

Christopher Hood & Gunnar Folke Schuppert (eds.): *Delivering Public Services in Western Europe: Sharing Western European Experience of Para-Government Organization* (SAGE Modern Politics Series Volume 16. Sponsored by the European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR). Beverly Hills and London: SAGE Publications, 1988. 268 + xii pp.

Along with the cut-back programs enforced throughout Western Europe during the 1980s, increasing attention among political scientists was drawn to the varieties in public sector organization. Also, demands for privatizing or 'contracting out' public services highlighted the dilemma between political control of public service provisions, emphasizing equality and legal security goals on the one hand, and clientele orientation and efficiency goals on the other.

The Hood-Schuppert volume presents an interesting analysis of a certain feature of public sector organization – so-called para-government organizations or PGOs. The editors have attempted to combine a comparative analysis with sectoral approaches, as well as accounts of subnational and international PGOs. The main thrust of the analysis is put into an attempt to explain the occurrence of PGOs in different types of policy-areas. PGOs are defined as '... all types of organizations other than core public bureaucracies which are used to provide public services' (p. 1). Thus, the definition describes PGOs as residual phenomena, a strategy which generates some problems in the empirical analysis. By stating what PGOs are not, rather than what they actually are, the analysis encounters severe difficulties embracing such varied phenomena as the Italian *enti pubblici* (pp. 113 ff.), the particularities of the administrative system of the Dutch consociational society (pp. 99 f.), and the Swedish popular associations (*folkrörelser*; pp. 65 f.).

Although created to implement public policy and to operate as intermediaries between the core government and segments of society, PGOs differ in many respects from traditional public administrative bodies in terms of government control, economic discretion, and organizational structure. First, PGOs frequently operate under non-public auspices, e.g. research foundations, bar associations, etc. Secondly, PGOs often control their own budgets and hence are insulated from austerity programs. Thus, PGOs are basically alien phenomena in the sphere of most political-administrative systems. In some countries, PGOs have come to play an increasingly important role in the process of implementing political programs. In other countries, PGOs have for decades been integrated parts of the bureaucracy.

The occurrence of PGOs – the key dependent variable – is explained by three different hypotheses. First, there is what the authors refer to as 'national style'; each political system presents its own unique features in government and administration. These particularities depend for example on the history, culture and feudal legacy of the country. Secondly, there is the 'service imperative' hypothesis, suggesting that the utilization of PGOs to implement public policy varies by policy-area; policies in some policy-areas are more apt to be implemented by PGOs than others. Finally, there is the 'administrative-dilemmas approach', according to which PGOs occur as instruments to resolve the tension between the desirability to have government structures run under strict rules on the one hand, and structures geared to make rapid decisions and operating under efficiency goals on the other.

Having elaborated on these three hypotheses, the editors proceed to investigate existing models for public service provision in five different policy-areas, and the role of PGOs in these respects. The five policy-areas are emergency rescue service, promotion of exports, provision of cable and related services, promotion of technological development, and finally provision of housing. In these areas, the analysis

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is focused on three specific policy functions – ‘defining’, ‘resource mobilizing’, and ‘social’ aspects. The hypotheses are elaborated by service-area and function. Thus, functions that require significant ‘public power’, e.g. for policy enforcement or for ensuring uniformity, are more likely to be executed by core government than other types of structure. Conversely, functions associated with resource mobilization are less likely to be conducted by core government and instead executed by independent public authorities such as PGOs.

The results by and large support the hypotheses formulated in the introduction. Thus, the greater the need of political power to implement public policy, the greater are the chances of core government bureaucracies being present in this process. Conversely, the more market-sensitive the service, the more likely are PGOs to occur on the scene. However, national style does seem to have a substantial bearing on the design of public administrative authority. To be sure, all hypotheses put forward in the introduction receive some support by the empirical data presented.

Only two of the Nordic countries – Finland and Sweden – are reported in the volume. Both the Finnish and the Swedish cases encounter some problems fitting into the analytical framework of the volume. PGOs are numerous in Finland, comprising at least four different types of this phenomenon. There is an increasing number of ‘statutory’ PGOs to be found primarily within services related to social welfare and also within industrial policy and trade issues. PGOs do not operate within any elaborated legal framework, but are rather subject to *ad hoc* rules and guidance. The rationale for creating PGOs, it is argued, is that these structures are means of expanding the sphere of government without necessarily placing economic burden on the core government general fund budget (p. 132).

If the Finnish case is tricky to put into the framework of the volume, this seems to be partially true also for the Swedish case. Here, it is the existence of ‘popular associations’ (*folkrörelser*) that generates definitional and analytical problems. These associations have fulfilled many of the functions today customarily assigned to the welfare state. Since they are still quite significant in this regard, according to the definition they qualify as PGOs, but remain – given their nature of mass membership organization – strange phenomena in the universe of PGOs. Next to this type of PGOs, the Swedish case also exhibits PGOs as traditional organizations created to promote the interests of different trades or sectors of commerce. Finally, there are PGOs in the shape of ‘derivative organizations’, i.e. organizations designed to control business functions under public auspices but kept at a certain distance from the core government. This third group comprises structures organizing the provision of utilities like communication, mail service, railway, etc – so-called *affärsverk* – as well as organizations for providing some public utilities within social policy. In all three cases, historical developments are – as the author correctly argues – key factors for an understanding of PGOs current status in Sweden.

There are three critical remarks to make about this volume. First, the conceptual and analytical framework outlined in the introductory section and later used to categorize PGOs in selected countries seems to be too broad and all-embracing to provide the country rapporteurs with sufficiently sharp knives to separate PGOs from other similar phenomena. As a result, the group of PGOs comprises extremely varied types of organizational phenomena.

Secondly, the editors’ efforts to give a general account of the existence of PGOs and to place their findings in a theoretical framework seem to have precluded a political conception of the PGOs. Thus the reader is frequently struck by the little attention paid to political factors that could account for PGOs. Also, there is no discussion about PGOs as a means of increasing public sector sensitivity towards

market actors. A tentative explanation of this might be that of the seventeen contributors to the volume only five have a political science affiliation – the majority come from public law and administrative law. In sum, the volume suffers from the lack of a clear conception and definition of the state (cf. above). Such a conception, it seems, would probably have enhanced the analytical power of the framework. Devoid of a distinct *political* analysis of PGOs, the analysis makes only a partial albeit valuable contribution to an understanding of current public administration in the no-man's-land between state and society.

Finally, and this is a critique that most country-by-country volumes expose themselves to, the editors do not clearly drive home the comparative aspects of PGOs. Apart from the introductory section outlining the analysis and presenting the theoretical framework, and the concluding section, the reader is offered a series of country reports without systematic comparison.

Having said that, the volume offers an interesting account of the existence of PGOs. By comparing PGOs between countries as well as between policy-areas, the editors take their analytical framework to a successful empirical test. Moreover, as is suggested in the concluding section, PGOs tend to become institutionalized and part of the core government apparatus over time and will probably play an increasingly important role in the future. Here, the volume provides an analysis that will prove useful for scholars of the current dynamics of public administration and the relationship between public and private actors. The volume is a valuable contribution to the debate on the advantages and disadvantages of different auspices for the provision of various services.

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Benny Morris: *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem, 1947–1949*. Cambridge University Press, 1987, 380 pp. and 'The Initial Absorption of the Palestinian Refugees in the Arab Host Countries, 1947–1949' in A. C. Bramwell (ed.): *Refugees in the Age of Total War*. London: Unwin & Hyman, 1988, 359 pp.

At the time of World War I, David Ben-Gurion wrote that the Jews had not come to Palestine to dominate and exploit the Arab population: 'We do not intend to push the Arabs aside, to take their land, or disinherit them'. But in the course of time, following the Balfour Declaration and the confrontations between Jews and Arabs in 1920–21, 1929 and 1936–39, his attitude was to change. On 12 July 1937 he wrote in his diary: 'The compulsory transfer of the Arabs from the valleys of the proposed Jewish state could give us something which we never had, even when we stood on our own during the days of the First and Second Temples, . . . We must expel Arabs and take their places . . . and if we have to use force'.

Ben-Gurion's notes were in reaction to the report of the British Peel Commission, which put forth the idea of dividing Palestine, setting up two separate states, and transferring the 250,000 Arabs living within the confines of the proposed Jewish state. The proposal was to be rejected, but it introduced the idea of expulsion, not the least in the mind of Ben-Gurion, the first leader of the Israeli state.

The quotes are taken from a new book from Cambridge University Press that has already become the focus of much debate, *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem, 1947–49*. In it Benny Morris, historian and journalist with the *Jerusalem Post*, presents the whole, complex chain of events that led to the flight of 600,000–760,000 Palestinians from Israel in the years 1947 to 1949.