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**Monitoring Administrative Change :
The BADAC Database of Swiss
Cantons and Towns**

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Monitoring Administrative Change: The BADAC Database of Swiss Cantons and Towns

1. A database for the observation of administrative change

1.1 Extreme federalism and extreme democracy

The Swiss federal state embodies the combination of an extreme form of federalism with an equally extreme form of direct democracy.

The country, which has only seven million inhabitants, is divided into 26 member states, i.e. the 20 cantons and six half-cantons. The ratio of the total population to the number of member states is unique when compared to other federal states in the world, and even in unitary states such extensive fractionalization of the national territory is also extremely rare. The cantons differ significantly in size, ranging from less than 15,000 inhabitants in Appenzell Inner-Rhodes to 1.2 million in Zurich. With over 420,000 inhabitants, the five biggest cantons (Zurich, Berne, Vaud, Aargovia, St Gall) accommodate 53 % of the population whereas 2% inhabitants can be found in the five smallest cantons, each with less than 40'000 population (Garus, Uri, Nidwalden, Obwalden, Appenzell Inner-Rhodes). Equally large disparities can be found in the economic power of the cantons. In 1995, the level of cantonal income per capita was highest in the canton of Zug at 75,349 Sfr and lowest in Wallis at 31,913 Sfr, and it only exceeded the national average of 45,276 Sfr in seven of the cantons, i.e. Zug, Basle-Town, Zurich, Geneva, Glarus, Basle-Country, and Vaud. Despite concerted efforts over many years to achieve "financial equalization", the disparity between the cantons is increasing.

Of all countries in the world, Switzerland has by far the most generously developed form of direct democracy. An average of six to eight national referenda are held each year on specific issues. More than two thirds of the

national referenda held in the world since the Second World War took place in Switzerland (Kobach 1994: 98). Direct democracy is even more extensively developed at cantonal level than at national level; all of the cantons have a form of financial referendum which does not exist at national level.

Extreme federalism and extreme democracy give rise to highly complex political and administrative structures and processes (Germann 1998a, 1998b). The cantons enjoy an almost complete autonomy in matters of organization and personnel and this has resulted in considerable diversities in the cantonal administrative structures. The cantons play a key role in the Swiss administrative system. They are the key players in the areas of education and health where they still enjoy a high degree of autonomy. And even in areas in which the central state has extensive competence, the cantons still dominate administrative activity as they are responsible for the implementation of most of the state legislation and programmes.

1.2 Accelerated institutional change

The radical transformation in the international environment since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 has increased the pressure for reform in Switzerland. The increasing isolation of the country in the middle of the European Union, which was able to achieve important measures towards integration, has resulted in the polarisation of opinions with respect to the position of Switzerland in Europe and contributed to a certain sense of impending change. The most important impetus for change in the area of administration has, however, been the crisis in public finances which resulted from economic stagnation since the early 1990s.

The above-listed circumstances led to an accelerated change in cantonal administrative structures. Many things, hitherto considered as untouchable, have started to move. The processes of change listed below, which are either planned or already under way, illustrate this point clearly.

- Several cantons and local authorities have introduced the methods of *New Public Management* on an experimental or definitive basis.

- The "New Financial Equalization" proposed in 1996 by the federal and cantonal finance ministers includes plans for a completely new division of tasks between the central state and the cantons, greater horizontal co-operation between the cantons and more efficient compensation mechanisms among the cantons. It is expected that this reform will strengthen the position of the cantons and introduce savings in the range of three billion francs.
- The project for a complete revision of the Swiss Federal Constitution, pending for over 30 years, has reached a stage whereby (modest) results should finally be achieved.
- A significant territorial reform at local level was achieved for the first time in the canton of Thurgau in the 1990s (46% reduction in number of local authorities by 1997). Similar reforms are planned in the canton of Lucerne. Moreover, territorial reform is no longer a taboo subject even at the cantonal level of the political system. Since 1997, some prominent politicians have been publicly considering whether Switzerland does not have too many cantons after all.

1.3 A database for research and practice

In 1990 the *Institute for Advanced Studies in Public Administration* (Institut de hautes études en administration publique - IDHEAP) together with the *Conference of Cantonal Chancellors* launched the project to set up a database of cantonal administrative structures (cf. § 2.1 below). The aim of this project was to establish greater transparency in the very complex administrative landscape, to support reform projects by providing easy access to reliable and comparable information and to stimulate learning processes in the public sector.

The BADAC project has the following six goals:

- to provide *basic data* about administrative structures and changes in administrative bodies at cantonal and local level;
- to update the recorded data on a regular and long-term basis;
- to *extend* the data record in response to the needs of interested administrations and authorities;
- to ensure the *comparability* of the data between the cantons and, where possible, with other countries;
- to *complement* the official information about administrative structures published by cantons and local authorities;
- to *report* regularly on administrative change at sub-national level in Switzerland.

The BADAC is an excellent research instrument and has an important contribution to make to the improvement of systematic knowledge about administrative structures at cantonal and local level which remains - at best - precarious. Although extensive work has been carried out on cantonal administrative law, few sociological studies and studies in administrative science have been undertaken in this area (c.f. in particular: Germann et al. 1979; Geser 1981; Urio 1986; Geser et al. 1987; Berchtold 1989; Germann/Weis 1995). Of particular significance is a study by Hans Geser (1981), which looks at the cantonal administrative structures in relation to the sizes of the populations of the cantons. This study provided valuable pointers for the conception of the BADAC. The first publication based on BADAC data appeared in 1995 (Germann/Weis 1995). The theoretical approaches, on which the BADAC concept is based, are presented in section 4 of this study.

In addition to its usefulness for research purposes, the BADAC is particularly helpful for administrative practitioners who deal with reorganisation and reform in the political-administrative arena. The database provides information about approaches and trends in the what are referred to as the "reference cantons" or in all of the cantons. The database allows the retrieval of aggregated data in

table form as well as "atomised" individual items of information. The BADAC was one of the first complex databases in Switzerland which can be consulted directly through the Internet (available on the Internet since March 1996).

The BADAC contains indicators about administrative structures and services and thus provides the prerequisite for *benchmarking* (Schedler 1995: 199-209). Such indicators enable an administrative unit to compare itself with others and take inspiration from the *best practices*. The indicators contained in the BADAC at present are mainly structural indicators with output indicators still a rare occurrence. The processing of output indicators is an expensive and politically sensitive undertaking.

Finally, the varied possible uses of the BADAC in the teaching of public administration deserve a mention. The BADAC has been a constant component of IDHEAP courses for some time now.

2. The creation and development of the BADAC

2.1 Co-operation with the cantons

From its inception, the BADAC was conceived as an instrument for use in both research *and* practice. This meant that the project could only be implemented in close co-operation with the cantons. The IDHEAP's partner in the compilation of the BADAC was the *Conference of Cantonal Chancellors* under Presidents Niedermann (St Gallen, up to 1992), Nuspliger (Berne, 1992 to 1996) and Aebischer (Fribourg, since 1996). The chancellors consider themselves as the chiefs of staff of the cantonal governments and thus have an excellent overview of the cantonal administration.¹ The Conference of Cantonal Chancellors elected a committee known as the "BADAC Support Group" and in May 1995 received a detailed report at its annual conference on the project. It recommended to its members to co-ordinate the data surveys of 1990 and 1997 in the individual cantons and agreed to support further surveys. As a result, all of the cantons actually participated in the surveys despite the considerable

¹ For information on the role of the chancellor in the cantonal governments, cf.: Germann/ Weis 1995: 15-24

effort involved. Differences only arose between the cantons when it came to the deadlines for submitting the data and the quality and comprehensiveness of the delivered data. The second survey of 1997 went far more smoothly than the first survey in 1990 (see § 3.2 below).

The "BADAC Support Group" is composed of three chancellors and a representative of the *Conference of Cantonal Finance Ministers*.² The group commented on the questionnaires for the 1990 and 1997 surveys and on practical issues involved in the collection of data. It concentrated in particular on the definitions which are essential if the data to be collected is standardised and compatible.

Following the first publication of BADAC data, the cantonal finance ministers began to express interest in the database. The Finance Ministers' Conference of Western Switzerland invited the project manager to their meeting of May 9th 1996 to obtain information about the database and statistics which had given rise to controversy in the press. The ministers agreed to support the BADAC and designated a representative for the "BADAC Support Group".³

2.2 The inclusion of the towns and cities

In Switzerland, local government regulations are the sole responsibility of the cantons. This means that each canton has its own local authority regime. However, an article on local authorities and urban agglomerations has been included in the 1998 draft of the complete revision of the Swiss Federal Constitution.

² Baumeler (Lucerne); Stern to 1995, Fremond to 1997, Grandjean since 1998 (Vaud); Niedermann to 1992 (St. Gallen); Nuspliger since 1992 (Bern) and Alfred Rey (Wallis) since 1996 as representative of the Conference of Cantonal Finance Ministers

³ Letter of 4.12.1996 from M. Francis Matthey, director of the Department of Finance and Social Affairs of the canton of Neuchâtel. See note 2 above.

In its current form, the BADAC only contains very basic information about the local authorities.⁴ It is, however, desirable that data of the same density be recorded for the towns and cities as that available on the cantons. This would involve the extension of the BADAC and a direct survey of the town and city authorities.

In July 1996, the board of the *League of Swiss Towns* (Schweizerischer Städteverband) approved the extension of the BADAC to include the towns and cities and agreed to lend its support in the relevant data survey. One year later, the League also recommended its members to make a financial contribution to the extended database, which will include a new element called "BADAC-Villes". To this end, in November 1997, it initiated a subscription to the project, recommending an annual fee of between 500 and 4,000 Sfr, depending on the size of the local authority. The subscription initiative was successful: 30 towns ensured their participation and other local authorities have declared their intentions to reach a decision about participation following clarification of technical details.

It is planned to hold the first data survey of the towns and cities in 1999. The survey instrument to be used will be similar to the original BADAC questionnaire with suitable adjustments and simplifications. The project will be carried out in agreement with a "BADAC-Villes Support Group" to be appointed, whose members will include the director of the League of Swiss Towns and experts from individual towns and cities.

2.3 Finance

At the end of 1997, the total investment in the BADAC from 1989 was approximately 1.5 million Sfr: this does not include the costs to the cantons of the two data surveys of 1990 and 1997.

⁴ Regulation of the municipalities, number of municipalities according to type and regime form, fusions of municipalities, intercommunal agreements, special purpose associations of communes, full-time or part-time job of the municipal president, municipal personnel.

The financial resources for the development of the BADAC was provided for the most part by the IDHEAP. The salary costs of the BADAC team and the information technology costs were mainly covered by the institute. Other resources were obtained from fees for expert services based on the BADAC. Third-party funding was also obtained from various other sources. Initial funding was provided by the *IDHEAP Fonds de garantie à la recherche*⁵ and this made the actual launch of the project possible. The *Federal Office for Justice* also contributed to the financing of the BADAC.

The ad hoc financing of the BADAC, which is based on intensive fund-raising, enabled the development of the database but does not cover its institutionalisation and ongoing maintenance. For this reason, efforts have been under way for some time now to guarantee the long-term financing of the basic operating requirements of the database. Due to the growing scarcity of public resources, efforts to raise this money have encountered difficulties and given rise to considerable toing and froing - quite typical of Swiss federalism - with respect to who should pay for the BADAC which is, however, considered as a thoroughly useful and necessary undertaking.

The monitoring of administrative change at subnational level is undoubtedly in the interest of both the central state and the cantons. The central state relies on the cantons for the administration of most of its legalisation and programmes as the main work involved in their implementation falls, for the most part, to the cantons. A more detailed knowledge of the cantonal administrative structures is also essential for the development of intercantonal co-operation which it is hoped would ease the burden on central state finances. Given the advantages to be gained by both the central state and the cantons from the availability of reliable data about administrative structures, joint financing of the BADAC would, therefore, appear to be a reasonable proposition. However, in response to a request in this regard by the *Federal Office for Statistics* in 1995, the Federal Chancellery stated that a database about cantonal administrative structures is the exclusive business of the cantons and that the BADAC data

⁵ This fund was set up by Enrico Bignami, the founder of the IDHEAP. Bignami also recommended the systematic collection of data about cantonal administrative bodies.

"would only be of very limited use" for the central state administration.⁶ The Federal Office for Justice, which - as already mentioned - contributed to the establishment of the BADAC, took a different stance. The database is relevant to this office particularly with respect to the reform of federalism and the complete revision of the Federal Constitution.

The financing of the BADAC by the cantons would face difficulties when each of the 26 cantons has to be asked for a contribution. The administrative work involved would not be worth the modest sum that could be raised in this way. Thus, financing through an intercantonal conference of ministers was suggested as an alternative. The Conference of Cantonal Chancellors, which had already been involved in the collection of data for the BADAC, could not, however, be considered as a possible solution here as it does not have its own budget. A solution was finally found through the *Conference of Cantonal Finance Ministers*. On request⁷ of one of its members, Peter Schönenberger from St-Gall, this conference decided in November 1998 to assume the operating costs of the BADAC. This includes the costs of managing and updating of the data, the information technology equipment and data analysis on a modest scale. It is intended to obtain financing from third-parties for in-depth analyses and larger research projects.

The solution adopted in November 1998 by the finance ministers means that two thirds of the BADAC costs are paid by the cantons and one third by the towns and cities. Two inter-cantonal conferences are involved on the cantonal side: the one of the chancellors, which is concerned with data collection, and the other of the finance ministers which will provide the basic finance. Both conferences are represented in the "BADAC Support Group" (see § 2.1 above).

⁶ Letter to the Federal Office for Statistics of 24.5.1995.

⁷ Letter to the board of the Conference of Cantonal Finance Ministers of 25.5.1998.

3. The features of the BADAC

3.1 Three levels, six dimensions

The data recorded in the BADAC is classified under three levels. The top level consists of the *canton* in its entirety. Below this is the level of the ministries (or departments) and finally at the bottom are the divisions which are assigned directly to the ministries. The questionnaire used for the survey is divided into three corresponding parts: the first and most important part concerns the canton as a whole and the two other parts deal with the ministries and their divisions. This procedure, which is based on the theoretical approach of population ecology (see § 4.1 below), enables the documentation of three "populations" of organisations, i.e. the 26 cantons, the approximately 200 cantonal ministries and their approximately 1,000 divisions.

In addition to the three main populations -"cantons, ministries and divisions"- other organisational categories are also recorded and assigned to a main population but with summary documentation only. These organisations include *inter alia* the local authorities, districts, regions, commissions and para-government organizations. In addition, official statistics concerning political institutions and the socio-economic context published by the central state and cantons are assigned to the "canton" level. The "ministries" level contains information about the vertical and horizontal external relationships of the canton in question.

The data recorded for the three levels covers the following six dimensions of the cantonal administrative apparatus:⁸

1. the organisation of the administration;
2. the public servants;
3. the functions carried out by the different units;
4. the finances managed by the different units;

⁸ An overview of the BADAC data can be found in Germann/Weis 1995

5. the legal regulations which determine the structure and procedures;
6. reforms and rationalisation processes.

Following the initial data surveys of 1990, the BADAC was mainly able to accommodate comparative and *synchronic* analyses. Most of the stored information reflected the situation as it stood in the early 1990s. The first date record does, however, show a certain *historical depth* as the development of certain aspects is traced from 1980. Data was also recorded on the age of the administrative units and the important changes they had been subject to.

With the second survey of 1997, it became possible to carry out *diachronic* analyses of the structural change in addition to the synchronic analyses. It is now intended to update the BADAC at regular three-year intervals with data obtained from new surveys. Thus, the next BADAC survey is planned for the year 2000. With time, therefore, generations of data will be accumulated enabling the observation of administrative change from a long-term perspective.

The BADAC is not rigidly based on the data record defined in the early 1990s. It is, of course, intended to query the basic information in the same way for each survey. However, aspects which become less relevant with time will be omitted from the new surveys. It is possible to include new topics or add more detailed data to the database, in particular in response to requests from offices or researchers requiring additional information.

An initial extension of the BADAC involves the towns and cities (see § 2.2 above) and another has been proposed for the courts. At present, the BADAC only contains information about the administrative courts and does not include the entire cantonal justice system.

The BADAC is conceived as being complementary to other databases. For example, it only contains very basic information about the formal design of direct democracy at cantonal level. Requests for information about the relevant legal texts and about the voting are referred to the database on direct democracy at Geneva University's *Centre for the Study and Documentation of Direct Democracy*.

3.2 The 1990 and 1997 data surveys

The BADAC is updated on the basis of two different cycles. Official statistics about the cantons which feature in the database are updated on an annual basis. Most of the information in the database originates, however, from the surveys of the cantons which will be carried out every three years.

The first BADAC survey was launched in July 1990. Nine cantons had completed the questionnaire by November 1990 and six others by March 1991. One year later, a total of 23 replies had been received and in August 1994 the final questionnaires were completed. All of the cantons participated in the survey.⁹ In the case of Zurich, Berne and Ticino a second survey was carried out because significant reform measures had been introduced in these cantons in the meantime. In most cases, the questionnaire was completed in full and gaps and inaccuracies were found only in a few cases. The questionnaires were in German and French only and Ticino, whose official language is Italian, agreed to complete the French form. This was not the only linguistic hurdle to be overcome. It was also necessary to deal with the fact that the material in the database involved the use of a number of "official languages". Each canton has its own administrative nomenclature which can give rise to considerable comprehension problems. To avoid this, therefore, standard definitions were used in the questionnaire.

The experience gained with the first survey provided a useful basis for improvements to the second survey of 1997. Questions involving too much work were eliminated, the definitions were formulated more precisely and the surveying techniques simplified. Current issues, such as the reform of public sector service law, new public management and the use of the Internet for administrative purposes were also covered by the questionnaire (see section 5 below). A section in which the surveyed bodies are requested to suggest improvements to the survey was also added to the 1997 questionnaire.

⁹ In the case of one canton, the data was lost in transmission and could not be replaced.

The 1997 survey started in April of that year. Again all of the cantons participated and the questionnaires were returned more quickly this time. More than half of the answers had been received by the end of 1997 and only two cantons still had to submit their entries on its first anniversary; these were finally received in autumn 1998. In general, there was an improvement in the quality of the data and there were almost no complaints about the method used in the survey.

3.3 Data access and technology

The BADAC can be consulted on the Internet since March 1996 (address: <http://idheap-badac.unil.ch:8000>).¹⁰ The data can be accessed in three ways:

1. *Open access*: the official statistics about the cantons and their administrations are available in the BADAC and updated each year. They can be consulted free of charge on the Internet.
2. *Controlled access*: an access code is required to consult data about the cantons via the Internet which was surveyed specifically for the BADAC. These codes are made available to the cantonal chancelleries, other official instances and researchers.
3. *Access via the BADAC team*: the BADAC team will provide help with complex data requests and the bonding of data for the purpose of statistical analysis.

The BADAC is a relational database with a *client/server* configuration. It is based on the INGRES database system under the UNIX operating system. Most of the stored data is classified in categories or quantified and can be bonded for the purpose of statistical analysis. Explicative texts are also stored with the data.¹¹

¹⁰ The technical solution was developed by a member of the BADAC team (Guye-Vuillème 1995).

¹¹ For information on the development of the database architecture and the processing of the BADAC data, see Weis 1994.

The BADAC contains the addresses of the Web sites of the central state, cantonal administrations and local authorities. These sites can be clicked on directly if information is required which is not stored in the BADAC.

4. The theoretical basis

The conception of the BADAC was influenced by two complementary theoretical approaches which are briefly described below.

4.1 Population ecology

The population ecology approach emerged in the 1970s within American organization sociology as a counter movement to contingency theory. This approach requires that research does not restrict itself to the observation of individual organisations or groups of organisations over more or less extensive phases in their life cycles but that it focus on *entire populations* of organisations. This alone will enable researchers to make reliable statements about the relationships between internal organisational processes and the environment of organisations. Hannan and Freeman (1977; 1989) are among the pioneers of this approach.¹² One of the postulates of this approach is the creation of databases which provide homogenous comparable data for entire populations of organisations (see in particular Freeman 1986).

In the USA, the population approach was also used for the analysis of public administrations. Herbert Kaufman (1976; 1985) caused controversy with his theory that once created, administrative bodies never disappear but survive on a permanent basis. Guy Peters of the University of Pittsburgh reacted to this by creating a database of organisational units of the US federal administration from 1933 to 1984. His findings did not corroborate Kaufman's theory and he was able to document explicit change in administrations which did not only involve the creation and dissolution but also the mutation of organisations (Peters 1988: 78-106; Peters /Hogwood 1988 and 1991).

¹² For overviews of the population ecology approach see Scott (1987: 110f., 121f.) and Walter-Busch (1996: 234-238).

The BADAC reflects a central aspect of the population ecology approach in that it includes all of the cantons, cantonal ministries and their divisions. In addition to these "main populations", it also covers other categories of organisations (see. § 3.1 above). Thus, the database provides an excellent instrument for observing administrative change at cantonal level.

4.2 Innovation diffusion

A diffusion analysis consists in describing and explaining the propagation of an innovation in a "population". A "population" is understood as all of the entities which basically come into question for the introduction of the innovation. Leaving aside epidemiological research in medicine, diffusion analysis were initially carried out by economists and later also by sociologists and political scientists. The latter mainly concentrated on diffusion processes in the member states and local governments in the USA (Bingham 1975, Crain 1966, Gray 1973, Walker 1969, Warner 1974). It is possible to understand federalism as a laboratory in which some pioneer member states first test innovations. If an innovation is successful it will be adopted by other member states. From this point of view, diffusion analyses are a promising tool for research into federalism.

Management research has also recently become interested in diffusion analyses. For example, O'Neill and colleagues (1998) work on the question as to why diffusion processes continue between organisations despite the fact that in the majority of cases the innovations introduced do not result in the expected outcome.

The "population" also provides the reference dimension for diffusion analyses. It is not sufficient to merely observe the entities which adopt an innovation. The entities which have not (yet) introduced the innovation or oppose it are also relevant.

With its population structure, the BADAC is excellently suited for use in diffusion analyses. Not only does it facilitate the examination of *horizontal* diffusion processes, for example between cantons or ministries in the same policy area,

but also enables the study of *vertical* processes within a hierarchically structured cantonal administration, i.e. the "top-down" mode of diffusion controlled from above or the decentralised "bottom-up" mode.

5. Detailed studies

It is easy to retrieve elementary data about cantonal administrative structures from the BADAC (see § 3.3). If, however, the correlations between factors are to be demonstrated and the differences between the cantons explained, in-depth-analyses involving intensive work are required. The five detailed studies outlined below are particularly topical in political terms and will be carried out if the necessary resources can be provided.

5.1 Statistics on public servants

Due to the extremely diverse nature of the cantonal administrative structures, it is difficult to produce reliable statistics on the development of personnel resources in the public services. Kleinewefers (1978) and Müller (1983) carried out research on this topic in the 1970s and this was followed by work carried out by Du Pasquier (1986) in the 1980s.

The BADAC survey of 1990 should have brought about definitive progress in this area but instead revealed that the cantons themselves had difficulty in estimating their own numbers of employees. Only 24 cantons provided information about their numbers of employees and only two cantons were able to estimate the numbers employed by their local authorities. A total of 143,3154 employees is obtained from the 24 cantons which provided information about their personnel resources. The corresponding operations census carried out by the Federal Statistics Office in 1991 gives a total of 154,618. The aggregate difference of 8 percent is sizeable and would indicate that different definitions were used by the central state and the cantons in their calculations.

In the BADAC survey of 1997, significant improvements were achieved with respect to the comprehensiveness and quality of the data. However, the new figures require careful processing and detailed explanation. The significant

differences in the "density of officials" (number of public servants per 1000 persons in the workforce) in the cantons need to be explained. The in some cases significant fluctuations in the numbers of employees in certain cantons between 1990 and 1997 must also be explained. Various cantons have, for example, shifted organisational units into the para-governmental sector. It should also be noted that the distribution of tasks between canton and local authorities differ significantly depending on the region and is the object of reform efforts in several cantons.

Due to the financial crisis in Switzerland, there is greater interest in the availability of reliable statistics about the public servants. The publication about the first BADAC survey (Germann /Weis 1995) prompted a remarkable response and the controversies centred on these employee statistics: questions were raised in various cantonal parliaments on this topic.¹³

The research for the processing of the employee data and explanation of the different developments in the area of cantonal personnel is to be carried out in co-operation with the *Federal Office for Statistics* and interested cantonal offices. Attention will also be paid to the international comparability of the data. Similar projects are also being carried out abroad, for example in the *European Institute of Public Administration* in Maastricht (Auer et al. 1996) and the *Public Management Service (PUMA)* of the OECD in Paris where a database of public sector workers in OECD countries is currently being compiled.¹⁴ The International Political Science Association's "Structure and Organization of Government" research committee is also working on this issue (Derlien /Peters 1998).

5.2 Civil service reform and merit pay

The central state, cantons and local authorities each have their own civil service laws and this has given rise to a wide diversity in public sector working

¹³ Examples: Question posed by Alice Veith in Basle City (*Neue Zürcher Zeitung* 19.11.96 p. 13, and *24 Heures* 27.11.96 p. 16) and written question by Hans Stocker in Fribourg of 25.3.1998

¹⁴ David Rushforth, director of the section *Managing Across Levels of Government* of PUMA visited the IDHEAP in March 1996 and obtained information about the BADAC.

conditions. Only two cantons - Geneva and Vaud - have civil servants with life-time appointments like our neighbouring countries such as France, Germany and Austria. In the federal administration, the other cantons and numerous local authorities until recently civil service laws prescribed the appointment of public servants for a period of four years which was then usually extended for further periods of the same duration. The canton of Grisons was the first to abolish the four-year term of office in 1990 and introduce a public employment statute which includes symmetrical possibilities for termination of employment. Several cantons and local authorities followed the example of Grisons and the four-year term of office is now also to be abolished at federal level.

Different cantons and local authorities introduced various types of performance-linked pay along with - or independent of - the abolition of the four-year term of office (Emery 1994). In some instances, these measures met with difficulties as they coincided with the compression of the salary mass.

The 1997 BADAC survey obtained relatively detailed information about civil service reform and merit pay in the cantons. Combined with other information still to be gathered, this data would provide a suitable basis for a comparative evaluation of the measures involved. It could also be used for a diffusion analysis.

5.3 The development of the para-governmental structures

Around the hard core of the state administration there is a further group of organisations which form the para-governmental sector (Sharkansky 1979; Germann 1987; Hood/Schuppert 1988; Anheier 1997). The BADAC survey of 1990 revealed that at cantonal level there are at least 272 public agencies, 284 public or semi-public enterprises and 762 private or semi-private organisms which implement public tasks. Thanks to the survey of 1997, new and more comprehensive data is now available on this topic.

For the first time there is comparable data available on the para-governmental sector at cantonal level for two periods i.e. the years 1990 and 1997. This makes it possible to identify developmental trends. It would be particularly

important to examine the theory as to whether the new management doctrines which promote more autonomous administrative units and the hiving off of administrative functions have enlarged the para-governmental sector in some cantons. It is conceivable that the para-governmental periphery is expanding mainly at federal level (partial privatisation of Swisscom) and to a lesser extent at cantonal level. Another hypothesis which should be tested holds that closer intercantonal co-operation ("horizontal federalism") promotes the creation of para-governmental organisations. Difficulties could arise in this analysis, however, as the data available for 1990 is less comprehensive than that available for 1997.

5.4 The NPM Laboratory

The central state, several cantons and numerous local authorities have initiated pilot projects for *New Public Management* (NPM) (Germann 1995; Hablützel 1995). Zurich, the biggest canton, has even decided to introduce NPM for its administration on a definitive and comprehensive basis. NPM reforms are being considered or are planned for other local governments. This means that a country-wide laboratory for administrative reform is in the course of development. It is essential that evaluations based on systematic observations be carried out so that reliable conclusions can be drawn from the numerous pilot projects (Bussmann 1997).

The 1997 BADAC survey provided basic data about NPM in the cantonal administrations, which constitutes a solid starting block for evaluations and benchmarking in the area of NPM. This data is also suitable for diffusion analyses. Particular attention should be paid to the question as to why NPM practices are spreading at such an unrestrained speed despite the fact that almost no pilot projects have been evaluated (O'Neill 1998).

5.5 "Government Online": the presence of the cantons on the Internet

It can be assumed that the major new communication medium, the Internet, will have a considerable influence on the cantonal and local administrations, on the relationship between the state apparatus and the general public and on the

territorial organization of the federal state in general (see: Casey 1996; Milward/Snyder 1996). Thus, basic information concerning the presence of the cantons and their ministries and divisions on the Internet was collected in the 1997 BADAC survey. This information indicates the moment of introduction (1) of purely "radial" Web sites, (2) of sites providing the possibility of basic interaction and (3) of sites which enable the conclusion of legally relevant administrative transactions ("cyber-administration").

It would be easy to add more detailed information to the basic data already obtained, particularly by polling the cantonal and local-authority Web sites (whose addresses can be found in the BADAC and which can be directly accessed from it). This data is particularly well suited to diffusion analysis.

With the help of diffusion analyses, it should be possible to gain better insight regarding the following questions: What are the organizational requirements for "Government Online"? How is this politically controlled? Which administrative structures and activities are resistant to the Internet?

Moreover, it would be possible to formulate disciplined speculation about the formation of dual administrative structures (for citizens with and without access to the Internet) and about the effects of "cyber-administration " on the territorial organization of the state apparatus. Since large volumes of standardised information can be spread via the Internet and administrative structures can be easily compared, new *benchmarking* possibilities are emerging. This can in turn change what citizens expect from the actual federalist arrangement which has only slowly evolved during decades.

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