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## **PR, Lobbyism and Democracy**

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# PR, Lobbyism and Democracy

## *Mapping the revolving door in Denmark from 1981 to 2015*

Mark Blach-Ørsten, Ida Willig & Leif Hemming Pedersen

### Abstract

The growth of PR in Scandinavia is linked both to the mediatisation of politics and to the decline of corporatism. Studies in Sweden and Norway suggest that one consequence of these changes is the increasing number of politicians who find new careers as lobbyists in the private sector. In this study, we have constructed a data set of all members of the Danish Parliament who have left politics from 1981 to 2015 ( $n = 613$ ) and identified the number and type of job positions they have taken up subsequently ( $n = 1,094$ ). We find that, especially from the 1990s, we can register revolving door activity. Still, 89 per cent of all the registered job positions fall outside of lobbyism. 11 per cent of the job positions fall within the wider field associated with the emerging field of policy professionals (including lobbyism), while lobbyism on its own accounts for two per cent of the job positions.

**Keywords:** mediatisation, corporatism, revolving doors, policy professionals, PR, lobbyism

### Introduction

Recent studies of PR in Scandinavia all point to an industry on the rise. In Norway, Al-lern (2011) points, in particular, to two explanations for the growth of PR: first of all the mediatisation of politics has placed an increased focus on both the public and private image of actors and their ability to communicate to the public via the news media, and second, the decorporatisation of the Norwegian state has led unions and corporations to seek other ways to maximise their influence. In a study of the development of the PR industry in Sweden, Johansson & Larsson (2015: 129) also argue that the recent growth in the PR industry can be linked to change in the corporatist system in Sweden, especially from the 1980s and onwards. Where unions, business firms and interest groups used to find themselves widely represented in government committees and other government bodies, today the same groups seek instead to achieve influence through, among other things, lobbyism and opinion building in the news media. In Denmark, where the development of PR has been less in focus, Kristensen (2004, 2009) registers a growth in the PR industry from the 1980s to the early 2000s and (Binderkrantz et al. 2015) find a recent rise in different types of lobby activities from Danish interest groups.

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In sum, the studies mentioned above indicate that the growth in the PR industry is closely linked to other developments in Scandinavia, primarily changes within the news media and changes within the political system. For this reason, many studies of PR in Scandinavia tend to focus on either PR in relationship to the news media (Larsson 2009, Kristensen 2004, 2009, Wedel 2016) or to focus on PR in relationship to lobbyism, politics and democracy (Allern 2011, 2015; Ihlen & Gullberg 2015, Larsson 2005a, Palm & Sandström 2014, Svallfors 2016), while a third line of studies focuses more exclusively on the development of PR as concept, industry or practice (Larson 2005b; Tyllström 2013, Falkheimer & Heide 2014).

In this study, we focus on PR in relationship to lobbyism, politics and democracy. In 1996, the former leading Danish Social Democrat, Erling Olsen, called attention to a worrying tendency of former MPs to leave politics and become professional lobbyists in PR firms, or elsewhere, in the private sector (Rechtman & Larsen-Ledet 1998). In general terms, the movement of high level government personnel between the public sector and the private sector is described as a 'revolving door' and is regarded as a potentially corrupting influence on politics (Allern 2011, 2015; Garsten et al. 2015, Ihlen & Gullberg 2015). The concern is that former government employees use their first-hand experience of the policy making process, as well as their access to other employees still working in the public sector, to help their new employer gain unfair advantages in their policy influencing efforts.

Despite this focus on lobbyism, only a few studies in Scandinavia have so far tried to map which politicians, and how many, have actually gone through the revolving door. In a study of the revolving door in Sweden reported in Garsten et al. (2015), Selling (2015) and Svallfors (2016) found that, in 2012, seven per cent of all lobbyists had been members of the Swedish Parliament. In a study on the lobby profession in Norway, Allern (2015) notes more broadly that in the spring of 2014, roughly 90 former politicians worked in the major PR bureaus. In Denmark, we have found no studies specifically addressing the revolving door issue.

The focus of this article is therefore first and foremost to present and discuss a study on the revolving door in Denmark. As both Svallfors (2016) and Selling (2015) argue, most other studies on this subject have an Anglo-American focus, leaving questions as to how this development plays out in countries with different political cultures and different political settings. From the outside, the Scandinavian countries are often looked at as remarkably similar, but studies of both the news media (Strömbäck, Ørsten & Aalberg 2008) and the political system (Öberg et al. 2011) also point to differences within the countries. Thus, in this study we focus on the development of PR and lobbyism in Denmark to gain an understanding of whether, and how, this development may be different in Denmark than in Sweden and Norway, but also which similarities there may be found between Denmark, Norway and Sweden when compared to the US.

The rest of the article is structured in the following way: We begin by describing the growth of PR in Scandinavia and the structural changes that studies suggest have caused this rise; the mediatisation of politics and the decline in traditional corporatism. This leads to a discussion of forms of lobbyism and a focus on the politicians who leave politics through the so called 'revolving door' to work in the private sector. We then present the results of our study based on a data set of all MPs that left the Danish Parliament from 1981 to 2015 ( $n = 613$ ), of which we have been able to map the subsequent

careers of 589. Finally, we discuss the implications our findings might have for further debate on PR, lobbyism and democracy in Denmark.

## **The growth of PR in Scandinavia**

The concept of PR, public relations, covers a wide range of communication activities and roles. It is also a highly-debated subject. For some, PR is associated with propaganda and spin (Allern 2011, Larsson 2005b, Palm & Sandström 2014), while for others, PR is an essential and necessary tool for any actor (politician, political party, corporation etc.) that wants to influence society (Allern 2011, Larsson 2005a). The practice as well as the study of PR was established in the US in 1920s and early 1930s (Allern 2011) while both, as is clear from the studies mentioned below, have a different history in Scandinavia (see also Larsson et al. 2015). First of all, it seems clear that there has been a greater focus on the role and development of PR in both Sweden and Norway than has been the case in Denmark. Despite this, the studies do point to a development of PR in the Scandinavian countries that also shares some similarities.

In their study on the growth of the Swedish PR industry from the beginning of Second World War and onwards, Johansson & Larsson (2015) note that, in Sweden, the PR industry began in the public sector, not in the private, as was the case in the US (see also Larsson 2005b). Thus, the first PR practitioners worked for the Swedish State Information Bureau during WW II, and from the late 1950s PR began to grow within the private sector. By the 1960s, most of the larger corporations had PR officers and since then the PR industry has had its ups and downs in Sweden, with growth in the 1970s, but a decrease during the recession of the 1980s. From the 1990s, Johansson & Larsson (2015) find that the PR industry begins a rapid growth in both the public and private sector. They argue that this recent growth in the PR industry can be linked to a fundamental change in Swedish society, especially from the 1980s and onwards. Where unions, business firms and interest groups used to find themselves widely represented in government committees and other government bodies, today the same groups instead seek to achieve influence through, among other things, parliamentary lobbyism and media lobbyism (Johansson & Larsson 2015: 129).

The link between changes in corporatism, changes in the news media and the rise of a PR industry can also be seen in the case of Norway (Allern 2011, 2015). In Norway, PR was introduced by the political parties in the 1930s inspired by trends in the US (Larsson et al. 2015). Though starting early in Norway, the expansion of the PR industry did not accelerate until the 1980s and 1990s according to studies by Allern (2011, 2015). Allern (2015) mentions three possible explanations for the growth in the lobby industry: firstly, the public sector has become more market-oriented and has thus fostered a need for more professional communication. Secondly, the mediatisation of politics has placed an increased focus on both the public and private image of actors and their ability to communicate with the public via the news media, and thirdly, because of the decorporatisation of the Norwegian state. Allern (2011, 2015) states that, as a result of these changes, more and more people are working in the PR industry and that the industry is increasing its yearly earnings, but also that the PR industry is constantly changing, with some agencies closing down, while other, new agencies open up.

In the case of Denmark, according to Kristensen (2004, 2009), the development of PR began in the private sector in the 1950s, and the first formal association for PR practitioners was founded by practitioners in the private sector in 1961. However, the field of PR does not begin to grow until the 1980s, when PR also becomes part of the public sector in Denmark (Kristensen 2004). Kristensen (2004) registers a growth in the PR industry from the 1980s to the early 2000s, which other data also suggest. For instance, in 1988, the association of the Public Relations industry was founded under the name of Association of Public Relations Companies. In 2004, this association had 23 member companies, and today (2016) 30 companies are members. Numbers from the Danish Agency of Statistics also state that employment at PR agencies grew by 37 per cent from 2011 to 2015 and their revenue grew 34 per cent in the same period. Kristensen (2004), who has done one of the few studies on the development of PR in Denmark, does not specifically link the rise of PR to the decline in corporatism, but focuses on the professionalisation of communication. However, looking at the studies above, the brief history of the Danish PR industry that Kristensen outlines, and the recent numbers on the growth of the industry from the Danish Agency of Statistics, the same indication of a link between societal changes, and the rise of the PR industry (which was found in both Norway and Sweden) can arguably also be seen in the case of Denmark.

In sum, the studies on PR in Scandinavia point to growth in the PR industry. This growth is however often associated with other significant changes in the Scandinavian societies, primarily the mediatisation of politics and the decline in traditional corporatism.

## **The mediatisation of politics**

The term mediatisation describes a process in which the news media becomes increasingly important, and perhaps even dominant, in relationship to politics (Asp 1986, Hjarvard 2008, Strömbäck 2008). Strömbäck (2008) identifies four phases of mediatisation and argues that these phases may be seen as linear, but may also play out very differently across time and, especially, geographic space. The first phase occurs when mass media constitute the most important source of information and channel of communication between the citizenry and political institutions and actors, such as political parties, governmental agencies, or political interest groups. The second phase is reached when the news media have become independent of governmental or other political bodies. In the third phase, the independence of the media has further increased to such a degree that political actors as well as other social actors have begun to adapt to the news media, rather than the other way around. And finally, in the fourth phase, mediatisation is reached when political and other social actors not only adapt to the news media logic, but also internalise this logic.

Studies of the mediatisation in Denmark generally conclude that politics in Denmark is highly mediatised (Blach-Ørsten 2016). Danes get most of their information about politics from the news media, especially TV and online newspapers (Schrøder et al. 2016). The news media are seen as an independent and influential political institution (Allern & Blach-Ørsten 2011) and politicians incorporate news values to a high degree in their political communication (Esmark & Blach-Ørsten 2011). In line with this, both

Allern (2011) and Selling (2015) point out how the mediatisation processes has created a demand for media training of politicians as well as corporate leaders and an increased focus on PR and communication with the media – as well as making the news media an increasingly independent arena for political influence (Binderkrantz 2012).

### **The decline of corporatism**

While the news media has become an increasingly important arena for political influences, older forms of influence, such as influence through corporatist networks and committees, seem in decline. Generally, corporatism is described as the integration of organised interest in the processes of both preparation and implementation of public policies (Christiansen & Rommetvedt 1999, Blom-Hansen 2000) and traditionally the Scandinavian countries have been regarded as some of the most corporatist liberal democracies in the world (Öberg et al. 2011). Chasing the roots of corporatism in Scandinavia, Blom-Hansen (2000) finds that corporatism has a long historical tradition in all the countries and that corporatism emerged almost concurrently in the three countries in the late 1800s and early 1900s. However, since the late 1990s studies have increasingly observed emerging changes in the corporatist societies, resulting in the corporatist structures losing influence (Binderkrantz et al. 2015, Rechtman & Larsen-Ledet 1998, Rommetvedt et al. 2012, Öberg et al. 2011). The central focus of most of these studies is the committee system. Öberg et al. (2011) therefore argue that corporatism can most accurately be measured by the number of policy-preparing committees which include organised interest; the more policy preparation a government is willing to delegate to the committee system the stronger the corporatist nature of the system, the less delegation the more the system moves away from classic corporatism.

Based on this measurement, Öberg et al. (2011: 373-374) conclude that the decline in corporatism had already started in Sweden in the 1970s, but also that the decline in Sweden probably has been less significant than in Denmark and Norway. In Denmark and Norway, on the other hand, corporatism peaked around 1980 and then declined. Öberg et al. (2011) also find somewhat different reasons for the decline in the three countries. In Denmark, corporatism is thought to have declined mostly due to both decentralisation of politics to the level of local government and the Europeanisation of politics, which moves the formulation of important policy issues, such as the environment, to an EU-level. Other important factors include the Danish parliament (Folketinget) having more power due to a more assertive opposition, financial cutbacks, and unions that became more fragmented and experienced a declining membership. For Norway, the reason mentioned by Öberg et al. (2011) is mainly the strengthening of the opposition in the Norwegian parliament (Stortinget). For Sweden, the reasons seem less clear, but it is argued that the Swedish governments of the 1970s and 1980s had fewer resources and therefore less to bargain with in corporatist negotiations.

Other studies (Blom-Hansen 2000, Christiansen & Rommetvedt 1999, Rommetvedt et al. 2012) argue along the same line, but also stress the fact that the Scandinavian societies have become more fragmented and more pluralistic, making the classic corporatist negotiations slower and more complicated. Finally, the decline in corporatist committees seems especially clear when the focus is on the decline of committees charged with policy preparation rather than implementation.



## **Lobbyism on the rise**

The mediatisation of politics as well as the decline in corporatism has led to rise in lobbyism in Scandinavia according to the studies mentioned above. Christiansen & Rommetvedt (1999:196) underline that even though theory might traditionally distinguish between two types of institutions that govern the relationship between organised interests and state actors – namely corporatism and lobbyism – the two forms of interaction should really be seen as two opposite ends of a continuum. Thus, corporatism describes the highly institutionalised ways that organised interest and political actors may interact – boards, councils, committees, hearings etc. – whereas lobbyism is characterised as an informal, and mostly ad hoc based, form of interaction.

Focusing on types of lobbyism, Christiansen & Rommetvedt (1999) identify two types of lobby strategies: one type directed at parliamentary actors and therefore named ‘parliamentary lobbyism’, and one type of strategy directed at administrative actors and thus named ‘administrative lobbyism’. A later study by Rommetvedt et al. (2013, however, identifies three distinct forms of lobbyism: parliamentary lobbyism, governmental lobbyism, and bureaucratic lobbyism. Binderkrantz (2012), in her study on the changing roles of interest groups in Denmark, add the news media as another point of entry for the lobbying strategist, making ‘media lobbyism’ a fourth distinct type of lobby activity. Based on panel data from several surveys and on the distinction between the three forms of lobbyism – parliamentary, governmental and bureaucratic – Rommetvedt et al. (2013) conclude that interest groups in both Denmark and Norway increasingly between the years 1982-2005 lobby both parliament and government in order to gain influence, whereas there is little change regarding the relatively low level of lobbyism aimed at civil servants: bureaucratic lobbyism.

Studies looking at the development of lobbyism in the different Scandinavian countries are nonetheless still few in number. Ihlen & Gullberg (2015) argue that the most important study of lobbyism in Norway is the study done by Espeli (1999), and since then only a few studies have been done on the subject. According to the study by Espeli, lobbyism in Norway had its first breakthrough in the 1970s when two of the Norwegian oil companies (Hydro and Statoil) began to systematically develop their contacts with the Norwegian Parliament. This development then accelerated in the 1990s. Ihlen & Gullberg (2015) thus conclude that lobbyism in Norway has increased from the 1970s and onwards and that lobbyism is likely to have become more and more professionalised. They also conclude that Norwegian politicians seem to look favourably at lobbyism, but since no studies have been done on the effects of lobbyism, they emphasise that, in general, there is too little knowledge on lobbyism in Norway.

In Sweden, there are some studies that look at lobbyism in relation to the Swedish Parliament. One study by Möller (2009) concludes that there is regular contact between politicians and lobbyists, but also that the politicians are split in their views on whether lobbyism should be seen in a positive or negative light. In an interview-based study, Strömbäck (2011) finds that Swedish politicians, in general, look favourably on lobbyism and consider lobbyists as contributing to the policy making process by supplying politicians with facts and new information. Strömbäck (2011) also concludes that more research into lobbyism in Sweden is required.

In Denmark, only one report on lobbyism has been done, and it was done by a PR company that specialises in lobbyism. The report, completed in 2012 by the company,

Advice, is a survey of Danish politicians and their relationship with lobbyists. The report concludes that contacts between politicians and lobbyists are frequent for politicians in the Folketing, the Danish Parliament. A little more than 60 per cent of the politicians surveyed answered that they have contacts with lobbyists several times a week. Like the Swedish politicians, the Danish politicians also have a favourable view of lobbyists, arguing that they contribute to the politicians' work with new information and new facts (Advice 2012).

## **The relationship between politics and the private sector: The question of the revolving door**

In the studies mentioned in the sections above, we find evidence to support the argument that the combination of both the mediatisation of politics and the decline in corporatism are amongst the structural changes that have given rise to increased lobbyism and a growing PR sector across Scandinavia. It is, however, also clear that lobbyism can take place under many different names and in many different forms. The same goes for PR, a concept that can also be associated with many different forms of communication activities. Allern (2011, 2015) and Selling (2015) argue for a focus on lobbyism understood as public affairs work done by former politicians working in the private sector. Both argue that former politicians are valuable as PA consultants because they have access to the political system, understand the system and have experience in political analysis. Selling (2015) quotes Lazarus et al. (2013) as showing that after the US election in 2012 half of the outgoing House and 60 per cent of the members that left the Senate went on to register as lobbyists. In a more recent study by the same authors, Lazarus et al. (2016) show that, based on a data set of all members of Congress who left the institution between 1976 and 2012, members of the House and the Senate are roughly equally likely to become lobbyists, but Republicans are more likely to become lobbyists than Democrats. In the Swedish studies reported in Garsten et al. (2015), but also in Selling (2015) and Svallfors (2016), they find that amongst Swedish lobbyists (working in 2012) seven per cent come from a career in the Swedish parliament. Compared to the studies from the US, Selling (2015) concludes this is a low number. Still, both Selling (2015) and Allern (2015) point out that several former MPs can now be found working for the PR industry in Sweden and Norway.

## **Methodology: Mapping the revolving door in Denmark**

To investigate whether the same tendency toward revolving door activity also can be registered in the case of Denmark, we constructed a data set consisting of all MPs who have left the Danish Parliament between 1981 and 2015. By accessing their online CV's on the webpage of the Folketing, but also by researching newspaper articles, social media pages like LinkedIn and Facebook, and the Danish biographical dictionary *Kraks Blå Bog* (Kraks Blue Book) we tracked and mapped the careers of 589 of the 613 former MPs who have left the Danish Folketing since 1981. Thus, out of the 613 MPs, we were not able to map the subsequent careers of 24 former MPs. Most of these (37.5 per cent) were MPs from the former, right wing party, Fremskridtspartiet (Progress Party), and while newspapers, in the case of most of the former Danish MPs, ran small stories on



birthdays, job changes, etc., the former members of Fremskridtspartiet did not get the same media attention. We did, however, successfully map the subsequent careers of 589 former MPs. This means that the study presented below is based on a mapping of 96 per cent of the MPs that left the Danish Folketing from the election in 1981 to the election in 2015.<sup>1</sup>

In our mapping, we focus on the job positions taken up by the former MPs. However, we do not only focus on lobbying. Inspired by the study by Garsten et al. (2015) we have chosen to focus on nine different types of job positions, of which four are categorised as job positions for the so-called *policy professionals*. The policy professionals are “(...) people who are employed to affect politics and policy, rather than elected to office” (Selling 2015: 7-8). Among these are professional lobbyists, but also job positions in think tanks, unions and interest groups.

We map as many as up to nine subsequent job positions per former MP. Re-election to parliament is only registered as *one* subsequent job position, even if it includes election for several terms in a row. In the rare case of a former MP experiencing two re-elections to parliament, separated by a period with one or more other job positions, the re-elections are registered as different job positions. Since most of the former MPs take up a magnitude of (also often paid) board memberships in their subsequent careers, we have found it too challenging to map all of these. Hence, board memberships are not included as job positions, with the exception of board memberships of the nine organisations which according to Binderkrantz, Christiansen & Pedersen (2014) are the most influential in Danish politics: The Confederation of Danish Industry, The Danish Chamber of Commerce, The Danish Agriculture and Food Council, The Danish Confederation of Trade Unions, The United Confederation of Danish Workers, The Danish Union of Public Employees, The Danish Local Government, The Danish Regions and The Danish Consumer Council.

With our mapping of the job positions of the former Danish MPs we seek to answer the following research questions:

RQ 1: Which job positions do former MPs move into when leaving the Danish Parliament?

RQ 2: From which political parties do the MPs who find work as policy professionals come from?

RQ 3: What is the educational background of the politicians who find work as policy professionals?

## Findings

Looking at table 1 below, we see all the positions taken up by the former MPs from 1981 to 2015. Thus, each column shows how many subsequent job positions a certain ‘year’ of former MPs has taken up afterwards. The table shows, first of all, that many former MPs find positions outside the field of lobbying, unions, think tanks and interest groups. Most of the MPs leaving return instead to – or find new – positions as for instance teachers, police officers or nurses. Secondly, another significant number of former MPs stay in politics at the regional or local level and thirdly many MPs also become ‘politically

appointed' to various positions within the public sector (for instance government committees or as EU commissioners). Thus, the first conclusion based on table 1 is that out of the 1,094 job positions, we have registered, 979 of these fall outside the field of PR/lobbyism or job positions sought out by the so-called policy professionals. This means that 89 per cent of all the registered job positions fall outside positions associated with the revolving door phenomenon.

Looking more closely at the remaining job positions, 24 of these positions has been registered as lobbyism. Popular job titles here include 'Head of PA', 'Public Affairs Manager' or 'Consultant'. These 24 job positions have been registered to 21 politicians meaning that a few of the registered politicians have had more than one job position working as a lobbyist. This also means that out of the 1,094 job positions we have registered, two per cent fall in the category of lobbyism.

**Table 1.** *Job positions from 1981-2015*

Type of job position	Election												Total
	1981	1984	1987	1988	1990	1994	1998	2001	2005	2007	2011	2015	
Lobbying position	0	1	0	0	0	2	2	1	8	4	5	1	24
Interest organization	1	6	1	8	0	3	6	6	8	10	7	1	57
Union	5	4	6	3	0	0	2	1	3	0	0	0	24
Think tank	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	3	4	1	0	10
Journalism	2	2	1	4	2	2	7	1	2	0	1	0	24
Communication	1	0	0	2	0	3	1	0	4	4	1	0	16
Bureaucrat	4	6	1	2	1	2	9	0	1	0	0	0	26
Other (non-policy professional jobs, education, ect.)	57	37	23	32	33	35	52	26	37	36	20	0	388
Elected member (municipality, region, EU, MP-substitute, etc.)	29	30	16	19	27	32	36	44	28	36	22	0	319
Political appointee (committees, region, municipality, ect.)	33	36	18	26	22	14	19	11	9	10	8	0	206
Total	132	122	66	97	85	93	135	90	103	104	65	2	1094
Number of politicians (with mapped subsequent careers) who were not re-elected or running for office in the following election	49	47	26	44	52	51	70	62	53	73	60	2	589

*Note:* The number and type of jobs taken up by former Danish MPs from 1981 to 2015. The table indicates which types of jobs the politicians from a given election year take up after not being re-elected – or running for office – in the following election – e.g., the 49 politicians who were elected in 1981, but were not re-elected in 1984, have taken up a total of 132 jobs subsequently. (N=1094). The significant drop in the number of subsequent job positions held by the group of former MPs who have left the Folketing after the election in 2015 is due to the fact, that this group only consists of former prime minister Helle Thorning-Schmidt and former minister of finance Bjarne Corydon, who were the only ones who had left office by the time the mapping was carried out (latest update April 4, 2016).

Table 1 also addresses the number of job positions taken up by former MPs within interest groups, think tanks or unions. The table shows that working for an interest organisation is the most recurrent next step for an MP, when it comes to policy professional jobs. Moving from politics to work for a union was a more frequent event at the beginning

of the examined period than after the more recent elections. Furthermore, table 1 shows that the movement from MP to a position in a think tank seems a more serious option from the 2000s and onwards, indicating a link to the growth of think tanks in Denmark that began in the mid-2000s (Blach-Ørsten & Kristensen 2016).

Turning to table 2 and looking at the different political parties that former MPs used to represent before taking up a job in a lobbying firm, a think tank, a union, or an interest organisation, table 2 shows that most of the former MPs used to represent the two biggest parties in the Folketing, the Social Democrats (Socialdemokraterne; centre-left) and the Liberal Party (Venstre; centre-right), with most former MPs coming from the Social Democrats. If you include the MPs from the smaller parties in the Folketing, Danish Social Liberal Party (Det Radikale Venstre; centre-left), Socialist People's Party (SF; centre-left) and Conservative People's Party (Det Konservative Folkeparti; centre-right) you find that, in total, most MPs who leave the Folketing to work in positions at either a lobbying firm, a union, an interest group, or a think tank come from centre-left parties.

**Table 2.** *Policy professionals and party association*

Party	Policy professionals
Liberal Party of Denmark (centre-right)	19
Danish Social Democrats (centre-left)	20
Danish People's Party (right-wing)	0
Danish Social Liberal Party (centre-left)	8
New Alliance (now Liberal Alliance; centre-right)	1
Centre Democrats (centre-left)	3
Socialist People's Party (centre-left)	10
Left Socialist (now Red-Green Alliance; left-wing)	4
Red-Green Alliance (left-wing)	1
Christian Democrats (centre-right)	2
Conservative People's Party (centre-right)	10
Parties from Greenland or The Faroe Islands	1
Progress Party (right-wing)	1
Other	2

*Note:* Number of former Danish MPs who have taken up a minimum of one job position in either lobbying, think tanks, unions, or interest organizations distributed on political parties. (N=82).

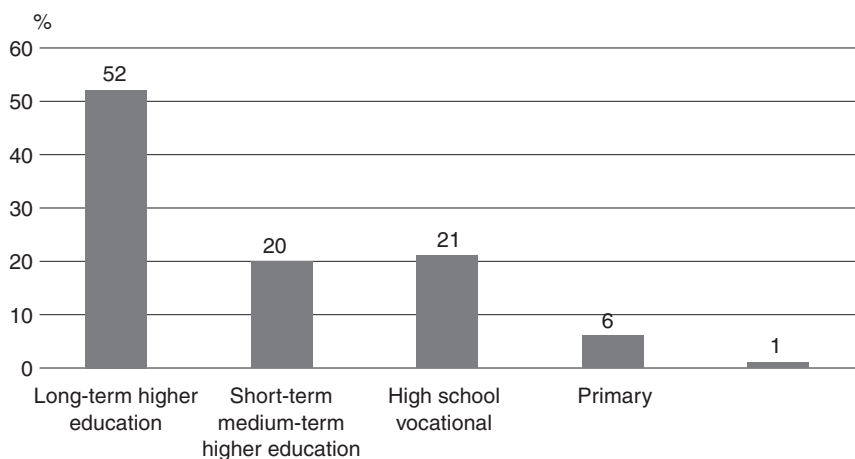
Looking specifically at party affiliation and the move to lobbyism, table 3 below shows that the MPs who leave politics to work specifically as lobbyists, have more often come from the centre-right parties than from centre-left parties.

Turning to our third and final research question, figure 1 below show that most of the MPs moving into these types of positions have a university education at graduate level (52 per cent). A study done on MPs after the 2015 election showed that 44 per cent of the elected MPs had a long-term higher education (Cevea 2015). Since our study tracks politicians from 1981 to 2015, these numbers cannot be directly compared. However, the numbers indicate that the MPs who move on to job positions working as policy professionals are better educated than the average member of the Folketing.

**Table 3.** *Lobbyism and party association*

Party	Lobbyists
Liberal Party of Denmark (centre-right)	7
Danish Social Democrats (centre-left)	4
Danish People's Party (right-wing)	0
Danish Social Liberal Party (centre-left)	2
New Alliance (now Liberal Alliance; centre-right)	0
Centre Democrats (centre-left)	1
Socialist People's Party (centre-left)	2
Left Socialist (now Red-Green Alliance; left-wing)	0
Red-Green Alliance (left-wing)	0
Christian Democrats (centre-right)	0
Conservative People's Party (centre-right)	4
Parties from Greenland or The Faroe Islands	1
Progress Party (right-wing)	0
Other	0
Total	21

*Note:* Number of former Danish MPs who have taken a minimum of one job position as a lobbyist distributed on political parties. (N=21)

**Figure 1.** *Educational background of policy professionals*

*Note:* Educational background of former Danish MP's who have up taken up job positions in lobbying firms, think tanks, unions, and/or interest organizations. (N=82).

## Conclusion

In our study, we have mapped 589 out of the 613 MPs that have left the Danish Parliament from 1981 to 2015 and the 1,094 job positions they have taken up subsequently. We find that 89 per cent of all the registered positions fall outside of job positions working as a lobbyist or working for an interest organisation, union or think tank. This leaves 11 per cent of the job positions that do fall within the wider field associated with the emerging field of policy professionals (including lobbyism), while lobbyism on its own accounts for two per cent of the job positions. In the Swedish study from Garsten et al.

(2015), mapping lobbyists in 2012, seven per cent had a background as an MP. Since we have mapped MPs over time, and Garsten et al. (2015) mapped a single year, the numbers cannot be directly compared. However, both studies indicate that the number of politicians who leave Parliament to work with lobbying is low in both countries, especially when compared with the US. A reason for the difference between Sweden and Denmark, methods aside, could be that studies point to an earlier decline in corporatism in Sweden than in Denmark, giving both PR and lobbying a 'longer' history in Sweden, thus perhaps also making lobbying a more established career choice in Sweden than in Denmark.

The Danish MPs who go through the revolving door come from both the centre-left parties and the centre-right parties. In total, most of the politicians who go through the revolving door come from centre-left parties, but politicians from the centre-right parties most often take up positions in lobbying firms. In accordance with the Swedish studies of revolving door politicians, the majority of Danish politicians who go through the revolving door are amongst the better educated part of the Folketing.

Based on our findings, it would seem that the focus on MPs turning into lobbyists working for PR firms that launched the debate in Denmark today is too narrow a focus to actually describe the development of the revolving door in Denmark. Only a small number of MPs over the years (21) become lobbyists. However, a higher number – 82 – of MPs take up positions as policy professionals working for think tanks, unions etc. Even though these job positions may not solely involve lobbying, working for a think tank, interest organisation or a union may indeed still involve elements of lobbying, and thus raise some of the same questions about privileged access to the policy formulating process that started the debate about lobbying in Denmark to begin with. Indeed, if we do include these new job positions as also being part of the development of lobbying, then it becomes more clear that we can begin to address the revolving door as a phenomenon that also exists in Denmark.

## Note

1. This does not include substitute members who have replaced elected MPs, either for a short period or permanently, unless the substitutes themselves have been elected MPs before or after their term as substitutes. Therefore, it follows, it was also registered if former MPs became substitute members in their subsequent careers.

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