

# **RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING OF SENIOR CIVIL SERVANTS IN DENMARK AND NORWAY, 1970-1995: THE IMPACT OF NEW PUBLIC MANAGEMENT AND EUROPEAN INTEGRATION\***

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## **ABSTRACT**

This paper assesses whether practices of recruitment and training of senior civil servants in Denmark and Norway became more similar during the 1970-1995 period and, if so, whether this occurred as a consequence of European integration or of New Public Management (NPM). Based on an institutional analysis of recruitment and training of senior officials in both systems, a mail survey, and interviews with senior officials, the research findings demonstrate that NPM has affected the Danish administrative system in terms of a decrease in lawyers and an increase in economists recruited for senior posts. Norway has experienced no significant change in the number of jurists. The impact of European integration on the recruitment of senior public officials in Denmark and Norway was found to be limited to foreign-language requirements for candidates to EU-related posts. An analysis of the training of senior public officials in the Danish and Norwegian administrative systems shows that European integration and NPM

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were the most significant influencing factors in the growing similarities between these two systems.

## INTRODUCTION

This paper assesses whether practices of recruitment and training of senior civil servants in Denmark and Norway became more similar during the 1970-1995 period and, if so, whether this occurred as a consequence of European integration or of New Public Management (NPM). This question - albeit in the wider context of West European countries - is one of the major challenges for students of comparative public administration. It is important because of the conceptual links that exist between recruitment and training, and between these two aspects and NPM and EU pressures. Recruitment and training significantly influence the professional ideology of the public organisation and the design of its policies. Indeed many scholars have focused on the function of recruitment in creating the professional ideology sought after by the top administrative elites (Kaufman 1960), and on the function of training in diffusing such ideologies and beliefs to administrative staff (Scott and Meyer 1994).

By the same token, EU and NPM pressures are conceptually related to administrative recruitment and training. The rapid emergence of market-based ideologies, which have gained a firm ground both in civil society and among policy makers, and the trend towards bureaucratic internationalisation following the institutional development of the European Union are precisely the forces that facilitate changes in professional ideologies and beliefs. In this light, administrative recruitment and training are sensitive indicators of NPM and EU pressures. Senior staff who are responsible for recruitment, training and personnel management, including appointment and promotion, will be among the first to feel the pressures and respond to them. They will need to hire or train staff familiar with NPM techniques, and they will need to ensure an adequate supply of staff able to operate effectively within an environment increasingly conditioned by EU policies.

There are two problems associated with finding the impact that NPM and the process of European integration have had on recruitment and training of senior officials. First, since studies of recruitment and training stand at the intersection of research on various topics (e.g., organisations, representativeness and politicisation), the development of theory has faced a serious obstacle, denying scholars a common frame of reference with which to conduct cross-national, cross-departmental and cross-time comparisons. Second, the consideration of two influencing factors requires the identification of NPM and EU dimensions of administrative recruitment and training in order to isolate the impact of each factor. This paper attempts to resolve these problems by following three steps: (i) choosing two countries whose bureaucracies are very similar, yet one country is an EU member state whereas the other is not; (ii) limiting, yet not abandoning, the scope of theoretical interpretation until results from other European countries are made available;<sup>1</sup>

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1 It is important to note that the study of administrative recruitment and training in Scandinavian countries has never been subjected to a quantified, long-term, cross-national, and

and (iii) conducting an institutional analysis, a mail-survey of 39 senior Danish officials and 105 senior Norwegian officials,<sup>2</sup> and interviews with 26 senior Danish officials and 22 senior Norwegian officials.

The choice of countries deserves elaboration. Denmark has been an EU member since 1973, whereas Norway declined membership both in 1972 and 1995. Equally important is the fact that Denmark and Norway are more similar culturally (e.g., than Sweden) in the aspects that most matter to this study. Norway was effectively a Danish province from the 14th century to 1814. (Sweden-Finland was separated from Denmark from 1523). Although Norway was ruled by Sweden (1814-1905) after Danish rule ended, Norway enacted its own constitution in 1814, and effectively ruled itself in domestic issues from then on. The Norwegian bureaucracy developed from the Danish bureaucracy and, together with the rest of the elite, spoke a version of Danish until the early 1900s, rather than the rural Norwegian dialect. One of the few textbooks dealing with the governmental systems of Denmark, Sweden and Norway refers to the 'strong Danish cultural influence on Norway, particularly in respect of the language' and 'the greater identity of outlook between Norwegian and Danish elites' (Elder et al. 1988: 3). The continuing resemblance of British and Irish bureaucracies, separated in the 1920s, and their common differences from other bureaucracies, make it plausible that the Norwegian and Danish bureaucracies still share common characteristics. The other main comparative textbook (Andrén 1964: 189-90) separates the Danish and Norwegian 'executive and administrative structures' on the one hand from the Swedish and Finnish structures on the other. The differences are not great (they share 'Scandinavian' similarity), but if we were to say that either the Swedish or the Norwegian bureaucracy is more like the Danish one, it would definitely be the Norwegian one.<sup>3</sup>

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systematically comparative analysis. This neglect is surprising because personnel policies, and recruitment and training in particular, are essential means for governing and steering formal organizations (Etzioni 1965). Most studies describe the process of recruitment and training in a given country (Lægreid 1987, 1989a,b,c, 1991; Olsen 1983; Bruun 1989, 1990; Nordhaug 1993), or in a few countries (Bras 1988; Siedentopf and Huber 1988; Lundquist 1988; IIAP 1993; Ziller 1993; Bodiguel 1994). Other studies approach the topic from a theoretical perspective of civil-service reforms (Pedersen and Lægreid 1995), and a few studies focus on the socio-economic characteristics of senior officials (Lægreid and Olsen 1978, 1984; Bruun 1983; Olsen 1983; Christensen, G.J. 1983; Christensen, T. and Egeberg 1989; Lægreid 1992) and their gender (Lægreid 1994).

2 For the detailed institutional analysis, see: Maor (1996).

3 Norway's membership in NATO - the most common meeting-ground for civil servants after the EC working groups - was another reason for choosing Norway and Denmark. The evidence needs to distinguish between trends derived from EC contacts and general international contacts. While choosing Sweden would have posed a methodological problem, choosing Norway avoided it.



## METHODOLOGY

The best method of discovering the systems of administrative recruitment and training is to ask senior public officials about their experiences and to compare these experiences, when possible, either with the 'organisation manual', that is, the procedures set by the administrative units under investigation, or with the findings of past research (Burnham and Maor 1995). Thus, the research presented here is based on three sources: an institutional analysis of recruitment and training in both the Danish and the Norwegian systems; a mail survey conducted in Danish and Norwegian during late 1994 to early 1995; and interviews conducted in English during mid-1996 with senior civil servants. The survey and the interviews contained questions asking the respondents' experiences of their initial recruitment, advancement, promotion and training; and there are two sections in the survey concerning the respondents' socio-economic and personal characteristics.

**Table 1. The Sample of Senior Public Officials**

| Country | Agriculture |               |     | Health      |               |     | Transportation |               |     |
|---------|-------------|---------------|-----|-------------|---------------|-----|----------------|---------------|-----|
|         | Sample size | Response rate |     | Sample size | Response rate |     | Sample size    | Response rate |     |
|         | (n)         | (n)           | (%) | (n)         | (n)           | (%) | (n)            | (n)           | (%) |
| Denmark | 14          | 13            | 93  | 12          | 9             | 75  | 13             | 7             | 54  |
| Norway  | 44          | 20            | 46  | 38          | 21            | 55  | 23             | 12            | 52  |

The total sample is of 39 top officials in Denmark and 105 top officials in Norway from three government departments: agriculture, transportation and health. Underlying the decision to sample top officials from three departments is the assumption that they differ in their exposure to European pressures, with the first department highly exposed to European integration, the last least exposed, and the Department of Transportation characterised by medium exposure.<sup>4</sup>

As Table 1 indicates, the survey's response rate averaged 74 percent in Denmark and 51 percent in Norway, with higher response rates in the Danish Ministry of Agriculture (93 percent) and the Ministry of Health (75 percent). Although this response rate is reasonable, the small size of the sample meant that interviews with senior officials needed to be conducted a year later. According to Table 2, most Danish officials who responded to the questionnaire were located at the A3 administrative level (*Kontorchef*) and, to a lesser extent, at the A2 level (*Afdelingschef*). Apart from the Norwegian Ministry of Transportation - where 83 percent of respondents were at the A2 level (*Ekspedisjonsjef*) - the distribution of responses from other ministries was evenly spread. Overall, the relatively high response rate, combined with the interviews of senior officials, provides a unique glimpse of the recruitment and training experiences of top

4 To avoid misleading generalisations on the basis of three ministries which differ in the educational composition of their civil servants, as well as in their culture and traditions, all survey results were supplemented by relevant data based on secondary sources.

officials. More importantly, it provides a rare opportunity to study what recruitment and training changes 'look like'.

**Table 2. Distribution of Respondents According to Administrative Level**

| Ministry/<br>Admin.<br>Level | AGRICULTURE |     |        |     | HEALTH  |     |        |     | TRANSPORT |     |        |     |
|------------------------------|-------------|-----|--------|-----|---------|-----|--------|-----|-----------|-----|--------|-----|
|                              | Denmark     |     | Norway |     | Denmark |     | Norway |     | Denmark   |     | Norway |     |
|                              | (n)         | (%) | (n)    | (%) | (n)     | (%) | (n)    | (%) | (n)       | (%) | (n)    | (%) |
| A1                           | 0           | 0   | 1      | 5   | 1       | 11  | 0      | 0   | 1         | 14  | 0      | 0   |
| A2                           | 4           | 31  | 7      | 35  | 2       | 22  | 8      | 38  | 2         | 29  | 10     | 83  |
| A3                           | 9           | 69  | 7      | 35  | 6       | 67  | 2      | 10  | 4         | 57  | 0      | 0   |
| A4                           | 0           | 0   | 5      | 25  | 0       | 0   | 9      | 43  | 0         | 0   | 2      | 17  |
| Lower<br>level<br>official   |             |     |        |     |         |     | 2      | 10  |           |     |        |     |
| Total                        | 13          | 100 | 20     | 100 | 9       | 100 | 21     | 101 | 7         | 100 | 12     | 100 |

'A1' refers to *Departementchef* and *Departementsråd*.

'A2' refers to *Afdelingschef* and *Ekspedisjonsjef* (*Avdelingsdirektor* and *Director*).

'A3' refers to *Kontorchef* and *Byråsjef* (two superiors) or *Underdirektor* [*Radgiver* (2 superiors)/*Kontorsjef* (2 superiors)].

'A4' refers to *Byråsjef* (3 superiors) including *Kontorsjef* (3 superiors) and *Rådgiver* (3 superiors).

## THE 'NPM' AND 'EU' FACTORS IN ADMINISTRATIVE RECRUITMENT

### SOURCES OF RECRUITMENT FOR SENIOR PUBLIC POSTS

The source of recruitment for senior posts is one of the factors that operates to develop a willingness and capacity in senior officials to conform to the goals and directions set by the Ministry's administrative leadership. According to Kaufman (1975),

The initial steps in socializing people to the norms of their employers are [...] taken long before the candidates are inducted into their organizations. Implantation of suitable outlooks and styles, as well as of needed technical backgrounds, begins very early. And since the focus is always taking precedence over future possible ones, the whole system is geared to keeping things as they are (Kaufman 1975: 16-17).

**Table 3. Sources of Recruitments for Senior Public Posts\***

| Admin.<br>level** | Sources Of Recruitment |                     |  |                   |                           |
|-------------------|------------------------|---------------------|--|-------------------|---------------------------|
|                   | Same<br>Ministry       | Another<br>Ministry | Public<br>Service<br>Outside<br>Ministry | Private<br>Sector | Full-Time<br>Education*** |
| Denmark           |                        |                     |  |                   |                           |
| A1                | -                      | -                   | 1  | -                 | 1                         |
| A2                | 1                      | 1                   | 1  | 1                 | 4                         |
| A3                | 11                     | -                   | 2  | 1                 | 5                         |
| A4                | -                      | -                   | -  | -                 | -                         |
|                   | ----                   | ----                | ----                                     | ----              | ----                      |
| Total (n)         | 12                     | 1                   | 4  | 2                 | 10                        |
| Total (%)         | 41                     | 3                   | 14                                       | 7                 | 35                        |
| Norway            |                        |                     |  |                   |                           |
| A1                | 1                      | -                   | -  | -                 | -                         |
| A2                | 14                     | 2                   | 7  | -                 | 2                         |
| A3                | 6                      | -                   | 1  | -                 | 2                         |
| A4                | 4                      | 2                   | 6  | 1                 | 2                         |
|                   | ----                   | ----                | ----                                     | ----              | ----                      |
| Total (n)         | 25                     | 4                   | 14                                       | 1                 | 6                         |
| Total (%)         | 50                     | 8                   | 28                                       | 2                 | 12                        |

\* Q. 'Where were you recruited for your current post?'

\*\* 'A1' refers to *Departementchef* and *Departementsråd*.

'A2' refers to *Afdelingschef* and *Ekspedisjonsjef* (*Avdelingsdirektor* and *Director*).

'A3' refers to *Kontorchef* and *Byråsjef* (two superiors) or *Underdirektor* [*Rådgiver* (2 superiors)/*Kontorsjef* (2 superiors)].

'A4' refers to *Byråsjef* (3 superiors) including *Kontorsjef* (3 superiors) and *Rådgiver* (3 superiors).

\*\*\* 'Full-time education' refers to those officials who are recruited from academic and administrative positions in educational institutions.

Indeed, this has been the case in the recruitment of senior officials in the Danish and especially the Norwegian administrative systems during the post-war period. Olsen (1983: 127) reported that in the period 1970-74, 55 percent of top Norwegian civil servants were recruited from their own Ministry, while 24 percent came from other ministries. The rest came from central government agencies outside the ministries or other public services. Olsen found external recruitment to top positions rare (such recruits usually came from related state institutions), and mobility between the public and the



private sectors insignificant. In terms of the Danish administrative experience, Damgaard (1975: 278) noted that 'as a rule, promotions occur only within the ministry where the civil servant was appointed, a civil servant's whole career typically takes place within the fairly limited context of one ministry'. Christensen (G.J., 1983: 73) reported a growing share of senior civil servants in the generalist grade who had served in one ministry for the whole of their administrative career: 58 percent in 1960, 65 percent in 1970 and 70 percent in 1977.

The survey asked from where respondents were recruited to their *current* post, their year of entry and whether they had been working continuously for the administration. Table 3 presents the various sources of recruitment for senior positions in Denmark and Norway. As could be anticipated the Ministry is the most important, but by no means the only, source of recruitment. In Denmark, 41 percent of the respondents were recruited to their current post from the Ministry, 3 percent from another Ministry, 14 percent from the public service outside the Ministry, 35 percent from administrative or academic positions in educational institutions and 7 percent from the private sector. In Norway, 50 percent came from various areas within the Ministry, 8 percent from another Ministry, 28 percent from the public service outside the Ministry, 12 percent from administrative or academic positions in educational institutions, and 2 percent from the private sector. As Øyvind Sæbø, Deputy Permanent Secretary at the Norwegian Ministry of Health, noted: 'The private sector is not that interested'<sup>5</sup>

Although those recruited from administrative positions in academic institutions may have had a past career in the same Ministry, the evidence still points - especially in Norway - to a growing reliance by the Ministry's personnel authorities on the public sector outside the Ministry, rather than other ministries, as a complementary pool of recruits. Olsen's observations on the insignificance of the private sector as a source of recruitment are also validated by our data. These findings imply, therefore, that the boundary between central government and the larger public sector is relatively permeable, while the boundary with the private sector is crossed much less frequently.

As for the growing share of recruitment from sources outside the ministry - a finding derived from a comparison between this survey and the aforementioned studies in this section - one may be led to conclude that there has been an increase in the degree of competition for top positions as more officials are recruited from sources outside the ministry. This conclusion must be reserved. As departments opted for employing more candidates from the public sector, it is reasonable to assume that some of these recruits came from proximate state institutions. Hence, the increase in recruits from sources outside the ministry is not as drastic as it appears.

Important as the recruitment processes are in producing personnel with the appropriate characteristics, it is through advancement and promotion that the fitting of the public official to the requirements of the administrative system is acknowledged. It is precisely here that senior public servants are gradually absorbed into the organization by a kind of bureaucratic osmosis (rather than by external specialization programs) which takes various forms, such as administrative training, day-to-day socialization and others

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<sup>5</sup> Øyvind Sæbø, Interview with the author. May 1996, Oslo.

(Kaufman 1960). Indeed, our survey asked officials whether further educational qualifications would be helpful in terms of promotion to the next post. In Denmark, 2 percent stated that no qualifications would help; not a single respondent answered yes.<sup>6</sup> The Norwegian respondents were more positive: 4 percent answered yes and 51 percent no.<sup>7</sup> We asked whether certain affiliation would help the officials in their promotion to the next post: 83 percent of the Danes answered no, and there was not a single yes answer. In Norway, 74 percent answered no, versus 4 percent yes.

### EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

The *Rechtsstaat* tradition, which regards public administration in Scandinavian countries, like judicial decision-making, as the application of legal rules (Christensen, T. 1995), meant that jurists long dominated senior civil-service posts. In Denmark, a 1970 study showed that 80 percent of civil servants in the generalist grade were lawyers and 17 percent were economists (quoted in Damgaard 1975: 278). In Norway, 86 percent of senior civil servants held a law degree in 1915, the figures for the period of pre-1945 compared with the period 1957-1965 (administrative level of *byråsjef*, i.e., head of unit, and above which is equivalent to our survey) are 72 and 38 percent respectively. While the number of lawyers decreased, the number of those holding an economics degree increased from 5 to 29 percent between these periods (Higley *et al.* 1975).<sup>8</sup>

The questionnaire explicitly asked what the 'major subject of study' was, and allowed multiple choices.<sup>9</sup> According to Table 4, 72 percent of the Danish respondents and 38 percent of the Norwegian respondents studied law. Economics is in second place with 35 percent of Danish respondents and 30 percent of Norwegian respondents. A comparison of these findings with those recorded in the aforementioned studies shows that in Denmark there was an 8 percent decline in lawyers during 1970 and 1995, whereas no change is recorded in Norway for the jurists' share.<sup>10</sup> By contrast, in Denmark there was an 18 percent increase in those holding an economics degree (from 17 to 35 percent)

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6 7 percent of respondents answered 'probably' and 10 percent 'perhaps' (n=29).

7 15 percent answered 'probably', 19 percent 'perhaps' (n=53)

8 For figures based on a sample of all officials in central government, see Bruun (1983: 48), Olsen (1983: 126) and Christiansen and Egeberg (1994). For figures based on a sample of top officials in central government and agencies, see: Christensen (1983)

9 This opportunity to mention several subjects was used to a considerable extent, which is evident from Table 4. At the same time, this gives an accurate description of the educational profile of the senior officials. It is also inherent in the character of the Candidat (Den.) and Cand. Real or Cand. Philol (Nor.) that one can study more than one major subject (*hovedfag*), and also hold several different degrees. This was indeed indicated by several of the respondents.

10 Norway, however, is not the only deviation for the share of the lawyers of all senior officials (administrative 'leaders'). A similar 'freezing' of the jurists' share is recorded in Finland; Staahlberg (1983: 95) does not show a declining share of jurists among administrative leaders, except for the lower levels.



between 1970 and 1995, compared to a 1 per cent increase (from 29 to 30 percent) in Norway.

**Table 4. Fields of University Study**

| Subject                    | Denmark |      | Norway |      |
|----------------------------|---------|------|--------|------|
|                            | (n)     | (%)  | (n)    | (%)  |
| Law*                       | 21      | 72   | 20     | 38   |
| Economics**                | 10      | 35   | 16     | 30   |
| Political Science          | 5       | 17   | 7      | 13   |
| Management/Admin.          | 5       | 17   | 6      | 11   |
| Humanities                 | 0       | 0    | 3      | 6    |
| Sociology                  | 0       | 0    | 7      | 13   |
| Agriculture Studies        | 1       | 3    | 5      | 9    |
| Engineering                | 0       | 0    | 5      | 9    |
| Medicine                   | 0       | 0    | 5      | 9    |
| Others***                  | 2       | 7    | 13     | 25   |
|                            | ----    | ---- | ----   | ---- |
| Total no. of responses**** | 44      |      | 87     |      |
| Total (%)                  |         | 152  |        | 164  |
| Total no. of respondents   | 29      |      | 53     |      |

\* There were 3 (10%) Danish officials who accounted for double degree in law and economics. In Norway there were six cases in which respondents accounted for degrees in both economics and law.

\*\* Two Danish economists also held other degrees: one in political science and the other in agriculture studies.

\*\*\* 'Others' include information technology, mathematics and veterinary science.

\*\*\*\* The number of responses is larger than the number of respondents since respondents were allowed to indicate more than one 'main subject' if they completed university degree in more than one subject.

These figures indicate that while the decrease of lawyers and the increase in the recruitment of economists in the Norwegian administrative systems predates the emergence of market-based ideologies, the same trend in Denmark was recorded after the emergence of NPM. At first glance, what may have triggered the emergence of this trend in Norway is the drive towards modernising the public service which began already in the 1960s. However, what is most likely the case is that the above conclusion is limited to the ministries observed, and therefore it is misleading when an attempt at generalisation is undertaken. Indeed, Tom Christensen and Morten Egeberg's (1989: 34) survey of all Norwegian ministries revealed the declining number of lawyers, which they found to be a long-standing trend.

The next step was to ask how entrants with different backgrounds have fared 'in the system'. One can examine a particular category of officials to discern more about the educational background of high officials and whether there really has been any change over time. There were 25 Norwegian respondents in category A2 (*Ekspeditionsjef*, *Avdelingsdirektor* or *Avdelingsjef*; 47 percent of the total Norwegian sample). The proportion of lawyers in this category was slightly higher than in the Norwegian sample as a whole, but the increase in economists was more marked (10 percent higher than in the total sample). However, looking again at the year in which the respondents entered public office, the lawyers fared well. Some lawyers who had entered public office in the 1980s had already, by 1995, reached the level defined as A2 (four lawyers, three economists). The higher up in the administration, the less any change in the officials' background is discernible - taking into account respondents who entered public office in the 1980s (40 percent of the lawyers in A2 had entered public office since 1981).

In summation, a long-term cross-time comparison reveals a trend in Scandinavia indicating a decline in the number of officials with a legal background since the 1970s. With 1945 as a starting point, the findings reveal an increase in the percentage of economists and social scientists (Higley *et al.* 1975; Bruun 1983; Elder *et al.* 1988; Christofferson 1983; Christensen, T. 1995). This change implies that law remains the classical administrative education whilst economics has been established firmly as the modern alternative. It also implies that greater stress is placed on means-end or consequence-oriented competence than before, as a reflection of the changing political constraints on civil servants (Olsen 1983: 124; Olsen 1988: 145). The findings indicate that in Norway, law school is still the most important breeding ground for high public office in the three ministries examined. The impact that European integration has had on the recruitment of senior public officials in Denmark and Norway was found to be limited to foreign-language requirements for candidates to EU-related posts.

Some may argue that because the changes observed were largely restricted to the lower level of the senior ranks and were not accompanied by structural changes they remain symbolic in nature. Even if this view holds true, it does not mean that the changes observed are inconsequential. First, to an institutionalist, symbolism, the mechanism by which meanings are shaped, exerts great social power (March and Olsen 1989). Second, numerous studies suggest that, although organisations may change their structures or processes for symbolic reasons, these structures and processes have a life of their own. Take the increase in the recruitment of economists: they both transmit and translate cost-attuned demands to organisations and also represent organisational concerns to cost-attuned agents (Taylor 1984; Peterson *et al.* 1986). Finally, as Ritti and Goldner (1979) have argued, staff become involved in advocacy for their functions that can in the long run alter power relations within public institutions.

## THE 'NPM' AND 'EU' FACTORS IN ADMINISTRATIVE TRAINING

Administrative training is another factor that operates to develop a will and capacity in senior officials to conform to the goals and directions set by the Ministry's administrative leadership. As Kaufman (1975: 175) notes, 'Post-entry training [...] expands the abilities needed to conform to preformed agency decisions. It also tends to reinforce dedication to the agency and its objectives [...] and, in its voluntary aspects, it helps identify men whose eagerness to advance manifests itself in the will to do what the leaders recommend, let alone direct'. On this note, we can now turn to the elaboration of the interesting findings that (i) some training provisions in both the Danish and Norwegian administrative systems were found to be changing, and demonstrated essentially similar outcomes, and (ii) the skeptical view about the usefulness of off-the-job training for promotion was shared by an overwhelming majority of the Danish respondents and a near-majority of Norwegian respondents.

### THE MAJOR SUBJECT OF OFF-THE-JOB TRAINING AND THE PREFERRED SUBJECT

The survey asked senior officials about the major topic of their off-the-job training and their preferred topic. The findings - shown in Table 5 - suggest that the major topic of training in both Denmark and Norway is that of EU institutions (28 percent in Denmark and 27 percent in Norway). The second and third major topics in Denmark are 'administration', i.e., Ministry-specific matters (20 percent), and 'management' (16 percent), whereas in Norway they are 'management' (25 percent) and 'administration' (13 percent). In terms of the correspondence between the training programmes undertaken by senior officials and their preferences, the findings indicate that 38 percent of Norwegian respondents prefer management training to training in EU institutions, finance and economics, administration, Information Technology (IT), and languages. 19 and 16 percent of Norwegian respondents prefer training in 'administration' and 'languages' respectively to training in IT, legal matters, finance and economics. Although 27 percent of Norwegian respondents have had management training, only 5 percent consider it their preferred topic. The Danish responses concerning a preferred topic are too few to draw useful conclusions.



**Table 5. Major Subject for Off-the-Job Training and the Preferred Subject**

| Subject                             | Denmark |       |           |       | Norway |       |           |       |
|-------------------------------------|---------|-------|-----------|-------|--------|-------|-----------|-------|
|                                     | Major   |       | Preferred |       | Major  |       | Preferred |       |
|                                     | (n)     | (%)   | (n)       | (%)   | (n)    | (%)   | (n)       | (%)   |
| EU institution/legislation/other    | 7       | 28    | 2         | 33    | 18     | 27    | 2         | 5     |
| Management (inc. human res. manag.) | 4       | 16    | 2         | 33    | 17     | 25    | 14        | 38    |
| Political/administrative training   | 5       | 20    | 0         | 0     | 9      | 13    | 7         | 19    |
| Financial/economic training         | 4       | 16    | 0         | 0     | 2      | 3     | 3         | 8     |
| Information technology              | 0       | 0     | 0         | 0     | 3      | 4     | 1         | 3     |
| Languages                           | 2       | 8     | 0         | 0     | 5      | 7     | 6         | 16    |
| Legal matters                       | 2       | 8     | 1         | 17    | 2      | 3     | 2         | 5     |
| Others                              | 1       | 4     | 1         | 17    | 12     | 18    | 2         | 5     |
|                                     | -----   | ----- | -----     | ----- | -----  | ----- | -----     | ----- |
| Total *                             | 25      | 100   | 6         | 100   | 68     | 100   | 37        | 99    |

\* Total percentage is more or less than 100 due to the rounding of the figures.

### **HOW USEFUL IS OFF-THE-JOB TRAINING FOR CURRENT POST AND FOR PROMOTION?**

In the survey, the officials were asked whether a period of off-the-job training would help them in their current post, and whether a period of academic education or in-service training would help them obtain a promotion to their next post. Concerning the usefulness of in-service training for current job (see Table 6), the Norwegian respondents were decisive, with 82 percent considering in-service training useful for their current jobs. Danish respondents were equally divided, 50 percent thought it useful, compared with 43 percent who thought that in-service training was not useful for their current post. Concerning the usefulness of off-the-job training for promotion to the next post, Danish respondents were decisive: 65 percent thought that it was not useful. Norwegian respondents were divided: 50 percent thought that off-the-job training was useful for promotion while 43 percent thought that it was not.

These findings raise a question: 'Why do 65 percent of Danish respondents and 43 percent of Norwegian respondents consider in-service training not useful for their promotion?' One may argue that other skills not provided by in-service training, such as political and problem-solving skills, are more important for promotion. An additional argument directs attention to the promotion culture in the administrative system, which may value performance on the job more highly than in-service training as an important criterion in promotion decisions.

**Table 6. Usefulness of Off-the-Job Training for Current and Future Posts**

| Response   | Denmark                 |      |                      |      | Norway                  |      |                      |      |
|------------|-------------------------|------|----------------------|------|-------------------------|------|----------------------|------|
|            | Useful for present post |      | Useful for promotion |      | Useful for present post |      | Useful for promotion |      |
|            | (n)                     | (%)  | (n)                  | (%)  | (n)                     | (%)  | (n)                  | (%)  |
| Yes        | 3                       | 11   | 0                    | 0    | 11                      | 22   | 5                    | 9    |
| Probably   | 2                       | 7    | 3                    | 12   | 12                      | 24   | 6                    | 11   |
| Perhaps    | 8                       | 29   | 5                    | 19   | 18                      | 39   | 16                   | 30   |
| No         | 14                      | 50   | 17                   | 65   | 8                       | 16   | 23                   | 43   |
| Don't Know | 1                       | 4    | 1                    | 4    | 1                       | 2    | 3                    | 6    |
|            | ----                    | ---- | ----                 | ---- | ----                    | ---- | ----                 | ---- |
| Total**    | 28                      | 101  | 26                   | 100  | 50                      | 100  | 53                   | 99   |

\* Q. Would a period of in-service training help you in Your Present Post?

Q. Would a period of in-service training or academic education help you to be promoted to your next post?

\*\* Total percentage is more or less than 100 because of rounding of the figures.

An analysis of administrative training indicates the emergence of similar patterns of training. In the two administrative systems, off-the-job-training aims to enhance managerial and professional skills amongst civil servants; the content of in-service training is characterised by a high degree of diversity; and the main subjects taught are management, EU and administrative topics (i.e., budgeting, government finance and legislative procedures). The prevalence and unpopularity of EU-related training may reflect preparation for the subsequent rejection of EU membership around the time our survey was conducted. A high demand for administrative and language courses did not find a corresponding supply of training courses.

The similar training programmes seem to be derived from the pressures of NPM and European integration. Three arguments could be advanced to explain these developments. The first is based on the premise that the tightly controlled training system is closely linked to very specific organisational tasks and purposes. Thus, training programs reflect the professional requirements of the 'client' administrative units. In a closed career system, changes in these 'requirements' may imply a necessary change in training. Training may be considered, therefore, as a specific instance of the ways in which *current* events or external processes affect the day-to-day work demands of the 'client' units, resulting in changes in the skills required by the staff.

The second argument is based on the premise that training is used by the top administrative elites to diffuse beliefs and (management) ideologies, so that, increasingly over time, these beliefs and values in modern organisations are taken for granted. Kaufman (1960) vividly elaborated this view:

The education *per se* doubtless does prepare them for the work they will have to do. It does enlarge their capacities to perform their jobs. But those who acquire this training voluntarily, who at some cost to themselves avail themselves of agency-sponsored or -approved programs, indicate by that very fact that they *choose* to fit themselves into the agency pattern in order to advance. It tends to suggest a good deal about their motivations. While, conceivably, men may engage in voluntary training with no aim but to advance themselves, the fact that they do so might be taken as an indication of their tendency to act as the organization wants, to ingratiate themselves with their superiors, regardless of how cynical their attitudes toward the training itself may be. In any event, exposure to the training may well have a more profound effect on them than they realize (Kaufman 1960: 174-5).

As such ideologies diffuse, training spreads throughout the public organisations, overwhelming the impact of specific causal factors characteristic of the particular organisational setting. To put it in context: recruitment creates the professional ideology sought after by the top administrative elites, and training is another mechanism to diffuse such ideologies and beliefs to administrative staff (Scott and Meyer 1994). In this light, training could also be considered an aspect of organisational support, provided by the Ministry or Department to help its staff cope with the changes of required critical competence.

The third argument is based on the premise that training is a form of education. In the modern state, education not only creates and validates citizens, but also creates and validates elites (Meyer 1977). Elites' cultural knowledge is expanded by training, elite positions are defined and legitimated by education, and citizens are allocated elite positions based on educational attainment. However, in administrative systems, educational attainment as well as training is one factor among many others that influences the promotion prospects of civil servants. The data showing the negative views of senior officials about the usefulness of training to their promotion is not surprising because of the way officials use their educational background and training in their jobs.

Finally, in terms of recruitment and training, no intra- and inter-system variations in the Danish and Norwegian administrative systems were found. The lack of inter-departmental (i.e., intra-system) variation could be explained by the relatively small number of senior public officials who deal with EU matters, because the size of ministries is small even in ministries heavily exposed to EU pressures. One would not expect that the structure and process of recruiting a few officials would be substantially modified. The lack of inter-system variation could be explained partly by Norway's membership in the European Economic Area and its close shadowing of developments in the EU. In addition, the fact that the mail questionnaire was conducted during Norway's preparations for EU membership - which were abandoned after the 'No' referendum - indicates that the results are EU-biased because public officials were encouraged to prepare for entry into the EU - for example, by taking training courses in EU affairs.



## CONCLUSIONS

Administrative recruitment and training are factors that operate to develop a will and capacity in senior officials to conform to the goals and directions set by the Ministry's administrative leadership (Kaufman 1960, 1975). They encompass a set of conditions that 'injects into the very nervous systems of the organization members the criteria of decision that the organization wishes to employ' and thereby increases the probability that each of them will 'make decisions, by himself, as the organization would like him to decide' (Simon 1947: 103). Although these arguments were presented decades ago, this study reveals that they are still valid, especially when examining sources of recruitment for senior posts in the Danish and Norwegian administrative systems, and the educational background of candidates during 1970-1995.

In terms of the influencing factors examined, the impact of NPM on the recruitment of senior public officials could be observed in the decline in lawyers and the growth in economists recruited for senior public posts in Denmark. While this trend has been recorded in the last decade (i.e., after the emergence of market-based ideologies), the same trend in the Norwegian ministries predates the emergence of NPM. The impact of European integration on the recruitment of senior public officials in Denmark and Norway was found to be limited to foreign-language requirements for candidates to EU-related posts (hence senior officials' preference for language courses).

An analysis of the training of senior public officials in the Danish and Norwegian administrative systems shows that European integration and NPM were the most significant influencing factors. The NPM effect includes a strong preference for managerial courses, as indicated by the respondents. The European integration effect comprises increasing availability of EU-related courses which cover EU institutions, law, and policy making, and a strong preference for these courses.

These conclusions complement Maor's (1999a) analysis of recruitment and training in Germany and the UK, as well as Maor and Stevens' (1997) study of the UK, which demonstrated that the British administrative system has been significantly affected by NPM. The former study also suggested that – as in Denmark and Norway – the impact of European integration on the recruitment of senior officials in the UK and Germany was found to be limited to foreign-language requirements for candidates to EU-related posts. The analysis of the training of senior public officials in the British and German administrative systems show that – as in Denmark and Norway – European integration and NPM were indeed the most significant influencing factors.<sup>11</sup>

These conclusions raise the question of whether changes in administrative recruitment and training derived from EU and NPM are related. As far as Denmark is concerned, the answer is yes. Being an EU member state, Denmark has been exposed to the Single Market legislation, which was a vehicle by which ideas and rules about NPM were introduced from Britain into the continental European states. Subsequently the

11 For other implications of NPM, see Maor (1999b).

Maastricht criteria for EMU squeezed governments into reducing public spending, thus increasing the pressure to obtain cost reductions associated with NPM reforms.

Another question is whether changes recorded are reversible. Although speculation is not part and parcel of the political science profession, it is reasonable to argue that, at least in Denmark, an increase in the share of jurists seems imminent. The Tamil case, which brought about the resignation of a government minister as well as a few senior civil servants, has led to a reconsideration of the important role lawyers play during the policy formation stage. As Ole Zacchi, Permanent Secretary in the Department of Transport, noted: 'After the Tamil case [...] the legal people have taken back some of their lost power'.<sup>12</sup> A similar view was expressed by Jette Mersing, Deputy Permanent Secretary of the Department of Health: 'Much of the political problems concern [with] economics. It is thus necessary to have more economists. But at the same time you might have lost a specific [perspective] in your administration; the point of legal values concerning the single person outside. But as always you can see that the pendulum swings back and forth. Now you would see a new trend because [of] the scandal - the Tamil case - [...] and now it is necessary to have more lawyers'.<sup>13</sup> However mutable this counter trend will be, it is clear that further research is needed before a valid conclusion is reached.

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<sup>12</sup> Ole Zacchi, Interview with the author, May 1996, Copenhagen

<sup>13</sup> Jette Mersing, Interview with the author, May 1996, Copenhagen.

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