

## **Discussion Paper No. 17**



**Democratization, Administrative Reform and the State in Greece,  
Italy, Portugal and Spain:  
Is There a 'model' of South European Bureaucracy?**

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## Introduction

After the transition to democracy in Southern Europe, administrative reform was necessary in order to make bureaucracies more accountable and responsive as well as more sensitive to the goals of economic modernisation and European integration. While such reforms were announced as necessary to increase efficiency and to improve responsiveness, they were often aborted, owing to bureaucratic resistance or to abrupt changes in reform plans after a new government came to power.

However, since the transition to democracy the transformation of the administrative systems of Southern Europe has lapsed. Administrative reform has not evolved as the corresponding processes in other sub-systems of political system of Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain. While the transition and consolidation of democracy in these countries saw the culmination of a long process of political and socio-economic modernization (Malefakis 1995), in the sector of the state bureaucracy there has been a slower pace of change, if not inertia. The state in Southern Europe has not changed a lot, even though Europeanization has effected pragmatic shifts in certain public policy areas, such as regional policy. However, the effects of Europeanization have not been uniform across South European states (Featherstone and Kazamias 2001). The gradual integration of the states of Southern Europe into the EU may have led to some convergence of their bureaucratic structures with the corresponding structures of the rest of West European states, but, in contrast to modernization theory, this change has not been evolutionary. Adopting Philippe C. Schmitter's perspective on partial democratic consolidation (1995: 285-286), we could argue that bureaucratic institutions are another case of 'partial regime' which was not fully consolidated even a long time after the transition to democracy.

This does not mean that between the end of authoritarian regimes and today South European states have not changed at all. By contrast, public expenditures, tax revenues and public employment all rose significantly. Between the mid – 1970s and the early 1990s, social rights were instituted, welfare policies were differentiated and expanded, administrative decentralization progressed and new channels of social participation 'from below' were created (Maravall 1993: 102-103). In the 1990s, new ideas about the state were imported from abroad, although they were transplanted with uneven success.

For instance, the ideas of 'New Public Management' (NPM) have not been applied consistently in the bureaucracies of Southern Europe. Such ideas were popular with other West European bureaucracies (Clark 2000: 25). Other relevant ideas referred to the retreat of the state from its habit of social and economic interventionism (Mueller and Wright 1994). Some influences of the above ideas may be traced in the following instances: in the aborted efforts of Italian reformers to separate clearly politics from administration and to make public managers out of senior civil servants; in the imitation of the international tendency to treat citizens and businesses as 'clients' of the bureaucracy, the satisfaction of whom should be a top priority; and in the introduction of fashionable management techniques to the day-to-day operation of the bureaucracy.

However, these ideas did not add up to a recasting of South European bureaucracies. Chances are that - in the last thirty years - the most important reforms of South European bureaucracies had nothing to do with 'New Public Management.' For instance, in Spain, 'the most important reform' was not the introduction of such a

kind of management, but ‘the territorial devolution of political power’ (Parrado 2000: 247).

The reasons may be found in the precipitation of simultaneous challenges, i.e. in the fact that South European bureaucracies were subjected to democratization, modernization and Europeanization, all taking place at about the same time, towards the close of the twentieth century. In contrast to other West European cases, the four bureaucracies under study did not develop into fully fledged Weberian administrations, subjected to the rule of law and to democratic control. In the span of the nineteenth and the twentieth century, they struggled with long traditions of authoritarianism and clientelism. Towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the effort to overcome past traditions coincided with the influence of new international trends, such as NPM. At that time, reformers of South European bureaucracies worked at cross-purposes, simultaneously trying to bring about more than one large-scale reforms. The result was that reforms were successful only to an extent. Democratization of the state apparatus was effected, but changes inspired by new international trends were implemented in a stop-and-go fashion.

## **1. Overview and directions of change in South European bureaucracies**

South European bureaucracies may have not faithfully followed the above international trends, but they have not been ‘frozen’. They have evolved in three directions. First, in the direction of decentralisation which was quite extensive in Italy since the early 1970s and in Spain since the late 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s. In Italy, decentralisation progressed slowly in the 1970s and much more rapidly towards the end of the twentieth century (Putnam, Leonardi and Nanetti 1993). In Portugal after the regime change of April 1974, while the mainland remained governed in a centralised fashion, the archipelagos of Azores and Madeira acquired substantial autonomy and already in the mid-1970s was experiencing more political stability than the mainland in the form of a coalition of PPD and PSD parties in the regional governments. Greece did not become as decentralised over the same period of time. However, after the mid-1980s, under pressure to absorb funds from the Integrated Mediterranean Funds, the country was divided into thirteen regions with very slim regional administrations. In the 1990s more competences were transferred from the central administration to the regions as well as to the prefectures.

The second direction of the evolution of the state in Southern Europe at the closing of twentieth century followed the world-wide trend of state retrenchment, mostly through privatisations of parts of the public sector (Wright and Pagoulatos 2001: 234-236). A related trend of the 1990s was the hesitant emergence of a regulatory type of state (Majone 1994), the success of which is still difficult to evaluate. The new regulatory role of the state is a world-wide phenomenon. In contrast to the post-war interventionist type of state, this end-of-the-century state was based on small new administrative units, functioning outside major ministries, and was oriented primarily towards setting the rules for private business and non-profit initiatives. Yet, in Southern Europe the ‘heavy’ traditional ministries were not dismantled. In the same vein, privatisations were wholeheartedly adopted in theory by successive South European governments, but in practice they were implemented to a very little extent until the beginning of the 1990s. In Greece, privatisations picked up only after the rise of Costas Simitis, the successor of Andreas Papandreou, to power (in 1996). In Italy, particularly in the second half of the 1990s, there was a pressure to trim the public sector by

getting rid of public monopolies (Lewanski 1999: 112). In Portugal, a large wave of privatisations occurred in 1989-1990 and again in 1995-1996. In Spain, privatisations picked up after 1993. Generally in the second half of the 1990s the size of South European public sector was somewhat altered, but the relevant process is still not over. On the other hand, the emergence of the new role of the state as a regulating agency is an unfinished process. Its results cannot yet be evaluated, as the process is linked to a third direction of change.

The third direction of change was related to the effects of European integration on the organisation of South European bureaucracies. These were not limited to the push for decentralisation but appeared also at the level of central government. The EU offered externally induced pressure on the South European bureaucracies, but also became a source for inspiration for domestic pressures towards administrative reform: the modernizing political elites of Southern Europe used the prospect of integration into the EU as a political weapon to press for change in their states and societies. The case of Italy where technocratic elites played a pivotal role in the country's monetary integration with the EU was typical in that respect (Dyson and Featherstone 1996). Generally, the effect of all this was the multiplication of administrative structures which appeared in various forms: first, in the form of new units (secretariats, divisions or sections of ministries) responsible for relations with the EU; second, in the form of task forces and ad hoc committees of experts entrusted with the tasks relevant to European integration; and third, in the form of new public agencies created on the side of ministries, in order to avoid the rigid hierarchy and cumbersome procedures of the central public administration. However, changes owed to Europeanization, without being cosmetic, have not been structural either. For instance, in Greece, the discrepancy between formal adaptation to EU rules and procedures, on the one hand, and informal practices, on the other, has been retained (Spanou 1998). This is not an idiosyncratic trait of contemporary Greece. The deviation of informal practices from formal arrangements is the consequence of the implementation of modern institutions in societies, which lagged behind in other, non-institutional aspects of modernity (e.g., in culture and social structure). Thus, the historical origins of bureaucracies have opened pathways for the organizational development of public administration and the wider public sector. This is an assumption derived from the theoretical framework of this paper, which is historical institutionalism.

## **2. The sections of the paper**

All three directions of change in bureaucracies noted above emanate from the specific historical trajectory followed by South European states and societies. In the following section of the paper we will discuss the legitimacy of studying Southern Europe as a separate area, through a quick tour of the relevant literature. We will proceed to a presentation of the social and historical context in which South European bureaucracies developed. Further on, we will argue that owing to the particular development of social and class structure of South European societies, it is possible to identify the rise of a 'model' or 'family' of South European state bureaucracies. The model has several real and persistent characteristics. These include formalism and legalism; extensive politicization of the top bureaucratic echelons ('clientelism at the top'); extensive patronage in recruitment of low-ranking public sector personnel ('clientelism at the bottom'); uneven development and unbalanced distribution of resources in the public

sector; and lack of an administrative elite in Greece, Italy and Portugal. By contrast, there are two stereotypical characteristics of the bureaucracies in Southern Europe, which stand in the crossroads between myth and reality. These are bureaucratic inefficiency and corruption. Switching our focus from cross-regional to intra-regional comparisons, we will very briefly note some differences among the four cases as well as a few variations among different sectors within each case. Finally, we will summarize our findings about the bureaucracies of Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain, in the context of the parallel processes of democratisation, modernization and Europeanization.

## **A. The study of democracy and bureaucracy in Southern Europe**

### **1. Brief survey of the literature**

Perhaps paradoxically, the comparative study of bureaucracy has been less advanced in European countries with a - more or less - negative reputation of bureaucratic performance, such as the countries of Southern Europe (Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain). Comparative studies of models of government or traditions of governance usually do not include Southern Europe (e.g., Ziller 2001, Bevir, Rhodes and Weller 2003). The transformation of state bureaucracy in these four countries during the post-authoritarian period has not been systematically studied, even though after the mid-1970s the political science literature on Southern Europe burgeoned, focusing on successful transitions to democracy (e.g., Pridham 1984, O'Donnell, Schmitter and Whitehead 1986, Lijphart, Bruneau, Diamandouros and Gunther 1988, Fishman 1990). The focus of this literature was on transitions from authoritarian rule and their external and domestic causes; on political elites and their role in the ensuing democratic consolidation; and on the evolution of political parties and parliaments. There was also a separate literature on the integration of three of the above countries, namely Greece, Portugal and Spain, into the European Union (e.e., Tsoukalis 1981, Seers and Vaitos 1982 for the European Economic Community, Featherstone and Kazamias 2001 for the EU). In almost all of the above research, the emphasis was put on the comparison of processes (transition, consolidation, integration) rather than structures, such as bureaucratic institutions and the state as a whole. Exceptions to this have been studies which look at the bureaucratic structures of Southern Europe indirectly, i.e., with regard to specific policy areas (e.g., Pridham 1996, Rhodes 1996, Bermeo 1999) or in relation to collective behaviour (Bermeo 1997, Duran 2001).

There are also particular public management reports on each one of the four countries (cf. various OECD studies since the mid-1960, as well as recent reports of OECD 's 'PUMA' unit in [www.oecd.org](http://www.oecd.org)). There are also country-specific monographs on decision-making and the core executives (e.g., Gunther 1980 and Heywood 1999 on Spain, Hine 1993 on Italy, Sotiropoulos 2001 on Greece) and on the systems of public administration (e.g., Alvarez and Gonzalez-Haba 1992, Nieto 1993, Baena de Alcazar 1993, and Crespo 2001 on Spain, Sotiropoulos 1996 and Spanou 2001 on Greece). While there are many such studies on the individual public administrative systems, there is a general understanding that the four cases share some empirical parallels or similarities (Goetz 2001: 1042-43).

As far as the welfare state is concerned, there is an emerging consensus, that Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain belong to a distinct "family" or "world" of welfare

capitalism (Leibried 1992, Ferrera 1996, Rhodes 1996, Bonoli 1997, Arts and Gelissen 2002) and cannot be classified into any of the three “worlds” described by Esping-Andersen (1990). It is then plausible to hypothesize that the ‘southern model of welfare’ (Ferrera 1996) corresponds to a distinct set of bureaucratic institutions and norms. The policy measures which have characterized the particular South European welfare model could probably have not emanated from a state apparatus organized to produce very different models of welfare, such as the social democratic, Scandinavian or the conservative-corporatist West European welfare model. Our hypothesis is that the South European model of welfare corresponds to a South European model of state bureaucracy.

Research on non-compliance in the European Union (Börzel 2001: 818) shows that until the early 1990s Italy, Greece and Portugal led the other EU member-states in the share of formal letters from the Commission, reasoned opinions and referrals to the European Court of Justice (ECJ). It is possible to claim that there is no ‘Mediterranean syndrome’ (Börzel 2001: 820), since France and Belgium also belonged to the same group of laggards (behind the above three South European states), while Spain was close to the EU average. However, one cannot help noticing that in 1978-92 the aforementioned three South European states accounted for a little less than half of all referrals to the ECJ (with the addition of Spain, the share of Southern Europe surpassed 55 per cent of all referrals; Börzel 2001: Table 4). It is reasonable to deduce that a particular model of public administration hides behind such a difficulty or reluctance to implement European law.

The same hypothesis may be derived from the - by now large - literature on the consolidation of democracy in Southern Europe (Pridham 1990 and 1991, Gunther, Diamandouros and Puhle 1995, Pridham and Lewis 1996, Linz and Stepan 1996, Ethier 1997, Morlino 1998, Diamandouros and Gunther 2001). Assuming that “the sphere of modern public administration is an integral part of the consolidation of democracy” (Goetz 2001: 1033), we may claim that in the post-authoritarian period the state apparatus, which is inherited from the pre-democratic period, simultaneously constrains democratisation and is also affected by it. It is then plausible to hypothesize that the particular patterns of democratic consolidation which, according to most of the above literature, have set the South European cases apart from the cases of other Western democracies, correspond to a distinct type of state apparatus. The aim of this paper is to trace what, if any, patterns make South European state bureaucracies, including the central public administration and the public sector, distinct and different from the rest of the West European bureaucracies.

## **2. Methodological and conceptual considerations**

The literature on Southern Europe, fuelled by the almost synchronized transition to democracy in Greece, Portugal and Spain in the mid-1970s, has indicated that it is methodologically legitimate to study together the political and economic systems of these countries, including Italy. The legitimacy of this area study has been substantiated by several authors working in different scientific fields such as history (Malefakis 1995, Sapelli 1996), sociology (Giner 1985) and economics (Tsoukalis 1981, Gibson 2001) and coming from diverse theoretical perspectives such as the modernization approach (Linz 1979, Ziegenhagen and Koutsoukis 1992) and neo-marxist theory (Seers, Schaffer and Kiljunen 1979, Arrighi 1985, Hadjimichalis 1987, Vergopoulos 1990, Kurth and Petras 1993, Holman 1996).

Southern Europe offers an interesting area for study not because Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain are identical, but because these cases share enough historical similarities so as to make the contrast between them and the rest of West European cases fruitful. The four South European countries have followed more or less similar historical trajectories in terms of their socio-economic and political development (Malefakis 1995: 36-44, Sapelli 1995: 5-20). For the purposes of this study, it would not be useful to include South European countries together with North European (Scandinavian) and other West European countries in a single group. Scandinavian and West European states have followed different historical trajectories in the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries.

The methodological legitimacy of studying the four South European countries together was enhanced by political developments, common to all of them, in the late twentieth century. These included a break with the authoritarian past in Greece, Portugal and Spain in the mid-1970s, which was crucial for the onset of institutional modernization and Europeanization in South European states and societies. This is true, even though in all cases authoritarianism has probably left its mark on the distrustful relations between citizens and the public administration and on the limited autonomy of the administration from the political system.

Around the same time (mid-1970s) the Italian conservative political class finally admitted the Communist Party (PCI) as a legitimate part of the political system and the post-war Italian democracy became fully consolidated (Morlino 1995: 376, Sani and Segatti 2001: 166). Later, in the 1980s all four countries were characterized by the comparatively strong presence of the Socialist and the Communist Left in their party systems and the corresponding presence of left-wing, often radical unions in their industrial relations systems. The place of such parties and unions along the political spectrum used to be to the Left of the typical social democratic or labour parties and unions of Northern or Western Europe. Other distinctive political patterns included the rise of majoritarian socialist or social democratic governments to power in the 1980s (or in coalition governments in Italy), whereas, by contrast, conservative parties were being returned to power in the rest of Western Europe; the permeation of many South European institutions by political parties; the importance of political symbols and traditional ideological cleavages in shaping electoral behaviour; and the polarized and partisan character of political culture at least until the mid-1980s, if not even later.

Finally, the last but not least commonality of political development of Southern Europe is the particular trajectory which the region's welfare states have followed and which has led to the provision of very fragmented, clientelist and uneven social protection. In view of the above, we would like to argue that the traditions of authoritarianism and political polarization, which have characterized Southern Europe, may be reflected in a particular 'model' or 'family' of state bureaucracies.

What are the distinctive aspects of this 'model' or 'family'? Our research design involves an examination of variables, i.e., of characteristics of South European state bureaucracies, including the central public administration and the public sector. We are going to registering the values of certain variables related to the organization and personnel of the bureaucracies of Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain. This may help us set South European bureaucracies apart from the rest of bureaucracies of Western and Northern Europe. These variables include the size of the state apparatus, including public spending and public employment; the extent of politicisation of the higher civil service; the patterns of personnel recruitment to the public sector; the internal distribution of resources in the public sector; the kind of implementation of norms and the character of legislative practices; and the availability of an administrative elite.

The variables are not random. They are related to a theoretical conception of the state in the analytical frameworks of organizational theory of the state and of historical institutionalism (Evans, Rueschemeyer and Skocpol 1985 and Knocke and Laumann 1987 on the organizational approach; Immergut 1998, Thelen 1999 and Peters 1999: 63-77 on historical institutionalism). We take the state to be a relatively autonomous set of large modern formal organizations, standing at the intersection between society and the international geopolitical and economic environment (Skocpol 1985, Mann 1986, Perez-Diaz 1998: 64). In our paper the state includes the central public administration and the wider public sector. Such an organizational approach to the state concentrates on the concepts of administrative structure, personnel recruitment and management, norms regulating organizational behaviour and functions of the bureaucracy. Obviously, the analysis of public administration and the wider public sector should be placed in the context of economy and society. In our case, this context consists of the economic, political and social systems of Southern Europe in the late twentieth century. While it may be the case that, as the twentieth century drove to its close, South European economies and societies gradually converged with the rest of Western Europe (Giner 1985: 346, Maravall 1993: 122-124, Gunther, Diamandouros and Puhle 1995), at the same time, the region's state bureaucracies until recently retained many of their traditional features. The latter have started changing under the twin influence of democratization and Europeanization.

This exercise is not meant to evaluate the four South European cases negatively in comparison with the rest of West European cases. Nor is it meant to imply that there is a solid Western model of state administration, which the four aforementioned countries have to imitate. State failure occurs also in the West and the North of Europe. For instance, there are many disagreeable aspects in the functioning of presumably more advanced Western bureaucracies. Such aspects include red tape, inertia, police surveillance, insensitivity to minorities and to socially excluded categories of the population as well as a 'race to the bottom' in the state provision of certain welfare services. South European bureaucracies did not differ from West European ones in these symptoms, but rather in their historical origins and current structural characteristics to which we now turn.

## **B. State and society in Southern Europe**

In this section, in order to trace the origins of South European bureaucracies, we refer to the particular socio-economic role played by the state in society in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. We underline the priorities of transition to democracy and to the simultaneous more recent challenges faced by South European states in the last decades of the twentieth century.

### **1. The social structure of South European societies and the state**

The social structure of South European societies bears certain similarities with that of other advanced industrial societies. However, South European societies have certain distinguishing traits. These traits are linked to the comparatively large agricultural economy in the countryside; extended petty commodity production; and self-employment in a concomitant service sector in the cities (Giner 1986: 310-312,

Petmesidou 1996: 95 and 98). Corresponding to that economic structure, in Southern Europe there are the following social strata: a still comparatively sizeable agricultural class, consisting of independent, small-holding farmers; a working class which, owing to de-industrialization, has rapidly shrunk; an enduring old middle class ('petite bourgeoisie'); a well organized and mobilized stratum of public sector employees; a politically strong stratum of urban liberal professionals (lawyers, doctors, engineers); and a state-dependent capitalist class, made up of industrialists, bankers, land owners, ship owners, financiers, mass media businessmen and public works contractors who have often relied on state loans, contracts and other outlays to sustain their share of the market.

The fact that bureaucratic institutions are embedded in societies means that we cannot explain how the South European model of bureaucracy has arisen without reference to South European state-society relations. Obviously, Southern Europe shares West European traditions. West and South European states have been developmentalist, in the sense that they have steered economic development for many decades and particularly since the end of the Second World War.<sup>1</sup> However, it has been argued that the state in Southern Europe has "assisted" the development of capitalism for a longer time and to an extent larger than states in other European capitalist economies. The "assisted capitalism" of Southern Europe is contrasted to the more "competitive capitalism" of the capitalist core economies of Western Europe (Giner 1985: 291, 318 and 338, Vasquez-Barquero and Hebbert 1985: 291, Maravall 1993: 79). In terms of social structure, which is the focus of this section, we may hypothesize that "assisted capitalism" may differ from "competitive capitalism" because the former has lower levels of social capital and trust than the latter.<sup>2</sup>

On the other hand, Southern Europe is neither halfway between Western Europe and the Third World nor is "assisted capitalist development" the same as "dependent development". The latter underlines economic dependence on foreign capital rather than on the state and has falsely been associated by earlier analysts with the development of Southern Europe (Seers, Schaffer and Kiljunen 1979, Arrighi 1985). The "dependista" perspective may have been useful in the past. It is not relevant to study of the 1980s and the 1990s, i.e., the time frame of this paper. Even earlier in the twentieth century, capitalism in Southern Europe did not look like capitalism in the Third World or the "periphery" (or even the "semi-periphery") of capitalism, where notions of "dependent development" apply. Over the last quarter of the twentieth century, if not earlier, Southern Europe has shifted to the "core" (Giner 1985: 339).

The state in Southern Europe has traditionally promoted economic development through patronage of certain industrial sectors and business interests. The traditional economic role of the state in South European societies involved protectionism, autarky, transfers and subsidies to and control of specific industries. All these constituted an array of strategies and instruments which have been employed to promote economic development since the nineteenth century. In the past, such strategies and instruments of development were well known to other states in Western Europe where there was "competitive" rather than "assisted" capitalism. In Southern Europe the difference was that such strategies and instruments were used in a very particularistic, if not personalistic fashion. The principal benefactors of this role of the state in society were the extended families of large landowners, industrialists and

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<sup>1</sup> I thank George Pagoulatos for this point.

<sup>2</sup> I thank Christos J. Paraskevopoulos for this point.

bankers who constituted the core of South European capitalist class. They became accustomed to depend on the state for their enrichment and for the reproduction of their power position in society. This has led to growth, but not necessarily to development. Uneven economic development and capitalist mis-growth ensued in Southern Europe.

In the same vein, it can be argued that South European states are more class-biased than other states functioning in capitalism, such as West European or North European ones. However, the class bias of South European states does not adhere to the traditional Marxist approach of the capitalist state. The South European class bias has been at the same time narrower, benefiting a closely knit capitalist class, and more wide, promoting various middle- and upper-middle class interests. The role of the state in society and particularly in conflict-ridden societies, such as those of Southern Europe, is not neutral towards particular social interests. This does not mean that, in an abstract sense, the state is always bound to promote only the same aforementioned social class interests. In addition to the cleavage between the capitalist class, on the one hand, and the middle and lower social classes, on the other, there are more social cleavages, which may in fact have been shaped by the state itself through its social welfare policies. Typical examples with particular reference to Southern Europe are the cleavage between self-employment and paid employment (the salaried strata); as well as the gender gap and the cleavage between native citizens and foreign migrants, to which we will return later.

In sum, the state has had the opportunity to promote a set of different vested interests. These have not exclusively been the interests of the capitalist class, although this class has clearly benefited the most from the manner the state developed in the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries. Liberal professionals, segments of the petite bourgeoisie and public sector employees have obtained and defended various privileges, usually at the expense of small farmers, workers and private sector employees. Nowhere has this been more evident than in the sector of welfare.

## **2. A particular model of social welfare**

Research has shown that Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain can be studied together in terms of social protection. Traditionally in Southern Europe social protection was offered by the family, the Church and voluntary associations practicing philanthropy. In parallel, the welfare state developed somewhat slowly during the second half of the twentieth century and more rapidly after the transition from authoritarian rule. As noted above, it is now accepted that the four countries under study constitute the South European model of welfare state (Ferrera 1996: 29-30, Rhodes 1996, Matsaganis 1999). As Table I shows, in the late 1990s South European welfare states performed differently from the rest of EU welfare states. The former were less generous in social spending and less effective in preventing income inequalities and in curbing poverty.

The South European model involves generosity of the state towards certain population categories combined with indifference towards other ones; universalistic provision of public health service, albeit with uneven quality; a mix of public and privately-funded, occupationally-based social insurance schemes; selective provision of cash subsidies by the state, sometimes on the basis of patronage; less-than-transparent financing of the system both from public finances and work-related contributions; and,

until the 1990s, lack of a minimum social protection, offered by the state, to which every citizen would be entitled.

The existence of a particular South European model of welfare should be accounted for by the distinct role of the South European states. Historically, capitalism in Southern Europe has been associated with the following pattern: revenue has been appropriated by the state and distributed to social classes linked to and dependent on the state.<sup>3</sup> Appropriation and distribution of revenue have been particularistic and less than transparent. Distributional particularism has favoured some social strata, namely the business class, the liberal professions and segments of the petite bourgeoisie (such as farmers receiving extensive subsidies). These strata have systematically avoided to contribute to the public finances at a level corresponding to their share of income and wealth. Large and small businessmen, doctors, lawyers and engineers have ‘excelled’ in tax evasion. The same strata have put together their own social security schemes, which are partly financed by the state.

TABLE 1

Selected indicators of South European welfare states					
	Greece	Italy	Portugal	Spain	EU-15
Social expenditure (% of GDP), in 1999	25.5 %	25.3%	22.9%	20.0%	27.6 %
Poverty <i>before</i> social transfers, in 1998	23 %	23%	27%	25%	26 %
Poverty <i>after</i> social transfers, in 1998	22 %	20%	20%	19%	18%
Distribution of income (S80/S20), in 1998	6.5	5.9	7.2	6.8	5.4

Source: Matsaganis, Ferrera, Capucha and Moreno (2003): 641, Table 1, based on Commission of the European Communities (2002), *The Social Situation in the European Union*, Luxembourg: Office of the Official Publications of the EC. ‘S80/S20’ denotes the ratio of income earned by the top quintile over the bottom quintile. Social expenditure data are drawn on the basis of ESSPROS system of social protection statistics, not on national social budgets.

<sup>3</sup> I thank Maria Petmesidou for bringing up and underlying the importance of this point.

The result was that the aforementioned strata have appropriated a comparatively large share of funds allocated to social protection. In other words, their earnings from the social security system have been incommensurate to their contributions to it. This has particularly been the case of liberal professionals. By contrast, other strata, such as dependent labour (wage and salary earners) have been unable to elicit the same response from the state, with the exception of certain well-organized and mobilized employees of public corporations. The salaried strata have had to rely on ill-financed social security, public health and social assistance schemes, offering inadequate social transfers and poor quality of services. The relations between business and autonomous employees on the one hand and wage and salary earners, on the other, have been very unequal. The salaried strata have partly financed the welfare of the former through taxation and social security contributions.

### **3. Gender, migration and the state in Southern Europe**

In addition to its role as assistant to the development of upper class interests (particularly the interests of businessmen and liberal professional), the state in Southern Europe has actively influenced gender relations and relations between the native citizens and incoming migrants. In both these policy areas, the state in Southern Europe has functioned in a fashion which sets it apart from the rest of West European states.

With regard to gender issues, the state in Southern Europe displays a formalistic distance between a universalistic and even progressive legal framework, on the one hand, and actual performance and policy implementation, on the other. At the face of it, South European countries do not lag behind their West European counterparts in terms of establishing social rights. Generally, in terms of new legislation, these states have slowly followed EU patterns. On that count, Spain, for instance, has been neither a laggard nor a fully compliant state (Threlfall 1997).

Nor can it be sustained that in terms of gender composition, the state apparatuses of Southern Europe are male-dominated. While Greek, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish political careers are still far more easily accessed by men than by women, a civil service career seems to be a less gender-biased option. As Table 2 shows, in comparative terms, the share of female senior managers among all managers in South European bureaucracies is not significantly lower than the equivalent figure for Western Europe.

TABLE 2

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Share of women among senior managers of the central governments in Western and Southern Europe in 1998 (%)

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Western Europe:	
France	53.5
Germany	14.3
Ireland	13.3
Netherlands	18.0
<u>West European</u>	
<u>average</u>	24.8
Southern Europe:	
Greece	30.1
Italy	12.0
Portugal	25.7
<u>South European</u>	
<u>average</u>	22.6

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Source: Averages elaborated on the basis of OECD Public Management Service 2001, available in [www.oecd.org](http://www.oecd.org). There is no data for Spain, the U.K. or any of the North European (Scandinavian) countries.

And yet Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain are distinctly ‘women-unfriendly welfare states’ (Gonzalez, Jurado and Naldini 1999: 25). South European states have benefited from, if not outwardly promoted, the continuing importance of the family as a fall-back institution for Greek, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish children, for adolescents just out of school or out of work, for sick family members, for the disabled and the elderly. South European welfare states have a pension-heavy character. As a result, welfare spending in areas other than pensions is slim.<sup>4</sup>

This is evident in many areas. For instance, all four states have put together comparatively meagre social assistance systems (Gough 1996). Until the late 1990s in South European countries (with the exception of Spain) there was no minimum income guarantee, i.e., no safety net (Greece has yet to install such a net). Social assistance, non-contributory pensions, i.e., pensions handed out to individuals with no social insurance contributions, and minimum social security pensions are still very low. The majority of South Europeans who receive such pensions are women. Their fate is contrasted to that of the typical South European male-breadwinner who often receives a more substantial pension. There is a gender gap also in unemployment benefits. In comparison with West European standards, child benefits for couples with children are small. Most importantly, compared to West European social services, in Southern Europe there are few or inadequate child care services and services for the elderly (Gonzalez, Jurado and Naldini 1999: 27).

How is the above discrepancy between recognized social rights and actual policies to be explained? It seems that the state in Southern Europe works on the basis

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<sup>4</sup> I thank Dimitris Papadimitriou and Manos Matsaganis for insisting on this point.

of two principles. The first is that women are expected to receive financial aid from their husbands or fathers rather than from the state. In other words, the South European welfare state is organized primarily to serve the - usually - male head of household. This occurs in Southern Europe more than in Western or Northern Europe, where traditional family-centered households have begun to disintegrate. The second is a particular subsidiarity principle. 'According to this principle, it is first the family that has a duty to provide for a dependent family member. The state has an obligation to intervene only as a second resort and in the case of the failure of the family' (ibid). Family care in the societies of Southern Europe where, compared to Western Europe, women have still not been fully integrated into the labour market, has a particular meaning: it means care by the female members of the household. Upper middle and upper class families may be able to draw on outside help, employing, for instance, immigrant women as child minders and carers of the elderly. This is common everywhere, but in Southern Europe the few or inadequate public care services add to the acuteness of social inequality. The state, being reluctant to offer full coverage in the area of social care, reproduces the social class discrepancy between families which can afford private child and elderly care and the rest which have to count on the rudimentary social care services.

A similar discrepancy, a gap in implementation, has been observed with regard to migration into Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain (Baldwin-Edwards 1999: 11). Formulating a migration policy has been a recent challenge for South European states, which at least since the late 1980s have witnessed waves of migrants from North Africa, Eastern Europe, the Balkans, the Near East and South Asia. Southern Europe has been a gateway for migrants from less developed areas of the world to the West. In particular, it has been an 'entrance hall to the EU' (Anthias and Lazaridis 1999: 3). Initially, South European states and societies were not prepared for this challenge. Relations between native citizens and migrants and the status of migrants were left outside the scope of public policy until this 'laissez faire approach' (ibid) could not any more cope with the size of the phenomenon. Slowly new policies were adopted. In the four South European countries, the introduction of asylum, immigration and regularization laws was accelerated in 1990-93 and 1995-98 (Baldwin-Edwards 1999: 9). The Shengen agreement channelled national legislation towards the adoption of more restrictive measures.

However, the initial state response, which was to neglect the problem and to pass the onerous task of dealing with migrants to the private sector, still determines the condition of migrants in Southern Europe. Large numbers of migrants remain unaccounted for; employers hire them in the underground economy, on much lower wages than native workers and often without fulfilling any social insurance obligations. Overall, despite gradual regularization of the status of migrants, the response of South European states has been slow and reactive rather than proactive. Civil servants and experts seemed to have played a much greater role than usual, in shaping relevant policies (Baldwin-Edwards 1999: 12).

In short, a further social role of the state in Southern Europe entails something more than the reproduction of social class inequalities. It includes structuring gender roles in line with traditional male-dominated family patterns and responding to the challenge of immigration first in a belated, if not ad hoc fashion and then in a restrictive manner, following wider EU patterns. The general failure of South European states to respond effectively to the challenge of migration may be linked to their inability or rather their reluctance to monitor large and small business interests. As South European businessmen and liberal professionals have been under-taxed, so

their hiring practices among foreign migrants have gone unchecked. The same holds true for unchecked gross wage discrepancies between men and women working in salaried (paid) employment. In jobs dominated by women, such as domestic employment, wages are low and social insurance meagre, if available. In other words, also in its migration and gender policies the states of Southern Europe have replicated their biased role in favour of the more powerful social strata mentioned above.

The above economic and social roles of the state in Southern Europe are closely linked to its distinct organizational traits, outlined later in this paper. These specific traits are owed to a large extent to the particular roles played by the state. More concretely, the large number and fragmentation of upper and middle class interest groups with their tailor-made access to the state have left their mark in the plethora and rigid nature of legislation. In Southern Europe, universalistic regulations are only formally adhered to. In practice, there are numerous exceptions to every rule, in order to accommodate the aforementioned powerful interests. This results in the over-production and rigidity of regulations. Conversely, less powerful social categories, such as women and foreign migrants, may not be covered by the existing legislation. The increasing entrance of women in the labour market in the late twentieth century and the influx of foreign migrants particularly in the 1980s and the 1990s have caught South European bureaucracies off guard. These bureaucracies, when they do not openly discriminate against powerless groups, respond to challenges rather belatedly and in a reactive fashion.

On the other hand, the long-term dependence of the South European capitalist class and the liberal professions on the state has increased the importance of controlling the state apparatus. Business interests have indirect ways of exercising political influence (e.g., through financing the campaigns of certain politicians or posing the threat of capital flight). Other social interests are directly represented at the centres of decision-making in a disproportional fashion. Research on ministerial and parliamentary elites in Southern Europe has shown the over-representation of lawyers and other liberal professionals in successive governments and parliaments in all four countries under study (Tavares de Almeida, Costa Pinto and Bermeo 2003).

Even in the current period of state retreat, in societies of 'assisted capitalism' the penultimate question is who controls the state. This is reflected in the relative lack of autonomy of the administrative from the political systems of Southern Europe. In that area of the world, the last thing business and liberal professional interests would like to see, would be a state apparatus autonomous from political power, let alone a strong administrative elite.

If a high quality administrative elite, independent of the political class, ever rose in Greece, Italy and Portugal, then the personal and collective privileges (such as low-interest loans, licences, etc.) granted periodically to members and sections of the interests mentioned above would run the risk of being reviewed on a non-particularistic basis. As long as the state apparatus is closely monitored by political power and as long as the latter is influenced through selective financial contributions of big businesses to political parties and through the over-representation of liberal professionals among parliamentarians and Cabinet ministers, the 'model' sketched further below in this paper will survive. Clientelism 'at the top' and 'from below', uneven distribution of resources in the public sector, fragmentation, rigidity and over-production of legislation and lack of administrative elites will continue to characterize South European bureaucracies. Conversely, as long as the patronage-based political participation of members of lower social strata in the political systems of Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain continues, reform of the administrative systems in a non-

clientelistic manner will have to wait. Clientelism has been a long-term trait of the 'model' of South European bureaucracy and may be here to stay.

#### **4. Clientelism as a mentality and a principle of social organization**

By clientelism, we mean 'a particular mode of social and especially political organisation, whose typical structural element and characteristic building block is the patron-client dyad' (Mavrogordatos 1983: 5). Political clientelism can also be seen as a mode of political participation of the masses in politics (Lyrintzis 1983). The patron-client relationship is dyadic and personal, contractual and achieved, informal, fundamentally instrumental for both sides of the relationship, reciprocal, but also asymmetrical and vertical, in the sense that the client depends on the patron (Mavrogordatos 1983:6). This definition refers to the individual level of analysis. For the societal level, it is useful to turn to Luigi Graziano (1978: 297): 'Clientelism may take one of two forms: the "privatisation" of politics or the "colonization" of civil society. Politics is "privatised" when groups have direct, unmediated access to political authority, which they treat as a tool for their private aims. "Colonization of society" is the opposite process. It occurs when formerly autonomous social institutions come to be regulated by the parties in power'.

During the last quarter of the twentieth century, in Southern Europe, the old person-to-person clientelism was probably replaced by party-led clientelism. The latter has assumed a more organised form and is engineered by party organisations, but its extent is debated (e.g., Lyrintzis 1984, Spanou 1996 and Mavrogordatos 1997 on Greece; Chubb 1982 and Caciagli and Kawata 2001 on Italy; Farelo Lopes 1997 on Portugal; Cazorla 1992 on Spain. Hopkin 2001 is critical of the explanatory value of clientelism).

Except for supporting a state-dependent business elite (consisting of private entrepreneurs subsidized and otherwise supported by the state) and actively reproducing social class and gender inequalities through its welfare model, the state in Southern Europe has traditionally upheld clientelism as an organizing principle. The same principle has been applied in encounters between individual citizens and the public administration (individual level of analysis) and in the interaction between the government and various social categories of the population (collective level of analysis). Clientelism is not an ingrained racial, tribal or regional characteristic of South Europeans. The roots of clientelism are historical and its perseverance has to do with the particular economic and political functions it has served.

Nevertheless, clientelism has by now become a mentality of South Europeans, i.e., a mental reflex, whenever they come in any kind of contact with state authorities. This means a tendency to think in terms of political connections and "plugs" in order to bring any business, however small, with the state to a successful end. Such a mentality refers to individual patron-client relations. However, this mentality alone would not have been enough to sustain clientelistic arrangements for long at the wider societal level. Rather, at that level clientelism has become a major structural characteristic which, as we will claim, has set the South European 'model' or 'family' of bureaucracy apart from its West and North European counterparts.

Deeply seated clientelism has not left room for universalistic, modernizing reform of state administration. Not even strong pressures, such as those exerted by Europeanization, have been able to dramatically alter the main characteristics of the South European 'model' of bureaucracy. Too many vested interests have been

accommodated by the aforementioned clientelistic arrangements to tolerate any attempts by modernizing governing elites or expert groups of reformers to do otherwise. The clientelistic mentality is difficult to uproot. In addition, there has not been any persistent, wide social mobilization from below to alter the clientelistic nature of South European state bureaucracies. This is related to the fact that the way the state in Southern Europe is organized has proven beneficial to more people than the usual state-dependent business entrepreneurs and to wider social strata than the capitalist class.

Which are these social strata? Clientelism constitutes an element of a 'complex and distinctive mode of income generation and distribution of [South European] societies' (Petmesidou 1996: 96). It is a principle of social organization with a primary economic function, which, nevertheless, has political implications. What is this economic function? In Southern Europe masses of unemployed or unemployable urban dwellers have obtained permanent or temporary jobs in the public sector through clientelism. One of the unintended consequences has been that the state has prevented the emergence of a large working class in the private sector, which could have mobilized to compromise the allied interests of the business elite, the liberal professions and the political class.

Income has thus been generated in the form of salaries as well as in the form of welfare transfers to particular, comparatively privileged socio-professional categories of the population. Many of these categories are linked to the state apparatus. Typical examples include employees of public corporations, professional military personnel and judges. A cleavage between public employees on the one side and private employees and workers on the other exists. The latter are subjected not only to job insecurity but also often to comparatively worse working conditions and lower pensions and social assistance benefits (Ferrera 1996). Normally in Southern Europe the trade unions of the private sector are much weaker than many unions of the public sector which have been able to obtain more beneficial social security and health insurance schemes.

Secondly, clientelism has a more straightforward political function too. It can be understood as a mode of political participation (Mouzelis 1986: 74, 76-77, 132-33). Under clientelism, the various segments of society are not incorporated into the political system in the form of interest groups, which enjoy a relative autonomy from the state. This has probably been the mode of political incorporation of the masses in various West European parliamentary democracies where civil society has generally been strong. By contrast in Southern Europe, where civil society has been relatively weak, lower and middle social strata have been brought into politics through various 'vertical networks of patron-client relationships' (ibid: 76).

This general pattern reflects the balance of power between social classes. The upper and upper-middle classes of South European societies, including businessmen and liberal professionals, have sought to protect their hegemony by using the state apparatus. A typical example is the case of post-war Italy where landed and industrial elites used the vehicle of the Christian Democratic party (DC) to exclude the middle and lower strata from power. The party controlled the bureaucracy and established its social base through clientelistic appointments of party supporters from among the middle and lower classes to the public sector as well as through party-led voluntary associations (e.g., party-dominated trade unions). The same clientelistic logic applied to the selective provision of subsidies to Italian private firms and businessmen (Shefter 1977: 444-45).

If the above aspects of clientelism, as mentality and principle of social organization, go some way towards explaining its historical endurance, what explains its continuity and persistence even in the late twentieth century? The answer may lie in the initial requirements and priorities of transition to democracy and in the multiple

challenges which South European states faced in the more recent stages of democratic consolidation.

## **5. South European state bureaucracies during democratisation**

The bureaucracies which had served the authoritarian regimes of Southern Europe could have been major obstacles to democratisation. In reality, they were not. The reasons were different among the four cases under study. In Spain, bureaucrats were somewhat insulated from the control of Falangist cadres. Since the late 1950s, bureaucrats had achieved a 'relative autonomy' from the Francoist state. In 1975-1977, regime change was to an extent engineered by such relatively autonomous bureaucrats. Bitter memories of the Spanish Civil War meant that all involved were very cautious during the delicate period of the transition. The traditional professionalism of the Spanish civil service corps also helped. The authoritarian regime had nurtured competent officials who masterminded the transition.

The case of Portugal was probably diametrical to that of Spain. Bureaucrats had identified a lot with the regime of Salazar and Caetano. The type of democratic transition, i.e., the collapse of the authoritarian regime, was sudden enough not to allow for the protracted evolution noticed in the Spanish case. Purges of bureaucrats followed in the wake of the installation of left-wing governments supported by the mobilisation of left-wing workers, farmers and students. In Portugal the identification of the bureaucracy with the deposed regime required such purges, which, however, contributed to the political instability that for a while made the Portuguese transition unpredictable.

The Greek and the Italian cases seemed to be somewhat in between the above two extremes. In Greece, there were some, but in fact limited, purges (Psomiades 1982). The military junta did not have the time to institutionalise itself, while the bureaucrats had not fully espoused the purposes of the seven-year long dictatorship. In Italy after 1943, pro-fascist officials were allowed to fade away.<sup>5</sup> The 'cleansing' of bureaucratic ranks was not a top priority, since the main problem for the new ruling elites was how to contain the Italian Left.

We may deduce that general administrative reform was not a main priority. Preoccupation with more pressing problems of transition has not allowed post-authoritarian governments to reform the administrative systems. Governmental, parliamentary and judicial institutions have been substantively reformed since the re-institution of democracy in Southern Europe. Bureaucratic institutions have not been subjected to equally satisfactory reform. Stereotypical perceptions about their inefficiency and corruption were not altered dramatically in the last quarter of the twentieth century (and in the last fifty years in the case of Italy). Democratisation has not effaced the rest of the long-term traits of South European bureaucracies either.

## **6. The precipitation of simultaneous challenges**

Still, why are some traditional aspects of South European bureaucracies perpetuated to a certain extent even today, i.e. long into the phase of democratic consolidation or in fact after its completion? We suggest that possible reasons may be the following:

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<sup>5</sup> I wish to thank Gianfranco Pasquino for contributing this point.

At the end of the twentieth century, South European democracies, had both to face old problems, the solution to which had been awaited for a long time by their citizens (e.g., to build accountable, transparent and meritocratic bureaucracies), and to meet new challenges. There was a precipitation of simultaneous challenges overtaking the state apparatuses of the area.

Other modern bureaucracies, particularly those of Western Europe, had first become modern and, with the exception of the inter-war period, were accustomed to function within democratic regimes. Later, in the last decades of the twentieth century, West European bureaucracies embarked on a process of adaptation to the diffusion of new technologies and the intensification of international economic competition. South European bureaucracies did not have the time to proceed in the same manner, i.e., meeting the aforementioned successive problems and challenges in a stepwise fashion. In contrast with their West European counterparts, the bureaucracies of Greece, Portugal and Spain were pressed to take all relevant steps simultaneously, i.e., organisational modernisation, democratisation, adaptation to new technologies and methods of management, including ideas of New Public Management, and orientation to the European integration and to the new competitive international environment. The state apparatuses of Greece, Portugal and Spain were put to the above imminent tasks all of which surfaced more or less at the same time.

Italy was and still is much different, because its post-war democratic regime was established much earlier than in the other three cases. Yet, Italy too has not been able to build a bureaucracy which would function like the North or West European ones. This is due to the inertia, if not the resistance, of the Italian civil service, among other reasons (Cassese 1984). Political clientelism in Italy was not dissimilar with the equivalent forms of state-citizen relations witnessed in Greece, Portugal and Spain. Finally, the Italian state functioned for a long time as a 'social shock absorber' (Spence 2000: 135), employing people who could not or would not find a job in the labour market. This was a function all too familiar in Greece, Portugal and Spain in the late twentieth century.

To sum up this section, our argument has been that long-term historical trends and specific political and economic functions of the state in Southern Europe have created a social context, which was conducive to the emergence of a distinct model of bureaucracy in that area of Europe. The trends and functions include the active shaping of social class, professional and gender inequalities by the state and the reproduction of patron-client relations both at the individual and the collective level. The structural characteristics of the South European model, which we proceed to examine below, may be understood as consequences of the above trends and functions.

### **C. A Southern-European traditional 'model' or 'family' of state bureaucracies?**

#### **1. Norms and legislative practices: Formalism, over-production of norms and legalistic rigidity**

All administrative actions of modern state bureaucracies are bound by the principle of legality. Bureaucracies are not free to do as they please. They may engage only in those actions which are described in advance by law. This principle is applied in South European states in an excessive and fragmented manner which has led to an over-production of laws and decrees. Regulatory over-production is linked with

legalism, the tendency to view things through the lens of provisions of law and to address all new political and social problems by resorting to the passage of new legislation or amendments to existing one. Legalism, in turn, is probably associated with compartmentalisation of regulations and with formalism, i.e., with a larger than usual discrepancy between what the law stipulates and what really happens.

In the previous two centuries, the formal structure of the state bureaucracies of Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain was not considerably different from that of their North and West European counterparts. In other words, official bureaucratic norms were not different in Southern Europe from the rest of Europe. All four bureaucracies were built in the nineteenth century along the lines of the master-plan of Napoleonic administration and continental European administrative law (e.g., Beltran 1988 on the case of Spain). The formal, Napoleonic-type similarities in terms of organization of the legal system and bureaucratic structure between North, West and South European bureaucracies did not over-shadow certain subterranean, substantive politico-administrative traits which were typical of Southern Europe.

An example was the discrepancy between legal provision and eventual outcome which did not simply reflect the problems of implementation faced by every modern state. In Southern Europe, the discrepancy was to a certain extent the result of the superimposition of modern political and administrative institutions on pre-modern societies and of the informal workings of all sorts of interests, related to social class conflicts, localism, regional identities and even organised crime (in a few regions). As a result, in various policy areas and with a lot of differentiation from one region to another, the state in Southern Europe was permeated by all those interests and functioned in a particularistic and clientelistic manner.

Except from formalism and legalism, over-production of norms seems to have taken place in Southern Europe to an extent larger than in Western or Northern Europe. A relevant example is the size and the type of legal framework with which the civil service in South European countries still operates. Generally, numerous, often contradictory laws passed by parliament, presidential decrees, and ministerial ordinances form the 'legal orders' of Greece and Italy. Estimations of the laws enacted in Italy by the beginning of the 1990s vary between 100,000 and 200,000 (Cassese 1993a: 318, Della Cananea 1995: 23). In Greece, between 1989 and 1996, 5,286 laws were passed (Greek newspaper *Eleftherotypia*, 15 August 1999). Obviously, the application of laws requires issuing further decrees and ordinances, which amounts to still further increases in formality and rigidity.

This tendency towards establishing detailed, formal regulations is accompanied by a desire to satisfy small sectoral interests through the passage of convenient legislation. Laws and decrees accommodate such interests but, as a consequence, also subject equivalent interests to unequal treatment. Examples include state-subsidized business companies, local networks of politicians, civil servants and businessmen as well as trade unions of the wider public sector. Some of these collective actors have succeeded in carving out a particularistic legal framework, suitable to their sectoral interests, thus adding up to the plethora of regulations and the contradictions of legislation.

The result is a plethoric, formal and inflexible legal framework which has provoked the rise of informal arrangements, side-stepping the law. Such arrangements have arisen as a matter-of-fact. The reason has been the large quantity and rapid changes in the production of legislation. Such frequent and cumulative changes have resulted in social relations being regulated in a detailed and rigid manner. In the meantime, administrative procedures have become long and complex. As De Sousa

Santos explains about the Portuguese state: '...the Portuguese state is an informal state, a state in which hyper-formalisation breaks into available informality. In a sense, there is an unofficial state that acts in parallel to the official state' (De Sousa Santos 1986: 188). Also in Greece, there have been multiple, frequently changing regulations of the status of civil servants and their recruitment and career patterns. Such regulations have varied widely within the confines of one and the same civil service. Generally in Southern Europe the implementation of regulations of the civil service status has been selective and complementary to informal practices. Such practices have varied according to the traditions of individual ministries or departments (e.g., in Greece) and corps of civil servants (e.g., in Spain) and to rapidly changing administrative policies of incoming governments. Despite repeated announcements of and attempts at reform, the administrative systems of Southern Europe have remained formal and rigid.

## **2. The size of bureaucracy**

There is an impression that, due to clientelism, South European bureaucracies are excessively large. In general, there are several ways to measure the size of states: size of public expenditure; size of government revenue; and size of public employment. Tables 3,4,5 and 6 below show that South European states used to and to an extent still are smaller than their North or West European counterparts. Over time, however, there has been a convergence, at least in terms of size, between South, West and North European states. We first look at expenditure (Tables 3-4) and then at revenue (Tables 5-6).

Comparing Tables 3 and 4, we see that overall in 1960-1982 South European states had lower levels of public expenditure than West European and much lower levels than North European states. All three groups of countries raised more or less equally their public expenditure as a share of GNP. North European states spent comparatively more funds (Table 3). In 1980-1995, South European states intensified their efforts to increase public spending and did so more than North European states. At the same time, West European states kept their expenditure levels stable (with the exception of France which followed the South European pattern, as Table 4 shows.) As a result, by 1995 the expenditure levels (as a share of GDP) of South, North and West European states had converged.

TABLE 3

Total public expenditure in Southern, Western, and Northern Europe between 1960 and 1982 (as percentage of GNP)

	1960	1982	Change 1982/60
Southern Europe:			
Greece	17.4	37.0	+ 19.6
Italy	30.1	53.7	+ 23.6
Portugal	17.0	42.7	+ 25.7
Spain	18.8	34.1	+ 15.3
<u>South European average</u>	20.8	41.9	+ 21.1
Western Europe:			
Belgium	28.9	45.8	+ 16.9
France	34.6	50.7	+ 16.1
Germany	32.5	49.4	+ 16.9
Ireland	28.0	57.1	+ 29.1
Netherlands	33.7	63.7	+ 30.0
United Kingdom	32.6	47.4	+ 14.8
<u>West European average</u>	31.7	52.4	+ 20.7
Northern Europe:			
Denmark	24.8	60.7	+ 35.9
Finland	26.7	41.3	+ 14.6
Norway	29.9	48.8	+ 18.9
Sweden	31.1	67.3	+ 36.2
<u>North European average</u>	28.1	54.5	+ 26.4

Source: Elaborated from Saunders and Klau 1985: 29, Table 1. In the case of Greece expenditure includes only current disbursements. Data for Spain is for 1964-1981 and for Ireland and Portugal is for 1960-1981.

TABLE 4

Total government current expenditure in Southern, Western, and Northern Europe in 1980 and 1995 (as percentage of GDP)

	1980	1995	Change 1995/80
Southern Europe:			
Greece	31.1	38.8	+7.7
Italy	37.6	48.0	+10.4
Portugal	28.9	37.7	+8.8
Spain	23.8	36.8	+13.0
<u>South European average</u>	30.4	40.3	+9.9
Western Europe:			
Belgium	46.6	47.9	+1.3
France	37.4	44.4	+7.0
Germany	.....	32.2	....
Ireland	40.4	39.3	-1.1
Netherlands	48.2	49.3	+0.1
United Kingdom	36.4	39.6	+3.2
<u>West European average</u>	41.8	42.0	+0.2
Northern Europe:			
Denmark	36.7	42.0	+5.3
Finland	25.2	42.0	+16.8
Norway	33.4	39.1	+5.7
Sweden	37.5	43.6	+6.1
<u>North European average</u>	33.2	41.7	+8.5

Source: Elaborated from The World Bank 1997: 241, Table 14.

How can the above trends be explained? Briefly, the growth of the Greek and the Italian state in the 1980s in terms of expenditure may be partly linked to servicing a growing public debt. A second reason was that Greece and Spain in particular increased their welfare spending. A third reason may have to do with the indiscriminate recruitment of new personnel through the enduring structures of party patronage in all four South European countries. It seems that political parties contributed to the overall expansion of bureaucracy through patronage appointments (Morlino 1995: 358).

TABLE 5

Total government revenue in Southern, Western, and Northern Europe in 1960 and in 1982 (as percentage of GNP)

	1960	1982	Change 1982/60
Southern Europe:			
Greece	21.1	31.3	+ 10.2
Italy	28.8	41.5	+ 12.7
Portugal	17.6	33.2	+ 15.6
Spain	18.8	30.6	+ 11.8
<u>South European average</u>	21.6	34.2	+ 12.6
Western Europe:			
Belgium	27.5	45.4	+ 17.9
France	34.9	46.9	+ 12.0
Germany	35.1	45.3	+ 10.2
Ireland	24.8	42.3	+ 17.5
Netherlands	33.9	55.8	+ 21.9
United Kingdom	30.3	43.7	+ 13.4
<u>West European average</u>	31.1	46.6	+ 15.5
Northern Europe:			
Denmark	27.3	45.4	+ 18.1
Finland	30.0	39.7	+ 19.7
Norway	33.1	52.8	+ 19.7
Sweden	32.2	59.7	+ 27.5
<u>North European average</u>	30.7	49.4	+ 18.7

Source: Elaborated from Saunders and Klau 1985: 29, Table 1. Data for Spain is for 1964-1981 and for Ireland and Portugal is for 1960-1981.

TABLE 6

Total government tax revenue in Southern, Western, and Northern Europe in 1980 and in 1995 (as percentage of GDP)

	1980	1995	Change 1995/80
Southern Europe:			
Greece	27.4	26.0	-1.4
Italy	29.1	38.4	+9.3
Portugal	24.3	30.9	+6.6
Spain	22.2	28.7	+6.5
<u>South European average</u>	25.8	31.0	+5.3
Western Europe:			
Belgium	41.7	43.7	+2.0
France	36.7	38.1	+1.4
Germany	.....	30.0	....
Ireland	30.9	35.1	+4.2
Netherlands	44.2	42.9	-1.3
United Kingdom	30.6	33.5	+2.9
<u>West European average</u>	36.8	37.2	+ 0.4
Northern Europe:			
Denmark	31.3	35.4	+4.3
Finland	25.1	29.3	+4.2
Norway	33.9	31.6	-2.3
Sweden	30.1	32.4	+2.7
<u>North European average</u>	30.1	32.3	+ 2.2

Source: Elaborated from The World Bank 1997: 241, Table 1.4. The World Bank has not included data for Germany in 1980.

Tables 5 and 6 show that, in terms of revenue, in the post-war period and before the beginning of the period of state retrenchment, South European states used to be considerably smaller than West and North European states; and that between 1960 and 1982 the increase in size of South European states was comparable to that of West European states, but still smaller than the corresponding increase of North European ones. On the basis of Table 6, it can be said that in 1980-1995, South European states increased their tax raising capacity much faster than the rest of European states. As a consequence, the levels of tax revenue as a share in GDP of South and North European states had converged by 1995, but both were lower than the corresponding West European levels.

Overall, any impression that the state in Southern Europe was comparatively overgrown needs to be qualified. There are two criteria or ways to evaluate whether a state is over-grown or not. The first way is cross-sectional comparison with other states. As noted above, data shows that - in terms of government expenditure and revenue -

South European states lagged behind West and North European states until the early 1980s. Thereafter, the former grew substantively. In proportional terms the South European states were not larger than other European ones.

The second way to argue that a state is overgrown is to claim that its size is not commensurate to the level of development of the national economy in which it is embedded. The relevant hypothesis is that extended state intervention is closely linked with industrial development and that most, but not all, advanced economies have evolved along with large state mechanisms and have supported extended social welfare systems. With regard to this criterion, it is implausible to claim that in the 1980s Southern Europe as a whole was comparatively under-developed and to argue that, given such economic underdevelopment, the state in Southern Europe was disproportionately developed. Even Greece and Portugal, which in the 1980 were the poorest West European countries, were members of one of the world's most advanced economic entities, the EC (Greece since 1981, Portugal since 1986). In the 1980s, as is well known, Italy was already a large industrial power, and Spain experienced rapid economic growth and also became an EC member in 1986. Thus, in none of the above two ways could it be claimed that South European states were disproportionately large.

To sum up this section, South European states were never particularly large. In fact, they used to lag behind other European states in terms of public spending and revenue. Over time they have closed this gap. Such a convergence was particularly noticeable after the beginning of the 1990s. However, this transformation does not seem to have eradicated political clientelism, a traditional organizational principle of politics in Southern Europe. This was a major trait of our 'model' of South European bureaucracy.

### **3. Political clientelism 'at the top': The extended politicisation of the higher civil service**

With regard to public administration, it is necessary to distinguish between two levels of clientelism and to claim that the term has two meanings. A first meaning or level of clientelism is extended politicisation of the managerial level of the civil service and public sector hierarchy ('clientelism at the top'). By referring to the 'top', we mean the higher echelons of ministries and public enterprises. After each government turnover, a large and often fluctuating number of top administrative posts are filled by appointees of the governing elite. These appointees are not necessarily civil servants. But even in the top posts reserved for career civil servants, there is apparent political party intervention. As we will try to show below, in most South European bureaucracies, incoming governments can influence the process of promotions to the managerial level to an extent larger than their counterparts can do in other, West or North European bureaucracies.

The distinctive aspect of South European politicization is that political intervention from above can sometimes reach down to the middle ranks of the civil service hierarchy and out to a large number of public corporations. The purpose of extending the long arm of the governing party, so to speak, into the bureaucracy is to prevent the latter from obstructing the implementation of government policy. Bureaucratic obstruction is not uncommon in any state apparatus which has previously served a different regime (e.g., an authoritarian regime). On the other hand, extensive political intervention 'from above' may bring about demoralization of the civil service and thus hamper bureaucratic efficiency.

The second meaning refers to what is most commonly understood by the term 'clientelism': recruitment of employees at the lower levels and in-service transfers on the basis of particularistic criteria, such as political party affiliation. The above two distinct levels of clientelism have always been extensive and inter-linked: it is difficult to obtain a meritocratic and effective higher civil service if the members of the lower civil service are recruited and promoted on the grounds of clientelistic criteria. Nonetheless, the two levels have a different function.

Some political colonisation 'at the top' of the civil service is practised in liberal democracies by many incoming governments. Such a practice enhances the responsiveness of the state administration to the changing will of the electorate. By itself, political control of the bureaucracy 'from above' is not a distinctive South European trait. For instance, in the U.S. some 10,000 positions change hands at every presidential turnover. Given the size and international role of the U.S. administration, this is in not such a large number. However, the equivalent practice seems more exaggerated in the comparatively smaller administrations of Southern Europe. Take the example of the smallest South European state, Portugal: it has been estimated that after the elections of October 1995 in Portugal, approximately 6,000 political appointments were made by the incoming government of the socialist party (PS) at the top of various ministries and public agencies (Oliveira Rocha 1998: 225). This was not an exceptional situation. Large-scale changes of this kind, at top hierarchical posts, had taken place in 1986-87, when the Portuguese Social Democratic party (PSD) formed a majoritarian government. Similar changes had occurred in 1974-1976, at the fall of Salazar's authoritarian regime. Comparable phenomena took place in Spain in 1982, when the socialist party (PSOE) came to power and again in 1996, when the conservative party (Partido Popular- PP) replaced PSOE in power (Parrado 2000: 266). Such practices were very common also in Greece after each regime and government change. Moreover, in Greece changes in the posts of General and Special Secretaries of Ministries and managers of major public corporations used to occur in the 1980s and the 1990s even after each reshuffling of the Cabinet of one and the same government.

Italy seemed to be somewhat spared of this practice of recurrent massive changes of personnel of different political persuasions at the top of ministries and public corporations. Managerial-level changes involved members of the post-war conservative political class. Career civil servants were less affected. Despite the frequent government turnover, the stability of the administrative personnel's profile was probably owed to the 're-cycling' of the same political elites and to the relative isolation of bureaucrats from politicians throughout the rule of the Christian Democratic party (DC) in the post-war period. However, surprisingly enough, Italy may have belatedly caught up with the other South European countries: since 1998, a legislative decree has tied the occupants of the upper echelons of the civil service with incoming governments (Battini 1998: 214-15, Lewanski 1999: 121). Also, contrary to an Italian practice dating since 1924, the same 1998 decree allowed for the appointment not only of civil servants but also of politically loyal but 'outside' experts to the 'cabinet ministeriels'. These staff units were also found at the side of cabinet ministers in the Greek, Portuguese and Spanish bureaucracies.

Although such 'cabinets' originated in other European countries (e.g., in France) and top civil servants serving in the highest ranks of other bureaucracies were traditionally politicised (e.g., the Belgian 'cabinets', the German 'political bureaucrats'), what is peculiar about Southern Europe is that the breadth of political appointments to the bureaucracy has been quite extended and perhaps unpredictable. Tenured bureaucratic positions could become slots for temporary political appointees and vice versa. In that respect, the aforementioned Italian change towards more politicisation was

not an exception; Greece, Portugal, and Spain witnessed similar situations at different time points.

In Greece the posts of directors general were abolished all together in 1982, a little after the arrival of the socialist party (PASOK) in power. The functions of the abolished posts were assumed by appointed 'cabinets ministeriels' and Special Secretariats. In 1990, the abolished post were re-instituted with the return of the conservative party (ND) to power (Spanou 1996: 107 and 109, Sotiropoulos 1999: 16). In Portugal in 1989, a law specified that the two highest among the four top civil service posts (i.e., the posts of directors general and deputy directors general) were to be filled by the government among candidates from outside the civil service. The lower two posts (directors of service and heads of division) were to be filled by civil servants again selected by the government. However, in the late 1990s in Portugal there were efforts to decrease the extent of politicisation. A new law passed in 1997 specified that the two lower posts were to be filled by civil servants through competitive entrance examinations (Oliveira Rocha 1998: 225-26).

In Spain, the top civil service had been politicised under Franco in the sense that many bureaucrats probably identified with the Franco regime. Yet they were not dramatically affected by the rather consensual transition to democracy in 1975-77. However, at the first government turnover, in 1982, when PSOE came to power, two hundred top posts changed hands. Between 1982 and 1991 90 per cent of all occupants of top posts had never served in a post of similar level before (Alba 1998: 237 on the basis of research by Sebastiano Parrado). When the conservative party (PP) came to power in 1996, it replaced all civil servants from hierarchical level no. 29 (included) upwards, i.e., the occupants of the top managerial levels, and all directors of public enterprises. A relevant law passed in the late 1990s had failed to specify with precision the break-point in the top echelons of the civil service at which the discretion of the government to nominate its sympathisers ended. Similar and, in fact, more accentuated trends towards the expansion of the discretion of political power to nominate top administrators had been observed in the autonomous governments of Catalonia and the Basque Country since 1980 (Alba 1998: 239-40).

Such changes in the breadth of top political appointments and in selecting politically loyal higher civil servants were more facilitated and occurred earlier in Greece, Portugal and Spain than in Italy. This was probably owed to extended periods of submission of the legislature to the executive branch of government, i.e., periods of majoritarian party government, in the first three countries. Such periods occurred in Greece and Spain since the transition to democracy (mid-1970s) and later in Portugal (since the mid-1980s). Majoritarian governments, having no coalition partner, were not inhibited by political alliances vital to the survival of the government. Governments generally stayed in power for longer periods of time and possibly possessed a stronger political will to control the highest levels of the civil service than was the case with Italy.

So, in contrast to Northern and Western Europe, politicisation in Southern Europe was not limited to the highest levels, such as the level of 'cabinets ministeriels.' At the levels of top civil service which were just below the level of minister and his or her 'cabinet' (i.e., at the levels of heads of general directorates, directorates, and even sections), the occupants were recruited from among eligible civil servants who were also political sympathisers of the party (or coalition of parties) in government. This was not equally necessary and did not happen in all four countries under study to the same extent. The point is that politicisation 'trickled-down' and was spread also in lower ranks in an ebb and flow manner.

The above patterns had two likely consequences at the level of attitudes and motivation of many South European civil servants. The first consequence was that competent civil servants were bypassed by their politically more agile colleagues or by outside experts. Career civil servants thus became demoralised. The second consequence was that soon most civil servants became politicised. In other words, they looked for political patrons and tied their professional careers with the parties to which their patrons belonged. Hence, the reproduction of political clientelism at the top, which was - and perhaps still is - a major trait of our 'model' of South European bureaucracy.

#### **4. Political clientelism 'from below': The state as a 'social shock absorber'**

Another relevant trait was the other side of political clientelism 'at the top'. This trait, which can be called 'clientelism from below,' referred to the relation between political parties and society. Through the intermediation of parties, the public sector used to fulfil a well-known social function in Southern Europe. This was the function of alleviating social pressures 'from below', from unemployed, unemployable or professionally insecure social categories of the population. Relevant examples included graduates of law, political science and humanities faculties, high-school graduates without university education and internal migrants. The function consisted in offering them job opportunities in the public sector, during periods of rising unemployment or just before the conduct of general elections (the 'political-electoral cycle'). This pattern was observed more in comparatively underdeveloped regions (e.g., Southern Italy, Andalusia) or whole countries (e.g., Greece, Portugal after the 1974 Revolution) and went through high and low points over time. For instance, it seems that it was intensified in Italy in the 1970s (Morlino 1984: 62), in Portugal between the mid-1970s and the mid-1980s and in Spain after 1982, probably more so in some Spanish regional governments than in the central government (Hopkin 2001: 128 and 132). The pattern was stronger in the 1980s than in the 1990s.

The tendency was for more recurrent massive recruitment of new personnel to the wider public sector than to the central public administration. In the public sector, recruitment was done without regard to the specific needs of public corporations. The absorption of new personnel was effected through extraordinary procedures, e.g., through by-passing competitive entrance examinations. This was the first step in a process labelled 'titularisation' which was quite common in all four countries in Southern Europe. Titularisation involves hiring personnel to meet temporary labour shortages in the public sector and then granting this temporary personnel the status of civil servant or its equivalent (i.e., permanent job contracts). In Italy, as Sabino Cassese writes, 'it can be estimated that, in 1973-90, about 350,000 people were recruited without entrance exams, and then had their posts made permanent by 12 special laws. In the same period, in the same administration, about 250,000 people were recruited through regular exams. It seems therefore that titularisation is the predominant way of entry into the civil service' (Cassese 1993a: 325). In Greece, laws passed since the transition to democracy offered tenure to successive waves of temporary employees who had been employed on the basis of renewable fixed term contracts or contracts for the duration of specific projects (Sotiropoulos 1996: 98-100).

Generally, clientelism 'from below' was not a new phenomenon. As it is well known, it was not observed for the first time in the post-authoritarian period. It had affected public employment in the past. The growth of public employment did not

coincide with the transition from authoritarian rule in Southern Europe. For instance, according to one estimate, between 1965 and 1978 the share of the public sector in total employment rose from 9.9 to 14.2 per cent in Italy, from 4.8 to 8.1 per cent in Portugal, and from 6.6 to 12.3 per cent in Spain (OECD 1982: 12). This data shows that, in terms of employment, South European states used to grow over time. Nevertheless, in Portugal a sharp increase in public employment roughly coincided with the period of transition to democracy; in Greece and Spain, the rise coincided most probably with the transition to democracy and with the ascent of socialists to power in the early 1980s in both countries; and in Italy, public employment grew throughout the more extended period of democratic consolidation (late 1940s – mid-1970s).

In detail, in Portugal, in the period after the Revolution of April 1974 the public sector absorbed excess labour created by the economic crisis which followed the regime change and by the influx of refugees (the 'retornados') from the former Portuguese colonies. Many banks and other private enterprises were nationalised. As a result, public employment rose very fast (Graham 1986: 6, Bruneau and Macleod 1986: 188-89, Opello 1991: 132-33).

In Italy, in the post-war period the social coalition between northern industrialists and southern landowners reproduced the earlier patronage patterns which had been suitable to their interests. They sought to fragment and to exclude the lower social classes from power (Shefter 1977: 444). This strategy of public labour supply 'from above' was met by a corresponding demand for work 'from below'. Throughout the post-war period, public employment rose steadily corresponding to the demand for jobs emanating mostly from the South of Italy, which was economically underdeveloped. This led to the 'Southernisation' (or 'meridionalisation') of the Italian civil service. Compared to the population of Northern Italy, the population of Southern Italy was over-represented among Italian civil servants, including the highest ranks of the civil service (Cassese 1993a: 319 and 323, Lewanski 1999: 105-06). Approximately two-thirds of all civil servants came from the South (Arabia and Giammusso 1993: 441).

In Greece, there was a net increase of 2 percent in the Greek labour force between 1981 and 1988, while, during the same years, the net increase in the civil service personnel was 12 percent (Sotiropoulos 1996: 118). In the Greek wider public sector, there was a similar discrepancy between new total employment and new public employment trends (Christodoulakis 2000: 100-01). In Spain this function of the public sector as a 'safety-valve' for unemployment was also visible. Patronage-driven recruitment followed the rise of the socialist party in power in 1982 (Beltran 1990: 347, Puhle 2001: 320).

As noted earlier, in terms of government employment in the 1980s on average South European states grew more than West European ones (Tables 4 and 6). Similar trends had been visible since at least the 1960s. To what extent may public employment growth be attributed to clientelism 'from below'? There may be three sources of such growth. First, as noted above, at various periods of time South European governments sought to curb unemployment by using the state as a 'social shock absorber'. Second, growth in public employment may be also accounted by the fact that extended patronage was exercised for electoral purposes by the socialist governments which ruled in Greece and Spain in the 1980s (Gillespie 1990: 132, Puhle 2001: 320-21). Third, the rise in public employment may also be interpreted by the expansion of social policy. The welfare state, which in Southern Europe has not been as developed as in Western Europe (Ferrera 1996), expanded significantly in the period of democratic consolidation. This was evident, e.g., in the growth of expenditure on pensions and unemployment benefits in Greece and Spain (Gunther 1996, Maravall 1997); in the creation of National Health

Services in Greece in 1983 and in Italy in 1978; and in the introduction of a minimum income guarantee schemes in Italy, Portugal and various Spanish regions in the early and mid-1990s (Matsaganis, Ferrera, Capucha and Moreno 2003).

Public employment in Southern Europe tended to be costly. Table 7 indicates that South European states used to spend relatively large shares of their state budgets in compensation (wages and salaries). Overall, compared with the 1980s, in the first half of the decade of the 1990s South European states followed the general trend towards a decrease of the share of wages and salaries in the state budget. This was a familiar trend in Western Europe, linked with the 'retreat of the state' (Mueller and Wright 1994). However, in two consecutive periods, 1981-1990 and 1991-1995, in Southern Europe the average share of public employee wages and salaries in the state budget was still roughly double the corresponding shares in West and North European state budgets (Table 7).

How do those trends compare with the trends in public employment shown in Table 8 below? Generally, as a share of total employment, South European states employed in the 1980s personnel amounting roughly to 60 per cent of the equivalent personnel of West European states and approximately 50 per cent of the that of North European states. Thus, the picture in terms of public employment (Table 8) is the reverse of that of compensation of public employees (Table 7): In comparative terms, South European states used to employ relatively fewer people than North or West European states, but devoted a larger share of their state budgets to their compensation. Conversely, again in relative terms, in North and West European states public employment as a share of total employment on average was larger than in South European states. Simultaneously the share of state budgets allocated to compensation on average was smaller in West and North than in South European states (Table 7).

This is probably an additional indication of the different orientation, if not different functions, of South European states, on the one hand, and North and West European states, on the other. The former used to be employing agencies, i.e., 'social shock absorbers', in a manner different from the welfare functions fulfilled by North European states which help people at risk, such as the unemployed and the poor, through extended welfare services. A distinctive function of South European bureaucracies was to provide income to their employees rather than welfare services to citizens at risk.

Social protection is supposed to be temporary, while the risk lasts, while employment in the state apparatus is or can become permanent. In a nutshell, one could argue that traditionally South European states offered jobs, while other EU states offered social protection. It is arguable then that South European states used to cater to the economic needs of the political clienteles of alternating governing elites, taking care of the working population safely employed in the public sector. By contrast, West and particularly North European states had developed more universalistic welfare systems. States in the Western and in the Northern part of the European continent had a longer and more enduring tradition of catering to the needs, not only of a particular segment of the active labour force, i.e., the segment which was employed in the public sector, but to the general population as a whole.

TABLE 7

Average share of wages and salaries in total public expenditure in Southern, Western and Northern Europe in 1981-1990 and 1991-1995 (as percentage of the state budget)

	(I) 1981-90	(II) 1991-95	Change (II)/(I)
Southern Europe:			
Greece	24.8	21.1	-3.7
Italy	11.7	11.7	0.0
Portugal	22.0	28.5	+6.5
Spain	21.6	14.9	-6.7
<u>South European average</u>	20.0	19.1	-0.9
Western Europe:			
Belgium	14.2	14.2	0.0
France	17.8	16.3	-1.5
Germany	8.6	7.6	-1.0
Ireland	12.8	13.2	+0.4
Netherlands	9.1	8.7	-0.4
United Kingdom	12.8	10.4	-2.4
<u>West European average</u>	12.6	11.7	-0.9
Northern Europe:			
Denmark	12.6	11.4	-1.2
Finland	10.4	7.8	-2.6
Norway	9.0	8.0	-1.1
Sweden	6.3	5.8	-0.5
<u>North European average</u>	9.6	8.3	-1.3

Source: Elaborated from The World Bank 1997: 199, Table A.2.

TABLE 8

Comparative evolution of government employment in Southern, Western, and Northern Europe between 1980 and 1990 (percentage share of government employment in total employment)

	1980	1985	1988	1990	Change 1990/80
Southern Europe:					
Greece	8.9	9.9	10.1	10.2	+ 1.3
Italy	15.7	16.8	17.3	17.2	+ 1.5
Portugal	10.7	13.2	14.1	14.3	+ 3.6
Spain	10.5	13.4	14.1	14.5	+ 4.0
<u>South European average</u>	11.5	13.3	13.9	14.1	+ 2.6
Western Europe:					
France	20.0	22.7	22.9	22.6	+ 2.6
Germany	14.6	15.6	15.5	15.2	+ 0.6
Ireland	16.4	18.8	18.4	17.2	+ 0.8
Netherlands	14.8	16.0	15.4	14.9	+ 0.1
United Kingdom	21.3	21.7	20.7	19.1	- 2.2
<u>West European average</u>	17.4	19.0	18.6	17.8	+ 0.4
Northern Europe:					
Denmark	28.3	29.7	29.4	29.9	+ 1.6
Finland	17.2	19.2	20.6	20.9	+ 3.7
Norway	25.3	29.2	29.3	32.0	+ 6.7
Sweden	30.7	32.9	31.8	31.8	+ 1.1
<u>North European average</u>	25.4	27.8	27.8	28.7	+ 3.3

Source: Elaborated on the basis of Wright 1994: 137, Table 5, which was reproduced from OECD's Analytical Database (segment EOY) of March 1991. Data for other West European countries, such as Belgium, was incomplete.

To recap, the purpose of over-staffing the state was to return the governing elite to power through the classic clientelistic exchange of favours for votes in general elections. Another purpose was to ease social tensions emanating from persistent local 'pockets' of underdevelopment or periodic waves of unemployment. This function of the South European state mechanisms as 'social shock absorbers' or as 'safety valves' combined with the expansion of the welfare services, which in Southern Europe until the late 1970s and early 1980s lagged behind the equivalent West European services. The combined effect of the two processes explains the expansion of public employment in Southern Europe in the post-authoritarian period.

To sum up our discussion of clientelism 'from below,' what distinguishes South European public sectors from those of the rest of Western Europe was a different relation with society. This is a well-known relation explored by many analysts of individual South European societies (e.g., Graziano 1978 on Italy, Mouzelis 1986 on

Greece). Generally speaking, the public sector in Southern Europe used to constitute a desirable outlet for large segments of the active labour force, and more precisely for the petty bourgeoisie and the middle class. Such pressures 'from below' were compounded by a specific political party function. In Southern Europe the function of political parties in relation to the state was somewhat different from the corresponding functions in other European societies.

While all modern parties perform several roles in the context of linking society to the political system, South European political parties used to perform what Leonardo Morlino has called the role of 'gate-keepers' of the 'decisional area' (Morlino 1995: 350-51). South European parties did so much more than was the case with parties in other contemporary Western systems. They controlled access of interest groups to the state, sometimes restricting, while more often facilitating access to state resources. The party predominating in elections often used to proceed with a partisan penetration of the state. This role was played differently in some South European countries than in other ones. In that respect, for instance, in Greece party patronage had a more serious and lasting effect on the central public administration than in Spain. In the latter country, similar effects were observed not so much at the level of central government as in the regional levels of 'Comunidades Autonomas'. Clientelism was exacerbated in some cases (e.g., in Catalonia, the Basque Country), where there was no government turnover for long periods of time.

## **5. The uneven character of the public sector**

This trait of the 'model' of South European bureaucracy has been possibly associated with the particular social function discussed above, namely public employment as a 'safety valve'. South European bureaucracies have not been as large as some neo-liberal polemicists of the state have thought. Still, these bureaucracies have been characterised by an uneven distribution of personnel. This trait has flowed as an outcome of the erratic application of the principle of political clientelism in the allocation of human resources. As a result, South European bureaucracies have been overstaffed in some of their quarters, owing to successive mass recruitment made by alternating political regimes and parties.

Traditionally, as noted above, there was hiring of unskilled or low-skilled labour, in exchange of the votes cast by the hired employee and his (her family). Since the mid-1980s, there has been pressure by the EC (now the EU) to practice fiscal austerity and cut down on public employment growth. At the same time, new administrative units have been created which were necessary for the absorption of EC funds and the implementation of EC policies. In contrast to past hiring practices, due to such highly specific tasks, the new units were staffed by highly skilled personnel (economists, engineers, etc.)

On the other hand, South European bureaucracies have remained understaffed in certain other administrative domains. For instance, certain public agencies, such as the Italian postal service or the Greek state airlines, have hired an excessive number of employees. Other public services, particularly in remote or mountainous provinces, have remained understaffed. In the late 1980s, there were more civil servants per 1,000 inhabitants in the Center and the South than in the North of Italy (Arabia and Giammusso 1993: 441, Cassesse 1993a: 335-36). There was also excessive personnel in some Italian schools and in the state-run railway company. By contrast, there was insufficient personnel in the Italian ministries of industry and of environment and in

other more technical services (D'Orta 1990: 447). A similar trend was observed in Greece, in the urban conglomerates of Athens and Thessaloniki, in comparison with any other regions or cities of Greece. Schools and hospitals in various remote Greek regions are still understaffed. In Spain, the Ministry of Agriculture and the local government of Madrid were overstaffed, while the police and the traffic agency lacked personnel (Parrado 2000: 257-58).

## **6. Lack of an administrative elite**

In modern Europe, states were distinguished by the presence of an administrative elite (Armstrong 1973, Aberbach, Putnam and Rockman 1981). In Southern Europe, particularly so in Greece and Italy (Cassese 1993b: 336, Sotiropoulos 1993), there is no such thing as a typical European administrative elite. Spain seems to be different on that count, given that in the central services of Spanish ministries there are higher civil servants who enjoy some power and prestige (personal interviews of the author in Madrid during 1994-95). This is not the case with Greece and Italy. Attempts to construct an administrative elite, as with the creation of 'dirigenza' in Italy and the foundation of elite national schools of public administration in the early 1980s in Italy and Greece, have failed (Della Cananea 1998 on Italy, Papoulias, Sotiropoulos and Economou 2002 on Greece). As a consequence, there is no equivalent to the British or the French higher officialdom, with its considerable political influence and social status.

In Greece, civil servants have adapted to the plans of intruding politicians, putting up relatively little resistance against dramatic transformations of administrative structures or personnel policies (Sotiropoulos 1996). Particularly in the central public administrations of Greece and Portugal, and less so in Italy or Spain, incoming governments often have felt free to bring about major changes, not only in the hierarchy of the civil service, but also in matters of personnel management.

However, in the wider public sector of all four South European countries, the unions of public employees, working for public enterprises and state-run companies, were often very strong. All incoming governments had to establish a 'modus vivendi' with public sector unions which were staunch defenders of their privileges and interests. The resistance put up by such associations was powerful. Still, their resistance was more effective with regard to compensation, social security, and other rights than with regard to the distribution of political power between bureaucrats and politicians. Both of these groups functioned in a tense co-habitation inside the state apparatus. At times, even strong labour unions were unable (or reluctant) to counter the depth and the breadth of successive interventions of alternating party governments in the appointment and transfer of public employees.

As noted above, patronage practices did not apply only to the lower layers of the civil service. Several of the top layers of the administrative hierarchy were also filled with political appointees or handpicked civil servants, shortly after the rise of a new government to power. In that respect, senior civil servants in Southern Europe, with the possible exception of Spain, were not part of the 'power elite'. In Spain, there was a tradition of technocratic, 'insulated' bureaucracy, to some extent even under authoritarian rule. This tradition has probably contributed towards the preservation of some autonomy of the Spanish civil service, during and after transition to democracy. In Italy and Greece, lack of such a tradition has led many civil servants to become very skilful at utilising party and union ties, in order to protect and promote their careers and administrative roles. It comes then as no surprise that in the past top civil servants in

Greece and Italy were usually characterised by limited effectiveness and low prestige; and that, as research has shown, they used to hold relatively non-democratic attitudes even after the fall of authoritarianism (Putnam 1973 on Italy, Sotiropoulos 1991 on Greece).

To sum up our discussion so far, how could we answer the question of the subtitle of this paper? We would submit that - compared to North and West European bureaucracies - South European bureaucracies have probably shown extensive politicisation of their top echelons and political patronage in regard to recruitment of civil service personnel. Those bureaucracies also used to function as a 'safety valve' in times of rising unemployment with the result that the wider public sector of South European states at times grew in leaps and bounds. Other distinguishing traits of South European bureaucracies were formalism and legalism; over-production and fragmentation of regulations; relatively large discrepancies between formal regulations and common, actual practices; uneven distribution of resources in the public sector of each country; and, finally, lack of a substantial administrative elite combined with a periodically strong trade union movement in the wider public sector. Taken together, the above traits may consist a loose, 'model' or 'family' of South European bureaucracy, allowing for variations from one country to the other.

#### **D. Between myth and reality: bureaucratic inefficiency and corruption in Southern Europe**

As noted above, the comparative study of the state in Southern Europe has not been systematic. As a result, there are grounds for the growth or reproduction of stereotypes. For example, it is easy to claim that South European states are organized in a less rational fashion than other European states located to the West or to the North of Southern Europe. Such claims of irrationality may be exemplified in bureaucratic inefficiency and corruption.

##### **1. Bureaucratic inefficiency**

A first common stereotype is that South European state bureaucracies are inefficient and sluggish. The efficiency of public organisations is notoriously difficult to measure, let alone compare with that of equivalent organisations of other countries. One possible indicator is the size of government employment (Table 9). The relevant assumption is that bloated and overgrown states are less efficient than states which are more 'lean' in terms of personnel size. Another indicator may be state capacity to collect direct taxes on incomes and profits (Tables 10 and 11).<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> This indicator should be used, not at a single time point, but over a long period of time, in order to balance periods of economic growth and recession.

TABLE 9

Percentage share of public employment over total paid (salaried) employment in Southern, Western, and Northern Europe in 1993-2001 (%)

	1993	1996	2001	Change 2001/1996
Southern Europe:				
Greece	13.4	13.0	12.3	- 0.7
Italy	10.7	10.6	10.6	0.0
Portugal	8.8	8.6	7.6	- 1.0
Spain	7.7	8.1	7.2	- 0.9
<u>South European average</u>	10.2	10.0	9.4	- 0.6
Western Europe:				
France	10.8	10.9	10.6	- 0.3
Germany	8.7	9.1	8.3	- 0.8
Ireland	—	6.3	5.2	- 1.1
Netherlands	—	7.5	7.1	- 0.4
United Kingdom	6.9	6.4	7.1	+0.7
<u>West European average</u>	8.8	8.0	7.7	- 0.3
Northern Europe:				
Denmark	—	5.6	5.5	- 0.1
Norway	—	6.1	6.3	+ 0.2
Sweden	—	5.9 (1998)	6.1	+ 0.2
<u>North European average</u>	—	5.9	6.0	+ 0.1

Source: Elaborated on the basis of OECD 2002: Table 2, Civilian Labour Force, data for various countries (paid employment: distribution by branch and activity). The total paid employment includes persons who performed some work for wage or salary, in cash or in kind.

TABLE 10

Direct tax-raising capacity of Southern, Western, and Northern European states, 1980-1988 (percentages of GDP)

	Direct taxation on incomes and profits		
	1980	1988	Change 1988/80
Southern Europe:			
Greece	5.7	6.4	+ 0.7
Italy	9.4	13.2	+ 3.8
Portugal	5.7	7.7	+ 2.0
Spain	6.3	9.7	+ 3.4
<u>South European average</u>	6.8	9.3	+ 2.5
Western Europe:			
Belgium	17.8	17.5	- 0.3
France	7.6	7.7	+ 0.1
Germany	13.3	12.8	- 0.5
Ireland	12.4	16.0	+ 3.6
Netherlands	15.1	13.4	- 1.7
United Kingdom	13.5	14.0	+ 0.5
<u>West European average</u>	13.3	13.6	+ 0.3
Northern Europe:			
Denmark	25.0	30.5	+ 5.5
Finland	16.2	19.1	+ 2.9
Norway	19.4	15.7	- 3.7
Sweden	21.3	24.3	+ 3.0
<u>North European average</u>	20.5	22.4	+ 1.9

Source: Elaborated on the basis of Wright 1994: 136, Table 4, which was reproduced from OECD's Revenue Statistics (OSIRIS database, segment TAXREV) of March 1991. Indirect taxes, such as levies imposed on some consumer products, are not included.

TABLE 11

Comparative taxation in South, West and North European states, 1998 (percentages of total tax receipts)

	Direct taxation on personal income	Taxes on goods and services	Highest rate of personal income tax (1999)
Southern Europe:			
Greece	13.2	41.0	40.0
Italy	25.0	27.4	50.8
Portugal	17.1	41.3	46.6
Spain	20.8	29.4	48.0
<u>South European average</u>	19.0	34.8	48.5
Western Europe:			
Belgium	30.7	24.9	65.6
France	17.4	26.6	62.9
Germany	25.0	27.4	55.9
Ireland	30.9	38.7	48.3
Netherlands	15.2	27.7	60.0
United Kingdom	27.5	32.6	40.0
<u>West European average</u>	24.5	29.7	55.5
Northern Europe:			
Denmark	51.6	33.2	63.3
Finland	32.3	30.7	60.0
Norway	27.3	37.2	49.3
Sweden	35.0	21.6	58.2
<u>North European average</u>	36.6	30.7	57.7

Source: Elaborated on the basis of OECD 2001: 38-39. Data for Greece found by personal research.

In terms of government (or public) employment, between 1980 and 1990 the four South European states became sizeable, but they were still smaller than most of the other European states and certainly smaller than the Scandinavian ones. As Table 8 (presented earlier in this paper) shows, the growth of public employment in Southern Europe was much higher than the corresponding West European rate in 1980-1990. Yet, it was smaller than the North European growth. In the 1990s there was a common attempt, throughout Western Europe, to decrease or at least stabilize the size of public employment. This is shown in Table 9 which presents the share of public employees in the total of salaried employees. Generally, in 1996-2001 public employment in Europe did not increase, with the exception of Norway, Sweden and the UK. Compared to Northern and Western Europe, Southern Europe has witnessed a somewhat more intensive effort to make public employment slimmer. So, if public employment size is an indicator of inefficiency, there is not enough evidence to suggest, that - comparatively speaking - South European states have been more inefficient than the rest of European states. By itself, the size of public employment does not reveal what the state actually does. It is thus an inadequate measure of bureaucratic inefficiency.<sup>7</sup>

In terms of capacity to collect taxes on incomes and profits, it is well known that in Southern Europe there is large-scale unreported economic activity and also tax evasion. There is data showing that South European states seem less able to collect such taxes (Tables 10 and 11). However, is this a sign of state incapacity or of social class bias?

On the basis of data shown in Table 10, it can be claimed that in the 1980s, compared to the North European or West European cases, the South European bureaucracies were the least capable to raise revenues from direct taxation. As Table 10 indicates, between 1980 and 1988 the tax-raising capability of South European states rose more than that of West and North European states. However, on average, by 1988 South European countries still lagged behind all the rest (with the exception of France).

The same was true ten years later, in 1998 (Table 11). This table shows a propensity on the part of South European states to apply indirect taxes, which are by their very nature regressive. Obviously, such taxes burden lower income groups more than higher income groups. On the basis of Tables 10 and 11, it seems that South European states do not emphasize the collection of direct taxes, which are progressive, as much as North and West European states do. This propensity of South European states probably betrays a social class bias in favour of upper income strata and strata which can avoid taxation, to an extent larger than in other European cases. Such strata which practice tax-evasion include, small shopkeepers, artisans and craftsmen, liberal professionals and, above all, big businesses.

As data in the third column of Table 11 shows, there is a systemic cross-regional difference, namely a variation in tax legislation. Compared to North and West European states, Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain impose lower rates of direct taxation on highest income groups. In other words, South European states systematically avoid to tax personal income at a high rate. For higher income earners, such as big businesses and higher-income liberal professionals, it is worth being taxed in Southern Europe rather than in Western or Northern Europe. Given that there is still no tax harmonisation in the EU, South European states remain more social class biased than other EU member-states.

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<sup>7</sup> I thank Dimitris Papadimitriou for this point.

In this respect, there is no linear evolution of Southern Europe towards the Western model of liberal democracy and capitalism. It appears that convergence with the West has only selectively taken place in Southern Europe. To sum up the argument so far in this section, on the basis of public employment size and state capacity to tax, it is not possible to be certain that South European states are more inefficient than other European states.

Turning to other indicators of inefficiency, we may look at the performance of particular public services. An example is the effectiveness of systems of social assistance. Most EU welfare states have a battery of social transfers which are scheduled to decrease the rate of poverty in the population. Hypothetically, the danger of falling in poverty should be higher before the transfers have taken place than afterwards. This holds true for most EU member-states. However, research has shown that in Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain the difference in the danger of poverty before and after the actual distribution of social transfers is comparatively small (Table 1, in section A of this paper).

In 1997, in Southern Europe the extent of effectiveness of the relevant measures of social protection was much smaller than the effectiveness of the equivalent measures in Northern and in Western Europe.<sup>8</sup> There are differentiations of this general tendency. In detail, in the mid 1990s, sickness and invalidity benefits reduced poverty by less than 25 per cent in Greece, Italy and Portugal (and also Austria). Family benefits reduced poverty by less than 15 per cent in the four South European countries. Unemployment benefits contributed very little in reducing poverty in Portugal, Italy and Greece (and also in the Luxembourg and the UK. Heady, Mitrakos and Tsakloglou 2001: 563 and Table 7). We observe that not all South European countries can be lumped together and that some West European states show similar low performance. However, in all of the above cases at least three out of the four countries of our study are included in the group of low effectiveness.

In the 1990s, the South European states were distinctly unable to lift the vulnerable groups of their populations out of poverty (Tsakloglou and Papadopoulos 2002: 223, Sainsbury and Morissens 2002: 319). This was particularly true for poor old-age pensioners, even though the bulk of social transfers from South European welfare states were directed to pensioners. South European societies share the characteristic of comparatively more widespread social exclusion which is associated with their very uneven welfare states. In view of the above, it is not unreasonable to conclude that South European social welfare services are among the least effective in the EU. An alternative conclusion may be that South European bureaucracies are among the least interested in reducing social inequalities and fighting poverty. One may again suspect that what we have observed is not so much a matter of efficiency as a matter of social class bias.

With regard to inefficiency, however, there are also other sources of data, including sample surveys of the population and opinions of experts. Attitudinal data from 1980-83 on how efficient were various West European bureaucracies show that bureaucratic efficiency was perceived to be much higher in the UK, France, and Germany than in Spain, Italy, Greece and Portugal (in that order; data from *The Economist Intelligence Unit* in Christopoulos 1998: 4). Experts agree that for long periods of time specific sectors of the South European bureaucracies were very inefficient, including Italy which has been the most industrially advanced nation in the region (Della Cananea 1997: 203).

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<sup>8</sup> In this paragraph, I present my own calculations, based on data from [www.europa.eu.int/comm/employment\\_social/soc-prot/soc-incl/indicator-eu.htm](http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/soc-prot/soc-incl/indicator-eu.htm)). I thank Dimitris Bourikos for emphasizing this point and providing me with the reference.

There is some impressionistic evidence on this matter. Greek public hospitals and public hospitals of the Italian South have acquired a bad reputation in terms of the quality of public health services they provide. Local users prefer to be hospitalised in other provinces or even in other countries or to resort to private alternatives in their country. Generally, in Italy state institutions perform less well in the South than in the North of the country (Putnam, Leonardi and Nanetti 1993).

There are examples from other quarters of the public sector. For instance, the performance of the Italian postal services remains unpredictable. And large parts of the Greek railway network are still grossly underdeveloped. There seems to be a consensus in the literature that Greece and Italy have particularly inefficient bureaucracies (Papoulias 1991, Spiliotopoulos and Makrydemetris 2001, Makrydemetris 1999, Spanou 1995, 1996, and 1998a, Danopoulos and Danopoulos 2001 on Greece; Cassese 1984, 1988, 1993, and 1999, Spence 2000, Lewansky 1999 and 2000 on Italy). Inefficiency is also highlighted in the bibliography on the Portuguese and the Spanish bureaucracies: the main theme is that inefficiency is a typical pattern on which there has been little improvement over time (Nieto 1984, Heywood 1995: 138-40, Alba 1995: 391 and Molina 1999: 50 and 52 on Spain; Corte-Real 2000: 24 and Graham 2001: 218 on Portugal).

However, the above evidence is based on attitudes and for that matter is inconclusive. Allegations of inefficiency are common with reference to all modern large-scale bureaucracies and do not exclusively concern South European bureaucracies. Such allegations have been part of the neo-liberal attack on the way public services used to be organized. There is an ideological element in the emphasis on inefficiency. While South European bureaucracies seem to function at below optimal levels, a strong emphasis on their technical deficiencies would mask their real distinguishing trait, which is a negligence of catering to the poorer social strata, if not an outright social class bias in favour of the upper strata. Obviously, inefficiency in the delivery of public services primarily hits the lower classes. The upper ones can, more often than not, resort to the private sector to obtain all kinds of services, including social insurance, schooling, health care and personal safety.

It can also be argued that any client of modern bureaucratic organizations, be they private or public, will sooner or later experience delays or low quality of service. This is an obvious correlate of the scale of modern formal organizations. The larger the organization, the higher the chances of some kind of inefficiency. Ideally, inefficiency could be fought through more rational organization of the public services. However, the further rationalization of public services is a multi-faceted and evolving problem and no modern state bureaucracy is ever left without it. It could be that South European bureaucracies, despite all the relevant rhetoric of governments of the area and the reform agenda suggested by international organizations, have not changed as much as North and West European bureaucracies have done. Certainly, the everyday experience of living in Southern Europe leaves very much to be desired from the performance of public services. In sum, it is undeniable that some inefficiency, particularly in regard to public services, is more common in South European bureaucracies than in the equivalent bureaucracies of Northern and Western Europe.

## **2. Corruption**

A second stereotypical characteristic of the state in Southern Europe refers to widespread corruption. The impression is that corruption is abundant in Southern Europe

although, of course, no one claims that it has reached East European or African proportions. On the one hand, there is some evidence supporting this impression. Table 12 (below) shows two things: first that, at least at the level of perceptions, among the member-states of EU there is no immaculate bureaucracy; and, second, that corruption is perceived to be more extended in Southern than in Western or Northern Europe. North European countries are associated with less corruption than West European countries. The latter, in turn, are associated with less corruption than South European countries. The distance among the three regions in terms of perception of corruption did not change a lot in 1995-2002. Still, over that time period, there was some improvement (less corruption perceived) in Southern Europe. By contrast there was little change in the other two regions.

TABLE 12

Corruption perception index (1995-2002) for Southern, Western, and Northern Europe

	1995	2002	Change 2002/95
Southern Europe:			
Greece	4.0	4.2	+ 0.2
Italy	3.0	5.2	+ 2.2
Portugal	5.6	6.3	+ 0.7
Spain	4.3	7.1	+ 2.8
<u>South European average</u>	4.2	5.7	+ 1.5
Western Europe:			
Belgium	6.8	7.1	+0.3
France	7.0	6.3	- 0.7
Germany	8.1	7.3	- 0.8
Ireland	8.6	6.9	- 1.7
Netherlands	8.7	9.0	+0.3
United Kingdom	8.6	8.7	- 0.1
<u>West European average</u>	8.0	7.6	- 0.4
Northern Europe:			
Denmark	9.3	9.5	+ 0.2
Finland	9.1	9.7	+ 0.6
Norway	8.6	8.5	- 0.1
Sweden	8.9	9.3	+ 0.4
<u>North European average</u>	9.0	9.3	+ 0.3

Source: Elaborated on the basis of Corruption Perception Index. Transparency International, *2003 Global Corruption Report*: 264 (Corruption Perception Index) and Kazakos 2001: 423, Table 5.10. No corruption tends to 10.0; extreme corruption to 0.0.

On the other hand, it is very difficult to measure the extent of graft, sloth or sleaze in any state. The evidence discussed above comes from unspecified perceptions about corruption. Relevant attitudinal surveys register very general attitudes. They do not differentiate among various types of corruption nor do they distinguish clearly between bureaucrats and politicians. Most importantly for our purposes, such surveys of perceptions do not pertain specifically to the public administration and the public sector. Perhaps the incidence of corruption can be more safely deduced from particular administrative practices, i.e., from observed behaviour rather than from hearsay evidence.

Some of the South European state apparatuses are periodically singled out as particularly problematic in terms of corruption. Specific events in Greece, Italy and Spain in the post-authoritarian period reinforced that impression. In the late 1980s Greece was swept by revelations of scandals involving ministers and managers of public enterprises appointed by the governing socialist party (PASOK). Two former ministers of the socialist government were found guilty by a special higher-instance court (Featherstone 1990: 106, Petras, Raptis, and Sarafopoulos 1993: 201-04, Koutsoukis 1995). Others accusations were made against ministers of the conservative (ND) government in 1990-1993.

In the first half of the 1990s similar developments occurred in Spain, where a few socialist ministers and the Governor of the Bank of Spain were implicated in cases of corruption (Heywood 1995a: 111-12, 115-20, Heywood 1995b). More extended and dramatic events of similar nature shook Italy in 1992-1994 and led to the shake-up of the Italian political system (Partridge 1995, Mershon and Pasquino 1995, Morlino 1996, Katz 1996, Sani and Segatti 2001). It has been argued that particularly in the post-authoritarian period corruption in Southern Europe became very widespread, giving rise to a new entrepreneurial class with political connections (Kurth and Petras 1993). However, all the above refers to high-level corruption, i.e., corruption of governing elites and senior managers of public corporations.

A distinction should be made between two forms of corruption (De Sousa Santos 1986): first, corruption linked with white-collar crime and the promotion of large business interests; and second, 'petty' corruption, related to strategies of the lower social classes to circumvent legislation. Whereas the former type of corruption probably involves the cooperation of politicians and high-level public managers, the latter requires the complicity of 'street-level bureaucracy'. The first can be understood as high-level corruption, while the second as low-level corruption.

However, also in Western Europe from time to time there are reports about the involvement of politicians, including heads of state and former prime ministers, in cases of corruption. Such cases are not unknown in the recent history of Belgium, France and Germany. At that level, it is not possible to conclude that, comparatively speaking, South European states are more corrupt than the rest of the European states. A well known argument says that the public sphere in contemporary democracies, mediated by large broadcasting corporations and press conglomerates, is systematically 'colonized' by financial interests. To put it differently, the public sphere has been 're-feudalized', i.e., carved up among different societal interests (Habermas 1996 [1962]). Particularly the way electoral campaigns are waged today, requires huge financial resources from political parties and individual politicians who are more and more drawn into corrupted practices to secure such resources. In this context, political parties have become 'cartel parties' (Katz and Mair 1996). In view of the above, it is not plausible to argue, let alone to show, that South European democracies in particular suffer more from this type of high-level, systematic corruption than the rest of West European democracies.

The case of low-level corruption is different and to a certain extent can be empirically shown. A concrete example is the disproportionate number of invalidity pensions issued in Greece and Italy by state-run medical committees (Ferrera 1996: 25-26). Such committees are composed by physicians and administrators working for regional or local public health organizations. They are responsible for evaluating the medical record of individuals who petition for invalidity pensions, i.e., for early retirement and compensation by the social security system.

In the 1980s, in certain areas of Greece (e.g., in Crete) and also in Italy, it was not uncommon to witness a flurry of such petitions, a large share of which were approved. In Greece, in 1984, 34 per cent of all new pensions, awarded in that year, were invalidity pensions. In Italy, until a reform (passed in 1984) tightened the relevant medical criteria, invalidity pensions served as a means of clientelistic exchange between politicians and petitioning voters (Ferrera 1996). It is difficult to prove the complicity of involved medical and civil service personnel in granting invalidity pensions to individuals who were perfectly capable of continuing full-time work. However, it is possible to think that in such circumstances under-the-table agreements between the petitioner and the relevant committee (or a politician in position to influence that committee) may have taken place.

This kind of indications probably offers more solid evidence than attitudes on corruption registered in attitudinal surveys employed by Transparency International (TI). Even though TI uses not one but multiple samples per country, its survey results should be used with caution.<sup>9</sup> As it is well known, attitudes can be influenced equally by personal experiences as well as by the word of mouth. Attitudes may reflect not so much reality, but stereotypes. In addition, as already noted, the Corruption Perception Index, constructed by TI, is not specific enough to distinguish between corruption at different levels of the political and of the administrative system.

Compared to the situation in Western and Northern Europe, chances are that corruption is distinctly more extended at the lower level of South European bureaucracies. This is the level of doctors and nurses of public hospitals, lower ranking customs officers, consulate officials, taxation officials and town planning employees. It could be that citizens are informally required or are tempted to engage in illegal exchanges more often in South European public services than in West or North European ones. This South European 'exceptionalism' is probably real but remains difficult to show. Until solid comparative evidence is produced on that matter, it is only possible to argue that South European states probably differ from North or West European ones in terms of more extensive low-level corruption. It does not look possible to argue the same about high-level corruption.

To sum up this section, the commonly accepted, very abstract notions about widespread inefficiency and corruption in South European bureaucracies are not fully substantiated. Comparatively speaking, it is not possible to systematically distinguish South European bureaucracies from West European ones on the grounds of excessive inefficiency or corruption as such. At the most general and abstract level, these two characteristics may or may not be equally common to most contemporary European bureaucracies. After all, a certain degree of corruption and inefficiency are found in most - in not all - large, public or private, modern formal organizations.

Admittedly, tourists, journalists and businessmen visiting Europe's southern periphery can tell many infuriating stories of their encounters with various public

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<sup>9</sup> This is a point raised by Paul Heywood, who criticized the way the Corruption Perception Index is constructed and used, at his speech on political corruption in the European Institute of the L.S.E. on 29 January 2003.

services in Southern Europe. The experiences of citizens of Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain are also telling, but are difficult to register and to systematize. There is some evidence that inefficiency in the delivery of public services and corruption at the lower levels of public administration are more widespread in the South than in the North or in the West of Europe. We may remain agnostic about the extent of such cross-regional differences, which, with regard to inefficiency and corruption, stand at the crossroads between myth and reality.

### **E. Differentiation among South European bureaucracies**

While South European bureaucracies used to differ and, perhaps, to an extent still differ from North and West European ones, two caveats are due at this point: First, there are many differences among the four Southern European cases. Second, judgments about each of the four cases may be misleading, to the extent that within each of the four cases there are specific differentiations with regard to bureaucratic structure and function.

The first caveat means that, within the South European 'model' of bureaucracy, there is enough variety which is owed to the vagaries of the socio-economic development and modern political history of the four countries under study. Such differences do not lead to grouping the cases under study into permanent sub-categories of the aforementioned loose 'model'. Observed differences give rise to various configurations of the four cases. For instance, in regard to high government turnover, which facilitates a relative independence of civil service from incoming governing elites, Portugal until 1987 and Italy throughout the post-war period can be treated on a par. The reason is that both countries have witnessed many short-lived coalition cabinets. In the same respect, Greece and Spain are more similar due to extended periods of socialist party government in the 1980s.

There are other examples of differentiation among the four cases. Spain has a tradition of skilful and cohesive bodies of civil servants ('cuerpos'). There is a certain professionalism among Spanish civil servants, which can only rarely be found in Greece or Italy. Indeed, political ties to governing parties and relative lack of professionalism are two dimensions which, from time to time, have particularly characterised the core of the Greek and Italian civil service at least since the end of the Second World War. If one was pressed to say which of the four state bureaucracies looked more alike, chances are that the Greek and the Italian bureaucracies would be selected as similar cases which, as a sub-group, were different from the Portuguese and the Spanish bureaucracies. The similarity of the Greek with the Italian case has also become more visible in the kinds and the fate of administrative reforms which have been aborted. Examples include the reform of 'dirigenza' (in the 1970s) and the Giannini reforms in Italy (in the 1990s) and the continuously changing pay scale and grade scale of civil servants in post-authoritarian Greece.

Still, there were important differences between the Greek and the Italian cases. While Greek party governments of the second half of the twentieth century used to actively intervene in the day-today operations of the Greek civil service, the Italian coalition governments of the post-war period reached an arrangement with the civil servants. Except for the recruitment of new personnel, which in Italy has habitually fallen victim to quotas and exchanges agreed among the ruling political parties ('lotizzazione'), other aspects of the functioning of the civil service were left to civil

servants themselves. This trend was the result of the 'art of arrangement', as Sabino Cassese has called it (1993b: 335 and 339).

On the other hand, in the case of Portugal, the intervention of political parties seems to have been more extensive in the immediate post-authoritarian period and again after 1987. In regard to party-led intervention in the bureaucracy, the case of Spain seemed to be similar with that of Portugal or Greece only after 1982. In view of all these differences among the four bureaucracies, the fact that we study them together does not mean that we lump them together on all counts.

The second caveat is that there is much less administrative uniformity within each of the four states than an all pervasive 'model' of South European bureaucracy would imply. To start with, between 1977 and 1983 Spain became a quasi-federal state through its division in seventeen 'Comunidades Autonomas'. Given the comparatively large size of Spain, one should then speak of seventeen regional public administrations in addition to the country's central public administration. Also since 1970 Italy has been divided into fifteen regions which have been governed by different political parties (regional governments). So the administrative system of some regions of Spain or Italy may be quite different from the rest of the country and may function in a different manner. For example, in Spain, the Basque Country seems to be nearly an independent entity, almost complete with all the typical authorities of a modern state, except for an army and a ministry of foreign affairs of its own. Less extended, but still remarkable autonomy can be observed in the administrations of Catalonia and Galicia.

In Italy, the quality of public services obtained in some areas of the South (e.g., Naples, Calabria, Sicily) is much lower than that of the equivalent services in the North of Italy. Putnam, Leonardi and Nanetti have linked this discrepancy to variable levels of institutional development and social capital. Besides, another differentiation which should be noted is the following: despite impressions to the contrary, there are quarters of the South European bureaucracies which are reliable and function reasonably well. In Italy, this holds true for the treasury, the diplomatic service, the Council of the State and the Audit Office (Meny 1993: 452-453). In Greece, the same is true for the Council of the State, the Bank of Greece and the Ombudsman.

## **F. Conclusions**

In the last quarter of the twentieth century, the four South European bureaucracies were sluggish, often partisan, sometimes unable or reluctant to implement the policies of incumbent governments and, last but not least, amenable to be treated as 'dumping grounds' for the political clients of the governing elites. While bureaucratic inefficiency and corruption have often been associated particularly with South European bureaucracies, the most important characteristics which distinguish them from the rest of West European bureaucracies are different ones. These characteristics are related to internal organization and to personnel recruitment and management.

South European bureaucracies should not be considered excessively large. Their alleged excess size has not been borne out of our brief cross-national comparisons of public employment or of public expenditure or of government revenue. South European states are not overgrown. However, their higher echelons of their civil service hierarchies are excessively politicised. Recruitment to the public administration and the public sector is still often done on the basis of particularistic criteria. Politicisation of the higher civil service, particularistic recruitment to the public sector and particularistic

provision of social protection are aspects of clientelism. Clientelism has affected the way resources, including personnel, have been distributed in the public sector of South European societies. The public sector of these societies remains uneven in terms of resources and performance. It has also lacked a distinct administrative elite with the *esprit de corps* and the skills encountered at the top levels of other West European bureaucracies. Clearly there are differences among the four South European bureaucracies. For instance, the Greek and Italian cases seem more similar particularly as far as lack of an administrative elite is concerned. Spain and Italy are more advanced in terms of administrative decentralization, while Greece and Portugal remain comparatively centralized. In addition, within each of the four countries there is enough variation in regard to public administration and public sector performance.

Yet a set of core characteristics of a South European 'model' is visible. These are long-term traits of the 'model' (or 'family') of South European bureaucracies and may be accounted for by the particular role that the state has played and continues to play in South European societies. The state has served a few specific social interests, including those of the capitalist class and the urban upper-middle classes. These vested interests have benefited from clientelistic practices and for this reason they have not mobilized in favour of a reform that would have altered the long-term characteristics of the bureaucracy. The capitalist classes have benefited from the development of 'assisted', i.e. state-dependent capitalism in Southern Europe. They have also benefited from the incorporation of segments of the middle and lower, urban and rural classes into the political system in a clientelistic, vertical fashion which is divisive of the interests of the latter classes. Along with state-dependent businessmen, also liberal professionals and segments of the self-employed strata have benefited from the type of taxation and social welfare patterns prevailing in Southern Europe. Among the self-employed strata, farmers in particular have benefited from EU and state subsidies and tax exemptions. The interests of these strata were not compatible with a reform of the bureaucracy which would have upset their particularistic access to the state. The reason was that taxation and welfare policies and their less-than-rigorous implementation have allowed the aforementioned strata to generate additional income.

A similar logic applies to the welfare state. Social transfers are organized in a compartmentalized fashion, privileging some social categories and groups, such as liberal professionals and public sector employees, against the rest of the population. The state in Southern Europe has often served a 'social shock absorber', i.e., it has offered employment outlets to members of the middle and lower strata who are out of work. These functions explain the historical endurance of the South European 'model' of state bureaucracy. The more recent perseverance of the 'model' may be accounted for by other reasons. These include the priorities of transition to democracy, which did not emphasize administrative modernization, and the simultaneous precipitation of challenges such as democratisation and Europeanization.

Such directions of change are routes which are followed by other West and North European states. In the beginning of the twenty-first century, chances are that West, North and South European bureaucracies have started converging. They may converge even more in the future. Domestic developments, such as the passing of the post-war party system in Italy in 1992-1994, and, more importantly, international changes, such as the advancement of European integration, the end of the Cold War, the further diffusion and change of the ideas of New Public Management, the intensification of global competition among national economies, and the spread of new technologies, have created a new political, economic and technological environment for state bureaucracies, including those of Southern Europe. This totally new environment is very

different from the historical context which was relevant for this paper, i.e., from democratisation and its aftermath. How South European bureaucracies will adapt to the new environment remains an open question.

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## ABSTRACT

The public bureaucracies of Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain may be set apart from the rest of West European bureaucracies. Until the mid-1990s, the former were distinguished from the latter by certain interrelated structural characteristics. The characteristics were extended politicisation of the top administrative ranks; enduring patronage patterns in recruitment to the public sector; uneven distribution of human resources; formalism and legalism; and, with the exception of Spain, absence of a typical European administrative elite. Taken together, these characteristics constitute a particular 'model' or 'family' of state bureaucracies. The traditions of authoritarianism and political polarization, which characterized Southern Europe in the past, may be reflected in this model. The characteristics were associated with the type of capitalist and state development in Southern Europe. The state in Southern Europe has actively shaped social class, professional and gender inequalities in the context of piecemeal clientelistic practices, both at the individual and the collective level: favoured individual citizens and privileged social classes and interest groups have had preferential access to the state. In the late twentieth century, South European bureaucracies have started evolving towards decentralization and privatisation. However, convergence of South European bureaucracies with the bureaucracies of other EU member-states is an open question, because in the last thirty years the former faced the precipitation of simultaneous challenges, such as democratization, modernization and Europeanization.

### Curriculum Vitae of the Author

Dr. Dimitri A. Sotiropoulos was senior research fellow at the Hellenic Observatory, The European Institute, The London School of Economics and Political Science, between February and August 2003. He has studied law and sociology at the Law School of the University of Athens, the London School of Economics and Political Science, and Yale University where he obtained his Ph.D. in 1991. He has published books and articles on politics and bureaucracy, civil society, the welfare state, and democratization. He has done comparative research on Greece, Southern Europe and Southeastern Europe. He has been coordinating editor of the *Greek Review of Political Science*. Currently, he is assistant professor of political science at the Department of Political Science and Public Administration of the University of Athens.