

# **RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING OF SENIOR CIVIL SERVANTS IN GERMANY AND THE UK, 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 Britain and Germany came closer together 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, and a mail survey, conducted from late 1994 to early 1995, the research findings demonstrate that NPM has affected the UK administrative system in terms of an increase in subject-related recruitment, that is, a trend away from the old style generalist administrator; and a decline in the number of senior officials with family background in the public service. Germany has experienced no significant change. An analysis of training of senior public officials in the British and German administrative systems shows that European integration and NPM were indeed the most significant influencing factors in the growing similarities between these two systems.

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## INTRODUCTION

One of the major challenges for students of comparative public administration and comparative bureaucracy has been the inability to provide rigorous proofs for the claim that administrative systems in West European countries are 'converging,' that is, becoming more similar to one another. Underlying this possible trend are two pressures. First, there is the challenge of institutional renewal which derives from the emergence of the New Public Management (NPM) paradigm that aims to foster a performance-oriented culture in a less-centralised public sector (Pierre 1995). Second, there is a set of pressures exerted on European administrative systems arising from the institutional development of the European Union itself (Olsen 1995; Page 1995; Page and Wouters 1995). This paper attempts to assess whether practices of recruitment and training of senior civil servants in Britain and Germany are converging, and, if so, whether it is occurring as a consequence of European integration or of New Public Management (NPM).

The rationale for the twin focus on recruitment and training is the assumption that both of them are sensitive indicators of NPM and of EU pressures. Top administrative elites are among the first to feel the pressures and respond to them. They need to hire and train staff familiar with NPM techniques and they need to ensure an adequate supply of staff able to operate effectively within an environment increasingly conditioned by EU policies and processes. Another reason for the twin focus is the theoretical link between the two. Recruitment creates the professional ideology sought by the top administrative elites, and training is another mechanism to diffuse such ideologies and beliefs to administrative staff (Scott and Meyer 1994). Seen in this light, training could be considered an aspect of organisational support provided by a government department or Ministry to help staff cope with changes in requirements for critical competencies.

The rationale for the selection of the British and German administrative systems lies in their contrasting institutional features and the implications in terms of the probability for the emergence of a coherent philosophy of civil service reform. The British state is highly centralised (i.e., there is a central governing authority located in the government, directed by the prime minister) and lacks a written constitution. This implies that, once elected, the government has virtually a free hand to engage in comprehensive reform tasks. Indeed, the radical Conservative government which took office in 1979 embarked on a comprehensive reform program designed to reduce the size and cut the cost of the public sector, including the civil service, to make it both more efficient and more effective in implementing government policies. By contrast, 'as a consequence of Germany's particular type of fragmented government, including federalism and the predominance of coalition governments, and the strong influence of the *Sozialstaat* tradition, there has never been a coherent reform philosophy or comprehensive central reform program which would have embraced all levels and sectors of governance' (Derlien 1996: 41). The question which this study addresses is whether the challenges of NPM and European integration have led to similar changes in recruitment and training of senior officials in both administrative systems despite the aforementioned differences. The paper starts with a methodological discussion. The findings are then presented in two

sections; recruitment and training. Finally, an attempt is made to explain the trends observed.

## METHODOLOGY

The method used to discern the modes of administrative recruitment and training was to ask senior public officials about their experiences, and compare these views with either 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).<sup>1</sup> Thus the research presented here is based on two sources: an institutional analysis of recruitment and training of senior officials in both systems, and a mail survey, conducted from late 1994 to early 1995. The survey contains sections uncovering the respondents' experiences in their initial recruitment, advancement, promotion and training, as well as two sections inquiring into the respondents' socio-economic and personal profile.<sup>2</sup>

**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)           | (%) |
| United Kingdom | 140         | 64            | 46  | 304         | 131           | 43  | 136            | 77            | 57  |
| Germany        | 116         | 46            | 40  | 87          | 35            | 40  | 110            | 46            | 42  |

The total sample comprises 544 top officials in the UK and 313 in Germany, from three government departments: agriculture, transport and health.<sup>3</sup> As Table 1 indicates, the response rate averaged 49 percent in the UK (272 responses) and 41 percent in Germany (127 responses), with higher rates in the British Department of Transport. Although the response rate does not vary substantially by departments or states, there is a considerable variation by grade. Table 2 shows that in both the UK and Germany most officials who responded to the questionnaire are located at the A3 (Under Secretary/*Unterabteilungsleit*) and A4 (Unit Head/*Referatsleiter*) administrative levels. The low number of responses from officials located at the A1 (Permanent Secretary/*Staatsekretär*) and A2 (Deputy Secretary/*Abteilungsleiter*) levels can be

1 For an alternative methodology, see: Maor (1997).

2 The questionnaire was translated and then validated by both academics and practitioners in the UK and Germany before being circulated to top officials.

3 Underlying the decision to sample top officials from three departments is the assumption they differ in their exposure to European integration, with the first department highly exposed to European integration, the last least exposed, and the Department of Transport characterised by

explained by the small number of posts at these very high administrative levels. Overall, the relatively high response rate concentrated especially at A3 and A4 provides a unique glimpse of the recruitment and training experience of top officials. More importantly, it provides a rare opportunity to study the 'look and feel' of recruitment and training changes.

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

| Ministry/<br>Admin.<br>Level | AGRICULTURE |     |         |     | HEALTH |     |         |     | TRANSPORT |     |         |     |
|------------------------------|-------------|-----|---------|-----|--------|-----|---------|-----|-----------|-----|---------|-----|
|                              | UK          |     | Germany |     | UK     |     | Germany |     | UK        |     | Germany |     |
|                              | (n)         | (%) | (n)     | (%) | (n)    | (%) | (n)     | (%) | (n)       | (%) | (n)     | (%) |
| A1                           | 1           | 2   | 2       | 4   | 0      | 0   | 1       | 1   | 1         | 1   | 0       | 0   |
| A2                           | 6           | 9   | 3       | 7   | 5      | 4   | 0       | 0   | 2         | 3   | 1       | 2   |
| A3                           | 11          | 17  | 8       | 17  | 16     | 12  | 4       | 11  | 19        | 25  | 11      | 24  |
| A4                           | 46          | 72  | 33      | 72  | 107    | 82  | 30      | 86  | 54        | 70  | 34      | 74  |
| Lower<br>level<br>official   |             |     |         |     | 3      | 2   |         |     | 1         | 1   |         |     |
| Total                        | 64          | 100 | 46      | 100 | 131    | 100 | 35      | 100 | 77        | 100 | 46      | 100 |

\* 'A1' refers to Permanent Secretary and Staatssekretär.

'A2' refers to Deputy Secretary and Abteilungsleiter [Ministerialdirektor and Ministerialdirigent (1 superior)].

'A3' refers to Under Secretary and Abteilungsleiter [Ministerialdirigente and Ministerialrat (2 superiors)].

'A4' refers to Unit Head and Referatsleiter [Ministerialrat and RegDir/ig (3+ superior), all BDir & ORR].

## THE FINDINGS: RECRUITMENT

Over the period examined, no change was observed in the demographic characteristics of German civil servants. Unification has had no impact on the higher civil service in Bonn ministries. Thus far, no East Germans are in positions of section head or above in the federal government. In Britain, however, two changes were recorded: an increase in subject-related recruitment and a decline in the number of senior officials with family backgrounds in the public service.

Regarding educational background, information about qualifications (i.e., the highest level of tertiary- or legal qualifications) confirms the importance of a university degree for high office in each of the two administrative systems (Mayntz 1980, 1984; Aberbach *et al.* 1981; Derlien 1990; Rose 1984; Page 1992). As shown in Table 3, 91 percent of German respondents, compared to 80 percent of British respondents, completed

university training; five percent of German respondents (compared to 13 percent of British respondents) attended academies, colleges or polytechnics; and one percent of German respondents (compared to seven percent of British respondents) passed at least one A-level examination. Only three percent of German respondents (and seven percent of British respondents) entered senior positions without advanced educational achievements. The gap in the figures for 'university training' is accounted for by the requirement of a legal background and other types of formal education in the German administrative system. Indeed, higher civil servants with training in law have a much better chance of attaining top positions (Luhmann and Mayntz 1973: 142; Mayntz 1984). By contrast, in the British administrative system, although a second-class honours degree is required for external entry to the administrative fast stream, no degree is required for entry as an Executive Officer (although in practice many exceed the minimum requirements) nor for subsequent entry to the administrative fast stream as an in-service candidate. Furthermore, for promotion, the British administrative system emphasises job-related performance rather than formal education.

**Table 3. Educational Attainment of Senior Officials\***

| Educational Attainment                              | United Kingdom |       | Germany |       |
|---|----------------|-------|---------|-------|
|   | (n)            | (%)   | (n)     | (%)   |
| No higher education                                 | 19             | 7     | 4       | 3     |
| Bachelor's/ordinary pass/Vordiplom/Zwischenprüfung  | 0              | 0     | 2       | 2     |
| Bachelor's/Honours/Diplom/Erste Staatsex./Mag. Art. | 109            | 40    | 17      | 13    |
| Master Degree/Zweite Staatsex. (German Lawyers)     | 52             | 19    | 42      | 33    |
| Doctorate (PhD)/Doktor (not Habilitation)           | 57             | 21    | 55      | 43    |
| Professional/special education**                    | 35             | 13    | 6       | 5     |
| Other   | 0              | 0     | 1       | 1     |
|   | -----          | ----- | -----   | ----- |
| Total   | 272            | 100   | 127     | 100   |

\* Q. What is the highest level of tertiary-level educational or legal qualification you have?

\*\* This category includes respondents that have gone through colleges, academies, and polytechnics.

As for the subjects studied, the 'monopoly of jurists' in the German administrative system is well documented (Steinkemper 1980: 105; Aberbach *et al.* 1981: 52; Derlien 1990: 365, Derlien 1995: 69). Roughly two-thirds of top civil servants have studied law. On the other hand, a humanistic background has long been seen as the basis for

the 'generalist' administrator, a phenomenon criticised by the Fulton Report (1968). Recent investigations conducted in Germany concluded that the German civil service is still disproportionately composed of jurists (Derlien 1990; Aberbach *et al.* 1990). Despite a gradual expansion since the mid-1960s in the number of economists in the federal ministries to roughly 15 per cent in the two highest positions (i.e., *Staatsekretär* and *Abteilungsleiter*) and an increase in mixed external and internal career elements, 'there may still be justification in speaking of a monopoly of jurists and the predominance of closed internal careers when looking at the overall administrative system' (Derlien 1995: 69).

When examining changes in subjects studied over time (i.e., using officials' year of entry, which is divided into five-year intervals), it was evident that the role of humanities education in the British administrative system has been declining since the 1970s. In Germany, the small number of recruits in our sample during the period 1981-1994 does not permit a meaningful analysis. Table 4 shows that in the period 1956-1960, half of the British respondents, out of a total of only 14, had an educational background in the humanities. More than one-third (38 percent) of the sample of senior British officials who entered the service in 1971-1975 had an educational background in the humanities. In the latter half of the 1970s, the figure dropped to 26 percent and has since stayed at between 12 and 4 percent, with the last figure corresponding to the recruitment background of the respondents who entered the service in 1991-1994. Modern languages were treated as a separate category, but since 1981 only one respondent with a modern languages background has entered the service in the three ministries. The Department of Health shows the most significant decline in the number of officials with a humanities background. In the entry period 1971-1975, 44 percent of the respondents (27 officials) had a humanities background. In the latest entry period, 1991-1994, only one individual out of 20 had an educational background in the humanities.

The sharpest increase of a background in any field was for medicine in the UK. In the entry period 1956-1980, the percentage of respondents who had studied medicine ranged from two percent in the late 1960s to 15 percent in the late 1970s. From 1980-1985 onwards, the figures jump to 53 percent (1980-1985), 62 percent (1986-1990), and 61 percent (1991-1994). All cases were confined to the Department of Health. One would be tempted to interpret this change as accelerated hiring of specialists. The question this trend raises is whether there has been a corresponding (if perhaps less marked) increase in subject-related recruitment to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF) and the Department of Transport (DoT) in the same period (i.e., specialists in agricultural science or economists), since that would suggest a general trend away from the old style generalist administrator.

Table 4 provides some support for the trend away from the old style generalist administrator. In MAFF, there has been a gradual increase of entrants with a background in agricultural science, from 22 percent in 1961-1965 (n=9) to 19 percent during 1966-1970 (n=21), 31 percent in 1971-1975 (n=16), 50 percent in 1976-1980 (n=6), and 50 percent in 1981-1985 (n=2). In DoT there was an increase in the number of entrants with a background in economics, from 13 percent in 1961-1965 (n=8) to 56 percent in 1966-1970 (n=16), 29 percent in 1971-1975 (n=28), and 27 percent in 1976-1980 (n=11).

Although for the most recent period the sample is too small to allow a meaningful analysis, there is certainly a trend away from the old style generalist administrator.

**Table 4. Changes in Recruits' Educational Background, 1952-1995 (%)**

| Entry Year  | Educational Background   |           |   |  |  |
|-------------|--|-----------|---|--|--|
|             | Humanities (UK)/ and law (Ger.)<br>background in entry period all<br>departments |           | Medical<br>background in<br>entry period--<br>Ministry of<br>Health | Agriculture<br>background in<br>entry period--<br>MAFF | Economic<br>background in<br>entry period--<br>DoT |
|             | UK   | Germany   | UK  | UK   | UK   |
| 1952-1955   | 25 (n=4)   | 0 (n=2)   | n.a.  | n.a.   | n.a.   |
| 1956-1960   | 50 (n=14)  | 33 (n=15) | n.a.  | n.a.   | n.a.   |
| 1961-1965   | 29 (n=24)  | 50 (n=34) | n.a.  | 22   | 13   |
| 1966-1970   | 25 (n=53)  | 50 (n=34) | 2   | 19   | 56   |
| 1971-1975   | 38 (n=71)  | 32 (n=22) | n.a.  | 31   | 29   |
| 1976-1980   | 26 (n=27)  | 36 (n=11) | 15  | 50   | 27   |
| 1981-1985   | 11 (n=19)  | 40 (n=5)  | 53  | 50   | n.a.   |
| 1986-1990   | 12 (n=26)  | 25 (n=4)  | 62  | n.a.   | n.a.   |
| 1991-1994   | 4 (n=23)   | n.a.      | 61  | n.a.   | n.a.   |
|             |  |           |   |  |  |
| Average (%) | 26   | 33        |   |  |  |
| N=          | 261  | 127       | 131   | 64   | 77   |

The burgeoning figures for the recruitment of specialists rather than generalist administrators reflect the fact that the sample is confined to those in senior positions at the time of the research (1995). Within this sample, those recruited recently were in almost all cases mature staff hired for senior positions because of their professional and/or managerial experience. The increased frequency of such appointments or a change over time in the proportion of senior posts occupied by staff with specialised qualifications would be a more satisfactory index of changing patterns of recruitment and appointment. These figures suggest that increased lateral entry is likely to work against the traditional generalist administrator with a humanities degree.

Regarding family background in the public service, we asked whether there is a public service tradition in the family and, if so, what is the relation. Our survey shows that 65 percent of German officials (n=99) but only 24 percent of British officials (n=272) stated that they had a public service tradition in their family. The majority of these British respondents (75 percent) indicated that their father worked in the public service, compared with 25 percent of their German counterparts, half of whom reported that they had a sibling who worked in the public service. There is great similarity between our figures for Germany and those of Aberbach *et al.* (1981). In the latter study, 64 percent of German respondents indicated that they have 'one or more relatives in the

public service tradition in 46 percent of cases whereas our survey points to only 24 percent. Although Aberbach *et al.* (1981) adopted a definition of family involvement which differs slightly from ours, the findings may be associated with changes in the educational backgrounds of senior British officials, especially the increase in subject-related recruitment, such as economists and scientists.

How can the demographic changes of British senior civil servants be interpreted? The expansion of subject-related recruitment can be explained by a combination of three factors: increasing emphasis on public management, diversification of government institutions, and the heightened salience of the field of economics. The emphasis on NPM emerged in Britain during the 1980s, from there spreading to most advanced countries (Hood 1991).<sup>4</sup> Rhodes (1991: 1) saw this phenomenon in Britain as a 'determined effort to implement the '3Es' of economy, efficiency, and effectiveness at all levels of British government'. This view points to substantial changes in government structure towards disaggregation and decentralisation, as well as within (public) organisations. Both imply changes in personnel policies. The focus on management, cost-cutting, and the introduction of market forces into the public sector emphasise the need to recruit individuals who have management experience or at least some potential. Performance appraisal and the need to monitor the contracting-out process and the contractors highlight the need to recruit candidates with specialised training.

On the heightened salience of the field of economics, underlying the NPM revolution is the argument that government was the obstacle to economic growth and freedom, and that markets are superior. Consequently,

A harder-edged form of economics became prominent in the economics profession at this time, sometimes called 'neo-classical economics' or 'economic rationalism'. Governments, policy advisers and the bureaucracy itself embraced this form of economics[,] making more use of microeconomics inside government for policy-making and delivery of services. This change in economic thinking has profoundly affected the public bureaucracy. There are more economists in government and the profession also enjoys more influence than before. Government economists, influenced by outside groups and think-tanks, arrived equipped with theories that seemed to offer more precision, more utility and more consistency than the vague, fuzzy notions of traditional public administration (Hughes 1994: 11).

Added to the change of thinking was the political demand to maintain services at the same level in the face of declining real revenues. This has forced governments to hire individuals trained in economics and management instead of generalist administrators, with the aim of cutting costs and altering working conditions within the public sector. The decrease in senior officials with a background in humanities, combined with the

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4 The model has several incarnations, including 'managerialism' (Pollitt 1990), 'market-based public administration' (Lan and Rosenbloom 1992) or 'entrepreneurial government' (Osborne and Gaebler 1992).

increase in subject-related recruitment, indicates that the possession of a generalist background is no longer the primary basis for appointment to the top civil service grades.

UK permanent secretaries (broadly, department heads) remained relatively immune to this transformation. Theakston and Fry (1989) showed that from 1900 to 1986, those appointed to such positions were increasingly career civil servants rather than people who had joined the civil service after working in other professions; that the proportion coming from private fee-paying schools remained unchanged from 1965 to 1985; and that the percentage coming from Oxford and Cambridge increased slightly.

In summation, the analysis shows two NPM-related changes which have been recorded in the British civil service: (i) an increase in subject-related recruitment, that is, a trend away from the old style generalist administrator; and (ii) a decline in the number of senior officials with family background in the public service. These shifts lead to the conclusion that whereas recruitment for senior posts in the German administrative system remains untouched by the NPM revolution, the character of the British civil service is much more diverse in 1995 than it was in 1970 due to the NPM phenomenon. No impact of EU on recruitment to senior posts in either administrative system was observed.

## **THE FINDINGS: TRAINING**

The survey asked senior officials to identify the major topic of their off-the-job training, as well as their preferred topic. The findings (see Table 5) suggest that the major training topics of off-the-job training in both Germany and Britain are management (21 percent in Britain and 25 percent in Germany) and the EU (34 percent in Britain and 21 percent in Germany). Another result is a correspondence between the training program undertaken by senior officials and their preferences. In both Germany and Britain, senior public servants preferred management (31 percent in Germany and 30 percent in Britain) and EU-related issues (27 percent in Germany and 22 percent in Britain) to training in finance and economics, administration, information technology (IT), and languages.

A major reason for this correspondence lies in the practical, job-related attitudes to training in both administrative systems. In Britain, the fact that departments pay the full cost of training provided by the Civil Service College has ensured most of the courses offered have a strongly practical, job-related character, with a particular emphasis on management. Furthermore, the requirement to cover costs in a competitive market has kept courses short or modular (seldom more than a week's duration) and sharply focused on client requirements. This focus is reinforced by client's assessment which is undertaken after a course is completed. In the German administrative system, the training program offered by the ministries as well as by the Federal Academy for Public Administration are also geared towards the demands and interests of customers. The ministries have the opportunity to participate actively in the design of the program of the Federal Academy through the advisory board, as well as through individual requests. For senior officials, the Academy offers insights into management techniques by utilising a system of trainee placements in industry.

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

| Subject                             | Germany |       |           |       | United Kingdom |       |           |       |
|-------------------------------------|---------|-------|-----------|-------|----------------|-------|-----------|-------|
|                                     | Major   |       | Preferred |       | Major          |       | Preferred |       |
|                                     | (n)     | (%)   | (n)       | (%)   | (n)            | (%)   | (n)       | (%)   |
| EU institution/legislation/other    | 12      | 21    | 16        | 27    | 53             | 34    | 34        | 22    |
| Management (inc. human res. manag.) | 15      | 25    | 18        | 31    | 33             | 21    | 46        | 30    |
| Political/administrative training   | 11      | 18    | 3         | 6     | 19             | 12    | 17        | 11    |
| Financial/economic training         | 4       | 7     | 2         | 4     | 20             | 13    | 19        | 12    |
| Information technology              | 2       | 4     | 4         | 7     | 7              | 5     | 6         | 4     |
| Languages                           | 4       | 7     | 8         | 13    | 2              | 1     | 3         | 2     |
| Legal matters                       | 5       | 8     | 4         | 7     | 3              | 2     | 8         | 5     |
| Others                              | 6       | 11    | 4         | 7     | 18             | 12    | 22        | 14    |
|                                     | -----   | ----- | -----     | ----- | -----          | ----- | -----     | ----- |
| Total *                             | 59      | 101   | 59        | 102   | 155            | 100   | 155       | 100   |

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

The similarity in training programs 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 provisions reflect the professional requirements of the 'client' administrative units. In a closed career system, alternations in these 'requirements' may imply a necessary modification in training. Training may be considered, therefore, an example of the ways by which current processes affect the day-to-day working demands of 'client' units (i.e., government departments), resulting in a redefinition of the skills required by the staff.

The second argument is grounded on the premise that training is used by top administrative elites to disseminate beliefs and (management) ideologies so that, over time, these beliefs and values would be taken for granted in modern organisations. As such ideologies diffuse, training spreads throughout public organisations above and beyond the immediate impact of causal factors unique to the particular organisational setting. In other words, recruitment creates the professional ideology sought 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 a ministry to help staff cope with changes in required critical competencies.

The third argument assumes that training is a form of education. In the modern state, education not only transforms human beings into citizens, but also creates and validates elites (Meyer 1977). Elites' cultural knowledge is enhanced 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 which influences the promotion prospects of civil servants. Data showing the negative views of senior officials regarding the usefulness of training to their promotion is not surprising because of the way officials use their educational background and training in their jobs. In Britain, job performance is already a paramount criterion for promotion; in Germany it seems likely to attain similar importance in the very near future.

Regarding the usefulness of training for current posts and for promotion, officials were asked whether a period of off-the-job training would assist them in their current post and whether a period of academic education or off-the-job training would help them to be promoted to the next level. The results are striking for the latter question, and rather similar for both administrative systems. Table 6 shows that, regarding the usefulness of training for the current post, 58 percent of German officials and 65 percent of their British counterparts responded positively. On the promotion side, 83 percent of German respondents and 66 percent of the British thought that training or a period of academic education would not help them to be promoted to their next post.

**Table 6. Usefulness of Off-the-job Training for Current Post and Promotion**

| Response   | Germany                 |     |                      |     | United Kingdom          |     |                      |     |
|------------|-------------------------|-----|----------------------|-----|-------------------------|-----|----------------------|-----|
|            | Useful for present post |     | Useful for promotion |     | Useful for present post |     | Useful for promotion |     |
|            | (n)                     | (%) | (n)                  | (%) | (n)                     | (%) | (n)                  | (%) |
| Yes        | 12                      | 10  | 3                    | 2   | 57                      | 21  | 16                   | 6   |
| Probably   | 27                      | 22  | 4                    | 3   | 49                      | 18  | 19                   | 7   |
| Perhaps    | 33                      | 26  | 14                   | 11  | 70                      | 26  | 54                   | 20  |
| No         | 51                      | 41  | 104                  | 83  | 87                      | 32  | 178                  | 66  |
| Don't Know | 2                       | 2   | 1                    | 1   | 8                       | 3   | 3                    | 1   |
|            | ---                     | --- | ---                  | --- | ---                     | --- | ---                  | --- |
| Total**    | 125                     | 101 | 126                  | 100 | 271                     | 100 | 270                  | 100 |

\* 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 than 100 because of the rounding of the figures.

These findings raise the question of why senior officials do not find off-the-job training useful for their promotion. One could argue that skills not provided by in-service training, such as political expertise and problem solving, are more salient for promotion. In addition, the administrative system's culture considers experience learned on the job (rather than off-the-job training) the important criterion in promotion decisions.

In summation, An analysis of training of senior public officials in the British and German administrative systems show that European integration and NPM were the most significant influencing factors in the growing similarities between these two systems. 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 and legislation, and a strong preference for these courses.

## CONCLUSIONS

Studies of administrative recruitment and training of senior officials stand at the intersection of research on political and social systems, bureaucracy, policy making, and the representativeness of administrative systems. The intellectual diversity which characterises both topics tends to fragment studies, as each perspective emphasises different theoretical frameworks, key questions, and methodological approaches. To fill this gap, an attempt has been made to explain the changes in recruitment and training practices in the German and British administrative systems during the period 1970 to 1995.

The analysis of recruitment of senior public officials in the administrative systems under investigation shows that the UK administrative system has been significantly affected by NPM in terms of an increase in subject-related recruitment, that is, a trend away from the old style generalist administrator, and a decline in the number of senior officials with family background in the public service. Germany has experienced no significant change. An analysis of training of senior public officials in the British and German administrative systems show that European integration and NPM were the most significant influencing factors in the growing similarities between these two systems.<sup>5</sup>

These conclusions raise the question of why the changes recorded in the British administrative system have not appeared in the German one. Key explanatory factors include the extent to which federal governments are involved in operations or service delivery and the extent to which the party or parties in power restructure the administrative system in ways that reflect and reinforce their ideology. For the former, administrative systems which are heavily involved in the provision of public services may be more vulnerable to external pressures than administrative systems not involved in such operations. In Britain one centre of power is responsible for all aspects of policy. The lack of effective independent or semi-independent sub-national governments in the UK implies that external pressures are concentrated on the central government rather than diffused to other governmental levels. By contrast, in Germany, sub-national governments play a role in the formulation of many policies. The federal government is dependent on regional government for effective public service delivery. The fact that sub-national governments are granted major policy responsibilities exposes them to pressures similar to those faced by the central administration, forcing them to adapt. This implies that in Germany, external pressures are not concentrated only at the national

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5 These conclusions complement Maor and Stevens' (1997) analysis of intra-departmental variations of the above factors in recruitment and training.

administrative level; rather, they are diffused to sub-national levels, thus reducing pressure for organisational adaptation at the national level.

An additional background influence on the adaptation of administrative systems to external changes is the strategy of the party which controls state power. This party can often restructure the administrative system in ways which reflect and reinforce its ideology. An example is the use of external appointments in the German system after the installation of a new government. This topic has been studied by Derlien (1988), who analysed personnel policies after the inauguration of new governments in Bonn in 1969 and 1982, tracing changes in the composition of the administrative elite produced by political intervention into the top civil service. Derlien found that the use of external recruitment was limited to around 20.4 percent of the appointments in the 1969 government transition, and 20.7 percent of the appointments in 1982. This limited number of recruits from outside the public service – a surprising result given the exceptional conditions – is indicative of the tendency of the German system to use internal recruitment at senior levels.

A change of government in Britain had a completely different impact on the civil service. During the period of Margaret Thatcher's premiership (1979-90), the neo-liberal emphasis of the Conservative government meant it was less interested in strengthening the state's capacity to solve social problems than in reducing the role of the public sector. The emphasis shifted to clarifying the objectives of policy and improving the ability of ministers to manage their departments. This thinking led in 1988 to the Next Steps initiative.

The ideas underlying New Public Management and the new structures which have resulted from the Next Steps initiative have contributed to the implementation of major changes in civil service management, including the increase in external recruitment. It is no coincidence that the latest White Paper is called *Taking Forward Continuity and Change* (1995) – continuity does not have to be taken forward; the emphasis is on change.

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