administration.

2. Common framework of country-papers

The two main questions that are addressed by each of the authors in their respective country-papers are:

- what are the distinctive characteristics of the national reforms;
- what are the explanations for the distinctive characteristics of the reforms.

Description of reforms

An important objective of this special issue is to inform the international audience of the journal, which might have some idea of what is happening in Italy, and maybe also in Spain, but is probably hardly informed about Portugal and Greece. The objective is not to elaborate on e.g. the transition to democracy in the past, but to concentrate on recent, current reforms. The objective is to concentrate on country-specificness and distinctiveness. An empirical description of the actual reforms at the level of national administration, will be a main component of the country-papers. Informing a foreign audience about what reforms are happening.

Nonetheless international comparative analysis of the reforms also is an important objective of this special issue. The authors were therefore asked to apply the following common framework in the description of the national reforms.

Administrative reforms

Review of the reforms

- review of national reforms. National specificness and distinctiveness.

Decision-making on reforms

- who are the reformers.
- Administrative elite. Top-officials. Resistance from lower ranks.
- political elite. role of party ideology. role of clientelism.
- role of consultants, experts, academics, think tanks

Management of reform process

- plans and proposals. Content, form. Symbolic, rhetoric. Fiction and facts
- implementation process. Initiators. Supporters. Resistance. Sabotage.

- results. Evidenced facts. Evaluations.

Pressures for reform

- events, disaster, scandals. Corruption scandals.
- public pressure. Protest, demonstrations, riots. Public opinion.

Comparative analysis and explanation of reforms

The country-papers will not be merely descriptive but also mainly explanatory. The explanatory part of the country-papers will also concentrate on country-specific explanations, on informing the international audience of the journal. However, the explanatory analysis of the country-specific reforms also explicitly aims at a comparative analysis. Not just four different descriptive ‘stories’ on four countries. The authors were therefore asked to apply a common framework. Although many explanatory factors will inevitably be country-specific, a main objective of such a common framework is to find out whether there are common characteristics of Southern administrations that explain for the reforms. Whether Southern countries do have certain characteristics in common, and whether these might have explanatory force.

On first sight one would tend to think of common features like the Napoleonic state tradition (Ongaro, 2008), legalism, formalism and juridification of the state (Capano, 2003), or the politicisation of administration (Sotiropoulos, 2006). However, focussing on just these few common dimensions runs the risk to reinforce the alleged stereotypes about Southern European states and administrations. We have therefore used the following broader common framework, based on the usual ‘comparative politics’ sort of categories: historical, social, economical, cultural context; types of political system; types of government and administration; types of politics-administration relations.

History, context, politics, administration

Context

- Historical. Early state formation. Conservatives versus Liberals. Role of military. Religion.
- Socio-economical. ‘Southern’ model of welfare state (Ferrera, 1996).
- Socio-cultural. Civic society, trust, collectivism-individualism. Hofstede (2001) dimensions of culture.

State, government and politics

- dictatorship, transition to democracy, consolidation of democracy
- type of state. Napoleonic model. Constitution. central-decentral-federal. (De)centralisation.
- government. Cabinets, prime-ministers. Heads of state. Role presidents.
- types of political system. Parliament, parties. Majoritarian-consensual. Pluralism-corporatism. ‘Southern’ model of politics.
- clientelism, patronage, politicisation

Administration

- type of bureaucracy. Napoleonic model. Hierarchical, centralised. Legalism and formalism.
- type of bureaucrats. Recruitment, career, professional organisations, elites. Politicisation.
- politics-bureaucracy relations. Political control of bureaucracy. Or vice versa.
- administrative organisation. Hierarchical, central. Independent agencies. NGO.

Of course it will be impossible for all the authors to elaborate all the aspects of this broad common framework – albeit for size limits – and some aspects might have little or no relevance in a specific country, its common use will allow for comparative analysis. For a major objective of this special issue is to find out whether there are common characteristics of Southern states and administrations that might explain for the reforms.

So let us first have a look at the question whether Southern countries do have certain characteristics in common. Some presume (Castels, 1995; Ferrera, 1996; Rhodes, 1997) the welfare states of Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain have common traits. Some presume their political democratic systems have common traits (Pridham, 1984; Hopkin, 2001). And others (Sotiropoulos, 2004) presume that their bureaucracies might also have some common traits.

3. Southern model of welfare state

Models of welfare state

Are Southern European welfare states in principle similar to other European welfare states, not distinct from the European model, the only difference being that they are lagging behind the Western European states because they are poorer? Or is there a distinct Southern European model of welfare state (Castles, 1995; Ferrera, 1996; Rhodes, 1997)?

In Western European countries welfare states were constructed and expanded, especially in the three decades after the second world war. Welfare state models are usually divided into either the Bismarck model – social insurance for income maintenance or assistance – or the Beveridge model – universalistic, solidarity based model, tax paid, including social assistance to prevent poverty. Esping-Andersen (1990) introduced another three-partition of (ideal type) welfare state models, the Scandinavian social-democratic, the German conservative corporatist, and the Anglo-American liberal residualist one.

Ferrera (1996) argued that the welfare states of Italy, Spain, Portugal and Greece had some traits in common, thus identifying a Southern model of welfare state with the following traits:

- a fragmented corporatist system of income maintenance.
- a polarized system which is in some respects generous (pensions, civil servants) but also contains major gaps (no unemployment assistance, no minimum incomes).
- a non-corporatist universalistic national health system.
- a low degree of state penetration, leading to a public-private mix.
- high degree of clientelism, patronage and dominance of political parties.
- ideological polarisation, in particular the presence of a maximalist and divided Left.

The post-war (1950-1970) expansion of Western welfare states had resulted in three main accomplishments:

- First the policy of full employment with jobs for all (men).
- Secondly the social insurance of workers against risks such as sickness, invalidity, unemployment, and old age.
- Thirdly the social assistance to prevent poverty of those without sources of support.

According to Ferrera (2005) Southern Europe has indeed also tried to accomplish these Western results, but is lagging behind Western Europe. In Southern Europe, however, besides a regular formal economy, the irregular ‘grey’ economy, and particularly the underground ‘black’ economy plays a major role. In the South social insurance only exists only for the formal regular part of the economy. The rest is virtually excluded.

Features of Southern model

In the South welfare predominantly consists of social insurance for old age – with pension systems far outreaching Western Europe – and for particular occupational groups – especially civil servants are relatively well-treated. On the other hand universalistic national health systems, following the British model, have been established in the South – although private health care is still better although more expensive.

A particularly remarkable distinct trait of the South is the almost total absence of the third aspect of Western welfare states, a social assistance system against poverty. There is no social safety net for long-term unemployed, for newcomers on the labour market, for workers in the black economy, and newly, for immigrants. In the South there is large scale poverty, with family assistance as the main shock absorber. According to Ferrera (2005) the main explanatory factors for this remarkable lack of social assistance, besides the fact that Southern countries are poorer and therefore lag behind, are the role of the family, the irregular and underground economy, and the low administrative capacities of the state.

In the South the role of the family is much more important than in North-Western Europe (Martin, 1997; Guerrero and Naldini, 1997). The family takes care of child care, unemployment assistance, the care for elderly and disabled, and housing. Cohabitation of two or three generations is significant. That is a major shock absorber for the lack of social insurance and assistance. Most of this family support is carried out by unpaid female work. In the South female employment in regular sectors of the economy is much lower, and so is the fertility rate. Martin (1997) distinguished gender-related types of welfare states. In the 'male breadwinner' model women's rights are derived from the husband rights, the wife's task is the household. In the French 'parental' model rights and benefits are concentrated on children. Women are parents and workers. In the Swedish 'two breadwinner' model equality exists between men and women.

In the South the 'grey' and 'black' economy is much more important than elsewhere in Europe. Estimates are that together they account for 15 to 30% of GDP. Many low paid jobs are provided in sectors like season work in agriculture, the building sector and retail. Typical for the South is the strict division between the formal regular labour market and the grey and black sector. These kind of jobs are typically for women and young people, both categories that are excluded from welfare assistance. The only welfare that workers in the grey and black sector can count on is the national health system and the pension system.

In the South the administrative capacities of the state, especially the street-level executive state agencies, is low. Local welfare offices have a low degree of institutional autonomy, have low effectiveness and efficiency, and a low level of professionalisation. The administration is hardly able to professionally determine the objective levels of need for assistance and means of benefit. Moreover there is the danger that local street-level officers cannot avoid political welfare patronage.

Welfare reforms

Ferrera (2005) pointed out that since the mid 1990s major attention has been given to reform of the welfare arrangements in the South, mainly due to the policy priority that the EU has given to poverty and social exclusion. Southern countries have more or less followed the French example, which in 1988 introduced the 'Revenue Minimum d'Insertion', a kind of welfare safety net. The asymmetry between generous social insurance for historically privileged groups on the one hand, and the lack of social assistance for the poor and unemployed on the other, is gradually restored. A minimum income is introduced as are other forms of safety nets against poverty. But according to Rhodes (1997) the prospects for welfare reform are hindered by the multitude of vested interests, political clientelism and patronage, political polarisation, administrative inefficiency, and the general public distrust of the state. The economic and budgetary crisis of the 1990s also seriously hampered the reforms of welfare systems. The main pressure for reform is still to be expected from the EU. Brussels was, is and remains the main source of financial support for the Southern welfare reforms.

4. Economies in Southern Europe

A number of common traits of the Mediterranean countries (Italy, Spain, Greece and Portugal) have historically marked their types of economy (Gibson, 2001; Malefakis, 1995):

- The Mediterranean climate (heat and water) led to a wider variety of crops, especially more luxury crops, which were labour intensive to grow and harvest, and therefore hindered agricultural modernisation. Irrigation was important.
- The mountainous topography led to regionalism, and the difference between fertile plains and the highlands.
- The peninsulas had a long coast line, which stimulated intensive maritime activity. The supremacy on the seas was however lost in the 17th century to the Dutch, British and French.
- The lack of iron and coal hindered the process of industrialisation. Mining in the South is predominantly of non-ferrous materials.

State assisted capitalism

According to Sotiropoulos (2004) states in Southern Europe have 'assisted' the development of capitalism much more than in Northern and Western Europe. In Italy, Spain and Portugal the state has traditionally promoted economic and industrial development through patronage, public ownership, protectionism, autarky and subsidies. In the 19th century Southern states were highly active in promoting new industries like textile, steel, shipbuilding, electricity etc. Large landowners, bankers, industrialists and ship-owners were supported by the state (Italy and Spain were ahead of Portugal and Greece in terms of industrialisation). Sotiropoulos (2004) remarked that this 'assisted capitalism' of Southern Europe differed from developing countries, where economic development largely depended on foreign investments. In Southern Europe foreign investment was often excluded by protectionism and autarky. In Western Europe the state more briefly and less deeply assisted the development of a more open and competitive capitalism.

In the 20th century Italy under Mussolini, Spain under Franco, and Portugal under Salazar developed their forms of state corporatism, that is, strong central state control of the entire economy through close cooperation between the state and capitalists. By its authoritarian nature and in excluding Labour, it markedly differed from the democratic type of (neo)corporatism that emerged in other West European countries.

After the Second World War states in Western Europe became more active in the development of the welfare state. Central government planning of the economy became normal in post-war Western welfare states. In Spain the 'Opus Dei' technocrats in the 1960s followed that Western government planning example in opening up the until then highly regulated, protected and autarkic Spanish economy to the Western world market. The Spanish economic development plans led to an enormous growth rate in the 1960s. The difference with the West was that the Spanish economy was underdeveloped and backward, so that the 'economic miracle' probably was the inevitable spurt that industrialisation brings to a backward economy (Carr, 1980). Industrialisation in Italy, Spain and Portugal only took a spurt in the 1960s. Italy also enjoyed an economic miracle in the 1960s.

Economic changes

In the 1950s the economies in the South were still characterised by low per capita income, technological backwardness, high employment in an inefficient primary sector (agriculture), many unskilled workers, and small scale firms. Exports mainly consisted of raw materials (fruits and vegetables). Imports were high value-added manufactured goods. Their economies were semi-peripheral to the core of North-western Europe. Within countries there were strong

regional economic differences, such as between Northern and Southern Italy, Catalonia and Basque country compared to the South of Spain, Athens and Thessaloniki and the rest of Greece, and Lisbon and Oporto and the rest of Portugal (Williams, 1984).

Since then the economies have grown at a higher growth rate than the European average. As mentioned before the 1960s witnessed an economic boom in Italy, Spain and Portugal. Tourism formed a major boost. Foreign investment, industrialisation in combination with low labour costs as well.

The oil crisis of 1973-74 and 1979-80 and subsequent economic crisis particularly had a major impact on the small and open economies. For the small countries cooperation with the European Community became economically vital (Gibson, 2001).

The (quite different forms of) transition to democracy in Portugal, Spain and Greece occurred in a period of economic recession. Moreover the initial response of Portugal and Greece after the dictatorship were economically harmful. Portugal after 1974 moved in the direction of a socialist economy with major nationalisations of banking and industry, which deepened the economic crisis. The IMF loan forced Portugal to reconsider its Marxism. The political left in Greece after 1974 also initially expressed a hard-line Socialist, anti-American and anti-European stance. Once in power the Greek socialists had to nuance their stance.

In the second half of the 1980s Spain and Portugal became full members of the Economic Community. Greece liberalised its trade within the community. Although the danger was that the weak economies would not stand to the single European market, especially Spain managed to catch up with the western economies. Portugal and Greece still lag behind (Gibson, 2001).

Economy and democracy

An improvement of economic standards has a favourable effect on the development and consolidation of democracy. A rise of the educational level, the opening up to the Western world, the rise of the middle class, are factors that favour democracy (Maravall, 1997).

5. Culture and Civic Society

The commonly assumed fact is that Southern countries have much stronger individualistic norms and values than collectivistic, and especially so in Italy. The level of collectivism in Italy supposedly is almost zero (which makes the study of Putnam (1993), who distinguished levels of collectivism in Italian regions, so curious). The Italian individual citizen only cares for his family, has hardly any collective value or civic culture, and despises the state (Clark, 1990; Ginsbourg, 1990; Smith, 1997).

That 'communis opinio' is however hard to substantiate and measure empirically. Socio-cultural studies of individualisation of Western societies measure values about family, church, work, politics, state, etc. (Ester at al, 1994). The overall picture is one of growing individualisation and erosion of collective values in Western Europe (following in the footsteps of the United States). A North-South division is less clear, not even on variables like confidence in democratic and authoritative institutions, nor on the variable of cultural individualism (respect for authority, willingness to follow instructions). In his review of political and civic culture in Southern Europe, based on the European Commission's Eurobarometer, Magone (2003) shows that satisfaction, confidence and trust in politics differ between the four countries, and do not consistently rank lower than the European average. Hofstede's (1993) international comparative culture study on power distance, uncertainty avoidance and collectivism-individualism was about organisational culture (not on societal civic culture). On power distance (between boss and subordinate) and uncertainty avoidance

there was a clear North-South division, on collectivism-individualism less clear so. Hofstede's variables differ from the socio-cultural variables and ranking orders.

Other empirical indicators provide no clear picture either. Citizens' trust in civil service and in government shows no clear North-South division, although the alleged stereotype is that public bureaucracy in the South is loathed for its rigidity, inefficiency, corruption, and that government and politics are despised. Operational empirical measurements apparently do not validate the 'common sense'.

Nevertheless the low level of collectivism and civic culture, the aversion against the state (which turned into conservative political apathy of the population during the dictatorships in Portugal and Spain), the low esteem for bureaucracy, the low status of civil servants (despite powerful administrative elites in Spain), the distrust of government and politics (see e.g. the massive corruption scandals in Italy and Spain in the early 1990s) etc, are commonly considered by native authors (Subirats, Alba, Cassese, Spanou, etc) to be underlying fundamental socio-cultural explanations for the relative dysfunctioning of public administration in Southern countries. They also explain for the relative failure of administrative reforms there in the past and today.

6. Southern model of democracy

In studying the regime transitions from authoritarianism to democracy in Spain, Greece and Portugal, Pridham (1984) wondered whether from an international comparative perspective one could distinguish a 'Mediterranean model' of liberal democracy. Southern European countries were underrepresented in comparative studies. In the past because of their dictatorships. But it could be argued that the distinctiveness of e.g. Spain and Portugal might go back beyond these countries' experiences with dictatorships. A comparative analysis of Southern Europe might shed light on concepts like corporatism, clientelism and authoritarianism, but also on features like democratic instability, governance of 'backward' economies, inefficiency of bureaucracy, etc.

The four Southern European countries Italy, Spain, Portugal and Greece have a number of cultural, social, economic and historical characteristics in common, and their political systems are often seen as similar. Using his comparative model for analysing majoritarian and consensus-democracies (Lijphart, 1984) Lijphart empirically tested this hypothesis (Lijphart et al, 1988). The comparison of the Italian, Spanish, Portuguese and Greek democratic regimes with the world's other democracies in terms of majoritarian and consensus models, led him to the conclusion that they do not form a distinctive and coherent cluster.

7. Distinctive characteristics of Southern administrations

Formalism and legalism: Historical roots

The predominant legalism in Southern administrations has its roots in the Napoleonic model. The Mediterranean countries Italy, Spain and Portugal have founded their states on the French model, that is the Napoleonic model (Wright, 1990; Wunder, 1995; Ongaro, 2008): The nation state is united and the state serves the general interest; The administration is centralised, hierarchical, uniform, accountable and controlled; The administration consists of highly trained and qualified civil servants, who are organised in professional 'corps'.

The historical roots of the Napoleonic model are the abolishment of the absolutist Bourbon monarchy by the French revolution, and the subsequent establishment of a Liberal constitutional 'Rechtsstaat'. The establishment of the Liberal constitutional democratic 'Rechtsstaat' not only became a fundamental turning point in the French development of state and administration, but also in many other continental European countries (Finer, 1954; Heper, 1987; Page, 1992). The Liberal constitution introduced the legalistic thinking about state and administration. Parliament became the highest sovereign authority in the state. Legislation became the fundament of state and administration. Administration was henceforth based on the primacy of the law. Constitution, laws and regulations became the exclusive source of administrative action. The key tasks of state and administration were narrowed down to legislation and the execution of laws and regulations. Therefore (administrative) law gained the monopoly of the only relevant expertise for the effective functioning of the state. This led to the monopoly of lawyers within continental European administrations. State officials were predominantly lawyers.

The establishment of Liberal constitutional democracies also marked the beginning of modern professional bureaucracy. State officials were no longer personal servants of the King. Ministers became responsible and accountable to parliament. State officials became properly educated and trained professionals with a proper expertise. The transformation of the British civil service into a meritocracy after the Northcote-Trevelyan reform of 1853 (Drewry and Butcher, 1988). In France the transformation into highly qualified professional bureaucracy under Napoleon (Thuiller et Tullard, 1984). Officials fulfilled an official, formally described task, occupied a formal and protected position with formal and lifelong appointment, and with regular salary and pension. In order to minimise personal influence of political rulers on the functioning of state officials, their career path in the administration's hierarchy was determined by seniority only. Their career was guaranteed, certain and predictable.

This historical description of modern bureaucracy coincides with the characteristics of the ideal type model of 'bureaucracy' that the sociologist Weber (1922) constructed early 20th century. Weber described bureaucracy as a form of legal-rational authority which was precise, stable, disciplined and reliable, and superior in efficiency. Legality and legitimacy were the main traits of bureaucracy. Its characteristics were rules and regulations, hierarchy and accountability, and official documents. Weber described the positions of officials in a bureaucracy exactly as the previous historical sketch: professional training and expertise, impersonal formal position, formal tenured appointment, regular salary and pension, and a career in hierarchy (see e.g. Stillman, 1992).

Formalism and legalism in the South

The juridical predominance ended in North Western states with the post-war expansion of their welfare states. The 'Juristenmonopol' still does exist in Germany and Austria. And in Italian administration. In view of the historical origin of juridified administration, the recent transitions to constitutional democracy in Greece, Spain and Portugal explain why legalism and formalism strongly prevail there.

The vast majority of civil servants in Southern Europe are administrative lawyers. Italian universities have exceptionally large numbers of law students, hence lawyers suffer from high unemployment. A job in the civil service often is the only employment available.

Legalism and formalism historically was introduced as counter-balance against political interference, and in highly politicised Southern systems still does so. In Italian administration it does so to an extreme extent: a trade of job and career security for loss of

power. In Spain and Portugal the administrative elite is strongly intertwined with the political elite, like in France. Many politicians, ministers and premiers are former top-officials.

Rationalisation and professionalisation along the lines of modern Weberian-type bureaucracy already occurred in Spain under Franco in the 1960s. These reforms pretended to make Spanish administration look like a 'Rechtsstaat' (Subirats, 1990).

In Greece after the restoration of democracy the formal professional system of formal entrance examinations and formal job qualifications was introduced to an extreme extent. The system was even quantitatively formalised and standardised to guarantee absolutely equal rights to applicants. Political patronage, however, continued on a large scale (Spanou, 1996, 2001).

Formalism and legalism are major reasons for the rigidity and inefficiency of Southern bureaucracies. Management reforms are based on an economical frame of reference in terms of effectiveness and efficiency, which is contradictory to the legal frame of reference in terms of legal accountability. As management reforms have to be formulated in juridical language in order to become legislation, the legalistic monopoly remained unbroken.

Government policy-making always takes place in the form of laws, regulations and provisions. That also holds true for government reform policy. Public management reforms had to be reframed in legal terms (Capano, 2003).

Political-administrative elite (corps)

Spain has powerful elite corps of top-officials, like in France. The administrative elite is strongly intertwined with the political elite. Like in France many ministers, members of parliament and politicians are former top-officials and member of the professional corps. In Spain the factor that seems most to hinder administrative reforms is the administrative elite organised in special corps ('cuerpos'). The preservation of privileges of civil servants was the concern of trade unions, but above all of the elite corps (Alba, 1995, 1998; Alvarez de Cienfuegos, 1999; Heywood, 1995; Subirats, 1990).

In Spain the historical origin of the professional corps was to counter-balance the politicisation of administration. Within Spanish ministries specialised groups of officials (special corps) existed with a specific university degree, selected by examination, who could not be removed. The professional corps were self-regulating in terms of recruitment, promotion, appointments and payment. The members of these corps had a monopoly over the top positions in the ministries and were relatively better paid. Defence of these privileges makes them strong opponents of reforms. Moreover their criticism that many of the 'new public management'-type of civil service reforms (e.g. HRM) were abused for political interference and clientelism, holds true.

During the Franco regime the special corps came to dominate virtually all decision-making in every department. Although the 1964 reform measures by the Opus Dei technocrats introduced a generalist corps to counterbalance the fragmentation and compartmentalisation caused by the special corps, their power remained intact. During the first years of the democracy many former senior civil servants were part of the centre-right Suarez government, which had no intent of confronting the higher bureaucracy. When the Socialists won the election in 1982 they attempted to reduce the power of the corps by opening up top-positions for non-career employees. The main effect was a massive politicisation of the bureaucratic elite by a wave of political appointments in administrative top-positions.

In Spanish ministries the corps members still occupy the majority of administrative top-positions, even the posts of politically appointed director-generals. At the ministries of Foreign Affairs, and Economy and Finance, they constitute virtually all top-positions. Some ministries are monopolised by a single elite corps (e.g. diplomats in Foreign Affairs, labour

inspectors in Labour). Elsewhere different special corps compete for top-positions within the same ministry. The ministry of Public Administration is dominated by members of the generalist corps of state civil administrators (Alvarez de Cienfuegos, 1999).

Political party patronage has further increased in the 1980s with the opening up of top-positions for externals, and the creation of 'ministerial cabinets' (technical and political advisers who are personally selected by the minister) in all ministries. The victory of the centre-right Popular Party (PP) in 1996 and advent of the Aznar government, did not change the political patronage system. Notice though that both the Socialist and the Popular Party's political appointments were often filled by highly qualified senior officials. The Spanish political and administrative elite is strongly intertwined. Senior bureaucrats occupy posts in political parties, government and parliament, as well as in industry (Alvarez de Cienfuegos, 1999; Baena, 2002).

Politicisation of administration

In contrast to North and Western Europe where trained and qualified professionals run a rational, professional, 'neutral' administration, in Greek, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese administration the factor of overriding importance is politicisation (Sotiropoulos, 2006). Political control of administration, relations between politicians and bureaucrats, political nominations of officials, party patronage and clientelism, in South European countries fundamentally differ from the political practice that is usual in Western Europe.

Political clientelism of civil service

First one should realise that political parties in Greece, Italy, Spain and Portugal differ from Western European ones. Political parties in Southern Europe are not only advocates of policy and ideology, but primarily organisations that provide jobs, pensions, payments, subsidies, insurances and the more, to party members. Clientelism and patronage are basic characteristics of Southern politics, and the side-effect is corruption.

Political parties offer their voters jobs in the public sector. That has of old been the case in Italy and Spain ('caciquismo'), and after abolishing dictatorship became widespread in post-war Italy. That practice was re-instated in Spain, Greece and Portugal when the Socialists won the elections. Although Southern European countries legally have the Napoleonic system whereby officially public jobs can only be obtained after professional training and competitive entrance examination, many civil servants bypassed that path with a political shortcut. Normal practice in Spain (Alba, 1998), Italy (Cassese, 1993), Greece (Spanou, 1996) and Portugal (Sousa, 2001), is that political appointees, who only receive a temporary contract, soon get their contracts changed into permanent positions, thus by-passing the official examination and qualification path. Cassese (1993) has calculated that in the 1970s and 1980s in Italy the number of civil servants appointed without formal entrance exam outnumbered the ones recruited in the regular formal way.

Politicisation of top-officials

The higher the public jobs, the more important party affiliation becomes. Although the practice of political appointments of higher ranking officials formally exists in the United States (spoils system) and Germany ('politische Beamten'), and informally exists in other countries like Belgium and France ('cabinets ministériels'), the extent of party politicisation of career top-officials in Southern Europe is higher (Sotiropoulos, 2006). In Spain the advent in 1982 of the Socialists in government, led to a huge wave of replacements of top-officials.

That practice was repeated by the Popular Party in 1996 when Aznar won the elections. Within a year almost all top-officials appointed by the Socialists had been replaced and thousands of lower-ranking civil servants were also replaced. In Portugal when the Socialists won the elections in 1995 many political appointments of top-officials took place (Sousa, 2001). In Greece the victory of the Socialists also led to a massive replacement of old regime top-officials (Spanou, 1996).

In Italy the higher civil service is not part of the political leadership unlike the top-officials in Spain and Portugal. In his analysis of the higher civil service Cassese (1999) called it an 'ossified world'. There was a strict division between politics and administration. Officials had a safe job and career guarantee, but had hardly any power or status. Top officials had an absolutely secure career perspective. Periodical promotions were based on seniority only, and not on performance evaluations that could be politically endangered. As a consequence top-officials were old before acquiring senior ranks, and therefore only remained shortly in top-positions (Cassese, 1984). Everything in the civil service was formally, legally regulated in order to ensure absolute security and political non-interference. The majority of top-officials were Southern recruited lawyers.

Politicians had no influence on this rigid, inflexible, non-adaptive, reform-opposed system. Politicians exercised influence by political appointments or dismissals of top-officials, and by creating their own ministerial cabinets. Most importantly politicians had circumvented the rigid civil service by setting up a parallel administration of public bodies and agencies.

Top-officials were well aware of this dead-lock. Distrust of politicians, sabotage, and extremely legalistic behaviour were the result. In return for absolute job and career security top-officials have lost all power and influence. Policy-making is not carried out by officials. Preparation of legislation is done in the ministerial cabinets. Officials only perform executive routine work, yet even that can be sabotaged. Many laws and acts are not implemented and executed by the administration.

In order to realise its political plans and policies the government mainly uses the instrument of legislation. The number of laws, decrees and regulations passed in Italian parliament is relatively huge. This however mainly enhances the influence of parliament over administration, and even further diminished the government's influence (Cassese, 1984).

The political turmoil and social uproar against political corruption ('tangentopoli') in Italy in the early 1990s led to political and administrative reforms, and also affected the functioning of the higher civil service. An administrative reform in 1993 introduced the distinction between government steering and policy-making on the one hand, and executive management and administration on the other (Battini, 1998; Cassese, 2002). The latter became the exclusive responsibility of officials. Their labour conditions were privatised. Their job was no longer based on the 'public function statute' but on a contract. In 1998 the executive management tasks and responsibilities of the 'dirigenza' (higher civil service) were further specified.

Another important reform for the functioning of the higher civil service was the legalisation in 1998 and 2002 of political nominations of top-officials (Cassese, 2002). Officials had an absolutely secure career perspective, promotions were exclusively based on seniority, so top-officials were old and could only be replaced upon retirement. With the 1998 law the 55 highest officials (secretary-generals and heads of departments) could be appointed by a new government within 90 days of its instalment. Directors were to be nominated for a duration of two to seven years. And 5% of the 'dirigenza' could consist of external appointments. The 2002 law went even further. Division heads could also be appointed within 90 days of a new government's instalment, and the maximum duration for director-generals

was reduced to three years, for directors to five years. Now 10% of the 'dirigenza' was to be externally appointed. According to Cassese (2002) the main reason for this reform was that the newly created political parties wanted influence, jobs and power. The effect was that top-officials became highly dependent on their minister and consequentially had to be absolutely loyal. A side-effect was that a function had now to be paid for twice, both for the predecessor who was sent on study-leave, and his successor. According to Cassese (2002) this reform broke the traditional dead-lock of a civil service with career security but without power. Officials have gained the power over executive management and their salaries have been doubled.

Clientelism, patronage and corruption

In view of the great importance of politicisation for the functioning of administration in the South, let us have a closer look at the precise meaning of concepts like clientelism, patronage and corruption, which are often wrongly confused in stereotypical prejudices of North-west Europeans about the South.

The classical political science definition of clientelism (usually named 'patronage') is (Eisenstadt and Lemarchand, 1981; Heywood, 1997; Piattoni, 2001): "Unequal, hierarchical, personalized and reciprocal exchange of favours between two individuals, a patron and a client." In traditional rural societies, landowners offered peasants protection in exchange for material goods, and in a democratic context, for votes.

The modern definition of 'political mass party' clientelism is: "Organized political party use of state resources to win the client's electoral support."

Political clientelism is opposed to the ideal-type responsible political party which offers packages of policies justified in terms of public interest and recognised ideology. Votes are exchanged in support for party programme. Clientelism is particularism (egoism and distrust) rather than universalism (solidarity and trust). Selective distribution of benefits. Ideal-type political parties, however, also unevenly channel resources to electoral constituencies, such as social class, or ethnic and territorial groups. Clientelism is the selective distribution of benefits not justified in universalistic terms, that is, not in terms of some recognizable ideology or party programme. Non-clientelistic politics distribute benefits to less selective groups, and their selectiveness is coherent with stated ideology and programme. Political parties in West European democracies are, however, increasingly using state resources to compensate for declining social support.

Clientelism (exchange of votes for favours) is not the same as corruption, which is defined as "misuse of public power for private personal or party gain" (Heidenheimer et al, 1989; Williams, 2000). Both are forms of exchange of favours, but corruption inevitably involves money, while clientelism, at least in a democratic party context, involves administrative decisions being exchanged for votes. Clientelism may be called a basic characteristic of the political system in the South, corruption is not. The latter is at most an occasional side-effect.

Patronage and clientelism have of old been the study field of anthropologists, only more recently of political scientists. The phenomenon used to be reserved to the underdeveloped third world, and is more recently also studied in Europe (Williams et al, 2000). Not only in Southern Europe, but there have been also sleaze and corruption scandals in France, Britain etc. Clientelism and corruption was extensively studied in Italy, less so in Spain (Hopkin,

2001), Portugal (Sousa, 2001) and Greece (Lyrintzis, 1984; Spanou, 1996) as those three were only democratised since the mid 1970s.

The profound politicisation of South European public administrations (Sotiropoulos, 2006) is not a momentary aberration of contemporary politicians, but an almost two centuries long tradition of particular political systems in their particular social, economical and cultural contexts. Such a historical-institutional fact is not simply abolished by administrative modernisation.

7. Administrative reforms in the South

Reforms in Southern Europe highly differ between countries. Although Greece, Italy, Spain and Portugal share the same French Napoleonic state tradition, their current forms of state, administration and reform are profoundly different. They even differ as to the very characteristics of the Napoleonic model: contemporary Spain and Italy do not have a strong central unitary state but a regionally decentralised state. Regional decentralisation is less significant in Portugal and Greece. The legalistic 'Rechtsstaat' was restored in Italy only after the war, and only introduced after 1974-75 in Spain, Portugal and Greece. Italy does not have a powerful central administration, neither does it have an elite of professional top-officials like in Spain. Powerful professional corps of top-officials neither do exist in Greece and Portugal.

More than managerial reforms

If one concentrates on Southern Europe, the study of reforms should not be restricted to 'new public management' reforms only (which are mainly a success in Anglo-Saxon countries) but broadened up to state, administrative, civil service and otherwise public sector reforms, including amongst others also public management reforms.

In Spain and Italy regional decentralization was considered a much more important reform than public management. After the death of Franco the new democratic constitution of 1978 provided for regional autonomy by creating seventeen 'autonomous communities' (regions). It was a response to the regional separatism that had been central in Spanish politics for ages (especially in Catalonia and Basque country), and had become highly violent during the repressive Franco regime (ETA terrorism). In Italy after the massive popular and political turmoil in the beginning of the 1990s (corruption scandals) regional decentralisation became a major political reform issue (in response to Northern separatism). And the transition to democracy in Portugal, Greece and Spain was of course much more important than administrative, let alone managerial, modernisation.

Three sorts of reform

Roughly speaking three sorts of reforms can be discerned in the South (Sotiropoulos, 2004).

First 'rationalisation and professionalisation' took place in the Weberian bureaucratic sense, and was accompanied by the introduction of Rechtsstaat type of rules and procedures. The effect was juridification and legalistic dominance. Inefficiency and politicisation however remained. In Spain this 'juridification' type of reform was introduced in the 1950s and 1960s (Subirats, 1990) in the post-war period of the authoritarian dictatorship when the 'Opus Dei' technocrats were allowed to modernise the economy and administration. In Italy juridification of the administration also was a reaction to the strong post-war politicisation, to protect administration from political interference, to ensure job and career security of civil servants.

Another explanation for the strong degree of formalism and juridification is that in Southern Europe most civil servants traditionally used to be and still are administrative lawyers.

Secondly 'democratisation' of the civil service was attempted in the sense of getting rid of the old regime reactionary forces in administration: replacing the supporters of the former dictatorships by supporters of the new democracy, and purging the civil service. Actually this hardly happened. After the transition to democracy in Spain and Portugal the administrative elite remained in place and in charge. In Greece the democratisation of civil service mainly was political symbolism and rhetoric. In reality it meant that the party that won the election replaced the former officials by its own followers. The arrival into power of the Socialist party (PSOE) in Spain in 1982 was a massive example of the spoils system. That practice was repeated by the Popular Party in 1996 when Aznar won the elections. In Greece the alteration between Socialists party (PASOK) and the New Democracy (ND) has time and again led to removals and replacements of officials (Spanou, 1996). And so is the case in Portugal (Sotiropoulos, 2004; Sousa, 2001).

Thirdly 'modernisation' in the public management sense took place. Budget deficits, cutbacks, need for efficiency increase, hence 'new public management'. In Southern Europe that recognition was mainly due to external pressure, membership of EU, Maastricht treaty on maximum debt and deficit, and started only in the early 1990s. Portugal, Spain and Greece only started to create and expand welfare sector after their transition to democracy, so the 1980s were a period of enormous increase of their public sectors, contrary to the retrenchments and retreat of the welfare states in Western Europe at that time. Moreover civil service primarily used to be and still is a job providing mechanism for political parties. That is a centuries old tradition, not a momentary aberration of some corrupt politicians of today. Such a historical-institutional fact is not simply abolished by some administrative modernisation. Moreover public management reforms can be abused by politicians. Privatisations, contracting-out and public-private partnerships were sometimes abused to generate personal and party incomes (which did not only take place in Southern Europe). HRM reforms can be abused to increase political interference and political appointments. Public management reforms can turn out to have little or even adverse effects.

Failure of reforms

Actually in Southern countries like Spain and Italy (and Portugal and Greece) the main problem is that reforms, irrespective of their form and content, never seem to have had significant effects (Alba, 1995, 1998; Cassese, 1984, 1993, 1999; Heywood, 1995; Lyrintzis, 1984; Spanou, 1996, 1998, 2000, 2001; Subirats, 1990; Zapico-Goni, 1993). In Greece it was as if every next government cancelled the reforms of the previous government and reinstalled its own former reforms (Spanou, 1996, 2001). Failure of administrative reforms has a long tradition, and is not restricted to recent public management reforms. A main reason for reform failure always was the politicization of the administration (Sotiropoulos, 2004, 2006). In Southern Europe the civil service is not only about providing high quality and low cost public services, but also a reservoir of jobs and favours to be distributed by political parties to their supporters. Top-officials of the party previously in office are replaced by loyal followers of the new incoming government. That is political clientelism at the bottom of the civil service and at the top (Sotiropoulos, 2006). Bureaucracies in Southern countries were and still are notorious for their rigidity, inefficiency, bad service delivery and lack of client orientation. The importance of Southern bureaucracies in the functioning of the state, politics and government, remains however incontestable (Rocha, 1986).

Administrative modernisation in terms of improving the effectiveness, efficiency and client-orientation of the provision of public services by the state, seems hardly to make sense

in a state which is not only aimed at providing services to citizens, but primarily aimed at providing jobs and favours to party-members.

8. Comparative analysis of administrative reforms (P.M.)

Assuming that the country-specific description and explanation of the national administrative reforms has been carried out in the country-papers, I will concentrate here on an international comparative analysis of possible similarities between the four.

Comparative analysis of the four country-papers.

National specificities and comparative similarities.

Is there a common Southern 'type' of reform.

Are there explanations for some common Southern 'type' of reform.

Comparative analysis of administrative reforms in the four countries:

- Differences and similarities in sorts of reforms (e.g. rationalisation, democratisation, modernisation. What sorts of modernisation. Rhetoric and results).
- Differences and similarities in decision-making about and management of reforms (e.g. role of politicians, top-officials, rank and file, unions etc. Initiatives, resistance and support. Organisation of reform process, etc).
- Differences and similarities in causes, occasions, pressures for reforms (e.g. corruption scandals, public pressure, external pressure European Union, etc).

Comparative analysis of explanations for reforms in the four countries:

- Differences and similarities in historical, social, cultural, economical context (e.g. state of the economy, development of welfare state, civic culture, authoritarian tradition, etc).
- Differences and similarities in state, government and politics (e.g. remnants of authoritarian, corporatist tradition, how consolidated is democracy, extent of (de)centralisation, stability of government and parliament, clientelism and politicisation, etc).
- Differences and similarities in administration (e.g. bureaucracy, legalism and formalism, efficiency, professionalism, politicisation).

9. Discussion and conclusions (P.M.)

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