Transformations of the State

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Preface and Acknowledgements

Without a doubt, the modern OECD state – the TRUDI state in the terminology of the Transformations of the State Research Centre (TranState) at the University of Bremen, whose research we synthesize here – has been transformed in major ways over the past four decades. While it became obvious with the Great Depression after 2008 that it was premature to sound the death knell for the state, it cannot be denied that the state now shares political authority and co-produces public goods and services – like security, the rule of law, democratic legitimacy and welfare – with other actors, be they international or private, or both. At TranState, which started its work in January 2003 and concluded it in December 2014, we examined the scope and nature of these transformations in roughly 15 comparative empirical projects that focused on different aspects and dimensions of the TRUDI state.

An introduction to TranState’s research concept and an overview of some of its descriptive findings can be found in the Palgrave *Transformations of the State* series – especially in two synthesis volumes edited by Leibfried and Zürn (2005) and by Hurrelmann et al. (2007). The Palgrave series, with Achim Hurrelmann, Stephan Leibfried, Kerstin Martens and Peter Mayer as series editors, now comprises some 25 volumes. It continues to grow and will remain an open series after 2015.

In the wake of such research efforts, a consensus on the contours and the meaning of state transformations in the West seems to have emerged: Most observers diagnose the ‘unravelling’ of quasi-monopolistic, ‘self-contained’ political authority in the ‘container state’ and the emergence of the ‘open state’ in a new, ‘managerial’ role, embedded in a system of global governance (for two grand retrospectives, see Genschel and Zangl 2014; Levy et al. 2015). The literature, however, is still clearly dominated by more descriptive accounts of state change, or by narratives that attribute state transformations and the convergence of policy regimes in a sweeping fashion to one driving force only, be it ‘globalization’, Europeanization, modernization or technological change.

Our volume moves beyond such stylized accounts in explaining the transformations of the TRUDI model. Parts II to V, or Chapters 2 to 12, probe the causal effects and mechanisms that, since the 1970s, have transformed the resource, law, legitimacy and welfare dimensions of the TRUDI state. All chapters are based on empirical work carried out at the TranState Research Centre in Bremen, Germany (www.state.uni-bremen.de). TranState was a Centre of Excellence founded in 2003 by the University of Bremen together with the International University Bremen (now Jacobs University) and the University of Applied Sciences, Bremen; TranState later also included researchers based
at the University of Oldenburg. The Centre was evaluated and funded for the full cycle of 12 years by the German Research Foundation, or Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, and it united expertise from political science, law, economics and sociology on the topic of state transformations.

We wish to thank all the contributors, the TranState Research Centre and the Palgrave staff for their support in the conclusion of our work and – given the lengthy production process of the present volume – for their patience. Special thanks go to Achim Schmid for his assistance in the assembly of the book and, especially, to Vicki May, Susan Gaines and Stephan Leibfried for their scrupulous and patient proofreading, the very thorough editing of some of the English language manuscripts and other support for this undertaking.

At the University of Bremen, our thanks go to the University management under the old leadership of Gerd Rüdiger Kück and Wilfried Müller (from TranState’s inception until 2012) and to the new leadership of Martin Mehrtens and Bernd Scholz-Reiter (since 2012) for their continuous and dependable support. Without creative support at the central level, research undertakings like these – comprising, at any one time, some 80 people or more who are expected to ‘deliver’ just in time and hence requiring a skilful blend of orthodox and unorthodox measures to move through three evaluations, three four-year employment phases and the phasing-out period – would be impossible. Such ‘moving targets’ need reliable backing, and – a true miracle – we have always been able to rely on it. Without this support, Bremen’s promotion in 2012 into the league of Germany’s top 11 ‘Universities of Excellence’ and the additional federal funding that came with it would not have materialized nor would it endure.

Heinz Rothgang and Steffen Schneider

Note

1 TRUDI is an acronym that stands for ‘a multifunctional state that combines the Territorial State, the state that secures the Rule of Law, the Democratic State, and the Intervention state’ (Zürn and Leibfried 2005, 3).
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