

# The Modernization of Public Administration in the Nordic Countries: Some Research Questions\*

Johan P. Olsen

---

THE MODERNIZATION OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN THE NORDIC COUNTRIES: SOME RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Administrative Studies, vol. 7(1988): 1, 2—17

The governments as well as the political oppositions of many Western countries in the recent past have formulated comprehensive reform programs for the public sector. There is a need for students of public administration to construct models of the processes through which criteria for evaluating administrative change are defined, knowledge of the relationship between administrative structures, processes and performances is developed, organizational forms are generated, and the need for administrative change is defined. The processes of reform also offer opportunities to discover and to develop and not only to act upon goals. The effects of programs are uncertain and alternatives are poorly defined, the private sector is easily taken to be the role model, and the »horror bureaucracy» of one period may become the ideal of another period. Planned change also has political limits and administrative change may lead to political conflict. Studies illustrate how the processes of planned change are facilitated or constrained by the ability of a government to provide a vision, a sense of direction, new aspirations and goals, to develop and make use of knowledge, to reduce the poverty of current organizational typologies used in reforms, and to build a consensus or viable coalitions.

Keywords: modernization, public administration, Nordic countries.

*Johan P. Olsen, professor, Norwegian Research Center for Organization and Management, Rosenbergs gate 39, N-5015 Bergen, Norway.*

\* Presented at the Third Finnish Conference of Administrative Studies, the Finnish Society for Administrative Research, Helsinki, 19 November, 1987. The author thanks Lars Chr. Blichner, Per Lægred, Richard Matland and Maila Solheim for help and advice.

Saap. 28. 12. 1987  
Hyv. 03. 01. 1988

## 1. A COMPREHENSIVE ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY FOR THE PUBLIC SECTOR

Recently the governments, as well as the political oppositions, of many Western countries have formulated comprehensive reform programs for the public sector. These programs reflect a disenchantment with the performances, structures<sup>1</sup> and processes of the administrative apparatus of government. The claim has been that the public administration is not well adapted to the present needs of society and to existing resources. It has to be reviewed and modernized. »Major surgery» — a comprehensive administrative policy — is needed.<sup>2</sup>

The reform programs may be part of a transition from the welfare state to a new pattern of governmental organization focussed on adaptive social learning, appropriate for handling a sustained rapid rate of social change (Deutsch 1981). If so, the Nordic countries may, after 40 years of building a welfare state that has been successful in international terms, be poised for a new public sector revolution involving major restructuring and adaptation (Olsen 1986a).

A comprehensive administrative policy suggests that government, in order to achieve political ends, might pursue a coherent set of ideas and practices directed towards the organizational structures and processes of public administration. This entails two assumptions. First, that organizational form is a significant determinant of administrative performance, and second, that choices made by political leaders are important determinants of organizational forms. The latter conception is supported by a democratic emphasis on human will, reason, effort and power in the transformation of society. The former represents a view of public administration as part of modern technology, as illustrated by mechanical metaphors of public administration as the »instrument», »tool», »apparatus», and »machinery» of democratic governance.

One consequence of seeing public adminis-

tration as an instrument is that administrative reform is often viewed from an *efficiency perspective*: how can we *best* organize the public sector in order to create a better fit with predetermined policy goals and socio-economic, technological and political developments outside the control of government? Orthodox administrative theory speaks of the design of administrative structures and procedures to facilitate the efficiency and effectiveness of bureaucracies. More recently, contingency theory has become the conventional wisdom (Child 1977). The research task is to specify the consequences for administrative performance of choosing different organizational forms. Goals specified a priori are taken as given. The problems of implementing chosen organizational forms are not made part of the research model.

The efficiency aspect is relevant. Much of what distinguishes good administrative performance from a bad one is how well an organization accomplishes its day-to-day tasks. Performance depends on the ordinary competence of individual employees and the effectiveness of routine procedures (March 1980, 17). In routine situations where goals are stable, precise, and consistent, and government has the authority or power to implement preferred organizational solutions, the critical policy question is whether government has adequate information about the impact of organizational forms on performance.

As a general approach to studies of comprehensive administrative policies the efficiency approach is, however, inadequate. It makes strong, and frequently unrealistic, assumptions about the ability and willingness of political leaders to specify policy goals, about their authority and power, and about decision making and change in formal organizations. It provides an a-political conception of a fundamentally political process.

Therefore, the efficiency approach must be supplemented by more realistic political theories of the state, the public sector, and citizenship. A comprehensive reorganization affects the political order. This order regulates the exercise of public authority and power. The change of this order may alter the values of the state, the purpose and meaning of state actions, the rationale and legitimacy of institutional boundaries, the regulation of conflict and the conditions under which different interests may be pursued (Poggi 1978, 97, Dyson 1980, 206).

Comprehensive reforms may have such

effects because they change organizational structures, processes, and performances, or because they affect our *images* of structures, processes, and performances. Organizational success and survival depends on factors other than technical efficiency. Frequently performance is difficult to judge and organizations are evaluated on the basis of societal beliefs about appropriate organizational forms or behavior (Meyer & Rowan 1977). Reform programs can be viewed as part of a struggle over peoples' minds — as civic education, marketing, propaganda or management of meaning.

I hope students of administration will accept the research challenges provided by the reform programs. On the one hand, comprehensive efforts to reorganize the public administration account for an insignificant share of the changes that occur. The longrun development of administrative institutions is only to a limited degree a product of intentions, plans, and consistent decisions (March & Olsen 1983). Change takes place without explicit decisions to change. Decisions to change follow after the changes have already occurred. Decisions to change do not lead to change, or they lead to unanticipated, unintended or unforeseen changes (Romanow 1981).

On the other hand, governments sometimes successfully intervene in administrative structures and achieve specified goals (Rones 1979, Egeberg 1984, 1987). Sweden, especially, has traditionally shown great confidence in her reform capacity and her ability to create effective and efficient bureaucracies (Hedborg & Meidner 1984). In addition, Metcalfe and Richards (1987, vii) have argued that the changes introduced in the British civil service since the conservative victory in 1979 mark a watershed in the evolution of British government. While the reform plans were expected to fade away, the Thatcher government has set a new direction and instigated changes in the culture of Whitehall which will be difficult if not impossible to reverse.<sup>3</sup>

This article identifies some research questions derived from a political-institutional approach to comprehensive administrative change (March & Olsen 1983, 1984, Olsen 1985). Public administration is viewed as part of a political order and reform programs are seen as attempts at changing the order. Some ideas are suggested for how political-institutional factors may affect processes of planned, comprehensive change.

The point of departure is that comprehensive reforms are nonroutine events where we should not expect objectives to be specified a priori, causal knowledge to be clear, or control to be unproblematic. In order to understand the possibilities and limitations of comprehensive administrative policies students of public administration must specify (construct models of) the processes through which:

(a) criteria for evaluating administrative change, and thus for administrative success and failure, are defined,

(b) knowledge about the relationships between administrative structures, processes and performances is developed, and

(c) organizational forms are generated,<sup>4</sup> and thus the level and content of organizational change is determined.

Focus will be on exploring some possible effects of political institutions and processes upon the generation of objectives, knowledge, and control. In particular we will be interested in the relative importance of explicit governmental choices in processes of organizational change. Doing so brings us back to some basic questions in political theory and in theories of organizational choice and change: the role of political intention, reason, power and choice in administrative and societal development.<sup>5</sup>

(1) *Intention*: An efficiency approach assumes that political leaders are able and willing to give direction to administrative change by specifying a priori a set of criteria which can be used to distinguish between good and bad changes, and between good and bad administrative performance. An alternative is to treat goals and criteria as endogenous and study how they are generated and used in reform processes.

(2) *Reason*: An efficiency approach focusses on providing more and »better» information about the effects of organizational forms upon pre-established goals. In situations of comprehensive reforms causal models and available data are often uncertain or disputed. There will be a need for research which shows how political processes and institutions may affect what is accepted as knowledge and used by different groups. An adequate knowledge basis for comprehensive administrative reform would include, in addition to knowledge about the effects of organizational forms, knowledge about how organizational forms and criteria for evaluating change are generated.

(3) *Power and Choice*: An efficiency ap-

proach views elected political (and administrative) leaders as able to implement the organizational choices they make. A more realistic view is to assume that there is no single centre of authority and power. Comprehensive change often represents a challenge to the core systems of meaning, belief, interpretation, status, power and alliances in organizations (Goodman et al. 1982). Winning support for a preferred organizational solution is a political process affected by the institutions, interests, cleavages, resources and alliances involved in administrative change.

## 2. GIVING DIRECTION TO ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGE: STANDARDS OF IMPROVEMENT AND MODERNIZATION

Despite standard observations about bureaucratic rigidity, and the persistence of many forms of organizational structures and routines, the public administration of the Nordic countries have experienced a recent history of exceptional growth and change.<sup>6</sup> It is not at all clear that administrative change has been the result of a coherent set of pre-determined criteria formulated (or accepted) by political leaders.

### The role of goals in administrative change

The current conventional wisdom is that goals are relevant and that they should be precise, consistent, stable, and treated as exogenous. Performance is improved when goals are operational and when strict monitoring gives good feedback about results achieved. The objectives and criteria of success of proposed change should be clearly formulated before change is initiated (OECD 1980, 16).

Empirical studies of organizational and political life suggest some alternative conceptions of the role of goals in processes of administrative change.<sup>7</sup> Goals may be *utopian* rather than operational and utopian goals may mobilize enthusiasm and support for organizational change or resistance against change proposals. Goals may be *conflicting*. It is unrealistic to assume that life can be decomposed into a political and an administrative sphere. The public administration is likely to be evaluated differently by different groups, and the criteria are likely to change over time. Goals may be *ambiguous*. Ambiguous goals may reflect a form of intelli-

gence different from the one assumed by models of rational choice. Ambiguity is a method for coping with unresolved conflicts, avoiding premature commitment, achieving flexibility through shifting emphasis on goals, and for preventing the best informed to dominate decision making. Making goals precise often means to ignore or suppress some goals and interests.

Governments have many goals and attend to them sequentially rather than simultaneously. Reform processes offer an opportunity for *discovering or developing*, rather than acting upon goals. Preferences are tested rather than aggregated and objectionable preferences are challenged through processes of discussion and criticism.

Furthermore, there are alternatives to goal-oriented behavior. A political culture may provide social definitions of justice and appropriateness which legitimize institutions, e.g. rational-legal norms and bureaucratic virtues like neutrality, integrity, and obedience.

Such observations make it necessary to raise questions about what criteria are used to evaluate change. What kind of public sector is wanted? Who defines what it means to do »the right things»? Who defines standards of improvement, and how is it done? Specifically, what does it mean to be, or become, »modern» and »new»?

### A new and modern public sector

Most reform programs are collections of reform ideas (many of which have existed for many years) rather than coherent philosophies and unitary strategies of change. Still, they share many features in terms of how problems are defined. The growth of the public sector has created problems both in relation to citizens and political leaders. The public administration has become too complex, centralized, sectorized, rigid and too difficult to influence. It is not oriented towards citizens' needs, service, effectiveness, economy, efficiency, and productivity.

The programs differ from one another with regard to how they will reduce the perceived discrepancies between the demands made upon the public sector and its capabilities. Some want to reduce the demands by rolling back the state — by eliminating or privatizing services, or by minimizing costs almost regardless of outputs (Gray & Jenkins 1985). Others want to increase the capabilities and perform-

ance of the public sector by reforming its structures and processes.

The reform programs may observe that the public sector has distinctive features and different goals than the private sector. It is often difficult to measure productivity and efficiency, or to describe explicitly public goals (e.g. Regeringens skrivelse 1984/85, 202). But the *implications* of such observations are often not made clear (von Otter 1986). A revised version of »government by objectives» is a key theme in most of the programs. The Danish program says that decentralization is without meaning if central government does not formulate goals and frameworks (Finansministeriet 1986; 3).

Yet, the goals formulated are seldom operational and tensions between parts of a program are rarely discussed. The Danish government, which claims to be in the forefront of modernizing the public sector, says that the new philosophy is the best possible service at lowest costs. »It shall become more easy to be a Dane» (Finansministeriet 1987a, 2, 14). The Swedish government in its statement on the modernization of the public sector, says that the welfare of citizens is the goal of all public sector activity. The program is for citizens against administrative agencies (Regeringens skrivelse 1984/85, 202, Mellbom 1986, 20). Similar formulations can be found in the other programs. The goals are *better service*, *better economy and efficiency*, *better work places* for the employees, *more democracy* through *more influence* for elected leaders and citizens (etc.). Lacking is an explicit discussion of the trade offs between such goals.

The programs of course include some operational goals, but the »philosophy» of the administrative policy is couched in grand, symbolic terms which open for many different interpretations. It appears difficult to formulate a shared vision or an ideological superstructure for reforms in the public sector. As observed by the Swedish LO (1986, 175): »Today it is perhaps less self-evident what our dreams look like». It is seen as a problem that government is not clever enough to formulate operational goals (Den moderne staten, 1987, 27). The possibility is not discussed that this may be an impossible, or not a smart, strategy.

The reform programs are influenced by an efficiency-approach without formulating the kind of operational goals assumed by this approach. The goals presented better fit the idea that the reform programs are part of a process

of rhetoric and reinterpretation of the role of the public sector. The key concept of the programs — *modernization* — is itself an important metaphor in Western societies suggesting a society heading towards a better state, a development towards progress and maturity (Bendor 1977, Eckstein 1982). Such a concept may be useful in a struggle over peoples' minds (Sørhaug 1986), even if it is not of much value when governments want to measure efficiency and productivity. Reform ideas accepted as »modern» are difficult to challenge, and a country defined (or defining itself) as »behind» the others has incentives to change its public administration.

One may conclude that the reform programs are parts of a public relation campaign aimed at changing the images citizens, politicians and bureaucrats hold of the public administration. More fundamentally, the programs may be seen (in their consequences if not in their intents) as a search for new visions and interpretations of possible roles for the public sector in society.

As argued by Sunstein (1987, 39), it should not be surprising if increasing knowledge about the processes of preference formation turns out to provide the next set of advances for democratic and constitutional theory. Maybe reforming the public sector depends as much on the ability of citizens, elected leaders, and civil servants to formulate new visions and utopian goals for the public sector, as upon the ability and willingness to implement current operational goals and develop precise measures of efficiency and productivity?

Studies of reform processes may help us understand the historical, institutional, political and socio-economic origins of preferences, wants and interests. They may shed some light on how definitions of improvement may develop before or after the structures and processes of public administration have changed, or as a part of such change processes.

### **3. THE REASON AND THE KNOWLEDGE BASIS OF ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM: ARTICLES OF FAITH MORE THAN CAUSAL THEORIES**

According to democratic norms the organization of the public sector should be a product of reason as well as will. Formal authority and power without knowledge may compel obedience but does not solve societal problems.

### **The uncertainty of effects and the poverty of alternatives**

The effects of reorganization are uncertain. Hopes for a firm theoretical basis for institutional design have been mostly unfulfilled, and prescriptions tend to be contradictory.<sup>8</sup> It has been difficult to demonstrate conclusively how variation in the design of organizations affects levels of performance, and in administrative reform explicit theoretical models have been less important than practical, institution-specific knowledge and political pressure (Sjöblom & Ståhlberg 1987). The paucity of evidence stands in sharp contrast to the firm ideological convictions that alternative organizational proposals arouse.<sup>9</sup>

Consider the poverty of organizational alternatives. Policy makers often tend to take an existing organizational form and use it regardless of the similarities between its present function and the new uses to which it is to be put (Christensen 1980, Preston 1984). Discussions of the (re)organization of public administration is dominated by a few standard types — legal categories which often work like Procrustean beds. Like the mythical robber made his victims fit an iron bed by either stretching their limbs or cutting them off, debates over the organization of public administration impose standard solutions on non-standard organizations in order to (formally) achieve clear lines of authority and responsibility.

History, on the other hand, produces complex forms where different and competing structures and processes coexist.<sup>10</sup> Today there is a lack of theoretical ideas and concepts adequate to describe and analyze such mixed forms and their complex and subtle arrays of relationships. We need better to understand the role of hybrid forms in public administration and in the interface between the public and the private sector. Possibly, the hybrids increase the organizational »gen-pool» of society, create flexibility, and thus contribute to the survival of representative democracies. The hybrid forms create a laboratory for administrative research, but reformers have so far been more interested in eliminating than in studying the hybrids.

### **The private sector as a role model**

The thrust of many recent reorganization efforts in public administration has been that the

organizational problems of the public sector are to be solved by using the supposedly more effective and efficient private sector as a role model (Czarniawska 1985). Modernization of public organizations is often portrayed as the substitution of up-to-date business management methods for old-fashioned public administration practices (Metcalf & Richards 1987a, 155). Business organization is assumed to be result-oriented, efficient, decentralized, and it is supposed to create innovation and freedom. Firms, markets, competition, management philosophy and concepts, private consulting firms, deregulation, de-bureaucratization, and private consulting firms, are *modern*.

A key argument is that the public administration should be changed from an »administrative culture» to a »service culture». The definition of citizens' needs is seen as self evident, or needs and interests are assumed to reveal themselves through autonomous choices in market-like situations. Citizens are described as customers, and the multifaceted relationships between citizens, elected leaders, and civil servants in a representative democracy (Stiftelsen Rättsfonden 1985, Hernes 1987) is to a large extent ignored.<sup>11</sup>

The *villain* is the bureaucratic form. Bureaucracies are described as centralized, rule oriented, inefficient, unproductive, expensive, rigid, impossible to influence, and there are simply too many of them. Bureaucracy is used as a code word symbolizing all frustrations with the public sector and governmental intrusion in private lives.

The critics of »bureaucracy» do not discuss Weber's analysis of bureaucracy as the most modern, rational, and efficient form of administration (Weber 1978: vol. 2, ch. X). To a large extent they ignore the great variety of rules and the different functions rules may have in public administration (Graver 1987). There is no analysis of the conditions under which a bureaucratic form of organization may work well. Neither is much attention given to the fact that the public administrations of the Nordic countries since World War II have *lost* many of their bureaucratic characteristics, so that bargaining rather than rules and hierarchical command has become the dominant form of coordination in important parts of the public sector.<sup>12</sup>

This lack of analysis of »bureaucracy» is matched by a lack of interest in variations in the organization and performance of the private sector. The image presented of the private sec-

tor is seldom based on empirical observations of how this sector actually works. Rather, it is taken from how introductory textbooks in business administration say it *should* work.

The general climate of discussion is one of image-building more than analysis and one is reminded of the fact that »modern» also means to stick to the latest fashion. Some management ideas and techniques developed in the private sector have spread like blue jeans, hamburgers, coke and Dynasty — without much consideration for variations in political culture and tradition.

Metcalf and Richards (1987b, 66—67) argue that we may be observing an intellectual imperialism of business management which seeks to mould government in its own image in spite of the fact that the success rate of transplants from business to government is low both for techniques and for individual managers. The faith in market solutions is high even where the conditions for efficient markets are absent (Hansen 1987). The enthusiasm for rational management techniques remains high in spite of the fact that they have had few striking successes and several failures in the public sector (Landau and Stout 1979, Wittrock and Lindström 1984, Goodsell 1985, 175).

The belief that *ownership* is the critical factor is more an article of faith than a generalization that is well grounded in empirical evidence (Metcalf & Richards 1987a, 172). It is often difficult to compare public and private sector performance, and no simple generalization about superiority of private sector can be sustained. There is more support for the view that the efficacy of all firms — public and private — is imposed by a competitive environment<sup>13</sup> (Kay & Thompson 1986).

Possibly, private sector-models have had more impact on how we *talk* about the public sector than on how it works. In a period where the private sector is assumed to be modern and the public sector old-fashioned, it is tempting for public agencies to change their basis of legitimacy. In an image-building process, talk, as well as changing a name or a logo,<sup>14</sup> founding or dismantling an agency, or hiring or firing a key bureaucrat may be newsworthy and contribute to an image of decisiveness and modernization without any major changes in the structures and processes of the public administration.

Talk, and image building, may substitute for action or create a future climate for action. An

important research task is to study the conditions under which talking and acting in administrative reforms are tightly or loosely coupled (March 1980, Brunsson 1985).

### A lesson of history

The idea that the private sector has the solutions and the knowledge needed by the public sector may reduce felt need for empirical research, in spite of the fact that administrative reform is a policy area where strong articles of faith often substitute for causal knowledge.

The lesson of history is that a concentration upon the problems and fashion of the day will not provide an adequate, systematic basis of knowledge for administrative reform. One period's horror story -bureaucracy is the next period's ideal. While reformers of public administration in one period focus on creating incentives for initiative, innovation, and willingness to take responsibility, bureaucrats soon after may be expected to act according to rules or political commands rather than in an entrepreneurial style (Jacobsen 1964, 1966).

Processes of sequential attention to goals (Cyert & March 1963) suggest that a reform period may be an occasion for rediscovering the benefits of bureaucratic forms — like predictability, formal equality, due process, and protection against misuse of public authority, especially for those who have no access to the bargaining processes of the contemporary public administration. While the current reform theme is de-bureaucratization it has already been suggested that soon there may be a renaissance for the public sector (Radetzki 1987).

In order to develop a more systematic basis of knowledge for administrative policy making it is necessary to attend carefully to variations in the tasks, the criteria of success, the environments, and in the organizational forms of public administration. For instance, since current reform programs primarily aim at developing organizational forms for a service state,<sup>15</sup> it is important to ask how the organizational forms of a service state will function for traditional public activities and for the almost bewildering array of tasks the public sector has taken on (Weidenbaum 1969, Rose 1976, Deutsch 1981). It is necessary to study how service-oriented organizational forms function

in situations where agencies are assumed to resist demands for change rather than to adapt, and in situations where citizens are not assumed to be (or do not accept to be treated as) customers.

Reform programs argue that administrative policies should be seen as experiments and deliberate attempts to learn from experience. Still, changes are seldom followed by systematic efforts to assess successes and failures, and when collected, such information is often not used. Research has shown that the past is often uncertain and ambiguous. It is difficult to learn from experience, especially in situations where many actors in networks of interacting organizations are making choices and learning at the same time.<sup>16</sup>

In general, more knowledge is needed about how the public administration collects, stores, retrieves and uses information. Students of public administration must take an interest in how change processes may be affected by ideas and information provided by temporary committees, private consultants (Premfors, Eklund & Larsson 1985), the analytical staffs of public administration and by academic administrative research.

In particular it may be worthwhile to consider how the collection and use of information may be separated in time. Reorganization studies are often filed rather than implemented immediately. Still, they provide concepts and ideas. They keep theories and proposals alive, create precedents, and develop a logic of argument that is carried over to subsequent reorganization efforts. Actual reorganizations often have deadlines which tend to make reformers use organizational solutions at hand, thereby creating a new opportunity for filed proposals (Feldman 1983, March & Olsen 1983, Kingdon 1984).

There is also a need for knowledge about the effects of different ways of regulating access to reorganization processes. The participation hypothesis suggests that reorganization efforts would be more successful if they involved an explicitly participatory style. Conversely, it has been argued that inviting people into the process involve compromises on the change to be proposed, that extended participation delays the process, and that radical changes need to be made fairly quickly if they are to occur at all. The evidence is inconclusive (Mosher 1967, March & Olsen 1983, Lien & Fremstad 1985).

#### 4. TO WIN SUPPORT AND CREATE COMMITMENT

For a reform-oriented government it is not enough to assume the right of governance and organization. Change is often viewed by those affected as disruptive, resource demanding, painful and threatening, and thus it is resisted. To build support and commitment is a political process, and reform may be difficult to implement for political and institutional reasons.

The rhetoric of *Realpolitik* speaks of reorganization in terms of a political struggle among contending interests. The formal administrative hierarchy is a minor part of the structure of control. Organizational forms reflect victorious interests and establish a mechanism for future dominance (March & Olsen 1983). Consequently, change may result when the authority and power built into the structure of the public sector is out of balance with actual influence and control, i.e. the ability to cope with critical contingencies (Pfeffer 1978, 192—193).

##### The political limits of planned change

In situations with multiple constituencies with incompatible interests and multiple contingencies with conflicting design implications the public administration have to choose which part of the environment to adapt to (Child 1977). Such choices are likely to be made in part on the basis of expectations of how groups in opposition to a proposed change might try to prevent or modify the reform. Thus, we need to study the institutions, interests, resources, conflicts and alliances organized around the modernization issues. We need to analyze how the criteria governing the reform process and the forms chosen and implemented may depend on which participants and conflicts are activated, how resources are distributed, and what alliances are viable.

A significant change is unlikely to move ahead without political support and leadership (OECD 1980, 13). The support given by the prime minister may be of critical importance. In addition the change process will be affected by the commitment and consensus of the government and the party or parties in government, the apparatus created to give effect to change and the resources invested in reforms, the types of bureaucratic politics activated, and the involvement of organized interests in society, the mass media and the public opinion.

Consider the role of a permanent central change agency to focus attention and energy, to create motivation and commitment, and to set priorities and review experiences.<sup>17</sup> Ministries and departments of public administration have for some time been fighting to raise their status and establish a more central position for themselves in governmental decision making. The results have been mixed, and the content of proposed comprehensive administrative policies may reflect that administrative policy making is a new and weak policy field.

A prevailing attitude in the reform programs is that each institution has the responsibility to develop itself.<sup>17</sup> The role of central agencies with a special responsibility for administrative policy-making is to facilitate, stimulate, motivate and help, rather than to control the change process. They are supposed to act on the basis of a distinct competence rather than formal position.<sup>18</sup> The argument is that formal authority and political power is sufficient when one is to make cuts and abolish administrative units. When reforms aim at changing administrative culture — i.e. concepts of meaning, norms, identities, and institutions — it is necessary to mobilize support and commitment for change among the civil servants and others directly affected.

Bureaucratic reform seems to require long-run commitment and patience, and keeping reform on the agenda of top political leaders is problematic. Reorganization is sensitive to contextual fluctuations and to short-run changes in political attention. The course of events surrounding a reorganization sometimes seems to depend less on properties of the reorganization proposals or efforts than on the happenstance of short-run political attention, over which reorganization groups typically have little control. A reform may become a garbage can for participants and issues producing results not intended by anyone. As a consequence, reformers experience cycles of enthusiasm and disappointment.<sup>19</sup>

Also, the organization of public administration is often less important for political leaders than substantive, especially economic, policies. Political leaders bargain away reorganization projects in order to secure legislative support on other issues. Reforms are sacrificed to consensual politics (March & Olsen 1983, Caiden 1984, 258).

Metcalfe and Richards (1987a, 213) relate the success of administrative reform in Britain to



the fact that feedback and evaluation processes were established at the highest level to monitor departmental programs. In Britain changing »the machinery of government» has absorbed a generous slice of the energies of several recent prime ministers and their most senior official advisors — despite the argument that such activities lack popular appeal, are unglamorous, and politically unrewarding (Pollitt 1984, ix).

The failure of administrative policies in Sweden is within a similar framework explained by the fact that the high ambitions of a comprehensive administrative policy was not reflected in the organization of the reform process. The prime minister was positive but not enthusiastic. There was considerable opposition within the governing Social Democratic party and among civil servants. Mellbourn describes the Minister of Civil Affairs, Bo Holmberg, as a general without troops, and argues that the failure of the reform process was a clear demarcation of the political limits of administrative policy making (Mellbourn 1986, 21, 60).

Civil servants are important actors in the politics of administrative change (Peters 1984, Suleiman 1984). The public administration is not a unified whole. Different ministries and agencies follow different goals and interests, and careful attention to such differences is essential both in managing and understanding administrative change (OECD 1980, 18). Attention should also be paid to the active attempts by civil servants to recruit allies in order to overcome resistance to change or to stop reform proposals. Such attempts may include the mobilization of organized interests in society, the mass media, the public opinion and ordinary citizens.

The role of the Ministry of Finance is of a special interest. Reform programs argue that governance should be based less upon detailed budgets and more upon specification of goals and monitoring of the results achieved. Whether the responsibility of administrative policy making is located in a separate ministry (like in Norway and Sweden) or in a department of the Ministry of Finance (like in Denmark and Finland) variation in the coordination of budgetary and reform processes, and the relative power of budget-agencies and agencies of administrative reform, may affect the outcome of change processes in significant ways. For instance, Mellbourn (1986) argues that lack of coordination between the Ministry of Finance

and the Ministry of Civil Affairs, and the weak position of the latter, contributed to the failure of Swedish administrative policies.<sup>20</sup>

Administrative reform illustrates the limitations of hierarchy. Many of the resources critical to the success of an administrative policy are controlled by other formal organizations, and administrative policies have to be directed toward influencing such organizations. It is not realistic to assume one omnipotent writer of incentive schemes which can fully order the behavior of participants in such interorganizational networks. We need to attend to the political limits of planned administrative change, and to some possible effects of political conflict.

### Political conflict and administrative change

The disciplining effects of competition in economic markets is widely acknowledged. Firms have to keep up their productivity or they are weeded out. Less attention is paid to how political conflict, competition, criticism and opposition may affect the propensity of change in public administration. In order to survive public agencies need political support and demands for their services. Conflicts and criticism of the public administration often signal that some groups want to change the way agencies operate — what they do, how they do it, or for whom they do it (Jacobsen 1964, 1966).

The effects of politicization and depoliticization of administrative policy making may be illustrated by the different responses towards the privatization-theme and the modernization-theme of reform programs. »Privatization» is closely linked to the major political cleavage in the Nordic countries — »modernization» is not.

»Privatization» is an ambiguous term covering a variety of changes in the relationship between the public and the private sector (Kristensen 1984, 1987a, b, c). The symbolic significance of the term is illustrated by the responses provoked in the Nordic countries. The reaction has been strong even when »privatization» has referred to ordinary processes of adjustment between the public and the private sector, usually widely accepted (Olsen 1986b, Christensen 1987, Kristensen 1987a).

While the issue was raised by governments in favour of »privatization», the opponents soon succeeded in defining the agenda. For instance, in Norway »privatization» was described as turning back the clock. Privatization propo-

sals were viewed as a general attack on the welfare state — as a »cookbook for the destruction of the welfare state» and as the »starting signal of an extensive ideological battle that may shatter hard-won unity and solidarity, reinforce old injustices and infuse life into destructive adversarial relationships between groups and classes» (Olsen 1968b). A consequence was that the privatization issue faded.

In Denmark a similar debate took place and the government removed privatization from the agenda long before an attempt to implement a privatization policy was really tried. The word disappeared from the Danish political vocabulary (Kristensen 1987). In the other Nordic countries governments have seen »privatization» as even less attractive as an explicit policy.

»De-regulation» also became politicized in Denmark. Christensen (1987) describes de-regulation as the story of an ambitious political initiative which gradually fell victim to bureaucratic reluctance and disinterest on the part of economic interest organizations. Among ministers there never existed much enthusiasm or it gradually eroded.

The lesson learnt by the non-socialist government in Denmark, like in Norway, was to de-emphasize the political and ideological aspects of administrative reform. As deregulation turned out to be more onerous and less popular than expected, the Danish government presented to Parliament in November 1983 a much publicized plan for modernization of the public sector. »Modernization» was not expected to provoke anyone. Christensen (1987) argues that the very looseness of this plan guaranteed that it would not be met with the same kind of fierce opposition as de-regulation. The Ministry of Finance commented that since re-distribution turned out to be problematic, it was necessary to improve productivity (Finansministeriet 1987a, 8).

Likewise, Mellbourn (1986, 103) argues that it is tempting to refer to management theories from private business because they are perceived as a-political and non-controversial, and Caiden (1984, 264) writes that compared with other change proposals administrative reform will look quite moderate and acceptable to rival interest groups. Threatened with drastic economies and the termination of programs much internal resistance to reorganization is likely to diminish.

The current reform programs may be what

Anderson (1983) calls a bland alternative — a choice with a low probability of producing either highly positive or highly negative effects. The argument is that policy makers frequently choose alternatives that they do not expect will solve the problems. They are more concerned with avoiding conflicts and failures than with achieving success. They settle for what they can change rather than try to change what they want to change (Wildavsky 1979, 79).

Apparently, many current reform programs illustrate an a-political and non-conflict approach to administrative change. Yet, the programs are written by people who understand the politics of administrative reform well, and they are mostly read by people who have a similar kind of insight. Therefore, the approach used is unlikely to be a result of political innocence or an attempt to manipulate potential opponents. It may reflect a consensus-oriented culture where administrative conflict is usually not exposed in public documents. Also, the approach chosen can be seen as a strategy of political and institutional *weakness*.

Consider the interaction between »privatization» and »modernization». It is often argued that the chances of cutbacks in public agencies will depend on their capacity to restructure themselves. Less attention is paid to the possibility that the chances for reforms may depend on cutbacks or threats of cutbacks.

For instance, »privatization» proposals will create conflict and political attention. Most likely, such proposals will be perceived as provocations and external threats by civil servants. It is uncertain how civil servants will respond to a politicization of administrative reform. They may try to resist all changes and the present climate of cooperation may deteriorate. The unions of civil servants may launch public relations campaigns in an attempt at changing the images of the public sector held by politicians and citizens. Also, threats of »privatization» may make administrative leaders, other employees, and their unions more positive towards reforms, making changes in administrative structures and processes »from below» more likely.<sup>21</sup>

If conflict and criticism rather than consensus and an a-political strategy promote change, the key to comprehensive administrative reform may be to keep the theme of privatization alive and administrative reform on the political agenda. How likely is this to happen?

The privatization debate may be dead, but it is not clear that the privatization process is

so.<sup>22</sup> For instance, the Norwegian Labour Party government recently said it will be pragmatic in evaluating the borderlines between the public and the private sector. Given the economic situation, it is not possible to continue all present tasks and at the same time add new ones (St.meld.nr. 4, 1987—88). Thus, economic necessity may modify traditional attitudes.

Furthermore, pressure for privatization may not come as an explicit government policy. Rather it may be the result of coalitions of people who have money to invest, professionals who have services to sell, and people who have money to buy services. If public services, especially in education and health, deteriorate as a result of tight budgets, or for other reasons, this kind of privatization process may tend to accelerate. A by-product may be to increase the probability of administrative reform.

An implication is that students of administrative policy-making must attend to the political and institutional preconditions for change. Reform processes are organized differently in the Nordic countries. Political cleavages and alliances differ. Thus, comparisons across the Nordic countries might shed some light on the political and institutional possibilities and limitations of comprehensive administrative policy. A central question is whether recent reform proposals signify changes in the political coalitions which traditionally have supported the welfare state in the Nordic countries.

##### **5. REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY AND ADMINISTRATIVE DESIGN: NEW WAYS OF REGULATING THE EXERCISE OF PUBLIC POWER?**

Nystrom and Starbuck (1981, xii) argued that if you want to understand an organization or an administrative order you should try to change it. This is what reform programs aim at. Thereby, students of public administration are provided an opportunity to learn about the transformative capacity of the democratic state: the relative importance of planned change in the transformation of the public sector, and the conditions under which administrative structures and processes can be deliberately changed in order to achieve policy objectives. Thus, more generally, we may learn something about democracy and power in the Nordic countries.

The purpose of this article has been to sketch some research questions derived from a political-institutional framework. Comprehensive administrative reform is seen as part of the creation and change of a political order. This order regulates the exercise of public authority and power, including the roles of citizens, elected leaders, and civil servants. Thus, comprehensive administrative reforms are intertwined with questions of democratic control, accountability, and legitimacy.

The main argument has been that in order to understand the possibilities and limitations of comprehensive administrative policymaking it is necessary to go beyond an efficiency approach which focusses on finding »the best way» to organize the public sector.<sup>23</sup> In a pluralistic and rapidly changing society processes of comprehensive reform are more likely to be characterized by ambiguity, uncertainty, and conflict than by specified objectives, clear understanding of means-end connections, and perfect control. Studies of comprehensive reforms may illustrate how processes of planned change are facilitated or constrained by the government's ability to:

- provide visions, a sense of direction and new levels of aspiration, as well as operational goals useful for measuring efficiency and productivity,
- develop and use knowledge, both causal models and data, and to reduce the poverty of organizational typologies typical for current reform debates,
- build consensus or viable coalitions.

Comprehensive reforms offer an opportunity to study different types of change, e.g. those which alter the basic nature of the administrative system and those which stabilize it by protest absorption and cooptation. We may learn about the different ways change may take place. For instance, changes through direct intervention in administrative structures and processes, and changes through processes of argumentation and interpretation which prepare a new climate by modifying codes of meaning, norms, identities, and institutions.

In order to explain such processes of change students of public administration must attend to the characteristics of the political context of administrative reform in the Nordic countries. Political leaders can not assume the right to design the public administration. The outcome of reform processes will be affected by the institutions, interests, resources, conflicts and al-

liances organized around administrative policy making, and by which actors are activated.

The content of current reform proposals is affected by the fact that as an organizing concept administrative policy making is new. In the Nordic countries organizational matters have so far been subordinated to substantive and economic policy making. The resources invested in reforms are limited, and the networks organized around administrative policies are rather weak. The a-political efficiency-approach found in the reform programs probably reflects a situation where control over the means of change is spread in interorganizational networks characterized more by bargaining than hierarchical command. It is a paradox that administrative policy making may »need» a certain amount of conflict in order to get the political attention which may motivate change processes »from below».

The reform programs invite comparative studies. There is much room for exchange of experience and shared learning (OECD 1980, 28). To give direction to empirical research we need better theories of management of change, adapted to the distinct tasks, possibilities, and constraints of the public sector (Kooiman & Eliassen 1987, Metcalfe & Richards 1987a). More generally, we need theoretical ideas about the interaction of citizens, elected leaders and civil servants in change processes.

In order to better understand this interaction we need to analyze the complex balance between partly contradictory principles of governance in representative democracies. A hierarchical concept is at the core of parliamentary governance, i.e. that the responsibility for departmental acts is located uniquely in the government or the minister's office (Wass 1985). Yet, this concept lives side by side with a variety of other principles. Some constitutional and ethical rules are assumed to be beyond the discretion of current political majorities. The principle of professional autonomy assumes trial by peers and a client relationship to citizens, based on the assumption that the professional knows what is best for the client. The principle of the sovereign consumer assumes that the citizen-consumer knows best what is in his interest. The principle that affected groups should be represented in public policy making legitimize the participation of organized societal interests. And the principle that employees should influence their own working

conditions legitimize a strong position for the unions of the employees.

In the search for clear principles of administration, with clear lines of authority and responsibility, reformers must not forget that democracy, as we know it in the Nordic countries, may be based on a fruitful tension between partly contradictory forms and principles of government. The distinguishing mark of democratic politics, including comprehensive administrative policy making, may be the ability to cope with rather than eliminate ambiguity, uncertainty, and conflict.

## NOTES

1. A structure is a process that changes at a rate so slow as to be negligible for the purposes of the investigation (Deutsch 1981, 332).
2. The term »major surgery» is used in the OECD report (1980, 13): »Strategies for change and reform in public management». For a listing of the Nordic programs used in this article, see the Document section in the list of references. One important aspect of the modernization programs will not be discussed here: the introduction of electronic data processing equipment. (e.g. »Den nye Staten 1987: 21, Den moderne staten 1987: 29). Such changes are often discussed in terms of optimal technical efficiency, or decisions are governed by national, industrial policy-considerations. Needed are studies that clarify how choices of electronic data processing equipment may affect the categories used to collect and analyse data, the information available, and thus the content of future policy making.
3. Metcalfe and Richards (1987a, 177) also observe that actual achievements in cutting total public spending have fallen well short of what was hoped for. Cutbacks in some policy fields have been more than matched by unanticipated increases in others. The general trend in public expenditure since 1797 is up, rather than down.
4. Barth 1966, Hernes 1976, Lave & March 1978, March 1981, Egeberg 1987.
5. Hamilton, Jay & Madison 1979 (1964), Mill 1861 (1962), Scott 1981, March & Olsen 1983.
6. Tarschys 1978, Christensen 1980, Lundquist & Ståhlberg 1982, Olsen 1986a, Söderlind & Petersen 1986, Sjöblom and Ståhlberg 1987.
7. Cyert & March 1963, Goodin 1986, March 1971, 1978, Cohen & March 1974, March & Olsen 1976, 1983, 1984, 1987, March & Sevón 1984, Tarschys & Edwards 1975, Christensen 1985, Egeberg & Stigen 1985, Jacobsson 1984, Ingraham 1984, Ofverdal 1987.
8. Simon 1957, Mosher 1967, Seidman 1980, Child 1977, Kaufman 1977, Szanton 1981, March & Olsen, 1983.
9. Public debate today to a large extent reflects the neo-liberal view that private solutions are to be preferred. But the opposite view is argued with the same conviction: »As socialists we believe that public enterprise is superior in all ways to

- private industry and we need to win peoples' minds for its ideals» (Hastings & Levie 1983, 8).
10. Winai 1985, Rosas & Suksi 1985, Egeberg & Stigen 1985, Bozeman 1987, Leazes Jr. 1987. The hybrid is not a new phenomenon: »For however much the articulation of the system of rule into organs, branches, departements, sections, and so forth may have been conceived as part of a unitary, harmonious organizational design, the component elements in that design became fairly quickly the seats of invidious interests all struggling to increase their autonomy, their reciprocal standing, and their command over resources» (Poggi 1978, 136).
  11. The Swedish program is the one most explicitly concerned with the roles of citizens and elected leaders. In addition, Sweden has had a strikingly large number of committees surveying various aspects of how representative democracy is actually, or should be, working to day.
  12. Læg Reid & Olsen 1978, Hernes 1978, Olsen 1979, 1983, Egeberg 1981, Hydén 1984, Øvrelid 1984.
  13. It is sometimes assumed that privatization in itself creates competition (Den moderne staten, 1987, 23). The British experience is that often a public monopoly is turned into a private monopoly which have no greater incentive to efficiency than public monopolies (Metcalf & Richards 1987a).  
The argument in this article is not that the public sector can not learn from the private sector. It is rather that such learning has to be selective. Also, it must be based on realistic analysis of actual variation in private sector organization and performance, and information about significant differences between the public and private sector (cf. Howells 1981).
  14. Harbo 1985, Högetveit 1985, Petersson & Fredén 1987.
  15. For example, »Den nye staten», pp. 7, 9, 14.
  16. March & Olsen 1975, Feldman & March 1981, Hagen & Rose 1987, Røvik 1987, Levitt & March 1988.
  17. One argument against having a central change agency has been that such an agency tends to be isolated from programme operations and rigid and unrealistic in its approach. It will create an artificial degree of uniformity without fully recognizing differences in tasks and environments (OECD 1980, 21).
  18. The Finnish program says that the achievements and the resources needed by the public administration will periodically be evaluated in detail (Översikt 1987: III: 14).
  19. Cohen, March and Olsen 1972, March & Olsen 1976, 1983, Olsen 1976, Melbourn 1986.
  20. In the OECD-report (1980) »Strategies for change and reform in public management» the problem is acknowledged. The advice given is to keep the two processes separate but coordinated.
  21. An important type of programs not referred to here is those of the trade unions. This group includes both the programs of the Federations of Trade Unions (e.g. LO, 1986) and the unions of the employees in the State and in local government (e.g. Statstjenestemannskartellet, 1987). Such programs will be an important source of data for studies of comprehensive reforms.
  22. A question raised by Else Kjølland, Tromsø.

23. An efficiency approach assumes à priori (substantive) goals and should be distinguished from a political discourse where citizens through an open process of communication defines the best way to live with differences in interests and beliefs, i.e. where they establish an order procedures for dealing with conflicts.

## REFERENCES

- Anderson, Paul A.: Decision Making by Objection and the Cuban Missile Crises. *Administrative Science Quarterly* 28 (1983): 2, 201—222.
- Barth, Fredrik: On the Study of Social Change, Plenary address to the American Anthropological Association, Bergen 1966.
- Bendor, Jonathan 1977: Confusion Between Developmental and Evolutionary Theories. *Administration & Society* 8 (1977): 4, 481—514.
- Bozeman, Barry: *All Organizations Are Public*. Jossey-Bass, San Francisco 1987.
- Brunsson, Nils: *The Irrational Organization*. Wiley, Chichester 1985.
- Caiden, Gerald: Reform and Revitalization in American Bureaucracy. In Robert Miewald and Michael Steineman (eds.): *Problems in Administrative Reform*, pp. 249—265. Nelson — Hall, Chicago 1984.
- Czarniawska, Barbara: The Ugly Sister: On Relationships between the Private and the Public Sectors in Sweden. *Scandinavian Journal of Management Studies* 2 (1985): 2, 83—103.
- Child, John: Organizational Design and Performance: Contingency Theory and Beyond. In Elmer H. Burach and Anant R. Negandhi: *Organization Design, Theoretical Perspectives and Empirical Findings*. Kent State University Press, Kent, Ohio 1977.
- Christensen, Jørgen Grønnegård: Centraladministration, organisation og politisk placering, Samfunnsvitenskabelig Forlag, København 1980.
- Christensen, Jørgen Grønnegård: Deregulation, Recent Danish Experience. Paper presented at the 1987 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Chicago 1987.
- Christensen, Tom: Styrt endring og planlagte konsekvenser? En organisasjonsanalyse av omorganiseringen i den sentrale helseforvaltningen 1982—83. Institutt for samfunnsvitenskap, Tromsø 1985.
- Cohen, Michael D. and James G. March: *Leadership and Ambiguity: The American College President*. McGraw-Hill, New York 1974.
- Cohen, Michael D., James G. March and Johan P. Olsen: A Garbage Can Model of Organizational Choice. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 17 (1972).
- Cyert, Richard M. and James G. March: *A Behavioral Theory of the Firm*. Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ 1963.
- Deutsch, Karl W. 1981: The Crisis of the State. *Government and Opposition*, 16 (1981): 3, 331—343.
- Dyson, Kenneth: *The State Tradition in Western Europe*, Martin Robertson, Oxford 1980.
- Eckstein, Harry: The Idea of Political Development: From Dignity to Efficiency. *World Politics* 34 (1982): 4, 451—486.
- Egeberg, Morten: *Stat og organisasjoner*. Universitetsforlaget, Bergen 1981.
- Egeberg, Morten: *Organisasjonsutforming*. Aschehoug/Tanum, Nordli, Oslo 1984.

- Egeberg, Morten: Designing public organizations. In Jan Kooiman and Kjell A. Eliassen (eds.): *Managing Public Organizations. Lessons from Contemporary European Experience*, pp. 142—157. Sage, London 1987.
- Egeberg, Morten and Inger Stigen: The Management of Competing Norms and Decision Principles: The Organizational Context of Norwegian Directorates. Paper presented at the IPSA XIIIth World Congress, Paris 1985.
- Feldman, Martha S.: Policy Expertise in a Public Bureaucracy. Ph.D. Dissertation. Stanford University, Stanford CA 1983.
- Feldman, Martha S. and James G. March: Information in Organizations as Signal and Symbol. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 26 (1981): 171—186.
- Goodman, Paul S. and Lance B. Kurke: Studies of Change in Organizations: A Status Report. In Paul Goodman et al.: *Change in Organizations*. Jossey-Bass, San Francisco 1982.
- Goodsell, Charles T.: *The Case for Bureaucracy*. Chatham House, Chatham NJ 1985: 5.
- Goodin, Robert E.: Laundering preferences. In Jon Elster and Aamund Hylland (eds.): *Foundations of Social Choice Theory*, pp. 75—101. Universitetsforlaget, Oslo 1986.
- Graver, Hans Petter: Norms and Decisions. Manuscript, Oslo 1987.
- Gray, Andrew and William I. Jenkins: *Administrative Politics in British Government*. Harvester, London 1985.
- Hamilton, A.J. Jay and J. Madison: *The Federalist Papers*. Pocket Books, New York 1797 (1964).
- Hagen, Terje and Lawrence Rose: Læring gjennom forsøk, Organisasjon og virkemåte ved statlige forsøksordninger. Manuscript, Institutt for statsvitenskap, Oslo 1987.
- Hansen, Tore: Privatisering — økonomiske og politiske forutsetninger. Manuscript, Institutt for statsvitenskap, Oslo 1987.
- Harbo, Hilde: Organisasjon og symboler, En analyse av beslutningsprosessen i forbindelse med emblemendringen i Televerket. Thesis (hovedoppgave), Oslo University 1985.
- Hastings, Sue and Hugo Levie (eds.): *Privatization?* Spokesman, Nottingham 1983.
- Hedborg, Anna and Rudolf Meidner, *Folkhems modellen*. Borås: Rabén og Sjögren 1984.
- Hernes, Gudmund: Structural Change in Social Processes. *The American Journal of Sociology* 82 (1976): 3, 513—547.
- Hernes, Gudmund (ed.): *Forhandlingsøkonomi og blandingsadministrasjon*. Universitetsforlaget, Bergen 1978.
- Hernes, Helga Maria: The Dimensions of Citizenship in the Advanced Welfare State; Manuscript, Institute for Social Research, Oslo 1987.
- Howells, David 1981: Marks and Spencer and the Civil Service: A Comparison of Culture and Methods. *Public Administration* 59 (1981), 337—352.
- Hydén, Håkan: *Ram eller lag?* Stat-kommunberedningen (DsC 1984: 12), Stockholm 1984.
- Høgetveit, Anne: Organisasjon og symbol, En analyse av beslutningsprosessen i Norges Statsbaner. Thesis (hovedoppgave), Oslo University 1985.
- Ingraham, Patricia W.: Civil Service Reform and Public Policy, Do We Know to Judge Success or Failure? In Patricia W. Ingraham and Carolyn Ban (eds.): *Legislating Bureaucratic Change. The Civil Service Reform Act of 1978*, pp. 264—278. State University of New York Press Albany 1984.
- Jacobsen, Knut D.: *Teknisk hjelp og politisk struktur*, Universitetsforlaget, Oslo 1964.
- Jacobsen, Knut D.: Public Administration under Pressure: The Role of the Expert in the Modernization of Traditional Agriculture. *Scandinavian Political Studies* (1966), 159—93. Offprint.
- Jacobsson, Bengt: *Hur styrs förvaltningen?* Studentlitteratur, Lund 1984.
- Kaufman, Herbert: Reflections on administrative reorganization. In J.A. Pechman (ed.): *Setting National Priorities: the 1978 Budget*. Brookings, Washington, D.C. 1977.
- Kay, J.A. and D.J. Thompson: Privatisation: A Policy in Search of a Rationale. *The Economic Journal*, 90 (1986), 18—32.
- Kingdom, John W.: *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*, Little Brown & Co, Boston 1984.
- Kooiman, Jan and Kjell A. Eliassen (eds.): *Managing Public Organizations. Lessons from Contemporary European Experience*. Sage, London 1987 (c).
- Kristensen, Ole P.: Privatisering: Modernisering av den offentlige sektor eller ideologisk korstog. *Nordisk Administrativt Tidsskrift* 65 (1984), 96—117.
- Kristensen, Ole P.: Alliancer og konflikter i forbindelse med privatisering, Paper presented at the FAFO Seminar on Privatization, October 7.—8., Oslo 1987 (a).
- Kristensen, Ole P.: *Væksten i den offentlige sektor: Institutioner og politik*. Jurist- og Økonomiforbundets forlag, København 1987 (b).
- Kristensen, Ole P.: Privatization. In Jan Kooiman and Kjell A. Eliassen (eds.): *Managing Public Organizations, Lessons from Contemporary European Experience*, pp. 223—252. Sage, London 1987 (c).
- Landau, Martin and Russell Stout: To Manage Is Not To Control, Or the Folly of Type II Errors. *Public Administration Review* 39 (1979), 148—156.
- Lave Charles A. and James G. March: *An Introduction to Models in the Social Sciences*, Harper & Row, New York 1978.
- Leazes, Jr., Francis J.: *Accountability and the Business State*. Praeger, New York 1987.
- Levitt, Barbara and James G. March: Organizational Learning. *Annual Review of Sociology* 14 (1988), in print.
- Lien, S. and J.K. Frøestad 1985: Moshers deltakelsehypotese belyst ved utvalgte cases fra offentlige reorganiseringssjekter. Thesis (hovedoppgave), Oslo University, 1985.
- Lundquist, Lennart and Krister Ståhlberg: *Byråkrater i Norden*. Åbo Akademi, Meddelande nr. 83, Åbo 1982.
- Læg Reid, Per og Johan P. Olsen: *Byråkrati og beslutninger*, Universitetsforlaget, Bergen 1978.
- March, James G.: The Technology of Foolishness. *Civiløkonomen* 18 (1971): 4, 4—12.
- March, James G.: Bounded Rationality, Ambiguity, and the Engineering of Choice. *Bell Journal of Economics* 9 (1978), 587—678.
- March, James G.: *How We Talk and How We Act: Administrative Theory and Administrative Life*. University of Illinois at Urbana-Campaign, Urbana IL 1980.
- March, James G.: Footnotes to Organizational Change. *Administrative Science Quarterly* 26 (1981), 563—577.
- March, James G. and Johan P. Olsen: The Uncertain-

- ty of the Past: Organizational Learning under Ambiguity. *European Journal of Political Research* 3 (1975), 147—171.
- March, James G. and Johan P. Olsen: *Ambiguity and Choice in Organizations*, Universitetsforlaget, Bergen 1976.
- March, James G. and James P. Olsen: Organizing Political Life, What Administrative Reorganization Tells Us About Government. *American Political Science Review* 77 (1983), 281—296.
- March, James G. and Johan P. Olsen: The New Institutionalism, Organizational Factors in Political Life. *American Political Science Review* 78 (1984), 734—749.
- March, James G. and Johan P. Olsen: Popular Sovereignty and the Search for Appropriate Institutions. *Journal of Public Policy* 6 (1987): 4, 341—370.
- March, James G. and Guje Sevón: Gossip, Information, and Decision-Making. *Advances in Information Processing in Organizations*, 1 (1984), 95—107.
- Mellbourn, Anders: *Bortom det starka samhället*. Carlssons, Stockholm 1986.
- Metcalfe, Les and Sue Richards: *Improving Public Management*, Sage, London 1987 (a).
- Metcalfe, Les and Sue Richards: Evolving public management cultures. In Jan Kooiman and Kjell A. Eliassen (eds.): *Managing Public Organizations*, pp. 65—86. Sage, London 1987 (b).
- Meyer, John W. and Brian Rowan: Institutionalized Organizations: Formal Structure as Myth and Ceremony. *American Journal of Sociology* 83 (1977): 2, 340—363.
- Mill, John S.: *On Representative Government*, Longmans, Green, Reader and Dyer, London 1861 (1962).
- Mosher, Frederick C. (ed.): *Government Reorganization, Cases and Commentary*, Bobbs-Merrill, Indianapolis 1967.
- Nystrom, Paul C. and William H. Starbuck: *Handbook of Organizational Design, Vol. 2, Remodeling Organizations and Their Environments*, Prentice Hall, London 1981.
- Offerdal, Audun 1987: Politisk ekspertise — finst den? Om politikarens plass i styringssystemet. Manuscript, Institutt for administrasjon og organisasjonsvitenskap, Bergen 1987.
- Olsen, Johan P.: Reorganization as a Garbage Can, In J.G. March and J.P. Olsen: *Ambiguity and Choice in Organizations*, pp. 314—350, Universitetsforlaget, Bergen 1976.
- Olsen, Johan P.: De nordiske lands offentlige forvaltning i 1980- og 1990-årene. Noen perspektiver. *Nordisk Administrativ Tidsskrift* (1979), pp. 257—273.
- Olsen, Johan P.: *Organized Democracy*. Universitetsforlaget, Bergen 1983.
- Olsen, Johan P.: Nyinstitusjonalismen og statsvitenskapen. *Statsvetenskapligt Tidsskrift* 88 (1985): 1, 1—14.
- Olsen, Johan P.: Foran en ny offentlig revolusjon. *Nytt Norsk Tidsskrift* 3 (1986): 3, 3—15. (1986a).
- Olsen, Johan P.: Privatisering og forvaltningspolitikk. *Norsk Statsvitenskapelig Tidsskrift* 1 (1986), 51—57 (1986b).
- Otter, Carsten von: Kan man rationalisera folkhemmet? LOs utredning om den offentliga sektorn, Stockholm 1986.
- Peters, Guy B.: *The Politics of Bureaucracy*, 2. ed. Longmans, New York 1984.
- Petersson, Ololf and Jonas Fredén: *Statens Symboler*, Maktutredningen, Uppsala 1987.
- Pfeffer, Jeffrey: *Organizational Design*, AHM Publishing Corp., Arlington Heights IL 1978.
- Poggi, G.: *The Development of the Modern State*, Stanford University Press, Stanford CA 1984.
- Pollitt, Christopher: *Manipulating the Machine*, Allen & Unwin, London 1984.
- Premfors, Rune, Anne-Marie Eklund and Torbjørn Larsson: Privata konsulter i offentlig förvaltning, Department of Political Science, Working Paper no. 9, Stockholm 1985.
- Preston, Michael B.: *The Politics of Bureaucratic Reform*, University of Illinois Press, Urbana IL 1984.
- Radetzki, Marian: Den offentliga sektorns återkomst. *Dagens Nyheter* 1. 10. 1987.
- Romanow, Allyn: Case Studies of Organizational Change: A Review. Manuscript, Stanford University, CA. 1981.
- Roness, Paul G.: *Reorganisering av departementa — eit politisk styringsmiddel?* Universitetsforlaget, Bergen 1979.
- Rosas, Allan and Markku Suksi: *Inlägg kring medelbar offentlig förvaltning*. Åbo Akademi, Åbo 1985.
- Rose, Richard: On the Priorities of Government: A Developmental Analysis of Public Policies. *European Journal of Political Research* 4 (1976), 247—289.
- Røvik, Kjell A.: Læringssystemer og læringsatferd i offentlig förvaltning, En studie av styringens kunnskapsgrunnlag, Manuscript, Institutt for samfunnsvitenskap, Tromsø 1987.
- Scott, W. Richard: *Organizations. Rational Natural and Open Systems*. Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs NJ 1981.
- Seidman, Harold: *Politics, Position and Power, The Dynamics of Federal Organization*, 3. ed. Oxford University Press, New York 1980.
- Simon, Herbert A.: *Administrative Behavior: A Study of Decision-Making Processes in Administrative Organization*. Macmillan, New York 1957.
- Sjöblom, Stefan and Krister Ståhlberg: Att ulla förvaltningen, En beskrivning av förvaltningsreformkommiteer i Finland åren 1975—1987. Åbo Akademi 1987.
- Stiftelsen Rättsfonden: *Medborgaran och förvaltning*. Liber, Stockholm 1985.
- Suleiman, Ezra (ed.): *Bureaucrats & Policy Making*. Holms & Meier, New York/London 1984.
- Sunstein, Cass R.: Constitutions and Democracies, An Epilogue. In J. Elster and R. Slagstad (eds.): *Constitutionalism and Democracy*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. Forthcoming.
- Szanton, Peter (ed.): *Federal Reorganization: What Have We Learned?* Chatham, N.J. Chatham 1981.
- Söderlind, Donald and Olof Petersson: *Svensk förvaltningspolitik*. Diskurs, Uppsala 1986.
- Sørhaug, Hans Christian: Hvordan høres moderniseringsprogrammet ut? Manuscript, Oslo 1986.
- Tarschys, Daniel: *Den offentliga revolutionen*. Liber, Stockholm 1978.
- Tarschys, Daniel and Maud Eduards: *Petita, Hur svenska myndigheter argumenterar för högre anslag*. Liber, Stockholm 1975.
- Wass, Douglas: The Civil Service at the Crossroads. *Political Quarterly* 50 (1985): 3, 227—241.
- Weber, Max: *Economy and Society* (ed. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich). University of California Press, Berkeley CA 1978.
- Weidenbaum, Murray L.: *The Modern Public Sector*,

Basic Books, New York 1969.

Winai, Peter: *Organisationen på gränsen mellan privat och offentlig sektor — förstudie*, DsFi 1985: 7, Stockholm 1985.

Wildavsky, Aron: *Speaking Truth to Power. The Art and Craft of Policy Analysis*, Little, Brown, Boston 1979.

Wittrock, Bjørn and Stefan Lindström: *De stora programmens tid: forskning och energi*. Akademiliteratur, Stockholm 1984.

Øvrelid, Ragnhild: *Rettsikkerhet eller demokrati*. Universitetsforlaget, Oslo 1984.

## DOCUMENTS

Finansministeriet (Denmark): *Redegørelse til Folketinget om regeringens program for modernisering af den offentlige sektor*, 1983.

Finansministeriet (Denmark): *Redegørelse til Folketinget om moderniseringsprogrammet for den statlige administration*. København 1986.

Finansministeriet (Denmark): *Redegjørelse til Folketinget om moderniseringsarbejdet i den offentlige sektor*. København 1987.

Översikt av förvaltningens utvecklande (Finland). Bilaga nr. 4 til Regeringens proposition till Riksdagen angående statsförslaget för år 1982.

Översikt över utvecklandet av förvaltningen (Finland). Bilaga nr. 3 till Regeringens proposition till Riksdagen angående statsförslaget för år 1985.

Översikt av utvecklandet av förvaltningen (Finland). Bilaga nr. 3 til Regeringens proposition till Riksdagen angående statsförslaget för år 1988.

Den nye staten. Program for fornyelse av statsforvaltningen (Norway). Forbruker- og administrasjonsdepartementet, Oslo 1987.

Den moderne staten. Innstilling fra et utvalg nedsatt av Høyres stortingsgruppe (Norway). Oslo 1987. St.meld.nr. 4: 1987—88: Perspektiver og reformer i den økonomiske politiske politikken.

Regeringens skrivelse 1984/85: 202: Den offentliga sektorns förnyelse (Sweden).

Regeringens proposition 1986/87: 99: Ledning av den statliga förvaltningen.

»Nu våras det». Rapport om förnyelsesarbetet i den offentliga sektorn. Civildepartementet. Liber, Allmänna Förlaget, Stockholm 1985.

OECD: *Strategies for change and reform in public management* 1980.

LO (Sweden): *Fackföreningsrörelsen och välfärdsstaten*, Rapport till 1986 års LO-kongress från LOs utredning om den offentliga sektorn, Stockholm 1986.

Statstjenestemannskartellet 6 (Norway): *Fornynelse i staten — hva vi vil*, Oslo 1987.