

SUMMARIES

The Chairmen and Vice Chairmen of the Committees in the Finnish Parliament

by Kyösti Pekonen

Several studies have confirmed the assumption that the higher the social position — in the wide sense of the word — of a person the better opportunities he has to attain a position among the political leadership. As far as I know this tendency has been demonstrated frequently and exhaustively; consequently it is needless to verify it once again in further studies concerning new institutions. The knowledge of such selectivity ought rather to be a starting-point for research than its result. In other words, research ought to concentrate on the analysis of structural aspects in the selective process, because these structural features finally determine who are elected, and in what way.

In this brief analysis the purpose was to analyze some structural aspects in the election process of chairmen and vice-chairmen of committees in the Finnish Parliament. The structural features analyzed were as follows:

- the earlier career of a M.P.
- the formal importance of the position of chairman and vice-chairman to the M.P.s and parties.
- the nature of the party system
- the impact of party cohesion on the behavior of a M.P.
- the impact of situational factors, and
- the later career of a chairman and a vice-chairman after resignation from the committee post.

Within this framework we then investigated the selective system as such as well as the criteria applied in the election of chairmen and vice-chairmen. Those who gained these appointments were more often men than women, more often from the higher social strata than from the lower and had a high-level education (these differences with ordinary M.P.s were more pronounced in the case of chairmen than vice-chairmen). Interpreted within our framework this means that the post of chairman is more valued than the post of vice-chairman, which is more valued than ordinary membership in Parliament. The same rank order applies to the degree of competition between parties in the election of chairmen and vice-chairmen. Additionally one must observe that the emphasis on high position on almost all dimensions of social background is more closely related to rightist than to leftist tradition.

Structural differences in the position of chairman, vice-chairman, and M.P. are also reflected in the election process of chairman and vice-chairman.

It is, for example, almost impossible to get elected chairman without previous experience in Parliament. In the case of vice-chairmen such a phenomenon is much more frequent. In a similar manner the behavior (speeches, initiatives and activities in general) of chairmen and vice-chairmen differed conspicuously from the behavior of other M.P.s. It was immediately clear that these differences were explicitly due to differing roles, and the 'group climates' had that great impact in this respect.

The Stability of the Composition of the Finnish Parliament (Eduskunta) after the Second World War

by Pertti Timonen

In the Finnish political system the voter's choice can effect the composition of the Diet in three different ways; his vote can bring about

- a change in the Right-wing/ Left-wing balance of power
- a change in the proportional strength of the parties
- a change in membership of the Diet.

The present article, which deals with the stability of the composition of the Finnish parliament since the Second World War, assumes these different changes to belong to the same political stability dimension as component parts on different levels, and overall stability is defined by assessing changes in all of them together. In calculation the following procedure was adopted:

A change in the absolute power of Right/Left is designated with A, a change in party proportions with B and the number of personal changes with C. In order to bring these changes into proportion their percentual contributions to overall change are worked out, added up and divided by 3 and then subtracted from 100, so that the result is the greater the fewer changes have taken place — that is the greater the stability of election results. The following formula is thus obtained:

$$\left(100 - \frac{100 (A + B + C)}{3 N}\right) \% \quad (N = \text{number of representatives})$$

On this formula stability thus assumes the same significance as a percentual expression. But is such a mode of measurement to the purpose? After all, it constitutes an arithmetic mean value of changes which politically belong to widely different levels of activity. In answer it can be noted that C contains both A and B, and B for its part contains A. A change in the balance of power between Right and Left is thus automatically weighted three times as much as a change in personal membership. Similarly a change in the proportional power of the respective parties gets twice the weighting of a personal change and 2/3 of the weighting of the Right/Left relationship. There is thus no artificial weighting of these

different components of change, they acquire automatically the significance their mutual dependency and the measurement procedure adopted involve.

By means of the above technique it was thus sought to measure the stability of the Finnish Diet in the period since World War II. From 1945 to 1970 it was according to the result extremely high — 82 %. In the first post-war elections there were far-reaching changes in Finnish political life with the advent of the Communist party on the scene, and at this juncture stability was at its lowest — 69 %. After this stability increased up to the 1954 elections but has since taken a downward path with the exception of the most recent dissolution of the Diet.

It would thus appear that while the parties are assuming increasingly official status in the Finnish parliamentary machinery the electorate are becoming increasingly independent of them. The 1972 election cannot be regarded as evidence to the contrary — the results can rather be considered as a fine adjustment to the election preceding. — Nevertheless only an overall investigation of the background to the increased independence of the electorate can provide a firm basis from which to predict future development.