

The politicization of recruitment to central public administration in Finland

BY KRISTER STÅHLBERG

The problem of politicization

Since the second half of the 70'ies more or less scandalous and well publicised law suits have involved high civil servants. According to Gallup polls general trust in the impartialness of civil servants has eroded. The public critique of administrative practices has increased.

Much of the debate around civil servants has in one way or another been related to the politicization of the Civil Service. The civil servants' moral has been questioned because they are increasingly perceived to be servants of the party rather than of the public in large.

The reason for the change in the public mood probably lies in few cases of misconduct that have been widely publicised. But public anger of course also reflects the fact that Finnish Civil Service is generally perceived in traditional weberian terms. The scandals and law suits bear witness of deviations from cherished ideals or rooted myths about the Civil Service.

Even if a peak in the debate of the politicization of public administration was reached in the late 70'ies, the issue has been contested for a long period of time. An indicator of this may be found from the Parliamentary proceedings. From the years 1961-67 I have found only two specific concerns expressed by members of the Parliament, one petitionary motion and one written question. The years 1967-72 saw the first peak in the interest in politicization. Five petitionary motions and one written question were produced by the representatives. In the years that followed only one indication of interest could be registered. But during the years 1978-81 another peak occurred. We find one petitionary motion, three written questions and three oral questions. This last period also had an exceptionally fierce parliamentary debate on politicization in relation to a bill. About 100 speeches were held.

This parliamentary activity mirrors several typical features of the politicization concern. All of the motions and questions were produced by non-socialist parties. Mostly they were produced by opposition parties. This tendency was strong also in the parliamentary debate.

The parliamentary indicator then supports one general assumption, namely that the politicization has been favoured by the left parties and opposed by the center and right parties. It also supports the view that political appointments have increased since the historical election of 1966. In this election the left parties gained majority in Parliament, and this victory has in many accounts been pointed out as a turning point in the Finnish post war political life.

Especially prior to politicization being generally perceived as something bad and almost criminal, there was a tendency on the part of the left parties to defend political appointments. The research director of the Social democratic party expressed himself clearly as he answered a circular interview by an administrative magazine: "Means by which to secure compliance . . . are among other things changes in recruitment of civil servants . . . and democratic control of the administration. With regard to recruitment care must be taken that the Civil Service is filled by servants whose attitudinal distribution is in better concurrence than before with the distribution of the society at large" (Kairamo 1974, my translation). He goes on pointing out that this means that the power distribution between left, center and right should be mirrored within the Civil Service. These views were supported by the communists who saw the debate on politicization only as an instance of a bourgeois Civil Service selfdefence.

During the decade that has passed since the quoted interview also the leftist attitudes have turned much more critical to the politicization.

Opportunistic reasons may play a part in this change of attitude. At least as important, however, seems to be another reason, namely that experiences of political appointments have not been altogether positive. A party may well find itself having appointed a master rather than a servant. Even if a civil servant's loyalty is high at the moment of appointment it may have changed over the years.

Notwithstanding the fact that the interest in politicization has been high for quite some time and that this feature has been generally perceived to be characteristic of the Finnish public administration within a Nordic context, knowledge of the phenomena has overwhelmingly been journalistic. No major scientific attempt to measure politicization and its correlates has been made. In this paper I shall therefore draw on some results from an ongoing project in which we try to throw light on this phenomena from the corridors of politics and bureaucracy.

The formal recruitment of civil servants

Before we are able to define and characterize political appointments in the Finnish context, a short review of the formal recruitment system must be done.

The Civil Service positions are filled through open competition among all who are interested and have formal qualifications for the jobs. No special administrative education exists. The formal qualifications for the jobs are individually specified and in about half of higher central administration positions this means that a specific academic degree is mentioned. For most of the other higher positions we find mention only of "suitable academic degree". Some additional requirements are also stated. These vary, but it is not uncommon to require special insights into and experience of the field in question.

Since we will be concerned by appointments to higher central administrative positions, it is central to note that the Finnish constitution includes a section on grounds for promotion within the Civil Service. According to section 86 the general grounds for promotion are ability, aptitude and civic virtue. This last ground is of secondary importance, whereas juridical interpretation of what is meant by ability and aptitude is common. The prevailing view seems to be that ability refers to educational attainments and aptitude to commendable conduct in previous jobs. By and large the constitution points to educational

achievements and good experience as ground for recruitment to public service.

The formal power to appoint civil servants is vested at different levels. If we take the ministries as an example, they employed around 3 000 persons altogether after the mid 70's. Of these servants the President appointed 16 %, the Cabinet 6 % and the remaining 78 % was appointed within the ministries respectively (Kiviniemi & Törmä 1979). Within this paper we will be concerned with only the highest level civil servants, operationally those appointed by the President or by the Cabinet at the central administrative level. To this group also belongs somewhat over 1 000 persons from the leading levels of central boards. Excluded from the study are state regional authorities. Further we have excluded the church, courts of justice and the universities. Due to the special career system within the administration of foreign affairs, this sector has also been excluded. What we have left is thus all higher appointments within the state central administration of ministries and central boards and equivalent state agencies.

A fairly normal appointment procedure would be the following: A position is declared open for applications during a period of 30 days. After this period an appropriate civil servant within a ministry deals with the applications, summarizes the curricula of the applicants. A senior civil servant acts as referendary in the matter and submits it for formal decision at a Cabinet meeting. If the President takes the final decision, the matter is submitted to the President during presidential sessions of the Cabinet by the appropriate minister. Within this procedure one among on an average 6 applicants will be appointed.

There are important exceptions to this "normal" procedure. In many cases a lower authority, a Central Board or some other agency, first prepares a submission to the ministry in which it proposes three names from among the applicants. In cases in which formal submissions are prepared, the applicants usually have the right to appeal the preliminary decision. This right to appeal is an important safeguard in cases where the qualifications of the position are clearly spelled out, but of course it has only minor importance in cases where the formal qualifications are only broadly spelled out. This last situation holds true for a large part of the highest positions. These are exceptions to the normal case also in that they are not formally declared open for applications. The appointing authority may itself try to find persons it would

like to appoint. Possible contestants for the job are given a chance to announce their interest in the job, and in these cases the appointment procedure is similar to the "normal" case.

The empirical data in the study we draw upon covers the years 1975, 76, 78 and 80. The years were chosen in order to cover a sufficient number of appointments made by all those Cabinets that sat during the period 1972–1981. The ministries allowed us to copy the formal submission memorandas on which the appointments were based. These contain summaries of all applicants and sufficient information on the positions to be filled. As a rule they also contain a comparative evaluation of the applicants with an argument in favour of the applicant to be chosen.

From these formal memorandas few insights into the informal side of the appointment process can be gained. In order to obtain such information we turned with a short questionnaire to some supposedly well informed high civil servants from all governmental sectors, asking for their evaluation of specific political aspects of the appointments.

The population on which the results reported are based is presented in Table 1.

If we consider the years from which the appointments are taken and the overlap of these years with the listed cabinets, we may conclude that the turnover within the highest Civil Service is fairly constant. We may also note that different types of Cabinets are represented. Sorsa I and II and Koivisto II are majority cabinets with a broad parliamentary base. This is also true of Miettunen II although the first mentioned Prime Ministers are Social democrats whereas Miettunen represents the Center Party. Miettunen III was a center minority cabinet and Liinamaa was what is called a "presidential cabinet", that is a temporary cabinet

appointed by the President because the parties could not agree on a cabinet. The Liinamaa cabinet consisted mainly of senior civil servants.

A definition of political appointments

Needless to say there is little agreement within the political debate on what a political appointment is. Representatives of different parties accuse each other of political appointments, but rarely present operational criteria of what they mean.

Since there are constitutional rules for promotion to public service, political appointments have by many been defined as appointments in which party-political merits have superseded constitutionally sanctioned criteria for promotion. Per Lindholm (1976) has presented a definition which we can agree with. With a political appointment he understands appointments in which more formally qualified persons have been sidestepped in favor of a person with party merits. If the appointment is based only on an expressed interest in the position, it follows that the appointment is political if the appointing authority does not look for other possible candidates than those having suitable political affiliation. In practice we see the phenomenon of political appointments as one in which party political affiliation has been set up as a *de facto* and *a priori* qualification criteria for an appointment. Such a situation has by many jurists been interpreted as unlawful according to the constitution and other statutes. Nevertheless in many instances where appointments have been appealed, the Supreme Administrative Court has upheld the appointment. It is not entirely clear and agreed upon what interpretations the Court has in fact used. Most of the appealed cases come from the local governmental jurisdiction, and here the Court has often ruled in favour of local

Table 1. The appointments included in the study according to appointing authority and government

The cabinet appointing or acting as referendary in the appointment:	Appointing authority:		
	President	Cabinet	Tot.
Sorsa I (4.9.1972–13.6.1975)	42	34	76
Liinamaa (13.6.–30.11.1975)	45	30	75
Miettunen II (30.11.75–29.9.76)	32	50	82
Miettunen III (29.9.76–15.5.77)	16	41	57
Sorsa II (15.5.77–25.5.79)	63	59	122
Koivisto II (25.5.79–19.2.81)	65	58	123
n =	263	272	535

selfrule, especially if the appointments have been to positions having political weight (Konstari 1979).

An example may be cited in order to show that appointments are hard to assess also on the state level. A labor district directorship was open for application. 15 persons applied for the job. The Secretary General of the Ministry of Labour acted as referendary at the Cabinet meeting. He noted that Mr. Y ought to get the job. The Minister of Labour (Communist) moved against his Secretary and suggested Mr X who was appointed. Mr X was not among those applicants that the Secretary had seen as formally qualified for the job. Among the 15 applicants the Secretary had listed 7 who were formally eligible. Mr Y had worked for 15 years in very qualified positions within the labor administration. Mr X had four years of work experience, none of which in the area of labor administration. In any other respect Mr Y was also far more formally qualified than Mr X. The Secretary General noted his dissenting opinion to the minutes thus freeing himself from judicial responsibility of the decision. Another leading civil servant within the Ministry of Labour filed a complaint regarding the constitutionality of the appointment with the Parliamentary Ombudsman. In his verdict the Ombudsman only noted that it is difficult to know what is meant by the formal qualification criteria "good insights into the field of labour matters" (Majava 1979).

By and large the judiciary has shown great understanding for political appointments, but the praxis is far from uniform and there are signs of a more strict posture. Disregarding this formal aspect of the appointments, they have been fiercely criticized by many civil servants and by massmedia. An important reason for this criticism is that several aspects of the appointments are such that they can simply not be convincingly demonstrated for lack of binding evidence. In the last instance it is many a time a question of the intention of the appointing authority. I shall therefore enumerate some examples of the ways in which political appointments can be made.

In a common case which is open for interpretation the most meritorious candidate is sidestepped in favour of a person with the right party credentials. We are in these cases faced with the difficulty of assessing what weight ought to be given to par-political experience. Clearly no one would advo-

cate that such experience would disqualify an applicant.

Another situation is one in which formal qualification criteria are interpreted in a disputable and deviant manner and in a manner that favors the political appointment. A lower academic degree may be seen as satisfying the criteria of academic degree. Normally only final academic degrees are seen as qualifying.

We have already mentioned cases in which the appointing authority only looks for politically suitable candidates for a position. It is a general interpretation of the law that appointing authority is to work in the common interest also in appointments which are in many respects left open to its discretion.

A special instance of political appointments is to tie up "packages" of many appointments. In these packages usually all parties within the Cabinet get their share and it may even happen that an opposition party is given some of the spoil, although this is rare. The package is not necessarily decided upon at one meeting only. The parties may have an agreement covering positions that are filled with even long time lags. As the politicization has matured it is evident that the parties consider many positions as their vested interests and new packages are tied in which parties trade positions with each other. In many cabinets the participating parties have delegated all questions on appointments to a certain member of the party which together form an informal group negotiating the packages before they are decided upon.

A special case of packages is one in which watch-dog positions are created within the ministries or the agencies in order to satisfy the information interests of some party that feels it has been sidestepped within a particular agency. The two major cabinet partners during the period of this study, the Social Democratic Party and the Center Party, have agreed on many such arrangements. The watch-dog arrangement works either in filling old positions, or in creating entirely new ones.

In some cases, not many, formal qualification criteria have been changed through amendments in the appropriate ordinance before a position has been declared open. Also some cases are known in which exceptions have been given from the formal qualifications thus making the appointment of a politically preferred applicant possible.

All the mechanisms that have so far been mentioned pertain directly to the appointment pro-

cedure. Another side of the situation is that political appointments at least at higher levels seem to have influenced the willingness of qualified persons to apply for an opening. There exists a quite common attitude – discernible also among students at the universities – that it is no use applying for a job unless one has made sure the job is "really" open for competition or unless one has the right party-book. Thus many high attractive positions may get only a few applicants although the appointing authority would be willing to consider all – potential applicants simply assume that the position is already filled *de facto*.

With mechanisms of this kind at work we may expect political appointments to favour increasing closeness of the administration. Only persons within the agency know the score.

A final aspect of political appointments ought to be mentioned. There are appointments in which the best applicant in any respect is appointed. Still it is clear to those who know the game that no other applicant would have had a chance even if he had been better. Thus there may be a clear political side to appointments even in those cases that seemingly comply with every rule.

An empirical assessment of political appointments

Within the study well placed civil servants were asked confidentially to assess different aspects of politicization of the appointments. We tried to find at least two judges from every administrative sector and if we knew about the political standing of a "judge" we tried to choose the other judge of another persuasion. In Table 2 some results are given of this assessment.

Based on these results a division of the appointments into political and non-political ones has been made. The division is made under the assumption that political features are difficult to know about. It therefore suffices if one judge has responded affirmatively. The argument for this is that in very few instances did the disagreement stem from different affirmative stands among the judges. The recorded disagreements in fact mean that one judge responded affirmatively and the other(s) did not respond at all on that aspect of the appointment.

The cases for which no judgement could be obtained have been left outside the study. Most of these 44 appointments are from Central Boards and represent the lowest positions within these that were included in the study. If this group had been included in a comparison of political and non-political appointments, they would have strongly biased the results regarding characteristics of non-political appointments. We have thus ended with a total of 491 appointments that are included in the results that follow.

The following condition had to be satisfied in order for an appointment to be classified as a political appointment:

- at least according to one "judge" at least one of the following conditions prevailed: part of political package, position created for political reasons, qualification criteria changed, exception to qualification criteria granted, problematic interpretation of qualification criteria, only politically suitable candidates were looked for or considered.

Table 2: Civil servant judgements of the occurrence of political features in the appointments to higher central administrative positions (% , N=535)

	Both judges in agreement	Judges disagree	No judgement obtained
The appointment is part of a package	12.9	1.1	8
The position has been created for party-political reasons	0.8	1.1	8
The qualification criteria have been changed before appointment	0.4	–	8
Exception from qualification criteria has been granted	0.7	–	8
The qualification criteria has been interpreted questionably	9.0	2.1	8.2
Only politically suitable persons were looked for	3.9	9.9	8.2
The appointment had been smoothed through prior temporary appointments	19.6	31.4	8.2

The total number of political appointments is 213 if we count each criteria separately, but considering the overlaps that exist among them, the final number of political appointments is 158 or roughly a third of all appointments.

We have good reasons to assume that this is a very low estimate. We have not considered temporary appointments in delimiting political appointments, because the strategy is used for many other purposes than purely political ones. It is an effective instrument for the bureaucracy to further its own interests since it has much more discretion in appointing persons only temporarily to hold jobs.

Table 3: Political and non-political appointments and the Cabinet involved (%)

	Political	Non-political	n=
Sorsa I	24,7	75,3	73
Liinamaa	30,1	69,9	73
Miettunen II	29,1	70,9	79
Miettunen III	59,6	40,4	52
Sorsa II	31,5	68,5	111
Koivisto II	28,2	71,8	103
	32,2	67,8	491

The variation between cabinets is not very large, but we find that the minority cabinet of Miettunen is a clear exception, more than half of the appointments were judged to be political by the civil servants. With regard to the critique against political appointments among many civil servants, it is interesting to note that the "presidential cabinet" of Liinamaa is not different from the political cabinets in its recruitment policy.

As a short summary of where we find political appointments we can note that they are common within the sector of general administration and the welfare sector. The share of political appointments is less than average within the economic sector and the infrastructure sector. Political appointments are somewhat more common at higher hierarchical levels. This holds true for ministries and central boards. But on an average political appointments are much more common among the ministries than among other state agencies.

Since the President appoints higher civil servants than the Cabinet, it is not surprising that we find a larger share of political appointments at the presidential level than at the Cabinet level.

To some extent we can substantiate the validity of the judgements given by the civil servants by correlating the results with some indicators of problematic features of the appointments. These variables are taken from the memoranda on the appointment. Political appointments are much more common if there has been disagreement at some point of the process. Disagreement here means that a lower authority has evaluated candidates differently than the ministerial civil servant acting as referendary.

Within the Finnish cabinet system members of the Cabinet have the right to postpone the final decision by asking for the memoranda until the next meeting. In appointments where this has been the case, political appointments are slightly more common than if the appointment has been made right away.

As our earlier example demonstrated, the Cabinet may make another decision than the one proposed by the referendary official. This happens rarely, in our material only twelve times, but almost all of these cases have been judged as political in nature.

In a comparison of the credentials of the appointed person and other applicants, we noted whether among the unsuccessful ones was anyone with superior educational (ability) or experiential (aptitude) merits. If among the applicants could be found persons with better educational achievement than that of the appointed person, political appointments were more common than if this was not the case. A similar tendency, although a weaker one than regarding education, held true for work experience.

Some recruitment correlates of political and non-political appointments

The excuse for political appointments was summarized in the argument presented by the research director of the Social democratic party. In the final instance it is a question of a compliant Civil Service and a major means for this is recruitment according to criteria of social heritage (class) and political affiliation ("to the victor belongs the spoil"). By and large the theoretical formulation can be found in the writing around a representative bureaucracy. I have elsewhere tried to show that this writing is logically questionable and often empirically false (Ståhlberg 1979). Here I shall just try to see whether according to some simple measures, political recruitment results differ from non-political recruitment.

Career aspects

Slightly surprisingly the appointment age of political appointments was on an average slightly higher than for non-political appointments. One would have expected politically appointed persons to be younger due to a more rapid career with the support of a party sponsor. A breakdown of average appointment age according to the level of appointment and type of agency showed that by and large no significant differences in age occurred. One exception was political appointments to the bureau level within ministries, these were significantly older than their non-political counterparts.

As we might expect from the age of the appointed persons, there was a slight tendency toward political appointees having more prior major appointments during their career – by major appointments we mean full time jobs that had lasted for more than a year. Only at the ministry bureau level was this tendency significant.

No differences between the groups could be seen in the average number of years they had worked within the agency prior to the appointment. Looking at the experience from other than state employment the general picture is one of great similarity between the groups.

These results are somewhat paradoxical. We know that political appointments tend to go hand in hand with at least some not appointed applicant having better qualifications. On the other hand, a comparison between people appointed shows that generally no major differences exist and that if anything, the political appointees have longer job experience from a larger number of prior jobs.

We have further tried to map whether the political appointments go hand in hand with external recruitment. If we compare the administrative sector of the appointment – on a rough scale distinguishing between general administration, welfare administration, infrastructure administration and economic administration – with the sector of the previous position held by the appointee, we find that internal recruitment is very high, from 80–90 %. From other studies we know that this internal recruitment is increasing (Ståhlberg 1983). Differences between political and other appointments are small.

If we go back in time to the job antecedent to the previous one and to the first main position held by the appointed persons, the picture changes slightly. Here we find that internal recruitment is somewhat higher for political appointees than for other within general and welfare administration

(Office of the Prime Minister, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of the Interior and agencies related to these and Ministry of Education, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and agencies related to these). For economic and infrastructure administration the tendency was clearly the reverse, non-political appointments were more internally recruited with regard to their entire career.

The situation within the two last mentioned sectors influences the general picture of careers within different sectors of the society. If we distinguish between state, local government, private companies, organizations and education as different work sectors, political appointments are more common with experience from more work sectors.

At a rough level this result fits the general notions advanced in relation to corporativistic ideas. Also in Finland corporatism is said to have advanced rapidly (Helander & Anckar 1983, Paloheimo 1984). The influence of organizations on the recruitment of civil servants does not seem to be large, and it has not been increasing. We have noted whether the appointed persons have earlier in their career held jobs within organizations standing in a client relationship to the state agency to which the people were appointed. In more than 90 % of the cases the appointed persons lack any such relationship. Client relationships are not more common among political appointments.

Characteristics of the appointed persons

During the period covered by the study the women's liberation has been a much debated issue and we might expect that political appointments would work in favour of the women. This is not true, however, although a slight tendency in that direction does exist. The tendency is too weak to be statistically significant.

If we look at the educational background of the recruited persons, we find that only in one educational group does political appointments account for a larger than average share. This category is the lawyers. Contrary to many views lawyers have not lost ground among leading civil servants. Among our appointments they account for more than 40 % of the cases. Within this group political appointments are almost 40 %.

Social and geographic mobility

Within the recruitment study we could not directly study the social background of those appointed.

We have some other data at our disposal from two other studies, that permit us to draw some preliminary conclusions.

According to results obtained by Uusitalo (1980) the share of high civil servants with parents from the rural communes has increased from 1969–79. This could be interpreted as an instance of political influence on the recruitment, but other factors may be influencing the situation as well. During these years the educational system at its highest levels expanded rapidly, and we might expect that to work in favour of recruitment of people originating at the country-side.

In another study (Ståhlberg 1983) characteristics of civil servants were measured for the period 1950–80. A comparison of civil servants' parental socio-economic status for the period 1950–65 and the period 1970–80 showed that practically no changes had occurred even if we kept constant different hierarchical levels of civil service. A high status background has been prevailing all through the postwar period. If the political appointments have as is generally assumed become more numerous from 1966 onward, and if political recruitment would work in favour of a socially broader recruitment, a clear change ought to be noticed. This is true also because we know that the left parties dramatically strengthened their political position after that time. No such changes have occurred. Political appointments do not seem to work in favour of equality in the recruitment in this respect.

Party-political consequences

As could be expected, political appointments must have almost per definition party-political consequences. Here we are interested in what parties have strengthened their position among the civil servants.

There is generally great reluctance to publicly admitting party affiliation. Many surveys have failed in trying, even confidentially, to obtain information on this point. Therefore we tried to approach the question another way in the previously mentioned study. Of all the civil servants, 1 114, that were included in the 1950–80 study, a third reported party-affiliation in *Who's Who* in Finland. The development over time within this third is very interesting. The share of Conservatives within the third is a fourth up until 1965. After that it starts to decline and in 1980 we do not find a single higher civil servant officially reporting conservative affiliation.

The change among social democrats and the Center Party is as strong. Social democrats increase from 20 % in 1970 to 40 % in 1980. The center increase is from 10 % to 23 %. We find this change indicator strongly correlating with the period in which social democrats and the center have formed the bulk of the Cabinet coalition and the period in which political appointments have generally been perceived to have increased.

Also in our recruitment study we asked our judges to report what party they thought had won. Of the political appointments more than 40 % were judged to have benefitted either the Center Party or the Social Democratic Party. If we include in this figure the share of smaller center parties – The Liberal Peoples Party and the Swedish Peoples Party – the share increases to more than half of the political appointments. But even in this study a good 40 % of the political appointments were not judged at all according to party.

Attitudes among civil servants on political appointments

No Finnish studies have been made of consequences on the internal relations within the Civil Service of politicization. In the mid 70'ies a survey was conducted in which civil servants were asked about their opinions on political appointments. Due to low percentage of answers, it is difficult to assess the representativeness of the views expressed. I shall therefore only generally indicate some views expressed according to the Salminen & Tynkkynen (1976) study.

The question put to the civil servants was: "It has been said that the Civil Service has been politicized. Do you find that this has happened within your ministry and in what form has it occurred. How do you see it affecting the working of the ministry?"

According to the authors responses to the question affirmed the politicization and the attitude expressed to it was largely negative and one concurring with the views of neutral civil servants. Among the answers could be found also positive views.

Among the pro views were mentioned that competent people could be recruited from outside and that the competency of the Civil Service was increased. It was perceived as a good thing that people with a labour background could be recruited. This made it more probable for views representative to the whole society to be regarded in the work. At the same time the politicization

had lessened attempts to cover up political opinions among civil servants and their work was seen to be more goal-oriented. This also made the work more realistic in relation to political facts.

These positive sentiments were expressed by a minority of the civil servants. A majority held critical views. Among these was the view that the politicization discriminated against the majority that is not politically affiliated. Political servants were seen to form camps against non-political servants and political servants from one party worked against political servants from another party. Many politically sensitive questions were difficult to prepare within the administration due to this watch-dog mentality. Loyalty to ones own party was seen as stronger than loyalty to the work itself. Political servants were perceived to try to serve their own party. Also much administrative work moved outside the official organization into political groups. Political fighting was seen to increase the work load and causing much pseudo-work to be done. At the same time the willingness of non-political servants to make a career within the Civil Service was diminishing. To some extent the politicization was seen to influence the distribution of work among civil servants within the ministries.

This study was carried out after the first wave of interest in political appointments had ebbed out. It is to be expected that a new study would reveal more critical views still and that some new themes would have been added. I shall in a concluding discussion deal with some perspectives on the politicization as it has occurred in Finland according to our results.

A concluding discussion

Our results suggest that many common assumptions made in the Finnish discussion on politicization are not true. Political appointments do not seem to work in an equalizing direction. Variables such as sex, age, education, social background etc do not correlate significantly with political appointments. Some trends that are typical of the day, i.e. the increasing number of women among civil servants, hold for political as well as for non-political appointments.

In fact these characteristics of civil servants show an amazing constancy over time according to the study of the years 1950–80. Even if variables are kept constant and a great number of classes are used in measuring civil servant characteristics, proportions remain fairly unchanged over time.

But of course political appointments influence the party political affiliation of the civil servants. In this respect we could assume that the attitudinal distribution among civil servants has changed into concurrence with the political power distribution. There are, however, increasingly signs indicating that this may not be true. Party leaders have during the last years criticized the increasing influence of civil servants within the parties, indicating that this influence cannot always be seen as promoting party ideologies.

Could we then assume that political appointments have increased civil servants compliance with political signals? I would rather argue the reverse and in this I side with a well known Finnish civil servant who has argued that civil servants rather give than take orders from the parties that have supported their appointments. He is himself a well known representative of the Social Democratic Party.

We have tried to look at this aspect of the relationship between parties and civil servants in a separate study. We found that civil servants have greatly increased their influence within party organizations. From 1965–75 the share of civil servants among the members of different work-groups within the Center Party and the Social Democratic Party increased drastically. In the late 70'ies party leaders have been concerned by this trend. It is easy to see that civil servants are in many respects the most resourceful persons within these party bodies preparing policy guidelines (Ståhlberg 1976, Djupsund 1977, Djupsund & Ståhlberg 1978).

Our results in this study seem to support this picture. If political appointments were in fact strongly influenced by the parties, and if the parties acted in the way they have publicly stated with regard to political appointments, we would expect some change to occur in the characteristics of civil servants. Since this is not true, this can be interpreted as a continuously strong influence on appointments by the bureaucracy itself.

It seems in fact as if the general picture of political appointments had been too static. We have found indications that the phenomena ought to be seen in a dynamic perspective.

In the Finnish debate views on political appointments seem to relate to what we might call the energizing phase of political appointments. In this phase political appointments are part of a real change occurring. They might not be the cause of this change, but perhaps only a reflection of it. This seemed to be the case in the 60'ies. The

general climate was one of change and optimism. In this climate the left won its parliamentary victory. The victory was used among other things to man central positions within the bureaucracy. Party supporters were appointed to positions in which they could develop and implement major reforms.

Due to a number of reasons the effects of this phase has not been large according to the data we have referred to. The parties have had to choose political appointees from within the Civil Service simply because they lack formally qualified candidates in their own ranks. Persons aiming at a Civil Service career choose political party for opportunistic reasons. Also in this energizing phase it is not important to man as many positions as possible, but to man central ones. We have in the longitudinal study of civil servant characteristics found that civil servants in leading positions in fact became younger during this period.

It would seem logical that this energizing phase eventually turns into a stabilizing phase. There is only a limited amount of positions to fill. As political appointments have occurred, the appointed servants are expected at least to some extent to retain their party-contacts. It would seem reasonable that these persons do not like to see young outsiders move into the career ahead of them. Thus we may expect politically appointed civil servants to become a barrier against new political entries at higher levels.

We have indications in our data that the Finnish bureaucracy has moved into this phase. At the ministerial bureau level we have a sufficient number of observations on both political and non-political appointments (78,138) to allow for a further division of the groups according to the year of their appointment. We found that politically appointed civil servants were older on an average if they had been appointed in 1978 or 1980 as compared to those appointments that occurred in 1975 and 1976. They also had a longer on the job experience. But interestingly enough they did not have experience from more jobs. For non-political appointments no clear differences between the periods could be found with the exception that they seemed to be younger on an average during the later period. These results seem to fit our assumption of political appointments working in a conservative direction as time goes by. There may in fact also be a tendency toward mediocrity in these appointments. I have found some support for this view on political appointments in some personal interviews with high civil servants.

Our results might also be related to the Aberbach, Putnam and Rockman (1981) view on the development in the relationship between bureaucrats and politicians. We would not expect a movement into what they call the fourth phase, the Pure Hybrid phase. We tend to think about the energizing phase as compatible with the energy/equilibrium model and the stabilizing phase as perhaps more related to the facts/interest model. The general social change that has produced changes in civil servants positions probably ought not to be seen as continuing indefinitely.

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