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Qualifications

PhD (Birmingham); MSc (Birmingham); BSc (Wales); AcSS

I am a member of: Political Studies Association, American Society of Public Administration, International Research Society for Public Management, International Political Studies Association,

I am an Academician of the Academy of Social Sciences

Editorial boards: Public Administration Review; Critical Policy Studies; Public Money and Management; Local Government Studies.

I was editor of *Local Government Studies* (1990-2000).

Biography

My research examines how ideas about democracy and governance interact with the institutions of contemporary governance. This research has attracted over £3m of grants since 1994, most as PI. It has involved extensive collaboration with European, US and Australian academics, including co-authored papers and conference panels, as well as knowledge transfer events for policy makers and practitioners in the UK and Australia and capacity building events for the PhD/early career research community.

My primary research focus is on the implications for democracy of the fragmentation of government into multiple agencies/partnerships operating at arm's-length to elected political authority. Initial research into quangos in mid 1990s (funded by Joseph Rowntree Foundation) investigated the membership and attitudes of board members, using a large scale postal survey and semi-structured interviews. A subsequent study of community regeneration partnerships (also JRF) undertaken with Prof. Vivien Lowndes, generated a *Public Administration* article (1998) which is one of the most cited articles in *PA* over the past two decades and continues to be widely cited. In 1998 I published a substantial research monograph - *The Appointed State: Quasi-governmental organisations and democracy* (Open UP). This resulted in invitations to give evidence to the Public Administration Select Committee and the Committee on Standards in Public Life. In 2000, Stuart Weir (Democratic Audit) and I were commissioned by the Local Government Information Unit to undertake an analysis of quangos under New Labour (with Lynne Wilson).

In the 2000s, my research migrated from the democratic analysis of 'quangos' into public private partnerships and single purpose boards (e.g. regeneration partnerships, business improvement districts, and the variety of local level special purpose agencies). I was PI on 2 ESRC research awards and an ESRC / EPSRC Public Service Fellowship at the Advanced Institute for Management Research, and held a number of ESRC PhD studentships and an ESRC Follow-on Grant. Further research was funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and a Danish Research Council international collaborative PhD scholarship.

These studies have involved methodological development, including a recent web-enabled and cross-national Q methodology study of Dutch and English public managers' understandings of democracy (published in *Public Administration*, December 2011). My recent book with Stephen Jeffares (Birmingham) and Helen Sullivan (Melbourne) - *Hybrid Governance in European Cities* (Palgrave, 2013) - reports the results of our analysis of changing forms of urban governance.

During 2010-2012 I collaborated on a successful ESRC seminar series award on *Beyond the State: Third party Government in Comparative Perspective* (with Dr. Catherine Durose, de Montfort University, and Dr. Jonathan Justice, University of Delaware). In 2011 I was awarded a Nuffield Foundation small grant to undertake a pilot project on *Political Commitment to Quango Reform* (with Dr. Chris Moores, School of History, University of Birmingham), comparing the politics of quango reform under the 1979 Thatcher and 2010 Coalition governments. This has developed into a cross-national comparative context through a subsequent ESRC award (with Professors Matthew Flinders, Sheffield, and Anthony Bertelli, Southern California) called *Shrinking the State:Reform of Arm's-length Bodies in Comparative Perspective*, which will run from 2012-2015 (**www.shrinkingthestate.org.uk (http://www.shrinkingthestate.org.uk)**).

Outputs from this research has been recognised through the UK Public Administration Consortium Prize for best paper in *Public Administration* 2005 (co-authored with Mathur/Smith) and a 'commendation' in 2008 (co-authored with Munro/Roberts, 2 PhD researchers), and the Jan Kooiman Prize for best paper in *Public Management Review* 2008 (co-authored with Helen Sullivan). My 2002 research monograph on collaborative governance with Prof. Helen Sullivan (*Working Across Boundaries*, Palgrave) and 2007 article with Professor Erik-Hans Klijn on the theoretical relationship between network governance and representative democracy are both widely cited.

In parallel to this academic research, I have been commissioned by government to undertake a large number of studies, evaluations, and policy advice projects. Sponsors include Communities and Local Government (formerly, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister), Local Government Association, National Assembly for Wales, Neighbourhood Renewal Unit, and a number of local authorities. In 2000 I led a team of political scientists, constitutionalists, and lawyers to draft an English equivalent to the *US Model Cities Charter*, a model set of constitutional documents for local authorities following the replacement of the committee system with cabinets and elected mayors. The outputs form the basis of the political management procedures adopted by almost all England's 400+ local authorities.

Later, I directed a 3 year £800k evaluation of turnaround by poorly performing local authorities, generating policy advice for HM Treasury, ODPM/CLG, Audit Commission, and other departments/local government bodies. This research led into a 2007 ESRC Public Service Programme research award (as co-I with PI Prof Kieran Walshe, Manchester Business School), again associated with close interaction and knowledge transfer with policy makers and practitioners.

Our current research on the *Shrinking the State* project involes close interaction with Cabinet Office and government departments, the Public Chairs Forum and the chairs and chief executives of public bodies, and a range of other stakeholders - including evidence to committees of the House of Commons and House of Lords.

Teaching

I teach a postgraduate module - 'Public management and governance', and have previously taught postgraduate modules on 'Democracy and participation' and 'Quality in public services', as well as undergraduate modules on 'Public policy making', 'Central and local government', and 'Policy analysis'.

My educational activities have also involved workshops and training events for a variety of local authorities on various issues of governance and management.

Postgraduate supervision

I supervise doctoral researchers working on issues connected to my main research interests, set out below. If you are a prospective doctoral researcher, I advertise PhD projects on **www.bham.findaphd.com (http://www.bham.findaphd.com/)** but also welcome research proposals from well-qualified scholars to undertake PhD or post-doc research in my fields of interest.

My doctoral students have or are working on topics such as: Interpretive analysis of evidence based policy making in the HS2 project; Institutional design and regional governance; Shared management in small local authorities in England and Thailand, Migration, integration policy and claims-making in Copenhagen and Birmingham, Accountability of indirectly elected representatives in regional government; The politics and chronology of rule change in governance networks; Boundary spanning behaviour and partnership effectiveness in PPPs; Gov 2.0 in local government.

My PhD graduates have quickly found graduate-level jobs in academia and public/not-for-profit organisations,

PhD opportunities

Research

Research interests

My research concentrates on the way in which ideas about democracy and governance interact with the institutions and behaviours through which public policy is performed. The main focus is on governmental activity at arm's-length to elected political authority – including citizen-centred governance, networks and partnerships, quangos, and public-private partnerships.

I am particularly interested in extending the methodological repertoire that can be employed in interpretive studies of these issues, including the use of Q methodology, quality of democracy analysis, technology-assisted research, and comparative cross-national analysis.

My research addresses a number of questions:

- What ideas drive contemporary models of governance?
- How can we explain the emergence of and transitions in the institutional designs and practices of arm's length governance?
- How can the democratic performance of these institutions be conceptualised and assessed?
- What is the role of intermediaries between state and civil society, and especially public managers and community leaders as situated agents?
- How do ideas about governance relate to the construction of performance?

I have also been investigating questions of governance and performance thru the lens of management studies, focusing on institutional explanations of 'poor performance' by local governments and other public organisations.

Current and some recent projects

- Shrinking the State? Analysing the reform of arm's length bodies (ESRC research award with Flinders, Sheffield, and Bertelli, Southern California), 2012-2015
- Political commitment to quango reform (Nuffield Foundation, with Chris Moores, Birmingham), 2011-2012
- Beyond the state? Third party government in comparative perspective (ESRC seminar series, collaboration with Justice, University of Delaware, and Durose, de Montfort University), 2010-2012
- Integration policy and network governance in Copenhagen and Birmingham (Danish Research Council collaborative studentship with Sorensen, Roskilde University), 2008-2011
- Multi-level governance and accountability in English Regions (ESRC CASE award) 2007-2011
- Responding to evidence of poor performance: explaining public organisations' capacity to deal with failure (ESRC Public Services Programme, with Walshe, and colleagues, Manchester Business School, completed 2009)
- Democratic anchorage of governance networks in European countries (ESRC, collaboration with Erasmus and Roskilde universities, completed 2008)
- Accountability impacts of local government modernisation agenda (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, with Cardiff Business School, completed 2008)
- Governance structures and citizen involvement (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, with Barnes, University of Brighton, completed 2007)
- Risk and the design of public space (Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment, completed 2007)

Publications

Recent publications include:

Skelcher, C., H. Sullivan and S. Jeffares (2013) *Hybrid Governance in European Cities: Neighbourhood, Migration and Democracy*, Basingstoke: Palgrave, 190 pps

Flinders, M. and C. Skelcher (2012) 'Shrinking the quango state: five challenges in reforming quangos', *Public Money and Management* 32 (5): 327-334

Jeffares, S. and C. Skelcher (2011) 'Democratic subjectivities in network governance: a Q methodology study of Dutch and English public managers', *Public Administration* 89 (4): 1253-1273

Skelcher, C., E-H. Klijn, D. Kübler, E. Sørensen and H. Sullivan (2011) 'Explaining the democratic anchorage of governance networks: Evidence from four European countries', *Administrative Theory and Praxis* 33 (1): 7-38

Farrelly, M. and C. Skelcher (2011) 'Democratic milieu: analysing democratic practice in the new governance', *Representation* 46 (2): 139-150

Skelcher, C. and J. Torfing (2010) 'Improving democratic governance through institutional design: civic participation and democratic ownership in Europe'. *Regulation and Governance* 4 (1): 71-91

Skelcher, C. (2010) 'Fishing in muddy waters: Principals, agents and democratic governance in Europe', *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 20 (supplement 1): i161-i175

Harvey, G., C. Skelcher, E. Spencer, P. Jas and K. Walshe (2010) 'Absorptive capacity in a non-market environment: a knowledge-based approach to analysing the performance of sector organisation', *Public Management Review* 12 (1): 77-97

Justice, J. and C. Skelcher (2009) 'Analyzing democracy in third party government: business improvement districts in the US and UK', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 33 (3): 738-753

Saltzstein, A., C. Copus, R. Sonenshein and C. Skelcher (2008) 'Visions of urban reform: comparing UK and US strategies for improving city government' *Urban Affairs Review* 44: 155-181

Skelcher, C. (2008) 'Does governance perform? Concepts, evidence, causalities and research strategies' in J. Hartley, C. Donaldson, C. Skelcher and M. Wallace (eds) *Managing to Improve Public Services*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp27-45

Skelcher, C. and H. Sullivan (2008) 'Theory-driven approaches to analysing collaborative performance'. *Public Management Review* 10: 751-771 (Kooiman Prize 2008 for Best Paper in Public Management Review)

Klijn, E-H. and C. Skelcher (2007) 'Democracy and governance networks: compatible or not?'. *Public Administration* 85: 587-608

Mathur, N. and C. Skelcher (2007) 'Evaluating democratic performance: methodologies for assessing the relationship between network governance and citizens'. *Public Administration Review* 67: 228-237

Skelcher, C., (2007) 'Does democracy matter? A transatlantic research design on democratic performance and special purpose governments'. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 17: 61-76

Skelcher, C., N. Mathur and M. Smith (2005) 'The public governance of collaborative spaces: discourse, design and democracy'. *Public Administration* 83: 573-59 (UK Public Administration Consortium Best Paper Prize 2006)

Sullivan, H. and C. Skelcher *Working across Boundaries: Collaboration in Public Services*, Basingstoke: Palgrave-Macmillan, 245pps.

C. Skelcher (1998) *The Appointed State: Quasi-Governmental Organisations and Democracy*, Buckingham: Open University Press, 205pps.

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