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Municipal Employees and Personnel Policies: A Comparison of Seven Countries

Vincent Hoffmann-Martinot

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Vincent Hoffmann-Martinot. Municipal Employees and Personnel Policies: A Comparison of Seven Countries. Workshop held at the ECPR Session of Bochum, ECPR, Apr 1990, Bochum, Germany. halshs-00005081

HAL Id: halshs-00005081

<https://shs.hal.science/halshs-00005081>

Submitted on 24 Oct 2005

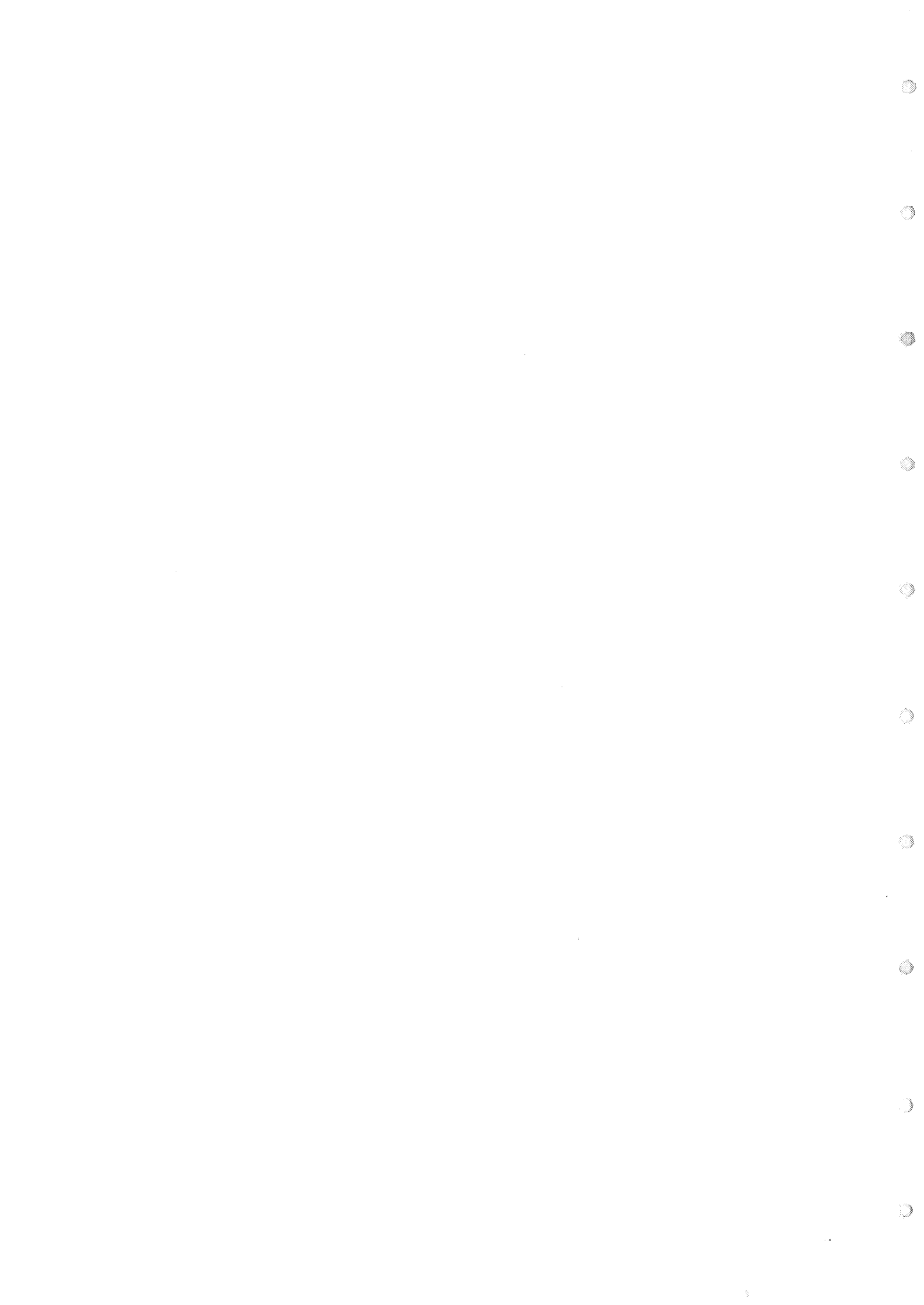
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**LOCAL AND REGIONAL BUREAUCRACIES
IN WESTERN EUROPE**

**Edited by Richard BALME and
Vincent HOFFMANN-MARTINOT**

Workshop held at the ECPR Session of Bochum, April 2-7 1990

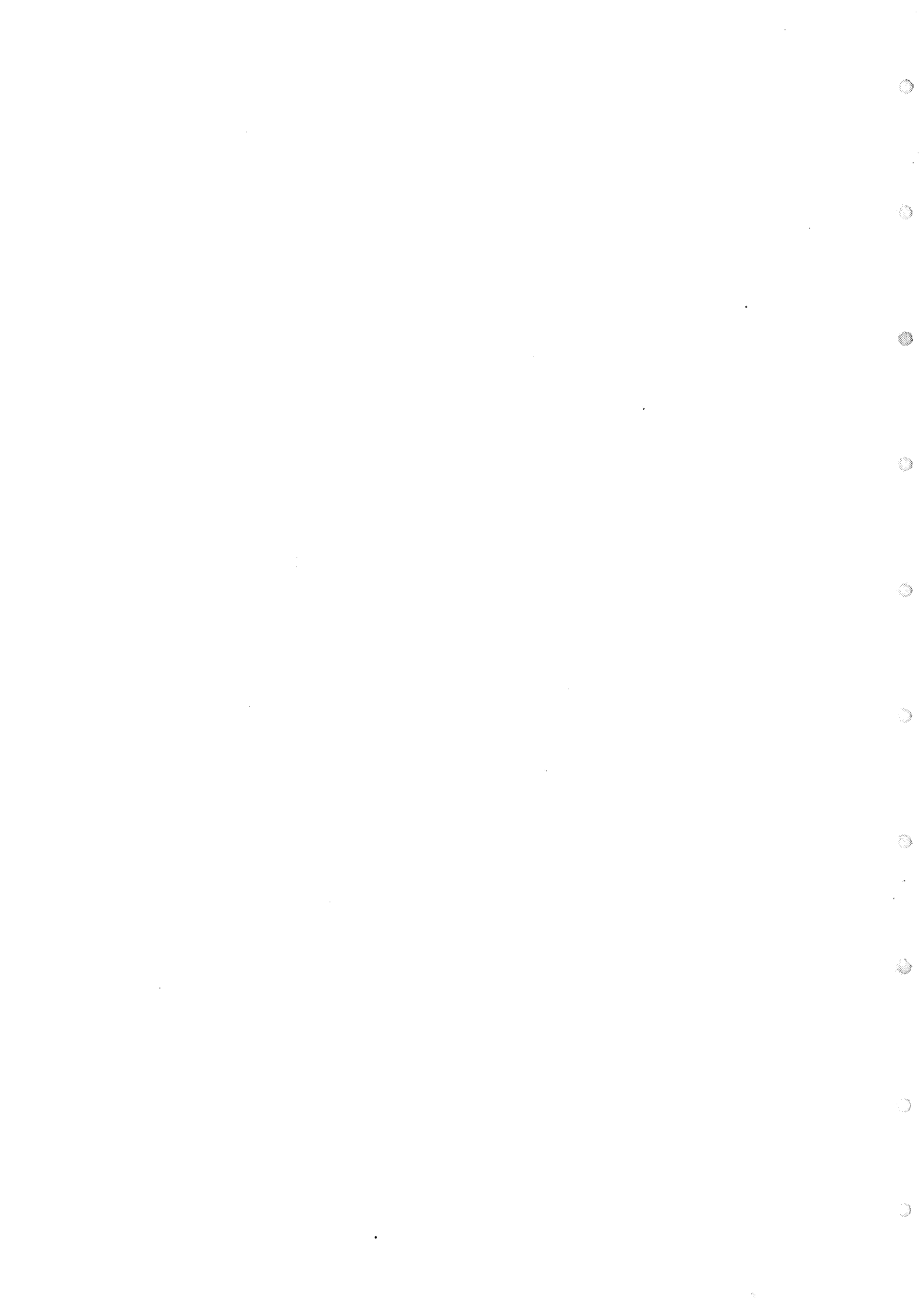


INTRODUCTION

The papers collected in this volume were presented and discussed at the European Consortium for Political Research's joint workshop session held in Bochum, April 2-7, 1990. Although in some respects they fall far short of the standard of an exhaustive comparative work, they do bring together a large set of data and case studies valuable to political scientists. The crisis of the Welfare State poses problems for bureaucracies on the local and regional levels, as well as for their counterparts on the national level. These are expressed in terms of cutbacks in public spending, the search for efficiency in the delivery of services and the need for accountability in a context of the declining legitimacy of representative democracies. But, often more than those on the national level, the regional and local bureaucracies are concerned with day-to-day government, e.g., with the provision of welfare services, or with public employment and its impact on local communities, including influence in elections. The territorial aspects of the recession, economic restructuring and European integration are dealt with chiefly by these bureaucrats, who are thus led to develop new relations with central administrations and with European institutions. Local and regional bureaucrats play an important role in the changing features of politics at the beginning of the 90's, and, in our view, they amply merit the series of studies presented here.

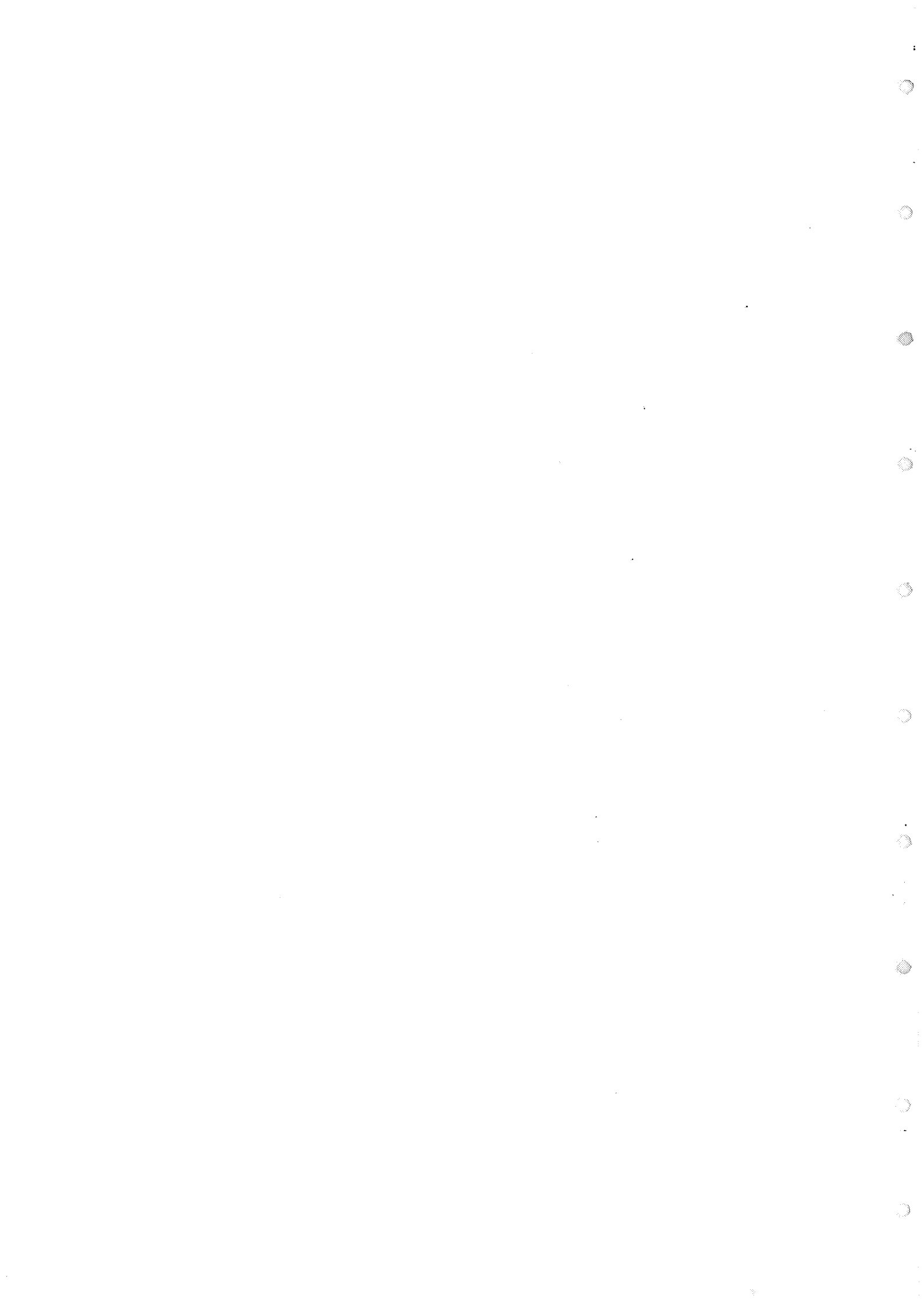
Section I addresses the question of labour in local government, looking at the scope of local bureaucracies and its evolution, their influence upon public employment and the type of bargaining between local governments and bureaucrats. Local personnel policies including employment, lay-offs and wages seem highly dependent on the influence and organization of unions, and on the role played by the central state. Sections II and III are devoted to the role of local bureaucracies in policy formulation, studying their influence in national or European regional policies and in the municipal decision-making process. Finally, section IV deals with the impact of political change on local bureaucracies, focusing on the effect of hung councils in British local governments and more broadly speaking, on the evolving context of local administration in Greece, Spain and in the former GDR.

We wish to thank all contributors and Maryse DUCOURNAU for her help in editing the volume.



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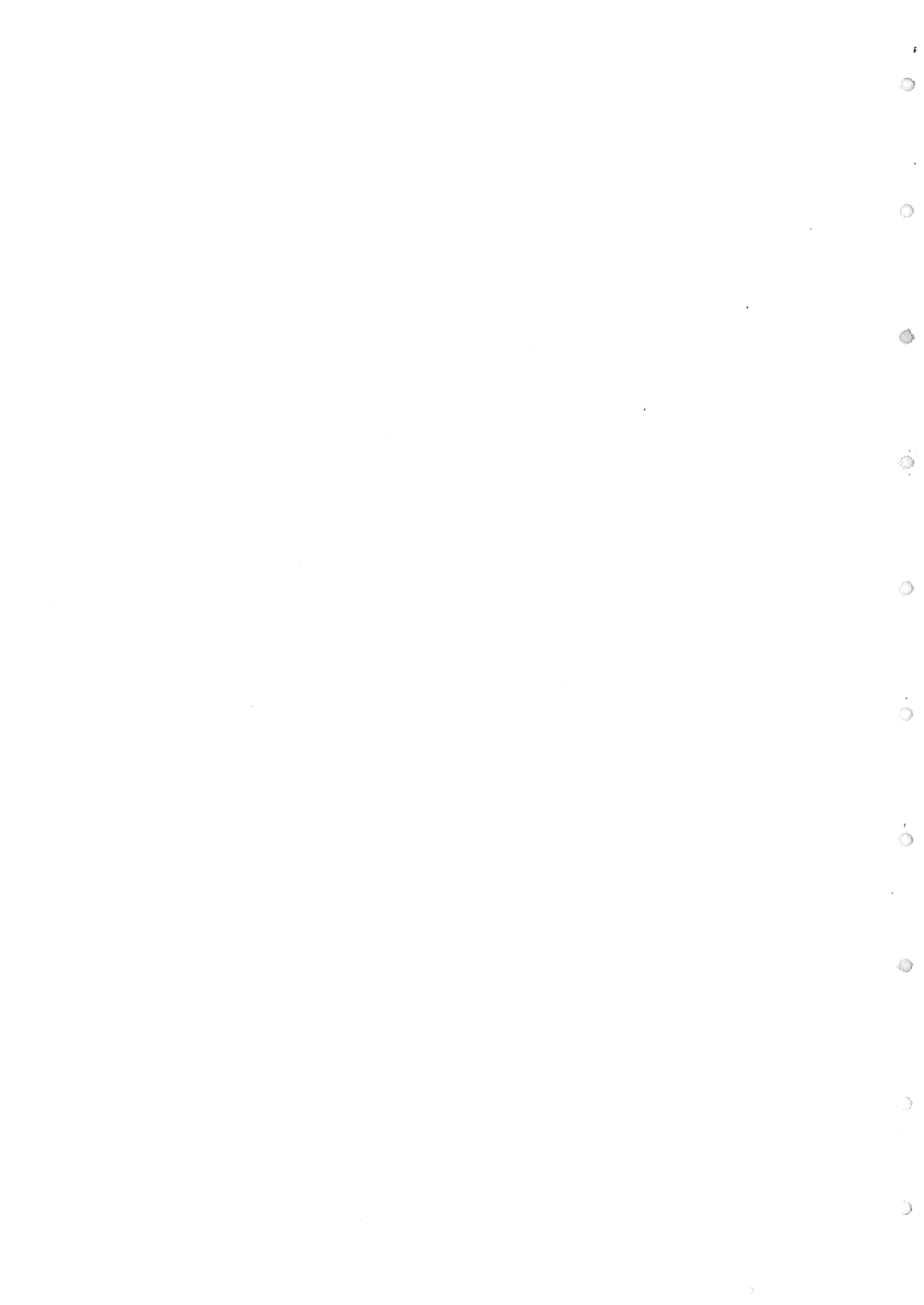
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I - LABOUR IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT



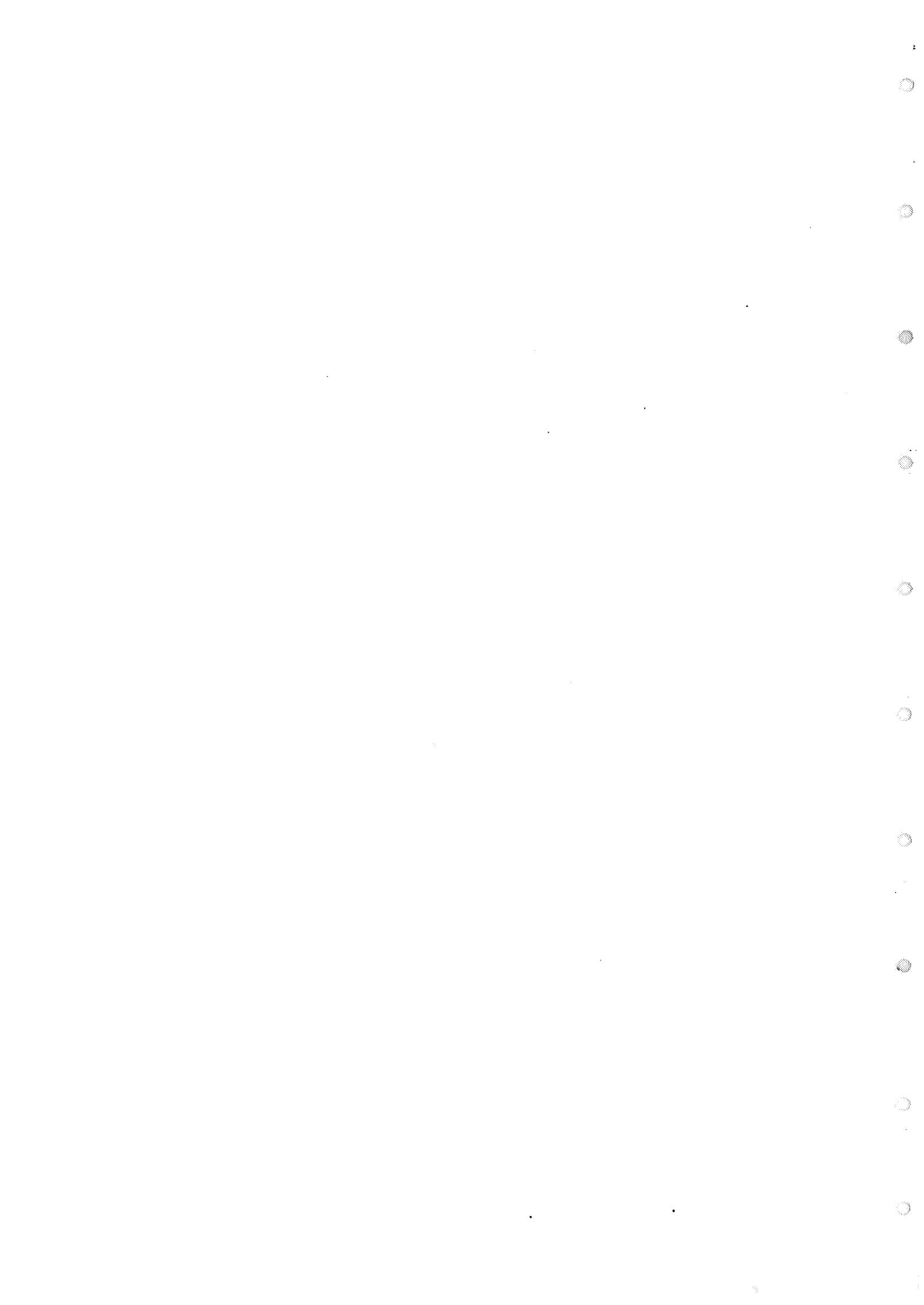
MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES AND PERSONNEL POLICIES:

A COMPARISON OF SEVEN COUNTRIES

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Municipal employees come under continued scrutiny. Municipal bureaucracies often are huge organizations and very important in policy decisions--the City of New York has 400,000 employees and Paris more than 40,000. Frequently, the municipal administration is the largest employer in the city, or even in the region. Citizens perceive elected officials not only as service providers, but also as potential employers, able to intervene directly in the war against unemployment by hiring new municipal agents. The Fiscal Austerity and Urban Innovation (FAUI) project analyzed variations in decision-making processes and types of municipal personnel policies implemented in the 1980s. This contribution, by describing and comparing seven countries (Denmark, the United States, Finland, France, Great-Britain, Norway, and Sweden), answers three main questions:

- who are the municipal employees and how did their numbers evolve during the last years?
- what types of influence do municipal employees exert individually and collectively on local public policies?
- which personnel policies were adopted by municipalities in the 1980s, and under which conditions were they pursued?

GROWTH AND STABILIZATION OF MUNICIPAL WORKFORCE

Since 1945 the development of the welfare state has brought a rapid growth of national and state/local public administrations. The percentage of public employees in the civilian labor force increased rapidly in several countries between 1951 and 1981 (Table 1).

Growth was particularly important in Sweden (23 percent) and in Denmark (22 percent), where today, as in France and in Great-Britain, one third of the active population works in the public sector (in Sweden, 41 percent in 1983 according to Gustafsson 1986: 42). On the contrary, the relative importance of public employees has been stable in the United States and remains below 20 percent, reflecting a very different perception of the public role in society ("nightwatchmen state").

Table 1. Public Employment

Country	1951	1981	Percent Increase 1951-81
	(Percent of Workforce)		
Denmark	09	31	22
Norway	-	-	-
Sweden	15	38	23
Finland	12	25	13
Great Britain	27	31	04
France	18	33	15
United States	17	18	01

Source: Rose (1985), Bentzon (1987), Alestalo and Uusitalo (1988).

Among the seven nations, Scandinavian countries show the highest public employment. Following the reign of Gustav-Adolf and entry into the Thirty Years War, the Swedish bureaucracy became one of the most competent and largest administrations in the world (Peters 1985). Sweden has broad public responsibility for social activities and services, based on the principle that individual welfare is rooted in collectivity. Such a global system covers not only targeted groups, but includes the entire population and implies redistribution in a large number of sectors: housing, education, leisure, and other services (Allardt 1986, Esping-Andersen and Korpi 1987).

Among Scandinavian nations, Sweden is closest to the institutional model of a welfare state. Not financed by contributions and covering all citizens belonging to a certain age category, its pension scheme is completely public, compared with a public/private mix in Denmark. Finland differs from Sweden, with a more mixed socio-economic system (for instance in the housing sector) and a higher degree of political polarization: social-democrats have to negotiate with agrarians of the center party for the elaboration and implementation of major welfare state programs (Alapuro 1982, Ylönen 1985 and 1986). Norway seems closest to Sweden in public sector development.

Most services linked to the growth of the welfare state (education, health, and social assistance) are delivered in Scandinavian countries by local governments and public employment growth was greater at the local rather than national level. Currently, one-half of the public sector employees (including central administrations, public enterprises and local administrations) are in local administrations (Table 2). In Denmark, between 1972 and 1983, local government employment more than doubled (from 210,000 to 468,000), while central administration increased only one-tenth (from 180,000 to 200,000) (Tonboe 1986). Similar

increases occurred in Sweden, where the 25 percent local employment increase in the public sector was spectacular (Peters 1985).

Table 2. Percentage of Local and Regional Employees in the Public Sector

Country	1951	1984	Change
Denmark	-	57	-
Norway	-	64*	-
Sweden	29	54	+25
Finland	-	-	-
Great Britain	24	38	+14
France	14	23 (1980)	+09
United States	42	70 (1980)	+28

* - Percent only in the state and local employees

Source: Page, Goldsmith (1987), Rose (1985).

Considering municipalities, rather than all local governments, full-time equivalents increased nearly one-fifth between 1978 and 1984: 22.9 percent in Denmark, 22.2 percent in Finland, and 17.7 percent in Sweden (Table 3, in annex).

The number of full-time equivalents per 1,000 inhabitants of Scandinavian countries are almost unique in density of municipal employment (Table 4). Employment per 1,000 residents increased 10 percentage points during that period, while it stabilized or decreased in the remaining countries. On the other hand, it reached approximately 60 FTE/1,000 residents in the mid-1980s, far above the United States or France (14) and even Great-Britain (40). Data are not available for Norway so Sweden leads the Scandinavian group with 64 FTE/1,000 residents in 1986.

Table 3. Number of Municipal Employees Per 1000 Municipal Population (Full-Time Population)

Country	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
Denmark	48.1	51.6	55.0	57.3	58.7	59.0	58.5	58.5	59.2
Norway	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sweden	53.3	55.8	58.8	59.8	59.4	60.9	62.3	62.9	63.9
Finland	51.9	53.5	54.6	56.4	59.6	60.4	61.7	-	-
Great Br	41.8	42.5	41.9	41.1	40.5	40.6	40.5	40.3	-
France*	-	-	-	-	-	-	13.8	13.9	14.0
United S	15.5	15.6	15.4	15.0	14.8	14.3	14.3	-	-

* - Except DOM-TOM.

Source: Mouritzen and Houlberg (1988), U.S. Department of Commerce (1988a).

Several factors explain the importance of Scandinavian municipal employment. Above all, the steady growth in the welfare state and range of functions assumed by consolidated municipalities is important. Also important are diseconomies of scale resulting from the merge reforms implemented in the 1950s and 1960s which, as in other European countries such as Germany, strengthened municipal government bureaucratization.

In Great Britain also, there was strong growth in local government employment, much faster than in central government, attributable to an extension of the welfare state. In spite of a transfer to national administrations of services traditionally delivered by local authorities (for instance, health services in 1974-75), the importance of local public employment in the public sector grew from 24 to 38 percent between 1951 and 1984 (Table 2). Local public employment increased 62 percent between 1961 and 1976 (from 1,870,000 to 3,022,000) with the major growth in education (from 785,000 to 1,569,000) (Thomson 1982). In contrast to Scandinavian countries and most European countries, however, this steady increase did not continue after the mid-1970s. Central government austerity policies, increasingly applied by local governments, led to a stabilization and even a reduction of jobs, especially in education where 63,000 positions disappeared between 1979 and 1984. Between 1978 and 1985, local public employment reduced 2.7 percent (Table 3), and municipal employment per 1,000 residents diminished from 41.8 to 40.5 (Table 4).

French public administration is much more centralized with only 23 percent of public employees in local governments in 1980, while municipal employment per 1,000 reached only 14.0 in 1986 (Table 4). Many functions assumed by municipalities in Northern Europe are provided by departments and territorial state agencies in France. These agencies are an intermediary level between central government and local governments and this governmental administration does not exist in Great Britain or in Scandinavian countries.

A first impression of strong and so-called "typically French" centralization should be corrected. Indeed, when available data are examined closely, the "jacobine France" has been decentralizing for many years. The main difference from the previously studied countries is education. The French Education Ministry often is depicted as the first European employer--after the Red Army. In 1987, this Ministry employed no fewer than 1,060,000 people, or 48 percent of the civil state employees (INSEE 1988a). If education in France were transferred to local authorities, as in many Western countries, the ratio would be radically changed. Local administrations would have employed 40 percent more than state agencies rather than 44 percent fewer. In any case, the relative importance of local employees in the public sector increased 9 percent between 1951 and 1980, and has, without doubt, increased

since then (Table 2). In particular, a transfer by the state to local governments of new responsibilities and a central government policy to stabilize state employee numbers caused the latter to decline in 1985 (-3,900 FTE) and in 1986 (-12,300 FTE) for the first time since 1946. The rise in total municipal employment - which constitutes 80 percent of local employees - has been rapid since 1967, as shown below for France (except Paris and DOM-TOM):

Table 4. French Municipal Employees. 1967-1983

1967	1969	1973	1977	1980	1983
393,839	420,838	486,915	589,941	676,346	835,473

1967 - 1983 Change = 112 percent

Source: INSEE

Since the mid-1980s, the growth rate of local employees (full-time equivalents) has slowed. While the average annual increase was 4 percent between 1979 and 1983, it steadily diminished from 1983 onwards: 1.8 percent in 1984, 1.1 percent in 1985, and 0.4 percent in 1986.

The level of public employment in the United States remains lower than in European countries. Relative to the civilian labor force, the public employment increased only 1 percent between 1951 and 1981, from 17 to 18 percent (Table 1). Except during war periods, public employment has been concentrated much more in states and local governments than in federal administrations. This concentration is mainly because of education (employing one third) and the fact that federal programs include state and local jurisdictions. In most states, education employees (4,600,000 in 1986, according to the U.S. Department of Commerce 1988b) are employed by school districts. The percentage of local employees in the public sector steadily increased between 1949 (50.3 percent) and 1977 (59.1 percent) (ACIR 1986). Between 1970 and 1980, while federal employment remained stable (0.6 percent increase, from 2,881 to 2,898 millions), state (36.2 percent increase, from 2,755 to 3,753 millions) and local government employment (29.4 percent increase, from 7,392 to 9,562 millions) grew rapidly. Municipal employment rose sharply. New York employees grew from 200,706 in 1961, to 294,522 in 1975, an increase of nearly 50 percent (Shefter 1985: 117). As in Europe, a period of strong liberalism and local public interventions of the 1960s was followed from the mid-1970s on by a reduction in public sector growth, leading to a slower rise of local public employment increases. Declines of 1.9 percent in 1981 and 0.6 percent in 1982 (ACIR 1986) were experienced with a decrease in municipal employment of 5.9 percent (129,000 jobs) between 1979 and 1983 (Table 3, and Lewis 1988).

INFLUENCE OF MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES ON LOCAL POLICIES

Following the distinction proposed by Banfield and Wilson (1967: 207), it is assumed that municipal employees occupy three main political roles. First, they are citizens with specific interests and preferences. Second, they are employees organized in pressure groups and finally they participate directly in the development and implementation of municipal policies.

Specificity of Interests and Preferences of Municipal Employees

Blais and Dion recently noted (1987: 78), "it has to be admitted that the public employee generally is a badly known and in fact scarcely studied actor." Nevertheless, several national studies have revealed the unique electoral behavior of public employees. In North America as in Europe, their participation in national or local elections is actually higher than that of private employees (on the United States: Bennett, Orzechowski 1983; other countries, Lipset 1981: 191-192). Likewise, in most industrialized nations, public employees more often favor left-wing candidates than private employees. In Great Britain, Whiteley (1986) shows that the Labour vote is 10 percent higher among public than private employees. The difference also is clear in France in the second round of the 1988 presidential election, with 74 percent of the voting public employees choosing Francois Mitterrand, who was supported by only 60 percent of private sector voters (Le Monde. Dossiers et Documents. L'élection présidentielle. May 1988).

More precisely and according to several studies, the higher the position in the professional hierarchy, the wider the orientation gap between public and private employees. The main finding of a 1978 French survey by the CEVIPOF/SOFRES is that 79 percent of private engineers and managers favored right-wing candidates, compared with only 42 percent among counterparts in the public sector.

Based on results from electoral studies tracing a particular segment of public employees (strong participation and largely left oriented vote), partisans of the public choice approach (Borcherding 1977, Niskanen 1971, Tullock 1970) try to explain how bureaucrats "naturally" behave as budget-maximizers. That analytical model has been criticized, especially on two points: its overestimation of the actual influence of bureaucrats in the decision system, and its ignoring of their attempts to rigorously manage the services for prestige reasons in the name of the "general interest." Rubin (1982) explains, for instance,

how municipal employees in Southside, whose professional ethics preferred quality rather than quantity, opposed a municipal council project to hire unqualified personnel. Moreover, the numerous empirical tests of public choice are not convincing, and even contradictory. In Quebec, research of Blais and Dion (1987) does not indicate significant differences in expenditure preferences between the two groups, contrary to the results presented for Sweden by Sårivik and Holmberg (1985). American analyses of expenditure preferences expressed in local referenda regarding limitations on tax and expenditure increases show that, on average, public employees favor retrenchment measures less than private employees. They also show that their impact on the overall results are limited (Gramlich and Rubinfeld 1982, Ladd and Wilson 1983). Finally, the results of the recent Norwegian study by Hansen and Sorensen (1988) contradict the public choice proposition, because municipal administrators are less in favor of public interventions than elected officials.

One of the clearest expressions of the responsibility of elected officials in budget and personnel maximization is clientelistic politics. Evidently under various forms, this policy is a common practice worldwide (Roniger 1981).

Clientelistic hiring is a traditional characteristic of the French local political system. That phenomenon was described in detail by Jean-Yves Nevers (1983) through study of the city of Toulouse under the Third Republic: during that period municipal jobs appear to constitute one of the fundamental resources of the clientelistic radical-socialist system. Most hirings are concentrated at the low end of the administrative hierarchy (sweepers, charwomen,...), not only within municipal services, but also in the various para- or inter-municipal services, or even outside the municipal sector (especially in the hospitals, whose executive councils are chaired by mayors). Consider the example of Marseille. In many aspects, it resembles American large cities with high migration, an ethnic heterogeneity of population, and integration and assimilation attempts. With a dream of success by the end of the last century, ethnic networks and clans (Corsican, Italian, Armenian) began to infiltrate all sectors of the Marseille social and political life ("clanism"). In the 1930s, the Sabiani municipality was characterized by unbridled clientelism, hiring thousands of new employees between 1931 and 1935 (Bergès 1984). Elected as mayor in 1953, Gaston Defferre also maintained his clientele, adopting the local saying: "a service, a vote." In the mid-1960s, a period of strong demographic rise, Marseille controlled approximately 50,000 jobs in municipal administration, transport authority, port enterprises, various public/private firms, social aid bodies, hospitals, housing agencies, and other departments. In Nice, also clientelistic networks - centering on the Médecin family - played an essential role as in Draguignan during the 25-year long domination of mayor Soldani, "the King of Var."

Clientelistic involvement through which a resident receives a job in exchange for his political allegiance to a patron also is a traditional and common practice in Corsica, where mayors usually control permanent or temporary jobs. But as often happens, patronage mainly is controlled and organized by political parties, particularly when strongly structured. Within a municipal organization, the partisan logic even can compete with the objectives of the notable-leader. Communist municipalities use clientelistic methods, but in a less systematic manner than often assumed. Dion (1986) established that the proportion of employees belonging to the majoritarian party is about the same in socialist as in communist municipalities in the Paris region.

Many studies have examined clientelistic government in American cities (see Clark and Ferguson 1983 for the different components of the ethnic political culture, and Woody 1982 for policies carried on by new black mayors). Traditionally, machines have rewarded workers by massive hirings in the municipal administration. In the last century, public employees in New York depended completely on the machine. As in European countries, the growing creation and diffusion of rules regulating public employee careers were not sufficient to prevent clientelistic approaches. Lindsay used them to a large extent during his second term, hiring up to 28,000 temporary workers and shifting them regularly to other positions to avoid the legal requirements for hiring (Shefter 1985). Likewise, in Boston and in San Francisco, White and Alioto did not hesitate to apply overt and often questionable clientelistic methods of personnel management (Ferman 1985).

Municipal Employees as an Organized and a Pressure Group

Union membership represents the main type of municipal employee organization. But union practices differ markedly from country to country, as indicated by the level and change in unionization rates after 1960. Table 5 lists three groups of countries by importance of their union concentration -- very high (Scandinavian countries), high (Great Britain), or low (United States and France).

Table 5. Percentage of Union Members in the Civilian Labor Force

Country	1960	1965	1970	1975	1980	1981	1982	1985	1986
Denmark	59.6	60.8	64.3	68.4	75.2	73.9	-	-	-
Norway	-	-	-	-	62.9 ^c	-	-	-	-
Sweden	-	-	72.3	78.1	87.7	87.0	-	-	-
Finland	-	-	-	-	80.0 ^a	-	-	-	-
Great Brit	44.2	44.2	48.5	51.1	53.1	49.9	47.8	-	-
France	20.5 ^b	20.8	23.1	22.9	19.2	19.0	-	15.0	-
United St	22.3	24.5	25.4	23.7	19.9	19.0	17.8	16.1 ^d	-

^a - Estimated

^b - Data for 1962

^c - Data for 1979

^d - Data for 1984

Source: Kassalow (1984), Lipset (19886), Mouriaux (1986), Troy (1986).

Most economically active Scandinavians belong to a union. Contrary to changes observed in many industrialized countries, the proportion of union members in the labor force has risen since the mid-1970s. Between 1975 and 1981, in Denmark the proportion increased from 68 to 74 percent, and in Sweden from 78 to 87 percent, without doubt the world record for unionization. Strongly linked to the social-democratic party, the three great Swedish federations (respectively, Landsorganisationen, TCO--Tjänstemannens, and SACO-SR--Sveriges Akademikers Centralorganisationen- Statstjänstemans Riksforbund) do not include only employees of the private and public sectors (the Military included), but also, different from organizations in non-Scandinavian countries, include shopkeepers and the self-employed (Peters 1985).

The power in a federation such as LO is reflected by the "empire" it controls: its cooperative, the greatest building firm in the country, includes a huge printing-house and a leisure and tourism organization. Also, it controls 25 percent of the daily printed newspapers. In the private as well as in the public sector, union representatives have extended rights in Scandinavian countries. In municipalities, at their disposal are many facilities to promote their activities. They are currently involved in personnel policy changes at the national and local levels. These include the national corporatist system of wage settlements, general work conditions and pension schemes of local employees associates in Denmark (Mouritzen 1987, Tonboe 1986), in Sweden (Anton 1974), and in Finland (Kiviniemi 1988) representatives of central government, local authorities and unions. Still, all decisions are not made during these national negotiations. Agreements, even confrontation, also occur in every municipality. In Norway, unions generally participate in many municipal commissions whose "team spirit" is

well-known (Eckstein 1966: 140). In addition to conventional and traditional relations between employers and employees, union action also includes strikes, even though seldomly occurring. For instance, in May 1986, the Swedish SACO-SR federation appealed to thousands of local employees for strikes, when menaced by a lock-out.

In Great Britain, nearly one-half of the civilian labor force is unionized. That high rate is caused partially by a closed shop practice including five million workers or half of the union members, and by the deduction in advance of membership subscriptions from wages. In the public sector, unions were created by the end of the 19th century: the Municipal Employees' Union (MEU) in 1894, the National Union of Teachers (NUT) in 1870, and the National and Local Government Officers' Association (NALGO) in 1905. After the 1960s and the 1970s, the strongest increase in union membership was in the public sector, including 12 of the 25 largest national unions in 1981 (Parry 1985: 80). In the early 1980s, an estimated 80 percent of national or local public employees belonged to a union (Rose 1985, Thomson 1982). In most countries, unionization is substantially higher in the public than in the private sector. This results from the average greater size of public units, the usually better and closer relations between political parties and unions, and the more opportunities to influence policies, especially through voting.

Since 1945, wages and work condition settlements for local employees are negotiated nationally in Great Britain, but not in as consensual a manner as in Scandinavian countries. The Local Authorities' Conditions of Service Advisory Board (LACSAB) a committee composed of representatives of Ministries as well as local authorities and unions, regularly produces recommendations for employers. Analyzing in-depth the functions and operations of firefighters, Rhodes (1984, 1986) demonstrated the noncorporatist pattern of this national regulation system, essentially dominated by central government orientations. In fact, representatives of employers and employees most importantly, after the electoral victory of the Conservatives in 1979, played a crucial role in determining the pay and work conditions of local employees. The flexibility of unions is more important within local authorities, which control many aspects of personnel management (hiring practices, career opportunities of employees, determination of fringe benefits, and so on).

Local unions have been increasingly active since the 1960s. First, there were strikes of the NALGO members in 1964, then a rapid extension of teacher demonstrations, ambulance workers, and firefighters (Hampton 1987: 140). General principles adopted at national tripartite meetings are more often modified and adapted at the municipal level, specifying their content and considering local peculiarities; unions such as NALGO or NUPE

(National Unions of Public Employees) begin to designate shop stewards more frequently, and to claim the right to participate in local government commissions. Recently they have obtained a right to be consulted in some local authorities like Liverpool, Slough, Hereford, Worcester, and Basildon.

By the mid-1970s, union activism had developed in reaction to the adoption of austerity policies by the central government. Enlarging their involvement to more general political and economic issues, unions vigorously opposed measures reducing the growth in expenditures, local taxes and a transformation of local institutions (Gyford 1985, Gyford and James 1983).

Since 1980, a decline in the national unionization rate has been observed (Table 5). Has the rate fallen in local authorities, also? Mobilizations and actions implemented for years finally have produced only limited effects (Pickvance 1986). The ability of unions to influence policies has gradually been reduced by the Thatcher government. The 1980 Employment Act limited the practice of strike pickets and solidarity strikes. The 1982 Employment Act defined strictly legal strikes and reduced union immunity in conflict cases. The 1988 Employment Act decided that a strike can be organized only by an union after a secret ballot. Since 1979, attacks by that government against "corporations" also led to a weakening in the traditionally strong influence of professionals (especially in the housing sector), who are nationally organized but benefit local authorities with their competence and expertise (Goldsmith 1988, Pickvance 1985a).

The United States is in a third group of countries, characterized by a low national level of unionization (between 15 and 30 percent). But, without the rapid increase in public unionism since the 1960s, the 16 percent American rate in 1984 would have been lower. Indeed, between 1953 and 1976, while the percentage of union members in the private sector declined (from 36 to 25 percent), it increased in the public realm (from 12 to 40 percent) and mainly at state and local levels (Table 6).

Table 6. Private and Public Unionization in the United States

Year	Employees (thousands)		Density (percent)	
	Private	Public	Private	Public
1953	15,540.2	769.8	35.7	11.6
1962	14,731.2	2,161.9	31.6	24.3
1970	16,978.3	4,012.0	29.1	32.0
1973	16,803.5	5,077.8	26.6	37.0
1976	16,166.8	5,980.3	25.1	40.2
1983	13,142.6	5,410.7	17.8	34.4

Source: Troy (1986)

In the 1960s and early 1970s, the difference between the two sectors lessened, not only in size and activism, but also in rights attributed to unions. Executive Order 10988, created in 1962, by President Kennedy produced an impact as important in the public sector as that induced in the private sector by the Wagner Act. In the mid-1970s, 40 percent of municipal employees were organized - either in unions (20 percent), or in professional associations (20 percent) - and nearly all of them in large cities (Lineberry and Sharkansky 1978). More and more, the employees were affiliated with AFL-CIO or the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), the International Association of Firefighters (IAFF) and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT). Also, in a more traditional way, they are affiliated with professional associations such as the Fraternal Order of Police, the Uniformed Firemen's Association and the National Educational Association, or even to confessional fraternities as the Holy Name Societies, the St. George Societies, and the Shomrim Societies (Sayre and Kaufman 1965: 75). Contrary to European countries such as Great-Britain, the organization of municipal employees as an independent force is rather new, having developed only in the past twenty years.

Another uniqueness of the American case is the primarily local decision-making regarding personnel, including wages. For municipal employee unions, city hall is the sole action and bargaining arena, although unions try to influence state legislative processes creating the work rules in the local public sector. If the political weight of unions in policy processes has, on the whole, increased in American cities since the 1960s, it varies widely from one municipality to another according to various factors, among them centralization of political leadership. According to Banfield and Wilson (1967), the more the party and the executive are centralized, the more they are likely to resist pressures of organized employees or the dominant political culture ("pro-labor" in Boston, rather than "anti-labor" in San Diego) (Clark, Burg and Landa, 1984). In many cities, there were strikes in the 1960s with the number of striking employees increasing from 28,000 to 252,000 between 1960 and 1975

(Clark and Ferguson 1983: 154). For example, in Chicago, after selection of a new union leader, firefighters spent as much energy fighting the successive mayors as fires (Grimshaw 1982). To prevent troubles and a fall of their popularity among citizens, many mayors confronted with strike threats preferred to give up and accept employees' demands. So, while the fiscal situation in New York worsened, Lindsay, as well as Beame, could not decide to adopt more stringent personnel policies (Shefter 1985: 117-118).

Yet the power of unions has substantially decreased following the 1970s. The conservative wave illustrated by movements toward expenditure and tax reduction led to a change of mayoral attitudes regarding demands and strategies of municipal employees. They often resisted union demands during sometimes very difficult labor conflicts, as in Seattle, Atlanta, or San Antonio. In San Francisco, while they had closely aligned with the Alioto administration, the importance of unions was significantly reduced by the Moscone and Feinstein administrations (Ferman 1985). In numerous cases, faced with acute fiscal problems, municipalities reacted with a reinforced centralization of politico-administrative leadership, which facilitated resistance to pressures by municipal employees (Levine et al. 1981). Compared with the 1960-75 period, unionism experienced a decline in numbers and militancy, marked by the fall of union importance in the public sector from 40 to 34 percent between 1976 and 1983 (Table 6) and the diminution of strikes (252,000 striking local employees in 1975 but 206,000 four years later) (Troy 1986). Underlying this decline is the less pro-union orientation of many political leaders - more and more supported by residents. Opinion polls taken in the late 1950s and early 1980s reveal a growing disaffection of the American population with unions (Lipset 1986, Lipset and Schneider 1983). Also, municipal hiring included an increasing number of part-time employees with only a minority favoring unionization -- 8 percent in 1982, compared with 46 percent of full-time employees (Lewin 1986, Stein et al. 1986, Troy 1986).

France is the least unionized country in our seven country sample. Estimating, precisely, the number of unionized people is difficult. According to Mouriaux (1983: 65), "estimations given by unions are suspicious. If there is no doubt that in the past CGT and CFTC inflated their official statistics to improve their representativity, current data in any case remain doubtful." Estimates in 1988 reached 13 percent (Table 5). So today France is similar to Greece, the European country where unions are lowest in numbers.

Two other elements reflect a decline of the unions. For ten years, elections to the comités d'entreprise (concertation bodies in private firms and public enterprises) have been marked by a rapid increase in non-unionized candidates (24 percent of votes in 1987, an

increase of 5 percent since 1977), with a steady decline of the largest union, the Confédération Générale du Travail (CGT) (27 percent of votes, 10 percent less), and a stabilization of the other unions (Confédération Française Démocratique du Travail-CFDT, Force Ouvrière-FO, Confédération Générale des Cadres-CGC, and Confédération Française des Travailleurs Chrétiens-CFTC). Moreover, activism measured by intensity of collective work conflicts, has diminished since the mid-1970s: one has to go back to 1946 to find a year with fewer conflicts than 1985.

The decline of union influence in French society could increase in the next years as, as in the United States, citizens become more and more distrustful of unions -- 57 percent of respondents to a SOFRES poll in 1985 said they had no trust in unions compared with 51 percent three years before (Sofres. L'Etat de l'opinion. Clés pour 1987. Paris: Seuil. 1987: 161).

This relative weakness in unionism can not be explained by a "national French uniqueness", according to which the French would be "naturally" and basically independent and hostile to collective organization. The distrust index used in the international survey conducted in Europe by the European Value Systems Study Group reached, in France and in Italy, a peak value (Stoetzel 1983; Inglehart and Rabier 1984; Inglehart 1989). Other factors determine the French characteristics also. Other than the privileged relationship tying the Fédération de l'Education Nationale to the Socialist Party, links between unions and parties have never been so strong or symbiotic as in Northern European countries as Wilson (1983: 247) describes "a solid tradition isolates unions from parties." In addition, closed shop practices are illegal and survive in only two sectors, Paris printing and dockers. Finally, the potential influence of unions is strongly limited by a high degree of fragmentation. That division in particular can be found in the public sector, which resembles a mosaic of little corporative groups (Crozier 1967). However the membership rate (35 percent) remains higher there than in private firms. With greater involvement in labor negotiations than in the private sector, unions such as the Syndicat National des Instituteurs in primary education or the Fédération CGT de l'énergie in Electricité de France - have more control over public careers.

Vis-à-vis municipal employees, French unions pursued as early as at the beginning of this century (from the 1910s to the 1940s) a fruitful strategy of national negotiation with associations of mayors the state playing a role of arbiter. During that period, legislation was passed establishing national norms for every municipality for hiring, promotion, wages and work conditions of employees (Lapassat 1977; Dupuy and Thoenig 1980, Thoenig 1982).

In the realm of general economic policy as defined by the central government, wage scales are negotiated at the national level for the entire public sector, local employee salaries are calculated in reference to those of state employees. Indeed, "territorial civil servants whose functions are equivalent to those of state civil servants benefit wages to a maximum identical" (article 88 of the January 26, 1984 Act on territorial civil servants) is used as a policy. At the national level also, the influence ability of unions is more pronounced in the training sector, a central issue of corporatist negotiations between representatives of state and of national associations of local elected officials (Dupuy and Thoenig 1980). Therefore, certain personnel decisions are not under municipal control. Despite strong jurisdictional constraints, the ability of municipal officials to negotiate is not negligible, especially for policies relating to staff size, carriers, and fringe benefits. Union stewards participate in negotiation practices in the municipal administration including commissions administratives paritaires (career and disciplinary questions), comités techniques paritaires (services organization and functioning), and comités d'hygiène et de sécurité (health and security). As in the national public administration, action by unions is most often characterized by a structural division, which partly explains the frequent failure of fights against retrenchment and privatization attempts in many municipalities. One of the factors favoring the rapid implementation of Jacques Chirac's privatization program in Paris was the dispersed defense of employee interests in ten different unions.

Municipal Employees in the Core of Decision Processes

In the Weberian model of bureaucracy, political and administrative functions are strictly divided. The administrative employee locally executes decisions of the political authority and "has to carry out his work *sine ira et studio*, without resentment and bias" (Weber 1963: 128). The American reform movement of the last century proposed isolating "government" from the "politics," in order to prevent any risk of corruption or clientelism. But there is no doubt that strictly defined separation of functions never matched reality, and numerous municipal employees act on the borderline of political and administrative spheres, (Banner 1982; Hoffmann-Martinot 1989; Jobert and Sellier 1977).

Far from restricting their activity to pure administrative tasks, administrative officials often serve as mainly decision makers. By their presence, expertise and professionalism, they directly intervene in various stages of the decision and implementation process. Their independence and autonomy are particularly important in Great Britain where councilors serve only part-time, and their influence is sharply limited by methods used by

administrators to monopolize information and relations with ministries (Byrne 1986, Glassberg 1980). In Norway, Rådmenn also are strong executives. At the top of the French municipal hierarchy, the general secretary frequently concentrates such power that he can reign over "its" administration; in many municipalities he is significantly called "le général." In the United States, many studies similarly have shown how the mayoral leadership may be challenged or limited by chief administrators, who oppose the mayor's instructions (in New York, Banfield and Wilson 1967: 218) or resist the introduction of new policies (in San Francisco, Ferman 1985).

However, since the 1970s, the stronger involvement of many elected officials in municipal management led, in many countries, to a redefinition of the spheres of politics and administration and to a balance conforming to the normative Weberian model. "Dilettantes" come so much closer to "specialists" that they compete or even substitute. That specialization or professionalization "meaning to have a technical competence, an expertise" (Mabileau and Sadran 1982: 269) is observed through the development of full-time activities among half of the mayors as well in Norway (Larsen 1987) or as in French municipalities, with more than 2,000 inhabitants, according to the results of a survey conducted in June 1988 by CSA/ Le Monde. The prospect of making a city administration more transparent, accessible, and visible, induces elected officials to be more active in the departments and so to prove through their various and daily interventions that they favor a more dynamic policy style in economic crises.

The relationship between a crisis environment and dynamic leadership can be found in Western countries following the mid-1970s (Goldsmith 1987: 5). The new rules of the game necessarily produce a reactivation of the "fundamental tension" (Mayntz 1982: 63) characterizing the relationship between "dilettantes" and "specialists." Elected officials know they can introduce change only with minimal support or at least non resistance by employees. They have at their disposal many resources to oppose plans of political leaders by using, manipulating, or curtailing internal information through various decision making techniques (Sayre and Kaufman 1965: 421), or modifying and limiting the implementation. Uncoordinated interventions by elected officials in "core questions" of administration can lead to such serious withdrawal and blocking-up reactions of a majority of administrators that conditions of the pre-bureaucratic administration described by Weber are likely to reemerge. Even today, numerous employees have limited qualifications, are involved in routine projects, and fit the Downs (1967) model of conservative public employees. Their behavior is characterized by a penchant for security and opposition to change. Nevertheless, a growing number of better qualified, younger, and more competent people were hired in recent years

and contribute to a renewal of bureaucratic methods and practices (see Lorrain 1989). Even if they face the inertia of conservative colleagues, basically hostile to the modification of existing structures and to the competition induced by this "new blood", those change advocates (using Downs' terminology) will be active agents of the administration modernization.

MUNICIPAL PERSONNEL STRATEGIES AND POLICIES

The final section presents the FAUI survey results concerning strategies directly affecting personnel -- strategies relating to staff, compensation, and privatization. Data for the seven countries are importance indexes computed by Mouritzen and Houlberg (1988) from chief administrative officer responses. The indices reflect both frequency of usage of these strategies and fiscal impacts.

Strategies Relating to Staff

Results for the four strategies aimed at reducing or stabilizing staff: lay off, hiring freeze, workforce reduction through attrition, and retirements show two distinctive types of policies among Scandinavian countries (Table 7).

Table 7. Strategies Concerning the Numbers of Municipal Employees (Index of Importance)

Country	Lay off Personnel	Freeze Hiring	Reduce Work- force through Attrition	Early Retirements
Denmark	26	51	-	-
Norway	4	22	15	2
Sweden	0	5	43	3
Finland	30	40	-	22
Great Britain	26	37	21	36
France	4	70	41	-
United States	30	41	49	13

Source: Mouritzen and Houlberg (1988).

In Norway and in Sweden, lay-offs and early retirement are seldom used, as are other strategies (except reducing workforce through attrition in Swedish cities). The high degree of fiscal slack, the dominant ideology of the welfare state, and strength of unions are the main factors impeding adoption of staff reduction strategies. By comparison, Denmark and Finland are closer to non-Scandinavian countries, especially in their relatively high level

of lay-offs (26 and 30). In Denmark, the importance of the middle class, without doubt, contributes to criticism of public interventions and limits them (see Allardt 1986: 115). Likewise, Finland is distinct from the "Scandinavian model" exemplified by Sweden or Norway, because of a greater polarization of its partisan system -- preventing social-democracy from playing a dominant role -- which is reflected within the unions, weakened by divisions pitting communists against social-democrats.

In France, strategies limiting local employees growth were implemented mainly following the 1983 municipal elections. One of the most striking cases of the shifting direction of personnel policies is found in Paris. While during his first term Jacques Chirac very much favored strong public interventionism and an extension of municipal staff, hiring hundreds of new employees, he then adopted retrenchment practices. Nevertheless, layoffs in France were few (Table 7). Most municipal employees have a long tenure, and the rare lay-offs mainly are for contractual services, often politically involved with previous local leaders. Municipalities commonly stabilize bureaucracies with a hiring freeze and, therefore, the value of the importance index for the strategy is highest in France. Fewer tenure jobs are created, compared with the development of temporary and auxiliary positions (especially under the form of TUC, Travaux d'Utilité Collective). But personnel policies vary widely and do not necessarily fit with official political ideologies. Though a conservative leader, the leader of the Parti Républicain and mayor of Fréjus, Francois Léotard, created no fewer than 13 divisions and doubled the number of employees (from 330 in 1977 to 610 in 1986) following his election to city hall. Inversely, many left-wing municipalities pursue very restrictive policies (see the example of the communist municipality of Tarbes in: Clark et al. 1987: 361-390). Between 1983 and 1986, Pierre Mauroy, the socialist mayor of Lille and former Prime Minister, managed, against strong reactions of unions, to reduce the number of municipal employees 10 percent.

Since the mid-1970s, the British central government has tried to reduce employment in local authorities. Under this pressure, many reduced employment, without using massive lay-offs. In Wandsworth, roughly 700 jobs were reduced in 1981 (9 percent of the workforce) but this example remains relatively unique (Chandler and Lawless 1985: 160, Wolman 1983).

Alternative policies, such as reductions by attrition in education often negotiated with unions, were implemented. The combined effects of such measures led to a rapid decrease in number of teachers, 25 percent, in Torytown (Duke and Edgell 1986). Compared with other countries, early retirement is a unique strategy in Great Britain (Table 7).

Concerned about growing unemployment, many local authorities intervened actively into the labor market, not by following the politically dangerous example of the radical-oriented council of Liverpool, but with job sharing, a means of dividing a full-time position into several part-time jobs and to reduce the influence of unions. Part-time employees more frequently are women and non-union members (Karran 1984).

In the United States, many case studies and statistical analyses underline the link between intergovernmental transfers and municipal workforce size (Schneider 1988). Numerous local governments used the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA), passed in 1973, to finance new jobs (Woody 1982), or even the rehiring of illegally laid-off employees (Rubin 1982: 105). When municipal officials thought that federal and state aid had become a regular and secure flow to finance job creation, transfers began to be reduced (Stein 1984). Diminution of intergovernmental grants, fiscal crisis, and growing conservatism induced a fall in local employment. In cities such as Detroit or New York, faced with acute fiscal problems spectacular lay-offs occurred. Hired since the 1960s ethnic minorities were major victims of these austerity policies, according to the rule "last hired, first fired." In New York, the number of white employees declined only 22 percent between 1974 and the end of 1975 but the black and hispanic employees, respectively, declined 35 and 50 percent (Shefter 1985, Eisinger 1982b, Levine 1980). Strongly organized groups more effectively resisted lay-off measures. Certainly that is true of firefighters and policemen, among the most organized employees in the local public sector (71 and 53 percent in 1980, according to Gross 1985: 411; see also Stieber 1973, Stern 1984). In austere as well as in prosperous times, firefighters and police officers most often succeed in negotiating skillfully the improvement or the nonreduction of their specific benefits (as illustrate their repeated successes in Oakland, see Levine et al. 1980: 23). The radical practice of massive lay-offs was replaced at the end of the 1970s by attrition, today reported by American cities as the most important strategy (Table 7). As in New York, many municipalities negotiated agreements with unions excluding lay-offs but providing a personnel decrease, combined with a productivity increase (Lewin 1986, Shefter 1985).

In these seven countries, stabilization or reduction of workforce is sometimes partially compensated by use of volunteers. Following the fiscal crisis of 1975, the City of New York created a citizens committee to train volunteers in various sectors: security, assistance to families, the elderly, migrants, and housing renewal. The use of volunteers is much less common in France and they add the equivalent of only 1 percent to the work force, compared with 4 percent in the United States and 3 percent in Great Britain (Le Net and Werquin 1985). One can argue that the higher the trust between individuals, the more

informal activities -- help and solidarity -- will develop. This explains the more limited use of volunteers in France - where the interindividual trust is particularly weak - than in Scandinavian countries, Great Britain, and the United States.

Strategies Relating to Compensations

A second group of personnel strategies involves municipal employee compensation (Table 8).

In Europe, municipalities individually have few options in wage settlements, because pay conditions are determined at the national level. Nevertheless, they set work conditions and benefits. Again, Danish and Finish cities differ from Norwegian and Swedish municipalities in using more restrictive measures, especially wages and salary freezes in Finland. British local officials favor reducing overtime. That strategy is almost as important in France, where many municipalities after the beginning of the 1980s tried to control increases in employee benefits. To reduce absenteeism, the mayor of Lille opposed unions with a hiring freeze and, in 1984, restricted bonuses. In the same year, the communist mayor of Le Mans and his socialist deputy, president of the communauté urbaine du Mans, were sequestered during several hours for having limited employee benefits.

Table 8. Strategies Concerning the Pay of Municipal Employees (Index of Importance)

Country	Reduce Employee Compensation	Freeze Wages and Salaries	Reduce Overtime
Denmark	-	59	-
Norway	11	41	14
Sweden	-	11	08
Finland	22	59	15
Great Britain	13	8	32
France	-	31	35
United States	11	22	33

Source: Mouritzen and Houlberg (1988).

Contrary to the European cases, municipalities in the United States are much freer to set compensation levels. Yet Table 8 shows that the importance of compensation reduction strategies is most often weaker in American cities. Tables 7 and 8 indicate that those cities confronted with fiscal stress preferred to use staff, rather than compensation, reductions. This result confirms several previous analyses (Clark and Ferguson 1983, Lewis 1988, Schneider 1988, Stein 1984, Wolman 1983) which have shown that, supported by unions, most

municipalities choose to reduce workforce rather than to displease all employees by worsening their conditions.

Privatization of Municipal Services

Privatization of municipal services is a strategy whose effects on personnel are considerable. Privatization appears marginal in Norway and Sweden, where the political culture remains widely acceptant of the welfare state (Allardt 1984, 1986, Flora 1988). This differs from the less homogeneous politico-economic system in Finland, characterized by stronger competition between private forces and the public sector (Table 9). Under central government pressure, privatization was used in Great Britain after 1979 by numerous (mainly conservative) local authorities and often provoked serious labor strikes (Duke and Edgell 1986, Walker 1983).

Table 9. Privatization of Municipal Services (Index of Importance)

Denmark	-
Norway	09
Sweden	06
Finland	39
Great-Britain	30
France	22
United States	27

In France, privatization of municipal services was frequently advanced in 1983 by newly elected right-wing mayors as an "antidote" to socialization of the economy and society. Locally experimentation, before its adoption at the national level, was recommended. Many right-wing (in particular RPR) elected officials suddenly were converted to market principles and free enterprise and viewed privatization as a true panacea. But in some cities, severe privatization measures were adopted, and applied with haste, and with insufficient control. In other cities such as Nîmes (Hoffmann-Martinot 1988), unions opposed, sometimes violently, the "dismantling of the public service"; but in most cases, the privatization measures finally passed with elected officials agreements determining in detail methods of shifting to the private sector.

Half of the American cities, mainly those under Republican control, use privatization. Sanitation is one service where privatization increased rapidly. Numerous reports and studies convinced municipal officials of the low competitiveness of the public sector. Consequently, between 1975 and 1983, the FTE per 1,000 inhabitants in those municipal departments fell 50 percent from 1.4 to 0.7, according to Lewis (1986). Lewis

(1988) indicates that 5 percent of a sample of 154 large cities eliminated their sanitation department between 1979 and 1983 (Fitzgerald et al. 1988). Comparing public and private costs is only one criterion which can be evaluated by a municipality before changing service delivery mode. In many cases, resistance by organized employees has an equal or even greater influence in the final choice. In this respect, Ferris (1986) states that the more organized the personnel, the less privatization policies are likely to be implemented.

CONCLUSION

This contribution is a sketch of a more systematic work underway to compare, internationally, the role of municipal employees in local policies. A review, in different national contexts, of the history and development of municipal bureaucracies, evolution of their size, relationships between administration and politics, and types of organization and defense of local employees interests is needed. We explain how and why certain personnel strategies are applied in specific countries, but only marginally in others. In this paper, a qualitative approach was preferred with a bold outline of main characteristics in the seven countries. Use frequencies of strategies with some interpretation of differences were presented. From that overview some interesting results can be underlined:

- in all studied countries, multiple attempts to stabilize personnel expenditures have been introduced;
- the more numerous, organized and influent are municipal employees, the more likely they manage to alleviate the impact of those strategies;
- the degree of fiscal slack has little effect on selection of personnel policies. For instance, retrenchment policies adopted since the beginning of the 1980s in France result more from pressures by state authorities and ideological orientations;
- international comparisons can lead only to biased or caricatural results if homogeneous national types of "regional models" are presupposed and serve as constant references. Intra country differences always must be firmly kept in mind, as well as historical and political traditions (significant differences within the "Scandinavian block") as related to union implantation or urban political cultures (in the United States).

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