

SUMMARIES

On the Impact of Using Experts in the Decision Making of the Constitution Committee

by Esko Riepula

The Constitution Committee is the most important organ that interprets the constitutional laws in Finland. The decision power in the Committee is wielded by MPs (17 in number). In the preparing of decisions the Committee uses the help of experts in constitutional laws.

In my doctoral thesis »Eduskunnan perustuslakivaliokunta perustuslakien tulkitsijana/The Constitution Committee of the Parliament as an Interpreter of the Constitutional Laws/» (Vammala 1973), published in the spring of 1973, one of the most interesting results was that during the era of the consolidation independence (1920—1970) the interpretation of constitutional laws by separate political groups had become more unanimous from the first researched period (1920—1944) to the second (1945—1970). In that context the reasons of this phenomenon were not systematically surveyed. In the same research it was noted that using experts in the Committee had become more usual in the same time. Thus it is tempting to suppose that the reason for growing unanimity is to be found in the more general use of experts.

To clarify the proposed causal connection the general impact of experts on the unanimity vs. divergence of the interpretations of constitutions in the Committee was first examined. The results showed the proposed kind of dependence to exist between the use of experts and the interpretations in the Committee. The Committee was relatively more often unanimous when experts were heard than when they were not.

To get a more profound explanation for causality between the use of experts and growing unanimity of the Committee an elaboration was produced where time was taken as constant and the dependence between the phenomena was observed in the two periods mentioned, on one hand, and by decades, on the other. It was surprising to note that during the first research period the expected dependence did not exist. During the second phase the dependence, however, came up clearly and strongly. It was noticed, too, that using experts tends to strengthen unanimity in the Committee. On the other hand, the results show that even some other time-dependent factor than the use of experts has influenced the growing cohesion between the political groups represented in the Constitution Committee.

When the additional factor was sought it was noticed that, on one hand, the number of experts heard, and on the other hand, the unanimity of experts had an effect on the unanimity of interpretation in the Committee. The results showed that using experts strengthens the unanimity of the Committee even in those cases where the experts did not achieve consensus in their recommendations compared to those cases where experts were not heard at all.

Expert influence making for unanimity appeared to be slightly stronger in cases where only one expert was heard in the Committee. The unanimity-inducing influence of the experts has been strongest when the Committee has heard more than one (e.g. three) expert in agreement with each other. Thus when the use of experts has become more general it has made the Committee more unanimous in its interpretations of constitutional laws especially when the Committee has heard more than one expert, and when these have been unanimous in their recommendations.

As a summary of the main results of the study the following can be stated: (1) *the use of experts as such has a unanimity-inducing influence on the Committee in its interpretations; (2) the unanimity of the experts makes the Committee more willing to follow their interpretation and (3) in this case the use of experts means as a whole that the interpretation of the experts becomes a (unanimous) interpretation of the Committee.*

The effects of war on political behaviour

A Study of the Effects of World War II on the Support of Left-wing Parties in Western Europe

by Pertti Timonen

In this article the effects of World War II on the support of the Left in fourteen Western European states have been examined. In other words, war has been used as some kind of a »super variable» that has not really tolerated other variables by its side. However, even a small study like this has been enough to show that a more sophisticated analysis and the use of »intervening» variables can help one attain more interesting and sensibly interpretable results.

The study shows that the support of the Left increased most in those countries which can be judged guilty of World War II, or which suffered most in it. However, the changes were very much in the same direction both on the side of the victors and the losers whereas in neutral countries no real changes took place.

When examining the results in more detail one can attest that the near-total defeat of fascism and national socialism caused by World War II did not signify any landslide victory for the Left in Western Europe but the increase in support for the Left on an average clearly remained under 10 per cent. In addition, the support for the Left reverted to its pre-war level fairly soon after the war.

The most significant changes that took place were the increase of over 25 per cent in Italian voting turnover and the emergence in Western Europe of four Communist parties with significant support, namely those of Finland, France, Iceland and Italy. The greatest upheaval on an average in the support for the Left was experienced in Finland and in Italy.

Although participation in cabinets by the strong Communist parties that emerged has remained infrequent and short-lived, they have at any rate enlivened the political configuration of Western Europe during the whole post-war period.