



28. May 1996
+47 99 46 92 53
Hammerstads gate 46
0363 OSLO, Norway
b.m.forum@stv.uio.no



BJØRN MO FORUM

Brief Description of PhD Project

Title: The Political Dynamics of Governments' Appointment Powers in High-Merit Administrative Systems

Appointing people to serve in the various functions of government is a core decision-making power of cabinet governments in parliamentary democracies. Ministers and cabinets often make the final decision on political as well as administrative appointments – also in democracies with a meritocratic recruitment system for administrative appointments. The purpose of the project is to contribute to our understanding of how different cabinet practices for administrative appointments develop, change, transcend, and are impacted by government turnover in parliamentary democracies with high-merit bureaucracies. The research will mainly draw on insights from the literature on bureaucratic politics and the politicization of bureaucracy, using principal-agent theory to model how (prime) ministers and the cabinet make appointment decisions with competence-loyalty trade-offs under institutional constraints. The project has a longitudinal focus on Norway, utilizing both quantitative and qualitative data. The project will seek to provide new insights into government decision-making in general, and specifically into the political mechanisms of how cabinets decide on non-political appointments.

Work Experience

01.2023–present

Doctoral Research Fellow

Department of Political Science at the University of Oslo. Participant in the research project: The Political Executive: Cabinet Government Praxis Between Laws and Norms (POLITEX), PI: Jostein Askim. Researching politicization of bureaucracy and governments appointment power – as well as government decision-making in parliamentary democracies more generally.

06.2022–12.2022

Research Assistant

Department of Political Science at the University of Oslo. Research project: The Political Executive: Cabinet Government Praxis Between Laws and Norms (POLITEX), PI: Jostein Askim. Tasks: data collection, analysis and visualization, literature searches, and developing a PhD research proposal.

10.2021–04.2022

Higher Executive Officer

Department of Employer Policy in the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development. Working in the secretariat of the Top civil Servant Remuneration System Committee (Lederlønnsutvalget). Tasks: assisted in carrying out ca. 20 semi-structured interviews with top civil servants. Had the main responsibility for designing, distributing and analyzing a survey to ca. 200 top civil servants.

10.2020–12.2021

Research Assistant

Department of Political Science at the University of Oslo. Research project: Public leadership, organizational performance, and trust in government (PART), PI: Tobias Bach. Tasks: Data collection, coding and statistical analysis in R.

02.2021–04.2021

Internship Trainee

Department of Employer Policy in the Ministry of Local Government and Modernization.

Education

08.2020–06.2022

University of Oslo

Master in Political Science (120 ECTS). GPA: A/B | 4.71/5.00. Specializing in quantitative methods, comparative politics and public policy & administration. Wrote my master's thesis (45 ECTS) on the politicization of top civil servants in Norwegian ministries 1884-2021.

06.2019–08.2019

London School of Economics and Political Science

Summer school (15 ECTS). Subjects in international relations.

08.2017–06.2020

University of Oslo

Bachelor in Political Science (180 ECTS). GPA: A/B | 4.48/5.00. Specializing in the European Union, international organizations and quantitative methods. Supporting subjects in economics and history.

Publications

1. Bach, T., Forum, B. M., & Hesstvedt, S. (Forthcoming). Norway: Formal and informal politicization in a merit bureaucracy. In Handbook of Politicization and Political Patronage, edited by B. Guy Peters, Colin Knox, Francesco Panizza, Conrado Ramos, and Katarína Staroňová. Palgrave Macmillan.

2. Askim, J., Forum, B. M., & Tranøy, B. S. (2024). The Party Politics of Policy Endurance: Parliamentary Settlements in Norway, 1980-2021. In *Pathways to Positive Public Administration an International Perspective*, edited by Patrick Lucas, Tina Nabatchi, Janine O'Flynn, and Paul 't Hart. Edward Elgar Publishing.
 3. Forum, B. M. (2022). The Political Dynamics of Administrative Turnover: The effects of political change on the careers of top civil servants in Norwegian ministries 1884-2021 [Master's Thesis, Universitetet i Oslo]. <https://www.duo.uio.no/handle/10852/95839>
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Working papers

1. Forum, B. M. & Hesstvedt, S. Partisan Appointees to Government Commissions in Norway 1972-2018. [Working Paper] (presented at ECPR 2024).
 2. Forum, B. M., Askim, J., & Mangset, M. Restraining Politics: The development of a meritocratic appointment system, Norway 1660-2023. [Working Paper] (Presented at NoPSA 2024)
 3. Rasch, B.E., Forum B. M. & Bucur C. Portfolio Allocation in Parliamentary Governments. [Working Paper] (Presented at ECPR 2023).
 4. Forum, B. M. Bureaucratic Turnover Under New Governments: The moderating effects of organizational buffering. [Working Paper] (presented at ECPR 2023).
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Conference & Workshop participation

2024	ECPR General Conference (paper presenter and panel co-chair) – Dublin (Ireland) 12–15 August.
2024	NoPSA XX Nordic Political Science Congress – Bergen (Norway) 25-28 June.
2023	ECPR General Conference (paper presenter and panel discussant) – Prague (Czech Republic) 4–8 September.
2023	ECPR Biennial Conference of the Standing Group on Regulatory Governance – Antwerp (Belgium) 12–14 July.
2023	Nasjonal fagkonferanse i statsvitenskap. Offentlig politikk og administrasjon – Kristiansand (Norway) 9-11 January.
2022	PAR Symposium Paper Development Workshop "Temporal Dynamics and Longitudinal Research in Public Administration" – Bergen (Norway) 27-28 October.
2022	EGPA 2022 Conference. PSG III: Public Personnel Policies – Lisbon (Portugal) 6-9 September.

Teaching Experience

- 2023-2024 Introduction to public administration (seminar tutor and lecturer) – Undergraduate level, University of Oslo
 - 2023-2024 Political-bureaucratic relations in the central administration (lecturer) – Graduate level, University of Oslo
 - 2023-2024 Ministerial steering of state agencies (lecturer) – Executive Graduate level, University of Oslo
 - 2024 Digital Data in Political Science (seminar tutor) – Undergraduate level, University of Oslo
 - 2024 Introduction to quantitative methods and research design (seminar tutor) – Undergraduate level, University of Oslo
 - 2023 Public policy theory (seminar tutor) – Undergraduate level, University of Oslo
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Supervision Experience

- 2023-2024 Supervisor on Master theses (3 students) – Graduate level, University of Oslo
 - 2024 Supervisor on Bachelor theses (12 students) – Undergraduate level, University of Oslo
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