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***THE REFORM OF THE CIVIL SERVICE IN ADVANCED
DEMOCRACIES: MERIT WITH FLEXIBILITY***

WORKING DOCUMENT

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English Version

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1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is the analysis of the changes produced in the Civil Service systems of a group of countries within the OECD. Its objective is to fulfill the request made to the author by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), within the framework of its "Regional Policy Dialogue", whose purpose is to support cooperation and the exchange of information in crucial areas for the economic and social development of Latin America. In accordance with this framework, the paper should make it possible for the countries participating in the dialogue to have a source to compare and learn about their own situation and prospects for reform. Three points need be made in order to define the scope of the paper.

The first one relates to the same subject matter of the analysis and, specifically, with the notion of reform. The changes to which I will refer are those that are incorporated within the concept of public management reform, understood (Pollitt and Bouckaert: 2000. 8) as the set of deliberate changes in the structures and processes of public sector organizations, with the objective of improving their operation. We speak then about reform as a deliberate and discontinuous change (Echebarria: 2000), and not of continuous and peripheral adaptations of a merely evolutionary nature. Let us add that the considerable differences in the typology, extension, and depth of the changes make it advisable, at this point, to speak about reforms in the plural sense.

The second has to do with the references used to compare experiences. The nucleus of the same is the one made up of the eleven countries included in the terms of reference of the assignment: United Kingdom, the U.S., Canada, Japan, Spain, Italy, Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, France, and Sweden. In addition to this nucleus, mention will be made to other national experiences on which evidence has been found in the literature, and that we deem relevant. In this regard we should point out the cases of Australia and New Zealand, countries that, as is well known, have gone through profound administrative reform experiences.

Finally, the temporal referent of the analysis should be mentioned. The period of time included is, basically, that of the last two decades, in which broad scope change processes have been concentrated on the public sector of some of the countries mentioned above. In all of them, without exception, the civil service systems and their reform have been in the midst of public debate, experiencing in many cases transformations of highly diverse scale and intensity, but of interest for the purpose of this paper. Without detriment to this temporal framework, our attention will focus preferably in the evolution recorded from the beginning of the 1990s until today.

We will devote the first part of the paper to specify the notion and defining features of the Civil Service concept, as well as its different models in the countries analyzed. The second part will address the main objective of the paper, that is, the Civil Service reforms, in four sections, as follows: the first one, to identify the dysfunctions diagnosed and faced by the change processes and discourses; the second, to specify the sense and direction of the reforms, from a global standpoint; the third, to analyze the main structures and human resources policies affected in every case by the changes; and the fourth and last, to identify the most relevant aspects of the processes followed in the implementation of the changes in the cases analyzed.

2. THE CIVIL SERVICE IN ADVANCED DEMOCRACIES

2.1. WHAT IS MEANT BY CIVIL SERVICE?

The first problem we have to deal with is specifying what we are referring to when we speak about Civil Service (hereinafter CS). The expression is frequently utilized with different meanings. This circumstance makes us refer briefly to those different meanings of the concept to specify within what scope we are going to use the same for the purpose of this paper.

Possible Approaches to the Concept

One approach of a totally legal nature, and especially originating in continental Europe, would identify the concept by the nature of the regulations on which it is based. Civil Service would be that part of public employment regulated by public law standards, different from civil or labor laws that regulate all other work for others in society. This is the scope within which, in Spain (Palomar: 2000; Sánchez Morón: 1996) or France (Ziller: 1993; MAP: 1997), one speaks about “public employment”, as governed by its own statutes, which is different from that applied to common employment.

This seems a concept of little use for our purpose since it concerns a merely formal approach. Since it does not require contents, it does not tell us to what extent, with what intensity and extension such particular regulations move away from civil or labor standards, thus the concept may lack a real limiting effectiveness. In fact, it would make us include in the assumption both the public employment models that, as the Spanish, are based on an extensive code of specific regulations, prepared on very different guidelines from those governing ordinary employment, such as for example, the Dutch (Van der Krogt et al.: 2000), in which the material proximity between both regulations is quite considerable.

A second way, similar to the previous one, would lead us to distinguish between the normative or contractual nature of the employment relationship. According to this, we would characterize CS as a system in which its contents are legally established and administered by the public employer, to a large extent, unilaterally. Outside of this would remain the assumptions—normal in the labor market—in which the content of the employment relationship is established

contractually, through individual or collective negotiation between the employer and the employees.

Today, the distinction has lost much of the limiting strength that it could have had at one time. In recent decades the interpenetration of the legal groups related to administrative and labor laws has led to a considerably hybrid configuration of public employment (Cassese: 1994, 206). As we will see further on, the increase in union participation and negotiations of working conditions are part of the most widespread trends in the analyzed countries.

A third form of addressing the subject would lead us to understand the CS as the system of employment characteristic of some civil servants: those that perform jobs connected to the exercise of public powers, unlike others whose jobs do not demand such tasks from them. The archetypal case would be that of the German *Beamte*, the only ones to whom the “traditional principles of the professional civil service” are applied (Röber and Löffler: 2000. 117), and who represent, approximately, 40 percent of public employment in Germany.

The distinction is important for several reasons. In the first place, because the notion of *imperium* has been historically very significant in developing the legal architecture of the professional administration. On the other hand, in the European Union, the exercise of public powers is precisely the criterion coined by the European Tribunal of Luxembourg to limit the free circulation of civil servants among the administrations of member countries. Furthermore, from neo-institutional approaches to state reform (Prats: 1995) the notion of a “public function” contracted to the “strategic nucleus of the State” for which the merit system fully operates, has been defended as an institutional guarantee for the governance of the countries, and it would be different from the broader notion of “public employment”, in whose core would be different employment relationships that are closer to those found in the private sector.

However, this notion of CS would continue to be unsatisfactory for our purpose. In the first place, because it would only be applicable, and even comprehensible, in those countries that have dual models of public employment, which would leave out a part of the universe that we intend to analyze. Secondly, because, even in these countries, that part of public employment not directly connected with the exercise of public powers (or thus it seems, since the ambiguity of this limiting criterion in the contemporary state, is notable) is qualitative and quantitatively very important. Finally, because when the real content of the standards, structures, and policies is analyzed, the scope of the distinction is, often, more formal than substantive.

A fourth and last approach to the CS concept would identify it with the system applied to government or central administration employees; that is, excluding the other levels of government: the Local, and, in federal or combined states, that of the states, regions or intermediate communities. Such concept is exclusive of one of the countries that comprise our area of study: the United Kingdom (Ziller: 1993; Horton: 2000). However, it concerns precisely that country in which the *Civil Service* expression was born and coined. Naturally, we cannot hold this meaning either and adopt as our own, since the scope of the work deliberately includes the different levels of government.

The Adopted Concept

We believe that our purpose demands us to start from a CS concept that extends to the totality of public employment, something that would not occur in any of the analyzed meanings. In addition, not all types of public employment is CS, but only when the latter is given in certain institutional contexts: those that make possible the existence and protection of a professional administration. We propose, accordingly, a concept of CS as the *system of articulation of public employment through which certain countries guarantee, with diverse approaches, systems, and instruments, certain basic elements for the existence of professional public administrations.*

The basic notes of this concept are the following:

- a) By professional administration we understand a public administration that is managed and controlled by politics—applying the democratic principle, but not owned by it—which requires the preservation of a sphere of independence and impartiality in its operation, based on the public interest. In this regard, the CS concept requires the existence of a body of laws to protect public employment to counter practices of political sponsorship or patronage.
- b) The existence and preservation of a professional administration will require certain regulations specific to public employment, but the CS concept we propose transcends the legal dimension in a double sense: 1) The mere existence of the standards may not be sufficient to warrant an effective articulation of the guarantees that make possible a professional administration. To us, only this real articulation makes it possible to speak of CS. 2) The intensification in the use of regulations may vary notably, depending on the different institutional contexts. In some cases, of which Sweden—as we will see—is the most compelling example, the operation guarantees of the CS are not predominantly legal.
- c) The CS systems may include one or more types of employment relationships. The uniformity or diversity of public employment structures and management policies only express the existence of different national CS models.
- d) The CS concept we are using encompasses assumptions in which the degree of distinctiveness of its own regulations with respect to common employment law may be very diverse: from considerable dissociation up to virtual identification.

Historical Origin and Raison d'être of the Civil Service in the Democratic Constitutional State

The contemporary CS systems have their origin in the establishment of constitutional regimes in Europe and America since the end of the XVIII century. The civil servant (Sánchez Morón:1996, 25) stops being a personal employee of the Crown to become a staff member of the State, an impersonal entity governed by laws. On the other hand, the suppression of class privileges and

the proclamation of the principle of equal protection will make it possible, at least in theory, that any citizen can have access to public positions. In this regard, the celebrated article 26 of the Declaration of the Rights of Men and Citizens of August 26, 1789 proclaims the right of all citizens to have access to “all sorts of rights, positions and public jobs, according to their capacity and without any other distinction than their qualities and their talents.” The historical formula combines the two pillars on which the identity of the CS will be based: equality and merit.

In fact, in other countries (Ziller:1993, 381; Palomar:117 and following), is rather the principle of recruitment by merit the one that comes first. The first one of them was Prussia, at the beginning of the XVIII century, where Frederick William imposed it through an ordinance in 1713. The merit system was also generalized in the United Kingdom throughout the XIX century. In 1853, Northcote and Trevelian, commissioned by Gladstone to conduct a survey on the English public service, recommended the implementation of a competition system opened to all for the recruitment of public servants, transferring to the metropolis the system already applied the same year in the recruitment for civil service in India. One *Order in Council* dated May 21, 1855, is the true birth certificate of the CS. It created the *Civil Service Commission* and appointed three commissioners in charge of examining all the candidates, to evaluate their suitability for the position.

The origin of the modern civil service has been related (Bekke et al.:1996) to the historical production of five phenomena: a) the separation of what is public from what is private; b) the separation of what is political from what is administrative; c) the development of individual responsibility; d) job security; and e) selection by merit and equality. The fulfillment of these principles in the legislation of each country is (Sánchez Morón:1996) a long and unequal process, closely linked to the social evolution and to the dominant political and cultural models. The first country that adopted a general statute for public service was Spain, in 1852. Italy prepared its first Single Text in 1908 following the precedent of a law in 1853 establishing an administrative career. The Netherlands did so in 1929 and Belgium in 1937, strongly inspired by the British model. In France, although part of its model—particularly the system of bodies—was established in the Napoleonic era, its first statute was not promulgated until 1941, under the Vichy regime. In the United States, the *Pendleton Act* of 1883 implies the abolition of the spoils system or political booty, and implies the birth of the CS. Although some presidents—especially Roosevelt, who had been part of the Civil Service Commission—strengthened the merit system, the regulatory framework remained in force until the *Civil Service Reform Act* of 1978, under president Carter, which shapes the current model.

Why and for what reason is the CS born? Which is its *raison d'être* in the contemporary State? For Prats (1995:26 and following), it appears as an evolutionary creation of modern constitutionalism, strongly associated with the liberal order of the market, since it concerns a key institution of the fundamental economic and social value that is legal security, which means that “it is an observable datum in all successful market economies, and in none of the planned or imports substitution economies, regardless of the authoritarian or democratic nature of either of them. On the same line, Evans and Rauch (1999)

adduce, based on an ambitious research project, that the substitution of a patronage system for a professional public bureaucracy is a condition, not sufficient but indeed necessary, for the development of countries. This “Weberian” bureaucracy would require (Rauch and Evans:2000) the presence of three key institutional characteristics: a) recruitment by merit through competitive tests; b) specific procedures—not political—to contract and lay off; and c) professional career based on internal promotion.

It concerns arguments that in a certain way are close to others that have placed the emphasis on the professionalism of the CS as a more important variable to reduce corruption. Etzioni-Halevy—cited by Villoria (2000:144)—explains corruption especially with respect to the relationships between the political and bureaucratic elites, and the political culture governing them, where the rules of the game separate the bureaucracy of the political elite and confers upon it a certain power allowing its political neutrality, thus corruption declines and the democratic processes are more pure.

These arguments have tended to place the emphasis, with indisputable soundness, in one of the central elements of the CS as an institution that creates value, that is, legal security. However, the reality of the State and of contemporary societies compels us, we believe, to complement this perspective with another: one based on the requirements of effectiveness of governmental actions. If legal security is based on the requirements of impartiality and transparency in the behavior of public servants (equality in access and open competition being, in this regard, central elements), the effectiveness of the government and the administration is the legal benefit protected by the requirements of professionalism and capacity of public servants, which are characteristic of a merit system.

This approach does not seem to us easily transferable to a scheme that distinguishes between parcels of public institutionality, considering that the first type of values is attributable to that part of the administration that exercises power, and the second to the sectors producing and providing public services (which would be the basis of the aforementioned dual models). On the one hand, because effectiveness should be a core value of public actions under any circumstance (Isn't the effectiveness of the regulator crucial for contemporary societies?). On the other, because the requirements of equity and neutrality in the behavior of civil servants are also indispensable in the delivery of public service processes.

Legal security and efficacy of the administration are, therefore, the principles found in the basis of CS systems, as value creative institutions in the democratic constitutional State. Making the CS operational has demanded from the countries constituting our object of analysis the articulation of a set of institutional arrangements whose objective is to guarantee that the behavior of civil servants follows certain patterns. If in order to state them we take as referent the British *Civil Service*, we would find (Cabinet Office:1993) the following four basic principles: 1) open and transparent access; 2) promotion based on merit; 3) integrity, objectivity, and impartiality; and 4) non-politicization. The challenge of our days is, precisely, (World Bank:2000) to find a strong basis so that those principles are transferred to practice, but without excessive rigidity.

2.2. CIVIL SERVICE MODELS

The institutional arrangements intended to guarantee the basic principles in the CS that we have referred to are not the same in all the countries we are analyzing. On the contrary, here the unit of the objective contrasts with the considerable diversity of the paths chosen to achieve it. Thus, it seems indispensable to refer, although briefly, to those differences, attempting to systematize them and to order them to the extent possible.

Civil Service and the Institutional Context

Our purpose is to describe the differences rather than to analyze them, but it seems unavoidable to begin by asking about its origin. The CS is but a part of the institutionality of the politico-administrative systems. It seems logical to think that the differences between CS models are consistent with those corresponding, more globally, to these systems as a whole. Pollitt and Bouckaert (2000:52 and following), apply, among others, to their analysis of politico-administrative regimes, the criterion of the dominant administrative culture, based on which they describe two generic cultural models that can shed some light on the issue we are discussing.

They call the first of these models the "the *Rechtstaat* perspective," for which the central integrating force of society is the State, whose basic concerns are the drafting of laws and the use of the necessary coercion to apply them. The distinctive values of this cultural model would be legal security, respect of precedents, and concern over equity, at least in the sense of equal legal protection. The second model, called "public interest", attributes to the State—or rather to the Government—a much less significant role, whose powers in no case should go farther than what is necessary. The law in this case is found in the bottom, rather than in first place. The government process is seen as the search for consensus—or at least acquiescence—for the adoption of general interest initiatives. It is accepted that there are different special interest social groups competing among themselves, thus an arbitration role is advocated for the government, rather than taking sides. Impartiality, transparency, flexibility and pragmatism are values that precede technical capability and even strict legality.

In the first of these models, staff members tend to be seen as invested of powers, and the law is the central axis of its training processes. Germany, France, and Spain would be, among others, the countries in which this culture is predominant. In the second perspective, public servants are seen as simple citizens who work for governmental organizations, and not as a class or special caste invested with the high mission of representing the State. Their technical training tends to be multidisciplinary. Anglo-Saxon countries would be in this cultural area. Other countries, such as the Netherlands or Sweden, would have evolved from a basically legalistic model toward cultural frameworks closer to those of the second type, with a consistent consensual dimension in regard to the processes of preparing public policies, but maintaining a strong sense of centrality of the State.

Although these generic cultural models are of certain usefulness when explaining and framing the structures and policies of CS national systems, their

weight, we believe, should not be exaggerated. Frequently, characteristic features of each internal context have greater explanatory strength when analyzing the different national peculiarities. We will refer, in this regard, to the cases of the Netherlands, Japan and Sweden.

In the Netherlands, a significant practice (Van der Krogt et al.:2000,190) is the fact that the main social services such as education, health, and social services have been provided to citizens by nonprofit organizations, regulated and financed by the central government or the local governments. In fact, the relationship among these nonprofit organizations and the branches of government was so intense that their regulations on personnel, including wages and pensions, had practically become the same as those of civil servants. Logically, given this starting point, the privatizations of the 1980s affected the Dutch public system to a lesser extent than in other countries. In addition, the decentralization of human resources management that, as we will see, characterizes most of the CS reforms, in the Netherlands it had a peculiar significance. More than creating new organizations to which to transfer autonomy and resources, it consisted in modifying the rules of the relationship between the State and the nonprofit sector, which went from being governed by grants to do so by service contracts. In this context, one of the results was the relaxation of personnel regulations and the trend toward the differentiation of these regulations among the different provider organizations.

It has been emphasized (Ikari:1995, 81) that it would be difficult to understand Japan's public employment model without taking into account the practices of human resources management in the private sector, which are idiosyncratic and different from those of the rest of countries in our area of analysis. The interpenetration between both sectors is revealed in the existence of the same dominant features: job contracts for life, absence of mid-career external recruitment, internal promotion, frequent mobility, seniority, on the job training, uniformity in working conditions and nonexistence of collective bargaining systems.

Sweden is a special case. The Swedish civil servants are subject to the common labor law. There is a special law (Murray:2000, 171 and following) that adds some specific regulations with regard to extended leaves of absence, the disciplinary system and certain other regulations. Each employee is hired by a specific organization (ministry, agency, local government), which establishes a labor relation only with the employee. There are no special tests or examinations established for this recruitment process. If an agency closes, its employees lose their jobs. In view of all this, it seems, at first glance, doubtful that Sweden has the precise elements and guarantees for the existence of a CS, as is the case in those countries to which we have referred in the previous section.

The Swedish case is the most representative of a different and alternative approach, with respect to the construction of the institutional framework necessary to guarantee and safeguard the merit system. In the traditional approaches, predominant elsewhere, the basic foundation of this framework is a legal structure. By creating a set of legal guarantees, and of restrictions on the discretion of its decision-makers, the standard intends to control the behavior of the different actors. Until the 1960s, this was also the system in Sweden, for more than three centuries, when Gustaf Adolf II guaranteed the stability of the

service providers of the central government. Starting in 1965, however, the rules of the game were drastically changed. At the same time that the right to strike was recognized for civil servants, a global reform of the CS created the new institutional order containing the features described in the previous paragraph.

The Swedish government maintains the objective of preserving a professional administration. What changed it are the instruments guaranteeing it. The new institutional framework assigns more force to the organizational design and the set of incentives articulated by the same, than to the legal framework, the mission to structure the CS. In Sweden the starting point is the social and institutional basis of the agency model. Over the same, measures will be gradually introduced to ensure that such a decentralized model does not imply a loss of integrity and control. We will not describe in detail now this institutional architecture that combines elements of contracting, allocation of resources, awards/penalties, training, socialization, introduction of market forces, and control of the managers by other social actors.

How to Identify CS Models

From all we have said, it is obviously difficult to reorient the diversity of the CS systems in the countries studied to a few specifically defined models. In fact, beyond the generic archetypes that would keep the description at an excessive level of abstraction, the national CS systems combine the particular institutional arrangements that characterize them, undoubtedly the result of their respective history, own traditions and other unique elements. The similarities between two countries in one specific feature become differences in another, which in turn would give rise to other alignments and comparisons.

The desirability, in spite of all this, to minimally systematize the description, leads us to present this considerably heterogeneous reality, identifying and grouping the national models based on four cross-sectional studies, that agree with the central elements of an institutional CS framework, which are the following: a) the access systems and instruments, that is, the set of mechanisms established for the recruitment and selection of civil servants; b) the organization of a professional career, that starts from the basic distinction between career and employment systems; c) the group of rights and duties established for the civil servants; and d) the administration of the CS system, which basically refers to the degree of centralization/decentralization of the same.

Access Systems

All the countries examined (Siedentopf:1990; Ziller:1993; Klingner and Nalbandian:1994; Férez:1995; MAP:1997; OECD: 1999th) share a minimum of formalization that distinguishes access to public employment from the characteristic system of the private sector. Based on this minimum, the differences concerning the degree of formalization are remarkable. A requirement has been defined (Ziller:1993,392) as the "common minimum" of the CS European systems (we can extend it to the rest of countries of the area under study). This is the requirement of publishing vacancies. Based on this

public call, some countries, such as Sweden—whose case we have already mentioned—the Netherlands or Denmark (all of them incorporated within what we will later describe as employment systems) allow the person responsible for the organization, agency or requesting unit, broad freedom to select.

Other countries, and especially those that is worth grouping as having career systems, incorporate additional mechanisms to guarantee preservation of the principles of equality and merit. The instruments differ in each country, but these can be grouped to simplify their description in three major models, whose basic patterns tend to be identified with the French, German and British systems.

The **French model** makes competition (*concours*) the basis of the recruitment and selection procedures. In France, the competition concept requires the presence of at least four requirements (Ziller:1993,398): a) a number of vacant posts (in a typical competition the number tends to be high), determined with precision; b) a tribunal independent of the political power, of the candidates, and of the managers in charge of the units in which the vacancies exist; c) a classification of the candidates accepted, ranked by merit (normally produced after the candidates take an test on subjects of a previously known program, and made up, at least partly, of anonymous written tests); and d) the obligation, on the part of the authority, to respect said classification.

Competitive recruitment is the standard, under different modalities, (MAP:1997) in Belgium, Spain, Italy—where it remains in force following the "privatization" reform of 1993—and Japan, as well as—although within the framework of another model of guarantees—in the United Kingdom.

Another characteristic feature of the French recruitment model are the schools of officials. In fact, what the French central administration normally recruits are not exactly officials but students of a specialized school, in which the future officials will be trained. This is a unique feature (closely linked to the system of bodies, to which we will refer to later) that has had much less dissemination than competition. Among the countries analyzed, only Spain, in a very limited manner, has made use of the same.

The **German model** is based on a very formal selection system in stages, combining theory and practice. In the high-level service, a first selection (State exam), after graduation from a university, leads to a two-year preparatory service, which combines theoretical training with the performance of labor practices that differ according to the specialty. This service culminates with a second State exam, performed by an independent tribunal, whose passing allow the performance of public functions for a period of three years plus the status of staff member in probation, without stability, which will be earned after a favorable statement from the incumbents of the agencies in which the person has provided services. At the other three levels of service, under the high-level level, the basic rules are the same, although the first exam is replaced with a school certification and some terms are reduced.

Recruitment, as such, remains in the hands of ministerial heads and of the *länder*, that elect, among the certified officials who have presented their applications, those who, in their opinion, are most suitable. The participation of personnel representatives in this selection is a significant limiting factor of management discretionary power in this field.

The German model is an original model of recruitment and selection that has not spread in other countries, with the only exception of Luxembourg, that has partially adopted it for the selection of its higher-level staff members. One of the most frequent criticisms of the model (Ziller:1993,395) is that it has been used to maintain the monopoly of jurists on the CS.

The **British model** is characterized by entrusting the recruitment to an independent central organ, not subject to the pressures of the electors. This is the Civil Service Commission, created in mid XIX Century, which is composed by three *commissioners*, named by the government to recruit and select the employees needed by the ministries, making them compete in an open competition. The British tradition of generalist officials leads—unlike what occurs in the French model—to very open competitions, centered on interviews designed to evaluate the qualities and personality of the candidates, without giving special importance to a specific university education—which also totally differentiates the selection of the German model. The administration is bound to the selections made by the Commission, and it cannot appoint other than the candidates certified by the Commission.

The protection of the merit system through the use of an independent commission is applied, in addition to the United Kingdom, in Ireland, Canada, the U.S., and Japan. Belgium was also inspired directly in the British model upon creating, in 1937, the permanent Secretariat for Recruitment. In Germany, there is a similar system to select the candidates that, in certain cases, apply directly for employment, without belonging to the public service career, and have not gone through the previous selection described above. The main criticisms to the independent commission system have pointed out (World Bank:2000) the risks of rift among the criteria of the former and those of the line managers, criticizing, in the words of Ziller (1993:396) an excess of independence on the part of the commission.

In summary, we could say that the three models described are an attempt to guarantee equality and merit in the civil service systems through a set of guarantees that have some common and other unique elements, but that certainly places the emphasis on different elements. The countries of the French model put the accent on the role of the selection instruments, creating systems of basically formal guarantees. The German model, also very formal, tends to guarantee the theoretical and practical training throughout a prolonged process. The British model, more flexible in the instruments, emphasizes the professionalism and independence of the selection organs.

Career Organization

Career development is a central delimitation element between CS systems. On this basis we can distinguish (Ziller:1993; Férez:1995; Sánchez Morón:1996; Palomar:2000; World Bank:2000) between employment systems (*position based*), and career systems.

Employment systems are organized based on the short-term personnel needs of the administration. Recruitment is produced for a post or position, and not for a broader framework to perform different positions. It is, normally, an open system, in which any position can be filled with outside candidates from the

administration, although, in certain cases, there may be different conditions for internal and external candidates. Sweden and the European Nordic countries, and the Netherlands have employment systems. This is also the system applied in many European countries for contractual employment covering tasks (technical, manual, subsidiary or temporary) or sectors (local governments in the United Kingdom; the French territorial public function) not affected by the public servants reserve. The range of this part of public employment in certain countries has led to talk (Ziller:1993,412) about *mixed systems*, to refer, in addition to the cited cases, to Germany and Belgium. With similar basis Spain could also have been included in this group.

Career systems are based on a hierarchical design of public jobs that implies that employees, recruited at a given level of employment, may in time move up through a series of levels, until reaching their corresponding maximum level. The career systems imply, accordingly, that there are certain positions that are considered access posts, reserved for external recruitment, and that the rest of the corresponding higher-level positions are available through internal promotion. Therefore, in every career system there are a given number of horizontal divisions (categories, scales, grades, classes, groups or other denominations), that reflect such ranking of the jobs, and whose limits are, on the one hand, the points in which external recruitment takes place and, on the other, those marking the maximum level that can be achieved through internal promotion. What is normal is that such horizontal ranking takes into account the formal level (certified by a degree or diploma) of specialized knowledge required to have access to the job. The CS of France, the United Kingdom, the U.S., Japan, Germany, Belgium and Spain, among others, are basically and without detriment to the aforementioned mixed assumptions, career systems.

At times, together with the horizontal stratification mentioned above, career systems also have vertical divisions. In certain cases, they respond to the need to limit mobility between sectors or organizations of the public system, as it happens in Germany, in order to preserve the constitutional principle of ministerial autonomy with regard to personnel management. In other cases, it concerns career organization mechanisms, as it occurs in the bodies system, originated in France and also adopted, with certain nuances, in the Spanish central administration. In short, a body groups a set of staff members recruited specifically for it, appointed to perform a given number of jobs, characteristic of its professional area. It is within the framework of that body that these staff members develop their career. The particular statutes of the bodies complete the general statute of the CS. In the French administration there are close to one thousand staff member bodies.

Summarizing, we can say that the fundamental distinction between the two CS systems is their relation with the job market. In the first case, the quantitative and qualitative personnel needs are basically met through the external adjustment. In the second, only the recruitment for the defined access positions is resolved in this manner. The creation of one or more internal job markets (Hondeghem and Steen: 2000. 65) will make personnel managers operate preferably within these markets to cover the rest of their needs.

Rights and Duties

In all the CS systems examined (MAP:1997; Ziller:1993), the right to the position (*tenure*) protects, to a greater or lesser extent, the civil servant from arbitrary dismissal, as a guarantee mechanism of maintaining an independent and professional behavior. All of them also include the possibility of dismissal for disciplinary reasons. The fundamental distinction, on this subject, would be among the systems that have standardized the termination of the employment relationship for organizational or economic reasons, and those that so far have not done so. We will return to this issue later on because this is a situation sometimes brought about by the reform processes. In any case, analysts agree that both the traditional culture of the administrations and the weight of union organizations within them, provide, in all cases, considerably higher stability to public employment than that of private employment.

CS systems coincide in demanding from civil servants a duty of loyalty to the nation and its basic institutions, as well as the duty of confidentiality concerning matters known on the basis of their position. In general they regulate, in addition, the incompatibilities of public servants with the performance of other jobs or political activities, although here the dispersion of national regulations concerning the degree of permissiveness is quite remarkable, and does not seem to respond to any recognizable pattern.

With regard to collective rights, the recognition of civil servants' right to strike divides the analyzed CS systems. This right is expressly prohibited in Belgium and Germany, and fully recognized in France and Italy. Also in Spain, where only policemen are exempted from exercising this right. In the Netherlands and the United Kingdom this right is not formally recognized, but exercising it does not lead to penalties. The rights of participation and collective bargaining of working conditions have been considerably consolidated and expanded during the last decades, with some exceptions. We will refer to them later.

System Administration

Contemporary politico-administrative systems tend to be complex and fragmented. This triggers opposite trends, toward diversification, necessary for adapting to a complex environment, and toward integration, indispensable for maintaining global cohesion and control. The different countries respond to the same in such a way that it is related, in general, to broader institutional contexts. CS systems are not unfamiliar to these pressures.

In fact, it could be said that those that we have called employment systems respond to the diversifying and adaptive pressures, while career models are more closely identified with the needs for internal coordination and cohesion. The distinction seems to us at least doubtful. On the one hand, the ability of managers to adapt personnel management to the specific needs of the services depends, more than on the existence of an employment system as such, on an organizational design that grants them the necessary autonomy. On the other, the career models often suffer from considerable internal fragmentation. This is the case in at least three instances: a) when the heterogeneity of the state plant and of its service portfolio in fact imposes distinct employment statutes

(careers) for different sectors (education, health, police, territorial administrations, etc.); b) when abundant use is made of the resource to create different entities and agencies (*quangos* and similar), exempted from the common system; and c) when the vertical divisions to which we have referred, and especially the bodies, increase the fragmentation trends, introducing even internal competition elements to secure parcels of the state apparatus.

What seems indubitable is that the figure of the public employer (a department or central agency, or else the ministries and agencies) can appear more centralized, in the cases in which the integrating and unifying trends have prevailed, or more decentralized, when the pressures toward adaptation have made it so. Thus, (OECD:1999a,21), we can say that France, Japan, Canada or Spain have centralized models, while the U.S., Sweden, the Netherlands, New Zealand and Australia, have more decentralized employment systems and human resources management.

In any case, as we shall see further on, one of the most powerful reform trends of CS systems within the OECD is precisely the decentralization of personnel decision-making. In recent years, the idea that the improvement of Human Resources structures and policies requires a decentralized design from the decision-making systems has reached, beyond the specific change initiatives in each country, a broad consensus.

3. THE REFORMS OF THE CIVIL SERVICE

3.1. THE NEED FOR CHANGE

Before focusing on the content of the changes, which is the focus of our objective, it seems necessary that we look for a moment to the diagnosis that made them necessary and that, in some measure, made them possible. In order to identify the features of the CS systems that at a given time appeared as dysfunctional, it seems necessary to frame that diagnosis, in the first place, in the broad reform movement of the public systems that has characterized most of the countries of the area analyzed during the last two decades of the last century; and, in second place, the set of social changes brought about during that period to the public employment environment.

Public Management Reforms

The CS reforms did not appear isolated, but, on the contrary, they appeared within a context of open questioning of the paradigms to which the politico-administrative systems of the developed world were adjusting their operation. The fiscal crisis, combined with the qualitative and quantitative expansion of the demand for public services, introduced in these systems pressures, frequently of a contradictory nature, causing movements for change (Barzelay:1998; Clarke and Newman:1997; Dunleavy and Hood:1994; Metcalfe:1993; Pollitt:1993; Pollitt and Bouckaert:2000; OCDE:2000a), that subverted many of the established patterns. Two trends or *megatrends* (Longo:1999,214) guided such movements. On the one hand, an efficiency trend, widely dominant, biased toward the fight against deficits and expenditure reduction, and very

much influenced by the *public choice* economic approaches (Schwartz:1994), and the political convictions of the “new right” (although, in practice, the political transversality of the reform initiatives and discourses ended up being of a significant nature). On the other, a “public service” trend, characterized by the emphasis on the quality of services, the concept of the citizen as a client and the achievement of “receptivity” of the administration (OCDE:1988,37).

What basis or core elements provided content to these reforms? Some have written (Barzelay:1998, 173 and following) about a new post-bureaucratic paradigm to change the focus of the convictions and the behavior of public actors, displacing them from the monitoring of regulations to the creation of value; from a generic public interest to the production of tangible results; from administration to production; from imposed responsibility to accountability; and from control, to compliance of shared standards. For Horton (2000:212), this new paradigm prefers decentralization to centralization, diversity to uniformity, performance to administrative routine, and enterprising willpower to consistency.

Clarke and Newmann (1997:29) place the emphasis on *dispersion* as the political strategy for State reform, in which they include various types of systems and mechanisms: the introduction of market forces, the expansion of other non-state sectors, the development of centralization/decentralization processes, as well as the outsourcing and privatization of public services. “Managerial” would be the ideology conferring sense on such a scattered design of power, in which managerial discretion (the “right to manage”) is configured as a core key.

This whole set of trends can be inscribed within the context of the inrush of *management* in public Administration (Echebarria:1993). To refer to this, a broad sector of scholars of such phenomenon has coined the expression “New Public Management.” Dunleavy and Hood (1994:9) have described its main features as follows:

- a) Transformation of budgets, to make them transparent from the accounting point of view, attributing costs, not to *inputs* but to *outputs*, and measuring these through results indicators.
- b) A vision of the organizations as a chain of principal-agent low cost relations, in contracts networks linking incentives to performance.
- c) Disaggregation of separable tasks in quasi-contractual or quasi-market forms, particularly through the introduction of provider/client distinctions, and replacement of the previous planning and service delivery unified structures.
- d) Opening the procurement functions to competition among agencies, or among public agencies, companies, and nonprofit organizations.
- e) Deconcentration of provider roles into minimum viable size agencies, allowing users more “exit” options from one provider to another, and relying more in these than in “voice” options, to guarantee the influence of the former in the form services are delivered.

The authors cited also place the emphasis on the expansion of the discretionary power of the directives that such arrangements entail. One of the issues that have been discussed is, precisely, if these reforms have implied in fact a displacement of the boundaries between policy and management, and, if this

has been the case, in what sense. For some (Clarke and Newman:1997), *management* has invaded politics and occupied spaces of the political territory. For others (Halligan:1997), on the contrary, the managerial reform has been the vehicle through which government politicians have gained greater control over their staff members. Probably, there is some truth in both. As underlined by Pollitt and Bouckaert (2000:146), managers have gained new authority in different ways, and at the same time political control has been strengthened in most of the cases. There is not contradiction, we believe, between both things, inasmuch as the governments, pursuing precisely greater control over the administrative apparatus, have had to resort to decentralized designs that increase at the same time managerial discretionary power.

As we will attempt to specify further on, this set of change trends were designed to exert strong influence on the transformation of CS systems, in all the area included, although said influence would lead to ambitious reforms and of very unequal content.

Changes in the Public Employment Environment

In the same period of time in which we placed the reforms mentioned in the previous point, and especially during the last decade, a set of broad scope changes altered the context of human work in the economies and societies of the developed world (Bridges:1995; Cranfield Network:1996; Fundación Encuentro:1998; Giarini and Liedtke:1996; Pfeffer:1998), making it the scenario of major transformations that could not stop influencing public employment. We will state, in a very summarized manner, some of those change trends.

The Work Contract: Toward the end of Taylorism

The uniformity and standardization characterizing the employment relation of the industrial era has become, in our day, diversity and flexibility. Products or services can be produced and distributed through global networks (Giarini and Liedtke:1996,194), thus incorporating a trend toward the redefinition and decentralization of the workplace. Network business designs have stimulated the appearance of new modalities of articulating the relation between the organization and the worker. The dependency/autonomy binomial of employment is being combined in highly diverse forms. Multiple types of employment relations, in which the provision/consideration mechanisms are diversified, replace the traditional work contract.

Weakening of Stable Employment

This new work contract tends to lose a considerable part of the stability that characterized it. Man's working life is becoming longer than the job, and probably longer than the company itself. The concept symbolizing the new relation is that of *employability*, which means (Pfeffer:2000,162) that companies provide interesting jobs that will help workers develop their capacity, but do not promise long-term stability in the position. In its place, the only promise made is that the experience and acquired skills will provide better possibilities of finding employment when needed. As Bridges (1995:76) affirms, in that new relation, the environment of the position, on both sides of the border of the organization, becomes a market and maintaining his/her high market value will be the central

concern of the worker in the scenarios of the future. Continuous learning and unlearning processes are consubstantial to such scenarios.

From “homo faber” to “homo sapiens.”

Entry in the knowledge society implies (Obeso:1999.23 and following) that knowledge has become a crucial asset to organizations. This implies, on the one hand, a loss in weight of the least skilled work, that tends to become mechanized or outsourced, fostering peripheral job markets (which cannot be forgotten as well as the need to adequately manage it). In addition, it has prioritized retaining and developing skilled workers, frequent carriers of the competitive advantage, whose management requires very different forms and methods. The ability concept, or intellectual capital, is not identified only with knowledge, but increasingly extends (Dalziel:1996, 32 and following) to a broader set of competencies, in which factors such as personality, attitudes, and values acquire, increasingly, a determining meaning.

Paradoxes of the Job Market

European countries, which comprise the majority of the group of countries examined, have experienced during this period a significant growth in unemployment, which has become one of the major concerns of governments (European Council:1997). Some countries, of which France is the most significant example, developed plans in which the public sector played a relevant role in the learning processes and labor incorporation, linked to the new employment sources. In parallel, and paradoxically, the growth in the demand for skilled employees exceeded, sometimes by much, the capacity of the labor market to provide them. The crisis of the educational systems highlighted this imbalance that, although it affected especially the so-called knowledge workers, ended up spreading to sectors requiring average skills in industry and services, insufficiently supported by the governing systems of professional education. At the same time (Fudge:1995,132; OCDE:2000d) the isolation of the public function, with respect to the job market, diminished, forcing it to enter, increasingly, in competition with the private sector with regard to wages and working conditions.

The Rearrangement of Working Hours

During this period working hours became a subject of vital concern and interest. Several reasons contributed to this focus. On the one hand, the new environment of the company increasingly required a flexible response capacity, which the standardized regulations of the working day did not allow (Cranfield Network:1996). The yearly days, the reserves of hours for unforeseen or seasonal work, compensation of overtime through free time, were, among others, formulas that were increasingly tried in this direction. In turn, the rearrangement of the work schedule cleared the way to improvements in productivity that made possible attempts to cut down the workday, within the framework of the policies to fight unemployment. A new social pact model was being drawn in this regard. (France was, in this area, the country that bet the most on its behalf). The change processes in this field came rapidly, on the other hand, by phenomena such as the massive incorporation of women into the labor market, or the increasingly felt need to reconcile work with personal

and family life, that promoted modalities of part-time work, work away from the workplace, and other (Fundación Encuentro:1998,174; Giarini and Liedtke:1996,236 and following).

All these changes tend to keep away the ordinary work world from the traditional guidelines articulating the CS systems, pulling these in different directions. Until then undisputed public employment peculiarities began to be questioned as a result of the impact of these trends on social belief systems. Penetration of the business management models will bring closer to the CS the new employment guidelines. Greater permeability between public and private organizations, consubstantial to the reforms previously alluded to, will work in a similar direction.

Managerial Diagnosis of the Dysfunctions of the Civil Service

In spite of the diversity of CS models and national specificities, an analysis of the specialized literature (Ziller:1993, 419; U.S. National Performance Review:1993; Longo:1995, 10; Rouban:1997; Ridley:2000, 30-31; Horton:2000, 210 and following; Ruffini:2000, 137; Hondeghem and Steen:2000, 64 and following) reveals a high degree of concentration and coincidence when identifying, from the perspective of the *managerial* reform of the administration, the main dysfunctions of the human resources public management systems. We summarize them briefly:

- a) An excess of uniformity within the CS regulatory frameworks reduces the capacity to adapt to plural environments and to react in the face of change.
- b) There are too many regulations, which leads to a high and excessive degree of standardization of personnel practices.
- c) Management is excessively centralized. Managers have limited autonomy to exercise their responsibilities with regard to management of their human resources.
- d) The organization of work (structures and positions) is limited and atomized. Frequently, it is imposed by law or the centralized collective agreements, and not by the managers. There is excessive specification of tasks that brings about rigidity in the allocation of the work.
- e) Mobility is low, both internally and externally. Internal mobility is hindered by the already mentioned excessive regulation of tasks, and sometimes by horizontal and vertical barriers.
- f) The recruitment and selection systems are long, complex, and excessively formalized. Excessive weight is placed on knowledge and formal merits.
- g) Excessive job security (perception of guaranteed stability) has been confirmed.
- h) Promotion is hindered by the existence of grade barriers that make career advancement difficult. Frequently, excessive weight is given to seniority.
- i) Frequently remuneration is based on grade and not on position, which does not link salaries to assumed responsibilities and real workloads. Grade levels can become, in addition, barriers to salary progression.

- j) There is an almost absolute separation between performance in the position and how the promotion and reward systems work. Experiences of reward for performance run into the nonexistence of effective evaluation mechanisms.
- k) The systems suffer from low capacity to produce competences and management profiles.
- l) Management styles tend to be paternalistic. Frequently, they adopt support behaviors for the staff, rather than enforcement.
- m) Collectivism in labor relations prevails, which comes into conflict with the growing needs for segmentation and personalization of personnel practices. At times, a trend toward a high degree of conflict is detected.

Obviously, in spite of the coincidences indicated, the weight of each of these dysfunctions is different in each of national realities studied, in which we would find, in addition, unincorporated nuances to such a schematic relation as the previous one. Together, the diagnosis presents a situation characterized by the abundance of rigidity elements. It would be necessary to add that these elements operate differently in relation to the CS model in question. In general, we can state that the rigidity of the system is a greater concern in the career models than in the employment models, although, the latter are not exempt either from criticisms in an analogous sense.

3.2. THE SENSE OF THE REFORMS

We will address in this section, in the first place, the more global or generic change trends in the CS systems; afterwards we will comment on some factors that explain the differences in the scope or intensity of the reforms; and finally we will attempt to identify what is behind the trend to flexibility, which has become the central slogan of these reforms.

Main Objectives and Change Trends

First of all, the reforms to the CS have meant setting a value to human resources management (hereinafter, HRM), which has been recognized (Horton:2000,212) as the central function of management of public services. The influence, in this regard, of similar trends in the private sector (Pfeffer:1998) seems indisputable. Part of this reconsideration has had to do with the efficiency trend, mentioned above, of public sector reforms, strongly biased toward adjustment and resource savings. Since personnel expenditures constitute a high percentage of public budgets, reduction of the same has been converted into a main objective (OCDE:1999a:25).

But the priority assigned to HRM has not only been the result of the need for cost reduction. It has also had to do with a rethinking of the directing or managerial function itself and with the recognition of its role in the public system, which we have already mentioned before. This inrush of *management*, and the decentralized logic that it brings along, has produced a generalized trend to transfer autonomy and the expansion of discretionary power of managers with regard to HRM (OCDE:1999a, 20; Pollitt and Bouckaert:2000, 72 and following; Ruffini:2000, 138-39; Horton:2000, 212 and following;

Thompson and Cachares:2000, 239), that constitutes one of the most intense global and shared trends of the reforms. In turn, it has given priority to the strengthening of the managerial function and to management development that has often been translated (Butler:1993; Pollitt and Bouckaert:2000,74) in the definition of specific structures and personnel policies for the management segment of the CS, to which we will allude further on.

The CS in the countries under analysis has evolved, in general, from a uniform system to one that is more pluralist (Ridley:2000,32), in which, in the face of traditional restrictions and standardization, different modes of employment and diversified patterns of work have been appearing (Horton:2000, 213) that have been translated into different contractual modalities and of organization of the work schedule. The influence, here, of the previously cited social changes has been indisputable.

In general, permeability to the influences of the private sector has been another of the common features of change processes, which has brought with it a trend of questioning the excessive stability and protection of public employment (Pollitt and Bouckaert:2000, 73; Thompson and Cachares:2000, 240). In Italy, the “privatizing” trend has played a leading role in a global reform attempting to confront the dysfunctions of the CS through a change, in 1993, of its legal system (Martínez Bargeño:1995, 32; Ruffini:2000, 138). This reform has redirected public employment under the civil and common labor law, and now the working relations are regulated through individual contracts and collective agreements, and are protected by the ordinary labor tribunals. The importance of this type of reform has been questioned by some, indicating that it places the change in a merely formal dimension. Among them, Ridley (2000:28) has indicated that contractual employment may not offer more flexibility than the statutory one, since both can end up enjoying the same stability and protection, and the same wage and working conditions. The experience in Spain, in whose administrations there are numerous contractual employments, subject to the labor law (Longo:1995) would make it possible to support this trend.

The increase in the mobility of people is another one of those common objectives (OCDE:1999a,19-20). Internal mobility, both functional and geographical, is an assumption, on the one hand, to obtain the maximum utilization of staff, which makes it indispensable in adjustment scenarios. On the other hand, it makes it possible to adapt the resources to environment or demand changes, increasingly frequent in the current scenarios. The incentive for mobility, both horizontal and vertical, makes it necessary to eliminate the characteristic barriers, as we saw, of many CS systems. External mobility is, in turn, a characteristic feature of the trends, as those we analyzed, of greater openness and permeability between the public and private sectors.

Promoting mobility in all these senses and directions requires going beyond the visions that perceive it as a strictly voluntary mechanism, based on a subjective right of the public worker (Longo:1995, 8), but virtually non-executable by force because of organizational needs. Some of the CS reforms are going in this direction. But this objective requires, in addition, different human resources policies, that are more flexible than the traditional ones. We will discuss further on, with greater specificity, the HRM areas in which those new policies are brought about.

Finally, another of the major areas on which the CS reforms have an affect is that of the labor relation models. Public employers (Horton:2000, 213) have had to learn to combine the channels of collective bargaining, giving special importance in the same to those with negotiating behaviors rather than to those looking for confrontation, with less mediated and formalized trends for collective relations, in which direct communication with groups of employees appears as a normal guideline, within a framework of growing personalization of the different HRM policies and practices.

Differences in Scope and Intensity

Without detriment to that generic coincidence with regard to the contents, the national situations examined present among themselves significant differences concerning the scope of the changes. In this regard, two represent the extreme poles: On the one hand, the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand, countries that can be considered as the archetypal scenario of the “New Public Management”, have in reality experienced transformations of singular intensity, in all the ways indicated in the previous section. On the other extreme, Germany probably appears as the country in which the traditions of its CS are kept more unaltered, and where reforms have been oriented much more to the rationalization and to savings than to the questioning of HRM structures and policies.

There are several factors that can explain these differences. We will cite, among them, the following (Pollitt and Bouckaert:2000; 39 and following; Ridley:2000, 24; Horton and Farnham:2000, 322 and following):

- a) The different perceptions concerning the role and meaning of public servants, firmly held in the visions of the State to which we referred in section 2.2.
- b) The nature of the constitution and the political system, favoring sometimes—unitary states, majority systems—large-scale changes and from top to bottom, or, in other cases,—federal or combined states, fragmented powers—more partial approaches and based on consensus (the differences among the British and U. S. systems would be, in this point, relevant).
- c) The political culture. In France or Germany, the weight of the values of continuity, regularity, and neutrality prevails over those of receptivity to the demands of politicians and citizens, who tend to be, on the other hand, prevalent in the Anglo-Saxon context.
- d) The legal systems that imply restrictions of greater or smaller importance, whose change implies efforts of also different meaning.
- e) The existing power balances in the area of labor relations in the public sector. The weight of the unions in France is considerably greater, for example, than in the United Kingdom (Rouban:1997). Also, the cultural conventions prevailing in said framework of relations. In Italy or Spain, confrontational unionism is much more habitual than in Sweden, where the unions in general have assumed a role of support for the reforms.

The Trend toward Flexibility

We already saw that rigidity was the common element in the dysfunctions identified by the “managerial diagnosis” of the traditional CS systems. It cannot surprise us that flexibility has become the slogan that synthesizes, at least in the OECD, which coined it some years ago, the main reform trends of HRM in the public sector. Flexibility is a very polysemous term, loaded with possible meanings that, as often happens, sometimes enter into conflict. It is worthwhile, thus, that we make an effort to clarify of what thing, or rather of what things we speak when we utilize this term for the purpose of our work.

The contemporary debate on labor flexibility started in Europe during the last part of the 1970s and the first part of the 1980s (Farnham and Horton:2000, 7), linked to a set of social facts among which are: 1) the change in the world markets and the increase in global competition; 2) the technological change, especially that one registered in the field of information and communications; 3) the volatility of the product markets; 4) growing unemployment; and 5) the passage of the industrial economy to the so-called post-industrial era. These scenarios affect various social actors, based on a set of issues such as education and continuous training, social legislation, wage systems, work schedules, equality of opportunities or the flexibility of public service organizations (European Commission:1997).

The paradigm of the “flexible company” (Atkinson and Meager:1986, 2-11), supposedly capable of coping with the set of challenges presented by such scenarios incorporates various types of flexibility, with regard to HRM:

- a) Numerical flexibility, defined as the ability of companies to adjust the number of workers or of working hours to changes produced in the demand.
- b) Functional flexibility, or the ability to reorganize the competences associated with the jobs, so that the incumbents of the positions can develop them through an expanded fan of tasks, horizontally, vertically or in both directions.
- c) Detachment, which is conceived as the displacement of work contracts by commercial contracts or subcontracting, for the purpose of concentrating the organization on the competitive advantage or finding less expensive formulas to administer non-nuclear activities.
- d) Wage flexibility, which is identified with the capacity of the company to make its retributive structures stimulate functional flexibility, become competitive in regard to the scarcest competences in the job market, and reward the individual effort and performance of employees.

Implicit in this set of statements, formulated with the company in mind (in a similar sense, Institute of Personnel and Development:1994), we find two visions of flexibility, both present, in variable doses, in the change processes and discourses of the CS public systems. (Longo:2001, 197). Although it does not deal, in a strict sense, with reciprocally exclusive visions, they do indeed use to correspond with the predominant management approaches adopted in each case.

The first one of these flexibility visions is based on a dominant perception of people as a restriction and places the emphasis on the reduction of personnel costs. It links with the business discourses of reengineering, *downsizing*, key competencies and the network company, and is oriented mainly to the detection and elimination of surpluses, and to the conversion of fixed personnel costs to variables. Taking into account the clearly inspiration on efficiency (*value for money*) of many administrative reform processes, it is not rare that this notion of flexibility is clearly present in them.

The second vision tends to perceive people rather as opportunity, and places the emphasis on the flexibility of HRM as support for the creation of value by people. It harmonizes with the business discourses on total quality (European Foundation for Quality Management:1999), flattening of structures and *empowerment*, or with high performance practices (Pfeffer:2000, 44 and following), and also with the trends of administrative modernization which are based more on the idea of public service, of receptivity improvement, or of conversion of the administered into client (OCDE:1988).

The option for one of these approaches, with the exclusion of its contrary, would introduce an impoverishing bias in the use of the concept. Adopting exclusively the second approach could lead to avoiding the adequate responses to the incremental growth of personnel expenditures that has characterized during decades the expansive budgets of the welfare state in the OECD. The opposite option could lead to the weakening of the capacity for intervention, and to the appearance of anorexic organizations that conserve only nominally a public service dimension.

For the governments, as well as for the companies, people represent both an asset and a cost. Flexibility should extend to personnel policies and practices that connect with both dimensions. A balanced synthesis of the two stated approaches, then, seems necessary, in which the quantitative and qualitative elements of people management are taken into account, and that a proposal be made in each case to collaborate in the creation of the greatest degree of public value, at the least possible cost.

From a different angle, that of the interests at stake, two more visions are possible and necessary (Ridley:2000, 33). On the one hand, from the standpoint of the interests of the organizations, flexibility relates to the mechanisms through which organizational structures, work processes, and personnel practices facilitate an increase in the managers' control over their human resources. On the other, from the perspective of the persons, flexibility has to do with the changes that empower workers to exercise greater control over their lives. Both dimensions contribute, in proportions to be determined in each case, to the changes in CS systems. On some occasions, these are compatible and complementary perspectives that are reciprocally strengthened. Sometimes, on the contrary, they enter in conflict and force the reformers to define options that give special importance to one or the other.

In the CS, the intensity of the legal instruments tends to confer to the flexibility-oriented reforms specific connotations. The deregulatory emphasis is much greater. It is advisable not to forget, however, that the normative change, by itself, cannot have a loosening impact. Sometimes, on the contrary, (Ridley:2000, 34) flexibility of personnel regulations may be facilitated by

previous changes in work processes, through which “the debureaucratization of the work precedes the debureaucratization of the people.”

Let us say, finally, that guiding public organizations and CS systems to flexibility should not be done at the cost of losing continuity and cohesion. Mayrhofer (1996) has utilized the comparison of the spinal column to make visible the need that adaptable organizations combine, in adequate proportions, rigid and flexible elements. Richards (1995:16) reminds us in turn that flexibility is not synonym of lack of a human resources strategy. On the contrary, the needs for a long-term personnel policy should be taken into account, and integrate the different parts of a more flexible HRM. “Flexibility and strategy are not opposed: they shake hands.”

3.3. STRUCTURES AND POLICIES THAT HAVE BEEN SUBJECT TO REFORM

The Quantitative Dimension of Public Employment

Practically all the OECD countries (OCDE:1999a, 24; OCDE:1999b) have attempted to reduce the volume of public employment, or at least control and contain its growth, toward the end of the 1980s and during the 1990s. The magnitude and intensity of this effort have been, however, very different in the different countries, as shown by the following examples.

The United Kingdom has been one of the most impressive examples in *downsizing*. Between 1979 and 1998 (Horton:2000, 214 and following), the total *Civil Service* fell from 732,000 employees to 480,000, which implied a loss of almost 35 percent in employment. In the British local government, the number of employees fell in the same period from 3 million people to 2.1 million (30 percent less). Australia and New Zealand (Stewart:1994, 70-71) registered, in the last years 1980, strong reductions. The Australian federal government reduced its personnel by 10 percent between 1985 and 1990. In New Zealand, the reduction in this period affected 80,000 jobs, and represented a 29 percent reduction in the central nucleus of public service. The Southern countries carried out to a large extent the restructuring of their public sector in these years, which means that since then they have constantly maintained their number of jobs (OCDE:1999a).

In the U.S., employment reduction policies were also developed with considerable force, but were concentrated especially in the 1990s. Between 1994 and 1999, the number of jobs in the Federal Administration was reduced by 13 percent (Thompson and Cachares:2000, 246), although in the total North American public sector, the annual reduction rate was lower: it did not reach 1 percent in the period 1990-1997 (OCDE:1999a). One of the characteristics here has been the selective nature of the adjustments, in accordance with the priorities of the *National Performance Review*, which converted control positions (not finalists) in the central objective of the reductions, recommending a 50 percent reduction. In accordance with such recommendation, and perhaps in order to set the example, the *US Office of Personnel Management* went, between 1993 and 1998, from 6900 to 3600 employees, carrying out a 48 percent reduction.

On the contrary, and in the other extreme, Japan has limited itself to contain the growth of its roster of staff, without being involved in significant reduction policies. Between 1990 and 1995, its average annual variation was (OCDE:1999a) 0.16 percent, equivalent to the maintenance of jobs. The evolution in Italy has been similar (Ruffini:2000,141), where even in the local area a slight growth has been detected. The case of Spain is also similar, (Parrado:2000, 155) where the International Monetary Fund detected, in a 1996 Report, duplication of services between administrative levels, due to lack of transfers of personnel from the central administration to the autonomous communities. France, Canada, and the Netherlands show superior reduction figures, but modest, with annual negative variation rates lower than 1 percent for similar periods, between 1990 and 1997 (OCDE:1999a). The reduction figures in Finland and Norway are somewhat higher for the same period.

In Germany, we found an interesting experience, which does not reach the level of severity of the reductions made in the countries indicated at the beginning, but that reflects the priority that—as we said previously—the rationalization and savings policy has had in this country, within the framework of the CS reforms. Between 1991 and 1997 (Röber and Löffler:2000, 126), the body of German administrations reduced their employment by 11 percent. The effort was unequally distributed, since while the *länder* diminished their numbers by 5 percent, the local governments did it by 15, and the federal government by 19, which represents a truly significant reduction.

If we refer to the instruments utilized for the development of these policies, we will also find differences among the countries (OCDE:1999a). In some cases, the reductions in jobs have been framed in specific plans, promoted by the governments. Thus has been in the cases of the U.S., where, as we saw, the NPR included specifically quantified objectives of reduction, and Canada. In the United Kingdom (Horton:2000, 214), the cuts were made through a combination of transfers of functions and personnel to the private sector, elimination of vacancies, advanced retirement, and dismissals.

In most of the countries, indirect methods have been utilized, mainly the restriction in the allocation of budgetary resources (Australia, Germany), advanced retirement plans (Spain), or non-replenishment measures, as in Italy. Also in Spain (Palomar:1997, 48), a limit in the refill of vacant positions that is set every year by the Law of Budgets of the State was established in 1997, as a basic standard, that is, of mandatory compliance for all public administrations, and that currently is set at 25 percent, which implies that only one of every four vacant posts can be filled.

Employment Stability and Protection, and Contractual Flexibility

The objective of the reforms in this area has been that of reducing, in the extent of what is possible and without affecting the characteristic guarantees of the CS systems, that we previously defined, the hiperprotección of public employment and the consequent guarantee of stability (*tenure*), considered as an element of rigidity hindering the effective operation of the administrations. Two have been the directions in which the changes have been directed. On the one hand, in some cases, the employment statutes of public servants have been redefined, incorporating the possibility of applying revocation of the employment relation in

certain cases. On the other, more flexible or extended contractual modalities have been introduced.

We said in a previous section that in all the models and national CS systems the possibility of dismissal for disciplinary reasons is included. Naturally, that possibility does not suffice in order to respond to the needs for job suppression for organizational, technical, or economic reasons. The dynamic character of the contemporary environments of many public services makes increasingly frequent the need for this type of dismissal. Thus, the reforms of the CS in some countries have aimed at regulating these assumptions. In some case, as that of Sweden, previously mentioned, this line of reform was already unnecessary, since its public employment model included this possibility since 1965. In others, it was part of the package of changes that was introduced. Also in this area, Australia and New Zealand (Stewart:1994; Boston:1997) have made the most impressive mark, with reforms that substantially brought closer the public employment relation to that of the private sector, oriented to grant to management the ability to contract and dismiss.

In the opposite case, are, among others, France and Japan (OCDE:1999a,22), where there is still no possibility for the employer to put an end to the employment relation for causes other than disciplinary. In Spain, the situation is similar. A 1993 law made the way for the possibility of eliminating positions for organizational causes, through a complicated procedure, the “employment plans”, that legally authorized the Administration to initiate a relocation process whose complexity maintains it, however, virtually inapplicable.

On the contrary, in certain countries, such as the U.S., Canada, or the Netherlands, dismissal on these grounds is possible. Also, at least theoretically, in Italy (Martínez Bagueño:1995,39), where the reform of 1993, lacking an express provision in this regard, and upon referring to the labor law, opens the way for dismissal with the same rules applied in the private sector. In any case, all the specialized literature coincides in that the stability of public employment continues to be, in most of the countries, much higher than that of private employment. Two reasons contribute to this. On the one hand, factors of a cultural nature: the traditions of the public sector continue to weigh considerably. On the other, the weight of the unions in many countries, that has played an important role in braking real questioning, in practice, of such traditions. In the German municipal area (Röber and Löffler:2000, 125), where legal stability continues to be considerable but many local governments put up with severe financial pressures, the CS union (OTV) imposes on the authorities the signing of “protection agreements”, in contrast to the possible negative effects of the reforms, for the employees. In Sweden where dismissal of civil servants is relatively frequent, the State and the unions have created (Gustaffson:1995b,59) an agency to attempt their reemployment.

The other great line of flexible treatment in this field is, as we said, the utilization of contractual modalities that do not imply employment stability. In Belgium, for example, where the statutory appointment is the firmly settled standard, 21 percent of the employees of the ministries maintains a contractual relation with the government (Hondeghem and Steen:2000, 68).

In some countries, such as the United Kingdom, the introduction of short-term contracts has accompanied the reforms of the high-level CS, where the way has

been made for contracting formulas of limited duration for managerial jobs. We will refer to these processes later, in a specific section of this part of the work.

Massive use of temporary contracting is a general practice in all the countries examined. Usually thought of as a resource to cope with peaks of workload, seasonal overloads, incidental needs of expert work or independent judgment, campaigns or projects of limited duration, or similar incidences, temporary contracting has tended to become (Horton:2000;Parrado:2000; OCDE:1999b) a resource to meet permanent needs, avoiding the rigidity of the CS systems, or budgetary constraints.

The Netherlands has been one of the countries in which the use of flexible contractual modalities has been more significant (They Go der Krogt et al.:2000, 193), encompassing labor or commercial contracting formulas, of predetermined duration or not, as well as the generalized resource to temporary work companies. An original experience in this country has been the internal *pool* of temporary work, organized to face temporary excessive workloads, and at times connected to policies destined to facilitate employment to certain categories of claimants (young people, immigrants or long-lasting strikers). There are several interministerial *pools*, intended to facilitate flexible collaboration between departments, one of which is collaboration among the internal audit units of five different ministries.

The extreme formula utilized to confront the problems of contractual rigidity of the CS systems has been *outsourcing*, or service subcontracting. Although it may not had been this, at least in theory, the underlying logic to these outsourcing processes, the experts coincide in diagnosing the search for more flexible formulas of employment as the dominant cause in many experiences. Among the analyzed countries, Sweden, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom are (Horton and Farnham:2000,317) those that have made a greater use of subcontracting.

Functional Flexibility: Instruments of Work Organization

We address here the changes related to attempts at eliminating or reducing the rigidity of the mechanisms for recruitment, selection, post design and tasks, and evaluation, which are characteristic, as previously indicated, of the bureaucratic CS systems.

In regard to recruitment and selection, the objective of the reforms focuses on overcoming the mechanisms based strictly in specialized technical knowledge, or in merely formal merits, characteristic of traditional CS processes. We speak here both about the systems to become a civil servant, characteristic of the career systems, and of those which are applied for access to the job, both if they operate on job markets external to the Administration, and if the assignment is produced through internal promotion. Both in some cases as in others, the dominant trends of change aim at the introduction of competency-based models. The notion of competences includes the set of knowledge, abilities, attitudes, values, cognitive capacities, and personality features that in each case configure the suitability profiles for the successful performance of the different positions and tasks (Longo:2001,199).

Management by competencies, whose incorporation into the CS systems reflects the influence of prevalent guidelines in the management of people developed in the private sector (Dalziel:1996), has been applied especially in the British CS, which is beginning to be seen (Horton:2000,216) as a competency-based organization, that identifies the key qualities that are specified in every level and in each branch of the service. The competencies become the basis for recruitment, development, and evaluation. Initially developed by the *Civil Service College* as an aide for the training of the High-level Civil Service, this approach has quickly extended to all levels of the CS in the United Kingdom.

In regard to recruitment and selection, the introduction of these approaches requires significant innovations in the following spheres: a) in the definition of the profiles of the incumbents of the positions, which should be based, as we said, in personal quality lists, many of them not taken into account by the common systems; b) in the selection instruments, that should be expanded, adapting to the different profiles that should be explored, and incorporating the set of techniques already used by the companies; and c) in the selection organs, that should be modernized and specialized, designed in such a way that they incorporate experts in the administration of such instruments.

With some frequency, these new guidelines appear combined with a trend to a more decentralized management of the recruitment and selection functions. The modification, in various U.S. states (Thompson and Cachares:2000, 248), of the traditional “rule of three” (the manager elects based on interviews from among the three candidates that have obtained the maximum scoring in the formal knowledge examinations), expanding it up to 10 or 20 candidates, is a change in this direction.

The second great area of change, in this area of functional flexibility, is related to the design of the job posts. The direction here is toward the expansion of post descriptions in two ways: a) horizontal, increasing the number of tasks likely to be carried out by the incumbent of the position, in case of being necessary for organizational reasons; or, if it is preferred, reducing the specialization and standardization to a compatible minimum in each case with the effectiveness and quality of the work; and b) vertical, which implies expanding the fan of levels or bands (*broadbanding*) in which the tasks that can be demanded of the occupant of the position are classified. Frequently, this second expansion brings along changes in the design of wage structures, to which we will refer afterwards. They also imply, in general, a flattening of the structures that brings along the reduction of hierarchical levels.

The objective of these transformations seems clear: increase the versatility of the positions and, consequently, the flexibility with which the organization can have available its human resources in contexts of change, allowing better utilization of the same. An example of these directions (Horton:2000, 221) are the *mixed skilling* strategies in the British National Health Services, that intend to cross transversally in some cases the borders among the medical, paramedical and nursing fields, in matters such as minor surgery, the utilization of certain diagnostic technologies, etc. In the Netherlands (Van der Krogt et al.:2000, 205), an ever-growing number of local governments are utilizing the assignment of “general service” personnel, characterized by a broader functional flexibility that ordinary.

The expansion of bands has allowed the reduction and simplification of the post classification systems, characteristic of many public bureaucracies, and based on an exhaustive definition of the tasks that have often been utilized (Longo:2001,202) to guarantee functional redoubts anchored in the routine and protected against any minimum demand for versatility. Only the California CS includes (Thompson and Cachares:2000, 247) 4500 classifications of positions, of which 1600 include five employees or less. In the state of Washington, a new classification system consolidated 750 classifications in only four broad bands.

All these directions toward multi-functionality bring along new needs in other areas of the HRM. On the one hand, they incorporate strong needs for investment in training, which force to configure this as a planned and central activity for the organizations (Cabinet Office:1996). On the other, they tend to the application of performance evaluation systems that are less formalized, more personalized, and increasingly aimed at supporting the development of human resources and at identifying training needs.

Promotion and Mobility Mechanisms

With regard to promotion, the emphasis of the reforms (OECD:1999a) has been in reducing the weight of seniority in promotions, and in linking these to the development of competencies and high performance in the position (World Bank:2000). As is obvious, this concern has been practically exclusive of the countries with career CS systems, where the traditional promotional procedures turn out to be dysfunctional. It is necessary to say, on the one hand, that the weight of seniority continues to be notable in the development of professional careers in these models; and, on the other, that the deficits of the evaluation instruments notably hinder, in general, the introduction of the new guidelines.

Another line of reform has been, in some cases, the introduction of promotion and recognition forms adapted to the processes, that we mentioned before, of flattening of organizational structures, with its reducing effect of possibilities of hierarchical advancement. Thus, for example, the "financing careers" introduced in Belgium at all administrative levels (national, state and local) have been created to compensate for the loss of category and grade (Hondeghe and Steen:2000, 72).

With regard to mobility, this is a concern of absolutely general scope in the analyzed countries. It is a matter in which the individual and organizational dimensions of flexibility, which we addressed before, are simply evident. A correct design of mobility (Longo:1995, 8) will try to harmonize the needs and strategies of the organization, leading to an optimal utilization of its human capital, with the aspirations and interests of personnel, leading to the realization of the task under the most satisfactory and gratifying conditions, from the individual standpoint. Both perspectives are present, as we will see, in the experiences examined.

The first requirement in the articulation of policies to promote mobility is, in some cases, the elimination, or overcoming of the barriers that, as we saw, characterized certain CS career systems. It is not strange that in France there is an effort to develop, since 1990 (Durafour Agreement), attempts at reducing the number of bodies (Burnham:2000,108), either by adapting the existing (the only

example of a sustained effort in this regard has been the Ministry of Agriculture), or else creating (Ministries of Education, and of Youth and Sports) broader inter-corporative professional groups, in which mobility is possible.

Part of the efforts of governments in this area has been geared toward the creation of mechanisms capable of imposing compulsory mobility for organizational reasons. In Germany (Röber and Löffler:2000, 127), compulsory transfers were established for these causes with the limit of 5 years if they did not have the consent of the interested party. The *détachements* operate with similar scope in France (MAP:1997). In Spain (Palomar:1997), the “employment plans” of 1993, aforementioned, were created in order to make possible, among other things, compulsory mobility, both functional and geographical, of staff members. A similar mechanism (Martínez Bargeño:1995,37) was created around the same time in Italy. Other instruments implemented for allowing compulsory mobility are, in the Dutch local sector, the mobility *bureaux* (Van der Krogt et al.:2000), which are centers that assume the reassignment of employees, which in the case of small organizations, act collectively to facilitate transfers between different local governments, sometimes with the support of private employment agencies.

The analyzed experiences make it possible to state that having the mechanism does not always end up linking in practice true processes of compulsory mobility. In reality, the weight of traditions can be imposed, maintaining this as the exception, more than as a habitual practice. The Spanish case can be put as an example of these inertias.

A second line of work has been the implementation of instruments intended to promote voluntary mobility, understanding that through this way flexibility is also facilitated, and other improvements are stimulated at the same time, in training polyvalence, global vision, etc. In this regard a policy was implemented in Sweden (Murray:2000, 179) with the objective of increasing mobility in the central government, and also among the latter, local governments, and private companies. To date, the initiatives have had limited success. In Germany (Röber and Löffler:2000) some *länder* have established rotation between positions as a requirement for hierarchical promotions. The Dutch central government has created (Van der Krogt et al.:2000, 296) a “mobility bank” that concentrates all the vacancies, accessible to all employees and not only to those who may have been declared redundant. The training processes necessary for facilitating the updating of employees who wish to change or are forced to this, are financed by an “Education and Employment Fund.” There is also an exchange program among the Ministries of Agriculture, Territory and Water, that facilitates temporary assignments for positions of the same rank in another one of the ministries affected for purposes of improvement of relations, exchange of information, learning, and improvement of the employability of staff.

Compensation and Incentive Systems

In compensation matters, the trends adopted by the CS reform attempts can be grouped into three major categories.

The first one consists in reducing the uniformity with which wage policies tend to be applied in the public systems, especially in the CS career models, as a consequence of the centralization of decision-making, and especially the negotiation of wages with union organizations at the national level. This uniformity introduces an important rigidity factor at the time of facing situations that can be very heterogeneous at the level of each individual organization. Initiatives in the sense of reducing the scale of negotiations have been attempted in France and Germany (Burnham:2000,109 and following; Röber and Löffler:128-30) without success, largely as a result of union resistance.

A second type of reform efforts has been aimed at transforming the wage progression mechanisms of civil servants. In the traditional CS systems, these mechanisms are based, basically, on seniority. As a maximum, some formal merits, or a routine and bureaucratized version of performance evaluation (the French *notation*) coexist with the former.

Although the new compensation guidelines tend to place the emphasis on the person, more than in the position (White:1998), previous steps have at times been necessary. Thus, in Italy (Ruffini:2000,144), the first objective was to go, starting in 1993, from the salary per grade or category to compensation by post, prior to the implementation of an assessment system of positions initially applied to managerial positions. The same line had been applied in Spain, for the totality of positions in the public administrations, in the years that followed the legal reform of 1984.

The criteria that the reformers have intended to link to the wage progression, replacing seniority and the traditional criteria are, on the one hand, the development of competencies and, on the other, high performance. Both criteria imply considerable reforms in the classification systems, converting the fragmented and bureaucratic grade scales, characteristic of the old CS systems, into *broadband* models, to which we have already referred. Performance and learning make possible to advance through wage bands that at times, as in the British SCS (Horton:2000,17) appear overlapped, in order to confer greater flexibility. In Italy, (Ruffini:2000,146) four broad bands have been created that replace the previous grades, each of which integrates between four and six steps. In some North American agencies (Thompson and Cachares:2000, 242), the creation of steps in each band has been avoided, in order to avoid preestablishing the advancement schedule, and to allow thus greater flexibility.

The third great trend in wage matters consists in the introduction of formulas of variable compensation linked to performance. The experience is absolutely generalized (White:1998; World Bank:2000; Horton and Farnham:2000), both with respect to attempts at implementing these wage practices and to the non-optimistic assessment, or at least very nuanced, on its effective results. Thus, in France, Germany, Spain, or Italy, the generalized perception is that its ability to discriminate between levels of performance (Ruffini:2000, 145) has been very poor. In the United Kingdom (Horton:2000, 218), where greater use of the same has been made, as in the U.S., payment for performance is strongly criticized by the civil servants, although a not small number of managers continue supporting it.

The World Bank (World Bank:2000) has pointed out the scarcity of the amount, the long period between appraisal and payment, the tendency to avoid the conflict of discriminating between employees, and deficiencies in other areas of the HRM as the main problems experienced by these attempts. In an analogous sense, Pollitt and Bouckaert (2000:119) indicate the risks of internal division and manipulation, as well as the limited effect on motivation when the amounts are excessively low. Let us add that the experience in Spain shows that the wage incentives for performance tend to fail if they have not been preceded by the development of internal organizational abilities to adequately evaluate the persons.

Organization of the Work Schedule

As we said before, numerous social changes are aiming at a reassessment of the traditional schemes of work day and schedule, and connect both with the possibility of improving productivity, and with the aspirations of people to reconcile personal and family life with work. This reassessment has arrived clearly, although unequally, to the CS systems that we are analyzing.

One of the countries in which the issues related to work schedules have enjoyed greater prominence has been the Netherlands (Van der Krogt et al.:2000, 194 and following) where the legal reduction of the work day to 36 weekly hours, for the totality of employment in the country, has been addressed in the CS as a scenario in which to achieve an adjustment among the needs for management and personal preferences: The 36 weekly working hours have been adopted as an arithmetic mean that, in each organization and organizational unit, should open a negotiated process that leads to schedules set for days, weeks, or broader periods, in accordance with the specific characteristics of the work. What the reduction of the workday does not seem to have caused is an increase in jobs, which was one of the results pursued by the unions.

One of the more consisting trends in this area is the increase in part-time work. Other than the case of the Netherlands (which is special inasmuch as it concerns the country in which this work modality presents, with a difference, a greater percentage of the employment group), in almost all the analyzed countries a certain increase in these labor formulas has been detected. Certainly, in some cases, such as Italy or Spain (Horton and Farnham:2000,318), its presence in the CS is practically negligible. In others, such as the United Kingdom (Horton:2000), its growth has been very notable, both in the *Civil Service* as in the National Health Services, but especially in the local governments, where in 1998 the number of part-time employees was 48 percent of the totality of the local public employment. If the figure is, in itself, spectacular, it is perhaps more so the fact that 13 percent of the local managers work part-time, which implies double the proportion at the national level. A British variety, which affects 25 percent of part-time employees, is the so-called *short hours* modality, which implies less than 10 hours per week, and that is reserved for the youngest and the oldest people, so that they can combine work and study, or supplement their pensions.

In France, where part-time work has also been significantly extended in the CS (Burnham:2000,103), one of the established modalities permits a reduction in

working hours to half when the employee is close to retirement age; a third of those possibly affected have been making use of this option. In general, part-time work may, however, be rejected by the chief of the unit, claiming “service needs”, which has contained in some measure the growth of the figure. A problem posed in the French Administration has been the concentration of petitions in a concrete work modality (80 percent and not to work Wednesdays), since the closing of schools was imposed in many cases on Wednesday afternoons.

Other flexible treatment modalities can be mentioned. The flexible schedule is the most extended, in general under the modality that distinguishes a compulsory core schedule, and available peripheral bands (Horton and Farnham:2000). Distance work, in its different modalities, is advancing with much greater speed in the North American Administration than in the European countries.

Development of the Management Function

We address in this point one of the central points of the CS reforms in the examined countries, which is consistent with the direction of the reforms of the public management to which we referred in section 3.1. There is no *management* without *managers*. The most impressive of the guidelines for efficiency and economic rationality, the best management instruments and techniques would fail without managers (Dalziel:1996, 31). We have already said that the traditional CS systems lacked, in general, the ability to produce managerial profiles in the proportion required and to duly promote the managerial practice. Thus, the professionalization of managers has become a priority for the reformers (Murray:2000,180), and has required the concentration of specific HRM policies in the upper band of CS systems (Losada:1999).

With some frequency, as we will see immediately, this objective has required differentiating that managerial band from the rest of the CS, and provide it with a specific statute, more flexible than the one applied to other public servants. Certainly, there are countries such as France, Germany, Belgium, or Spain, which have not joined this trend, which has not prevented a growing use of managerial training in all of them, in which, however, the development of public management still shows significant institutionalization deficits (Jiménez Asensio:1995).

The differentiation to which we have referred should not be confused with the absolute discretionary power in the appointment of managers for political reasons. Governments need a certain number of political appointments that they are used to setting through certain techniques. Thus, in France the limitations to direct appointment personnel by the Ministers are basically budgetary. At present, some 450 positions are covered in this manner (Burnham:2000, 101). In the U.S., 10 percent of the upper service, plus some specific positions of the *executive schedule* add up some 1350 positions to the federal executive branch. In Sweden, the number of these positions is set by agreement among the parties. In Germany and Belgium, hybrid appointment systems govern these positions, using the *pool* system, in order to be part of which certain requirements are considered such as a university degree and at

times an examination, and such members can be subject to discretionary political appointment (World Bank:2000).

The differentiating guideline to which we referred is based, on the contrary, in separation models between policy and management that stem from the recognition of a managerial sphere to be covered by professional public managers (Longo:1999b,26 and following), subject to the political mandate but to whom the “right to manage” is recognized. The framework of exercising this managerial function is presided by economic rationality criteria, and implies the articulation of contractual relations (Laegreid: 2000) with the political leadership, based on the principle of responsibility by results (Jiménez Asensio:1998, 338 and following). Some of the reforms that have affected the higher-level positions of the CS systems have shown this direction.

Thus, in the United Kingdom (OECD :1999c:8), in 1996 the *Senior Civil Service* was created that encompassed and expanded the previous *Open Structure* of the CS, and incorporates the 3000 higher-level positions of the British Administration. The SCS includes all the executive directors of the agencies, some of which are incorporated from outside of the CS through contracts of limited and renewable duration. The majority, however, have contracts of indefinite duration. The SCS positions are evaluated through a new position assessment system (JESP, *Job Evaluation for Senior Posts*), applying to all of them variable forms of remuneration by performance. The wage policy depends on an office that reports directly to the Prime Minister. The Cabinet Office has implemented advanced management performance systems, including 360-degree evaluations and other techniques, in the SCS.

In the U.S. (OCDE:1999c:21), the *Senior Executive Service* (SES) was created in 1978 by the Civil Service Reform Law. It integrates some 7000 positions, (too many, to some experts, to be described as *elite*), among which is the 10 percent that, as we said before, can be earmarked for political appointments, although (Ingraham et al.:1995) it has not exceeded 9 percent. The combined effects of the budgetary cuts, the *downsizing* and the reforms of the last years have affected the SES in various forms. The most recent reforms, with the creation of the *Performance Based Organizations* (PBOs), are inspired in the British agencies and introduced new performance standards for managers.

In Australia, the SES was created by the Public Sector Reform Law of 1984, in a reform context that had as priorities (Pollitt and Bouckaert:2000, 202) reducing the permanence of public servants, diversifying the sources of political advisory services to ministers, and increasing both the managerial capacity and the receptivity of civil servants toward the political priorities of the government.

In Italy, the creation, through the reform of 1993, of the *Dirigenza Pubblica* (Sánchez Morón:1994; Martínez Bagueño:1995, 34) had as basis the achievement of a clear distinction among the cadres of political and administrative management, with the objective of strengthening the autonomy of the public professional managers with regard to the political power, and guaranteeing them their own area of action, free from interferences, although conditioned by the political objectives. One of the characteristics of the Italian reform is its willingness to extend the model to the group of public administrations. Based on the hierarchical position and the greatest or least flexibility of the appointments system, the Italian model distinguishes between

the levels of *general leader* (appointment prior to testing of requirements), and *leader* (appointment prior to passing an examination or training course).

In the Netherlands, a 1995 reform created, after many years of debate (Van der Krogt et al.:2000, 197), the ABD (High Civil Service), that integrates the three hundred higher-level positions of the central government, and currently the expansion of said number is under consideration. The purposes for the creation of the ABD were: development of managerial abilities, mobility promotion and international experience, and the development of an *esprit de corps*. There are incentives to rotation and restrictions to stability in a single position for more than 7 years. A special office for the ABD in the Ministry of the Interior recruits and selects the staff, and develops an elaborate training and evaluation program.

In the Canadian case, (OCDE:1999c), the high-level CS has been traditionally an elite group characterized by being recruited in prestigious universities, as well as by a centralized personnel system and lifelong jobs. The situation (“Westminster model”) is similar to that of the United Kingdom at the beginning of the reforms in the 1980s. The unquestionable changes of environment have not given rise to an in-depth reform in Canada, since the governments seem to have been more interested in savings and reduction of personnel policies than in global transformations.

One of the general characteristics of the new models of professional managerial function (Ridley:2000, 35) is the opening of the positions, in many cases, outside of the Administration, combining the access of executives from the private sector with the recruitment—in the majority—of people from the CS.

Organization of the Human Resources Function

In this point, the fundamental trend has been, as was already previously mentioned, the decentralization of the CS systems. Although the desirability of transferring the HRM responsibilities from the central departments to the individual organizations, and from the specialized technical entities to the executive line, has become one of those consensus that no one discusses when one speaks about administrative reform, what is certain is that when compared with reality, the real scope of the decentralizing processes shows notable differences among the countries.

Thus, on the one hand we find a group of countries that have developed ambitious decentralizing processes. As we saw before, Sweden is perhaps the most impressive case. In the Swedish model (Premfors:1998; Murray:2000), the executive director has the authority to organize his agency in the way that he deems more efficient. This authority includes the ability to choose his personnel, which imply the contracting, payment, and dismissal of the same (Gustaffson:1995a). As we said, an elaborate incentive system (award/penalty), whose basis is responsibility by results, is the basis for the Swedish system of guarantees in contrast to the arbitrary nature and other occasional deviations.

Also among the countries of this first group, although at a slightly lower level of decentralizing ambition, we should include the United Kingdom. The directors of the British executive agencies have the ability to recruit all their personnel, but only below the ranks corresponding to the High-level Civil Service. They can

promote, train and develop their employees, determine the classification of the positions and the wages, and arrange dismissals and discipline. Actually, only the larger agencies have this list of total competencies, while those of smaller size adopt, in general, the personnel policies of their ministries (Horton:2000, 217). In the same group of countries with strongly decentralized systems from the CS are (OCDE1999a:21 and following) Australia, New Zealand, and Finland.

In the other extreme, that is, that of those countries in which the decentralization of the CS has been rather a matter of discourse than of effective accomplishment, we find France, where the logical decentralizing of the *Centres de Responsabilité* has had, with regard to HRM, lower strength than in the aforementioned countries, and where, in addition, it has affected in a very unequal manner the different ministries (Trosa:1995). Part of this group would also include (OCDE:1999a,21; Horton and Farnham:2000, 320; Kim:1996) Germany, Belgium, Spain, Canada, and Japan.

An intermediate position would be that of the Netherlands, where the decentralizing reforms are especially related to the appearance of a certain type of semiautonomous agencies (the ZBOs), whose degree of generalization and consolidation has been lower than that of the British or Swedish agency models. Something similar would be worth saying about the Belgian APEs. With regard to U.S., the decentralization of the CS has occurred unequally and heterogeneously (Thompson and Cachares:2000, 239 and following), since it has been based in the federal government, in the powers conquered by some agencies, such as the *Federal Aviation Administration* or the *Internal Revenue Service*, through bilateral negotiations with the respective overseeing committees of the Congress, but without a generalized process in the group of governmental agencies. At the level of the states, the disaggregation has been also the norm, and very different experiences can be found, from models of very centralized CS up to cases such as the 1966 law in Georgia, that decentralized and deregulated recruitment up to limits that could succeed in questioning the lasting relevance of the merit system.

The decentralization of the CS has implied, wherever it has become effective, an important change in the role of personnel central services (Longo:1995; Thompson and Cachares:2000), from a function of control to one of consultant, member or, at least, internal service provider. The acceptance by the RRHH techno-structures of this new role or its resistance to assume it are relevant variables for the speed of the reforms and their consolidation.

Labor Relations

One of the generally applicable characteristics of the analyzed period has been the expansion and intensification of union participation and the use of collective bargaining in the determination of working conditions. Certainly, there are notable differences between the case, considerably toned down, of Japan, where public sector union representatives can negotiate but not conclude agreements, and the right to strike is banned, and those of Australia and New Zealand, where legislation promotes full freedom of association and representation, and the Administration is empowered to conclude multiple agreements: with the individual worker, with a union, or with a group of these.

(OCDE:1999a,23-24). The expanding trend is, however, very consistent and general.

In fact, this transfer of setting the working conditions from the legal to the conventional area has been a road followed in certain cases for the rapprochement between public management and private management. We already alluded before to the Italian case, in which this change gave rise to the great reform of the Amato government in 1993 (Rebora:1994; Sánchez Morón:1996; Ruffini:2000). Ordinance 29/93 determined the “privatization” of public employment, which is now governed by common civil law. Only certain elements, such as recruitment, remained subject to administrative law, and only some employees were excluded from the new framework, in particular judges, diplomats and the armed forces. Employment relations, including individual contracts, are now defined through collective bargaining.

In Sweden, a similar process had its origin in 1965, in which, as we commented before, the civil servants, including policemen and the military, gained the right to strike, which was framed in a broad public debate that led to a global rethinking of the model (Murray:2000,173). The Swedish civil servants, in exchange of the contractual power implied by the collective bargaining recently conquered, lost the old privileges and guarantees characteristic of the public statute. The right to strike was compensated—as is common in the private sector—with that of employer lockout, and all this implied the entire substitution of an employment model by another.

Outside the Swedish case, the “labor relations” of the CS systems, that we pointed out at the beginning of this section, has not had, in general, not even in the Italian case, these effects of substitution of an employment model or system by another. In fact, the new guidelines for contractual operations have come to be added to the procedures and guarantees of public law, giving rise to models which are multi-colored and leading to ambiguity, in which the social actors have an expanded margin to search for the most beneficial way or standard in each case. In Spain, a recent judicial sentence, that, invoking a previous collective agreement with the unions, condemns the Government to leave without effect the wage freezing imposed by law in 1997, has revealed this ambiguous scenario in which faculties of the legislative branch succeed in colliding with agreements between the government and the public servants’ representatives.

In this context of reinforcement of the weight of the unions and the staff representatives, the governments have tended to strengthen their capacity as employers. One of the formulas, utilized in the Italian and Swedish cases, has been the creation of a public agency in order to represent the government in collective bargaining. In Italy, (Rebora:1994; Ruffini:2000), the agency assumes the representation of the central government, the local authorities, and other public agencies, and concentrates all the transactional power derived from the use of funds centralized by the Treasury. In Sweden (Murray:2000,172), the *Arbetsgivarverket*, AgV, was created with the objective that the government as such would completely be kept out of wage negotiations, and these remained as the exclusive responsibility of the agencies. The AgV is property of the other agencies that finance it, elect its directing council and the Director-General, and entrust him the negotiation with the unions.

These designs, in exchange for increasing and concentrating the contractual power of public employers, can carry along an excess of centralization of the labor relations. Thus, the current objectives (obtained more in Sweden than in Italy) are centered in that collective bargaining at the central level is only a framework, whose concrete development corresponds to the local agreements in the area of the individual organizations. In the Netherlands (Van der Krogt et al.:2000,200), where the negotiation is developed in three levels, national, sectorial (eight functional or territorial sectors) and local, the process has been to transfer subjects of negotiation toward closer levels, although the sectorial negotiation continues to play the determining role.

3.4. THE REFORM PROCESSES

We will refer briefly, in this last section, to some issues related to the implementation processes of the CS reforms, in the area that we have been discussing. Let us say from the start that if there was not, in the national situations examined, a single reform pattern with regard to the contents, neither is there one from the standpoint of the processes.

Some of the reforms have been characterized by having deliberate strategies, supported in global diagnoses of the problems that had to be faced, and in consistent transforming visions. The most representative case, and probably the best known, is that of the United Kingdom (Pollitt:1993; Metcalfe and Richards: 1989) characterized besides by a strongly ideological political leadership (Metcalfe:1993) and centralized, that maintains a persistent continuity during more than one decade of government. Perhaps one of the most significant features of the British experience is the high degree of institutionalization obtained from the changes, evident especially now, once the political alternation has been produced, which has only actually questioned peripheral aspects of the reform model (Cabinet Office:1998).

The reforms in the Southern countries coincide in not few of the process features that took place in the United Kingdom, although with two special characteristics. One of them is its extraordinary concentration in time: the second half of the 1980s. The other one, as pointed out by many observers (Schwartz:1994; Boston et al.:1997; Halligan:1997) has been the extraordinary weight of the role played in these cases by the high-level CS, especially by the fiscal bureaucracy, committed with the need for changes in an efficiency sense and the reduction of the fiscal deficit.

The indicated cases constitute, as we said before, the archetypal scenarios of the reforms inspired in what has been called the "New Public Management". In these coincide the depth of the contents of the changes, the deliberate and global approach, and a *top down* implementation strategy, anchored in a strong leadership and the central government playing a leading role.

In the U.S., the apparent design of the reform process in the period examined would not be too far in many points from what we have commented. Both at the federal level (U.S. National Performance Review:1993) as even in the state and local levels (National Commission on State and Local Public Service:1993), systemic visions of the reforms are developed, and, in the federal area, the visualization of a presidential political leadership is clearly manifested, with the

Vice President assuming in this regard a specific assignment. In 1995 (Thompson and Cachares:2000, 240), a legislative project was prepared for implementing the main recommendations of the NPR with regard to the reform of the CS, including the broad bands to replace the old grades, eliminating seniority requirements, facilitating the removal of low performance employees, together with other change measures. The opposition in the Congress impeded its approval, which means that the global approach and “from top to bottom” was to give way to other process lines (Pollitt and Bouckaert:2000, 82).

As we said before, reform in the U.S. has adopted a disaggregated trajectory. The agencies that could or knew how to make use of their negotiating power with the respective Congressional committees were authorized to make significant reforms, of which we have taken note. Also, although with greater logic given their autonomy, the states, and the local governments also played a leading role in changes of very unequal and fragmented scope.

Sweden, a country in which, as we have seen, significant changes have also been developed, has fled, in general, and this is one of the generically attributable characteristics of the European Nordic countries, from the strident styles of implementation of the reforms (Pollitt and Bouckaert:2000,265). On the contrary, processes have been imposed, common in this cultural environment, of discussion with the sectors and corporations interested in the different subjects, and an intensive use of the trial and error strategies and pilot projects have been made to experiment the changes before generally implementing them. The great effort made to minimize compulsory dismissals of civil servants has been part of this orientation to consensus. The same type of process, predominantly incremental and selective has characterized (Pollitt and Bouckaert:2000, 248) the reforms in the Netherlands.

In Germany, a significant characteristic of the reforms, more difficult than in other countries because of the restrictions (Siedentopf:1990) in its constitutional and legal framework, has been a *bottom-up* orientation, if we take into account the role played by the different Administration levels. For Klages and Löffler (1996:134), the federal government has virtually lacked initiatives, while some *länder* have been shown as reform drivers, but the true drivers of the same have been the local governments. Some experiences in Spain would point in the same direction. The problem of these approaches is that they make it difficult to resolve the needs for macro reforms, indispensable when there are global rules of the game that should be reviewed or replaced.

What we have just said should not be understood as an over-assessment of the legal instruments of the CS reforms. Perhaps the most adequate case to reflect about this extreme is that of Italy. As we indicated before, Ordinance 29/93 incorporated a global reform, of deep significance, of the Italian CS, under the premises of the “privatization” or labor relations, which is located within the framework of what Sánchez Morón (1994) has called a “constitutional revolution.” Up to what point the new legislation has changed things in fact, deeply transforming the *status quo*? For Ruffini (2000:139), “...the new regulations have not been fully accepted and implemented. In order to develop a new and more effective management of people it is necessary first to develop the capacities of the managers and to change the *ethos* of management, within the public Administration.” The reflection seems to us valuable and fully

applicable, especially in politico-administrative cultures that, as the South Europeans, tend to think about the laws exactly at the time of changing things.

4. CONCLUSIONS

We will point out, in concluding, some reflections that the content itself of the work suggests.

The first is that the CS reforms, of which we have already spoken, were and are necessary, that is, they respond to effective needs and social demands. The traditional bureaucratic CS systems presented in the countries examined a series of dissonances that compromised the good operation of the public systems. Outside of the ideological or fashionable influences, almost always present, it concerns a generalized reaction regarding the accumulated dysfunctions by models of operation in need of profound changes. Of both things, the dysfunctions and the changes, we believe we have spoken in this paper.

The second reflection is that such reforms have been put into practice, at least in some cases, with a very significant degree of depth. In some of the countries analyzed, today their CS systems are very different, and in very important aspects, from those they had only two decades ago. Certainly, and this is another unavoidable conclusion, in other national environments analyzed the changes have rather remained in the land of discourse or rhetoric, without being significantly introduced in the reality. The diagnostic we formulated some pages back continues to enjoy, in these cases, almost total validity.

Although the assessment, as such, of the results of the changes is not our main objective, it seems necessary to refer at least to two orders of problem that begin to appear in the specialized literature. The first one is the difficulty that in many of the experiences has represented, and continues to represent, the need of combining the reduction of jobs with the policies oriented to the qualification, the implication, and the cultural change of people (Korsten and Van der Krogt:1995; Pollitt and Bouckaert:2000, 162). In fact, this contradiction is a source of difficulties in the contemporary management of people, which is also clearly present in the corporate world (Pfeffer:1998), and that suggests problems of considerable scope to the managers.

The second order of problems has to do with the decentralized nature of the designs that lie beneath, as we have seen, the CS reforms, and the possible risks of lack of cohesion that these can carry with them. The problem points, obviously, to the national realities in which this trend has manifested itself in a most impressive form. Thus, in Sweden, the Commission for Administrative Policy (SOU) expressed in 1997 its concern over an excess of fragmentation of the government in several different cultures and even, in some cases, contradictory (Murray:2000,187).

Which are, in the context that we have made the object of our analysis, the new challenges of the moment? One year ago, the OECD (2000b:3 and following) attempted to bring about a framework of priorities in HRM to a 2003 horizon, regarding the following subjects:

- a) *Competence in the job market*, which implies the development of new formulas that increase the capacity of attraction of the public organizations, in a context in which, as revealed by a document on the situation in the Netherlands (OCDE:2000d) it will increase at the same time the strategic value and the scarcity of certain key competences.
- b) *Leadership promotion*, in which the crucial basis of the development of managerial capacity is centered in the public sector. Another recent document (OCDE:2000c) makes explicit strategies that go through the identification of the potential, the development of training and *mentoring*, the implication of managers in development tasks of people and the construction of new incentive systems.
- c) *The political/administration relation*, that is in the nucleus itself of the problems of governance of contemporary public systems, in particular in regard to the consolidation of the sphere of public professional management to which we have referred with certain extension.
- d) *Knowledge management*, that forces to promote public organizations that learn, and to extend this learning to the whole of the public sector. All of this requires policies that increase the internal social capital of the public systems (Nahapiet and Ghoshal,1998), promoting the formation of networks and exchanges based on trust and reciprocity, and taking advantage of the potential of the information and communications technologies.
- e) *The strengthening of public professionalism*, that aims at the promotion of ethical behaviors, to the fight against corruption and to the consolidation of the characteristic values of the public service in new types of organization. In this regard, the construction of an ethical infrastructure (Villoria:2000), implies combined actions in various fronts: legislative development, transparency and the push for an active and monitoring civil society, internal and external control systems, codes of behavior and the teaching of administrative ethics.

Together, as we have pointed out, the CS reforms can be encompassed within a prevalent direction to flexibility. The years have deposited in the hinges and articulations of the old merit systems numerous dysfunctional elements of rigidity, converting them, on the one hand, in slow reaction apparatus, more inclined to the routine than to receptivity to the needs and emergencies of politicians or of the citizens; and, on the other, vulnerable to the capture by the corporate interests of staff members.

Operating on those systems with reforming will implies, in any case, being aware that a delicate balance should be respected. Flexibility without merit would make the CS vulnerable to other risks: those of politization or service to private interests, and would put in danger, as we said, the same existence of a professional administration. Political patronage and nepotism (Hondeghem and Steen:2000, 66), by generating mistrust in the system, are the principal catalyst of reactions that cut down the discretionary power of managers, introducing rigidity into the latter, creating in turn favorable scenarios to circumvent the rules, in a cycle of sustained deterioration.

Merit and flexibility are, therefore, elements that are not opposed nor contend for a previously limited territory, as if it were a game of sum zero. On the

contrary, the new CS designs should pursue that both dimensions feedback and develop each other, in a virtuous circle of crucial importance for the governance of contemporary politico-administrative systems.

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ANNEX: Data of Civil Service Systems within the OECD

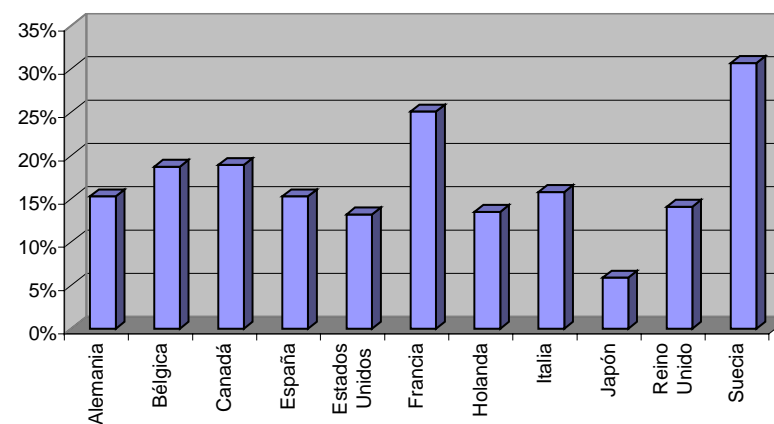
April 2001

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1. Percentage of public employment with respect to total employment¹

	%
Germany	15.3%
Belgium	18.7%
Canada	18.9%
Spain	15.3%
United States	13.2%
France	25.1%
Netherlands	13.5%
Italy	15.8%
Japan	5.9%
United Kingdom	14.1%
Sweden	30.7%



¹ Website OCDE: www.oecd.org/std/nahome.htm. Data corresponding to 1997.

2. Current number of jobs (1): comparative percentage table by administration levels

	State	Regional	Local	Others	Total	Dates updating
Germany	546.299	2.453.439	1.801.549	Railways: 119.838 The postal Service and telecommunications: 271.525	5.642.514	1995
Belgium ¹	195.683	347.677	224.729	Special bodies (learned, army, federal police): 75.603	866.434	1998
Canada ²	405.822	1.039.502	904.246	-	2.349.571	1993
Spain ⁹	753.783	904.041	455.357	Universities: 94.951	2.208.132	2000
United States ³	3.047.000	4.595.000	11.103.000	-	18.745.000	1992
France ⁴	2.202.500	160.200	1.205.400	National Public Establishments and Public Companies: 1.058.700 Public Function Hospital: 842.600	5.513.500	1994
Netherlands ⁵	103.500	11.450	151.800	Armed forces: 76.400 Police: 43.700; Judicial Branch: 2.200 Water Boards: 8.250; Teachers: 271.200	668.500	1997
Italy	278.425	-	1.386.121	-	3.613.069	1993
Japan ⁶	1.163.943	1.742.121	1.512.170	Public Corporations: 1.302.000	4.418.234	1993
United Kingdom ⁷	1.020.500	-	2.040.000	-	4.362.000	1995
Sweden ⁸	309.500	1.062.560	-	-	1.372.060	1993

¹ Source Belgium: *Human Resources Flexibilities in the public Services. International Perspectives*. Edited by David Farnham and Sylvia Horton. Ed. Macmillan Business. 2000.

² Source Canada: Public Institutions Division, Statistics Canada, 1996. Taken from *Managing Across levels of government*, OECD 1997. Rounded figures.

⁹ Source Spain: Ministry of Public Administrations. Statistical Bulletin of the Central Record of Personnel. <http://www.map.es/seap/dgoa/oa1/person.htm>

³ Source USA: *Public Management Developments*. Updated 1995, OECD 1995. Taken from *Managing Across Levels of Government*, OECD 1997, page 492.

⁴ Source France: DGAFP, INSEE, SESI, DGCL. *Bureau des statistiques, des études et de l'évaluation*.

⁵ Source Netherlands: Tweede Kamer, 1998. Taken from *Human Resources Flexibilities in the public Services. International Perspectives*. Edited by David Farnham and Sylvia Horton. Ed. Macmillan Business. 2000. Page 192.

⁶ Source Japan: *Managing Across Levels of Government*, OECD 1997.

⁷ Source United Kingdom (UK): *Economic Trends*, N° 508, February 1996.

⁸ Source Sweden: *Managing Across Levels of Government*, OECD 1997.

3. Current number of jobs (2): comparative percentage table between the Central, Regional, Provincial, and Municipal Administrations

	% Central Administration	% Regional Administration	% Provincial Administration	% Municipal Administration	Date updated
Germany	7.9	44.9	0.0	47.1	1994-1995
Belgium	20.9	18.6	4.1	56.3	1994-1995
Canada¹	17	44	0.0	39	1993
Spain³	34.1	41.0	0.0	20.6	2000
United States²	16	25	0.0	30.7	1992
France	31.3	0.0	9.6	59.1	1994-1995
Netherlands	37.0	0.0	6.0	56.9	1994-1995
Italy	31.8	37.2	0.0	31.0	1994-1995
Japan	26.34	39.43	0.0	34.23	1994-1995
United Kingdom	34.0	0.0	0.0	66.0	1994-1995
Sweden	17.1	0.0	26.8	56.1	1994-1995

Source:

Civil Service in the Europe of Fifteen: Current Situation and Prospects, Astrid Auer, Christoph Demmke and Robert Polet. EIPA 96/06.

Clarifications:

Except for Canada and the U.S., this table provides data based on information from OECD (*Public Management Developments*) corresponding to 1994 and 1995, and of other national sources. For data computation the civil servants who perform administrative functions have been mainly taken into account. Following this criterion, the following groups have been excluded from the data calculation: military personnel, police forces, educators, penitentiary workers, foresters, and health personnel. This bias explains, for example, that France shows a much lower percentage of state administration than what is expected if

¹ Source Canada: Public Institutions Division, Statistics Canada, 1996. Taken from *Managing across levels of government*, OECD 1997. Rounded figures.

² Source USA: *Public Management Developments*. Updating 1995, OECD 1995. Taken from *Managing Across Levels of Government*, OECD 1997, page 492.

This exclusion, however, has not been possible in certain Member States. Nevertheless, what is interesting of these statistics is that it makes it clear that a centralized state does not necessarily imply that the bulk of civil servants are also concentrated in the central or state administration.

³Source Spain: Ministry of Public Administrations. Statistical Bulletin of the Central Record of Personnel. <http://www.map.es/seap/dgoa/oa1/person.htm>

we take into account that it concerns a very centralized State, and that we have excluded from this count policemen and the military and teaching staff, whose categories total 1.5 million people.

4. Current number of jobs (3): comparative percentage table by sectors, in the central administration¹

	Social	Education/Culture	Authority	Finance	Others
Germany	6%	0%	27%	64%	3%
Belgium	7%	0%	29%	59%	5%
Canada	-	-	-	-	-
Spain	24%	11%	18%	47%	-
United States	10.7%	42.7%	5.3%		
France	4%	11%	31%	54%	-
Netherlands²	30%	39.7%	17.6%	12.7%	41,3
Italy	5%	10%	37%	47%	1%
Japan	-	-	-	-	-
United Kingdom³	31%	1%	39%	28%	1%
Sweden	15%	8%	27%	50%	-

¹Source: European Institute of Public Administration (IEAP), *Employment in the Public Administrations of the Member States of the European Union*. November 1996.

²Source Netherlands: EZ Ministry, 1997. Taken from *Human Resources Flexibilities in the public Services. International Perspectives*. Edited by David Farnham and Sylvia Horton. Page 195.

³Source USA: *Human Resources Flexibilities in the public Services. International Perspectives*. Edited by David Farnham and Sylvia Horton. Ed. Macmillan Business. 2000. Page 237.

5. Employment Ratio: statutory/contractual

	a. Statutory	b. Contractual	Nature of the service ratio
Germany	Staff Members	Employees	- For staff members: public, mutual fidelity. - For employees: private, subject to collective bargaining.
Belgium	X		
Canada	X		
Spain	X		
United States	X		
France	X		- Staff members: statutory. - Agents: contractual
Netherlands		X	
Italy¹		X	- Privatization of the working relationships since the Reform. - Distinction between service relation (volunteer, professional and beneficial) and the organic relation subject at the beginning of reserve of
Japan	X		
United Kingdom	X		
Sweden		X	- Labor, with some special features.

¹Italy: Law number 421, of 23 October 1992; Legislative Decree number 29, of 3 February 1993; Legislative Decrees "corrective" numbers 470, of November 18, and 576, of December 23, 1993.

6. Groups of civil servants covered by same legislation as those of the central government³

	Groups of civil servants covered by same legislation as those of the central government				Groups with own Legislation
	Health Workers	Educators	Policemen	Subnational Government ¹	Subnational Government ²
Germany	X	X	X	X	
Belgium				X	
Canada					X
Spain		X	X	X	
United States					X
France	X	X	X	X	
Netherlands				X	
Italy	X	X	X		X
Japan	X	X	X		X
United Kingdom			X		
Sweden	X	X	X	X	

¹Excluding the following sectors: Education, Health, and Police.

²Understanding by subnational government the local, state, regional and provincial. The following sectors are excluded: Education, Health, and Police.

³ Source: World Bank. Scope of the public administration and civil service in OECD and SIGMA countries. Page 11. Data extracted from OECD, PUMA and SIGMA.

7. Stability (*tenure*): lifelong employment/possible termination due to organizational reasons

	a. Lifelong Employment	b. Termination due to organizational reasons
Germany	x	
Belgium		x
Canada		x
Spain	x	
United States		x
France	x	
Netherlands		x
Italy		x
Japan	x	
United Kingdom		x
Sweden		x

8. Access (1): selection basically through knowledge tests/other instruments¹

	a. Selection through knowledge tests	b. Other instruments	Characteristics
Germany	X		
Belgium	X		
Canada		X	Examination or merit.
Spain	X		
United States		X	- Merit. - A considerable number of States have applied the principle of flexibility in the selection procedures, going from the traditional "rule of three", in which the three candidates with the best scores in the examination were chosen, to the adoption of much more flexible criteria.
France	X		Examination
Netherlands		X	Merit
Italy	X		
Japan	X		
United Kingdom		X	
Sweden		X	- They govern the principles of publicity, merit, and capacity evaluated by a Board and that of continuous education to perform the job.

¹Evolution de la gestion des ressources humaines dans les administrations publiques. OECD 1999. PUMA/HRM (99).

9. Access (2): Is there a probationary period?

	Yes/ No	Characteristics
Germany	Yes	Process divided up in stages in a prolonged period of time directly proportional to the category to which it is desired to go (Up to 3 years).
Belgium	Yes	The same as the education period.
Canada¹	Yes	The person who has access to the public Administration is considered to be in probationary period for the time regulated the Public Function Commission for that position or for the category or group to which he/she belongs.
Spain	Yes	Only in some cases.
United States	Yes	
France	Yes	Of variable duration, depending directly on the level of the position desired.
Netherlands	Yes	Normally up to 2 years.
Italy	Yes	Normally 6 months.
Japan²	No	
United Kingdom	Yes	Up to 2 years in the department or assignment agency.
Sweden	No	

Source: *Civil Services in the Europe of Fifteen: current situation and prospects.* Astrid Auer, Cristoph Demmke and Robert Polet. IEAP. 1996.

¹Source Canada: Website of the Public Function Commission. http://www.psc-cfp.gc.ca/staf_dot/psea-lefp/psea_e.htm#28

²Source Japan: National Personnel Authority: *Introduction to the Japanese Civil Service System.* <http://www.jinji.admix.go.jp/english/intro.htm>

10. Governing function (1): Is it diversified?

	Yes/ No	Characteristics
Germany	Yes	
Belgium	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Formal conditions: need to remain one year with grade 15 to be able to be promoted to grade 16 (Director General) or 17 (Secretary General). - Required degrees: actually nor even a university degree. The candidate can be accepted through successive promotional examinations. - In general, the government follows the unanimous and official advice of the "Management Board" of the minister. - Education is voluntary: the departments offer continuous education during 1 year (120 hours), with withholding of wages.
Canada	Yes	
Spain	No	
United States	Yes	
France	No	
Netherlands	Yes	
Italy	Yes	
Japan	No	
United Kingdom	Yes	
Sweden	Yes	Remuneration set by the Government.

11. Websites of interest:

URL	Contains
Germany	
Http://www.bmi.bund.de/frameset/index.jsp?lexmode=on	Ministry of the Interior (in German).
www.bakoev.bund.de	Federal of Public Function School (in German).
Http://foev.dhv-speyer.de/engl.htm	The Research Institute for Public Administration (FÖV).
Belgium	
Http://www.mazfp.fgov.be	Public Function Ministry.
Http://selor.fgov.be	Office of Selection of the Federal Administration.
Http://www.copernic-us.be	Copernic: Modernization Plan for the Federal Administration.
www.kuleuven.ac.be/io	Institut pour le Gouvernement.
Canada	
Http://www.psc-cfp.gc.ca/index_e.htm	Public Function Commission of Canada.
Http://www.ioq.ca	The Institute on Governance.
www.ipaciapc.ca	Institute of Public Administration of Canada.
www.irpp.org	Institute for Research on Public Policy.
www.enap.quebec.ca/observatoire	Observatoire de l'Administration Publiques (ENAP).
Spain	
Http://www.map.es	Ministry of Public Administrations (MAP).
Http://www.map.es/seap/dgoa/oa1/person.htm	Statistical Bulletin of the Central Personnel Record. Number of Jobs of the State Administration, of the Autonomous Communities, of the Local Entities, and of the Universities.
www.igsap.map.es/cia.htm	National Institute of Public Administration.
United States	
Http://www.opm.gov	Office of Personnel Management (OPM): <i>The Federal Government's Human Resources Agency</i> .
Http://www.opm.gov/feddata/index.htm	OPM Statistics.
www.alliance.napawash.org	National Academy of Public Management (USA).
www.aspanet.org	American Society for Public Administration.

URL	Contains
France	
Http://www.fonction-publique.gouv.fr	Ministry of the Public Function and of State Reform.
www.service-public.fr	Portal of the French Public Administration.
Http://www.ena.fr	Ecole nationale d'Administration.
www.iiap.fr	Institut International d'Administration Publiques.
Netherlands	
Http://www.minbzk.nl/international	Ministry of the Interior (Summary in English). This Ministry is responsible for the Public Function
Http://www.minbzk.nl/international/documents/documents.htm	Documents in different languages.
&Http://www.overheidsmanagem	Association for Public Management (In Dutch).
ent.org/index2.html	European Institute of Public Administration of Maastricht (Netherlands)
www.eipa.nl	
Italy	
&Http://www.funzionepubblica	Public Function Department.
&.it	Scuola Superiore della Pubblica Amministrazione della Presidenza of the Consiglio dei Ministri (SSPA).
www.bicnet.it/labpa/sspa/home.htm	Portal of Public Education.
Http://www.formapubblica.it	
Japón	
&Http://www.jinji.admix.go.j	National Personnel Authority.
&p/english/intro.htm	
Http://www.soumu.go.jp/english/index.htm	Ministry of Public Management, Internal Affairs, the Postal Service, and Telecommunications.
Http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/constitution_and_government/index.ht ml ..	The administrative Organization of Japan.
Http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/central_government/index.html	Reform of the Government of Japan. January 2001.
Http://www.soumu.go.jp/jinji/jinji_f.htm	Personnel and Pension Bureau
United Kinadom	
Http://www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/index/civilservice.htm	Cabinet Office (Civil Service).
Http://www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/civilservice/index.htm	Civil Service Corporate Management
Http://www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/civilservice/index/statistics.htm	Civil Service Corporate Management. Statistics on number of jobs.
www.open.gov.uk/college/cscheme.htm	The Civil Service College.
Sweden	

[Http://www.justitie.regeringen.se/inenglish/pdf/publicadministration.pdf](http://www.justitie.regeringen.se/inenglish/pdf/publicadministration.pdf) Ministry of Justice (Responsible for the Public Function). Document: Public Administration at the service of democracy.

[Http://www.statskontoret.se/english/index.htm](http://www.statskontoret.se/english/index.htm)..... Statskontoret. The Swedish Agency for Public Management

[&Http://www.sverigedirekt.r](http://www.sverigedirekt.r)
 [&ksdagen.se/english/swedens_public_sector.asp](http://ksdagen.se/english/swedens_public_sector.asp). Information on the Swedish public sector.

OTHER WEBSITES OF INTEREST

Latin American Center for Development Administration
<http://www.clad.org.ve>

European Evaluation Society
<http://www.europeanevaluation.org>

European network of training organizations for local and regional authorities (ENTO)
<http://www.asmez.it/ento>

Institut Européen de Management Public (INEMAP)
<http://www.ulb.ac.be/soco/solvay/inemap/frame2.html>

International Institute of Administrative Sciences
<http://www.iiasiisa.be>

International Council for IT in Government Administration
<http://www.ica-it.org>

PUMA: OECD's Committee on Public Management
<http://www.oecd.org/puma>

World Bank
<http://www1.worldbank.org/publicsector/civilservice>