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Why not professionals?

*A qualitative study about the process of reintroducing a
professional Other Ranks (OR) structure into the Norwegian Army
today*

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Abstract

Although the Norwegian Army once contained a professional Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) or Other Ranks (OR) structure, it was abolished for reasons that did not take into account future needs or the ultimate consequences of such change. As the only Army in NATO at present, that lacks such a structure, many consider the Norwegian Army to be at odds with a world that requires a very different emphasis today. Although efforts have been made to effect such change, various factors have contributed to the status quo. This study identifies a number of factors that have played a role in shaping the process to reintroduce a professional Other Ranks structure in the Norwegian Army today. The key findings indicate that political ideology is far less influential today than has been the case historically. The idea of officership as profession appears to play a role, as do the aspects of ownership, timing and a holistic approach. The study also shows that gradual change is now evident and it is therefore considered likely that the Norwegian Army will also develop its own professional OR structure in the foreseeable future.

Summary

The issue of a professional OR structure in the Norwegian Armed Forces has been controversial for a number of years. The disbandment which was a political decision came about largely due to contention over ideology and class perspectives. The political involvement resulted in a prevailing perception within the Armed Forces themselves that reversing these changes was considered to be a task of insurmountable proportions. The lack of a so-called specialist structure was acceptable as long as the Norwegian Army was producing soldiers for a mobilisation Army. With the end of the Cold War and a lengthy engagement in Afghanistan, the world changed and the need for a professional OR structure in the Norwegian Army gradually resurfaced. For the past three years, the Chief of Staff of the Norwegian Army has endeavoured to re-introduce the professional OR structure. This has been a time-consuming process that has required a great deal of effort, and which has yet to see tangible results. The overarching goal with this research has been to identify why that may be the case. The research is therefore based on the simple question: why does the Norwegian Army not have a professional Other Ranks structure today? This thesis then examines the process and the various forces of influence that appear to be playing a hand. Through qualitative research, the thesis identifies a series of factors that appear to be influencing the overall outcome to varying degrees. Research shows that political ideology is far less an obstacle than was the case previously. Other factors identified as been part of the process include the idea of officership as a profession, which for various reasons has been less prevalent as a concept until recent years. The dimension of ownership and stakeholders has also been important, as has timing and the need for a more holistic approach. A lack of implementation of the existing concept has also played a role, though the perspective of costs has not yet done so directly. In conclusion it now appears that the change will take place, though it is premature to say when this will happen.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

In the year 2012, the Kingdom of Norway is the only country out of a total of 27¹ member countries in NATO that currently does not have a professional Other Ranks (OR) structure in its Army. The current Chief of Staff of the Norwegian Army has endeavoured for almost three years to reintroduce such a system, which in many respects is similar to that which was once abolished several decades ago. Significant changes in the manner in which the Norwegian Army has been used over the last ten years and the resulting experience that the Norwegian Army has gained in particular from its engagement in Afghanistan have highlighted the need for change. Challenges that can only be addressed through a fundamental change in structure and concept have come to the fore. In recent years considerable effort has been invested into research related to this specific focus group. This includes a number of surveys within affected target groups on how to achieve such change. In an empirical survey conducted last year amongst relevant employees, an overwhelming majority of the respondents indicated their desire to belong to such an OR or specialist structure. Arguments or so-called forces for change have been growing, but despite efforts over the almost past three years; no real change has yet taken place. For a number of given reasons this has thus proven to be an elusive goal. This paper focuses on why that may be the case. This therefore gives rise to the following problem statement; why does the Norwegian Army not have a professional Other Ranks structure today?

The scope of this thesis is to analyze the process of attempting to re-introduce a professional OR structure in the Norwegian Army. The intent is to determine in particular which factors have played a role in influencing this process and to what extent these factors or new ones will continue to influence a future outcome. The thesis will use a historical perspective as a reference for interpretation of the current context, and examine the cultural and historical legacies that appear to significantly shape today's perspectives. For comparative purposes and as a further cross reference, the thesis will also examine a similar process that recently took place in the Swedish Armed Forces.

¹ Iceland as the 28th NATO member does not have its own army.

1.2 Relevance

The subject is considered to be highly topical today as it figures on the agendas of both senior representatives of the Armed Forces as well as politicians, including the Defence Minister himself. Current attempts to re-introduce a professional OR structure into the Norwegian Army have been ongoing for almost three years. Within this same time frame, Sweden has just completed its own transition towards the same goal. Given that Norway fields the only Army in NATO today that does not have a professional OR structure, it is the object of focus as NATO strives daily for enhanced interoperability. Everyday experiences in Afghanistan have only served to underline the urgency of this potential reform.

Multiple initial indicators point towards this process been brought to a conclusion of sorts within the next 24 months. In January this year, the Minister of Defence gave a speech in which he spoke of “preparing for careers for specialists” (Bart Eide, 2012). This is the same terminology as that employed by the Chief of Staff of the Army in his attempts at reform. A number of recent political speeches have centred on the same topic, with the need for change as the key note. The topic has been the subject of a parliamentary interpellation as recently as February 2012. This thesis attempts to provide an understanding of the various arguments for and against the process and its potential outcome and as such might provide useful insights for military personnel, as well as politicians with an interest in defence related matters.

1.3 Terminology

For purposes of clarification, it must be underlined that semantically and culturally there are some specific nuances in the terms used in this paper that do not translate well from Norwegian to English. In English, the most commonly used term today for Other Ranks is Non-Commissioned Officer or NCO. As Norwegian officers are not technically commissioned, this term is not entirely accurate. For practical reasons the NATO term OR, will therefore be used throughout the paper, unless as part of a direct quote, in which case the term NCO may be used. In Norwegian there is a differentiation between the terms “offiser” literally meaning an officer, and “befal”, meaning those who command. This latter term includes both officers and other ranks, and in the Norwegian language may be used to denote one or both categories. For practical reasons in this paper, the term “befal” has therefore been translated to include both groups. The term specialist, denoting the same category, has been used deliberately in recent

years as it is considered to be more politically correct. Although it is used with more frequency today, it will only be referred to when part of a specific quote.

Two additional terms however; “enhetsbefal” and “avdelingsbefal” which when literally translated yield the same English word; denote two significantly different meanings in Norwegian. The first indicates a “one size fits all” format, where a standardised type of training and education is provided to all officers, as a basis for the concept that all officers are “built in the same mould”. The second term describes the new type of officer concept introduced in 2005, aimed at providing officers at the lower levels of the command structure. The term has thus been translated to unit officer. The unit officer exists as a concept today, and it is a key part of this thesis in that it might eventually be replaced by a professional OR structure. Although it is necessary to refer to the unit officer concept and examine some of its shortcomings in particular, this paper is not intended as an evaluation of the unit officer concept.

1.4 Research Methodology

The procedure of enquiry or research strategy for this thesis is based on a qualitative approach for the collection, analysis and interpretation of the data. “Qualitative research is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem” (Cresswell, 2009, p. 4). Qualitative research aims at entering a social world and describing and explaining social phenomenon by analyzing experiences, communication, and interactions. Rather than conduct causal enquiries, as occurs in quantitative research, qualitative research focuses on the understanding of complex interrelationships (Stake, 1995). This last parameter is crucial to the choice of strategy for this specific thesis, as the relationships between the various players involved and the subject itself are decisive to its very outcome. The process of this research involves emerging questions and data collected in the respondents setting (Cresswell, 2009). In this sense the respondents are both participants and observers, where subjective as well as objective perspectives are presented.

Given the history of the research subject, it is potentially both contentious and controversial and as such can be expected to generate subjective views that may be prone to both prestige and speculation. A singular advantage of the qualitative analysis is therefore that it requires and promotes an approach that is both critical and holistic, and where differing perspectives are necessarily balanced against each other.

Although the sample size does not support statistical generalization, it enables a deeper understanding of those processes and structural and systemic factors that influence learning at individual and organizational levels. This understanding was derived via an iterative and critical process of reflection on the data and relevant theory. As the research has progressed, certain views have shown themselves to be representative for a number of the respondents. This has enabled the possibility to identify certain trends in the research group.

Quotations from the interviews are given in italics throughout, though for lengthier quotations, the text is provided with an inset instead. These quotations are considered representative of the stories and cited perspectives of the participants and as such provide a common platform to present the findings.

The information has been drawn from a mix of both primary and secondary sources. To base a thesis exclusively on primary sources would probably be possible, but this would fail to take into account the results of research done by others, and as such would not have provided a sufficient base. On the other hand, to base information gathering only on secondary sources could fail to bring new facts to bear on the issue and therefore have less chance of providing new insight. Additionally, it was necessary to use primary sources to verify the accuracy of secondary sources. In cases where there are no primary sources available, care has been taken to have more than one secondary source when possible, as well as to check for the possibility that the secondary works were not simply based on one source shared by all.

The primary sources consist of the interviews themselves. Most of these are recorded and as such, are considered to be formal interviews, whereas others which were not recorded are considered more as informal interviews primarily with the intent to provide background information. Secondary sources were mainly historical accounts and earlier research.

The secondary sources have consisted primarily of written material in a variety of forms ranging from media accounts to parliamentary bills and Armed Forces implementation directives. The material in this category is extensive and time consuming to examine. However, it provides a necessary historical backdrop and it has also provided new insights.

The primary research method was based on formal interviews with a selection of 15 respondents.

Criteria for selection included a firsthand knowledge of the topic itself, but also of both the political and bureaucratic machinations and processes involved. Respondents were all either civil servants or senior military officers working in the Norwegian Ministry of Defence, the Defence staff or in the main officer unions. Two of the respondents were retired.

Some brief supplementary conversations with additional respondents were subsequently required, but were used mainly to answer specific questions and can therefore not be considered as formal interviews. For comparative reasons two respondents from the Swedish Armed Forces are included in the material to illustrate the processes resulting in the recent re-establishment of a professional Swedish OR structure. Some of the respondents had a historical knowledge of earlier phases of the developments involving the OR structure, whereas others were considered to be part of ongoing processes today. Several of the respondents have been promoted (up to several ranks), since their original involvement in the process. For purposes of clarity, I have therefore consistently referred to all the military respondents with their final or current rank.

There were varying degrees of understanding of the topic shown by respondents, leading some to exhibit an initial hesitancy in taking a definite standpoint. However, it was interesting to observe how several became emboldened in their comments with increased awareness of recent development. This shift in approach would indicate that although a number of the respondents were obviously conscious of their current role, and displayed a cognisance of political sensitivities, a higher level of social reflexivity appeared to manifest itself as the interviews progressed. Although a form of structured interview was therefore initially considered, it became obvious there it would more beneficial to use a focused interview form.

In considering the required interview strategy and tactics, the option to use structured; unstructured; respondent or informant (non-directive) interviews (Powney, 1987) became relevant, following the conduct of two pilot interviews, which were run before the process was fully initiated. The pilot interviews showed that although it was desirable that respondents spoke freely, a non-directive interview became very time consuming and often did not concentrate on the relevant areas of main interest.

The non-directive interview (Rogers, 1945), has been criticised as unsuitable for non-clinical research (Whyte, 1984) which has led to the development of the focused interview. In essence the respondents were all given a fifteen minute introduction on the status of the subject process.

This approach was used in order to set the stage for the respondent and to outline what was already known. The respondents were then encouraged to speak freely both with regards to content and structure. A limited number of directed questions were provided towards the end of the interview in order to supplement the information that had been provided. This was done in the form of both prompts and probes. As such the form of the interviews can not be defined as directly structured, but more as focused interviews.

Reflexivity was also a considered feature of this research. Reflexivity refers to the researcher's acceptance of himself as part of the research environment, and subject to bias, prejudice, and preconceived ideas (Woolgar, 1988). In essence a low level of reflexivity indicates an individual who is shaped primarily by their environment. Conversely, a high level of social reflexivity indicates an individual shaping their own perspectives, norms, desires, etc. Although there was therefore a risk of the respondents having somewhat similar backgrounds and thus representing a homogenous and potentially narrow perspective with a lower level of reflexivity, the interviews showed that they actually represented differing perspectives, and in some cases respondents were actually diametrically opposed in their views.

Although all the chosen respondents had links to the topic, not all of them had direct personal insights, and as such some of their input was more of a peripheral character. Respondents were given a common background update, and were then asked a number of similar questions and encouraged to tell their own stories. Question choices were motivated by a combination of theoretical concerns and stakeholder interest. In most cases, the respondents moved into a form of storytelling, which provided additional insights. Such stories from respondents; "enable us to study organizational politics, culture and change in uniquely illuminating ways, revealing how the wider organizational issues are viewed, commented upon and worked on by their members" (Gabriel, 1998, p. 12). Simply put, the storytelling encourages the respondent to elaborate in their own words and style. More often than not it also enables them to expand on their views and is therefore more symptomatic of a high level of social reflexivity, as mentioned earlier.

As the data was analyzed, assumptions were queried and interpretations were checked with other findings and with some peers not involved in the research, in order to increase the trustworthiness of the conclusions. The research approach adopted for this method is focused on achieving analytical rather than statistical generalization through the use of qualitative methods.

As already mentioned, a major challenge in collecting this data is that it was time consuming. The topic of a professional OR structure itself has also had a long and at times turbulent history with clear political connotations. This implied perceptions of political sensitivity in some of the respondents. Additionally, a majority of the respondents are still active in positions where they may not always feel comfortable being quoted in full. Some specific comments were also made “off the record”. To make a quotation without identifying the source is not a step that should be taken lightly, as it can weaken the ability of other researchers to re-evaluate the data, and as such, might weaken the credibility of the thesis. However, where such data provides an important degree of understanding, anonymous quotes may be used when no other option is considered to be available.

Analysis started as soon as collection of information had reached a certain level. This had the added benefit that a lack of information in any area was identified early, and could be rectified right away by collecting other information that would answer the outstanding questions. There was however a risk to this approach, in that information collected at a later stage might upturn conclusions reached in earlier analysis. However, this was not necessarily entirely negative. As earlier assumptions were overturned (and there were several), this indicated that newer ones might have more credibility. This is a central trait of qualitative methodology, which proved very useful as the study progressed.

Possibly the most challenging part of the effort has been to integrate the results of the analysis into a conclusion, or a set of conclusions. This process, or synthesis, is one of the strengths of the qualitative research method. The fact that information is collected from a rich variety of sources, and that the focus is on the how and why, using a broad context from history, culture, society, and others, make the conclusions reliable, even if they are not always supported by quantitative data. A general problem with this form of research is potential subjectivity versus the selected field of research. Although an intimate knowledge of the Norwegian Army offers distinct advantages in how to conduct the research, the fact that this researcher is a career officer with 29 years of active service in the Norwegian Army offers both strengths and weaknesses versus the integrity of the research and the requirements for ethical standards. It would be misleading to believe that a long term association with the subject area has not generated an established position on the process and its possible outcome. Such a position might lend bias to the conduct of the research itself, selection of respondents, or even the choice of questions and specifically the conduct of the focused interviews. This awareness has therefore required a deliberate,

reflected and balanced approach to the research process itself. Perspectives on some of themes that are explored, such as the idea of the Army profession, are other areas which can generate bias and thus require a certain distancing from the subject itself.

Some quantitative data have been used in the research. Several studies of the affected group in recent years have been referred to, as they support the arguments for attempting to implement a professional OR structure. It would however be incorrect to imply that the study uses mixed methods (Cresswell, 2009).

This thesis has been registered with the Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NDS). This implies that the research is subject to review and notification by the NDS in order to ensure full compliance with established rules on the conduct of empirical research. There is a specific focus on research and privacy. The Data Protection Official for Research works in compliance with the Personal Data act and regulates research ethics as well as the use and processing of sensitive personal data ((NSD), 2012).

The structure of the thesis has been based on establishing a historical setting as a backdrop for the current situation. The current situation is then explored through describing the Norwegian Army of today, further describing the forces for change and then comparing this process with a similar process that recently took place in Sweden. The research has then primarily been centred on a series of interviews that have given rise to certain findings in the form of factors identified as having or not having influenced the process of change. The main findings show why certain factors have so far prevailed as obstacles to change, but also how change is gradually starting to manifest itself over time. The presentations of the thesis are laid out with the following structure;

Chapter One outlines the applied research methodology.

Chapter Two provides a brief history of developments related to the professional OR structure in the Norwegian Army, with a summary under the title *Key aspects*. This is provided as a base reference in order to offer a better understanding of the context.

Chapter Three looks at the current situation and then has two additional sub-chapters, examining the *Forces for change* and the so-called *Swedish process*, which also serves as a comparative reference.

Chapter Four titled *Explaining the status quo* contains the factors that have been identified as influencing the process. These include; the idea of a profession, political

ideology, ownership and stakeholders, timing, a holistic approach, an incomplete implementation and finally the issue of costs.

Chapter Five provides a conclusion with a brief perspective on what the future might hold.

2 A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE NCO

2.1 History shaping today

In order to fully comprehend today's perspectives on a possible professional Other Ranks structure in the Norwegian Army, it is necessary to review the historical developments and more specifically the gradual evolution that has resulted in today's structures and status. It is also necessary to provide an overview of how these perceptions are situated in the greater context of what may be described as an enduring cultural legacy, expanded security policies and changing political environments and cultures. It is especially relevant to note that throughout this entire period of time, the Norwegian political authorities in cooperation with the military have repeatedly revised existing arrangements involving the Norwegian Army's officer structure.

Influenced by various special interest groups, social perceptions and beliefs and by a desire for an effective defence organisation, the Norwegian parliament has constantly engaged in what may be termed as adjustments to the conditions that regulate the employment of officers in the Norwegian Army (Grimsø, 1995). "With regards to education, it is clear that in the military, as with all other occupations, one must provide different educations to those who are to fill higher positions, versus those who initially will do lower level work"(Norwegian Defence Commission of 1920) (Moe, 1986, p. 122). "Neither socially, nor militarily is there any difference between NCOs and officers, that justifies the need to maintain a divide between these two classes of officers" (Parliamentary bill 33/1926) (Moe, 1986, p. 122). As Moe notes "these two quotes clearly illustrate the dilemma that has preoccupied the Norwegian Army since the beginning of the last century and which has been called "enhetsbefal" or the standard officer, as in one standard of officer to fit all jobs "(Moe, 1986, p. 122).

As we will note, the Norwegian Army's organisation and rank structure has been subject to a never-ending series of changes, in a process that still fundamentally affects it today. As with most European countries at the time, Norway was also subject to international trends and influences including social liberalism which emerged in the nineteenth century with demands for

social justice and real freedom for all. This contributed towards the Norwegian people as a whole developing a strong desire for political and individual freedoms.

As a consequence, this desire also manifested itself within the Norwegian Army and more specifically within the existing OR or NCO structure at the time.

As a key representative of this specific group, the rank of sergeant was in many ways on a par with the privates at the lowest end of the hierarchy. “He wore the same clothing and equipment and carried the same arms as them, and he ate at the same table” (Jakobsen, 1994, p. 3). The sergeant was quite simply a private with a rank. Even in the context of the broadly impoverished conditions existing at the time, the NCO had a greatly reduced professional, financial and social standing (Helberg, 1971) and there was a constant level of frustration expressed vocally through the NCO ranks. In 1845 the authorities established a committee to review the conditions of the NCOs (Grieg-Smith, 2007). Their recommendation was published a year later, but although a majority recommended no changes, representatives of the minority were highly critical of the existing conditions for the NCOs and described them as a legacy of the feudal ages. It would take another forty years before the issue was raised again (Grieg-Smith, 2007).

In attempting to address their grievances in general, the NCOs established the Christiania Non-Commissioned Officers Association in 1847. Similar associations were then founded all over the country over the following years. Initially the associations were intended to increase the knowledge base of their members, primarily through the acquisition of books and subscriptions to newspapers. In 1879 a Royal decree was passed that affected the NCOs service time, promotion rights and discharge. This greatly worsened the NCO structure yet again and it triggered major efforts to counter it. The editor and publisher of the first NCO magazine wrote in its first edition 1/1880, of the need for the NCOs to unite. He strongly believed that there was an urgent need for the NCOs to endeavour for a common cause in order to achieve acceptable conditions and to have their basic human rights respected (Helberg, 1971).

This initiative by Editor, M. Tønning was part of a concerted effort throughout the period of 1879/80/81 to achieve fundamental changes with regards to the rights of the NCOs (Grieg-Smith, 2007). The Venstre Party took up the cause and the first of many proposals was forwarded to the parliament in 1880. The bill was debated by parliament in 1882, leading to a majority vote and the rejection of a counter-proposal by the Minister for the Army, thus forcing the resignation of Prime Minister Daae. His Majesty King Oscar II initially refused to sign the

bill, however it did not take long for a new proposal to be forwarded and following another parliamentary debate in 1885, the King finally sanctioned the bill and it came into effect on 1 January 1886.

A number of the local associations initiated a drive to create a national association and on 7th February 1896, the national NCOs association was formally established. The delegates represented approximately 1400 NCOs, and on their agenda, they had three key issues; education, pensions (particularly for widows) and provisioning (Helberg, 1971). The Norwegian Labour Party which has also been Norway's biggest party since 1927 was now to become a key player involved in the developments of the Norwegian Armed Forces. It was very focused on civil-military relations which became a central issue in the political power struggle that followed these developments (Jakobsen, 1994). The Norwegian Labour Party was initially very hostile to the whole idea of the Armed Forces. The Labour Party manifesto in 1915 demanded "disarmament", and in 1920 the wording insisted on a complete disbandment of the Armed Forces. In 1923, the party programme introduced the idea of "conquering the Armed Forces from inside". The Labour Party, however, eventually worked for a democratisation of the Armed Forces and of the officer structure in particular, with a formal demand for reforms published in their manifesto in 1933 (Jakobsen, 1994). The general idea was that the officer structure should be representative of society in general. These demands would continue to manifest themselves until well after the Second World War, with demands for a broad representation of society in the officer-structure, being repeated at the Labour Party's national congress in 1949 (Jakobsen, 1994).

Following the First World War, a civil defence commission was appointed in 1920 to reorganise the entire Armed Forces in general and the officer structure in particular. Its recommendations were forwarded in 1924 and one of the recommendations that were passed in yet another parliamentary bill in 1927 was that all professional NCOs were to be given officer-rank. The bill which was also named BO (Befalsordning) or Officers Scheme of 1933, was to differentiate career officers who had passed through the Military Academy, from conscripts who had completed NCO training.

This second category was intended in point of fact to replace the former NCO structure. When these changes came into effect in 1934, they effectively eliminated the existing NCO rank structure. Based on egalitarian principles, the intent was simply equal opportunities for all. Yet,

again the reforms were incomplete and a great deal of frustration permeated the ranks of the armed forces between 1927 and 1934. (Moe, 1986).

It is also important to note that these changes were strongly influenced by the so-called “Menstadslaget” in 1931, where the government used both Norwegian police and the Armed Forces against striking workers. Although the Armed Forces themselves played no real role, the consequences would, however become part of the political ideological legacy that, as we will note later, has since played a central part in Norwegian political perceptions of the role of Norwegian Armed Forces.

Unfortunately, the BO of 1933 did not appear to work as intended. The two classes of officers remained strongly divided despite repeated efforts to unify them, including the establishment of common officers messes during exercises (Moe, 1986). At the outbreak of World War Two, the Norwegian Army consisted of two levels within the officer structure and a separate NCO structure (Moe, 1986). The Second World War was also to influence the structure of the remaining Norwegian NCO ranks, and experiences with both the British Army and the Royal Air Force in particular became a benchmark for many of those Norwegians who served in these organisations during the war. The Defence Commission of 1946 wanted to maintain the structure based on the officers scheme of 1933, but the proposal forwarded by the Ministry of Defence was not sanctioned by the parliament, and the problems of a differently tiered system persisted (Moe, 1986). The post World War Two period also saw the establishment of a number of different officer unions, representing the various services.

A number of new challenges presented themselves when Norway joined NATO in 1949, and two factors in particular helped accelerate additional changes to the existing officers’ scheme. Firstly, the defined threat was from the North, whereas the bulk of the population was situated in the South (Høibakk, 1995). The Army now needed to post officers to new and distant locations. Secondly, a Norwegian membership of NATO compelled the need for an urgent and dramatic increase of knowledge and skill sets in the Armed Forces, as Norway adopted NATO standards and procedures. The extensive provision of American military equipment in the form of new aircraft, vessels, vehicles and weapons systems also contributed to a significant amount of training of Norwegian officers in the United States (Grimsø, 1995). Both of these factors were central as further changes took place in the 1950s, with the Norwegian Ministry of Defence forwarding amendments in 1952, basically differentiating requirements for the teaching of

different categories of officers and eventually different career categories.

The proposals which included contracting officers and NCOs in order to fill out structural requirements in the new organisation, met with stiff resistance from the dominant officers union, Norges befalslag. The union was again both critical and strongly opposed to these changes, which it felt still did not reflect the egalitarian principles that ought to be applied across the officer structure, irrelevant of rank (Jakobsen, 1994).

The 1950s and 1960s were characterised by an overproduction of officers which had not been anticipated. The existing structure was not designed to receive them and promotion was to a large extent based on seniority, resulting in many officers having limited prospects for promotion. This factor combined with an expansive growth in industry and the private sector with many well paid civilian job opportunities, resulted in an exodus of officers from the Armed Forces. In 1957, parliamentary proposition nr 44 therefore further addressed the issues of promotion and careers for officers. A key aspect was again the posting system that would compel officers to serve in locations against their will. This new change reinforced additional frustration and resentment within the officers' cadre. A Royal Decree on 2 September 1960 established a committee to review all aspects of the officers' careers and conditions of employment. The committee put forward a series of recommendations in 1962, which were eventually incorporated into another parliamentary proposition nr: 4 (1964-65). The Ministry of Defence had also included requirements to harmonise the Norwegian Armed Forces rank structure with NATO structures (Jakobsen, 1994), but not all the proposals were accepted. On 13 June 1966, parliament approved yet further changes in the form of yet another BO (Befalsordning) or Officers Scheme. This was a reinforcement and expansion of changes implemented in 1957, though they had to a large extent not come into force previously due to strong resistance from the officer unions. Following the introduction of the BO in 1966, there arose a continual need for further amendments and adjustments to problems not foreseen in the original proposals (Høibakk, 1995).

This again resulted in a great deal of frustration and although the changes partially did away with some of the conflict between the different tiers of officers in the army, differences remained. Events showed clearly that the officers scheme of 1933, which was the basis for later changes, had in the long term not been beneficial to the Norwegian Army (Moe, 1986).

In 1973 a new committee was established to review experiences with the officers' scheme of

1966. The committee, named after its chairman Edgar Andreassen, took 9 months to come up with recommendations, but it was strongly divided in its views, as was the Defence Committee which debated the recommendations, with a minority strongly opposing the recommendations of the majority. As one member of the committee highlighted; “personally, I find the whole concept of this proposed structure to be fabricated and anachronistic, and reminiscent of a caste system”(Jakobsen, 1994, p. 32). The recommendations from the Andreassen committee were, however, implemented in 1975 as parliamentary bill nr. 143 (1975-76) and the last vestiges of the professional NCO structure were finally removed. Although the intent of this last bill was to even out perceived distortions and establish a greater degree of fairness, additional problems now arose. A certain category of officers had 3 chances for promotion to the next rank. This was considered to be unfair and stigmatising. Parliamentary bill nr. 170 (1980-81) was therefore produced in order to make further amendments and specifically in order to remove limitations on options for promotion.

Thus seven years and several parliamentary propositions later, and due to constant frustrations in the officers’ structure and extensive empirical research conducted in 1975 and 1976 on the officers conditions of employment (Høibakk, 1995), yet another parliamentary bill nr. 76 (1982-83) was developed addressing the need for a complete revision of the existing rules. It was clear that the changes made in 1975 had not solved all the problems, and indeed had contributed to quite a number of new ones (Høibakk, 1995).

The results implemented in 1983-84 were termed the Revised Officers Scheme (RBO) and addressed all three areas of education, postings and promotions. The Ministry of Defence established a new working group in 1988 to review the existing career officers’ law which provided the officers with unique terms of employment especially with regards to discharge from duty. A recommendation was forwarded in 1990, and it did not trigger much debate in parliament, as the general perception was that RBO was the problem and not the laws (Grieg-Smith, 2007).

The 1980s were marked by a difficult economic era and increased unemployment. One consequence of this was a significant increase in the numbers of cadets joining the Military Academies. Foreseeing a need to provide adequate numbers of officers for the mobilisation army, the Norwegian Armed Forces increased the size of the intakes for a several years, resulting in a substantial increase of the number of career officers through the 1980s. A Defence

Committee in 1990 proposed further changes to the rights of career officers and in 1992 a white paper nr. 16 (1992-1993) proposed yet another revision of the existing RBO (officers scheme) (Grieg-Smith, 2007). As the 1990s drew on, the consequences of the multiple changes to the officers scheme over the last two decades became manifest.

Two issues were of particular concern to the Ministry of Defence (Røksund, 2012). Firstly there were far too many officers at the mid to senior levels, and secondly there were clearly not enough officers or ORs at the junior levels in the rank structures. In 2001 parliament debated parliamentary bill nr. 45 (2000-2001) Restructuring of the Defence 2002-2005. This was to include a thorough revision of the RBO. In 2002, Admiral Arne Røksund led a committee that was tasked to examine alternatives to address these two primary concerns.

The recommendations put forward by this committee in December 2002 were very clear and strongly recommended the reestablishment of an NCO structure of sorts. The latest proposal, which was described in parliamentary bill nr. 42 (2003-2004), and which aimed at providing the armed forces with specialised skills, experience and continuity at the lower levels in the organisation, did not go quite so far. One of the main aims of the original study, however, was to introduce a lowered retirement age in order to avoid a renewed build up of older personnel in the rank structure. This was a system typically found in other armies, where British and American ORs could retire with a pension after 20 to 30 years of service. Due to the ongoing pensions reform however, that was intended to increase the retirement age across society as a whole, a lowered retirement age for certain groups was considered politically unacceptable. A proposed solution therefore was an age limit for contracted service, initially put at 35 years of age. In lieu of being actual ORs, the model was still based on the officers coming through the standardised basic officer education training (Grunnleggende Befalsutdanning or GBU). The group was called Avdelingsbefal or unit officers. The officer unions strongly resisted the proposed changes regarding an age limit, as this in their opinion would lessen the rights of the individuals involved, specifically denying them a right to a full career. In 2005 the changes were implemented in a new Officer's Scheme called BO 05.

It is worth noting at this point that the Chief of Defence until 2009, General Sverre Diesen, who worked extensively to reintroduce a professional OR structure was to a certain extent derailed in his efforts. In conjunction with an ongoing debate on further changes to the officers' scheme, the parliamentary Defence Committee introduced an amendment that was intended to remove the

officers' so-called "stillingsvern" or protection against discharge from duty. This pertained to the officers rights versus termination of their employment. The proposal was initially not supported by either the Ministry of Defence or the officers unions, with the latter strongly resisting the idea. This proposal came into effect in 2004 with the result that officer unions strongly curtailed their cooperation with the Chief of Defence, who at the time was General Sigurd Frisvold. The amendment was overturned again in 2006, but the damage was already done, and the new system of unit officers with contracts until the age of 35, was the closest that General Diesen came to fulfilling his vision of a professional NCO structure.

The implementation of the unit officer concept in 2005 was considered by many to be less than successful. The Ministry of Defence then conducted an evaluation of the concept in 2009, concluding;

Random attrition and low average age of officers may become a problem, thereby undermining the academic requirements for specialization that the Armed Forces require of their personnel. There are challenges related to employment, such as age, salary and bonus. There are structural issues impeding implementation. There are also challenges related to skills and career plans, and visibility and recognition. The report does not provide depth in reviewing the reasons for these findings. It does state however that the lack of a unified concept for the unit officers' scheme is a problem. Moreover, it highlights a certain lack of resources in personell management, poor structural conditions, and high level of ambition in the military in relation to available resources (N. M. o. Defence, 2009, p. 5).

Several sets of empirical research done by the Norwegian Army in 2008, 2009 and 2010 culminated with a study in 2011 that clearly reflected a degree of dissatisfaction amongst the affected ranks (Kristiansen, 2011). In 2011, Brigadier Anda of the Defence Staff was tasked to further review how the system could be improved upon within its original parameters. The group's findings were presented in January 2012. In essence "the recommended measures are intended to ensure that unit officers are given favourable conditions, so that the Armed Forces have the special competencies that we require", explained Brigadier Anda. "The measures are furthermore aimed at a broad spectrum within personnel management areas, including recruitment, selection, development, safeguarding and career change"(Birkeland, 2012, p. 1).

2.2 Key Aspects of history

In reviewing what has taken place over the past 145 years with regard to the Norwegian Army's officer structure and in particular its NCO structure, it is possible to identify a number of fairly singular characteristics and trends. Firstly, as noted earlier in this text, the Norwegian political authorities clearly appear to have taken a keen interest in the conditions relating to the officers structure. The number of committees, parliamentary white papers and parliamentary bills to be produced on the subject, might be considered as astonishing in any context. In the period from 2000 to 2012, a total of no less than 80 parliamentary bills were produced regarding the Norwegian Armed Forces. On average this amounts to almost 7 bills per year (www.regjeringen.no, 2012b). Although a number of these relate to annual defence budgetary issues, etc, a significant proportion is focused on personnel-related matters.

The political involvement is indisputable; however it does raise the question of why that is the case? This can in part be explained by a strongly embedded tradition of egalitarian rights as being the main reason. The tradition itself is anchored in various historical shifts including a gradual replacement of the existing civil service state in the late 1800s, with a new citizen based multiparty state, that came to represent a broad middle class (Grieg-Smith, 2007).

Another interesting factor is the type of changes involved. Almost the entire list of changes consists of amendments and adjustments to existing arrangements. Although as we have noted, significant adjustments were made in 1930, 1966, 1975 and 1983, each one was typically characterised by adjustments to a previous regime. One can reasonably argue that not one of these represented a genuine transformation or fundamental change. It would appear that despite, or possibly due to a constant debate of opinions and counter opinions, political bartering has been the norm, and the results more often than not have been characterised by lesser reaching compromises.

The reasons for change would initially appear to be largely driven by one major influence in particular. Although shifts in security politics and fluctuating economic eras have clearly played a role on occasion, changes for the most part seem to consist of attempts to improve or amend the terms of employment for the officers and NCOs (Høibakk, 1995). Nor do the finances of the Norwegian Armed Forces seem to have played a major role (Høibakk, 1995). The key driver behind this force for change however, seems clearly to have been the officer unions. That is not to say that societal changes have not played a part as well. As we will note later, in keeping with

an established political ideology that demands that the Norwegian Armed Forces reflect the society that it is part of, evolutions in society have typically been reflected within the uniformed ranks as well.

3 CURRENT SITUATION

3.1 Norwegian Army of 2012

The Norwegian Army is undoubtedly in a state of change today, but opinions differ on how far this potential transformation can be carried through. This chapter will examine where the Army stands today and highlight in particular who is advocating such change. The current Chief of Staff of the Norwegian Army is one such prominent voice. The arguments for change are manifold and to a large part due to changes in external parameters. These arguments will be examined in detail below. Once a clear picture has been established, this chapter will then outline the so-called Swedish process which is in many ways comparable to events now taking place in Norway. This in turn sets a possible bench mark for how change may be achieved. Major historical and political changes over the last few decades have set in motion a process of transformation within the Norwegian Armed Forces. Fundamental change, both structurally and culturally is still underway, although it can be argued that the latter has seen somewhat less progress. These changes have been a catalyst in how the Norwegian Army in particular, uses its personnel. In order to fully understand this process and the incentives for change, it is necessary to examine the position of the Norwegian Army today. What has driven the need for change today and how has this happened? Through providing an answer to these questions, it is possible to identify how certain factors and parameters are influencing the process of re-introducing a professional OR structure. A further analysis of these factors will thus offer an insight into the variables that are in play in this process. These variables which appear to fluctuate with shifts in societal trends therefore appear to regulate the outcome of the process itself.

So where does the Norwegian Army stand today?

3.2 External Parameters

The external parameters have changed fundamentally. Parameters such as a deep-seated shift in security policies abroad in recent decades have been a key influence. Thus one might say that the end of the Cold War and the associated bi-polar security system has had a profound impact on Norwegian security policies and in extension this should apply to the officers' structure as well. One of the main consequences of this shift is the change in our perception of security (Blease,

2010). As Chris Donnelly so succinctly states; “large standing armies, territorial defence, and hard geographical lines of confrontation characterised the geostrategic situation before 1989.” During the Cold War, “the terms “defence and ‘security’ were nearly synonymous.” (Donnelly, 2004, p. 42)). This is no longer the case for most countries in the Euro-Atlantic region, where security is primarily “measured in non-military terms and threats to security are non-military in nature”. The growing recognition that security is also central to effective and sustainable development has been very significant for Norwegian Foreign and Security policy in particular, and the realisation that “development without security is not possible; security without development is only temporary” (Benn, 2004, p. 4) has also gradually been absorbed into Norwegian security policy. On the other hand Norwegian defence policy is still solidly anchored in such principles as conscription and as also mentioned previously, the perception that the armed forces are a reflection of society with which it has deeply embedded and intimate links.

As the security environment underwent a significant shift and NATO metamorphosed “from a passive Cold War alliance into an active political and security actor on the world stage” (Blease, 2010, p. 3), so Norway’s security policies evolved as well. However the basic priorities of Norwegian security policy remained unchanged. NATO and the United States continue to be the cornerstones of Norwegian security, though the parameters themselves for this security have undergone fundamental changes over the last 20 years (Bjerga, 2010).

As a result of these changes, the Norwegian Armed Forces have been transformed from a traditional mobilisation homeland defence force into a modern flexible instrument of security policy. External change often manifests itself with a need for internal change and adaptation to a different set of circumstances.

For a system in which military culture may be rooted in the Cold War world of territorial defence and the detailed supervision of a conscript based system, this can be a challenge for the officer structure: to rely on a competent NCO cadre in order to refine military judgement and action at the professional executive level (Dandeker, 2012, p. 23)

When Major General Opedal assumed his current position as Chief of Staff of the Norwegian Army in 2009, he made clear his intentions with regard to the requirements for a professional OR structure. In a speech he spoke at length about further developing the unit officers into a

specialist structure or sergeant structure (Opedal, 2010). Under his tenure a significant amount of effort has been expended on empirical studies in order to argue for and justify such a change. His perspectives are reflected in what he describes as his goal to establish a comprehensive or holistic system for developing and maintaining specialist competencies in the Army (Opedal, 2011a). His main argument is that in transforming from a mobilisation army to a rapid deployment army, changes in personnel and competence areas are decisive.

A consideration promoted by Dandeker in this context is to ensure that reflections on officer Professional Military Education (PME) are connected with the wider organisational context of the All Volunteer Force (AVF), especially the role of ORs (or NCOs as he calls them). For officers to focus on their own professional competence it is essential that, in an AVF, a cadre of NCOs or ORs is created who are able to supervise other ranks and deliver sub-tactical effects (Dandeker, 2012).

Furthermore, Opedal clearly differentiates between what he calls the generalists and the specialists, emphasising the need to provide each category with a distinct set of competency perspectives, conditions of employment and selection criteria (Opedal, 2011a). In elaborating on a specialist structure, General Opedal associates this closely to the concept of a profession. Thus despite a major transformation of the Norwegian Army over the course of the last two decades, some fundamental changes including the re-establishment of a professional OR structure have yet to be implemented. The status quo in this area is however now being challenged from a number of different quarters. From a former Chief of Defence to the current Chief of Staff of the Army and even from the affected group themselves, a clamour for change is now being heard. This thesis will examine those forces for change and additionally review the Swedish process to achieve the same goal. This process itself will be highlighted and used to further inform the discussion later on.

3.3 Forces for change

Having addressed the status quo of the Norwegian Army today, it is necessary to examine more closely the forces at play, both for and against change. As a long-time driving force for transformation, it is instructive to refer to the former Chief of Defence, General Sverre Diesen who has argued both passionately and eloquently for such change. From an early stage in his professional career, Diesen was shaped by his experiences with the British Army. As a young

officer serving with the British Army on the Rhine in Germany, he experienced first hand how a professional OR system functioned. Both then and later, during his year as a student at the British Army Staff College, he came under the influence of an Army system with a long history and traditions anchored in a professional OR structure. Already as a Battalion Commander, in 1995 he foresaw that change was afoot and argued publicly for a change in the existing system and structure.

As he points out, there are two fundamental differences today versus most of the period following the Second World War:

First, we have changed from having to produce a large number of reserve officers for a mobilisation army, to having to produce professional leaders and instructors for the grassroots level of a standing and rapidly deployable army. Second, with the engagement in Afghanistan over the last 10 years, the Army is now directly involved in real combat operations, which means that the price for dysfunctional or inadequate leadership at this level is paid in blood (Diesen, 2011).

An expeditionary army requires a very different and more professional skill set in its officers and ORs, with a radical shift towards quality versus quantity. Combat experience in Afghanistan serves to highlight the criticality of these very skill sets. We will note later that this overall shift is fundamental not only to the role, but also to the societal perceptions of the Army.

The arguments for implementing a professional OR structure appear to be numerous, and the Chief of Staff of the Norwegian Army has worked energetically to justify what he describes as a crucial need in this respect. The reasoning and logic he posits would seem to be widely shared by others and significant amounts of research and empirical studies underpin his position. Before considering the overall process, we will therefore examine some of the main arguments as a basis for understanding the rationale of the debate.

An overarching argument is the phenomenon of globalisation, with swiftly changing technologies and demographic trends, as key drivers of increasingly adaptive challenges in organisations (O'Brien, 2009). These challenges confront all organisations irrelevant of profession, but they have in common a requirement for ever more specialist skills across the spectrum of professions.

For military organisations this increased complexity of challenges also manifests itself in what Dandeker has called “complex operational spaces” (Dandeker, 2012). This complexity includes a multitude of influencing parameters, but as Dandeker emphasises “the contemporary understanding of professional space needs to be altered because of the increasingly ‘crowded battlefield’ in which a variety of military and non-military actors are engaged in the field of operations that encompasses a far broader range of security objectives” (Dandeker, 2012, p. 12). These expected challenges include the requirement to handle a broad spectrum of what Chan describes as “from purely humanitarian operations to complex war fighting scenarios in joint and multinational settings” (Chan, 2006, p. 2).

As further cited by the Chief of Staff of the Norwegian Army; the NATO report “Multinational Military Operations and Intercultural Factors” highlights the different national, legal and political parameters that combined with varying interpretations and execution of these parameters increases both the complexity and the requirements for highly specific competencies in the conduct of multinational operations (Opedal, 2011a). His report reinforces this with reference to Kit and McCausland; “a context that implies an integration of military, social, economic, environmental and technological factors in solving military tasks, creates diffuse borderlines, asymmetry and problems in trying to predict behaviour patterns, both operationally as well as administratively” (Kit, 2008, pp. 1-2), (McCausland, 2008, pp. 87-89).

The importance of technology is also stressed as a key factor for military organisations, both in concept development and transformation. Network centric warfare is given as an example. Both at the individual level, but also as part of a system within the operational, administrative and technological areas, this manifests itself in the form of advanced technological systems with high user thresholds that require a lengthy and resource-intensive education (Opedal, 2011a).

Opedal also refers to Norwegian government policy which has a declared intent to achieve diversity as an established personnel policy. Diversity is characterised as an indispensable system characteristic in order to facilitate innovation and development (Wheatley, 1999).

Opedal argues further for diversity in referring to Sturmberg “a too strong homogenisation of personnel and competencies in the form of recruiting, selection and education is destructive to a system that is dependant on variety and robustness” (Sturmberg, 2009, p. 882).

In closing, Opedal notes;

A prominent trend in the Armed Forces has been an increased focus on quality as a unit to describe the capacity and effect, versus quantity. The pressing need for quality within a broad spectrum of operations, increased interoperability, technologically advanced systems as well as the need for mental diversity in the Armed Forces, reflects a call for the development of specialist skills in a lifelong perspective. (Opedal, 2011a, p. 3)

One of General Opedal's key arguments has been based on several recent quantitative studies of the Army unit officers themselves (Kristiansen, 2011). An analysis of the Norwegian Armed Forces SAP system (Systems Applications and Products) focusing on employment posts for the group, is also revealing (Opedal, 2011a). As already discussed, the unit officer concept implemented in 2005, initially allows for a service contract until the age of 35. An analysis of the actual time spent in service shows not only that the average unit officer typically terminates his or her contract between 26 and 27 years of age, but that this trend is also largely representative for all of the years since its implementation (Opedal, 2011a). This trend of shorter contracts is further verified by an evaluation conducted by the Norwegian Army's Military Academy for the Army (Kristiansen, 2011). Svein Kristiansen has conducted a number of studies on the group and his findings appear to be strongly indicative of a pressing need for change.

Of a total of 60 respondents interviewed in the most recent survey conducted in 2011, a majority also clearly pointed out why they appear to be unwilling to extend their contracts (Kristiansen, 2011).

- 94% of the respondents perceived the age limit of 35 years to be unreasonable and only 29% were willing to consider continuing within the current framework to the age limit of 35 years of age.
- There was an overall perception amongst respondents that the unit officers should have their own training and education programme (90%), which also needed to be adapted to the practical realities and requirements of the specialist (85%), and that this education should be given a form of civilian qualification (89%). Implicitly this also indicates a major technical distinction between the specialists and so-called generalists (77%).
- Respondents wanted a rank structure that highlighted their experience and position in a horizontal system. 90% either wanted to work within an Other Ranks

(OR) 5 - 9 or Warrant Officer (WO) system. 82% also responded that they had no objections to converting from the current system to an OR/WO structure.

- Only 4.8% of respondents wanted to retain the name of unit officer. The rest preferred Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) (38.7%), specialist NCO (27.4%) or specialist officers (21%).
- Respondents considered that wage growth to a greater extent needed be based on competence and separated from rank (81%) and that positive wage growth was a prerequisite to work in a horizontal career system (97%).

In summarizing his findings, Kristiansen highlighted:

The Norwegian Armed Forces has launched a strategy to build a structure of Non-commissioned officers (NCOs). The plan is to contract the NCOs up to the age of thirty five. At the end of this service they will receive compensation equal to two years salary. This paper builds on the results of a two-year project that inquires into conditions for retaining NCOs in the Norwegian Army. The evidence from this project shows that the NCOs on average tend to leave the Army at the age of twenty six. The consequences of this early retirement are a loss of critical competence and a need to graduate an increasing number of officers at the basic training schools.

The results of the project point at the requirements for career paths that facilitate the NCOs learning and personal development throughout the contracting period. Hence, the Norwegian Army needs to pursue work conditions that promote life long learning and develop an organizational culture that allows the NCOs to become recognised experts within their profession. To satisfy these demands, the Army needs to develop the characteristics of a learning organization. Based on the empirical data the article concludes by outlining a model that responds well to the Army's present challenge of retaining NCOs throughout the contracting period (Kristiansen, 2011, p. 1).

It is now obvious that multiple forces for change are at play. Shifting security parameters that have significantly adjusted the political context have been a driving force. This has impacted directly on the use of the Norwegian Army, thus directly influencing its role and capabilities. Globalisation with its accompanying demands for

adaptation to increased complexity and leaps in developing technologies have all exerted their influence. The resulting need for quality versus quantity is overarching, and the affected group are themselves clamouring for change. This is in effect, the essence of the problem, the arguments for change and how these may or may not prevail in the face of other forces at play. The process itself is dynamic and subject to a constantly shifting array of both internal and external factors. In attempting to understand how the process may or may not move towards its completion, and why these forces for change have not yet prevailed, it is therefore necessary to identify which factors are at play and how they exert their own influence. For additional clarity however, there are insights to be gained from reviewing a similar process, namely that which has recently taken place in the Swedish Armed Forces.

3.4 The Swedish process

In reviewing the possibilities for change in the Norwegian Army's organisational structure, and in particular the options for re-implementing a professional OR structure today, it is instructive to look to Norway's closest neighbour Sweden. Similar to Norway, the Swedish Army formerly had a professional OR structure, which was eventually abolished in 1972. Sweden however reintroduced its own professional OR structure in 2010, as part of a sweeping reform of its Armed Forces and a transition to an All Volunteer Force (AFV). Norway and Sweden have a great deal in common, both historically, culturally and politically. With common roots, a common legacy in the Scandinavian heritage and commonality in identity and political history, Norway even gained its independence from Sweden in 1905.

For decades, changes implemented in Sweden were closely watched in Norway and in many cases came to influence similar changes in Norway. The principles of egalitarianism that are so deeply entrenched in the Norwegian mindset, are similarly present in Sweden, although it can also be argued that Sweden to a slightly greater extent still retains some traces of its past class society.² Historical events such as the earlier mentioned "Menstad slaget" which took place in Norway in 1931 and which deeply affected national perspectives on the organisation and use of the Norwegian Armed Forces, also took place in Sweden the same year. In Sweden they were

² Many Swedish families of the so-called nobility still openly maintain the traditions associated with their family coats of arms and cultivate their family legacies (Hard af Segerstad, 2012).

known as the Ådalen riots, where Swedish soldiers actually shot and killed a number of demonstrators. Historical and incremental changes in the Norwegian officers' employment conditions have thus often closely reflected similar changes in the Swedish Armed Forces.

In 2005 the Swedish Armed Forces produced a report (Försvarsmakten, 2005) that paved the way for a major reform of the Swedish Armed Forces that was implemented in 2010. The Swedish approach reflects a number of parallels with the endeavours currently being attempted by the Norwegian Army staff, and it is thus informative to review their identified success criteria. As was noted by Colonel Johan Fölstad, who was central to implementation of the Swedish process, a key strategy was to avoid undue focus on the discussions surrounding the OR's as a term, but rather anchor the whole process in the need for a discussion on competence in general. Fölstad described how there was an informed opinion within the Swedish Armed Forces of a generally very poor level of specialist knowledge of systems and functions, but an abundance of general knowledge particularly at higher levels within the organisation (Fölstad, 2012). It is interesting to note the similarity to the challenges facing the Norwegian Army today, as has been highlighted repeatedly by the Norwegian Chief of Staff of the Army (Opedal, 2011a). Once this fact was accepted as a truth by the majority, the next step was to introduce a competency system that would seek to rectify this imbalance.

Previously under the Swedish "enbefälssystemet" or unit officer system, there had been at least three separate organized attempts to develop both general and specialized knowledge in the existing officer structure. As Fölstad pointed out; "We were able to prove with statistics that all of these attempts had failed. We were also able to prove statistically that comparable countries such as Denmark and the Netherlands had been more successful in their efforts, with Norway unfortunately, being as bad as Sweden"(Fölstad, 2012).

On this basis, and as a third step, the aim was then to clarify these new specialists' careers and status in the Armed Forces. The effect was then reversed. Instead of being afraid to associate this skills group with the negatively charged term NCO, it became a positive and necessary step to develop a separate category of officer.

The name specialist officer was specifically chosen in order to avoid a class debate centred on negative connotations associated with the term NCO. In the ongoing debate, a number of useful comparisons were made with other professions, such as health care. In short, it was argued that all professions including the Armed Forces needed both academically based competencies as

well as skills based on specialized knowledge and experience. All industries make a distinction between these categories, so why not the Armed Forces? To further clarify this, Sweden introduced three distinct military personnel rank categories. The ranks are now more similar to the ranks that existed in Sweden before 1972, with some adaptation for cooperation with NATO.

The opposition to this process came mainly from the trade unions, but this was handled through frequent, clear discussions based on facts and figures and with the right arguments at the right time. One key adjustment was made in this respect. Both the officers and the specialist officers have an interim employment agreement in the same manner as before and the collective term for these two categories is career officer. As has so often been the case previously, Sweden has led the way in adapting reform, and it remains to be seen if the Norwegian Army can follow through in a similar manner. Although there are a number of distinct parallels, there are, however, also some significant differences in the two cases of Sweden and Norway. These may appear to highlight the factors consolidating the status quo in Norway.

In the Swedish Armed Forces, the process was a comprehensive effort, initiated at the top and involving the entire Defence Force. Contrast this with the Norwegian case, where only the Army is currently involved and not the other services. Despite initial efforts to introduce the issue of a professional OR structure into the Chief of Defence's Defence Review for 2011, the Chief of Staff of the Army was initially unsuccessful in garnering support from the Navy and the Air Force (Kulseng, 2011). The Chief of Defence himself has yet to endorse the concept and as such, the effort cannot so far be considered a joint service one. As we will note later, this fact has also been seized upon by one of the main officer unions, as an argument for not supporting the initiative.

Another important consideration when comparing the Swedish and Norwegian processes is the different parliamentary constituency systems in the two countries leading to differences in the regulation of the political power structure. Not least, Sweden has chosen a different management system for decisions around the development of a range of societal issues, with less political micromanagement, but where professional bodies have more control. This last point, as we have already noted, is considered by some to be crucial in enabling reform of the rank and pay structure, and where change in Norway is very much dependant on support from the aforementioned Ministry of Government Administration, Reform and Church Affairs (Fornyings-,administrasjons- og kirke departementet (FAD)).

A third issue that we will also note later, is that the main officer unions in Sweden merged into one union some years before the process started in Sweden. This simplified negotiations for the Armed Forces, and did not become a point of rejection, which as we will note later, has been a factor in Norway.

Paradoxically, an interesting aspect in the Swedish process is the influence of NATO. NATO has established a standardisation document that seeks to implement a standardised system in the military rank structure of the member nations (NATO, 2010). The rank structure specifically outlines a system for NCOs or Other Ranks (OR). Norway, as a member nation, has ratified the document, but is today the most divergent country with regards to a comprehensive OR rank structure. In line with its historical position of neutrality, Sweden is not a member of NATO, however it is a very active member of NATO's Partnership for Peace (PFP) programme and has in an effort to enhance this cooperation, strived purposefully to implement an OR rank structure that reflects NATO's rank structure design.

The Swedish process clearly has many parallels to that which is currently taking place in Norway. It thus serves to illustrate both some of the potential pitfalls and some of the catalysts that appear to be influencing the Norwegian process today. A number of relevant comparative aspects from the Swedish process will therefore be used to highlight and provide additional insight later in this analysis.

4 EXPLAINING THE STATUS QUO

Based on the interviews and the ensuing analysis, it has been possible to identify a specific group of factors that appear to be at play, exerting an influence in the ongoing process, as well as contributing towards a relative standstill. This portion of the study will therefore list and elaborate on these factors in order to address the initial problem statement. These factors though identified distinctly, also overlap to some degree. As such they provide a platform, where some factors not only directly influence others, but in some cases pose a form of requisite for further momentum.

4.1 The idea of a profession

The general perception of the officer's role as being a profession is central to the understanding of how that role can be allowed to adjust itself to changing times. There are two distinct dimensions to this perception. Firstly there is the internal dimension, as in how Norwegian officers perceive themselves. This is important, as an acceptance of a status quo by the officers cadre, directly impacts on a desire (or lack thereof) for change. If the officers are satisfied with their status, then there is obviously less reason for change. The second dimension is how the officer's role as being a profession is seen from outside, in particular by those who might influence change. If those who influence policy, as in governmental bodies, see no reason for change, then change may be more difficult to achieve.

As we will note, the idea of a profession in the Norwegian Army, as in any military organisation, is linked to another identity, namely that of the organisation itself as a bureaucratic structure. Part of the argument for establishing a professional OR structure is therefore rooted in a debate on the idea of the profession, and as such we will study this aspect more closely in order to understand the different rationales that are applied.

Over the years, extensive research has been focused on the officer's profession. Although most research appears to have been done on the officers themselves and not the ORs, "recent research (Prandstaller, 1997) would indicate that NCOs are considered by some to be a semi-profession, now it seems, at least in all the developed countries, to have completed the historical process that has led them to be considered a profession" (Caforio, 2007, p. 219).

As Caforio also points out;

Indeed, NCOs no longer fit the mould of the sergeant, the eighteenth-century "serra gente" whose main task was keeping squads of soldiers united and in close ranks in combat. Today's NCOs go through a training process that in many countries leads to a university degree and acquire specialisations that enable them to master a sector of activity that, in complexity and importance, can be considered the equivalent of what is entrusted to a junior officer (Caforio, 2007, p. 219).

As we have already seen, the rank structure in the Norwegian army does not necessarily fit this mould, and when Caforio refers to "*all* the developed countries", Norway clearly appears to

stand out. For practical purposes therefore in the continued discussion of the officers' profession and the Norwegian Army, we will equate the role of officer to that of NCO or OR, unless otherwise indicated.

Of the most influential contributions to the debate on the officers' profession, Samuel Huntington (1957) and Morris Janowitz (1960) are of particular note. Huntington defined a profession in the strict sense: expertise (acquired through prolonged education and experience), responsibility (towards the society at large) and corporateness (as self-awareness of the professional group) (Huntington, 1957, p. 8). He wrote that a profession is a peculiar type of functional group with highly specialised characteristics (Huntington, 1957). Caforio's conclusion is that the profession of officer today has all three attributes of a profession; "in contrast to ancient times, as professionalism distinguishes the military officer of today from the warrior of previous ages" (Caforio, 2007, p. 124).

The perhaps most fundamental thesis of Huntington's book *The soldier and the state* is the declaration "The modern officer corps is a professional body and the modern military officer is a professional man" (Huntington, 1957, p. 7). Although the book was written with the United States Army in mind, the principles are of course applicable to the Norwegian Army, as a comparable basis. As we will note later however, Norwegian cultural and political heritage do provide a basis for a different perception of the role of the Norwegian officer as a profession.

Janowitz, as quoted by Cafori, uses five attributes to define the professional, namely a core of hard to master, socially important skills, an own organisation, autonomy or self rule, a code of ethics and a system of compulsion (Caforio, 2007). According to Janowitz, although autonomy is lacking, the other criteria provide a basis for defining the officers' lot as a profession and in essence the officer is defined as a professional. If we therefore accept that it would be natural to consider serving in the Norwegian Army as a profession, we may then attempt to further examine the idea of the officer's profession and a central dilemma linked to its role in Norwegian society in particular.

In researching the theory of modern professions, another prominent researcher on the Army, Don Snider, posits "Thus, as a producing organisation the Army could be recognised as a business, or a bureaucracy, or a profession, these three being ideal types of producing organisations most commonly found in western capitalistic democracies" (Snider, 2005, p. 13). He also describes

the most critical challenge to an Army in its transition, as reinforcing the professional nature of the institution and to provide the opportunity for its soldiers to be members of a profession- the Army profession. “The Army is neither a public sector bureaucracy manned by civil servants nor is it a business with employees. It has been and must continue to be a profession, one in which military professionals serve with deep pride and immense personal satisfaction” (Snider, 2005, p. 441).

It is important to emphasise that the aspect of transition is also key here, as the Norwegian Army as part of the Armed Forces, has since the year 2000, been undergoing the greatest public restructuring ever undertaken in Norwegian history (Ina Eriksen Søreide, 2010). As Snider also points out however, the Army is not a business; it was established to achieve operational missions (Snider, 2005). Herein may lie part of the crux. In all societies military organisations today are thus embodied with primarily two competing identities. Don Snider further speaks of the “natural tensions within the Army’s dual character” (Snider, 2005, p. 9).

In Snider’s understanding of the Army profession, he describes;

Predominantly, the Army is a profession focused on developing and adapting its expert knowledge, in other situations, generally in administrative, logistical, educational, and headquarters contexts, the Army is a hierarchical bureaucracy focused on apparatchik-type work familiar in any large organisation in the western world today. In this world, the watchword is efficiency...while this dual nature is unavoidable and healthy for the nation, it can be cause for considerable tensions, both for the individual profession and for the institution as a whole (Snider, 2005, p. 14).

The challenge thus for any Army if it is to continue to develop its expert knowledge, is to keep these two natures in balance, but with profession in dominance over the bureaucracy “in all areas except those very few that are intrinsic to any large organisation” (Snider, 2005, p. 12). Snider underlines that “professions excel where bureaucracies can not, namely in the creation and adaptation of abstract expert knowledge and its application in new situations”(Snider, 2005, p. 15).

To what extent might this dilemma apply in Norway? In one of his most recent studies of the Norwegian Army's unit officer concept, Svein Kristiansen (Kristiansen, 2011) quotes Snider in exemplifying this dilemma further.

Maintaining an appropriate balance between the Army's two natures is thus ever elusive; at any time, bureaucracy can come to predominate over profession. The result is an army whose leaders, self-concepts, decisions, and organizational climate for soldiers reflect a high degree of bureaucracy and efficiency rather than military professionalism and effectiveness. In the bureaucracy mode, the self-concept of the Army's members is likely to become one of "employee", while in the mode of a calling their self-concept is one of professional...historically, militaries that do not resolve this tension in favor of their professional identity can experience the death of their professional character. As their bureaucratic nature comes to dominate, they cease to be a profession and become little more than an obedient military bureaucracy, treating their officers and soldiers as bureaucrats" (Snider, 2005, p. 15).

For the United States Army, many would counter that sheer size has been a prevailing reason for such developments. In Norway, however the reason may be found in the unique and strongly egalitarian Norwegian tradition. As we have already noted, the officers' unions have traditionally exerted great sway on developments in officers' personnel-related matters. The two main officer unions today both belong to the largest national labour or trade unions. A driving principle still reflected in their manifests today, is the constant need for comparison with other government employed groups. This is typically worded as a desire to have the same rights, the same security or the same predictability as other government employees (Solberg, 2012a). One might say that the concept of equality is overriding. Based on these documented influences that the officer unions have historically exerted and the fact that over 10,000 officers (Aas, 2012) of the Norwegian Armed Forces are registered as dues-paying members with the two largest officer unions today, it may therefore be accurate to assume that a majority of officers in the Norwegian Army today, consider themselves first and foremost as state employees and thus in extension, members of a government organisation and bureaucracy, and only secondly as members of a profession.

It is worth noting that Huntington also observed that "officership is a public bureaucratized profession" (Huntington, 1957, p. 16). Huntington also argued that in states where the priority is

ensuring that the military conforms to wider social values, there is a risk that the consequent politicisation of the profession makes it impossible for full professionalism to develop. The result is a shift away from objective to what he calls subjective civilian control. Although at this point it would be tempting to contend that bureaucracy as a state has prevailed in the Norwegian Army and argue that it has clearly negatively influenced its efficiency, this research is not about the extent of that influence. The point here is the general acceptance both within the Army itself, and more importantly within public perception that the Army is first and foremost a bureaucracy and that it should be regulated as such. This is especially relevant when one sees how some aspects of the officers personnel-related matters are regulated, not within the Ministry of Defence, but within the Ministry of Government Administration, Reform and Church Affairs (Fornyings-, administrasjons- og kirkedepartementet (FAD)), which has an overall responsibility for reforming and regenerating the public sector (www.regjeringen.no, 2012a).

According to the former Chief of Defence General Diesen; based on his personal experiences whilst serving as the Chief of Defence, this ministry, representing the Government in the role of employer had a decisive say on regulating issues such as salaries, retirement age, etc. This perspective is echoed by the Personnel Director of the Norwegian Defence Staff, Tom Simonsen, who however highlights that change is now afoot (Simonsen, 2012). The principle is based on the understanding that all government employees should come under one standardised system in order to achieve overall goals of efficiency and equality. The system does not take into consideration the fact that efficiency and effectiveness are not one and the same. The whole concept of implementing a professional OR system raises issues whereupon salaries may have to be separated from rank, and where a senior OR, who may be subordinate to a junior officer, may also actually earn more. This could be highly problematic for a system, primarily based on the idea of “one size fits all”. Professionalism as a concept is now starting to manifest itself, but is clearly still been challenged by bureaucracy as a whole.

Secondly, the issue of a special age limit for the ORs, with the possibility of retiring at 45-50 years of age (as is very often the case, in other Armies) would also most likely be a major challenge for a ministry that is currently endeavouring to raise the retirement age for all occupations irrespective of role or profession. In general, this would imply that FAD might be compelled to depart from the Norwegian principle of attempting to create rules that apply equally to all those employees who are considered part of the state administration. Furthermore create an acceptance for the understanding that the military should have completely separate

provisions in a number of areas, even when they violate the general rules and principles. In other words, a discussion of specific issues to include payrolls, retirement and pensions, will have to involve a ministry that prefers to think of the Army as a bureaucracy (Diesen, 2011).

4.2 Political ideology

An oft-heard view expressed by many officers in the Norwegian Armed Forces in everyday discussion is that the functionality of the profession will often be subject to the whims of political machinations. Political intervention in the Norwegian Armed Forces over the past 30-40 years has certainly been commonplace. As Huntington has highlighted, this is also a core idea of civil-military relations in most democratic countries. Several examples can be used to illustrate this perspective. As already highlighted in this study, the abolishment of the professional non-commissioned officers' (NCO) structure was clearly a strongly politically motivated decision to eradicate perceived class differences and as such it was a direct consequence of a prevailing attitude in a Norwegian society rooted in egalitarian principles. "The practical implications were never really understood or even fully considered. So, today Norway fights shoulder to shoulder with allies in Afghanistan using inexperienced 20 year old NCOs to lead, where other nations use experienced 30 year old professional NCOs" (Diesen, 2011).

It can be argued that this is an example of how perceptions of societal norms have impacted on the structure and culture of the armed forces. It may also reflect a deeply seated conviction amongst Norwegian politicians that the Norwegian Armed Forces were first and foremost expected to be a mirror of society, and that functionality as a security policy tool may therefore have had a lesser imperative. Huntington specifically describes the so-called responsibility of officership in which the expertise of the officer imposes upon him a special social responsibility (Huntington, 1957).

In the mid 1980s, the then Norwegian Chief of Defence, General Bull Hansen publicly expressed concerns with regards to the existing defence budgets. He highlighted significant funding discrepancies versus the ambitions of the National Defence Commission of 1974. This stated position exposed him to severe criticism from the Minister of Defence at the time, Johan Jørgen Holst, who signalled that he had no right to question political decisions. Although the issue was eventually resolved when the parliament established that the Chief of Defence not only had a right, but also a responsibility to voice his professional concerns, it highlights a reoccurring perspective from the political levels.

In 2003 the Norwegian central defence organisation was thoroughly restructured. An Integrated Strategic Leadership was established. The Chief of Defence and the parts of the High Command involved were integrated with the Ministry of Defence (Bjerga, 2010). This structural change has enabled a tendency towards political control well outside that previously witnessed, and can be seen as yet another example of the political leadership controlling the internal development of the military establishment at a level that actually impedes its cultural transformation. This form of political intervention was again seen as symptomatic in a system that had been subject to political focus for decades. The involvement of political ideology in the control and processes of the Norwegian Armed Forces was therefore considered a natural and ever present factor, but for many of the officers this was also synonymous with intrusion and interference.

As we have already noted, the debate on the pros and cons of the NCO structure was more about the stigma of the Norwegian word for NCO which is literally translated as under-officer, than its actual functionality.

The name was in itself perceived as demeaning and it clearly implied a sub-class of officer, denoting a former class system. Semantics as such have therefore played a key role in today's perceptions and efforts to reintroduce a new professional NCO system. Both the Swedish Armed Forces and the current Chief of Staff of the Norwegian Army have studiously avoided the term, preferring instead to call the new structure, a specialist structure, which is considered far more politically acceptable. A relevant question today therefore is; whether political ideology still really plays such a significant obstacle as some would appear to believe?

The political establishment has however shown some interest and during the last three years there have been at least three separate enquiries from the Norwegian parliament to the Ministry of Defence as to the status of this process (Kulseng, 2011). In 2010, the opposition Conservative Party forwarded a proposal to parliament to conduct a comprehensive review of the existing officers scheme, but the proposal was rejected by the government parties (Ine Eriksen Søreide, 2012). As the leader of the Parliamentary Committee for Foreign Affairs and Defence has recently stated; "it now appears that all parties are supportive of real change which can have an impact on the Armed Forces" (Ine Eriksen Søreide, 2012).

Some recent political perspectives have also been provided through the media, and in Nov 2011, Laila Gustavsen, a member of the Norwegian Parliamentary Standing Committee on Foreign

Affairs and Defence, and a representative of the Labour Party, provided an interview to the conservative publication *Minerva* (Butt, 2011). In discussing the existing unit officers' structure, Gustavsen clearly states that "time is ripe for a review of the system". At the same time though, she thinks "it is legitimate to argue that a non-commissioned officer system is not adapted to a Norwegian reality". She underlines however that the main problems are the fixture between rank and salary, and that the system in itself is too rigid. She believes that there is a lack of opportunity to have horizontal careers. and "that it is important that we manage to take care of those who want to be leaders." (Butt, 2011). Gustavsen agrees with the former Chief of Defence, General Sverre Diesen, in that the "system must be changed" (Butt, 2011). She acknowledges, however that ideology plays a role and that this is first and foremost about politics. She agrees that there are differing opinions about what system is best, and that it is therefore up to the politicians to make the necessary decisions. "I am very concerned about the fact that we are talking about the workers in the Armed Forces, those who are good at their profession. These are people who we must manage to look after"(Butt, 2011). She also concurs that the Norwegian Armed Forces must reflect developments in society. It is likely that here in her final point, we may find the reason for a shift in perspectives.

Gustavsen's support for changes in the current Armed Forces rank structure is also echoed by other politicians. Tore Nordtun, a seasoned Labour politician with 20 years as a member of parliament, has argued repeatedly for the need for such change. In February 2012 he elaborated at length on how the Armed Forces were losing skilled and competent employees from the unit officer structure, and how this was both costly to the Armed Forces and undeserved for the officers involved (Nordtun, 2012b).

Although a perceived inability to implement change in recent decades, has traditionally been associated with concerns that the subject was not politically palatable, these new perspectives from the political levels themselves would seem to be indicative of a significant change in ideological positions today. If these signals can be seen to be representative for the political structure, then contrary to contemporary wisdom in the officers' structure today, political ideology is certainly not an obstacle to change.

In fact, on the contrary, arguments appear to hold that in favour of political ideology, the unit officers are deserving of a full career, on a par with other career officers. Equality and egalitarianism are the motivating principles. This in itself as part of a political ideology might appear to be a driving force for change.

A claim also linked to ideology, may be that the trade unions themselves maintain robust links to certain political parties. The position on egalitarianism has for example also been reflected from one of the main officer unions in particular. The Norwegian Officers Union (NOF) which has historically been seen as hostile towards efforts to reintroduce a professional OR structure, has in its national manifesto of 2010-2014 stated unequivocally that it will work towards a new officer's scheme, but one still based on the traditional and single "one size fits all" officer system (Norges Offisersforbund, 2010). As noted earlier, the union's reservations towards a perceived two class system of officers has a historical legacy rooted in an enduring struggle to achieve equality for its members. Peter Andre Moe, who served for twenty years as both the NOF union leader and as a senior labour union representative, experienced first hand the discriminatory culture that existed before the former professional NCO structure was abolished in 1975. He was a product of that generation, shaped by that era and he had a very strong stance on the inequalities that he had personally experienced (Børresen, 2012).

The new NOF union leader Egil Andre Aas, who was elected in 2010, inherited the legacy reflected in the current NOF manifesto. He provides, however, a very positive and constructive outlook on the potential for change, and is certainly not adverse to a two tier system (Aas, 2012). Based on his visits to a number of Norwegian Army units, and on conversations with serving personnel, he openly acknowledges the need for change, but at the same time underlines the need for predictability for those very same personnel. If there is to be change, those affected must have the possibility to see what lies ahead in a potential career path. Aas further describes that this is not an obstacle with the trade unions, on the contrary, the argument that all levels of officers are deserving of a full career is fully understood and well received in the main labour union, where Aas also sits as member on the central committee, (Aas, 2012).

The reasons for this shift are likely multiple, but one might argue that changes in society as a whole have triggered a shift in perspectives in general. The issue of a class society as a divisive factor has long since been removed from the political agenda as a catalyst for driving reform. Egalitarian principles that now form a common base across the Norwegian political spectrum do not appear to be linked to a higher political agenda, to the same extent as has been the case historically. It has to be said, however that there are some notable exceptions such as the promotion of gender equality in the Armed Forces. Any citizen is today entitled to apply to join the Norwegian Armed Forces. Senior officers' ranks that were once considered a prestigious part

of the civil service and were also associated with a certain social status, no longer hold that position in today's society, and are therefore no longer symbolic of a separate class. In fact, it might be said that serving in the Armed Forces today is rarely associated with status or prestige and few senior officers wear their uniforms in public today, unless compelled to do so. The Armed Forces as an institution has thus effectively been decoupled from the stigma of representing a class society today, and it would appear that the pendulum has swung in the debate on how to achieve egalitarianism.

Another influencing factor is the relatively large number of particularly younger Norwegian men and women who have served with the Norwegian Armed Forces in Afghanistan in recent years and who represent a not-insignificant source of insight amongst the Norwegian people as a whole. In the period from 2001 to 2011, no less than 7200 Norwegians served in Afghanistan (Hougsnæs, 2012). This group with its first-hand knowledge and opinions on the Norwegian experience in Afghanistan has shown that it can exert both influence and demands that have been reflected both in the Norwegian media, as well as through political parties and the trade unions.

As the leader of the parliamentary committee for Foreign Affairs and Defence emphasised in a recent article in one of the officers magazines; "regardless, at the political level we must now dare to do what it takes, and to venture beyond a debate that sometimes paralyzes this discussion: namely the question of the name - which is substantially less important, but which appears to carry a significant symbolic weight" (Ine Eriksen Søreide, 2012). If this shift in ideology as a force for change can be considered a finding, then it is significant in that it no longer represents an obstacle. One interesting perspective from this was the observation that a majority of the respondents from the interviews appeared to be unaware of this political shift. Only one of the respondents was familiar with the interview given by Gustavsen (see above) two months earlier and in general there appeared to be a perception that political ideology might still be an obstacle to change. Although at least one respondent was clear in that he believed that the political levels would be supportive of change (Thorsen, 2012) and most of the respondents were understood to be well placed at senior levels in the organisation and therefore in a position to grasp such changes, this did not seem to be a prevailing perception. There are several reasons for this, but one in particular which is reviewed below is the ownership and stakeholder aspects of the process itself.

As has already been mentioned, the Afghanistan experience has played a role, and this has at least contributed to a weakening of some of the perceived obstacles to change. The influence of the Norwegian Army's experience in Afghanistan has played a significant role in the perspective of ownership and stakeholders and as such paves the way for next factor for analysis.

4.3 Ownership and stakeholders

For some years now the idea of a new professional OR structure has been driven from within the Norwegian Army itself. The Norwegian Ministry of Defence has not involved itself other than to review the earlier mentioned unit officer structure that was introduced in 2005 (Kulseng, 2011). Some support has been provided to the Chief of Staff of the Army, but the main effort has been outside the Ministry of Defence. Although all the respondents were fully aware of efforts by the Chief of Staff of the Army to re-introduce a professional OR structure, most of them did not appear to have any direct involvement or to be personally engaged in the process. As was pointed out by several individuals, there were a number of obvious reasons for this. Primarily this lay in the fact that the process was clearly not owned either at the Chief of Defence level or by even the other service chiefs. Although several of the respondents believed that the Chief of Defence personally supported the idea, he had at no point publicly endorsed it nor made any efforts to identify himself with either the process or the declared end state (Kulseng, 2011). As such, the effort was to a large extent seen as a "one-man show". The Norwegian experience in Afghanistan, where the Army in particular has carried the burden of the task, serves to highlight this perception of imbalance. This imbalance stands in direct contrast to the Swedish approach which was fully owned and openly supported from the top by the Swedish Chief of Defence (Fölstad, 2012).

This very point was also expanded upon by the union leader of one of the main officer unions, BFO, who highlighted that the initiative was not initially backed by the other services, i.e. the Norwegian Navy or Air Force, and as such was more problematic for the union to endorse as prioritised initiative (Solberg, 2012b). This was also confirmed in that attempts by the Chief of Staff of the Army to include the item in the Chief of Defence's Defence Review for 2011, were initially not supported by the Navy and the Air Force (Kulseng, 2011).

The Air Force has currently indicated that for the present it prefers to work with the existing rank structure system, which in its opinion has the potential to be further improved. They would also

prefer not to introduce two separate officer structures as this would not necessarily be supportive of the way they operate today (Kotte, 2011). This perspective is in direct contrast with the official Air Force position in 1975 when the Andreassen-committee moved to abolish the professional NCO system. The Chief of Staff of the Air Force at the time, wrote a letter to the Ministry of Defence in January 1975, where he argued forcefully against the proposal to do away with the existing structure (Jakobsen, 1994).

This point is particularly revealing of how positions may change over time as an adaptation to new structures results in a new way of doing business which then becomes the norm. The Air Force has, however, underlined that it is not averse to a discussion on other possibilities in the future (Kotte, 2011). From these arguments it would seem obvious that not all the three services have the same level of incentives for reform, which illustrates that the concept currently does not hold a broader appeal outside the Army. The Army has thus been compelled to initiate and run the process on its own, without the necessary broader spectrum of stakeholders that would have enabled a greater degree of momentum.

As one representative of the Army staff pointed out, someone had to start the process and if necessary “go it alone” until this process picked up the required momentum (Garang, 2012). It therefore seems clear that as an insular point, the idea of a professional OR structure has until now not had a broad enough anchorage. The idea of embedding the requirement in a wider need, will obviously expand its appeal, and give it a support base with a greater degree of impetus. Support at the top, linked to the approaching reform on PME will likely serve purpose and provide the necessary drive. This thesis will therefore examine the idea of a holistic approach as a separate factor later on.

In summary, although there appears to be a prevailing perception amongst some that can be described as “we’re not for, but we’re not against either” it strongly suggests support for the idea of a broader base of stakeholders that can be considered a relevant factor and that clearly appears to weigh-in. The argument of not been either for or against, is to a certain extent also linked to the view that the existing concept still deserves to be fully implemented, before moving on.

This factor is explored in more detail below. That the new concept requires greater mass in order to achieve the necessary acceptance and consequentially the required momentum is equally obvious. If this can initially be achieved through an increase in lateral support or through a top-

down drive is not yet entirely clear. An additional factor, however that appears to be playing a role is timing. A convergence in time of multiple developments may now represent what Malcom Gladwell describes in his bestseller “The tipping point” as “that magic moment when an idea, trend, or social behaviour crosses a threshold, tips, and spreads like wildfire” or what he also defines as “that critical mass” (Gladwell, 2000, p. 4). Timing is thus identified as the next factor potentially also influencing several of the factors that have been identified.

4.4 Timing

As has already been highlighted, the fundamental shift in Norwegian security policies over the last two decades, and the consequent need to be an active part of NATO's operations in Afghanistan has had a very direct impact on the timing for the Norwegian Army. As the Chief of Staff of the Army has argued, the Norwegian Army has been at the forefront of experiencing first-hand the transformation from a mobilisation Army to a rapid deployment Army, and then been actively engaged in combat operations. This has been a catalyst for change in the requirements for a more specialised and professional command structure particularly at the lower levels of Army units, where combat is literally experienced first hand. This imperative has by most accounts not been so urgent for the Navy and Air Force, but they, too, appear to be starting to respond positively. Timing then becomes a variable of influence and it is therefore necessary to examine how this has affected the entire process.

The timing of potential shifts in political perspectives can certainly be said to have played a major role in the outcome. As we have already noted, however, timing also plays a role in other areas. Timing is as much about a convergence of multiple processes, as it is about the occurrence of a single event or happening. This is exemplified in that although the occurrence of a single event may not in itself herald change, multiple occurrences happening simultaneously may often do so. As one respondent pointed out; major change is often dependant on external factors necessitating such change, where a sense of urgency may drive actions (Søgaard, 2011). Examples of such external factors might be significant reductions in available Defence budgets or major shifts in security perspectives.

Søgaard described a parallel from when the transformation of the Norwegian Armed Forces was initiated in the late 1990's and early 2000's. Those involved were driven by a sense of urgency, after a number of years marked by failed change, and eventually the entire organisation appeared

to rally to the cause (Søgaard, 2011). Although he emphasised that this was not necessarily his personal opinion, in today's Ministry of Defence there had not yet appeared to be a similar perception of urgency or of a pressing need for change of the personnel structure and as was often the case in an organisation such as a civil service or bureaucracy, there might even be a tendency for the "tyranny of status quo" to extend its grip. Typically the default mindset was; if there was a perception that the system worked, why invest effort in attempting to implement change? The "burden of proof normally rests with those who want change", and as such it was therefore up to them to impress this need on the organisation as a whole. Typically, what was needed to create change was a "few select and motivated doers who could drive the process along"(Søgaard, 2011).

A somewhat differing perspective on timing has however also been offered. One respondent highlighted that in difference to many other NATO members, the transformation of the Norwegian Armed Forces had taken place at a fairly early stage, and certainly well before the onslaught of major fiscal constraints that other nations were now experiencing. The Norwegian Armed Forces had thus proven that they were capable of engaging in transformation, without the pressure of an external influence (Thorsen, 2012).

Timing has however played a role in other arenas that are clearly influencing a potential outcome. The two main officer unions which together represent approximately 10,000 members (Aas, 2012) are both linked to trade unions, but on opposing sides of the political spectrum. In recent years there has been a concerted effort by both unions to merge into one main officer union; however this has proven to be a challenge, given their differing affiliations. It should be noted that this particular situation is comparable with that of Sweden, where the two main officer unions, merged more than a decade ago, thus setting the scene for a convergent effort in the Swedish Armed Forces process of establishing a professional OR structure. For the Swedish process, the timing of this event quite obviously played an outcome in the overall process (Axelsson, 2012). Although dismissed by one union leader (Solberg, 2012b), some respondents indicated that the issue of a professional OR structure could potentially complicate the process of merging into one officer union, thus making the professional OR structure process a lesser imperative. Certainly, although the two main unions appear to have very differing perspectives on the subject of a professional OR structure, their declared intent to merge and the timing of the process itself has had one positive initial outcome on the process.

During the process of attempting to implement a professional OR structure, the former Chief of Defence, General Diesen, found that the Ministry of Government Administration, Reform and Church Affairs was unwilling to endorse the process (Diesen, 2011). As already mentioned, the Ministry was important in that representing the Government in the role of employer, it had a decisive say on regulating issues such as salaries, retirement age, etc. Personnel Director of the Norwegian Defence Staff, Tom Simonsen, says that this year for the first time, the officer unions have both agreed to endorse a proposed salary system that would open for two parallel salary structures in the Armed Forces in the future (Simonsen, 2012). This is a key step towards establishing a professional OR structure in that it would allow for differentiated but parallel salary systems at different rank levels. The fact that the officer unions concur is crucial in that the Ministry of Government Administration, Reform and Church Affairs was previously unwilling to endorse the process given their lack of endorsement. It is thus expected that the Ministry of Government Administration, Reform and Church Affairs may for the first time endorse efforts to restructure the salary system, thus paving the way for potential follow-on changes in the rank structures. So in essence, given that the unions are cooperating in efforts towards a hoped for merger in the future, timing has proven to be key to current progress in the overall process.

One interesting view on timing offered by several of the respondents concerned the next parliamentary general election which is scheduled for September 2013 (Thorsen, 2012). There was an expectation that a potential shift in government might herald a sea change in political perspectives and as such set the stage for a fundamental shift in policy toward the Armed Forces. Timing would therefore be of the essence for the process to run its full course. As already noted however, recent positions provided by political representatives from the present government, do not suggest that this is a prerequisite for change (Nordtun, 2012a). Multiple indicators from this study indicate that the political dimension is no longer such a dominant factor as may have been the case previously.

4.5 The holistic approach

In considering the OR process, we have seen that it is a piece of a bigger picture impacted by timing and ownership. As already highlighted, the whole dimension of ownership or stakeholders is central to the success of a process and this is also linked to the OR process as a part of greater reform. In the Swedish process a key factor was that implementing a professional OR structure

was only a lesser (albeit important) portion of a far reaching reform that focused on overall competency in the Armed Forces in general.

Interestingly, this would now appear to be happening in the Norwegian Armed Forces as well. In December 2011, a pre-study on competency in the Norwegian Armed Forces was completed by the Ministry of Defence and this appears to set out a course for a potentially far-reaching reform in many areas (M. o. Defence, 2012). Although a follow-on main study is yet to be completed over the coming year, the Minister of Defence has already stated his intent with regards to this review. In his new year's speech he highlighted that since the transformation of the Armed Forces, initiated after the cold war, "it is now obvious that the personnel and competency areas have not yet been the subject of a comprehensive and systematic review" (Bart Eide, 2012). This was an issue that would have his priority. He added "I also see that in a Defence Force with a high demand for expertise, it is necessary that we prepare for a career as a specialist" (Bart Eide, 2012).

Based on the initial findings described in the pre-study report, and the Minister of Defence's speech, it is therefore more than likely that Norway may now follow a course already set in Sweden. Although the Chief of Staff of the Army has now worked for several years on his programme to reintroduce a professional OR structure, indications are that momentum may now be gained through timing and a greatly increased degree of stakeholdership at the political levels. In his arguments for change, the Chief of Staff of the Army refers repeatedly to the heightened requirements for competency, which in this context is what Dandeker has described as Professional Military Education or PME. In discussing military professionalism in the 21st century, and listing the challenges and potential responses, Dandeker's key parameter is PME itself. As he notes; "the new force design and wider security context pose challenges for the military profession; these include how best to ensure that the system of professional military education is fit for purpose: that is, to deliver the kind of officer needed for the 21st century"(Dandeker, 2012, p. 2). This has been a common challenge for Armed Forces that are transforming themselves. This line of thought meshes well with that of the Chief of Staff of the Army, but with a singular difference. PME is the main effort and a professional OR structure therefore becomes just a piece of a bigger picture.

A key challenge for the Norwegian Army in including the specific requirements for a professional OR structure into an expansive and potentially far reaching reform is first and

foremost the time required. Although estimates and expectations appear to vary with regards to the required timeframe for implementing a professional OR structure, a number of the respondents agree that estimates are difficult, but that introducing a major reform in PME could take from anywhere between two to four years (Thorsen, 2012).

This timeframe would necessarily include the political process in addition to the required study and follow-on recommendations. It is also unclear if the Chief of Staff of the Army would find such a delay acceptable, given the pressing need for change currently felt in the Norwegian Army today (Opedal, 2011b). Several respondents have also clearly indicated that a holistic approach is what is required now and that attempts to introduce reform piecemeal will at best be problematic (Solberg, 2012b). At least one of the officer unions has stipulated that any new reforms must be holistic in their approach and encompass all the planned potential changes for officers in the future (Solberg, 2012b). This suggests that in order to have any chance of achieving success, the introduction of a professional OR structure requires a holistic approach.

4.6 An incomplete implementation of an existing process

When the new unit officer concept was introduced in 2005, expectations were high with regards to possible results. With an implementation directive released in December 2004 (N. M. o. Defence, 2004), the Ministry of Defence outlined a number of parameters and expected standards for the concept. Although some later criticisms have been justified, and both the Ministry of Defence and the Defence staff (Birkeland, 2012) have highlighted shortfalls through their evaluations (N. M. o. Defence, 2009), there has also been a prevailing perception amongst some (Frantzen, 2012), that the concept was never fully implemented as intended, and that it was therefore deserving of a proper effort, before further reforms were introduced.

Several of the respondents, including representatives from all three of the officer unions, echoed this very argument (Aas, 2012). Although the reasons given, varied somewhat, respondents indicated that the military organisation as such, had neither exploited the full potential that the concept offered, nor acted steadfastly in implementing it (Frantzen, 2012). One former battalion commander explained how; given the option to recruit officers under the unit officer concept or to sign them up under short term contracts, there was a tendency to opt for the latter, as there were concerns about funding for salaries not being available in the future. He further reflected that in retrospect this should not have been a concern, but in managing budgets at the unit level,

in a climate of fiscal restraint, it was better to be safe than sorry (Frantzen, 2012). Although the concept was intended to significantly reduce the number of short term contracts, in favour of an increase of unit officers, results over the first few years did not reflect this shift (Frantzen, 2012). Respondents acknowledged that a lack of implementation of the existing concept, both at the unit levels as well as centrally, had served to undermine its potential. Several respondents thus attributed a perceived lack of willingness at the ministry level towards implementing a new reform, to further expectations of the existing concept. As was pointed out; why introduce a new system, when the current system has not been properly tried out?

With the results and follow-on recommendations from the latest evaluation of the unit officer concept published in January 2012 (Birkeland, 2012), it is obvious that until a new system is introduced, efforts will still be made to enhance the current concept. As already noted, there are several potential reasons for this, but given that the unit officer concept was formally established through a parliamentary bill (Parliament, 2004), several respondents have commented that a political decision implies a demonstrated commitment on behalf of the Armed Forces in attempting to implement it, before asking for yet another decision. To do otherwise would draw unnecessary questions and could be a potential embarrassment for the Armed Forces, something that the Defence management is unlikely to allow. One can therefore again argue that the timing is not right politically, but for a very different reason.

Respondents from both the Defence Ministry and the Defence staff highlighted that there was a prevailing perspective that the Chief of Staff of the Army, had not fully exploited the possibilities in the existing concept, and that the Army staff was too quick to see limitations, before attempting to find solutions that were already available (Thorsen, 2012). Thus, although one can therefore argue about the various reasons for not fully implementing the existing concept, it appears that the current concepts existence and untried potential is still reason enough for some to hold off on working towards a completely new concept. This justification also goes some way towards explaining reluctance or in some cases even a perceived lethargy at the Ministry of Defence level, in working towards a new reform.

4.7 Costs

In the underlying arguments for reform, the issue of cost has only been mentioned peripherally. The costs of PME are however intrinsically linked to the field of human resource accounting, in

which extensive research has already been conducted (Cascio, 1991). The argument of cost has as yet, not figured as a prominent part of the OR structure debate and none of the respondents appeared to have any direct empirical perspectives. The Ministry of Defence has only recently attempted to quantify the overall expenditure that is linked to developing and maintaining PME in the Armed Forces (Thorsen, 2012), and accurate figures are still not available.

Although the arguments have to a far greater extent focused on PME, the Army staff was initially questioned as to the overall costs of implementing a new rank structure (Rønne, 2012). Representatives at the Ministry of Defence had early on in the process, aired initial concerns about the possible costs of implementing the outlined structure. The concerns related to the costs of committing to providing a career for those beyond the age of 35 years. As already mentioned earlier in the study, and as was pointed by at least one of the respondents, the initial study led by Admiral Røksund in 2002, had two separate but linked goals; one was the overabundance of officers at the mid to senior levels, the other was the lack of officers at the lower levels (Røksund, 2012). A point highlighted by two of the respondents was that in his current efforts, the Chief of Staff of the Army may be focusing almost entirely on the latter (Røksund, 2012). Although it can be argued that rectifying the one may eventually lead to a natural change in the other, it is obviously a long term project that may be very costly in the interim. These arguments compelled the Army staff to initiate a research project in collaboration with the Norwegian Defence Research Establishment (Rønne, 2012).

The goal of the project has been to quantify the costs associated with losing PME (Rønne, 2012). The rationale is based on the idea that overall costs spent on education and training of personnel are not fully recuperated in that the relevant employees leave the Armed Forces well before their service career is completed. The consequences are potentially a huge drain on existing resources. Although the project has not yet been completed, initial findings are strongly supportive of similar studies in the private sector, where the key argument is that a high turnover of personnel is extremely costly (Rønne, 2012). Simply put, the Armed Forces are ridding themselves of valuable and very costly PME before it can be fully utilised (Thorsen, 2012). As one respondent emphasised; “recruiting is one of the most costly activities one can engage in, and it is therefore difficult to understand how anyone can question that the planned new structure is going to be more expensive than the current concept” (Thorsen, 2012).

In one of his most recent decision memos on implementing reform in the OR structure, the Chief of Staff of the Army argues the case for significant cost savings; in the longer term, citing that significant economic gains are to be expected (Opedal, 2011a). The Ministry of Defence's new pre-study on competency (M. o. Defence, 2012) highlights the risk of competence or PME being a scarce resource in the future, and the crucial linkage between investments in competence and equipment, as a prerequisite to producing operational capability (M. o. Defence, 2012).

This statement goes a long way in defining the value that needs to be placed on competence or PME. One might therefore naturally assume that once cost has been given a convincing price tag, it will be put forward as a key argument for change. Costs openly represent differing perspectives, with the costs of competence loss been factored against the interim costs of extending careers for unit officers beyond 35 years of age. The time frame for costs therefore becomes a factor, with the shorter term costs been pitted against the expected longer term costs. Although it can be expected that costs may play a key argument in driving through change at a later stage, no figures as yet appear to be available. As the whole debate on costs has yet to surface, and given the fact that it has not yet been specifically addressed as the subject of a quantitative study, nor publicly raised as an argument, the issue is therefore still expected to be the subject of considerable debate in the future. It is currently unclear as to what the reasons for this are, but this is most likely linked to a lack of up to date empirical evidence, pending further studies. Timing clearly appears to play a role in this area as well.

5 CONCLUSIONS

In attempting to draw conclusions from the research, a number of aspects stand out directly. What many career officers still consider a major obstacle to change, namely political ideology, no longer appears to be a genuine impediment. Times have changed, as well as attitudes. The relevant political establishment clearly displays a pragmatic perspective and in those areas where such an attitude counts, there is open support for change and, remarkably, for reasons that are ideologically correct. The applied logic is converse and as has been pointed out repeatedly, the group that is directly affected by such change is deserving of a professional career. As this appears to be the case, and the political tide appears to have shifted, it would seem apparent that this is no longer a ground that needs to be fought over, or even one that triggers concern.

The idea of a profession versus bureaucracy in the Norwegian Army has, as in other countries, been a basis for concern amongst an increasing number of officers. There is evidence to suggest that this too has been an obstacle to reform, as the self-perception of belonging to a bureaucracy has been well entrenched, not only in the Army itself, but also in society as a whole. The perception of a profession appears to be gradually manifesting itself as an awareness amongst Norwegian Army officers. It can also be argued that this gradual change is to a large extent due to the Norwegian Army's Afghanistan experience over the last ten years, which has also included a direct exposure to other professional Army structures. Indications are that if there is an overall acceptance of the idea, first in the Army, then in the Norwegian Armed Forces as a whole, it may contribute to a different perspective in society in general, to include the political levels. This can then be expected to facilitate an acceptance of a professional OR structure. It is however difficult to approximate when a real shift or groundswell may occur, or to what extent it may exert an influence. As we have already noted, a political acceptance of the need for specialisation as well as trends and developments in society in recent decades, indicate that this now is likely only a matter of time.

Timing now seems to be an important factor linked to the re-introduction of a professional OR structure. Timing and opportunity are as much about a convergence of multiple processes related to the efforts by the Chief of Staff of the Army. The timing, versus a focus on PME, also appears to coincide with shifting attitudes accumulated over the past ten years, from the Norwegian Army's Afghanistan experience. This point has in addition appeared to help sway the Norwegian officer unions, who are considered to be a key element to progress in this process. Timing has additionally played a role in efforts by the officer unions to merge into one body. Although some still contend that a planned merger might be rocked by the re-establishment of a professional OR structure, others do not concur, and some positive effects have already been seen. As already noted, the two main officer unions have both agreed for the first time to support a proposal from the Norwegian Defence Staff to establish two parallel salary structures in the Armed Forces. This parallel pay structure potentially lays the foundation for establishing a professional OR structure. As stated above, this consensus from the officer unions may thus be the prerequisite for the Ministry of Government Administration, Reform and Church Affairs (Fornyings-, administrasjons- og kirke departementet (FAD) to support the initiative for the first time. Timing may now play a role in the Army's possibilities for garnering support from the two other services and eventually the Chief of Defence himself. This support, though, will necessarily have to draw away from the ongoing unit officer process that was formally introduced in 2005.

A prevailing perception that the existing unit officer concept was never fully exploited still remains. Although the Chief of Staff of the Army has attempted to build his ideas on it, it is still considered by some to be the viable alternative to a professional OR structure, and as such it undermines potential support for his suggested initiatives. However, an accumulation of empirical evidence in recent years suggesting that this current unit officer concept cannot succeed, serves to emphasise the need for an alternative. It is likely that efforts to realize the full potential of the existing unit officer concept may be continued, until the alternative gains enough momentum.

Costs have traditionally been an important factor in the debates on reform and restructuring, particularly in times of budgetary constraints. Based on the findings in this thesis, they appear however to have played a lesser role so far in the process of attempting to re-introduce a professional OR structure. Although initially considered to be a significant factor, a lack of up to date quantitative research has most likely resulted in a lack of arguments thus far. Some research is currently underway, and it is expected that evidence may be put forward as the debate progresses. The debate on costs can also be expected to centre around two main positions of the pros and cons. The potential opponents of reform will likely argue that the costs of providing a career commitment to the professional OR structure will be prohibitive, whereas the arguments for, will contend that the loss of competence and a high turnover of personnel will be too costly to sustain. This last approach is directly linked to the ideas of Professional Military Education or PME, which are considered to be central to a reform process.

Reform of PME which has started to gain noticeable momentum over the last year is considered to be a key factor in enabling the establishment of a professional OR structure. Recent PME reform was central to significant changes in the structure of the Swedish Armed Forces, and may thus be considered a pointer in the Norwegian process. General perceptions of the increasing importance of specialisation and competency can be expected to be an important driver in the Norwegian Army's process of establishing a professional OR structure. This is especially true, given the Minister of Defence's recent statements relating to the priority of this effort. The expansion of the recent pilot study on PME in the Norwegian Armed Forces also opens for a holistic and all encompassing approach which in turn greatly expands the potential for an increased ownership and stakeholder base.

The prospect of a broadened ownership or stakeholder base for the process is also obviously important. The perception that the Chief of Staff of the Army has necessarily had to engage in a “lonely struggle” is felt by many. This has directly impacted on his ability to rouse followers to his cause. What appears to have been an open lack of support from the other services as well as the Chief of Defence, may be said to have hampered his efforts to gain momentum. The potential for expanding the support base may be directly linked to a more holistic approach and a focus on a PME reform in general, where a professional OR structure may be just one piece of a bigger picture. In this sense, the Swedish process serves as a noteworthy example to follow.

Overall, the findings in this research strongly suggest that a professional OR structure is likely to become a reality in the Norwegian Army in the foreseeable future. A convergence of multiple developments in recent years supports this idea. The expected time frame required to implement such change is still difficult to assess, but on an optimistic note it is possible that, with the present momentum for change it may be introduced within two years. Political machinations and bureaucracy could delay implementation by a year or two, but mounting evidence indicates that change will occur and that the more optimistic time-frame is probable. It may, however, depend on a wider acceptance of the need for change across a number of areas, and that the proponents for establishing a professional Other Ranks structure within the Norwegian Army are able to exploit this window of opportunity as it crystallises.

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Annex A: List of key respondents

Aas, Egil Andre, Norwegian Army officer and union leader of Norges Offisersforbund (NOF)

Axelsson, Bengt, Brigadier; a senior Swedish Army officer and Head of the Directorate for Officers Academic Education at the Swedish National Defence College. Axelsson was a central figure in the reform process that also involved establishing a professional OR structure in the Swedish Armed Forces.

Bremerthun, Knut; Norwegian Army officer and union leader of Krigsskoleutdannede Offiserers Landsforening (KOL).

Børresen, Jakob, Commodore (R); former senior Norwegian Naval officer. Since his retirement in 2000, Børresen has been very active as a military historian, with extensive debating engagements on current Defence affairs in the public arena. He has published a number of books and articles both internationally and in Norway.

Dandeker, Christopher, Professor; AcSS, professor of Military Sociology in the Department of War Studies, King's College London and Co-Director, King's Centre for Military Health Research, Department of War Studies, King's College London. Dandeker is a leading authority on Professional Military Education (PME), as well as author of "Military professionalism and professional military education in the 21st century: the challenges and potential responses".

Diesen, Sverre General (R); former Norwegian Chief of Defence and an active proponent for change.

Fölstad, Johan, Colonel, a Swedish Army officer and current ACOS J3 in the Swedish Defence Staff. Fölstad led the committee that examined the personnel reform of the Swedish Armed Forces in 2005, which was implemented two years ago.

Frantzen, Henning, Colonel; Norwegian Army officer and Head of the Department of Military Studies at the Norwegian Defence University College. Frantzen was formerly a senior staff officer at the Department of Defence Policy and Long-Term Planning at the Norwegian Ministry of Defence, as well as Military Assistant to the former Chief of Defence, General Diesen.

Nermo, Bjarne, Brigadier; Deputy Director General of the Department of Defence Policy and Long-Term Planning at the Norwegian Ministry of Defence.

Opedal, Per Sverre, Major General; current Chief of Staff of the Norwegian Army.

Røksund, Arne, Rear Admiral (R); currently Secretary General at the Norwegian Ministry of Fisheries and Coastal Affairs. A former senior naval officer and Director at the Norwegian

Ministry of Defence, Røksund led the committee mandated to proposing a new OR or specialist structure in 2003.

Simonsen, Tom, Director; head of personnel in the Norwegian Defence Staff

Solberg, Eivind; Norwegian Air Force officer and union leader of Befalets Fellesorganisasjon (BFO).

Søgaard, Fridthjof, Director General; in charge of the Department of Management and Financial Governance at the Norwegian Ministry of Defence.

Thorsen, Jens Thorleif, Brigadier; currently acts as Director General at the Norwegian Ministry of Defence in charge of the Department of Personnel and General Services.