

BEHIND THE FORMAL EQUALITY: FINNISH WOMEN IN STATE ADMINISTRATION

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INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of the 1990's Finnish women have a firm position in the labour market. We have a majority of female wage-earners; of the Nordic countries only Denmark and Sweden have a higher female labour force participation than Finland. Finnish women work full-time; only 16 per cent of the employed women work part-time. Also, women do not stop their career because of child care, as it is the case in many other western countries, but the situation of women is still traditional. Women still bear the main responsibility for everyday life and men still maintain a status of supremacy in the family. In Finland women and men are most equal in terms of the vocational and educational opportunities, but the disparities in remuneration are the greatest of the Nordic countries. There is a clear division of the labour market according to gender, which has been supported by the development of the Welfare State. It has been observed that, for example, within academic professions there exists gendered labour markets which direct women into the public sector. The Welfare State has brought about groups of employees with lower level of remuneration in the public sector and particularly in the municipalities.

The basic principles of public administration are objectivity and equality, which must be also observed when filling vacancies. The demand for equality and the required qualifications are defined in the Constitution (HM 5§ and 86§). Segregation contrary to the demand of equality is prohibited by the multilateral agreement on civil and political rights that Finland has signed. Every citizen has the right and the opportunity to be appointed to public offices on equal terms and without unreasonable limitations. Actual sex discrimination is forbidden by the Equal Rights Law, which is also a means to increase the equality of the sexes.

The law on women's competence for government offices was enacted in 1926. In 1901 women were given the right to higher education that is a prerequisite for administrative work. However, the right of married women to enter administrative positions and the right to exercise public authority presupposed by that status was still restricted by their legal incapacity under Civil Law, until this was abolished in the 1929 Marriage Law. Women are still refused the right to enter certain offices in Defence Administration and the Orthodox

National Church.

Despite the formal equality and the prohibition of discrimination it can be shown statistically, for example, that even in public administration it is gender that directs women into certain tasks and certain levels of the organization. Basic education, social welfare and health care are female jobs, as is office work. Office work, which has immensely increased after the Second World War in particular, was constructed expressly for women. Instead, women are in the minority in the core of the administrative work that directs and controls these typical female tasks. The influx of women into male-dominated occupations or lines of work usually starts a process that results in segregation between the sexes within that occupation. Has this taken place in state administration, too? Do women place themselves in female jobs in spite of their masculine choice of occupation? That is the problem this article seeks to answer: first by examining the feminization of administrative work; second by providing an outline of how women doing administrative work in state administration are positioned in the different branches of administration and within the internal office hierarchy of the departments. The differentiation of the female and masculine worlds will also be discussed from the point of view of the unofficial organization. Do women form a differentiated island of their own also at such levels of organization and in such tasks where it is possible to influence the organization's goals and functions? This has been the case in office work (Rantalaiho & Korvajärvi 1984, Korvajärvi 1989).

In spite of the furthering of equality within the family by such legal measures as the separate assessment of spouses, the extension of partial social security to women at home and to farmer's wives and the realization of parental and paternal leaves, woman's status in the family has remained traditional. In addition to salaried work, she has the main responsibility for the household. The increased leisure time of employed women should rather be understood as a result of better domestic technology and greater availability of useful services than as a breaking of sex roles inside the family. This article approaches the dilemma of everyday domestic life and work from the viewpoints of women's family circumstances and the combining of the official career and the family.

The study comprises 240 women doing administrative work in the Ministries, National Boards and in Provincial Administrative Boards. The control group consists of 512 men fulfilling the same conditions. Other departments and institutions of the central administration as well as the state's district and local administration and municipal self-government will remain outside the scope of this study.

ADMINISTRATIVE WORK AS WOMEN'S WORK

The functions of state administration can be divided into administrative work and office work. Office work is a function assistant of administrative work. This

article deals with the personnel employed in administrative work. The term "administrative work" will refer to such tasks in state administration that include planning, organization, coordination, management and control (Urwick 1973, 119). It can thus be defined as the directing and controlling of the basic administration functions (Hallinnon rakenteet 1984, 184). The personnel employed by the state in administrative work comprises the highest authorities and the chiefs as well as the assisting academic staff such as research workers, planning officers, presenting officers, various inspectors and secretaries. (Valtionhallinnon johdon koulutuksen kehittämissuunnitelma 1979, 63-68). In the text the highest authorities and the chiefs will frequently be combined into one single group referred to as the "directors".

Administration usually involves exercising public authority. The use of this authority in the offices of the core bureaucracy has from time immemorial been the prerogative of males. Historically, it has provided a means to exclude women from administrative work. Therefore women have made their breakthrough in this field only recently, aided by the enlargement of their civil rights, the breakthrough of the Welfare State and their improved level of education. Some 32 per cent of the administrative personnel are now female. The feminization of administrative work has also been influenced by a favourable economic development. During the periods of economic growth the appeal of the public administration as an employer decreases compared with the private sector. This notion is supported by the observation that the holders of state offices are discontented with their own economic situation, and they estimate that it has weakened since the early 1970's (Vartola & af Ursin 1987, 209). Also, women have perhaps a little more actively than men sought employment in the civil service attracted by its formal equality (Vartola & af Ursin 1987, 78-85, Sinkkonen & Hänninen-Salmelin 1989, 31-32).

THE POWER STRUCTURE OF STATE ADMINISTRATION

The power structure of state administration refers to the sectors of government with an institutionalized and legitimate right to exercise administrative power. The structures of the Finnish politico-administrative system are the following: at the level of central government the state consists of the Council of State, the Ministries and the National Boards; Provincial Administrative Boards and the district administration at the provincial level; the state's local government and courts of law at the local level. In our system local government falls within the jurisdiction of the municipalities with the right to self-government. The municipalities, not the state, produce and put into effect the main part of public welfare services. The state controls and directs the municipal production of these services.

The administrative apparatus of the state in Finland is directed by the Council of State, which is composed of the sitting Government, that is the 13 Ministries. In addition, the Finnish central administration includes the National Boards,

numbering 22, and about 80 comparable units of central government with research, service or business functions. The latter, however, will not be included in this survey, because the women studied here are employed in the Ministries, the National Boards, and the Provincial Administrative Boards.

In the Finnish administrative system the head of the Council of State is the Prime Minister. Normally, each of the ministries is headed by only one minister, except the ministries with a wide range of functions like the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Finance, which usually have two ministers. At the beginning of the 1990's the other one of the two ministers was a woman in each of these three ministries. A minister's function is political, not administrative. It is not a permanent post but a position of trust tied up with the life span of the sitting government and the political changes in the composition within this particular government. A minister uses political power rather than public authority. The status and the political careers of Finnish women ministers are discussed in Jaana Kuusipalo's article in this same book. This study is limited to the body of civil servants.

Each ministry has a Secretary General. They are responsible for the continuity of the ministerial functions as ministers change. The Secretaries General have always been men. No woman has ever been appointed to this highest office of the state. The ministries are divided into departments and bureaus. Within every ministry there are five departments on the average, each headed by a Director of Department. In 1989 there was one woman holding this office, and at the same time two of the acting Directors of Department were female. Each department has an average of two bureaus, each lead by an Assistant Director. In all, there were 67 Assistant Directors in the ministries, of which 18, or 27 per cent, were female in 1989. The average number of personnel in each ministry is about 250 persons (Vartola 1977, 91-92, Tuominen 1986, 61-62).

The National Boards lie under the authority of the Council of State. Their function is to take care of a limited branch of administration in the whole of Finland, and they are divided into departments, bureaus and sections according to the ministries. Of the Directors General of the National Boards one is a woman. In 1989 about 17% of the government directors of the National Boards were women.

At the intermediate level of state administration the general administration belongs to 12 Provincial Administrative Boards. As regards the general administration, these take care of the state's welfare functions. The units of provincial government are the Province Chancellery, the General Department, the School Department, the Social Welfare and Public Health Department, the Province Fiscal Office and the Provincial Administrative Court. The provincial administration is headed by a Governor. Two of the twelve Governors in Finland are women. There were altogether 5 women among the Directors of Department in the Provincial Administrative Boards.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The material ¹ was gathered by a posted questionnaire at the end of 1984 and the beginning of 1985. As far as the combining of private life and paid work are concerned, the material has been complemented by the interviews of 25 female directors employed in state administration that were a part of an international woman executive project (see the Upward Mobility and Career Advancement project in Sinkkonen & Hänninen-Salmelin & Karento 1985, Sinkkonen & Hänninen-Salmelin 1989).

On the whole, the stratum of administrative personnel in the departments subject to the study comprised approximately 8100 civil servants, of which 31 per cent were women. These figures are based on the personnel files of the body of administrative officials in the departments, which means that they do not have a total statistical reliability.

When the positioning of women in the government's power structure is considered, the study focuses primarily on 240 women with an academic degree and doing administrative work for the state. The control group consists of 512 men fulfilling the same conditions. The dilemma of fitting together work and family will be given deeper empirical consideration by means of interviews with 25 female government directors. Background information about the subject persons is available in Table 1.

The officeholders included in this research were employed in the various civil service departments as follows:

DEPARTMENT	WOMEN %	MEN %	ALL %
Ministries	26	28	27
National Boards	48	46	47
Provincial Administrative Boards	27	25	26
Total	100	100	100
(N)	(240)	(512)	(752)

Nearly half of the women studied worked in the National Boards and approximately one fourth in the Ministries and the Provincial Administrative Boards. The distribution of men in the departments was very much the same.

The following table provides a picture of the gender structure of the administrative staff in different departments of state government.

GENDER	DEPARTMENTS			ALL
	Ministries %	National Boards %	Provincial Administrative Boards %	
Female	30	32	33	32
Male	70	68	67	68
Total	100	100	100	100
(N)	(206)	(352)	(194)	(752)

Women were in the minority in each type of department. The distribution of both men and women in the departments according to gender was much the same. The Ministries with a greater governmental importance were less open to women. There were no great differences between the various departments.

I compare women and men with certain reserve. Gender is by no means the only variable indicative of features specific to the status of women. Neither do I feel that man is the measure nor that his status provides the ideal from which woman differs and thus becomes subordinate and deficient. Here the comparison of the sexes will reveal more of the woman's situation and its particular traits than would a study of women only. Another reason more for a comparative approach is the fact that in Finland the labour market is, to a great extent, gendered. Consequently, within a limited structure it is very rarely possible to compare women and men doing the same or comparable work. The choice of the method was also influenced by the kind of material used and the way it was gathered.

When I discuss the dialectics of paid work and home duties, I will strictly concentrate on the female point of view. The reason for this is the greater responsibility that women take for the private domain and their double role in public and private lives.

WOMEN IN THE POWER STRUCTURE OF STATE ADMINISTRATION

In principle, the internal impartiality and equality practices within state administration seem to have been accepted, because holders of state offices consider the violation of these practices condemnable in official duties (Vartola & af Ursin 1987, 278-287). This apparent formal equality in public administration is the reason why women regard the state as a more unbiased employer than the private sector, although sex discrimination is a problem that holders of government offices are widely aware of. Being of female sex is also considered something that slows down or even hinders a career in state administration (Karento 1987, 11-13, Vartola & af Ursin 1987, 100-104, Karento 1989, 268-269, Sinkkonen & Hänninen-Salmelin 1989, 34-35).

Although the number of women holding a state office has increased, their number has not risen linearically through the administrative hierarchy. Top offices in the Ministries and the National Administrative Boards have traditionally been occupied by men. The percentage of women in these offices was in 1988 about 13%. In the Ministries women occupied 7 per cent of the leading positions, and in the National Administrative Boards the corresponding figure was 17% (Finnish State Calendar 1988). In the 1980's, even in such domains of public administration as social security, which have a high rate of woman employees, the representation of women in the top offices has diminished (Sinkkonen & Laitinen 1989, 291-293).

When I discuss women's position in the power structure of state administration, the focus will be set on women's increasing role in administrative work, their sphere of duties and their position in the internal hierarchy of administrative bodies. Finally, attention is drawn to women's position in the unofficial organization of the working community.

The Feminization of Administration

A common denominator for the period covered in the study, 1938-1985, was the gradual development of the Welfare State towards its zenith. The number of employees in state administration has grown especially within such sectors as teaching and social and health services. The office holders' qualifications have also been in transition: now the task of administration is more to steer society than to execute its functions. This transition has brought both social scientists and specialists of other fields into state administration to work together with the traditional generalists, the administrative jurists. With more academically educated and more married women in wage labour, these changes have likely contributed to the growing role of women in administrative work.

The employment of office holders will be studied according to the periods based on the characteristics of changes in state administration. This division into periods has been made on the basis of empirical studies describing changes in administration. Thus the following periods emerge: first, the Second World War and Ensuing Reconstruction 1938-1955; second, the Period of Stability in public administration 1956-1965; third, the Period of Expansion in administration 1966-1976; and fourth, the period named the Welfare State 1977-1985.

The first period, the Second World War and Ensuing Reconstruction, was characterized by the war and its consequences, the paying of indemnities and the laying of the foundations of the Welfare State. The beginning of the 1940's was a period of rapid growth in the recruitment of personnel into public administration. This growth came to an end during the latter part of the decade, and on the other hand, the tasks of the state shifted directly from national defence to organizing services to the citizens (Talkkari 1979, 69-71).

At the beginning of the Period of Stability or Conservatism, 1956-1965, changes in the number of the personnel were barely visible. During this period

the welfare sector, especially teaching and medical care, expanded. What was typical of the period was the fact that state administration became less labour intensive, because the increase in public administrative tasks and personnel shifted to local administration in municipalities.

Between the years 1966 and 1976 the Welfare State was reaching the final stage of its development and the international economic crisis was gravest (Nikkilä 1976, 136). During this period two major social reforms were carried out: the Comprehensive School system was established and the medical care was reorganized as the National Health Service. In state administration these changes brought about an increase in the number of the employed, particularly in the welfare sector. The increase in the administrative personnel was most prominent in the sector of planning, the areas needing expertise and in international tasks (Vartola 1983,10-22).

The period of the Welfare State, 1977-1985, was characterized by a favourable economic growth and criticism towards state bureaucracy. The expansion of state administration came to a halt, except in the welfare sector. This period can also be labelled as a period of Bureaucracy Criticism. Public administration was accused of the excessive centralization of power into the hands of state administration at the expense of local self-government, of restricting the citizens' opportunities to affect the society they live in, and of inability to create successful and direct contacts with the citizens, which are a precondition for the social services provided by the Welfare State. Public criticism was probably hardest towards the moral standards of civil servants.

The next table shows how the recruiting of employees varied according to sex in public administration during the periods discussed.

PERIOD	GENDER		ALL
	WOMEN	MEN	
I	9	19	16
II	20	26	25
III	52	42	45
IV	19	13	14
Total	100	100	100
(N)	(240)	(512)	(752)

I The Second World War and Ensuing Reconstruction, 1938-55

II The Period of Stability, 1956-65

III The Period of Expansion, 1966-76

IV The Welfare State, 1977-85

Over half of the women studied here had come into public administration

during the Period of Expansion. The corresponding percentage among men was 42. The recruitment of women into public administration was lowest during the war and post-war reconstruction. The number of men recruited was lowest during the Welfare State period. If these four periods and the recruitment of both women and men are examined, the rates of new employees were lowest during the periods mentioned last.

The next table shows the percentages of women and men in relation to the different periods mentioned above as far as the new employees in public administration are concerned.

GENDER	PERIOD				ALL %
	I %	II %	III %	IV %	
female	20	27	37	40	32
male	80	73	63	60	68
Total	100	100	100	100	100
(N)	(110)	(180)	(339)	(114)	(743)

I The Second World War and Ensuing Reconstruction, 1938-55

II The Period of Stability, 1956-65

III The Period of Expansion, 1966-76

IV The Welfare State, 1977-84

On the basis of this material the distribution of women and men in state offices has become more balanced between 1938 and 1985, because the number of woman employees has grown steadily from one period to another. The balancing of the gender structure has become increasingly conspicuous, since during the Period of Expansion women's share of the new employees was as high as 37 per cent. Feminization continued in the Welfare State.

When one compares civil servants with the most years in office, who came into state administration during the war and post-war reconstruction, to the youngest ones in office, who are representatives of the less populous generations of the Welfare State, the representation of women has relatively doubled.

Women's Positioning in Different Sectors of State Administration

The tasks of the state can be divided into 1. reproduction 2. directing production and economy and 3. system maintenance and development (see about the tasks of the state in Nikkilä 1979, Sinkkonen & Haavio-Mannila 1980, Hernes & Hänninen-Salmelin 1989, Sinkkonen & Laitinen 1989). This division is based on the idea that administrative work connected with the renewal of human resources differs from the other fields of tasks in terms of values, administrative

principles and the demand of knowledge (Sinkkonen & Haavio-Mannila 1980, Sinkkonen & Hänninen-Salmelin 1989, 29). Also, this division reflects the social division of labour between the sexes in different branches of administration. This can also be seen in the internal division of labour between the Ministries. The same is true of the National Boards and the Provincial Administrative Boards, which operate under the supervision of the Ministries. The tasks of reproduction are executed, for example, by the Ministries of Education, Social Affairs and Health, Labour, Environment, the National Boards of Social Welfare and Health and the provincial departments of schools, social and health affairs. Directing production and economy concerns the Ministries of Finance, Agriculture and Forestry, Trade and Industry, the National Boards of Taxation, Civil Aviation, Railways and Post and Telecom. The maintenance and development of the system is carried out, for example, by the Office of the Council of State, the Foreign Ministry and the Ministry of Justice, and the Provincial Administrative Boards except for the social, health and school departments.²

The following table gives the percentages of women and men in the different sectors of government.

SECTOR	WOMEN %	MEN %	ALL %
Reproduction	38	28	31
Directing production and economy	34	29	31
System Maintenance and Development	28	42	38
Total	100	100	100
(N)	(240)	(512)	(752)

The maintenance and the development of the system gives employment to 42 per cent of the men in state administration; only 28 per cent of women were employed in this sector. On the other hand, women have had the best access to the administration responsible for reproduction, which can be considered a typically female domain.

If we compare the subject persons' present field of tasks in public administration and compare it with the sector into which they were first recruited, it seems that women moved from the field of directing production and economy to reproduction as the years in office increased. The next table shows how the women and men studied were positioned in the various sectors when they entered public administration for the first time.

SECTOR	WOMEN %	MEN %	ALL %
Reproduction	30	29	28
Directing production and economy	45	49	48
System Maintenance and Development	25	23	24
Total	100	100	100
(N)	(222)	(486)	(708)

The movement of men from one sector to another was primarily from directing production and economy into tasks of system maintenance and development. The former had functioned as a passageway through which the officeholders moved to other fields of tasks according to gender.

Women in the Official Hierarchy of the Civil Service Departments

The internal hierarchy of the departments was differentiated according to gender. The directors³ were in most cases men. The following table (next page) shows how the officials included in the study were positioned within the hierarchy according to their sex.

A little over ten per cent of the women and 4 per cent of the men served as presenting officers and as planning officers, but in both cases women made up 57 per cent of all the holders of these positions (Table 1). In addition to the directors, the expert positions were the most male-dominated. Other primarily male groups of personnel were inspectors and research workers.

HIERARCHIC POSITION	WOMEN	MEN	ALL
Directors	19	49	39
Presenting officers	12	4	7
Secretaries	14	8	10
Inspectors	21	16	18
Planning Officers	13	4	7
Research Workers	6	4	5
Experts	6	8	8
Other Official Position	7	6	6
Total	100	100	100
(N)	(240)	(512)	(752)

The distribution of directors in various government sectors is the following:

SECTOR	HIGHEST AUTHORITIES		CHIEFS		ALL
	WOMEN	MEN	WOMEN	MEN	
Reproduction	48	24	12	14	24
Directing production and economy	38	50	29	44	47
Maintenance and Development	14	25	58	41	29
(N)	(29)	(188)	(17)	(61)	(295)

Half of the male directors in state administration worked in the sectors of production and economy, one fourth in system maintenance and development, and one fourth in renewal. Female directors were distributed differently. Approximately half of them served in reproduction and around 40 per cent in directing production and economy. 14 per cent were employed in maintenance.

Women have traditionally held positions in the management of reproduction, but their number has remained the same since the 1950's despite the growth of the sector. Women have entered into the management of production and economy in the late 1979's and into the offices of system maintenance and development only in the 1980's (Ståhlberg 1983, 98).

The majority of women in chief positions (58 %) worked in system maintenance and development. The distribution of male chiefs in the different fields of tasks was, to a great extent, dependent on gender. The typically male tasks of directing production and economy as well as the maintenance and development of the system both comprised more than 40 per cent of the men employed in these positions. The distribution of directors in the various fields reflects the gendered division of labour. From the point of view of this study, reproduction belonged to women's field of tasks; other sectors were maledominated. Even here the contribution of women directors was of a relative importance, as their number was small compared to men.

Women in the Unofficial Organization

It has been discovered that in male-dominated working places the women in the minority tend to be excluded from the unofficial organization. It has also been observed that in these working places the community of men remains shut to women on account of male solidarity. Various networks and groups formed by male friends and fellow workers are not open to women. For example, information transmitted in this manner never reaches the women. These coalitions of men also initiate male new-comers into the traditions and the methods of working, and introduce them to the key persons (Herlin 1980, 9-12, 47, Naisten tutkijanuran ongelmista ja esteistä 1982, 25-27, Lindgren 1985, 40-41, 130-134, Riska & Wegar 1989, 29-37). This study approaches the issue of women as outsiders in the work community by examining women's contacts with their colleagues. Furthermore, the mutual solidarity of women will be commented on.

It turned out that isolation of women did exist to a certain degree. Most of the women participated occasionally in situations where work-related matters were discussed informally. Thus the majority of women do not get the information transmitted in this way. Only one third of them took part in these situations very often or often (Table 3, which also shows the rest of the statistics given in this chapter).

The women worked mainly together with other women who too did administrative work. More than half of them had a woman as their closest colleague. Additionally, almost 60 per cent had a woman as their second and third closest fellow worker. Thus the women's colleagues were primarily female, but only 18 per cent had a woman as their superior.

In women's studies, especially in literature dealing with woman executives, it is often emphasized that women have a particular need for support when acting in male-dominated vocations. The support answers a real need, because

token women are often left outside the unofficial organization and they lack the models and examples set by female predecessors. They often face unreasonable expectations. In professional life the support of an influential individual or individuals is indispensable for advancement in the career (Epstein 1971, 167-177, Thompson 1978, 67-73, Sinkkonen 1982, 58-60, Kanter 1977, 249, Riska & Wegar 1989, 39). In the present situation, with only few women in leading positions and when less than one fifth of the women studied here have a female superior, this supporting person is a man. As far as career advancement is concerned, the possible supporters of women in administrative work would primarily be their closest superiors and the highest authorities in the department.

The following figure shows who provided the women with the support important in their work:

The supporting person

Closest female colleagues	77
Nearest superior	71
Closest male colleagues	66
Subordinates	49
Other staff members	59
Highest authorities in the department	43
(N 212)	

The most important support in work was given to the women by other women, but they also received encouragement from their superiors. Instead, neither the highest authorities nor their subordinates were important in this respect. One reason for the isolation of women could be the bureaucratic deep-structure of state administration, which requires formality and impersonality in order to achieve objectivity in administrative work (Kanter 1977, 22-23, Vartola 1984, 7-8, Sinkkonen & Laitinen 1989, 290-291). Another reason could be found in human relationships at the job, which a clear majority of the women considered important for carrying out their official duties, for the motivation and satisfaction at the job and the atmosphere in the working place. Only half of them estimated these relationships to be good and one fifth found them bad.

The mutual solidarity of women is a typical feature of gender specific female jobs. In workplaces where women and men share the same tasks, this sort of solidarity does not generally occur. In Finnish working life the other sex is not regarded as an inner circle keeping up a "conspiracy", but the sense of solidarity towards one's own sex does get expressed. (Haavio-Mannila 1984, 26.)

In state administration the conscious furthering of women's position and rights is a dual question. It may mean increasing women's legal protection and equality in general, but in certain cases it can be interpreted as contrary to the administration's principals of objectivity and equality. Although state administration does, as an employer, have an obligation to promote equality, in

reality it does not possess adequate means to meet this demand. In the personnel policy programmes of the departments it has been possible to add a recommendation to promote the equality of the sexes. This was, in fact, the procedure in the 1980s, but it has not lead to any concrete actions (Suunnitelmallinen tasa-arvon edistäminen valtionhallinnossa 1990, 30-31). In addition, the Equal Rights Law provides an opportunity to a conscious advancement of women's status in the departments with an equality programme that allows positive discrimination. So far, such an equality programme does not exist in any civil service department, so that in state administration the only way left is a certain disobedience that goes against the principles of objectivity and equality.

The mutual solidarity of women was studied through inquiring whether the women had, as officeholders, consciously sought to better the female situation and rights. Women's studies and the debate about the status of women have revealed the problems existing also in formally equal societies. In Finland there has been a reawakening of willingness to social activity that has its roots in an experience of subjugation. Particularly women and the young demand improvement in their status. (Luokkaprojekti 1984, 527-546, Kivinen 1987, 153-194, see also Kuusipalo 1989, 1990).

The issue of improving women's status and rights is based on the idea that in principal the female minority competes with the male majority for the limited number of administrative jobs. Solidarity within the minority can be seen as a means to strengthen the equality of the sexes and women's status (see e.g. Haavio-Mannila 1970, 23-26). Six out of ten women (60%) said that they had done so in their work.

The following table groups together the answers given to an open question about their methods in this matter.

The method of improving women's status and rights	Number of mentions f
Unofficial activities	73
Improving women's legal safeguards	
Improving women's status as citizens and clients of the civil service	46
Staff managerial methods	
Activity in equality working parties	46
Influencing personnel policy	35
Personnel training	23
Social activity	
Activity in trade unions	15
Wage negotiations	11
Total number of mentions	249

The most popular method was clearly non-concrete, unofficial action for the cause. This consisted of bringing out the problems and the defects in the condition of women, and of encouraging and supporting women in relevant situations. The persons studied told that the aim of these unofficial conversations was to raise the issue of women's status and to get an improvement by changing attitudes and values.

The other methods were a direct part of their work, and thus were effective in a more concrete way. In their work they had sought to amend faults in women's legal safeguards by improving their situation as citizens and clients of the administration. This they could do for example when preparing law proposals or making decisions on matters concerning legal protection, patient's rights, basic education, taxation and labour protection. So it was a matter of furthering objectivity and equality in administration and strengthening the citizens' legal rights.

The subject persons had quite a few staff managerial means at their disposal to improve women's status. They might steer the personnel policy by appointing and presenting women to vacancies or to temporary posts preparing for a career. Some interpreted the administrative directive in favour of women as far as possible. For example, they could increase the flexibility of office hours for mothers with small children or for those who have to travel a lot in their official capacity or work a great deal outside official hours. Giving preference to female experts when possible can also be seen as a part of staff management.

The social methods consisted of trade union activities, particularly in issues concerning women's wages.

PROFESSIONAL AND DOMESTIC LIVES

The demands of professional life are often in conflict with the expectations in private life. As the fitting together of waged work and the family reflects the social division of labour between the sexes, this is specifically a female dilemma. Men do waged work because for them the responsibility for the home and the children is secondary (Barrett 1985, 217). The issue of combining work and family has been more generally raised only with the increased paid work of mothers with children under school age (e.g. Myrdal & Klein 1956, Haavio-Mannila 1970, Auvinen 1977, Jallinoja 1983, 1984, Vanhala 1986, Kuusipalo 1989, Hänninen-Salmelin 1990). In labour research the importance of the family has often been neglected, because it has been perceived as belonging to a person's privacy.

Structurally the family is nowadays understood as the nuclear family with a mother, a father and children. In addition to the structural definition, a particular importance has been attributed to the feeling of togetherness that functions as a safeguard towards the surrounding society. The family has also been seen as a counterbalance for the alienating paid work; it is a domain where one is able to control one's own life. (Sinkkonen 1975, 1-4, Jallinoja 1984, 37-57,

Kuusipalo 1989, 158-159, Vuori 1989, 29-30, Haavio-Mannila 1989, 77-93.)

As regards women, they may find themselves in conflict between the expectations concerning their privacy and the requirements of working life. Rosabeth Moss Kanter (1977, 22-23) uses the Weberian model of ideal bureaucracy as her starting point to define the modern big organizations as inhuman machines with "masculine ethics", and it is the masculine ethics that defines which individual characteristics are considered important in organizations aiming at efficiency. These characteristics are: the ability to act methodically and in a problem-centered and fact-orientated way, the ability to solve problems and make decisions, the ability of abstraction and impersonality. In his or her work the individual is supposed to act separated from other aspects of life. These features are particularly emphasized in public administration (Ferguson 1984, 61-78). The official position is separated from its holder, and a "good" civil servant functions impersonally and free of human elements. Consequently, the best and the most recommendable employee will be a man without responsibilities outside his work. This means that in reality women end up in a situation where they must frequently try to minimize the obligations of their private lives, or at least to pretend that the family or the children do not interfere with their work performance or influence their use of time.

Family situation

60 per cent of the women employed in government administration and examined in this survey were married. 24 per cent were single, 11 per cent divorced, and 1 per cent widowed: 87 per cent of the men in corresponding positions were married (Table 1). It is not really surprising that women are more often single, because historically it has been necessary for them not to be married if they wanted to do paid work on a regular basis. They have had to choose between salaried work and family life (Jallinoja 1983, 70-90, Kuusipalo 1989, 150-151). In state government the choice has been almost unavoidable for reasons pertaining to family law. Although the law on women's competence for government offices was enacted in 1926, it did not give access to these positions to married women. They received this right only with the marriage law of 1929, which liberated them from the tutelage of their husbands. The right to exercise public authority that comes with the office requires legal competence. Women in executive posts as well as academic women have a family less often than men positioned similarly (Aitta 1988, 11, Silius 1989, 130, Sinkkonen & Hänninen-Salmelin 1989, 31). Not being married or living single has also been perceived to be a characteristic of an independent woman. Reflections of this are still apparent.

"I have given priority to my career, the obligations of private life have had to be disregarded. When I was married my husband did not understand the ideology of my work, the low pay and the long hours that it demanded. As taking care of the home and the children was on my responsibility

too, we ended up in divorce. After that it has been easier." (A woman director of a National Board, 56 years.)

Also young women appreciate the independence of not having a family:

"I have succeeded badly in combining my career and my private life. I have always put aside private obligations. The men I have met have found it difficult to understand that a woman can commit herself to work with all her heart, disregarding even him at times. I have come to a solution where no one interferes. I live alone." (A woman director of a National Board, 38 years.)

Of the total number of 240 women in the study, 62 per cent had children. 28 per cent of them had children who needed regular day-care, and the majority of the women were themselves responsible for arranging it. Also the household work was their job, because for the most part it was they who took care of the commonest domestic tasks alone without outside help or help from the other family members. Only major purchases were decided on jointly by the spouses. Close to three fourths of the women with families had less than three hours of daily free time (Table 4).

In order to come into terms with this dualistic situation, the women resorted to alternating the emphasis between work and privacy. They may have complied with the moderate ideology of gender roles and given up work while the children were young, even if young Finnish women of today do not find this quite satisfactory (Kvinnor och män i Norden 1988, Kuusipalo 1989). The elder interviewees, in particular, had used this strategy to reach a balance:

"I was out of working life for a few years when the children were small. I did not like it, but I felt it was necessary. Afterwards I have been satisfied." (A woman director of a Ministry, 51 years.)

In general, the relationship between the individual and the family is felt to be problematic. The increasing amount of individualistic family solutions indicates that families must more and more often submit to the personal aspirations of their members (Jallinoja 1984, 109-110). This submission, however, does not seem to be painless for the women, but provokes thoughts about the order of importance of things:

"Occasionally, I have been forced to give precedence to one above the other (that is, to work or family). Some of the necessary obligations due to the children I have usually put first before professional demands. It has not always been possible. It has been difficult to assess what is possible and what is necessary in each situation. One must often choose the most necessary out of two necessities, and find a better time for the other. It has been a really rich life, though." (A woman director of a Ministry, 62 years.)

A purposeful, systematic striving for control over one's own life can in reality turn out to be a restriction of life. In a family of two careers it is the woman who may be compelled to give up more:

"My main principle has been: first the career, then the family. In practice I have renounced all hobbies, all activities in organizations and the like; everything that has not been compulsory. I have only taken care of the tasks of representing and of contacts with relatives. I have no more friends. I have had to fit together not only my career and my privacy, but also my husband's advancement in his career and the children's future. It has been necessary to do a clear-cut choice and set things in an order of importance. I have given up all hobbies and all private things of my own. I do not know if it has been worth it all." (A woman director of a Ministry, 59 years).

Family and Official Career

The family and work are the corner stones of Finnish existence. In this respect the family takes precedence over work. Women employed in administrative work for the state emphasize the meaning of family life more than for example office-workers do. This would suggest that the career comes second to the family. (Järvelä 1988, 108-112.) The women also feel that in administrative work it is easier to combine work and family (Sinkkonen & Hänninen-Salmelin 1989, 32). One of the interviewees also referred to this:

"When I was younger and the children were small, I chose the career of an administrative jurist in order to get regular working hours. I myself would have preferred to become an attorney." (A woman director of a Ministry, 50 years.)

The next figure gives a picture of how the women with families estimated that taking care of the family influences or has influenced their official career:

FACTORS RELATED TO THE CAREER	INFLUENCE	
	A lot or quite a lot	A little or not at all
Has limited the choice of occupation	31	67
Has taught to take other people into consideration also in one's work	28	72
Has complicated participation in further education in one's work	24	76

FACTORS RELATED TO THE CAREER	INFLUENCE	
	A lot or quite a lot	A little or not at all
Has impeded career advancement	19	81
Has restricted political activities	19	81
Has hindered participation in trade union activities or other work-related activities in various organizations	18	82
Has hindered informal social relations with colleagues	17	83
Has restricted getting employment	15	85
Has hindered attending to work	9	91
(N max 186 - min 147)		

The majority did not think that the family had a negative effect on the career. The family had most limited their freedom as regards the choice of occupation; approximately one third of the women with a spouse or a family estimated that it had been influenced either a lot or quite a lot by the family. Neither had the family been an obstacle in finding employment.

Research on executive women has often stressed women's more human and empathic leadership style in comparison with men, and that has at least partially been explained by the female role in the family (e.g. Heller 1982, Sinkkonen 1982, Nurhonen & Vehviläinen 1986, Hänninen-Salmelin 1989, Sinkkonen & Hänninen-Salmelin 1989, Sinkkonen & Laitinen 1989). In this survey, however, the majority of women did not perceive the family as a source for social skills, for only 28 per cent of those with a family felt that it had taught them to take the others into considerations in their work, too. 22 per cent of those without a family appreciated it as a school for human relations. The rest of the factors related to the career were graded as meaningless from the point of view of women without families.

WOMEN ON THEIR ISLAND IN ADMINISTRATIVE WORK

Sexual segregation could be shown to exist also in administrative work. Choosing a typically male field of education directed the women into female jobs in the power structure of state administration. Despite the gradual feminization of

this area, the women had not advanced equally in all the government fields of activity. Reproduction, which reflects a social motherhood, was a female area. Even though women have entered public administration through other sectors, this particular area compiled the women in the course of years in office. Thus administrative work has its part in the development that strengthens the gendering of the labour market (Kuusipalo 1988, Silius 1989, Sinkkonen & Hänninen-Salmelin 1989, Sinkkonen & Laitinen 1989). Half of the women belonging to the highest ranks of civil servants also functioned in the sector of reproduction, but all in all the contribution of women at that level is a relative one, because they were very few in number. In this study their position becomes accentuated, as it was thought preferable to include women from all levels of administrative work into the research material. The emphasis on the highest positions and chiefs is all the more marked due to the interviews used in the material. There is good reason for a certain over-representation of well advanced women, because they have a wide and varied experience of administrative work and about the state government as a working environment.

The unofficial social organization, too, isolated women into a group of their own (Kanter 1977, Herlin 1980, Naisten tutkijanuran ongelmia ja esteitä 1982, Rantalaiho & Korvajärvi 1984, Lindgren 1985, Korvajärvi 1989, Riska & Wegar 1989). The female administrative civil servants worked together mainly with other women doing similar work, but their relationships with their subordinates were distant. Female solidarity was the most typical feature of female-dominated jobs (Haavio-Mannila 1989). Even though the administration is male-dominated, the women do, nevertheless, express solidarity towards their own sex. This unexpected response was explained by the fact that even in administration their fellow workers were mostly female. Their methods to improve women's status and rights varied from working on attitudes to influencing by social activity. Acting in the interest of women can be seen as a certain kind of disobedience in office, because basically it goes against the objectivity and equality principles. Still, one could also say that the objectivity and the equality that people consider gender-neutral are in fact a myth with a masculine set of values and male solidarity hidden behind.

The deep-structure of bureaucracy separates the actual office from the officeholder. One characteristic of a good official is that he or she lives in a vacuum where work and private everyday life never meet. For men this has been traditionally possible, because women have taken the responsibility for the home and the children (Kanter 1977, Barret 1985, Haavio-Mannila 1970, Jallinoja 1983, 1984, Haavio-Mannila 1989). The women in this research had solved the dilemma either by remaining single or by alternating waged work and family obligations, although this solution was not considered to be without problems (Myrdal & Klein 1968, Jallinoja 1984, Kuusipalo 1989). Women with families still lived in a traditionally modelled family where the wife takes care of the domestic side and the husband has the authority (Haavio-Mannila 1989). Primarily, the family had a restrictive effect on the choice of occupation,

and to some extent it taught human relation skills needed in work. The family also influenced the use of time so that the women could be said to give precedence to the family over certain obligations and advantages related to their work: they might for example give up opportunities for further education.

In state administration there is a directive concerning the official furthering of equality with a definition according to which equality means equal value of the sexes and equal division of tasks in domestic, public and professional lives (Karento, 1989). In Finland the state administration can be considered to be in the vanguard as far as equality in working life is concerned. However, it is still a long way from formal equality to equality in fact. That women commonly study at universities and that women with families increasingly assume paid work, as well as the growth of the administration sector, have all resulted in the gradual feminization of administrative work. Nevertheless, the growing female representation has not modified its power structure. Instead of a change it has brought about a strengthening of sexual segregation in the government's fields of activity and in the official hierarchy - unless we interpret this strengthening as one kind of change.

NOTES

1. My study on the status of female holders of state or municipal administrative offices is a part of the project called "Public Service, Public Administration and Society" that was carried out in the department of administrative sciences of Tampere University. The project provides the basic material for this study; it has been complemented by information from the questionnaires posted to 2245 officeholders, of which 691 were women and 1554 were men. 61 per cent of the questionnaires were answered and returned; 63 per cent of the men and 58 per cent of the women replied. The women's lower activity to answer was at least partially due to the fact that they had to fill in two separate forms. Inquiries about the questionnaire gave the impression that particularly in some government departments equality issues were perceived as especially problematic, and that made the women reluctant to reply. Part of those who inquired about the research were afraid of being recognized on the basis of their answers. Some refused to reply because they found that equality is already a fact in administration.

The problematics of work and everyday private life will be approached through the interviews of 25 female directors employed in state administration. They were first interviewed for the purposes of an international woman executive project. Some more thorough-going material concerning the combining of the family and the obligations of privacy was acquired in the same connection.

2. The departments included in this study were classified as follows:

Reproduction: The Ministries of Education, Social Affairs and Health, Labour and the Environment; the National Boards of Vocational Education, Housing, Social Welfare, Health and Labour Protection; the Department of Social Affairs and Health and the School Department of Provincial Administrative Boards.

Directing production and economy: The Ministries of Finance, Agriculture and Forestry, Transport and Communications, Trade and Industry; The State Treasury, The State Audit Office, The Central Statistical Office; The National Boards of Taxes,

Customs, Public Building, Agriculture, Waters and the Environment, Survey, Roads and Waterways, Aviation, Railways, Post and Telecommunications, Navigation, Trade and Consumer Affairs and the National Board of Patents and Registrations.

System maintenance and development: Prime Minister's office, the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Justice, of the Interior and of Defence; the Provincial Administrative Boards except for the departments belonging to the sector of reproduction. In the text the common name of a "department" will be used for all the units of state bureaucracy.

3. The state offices are grouped hierarchically according to the official names of the posts. The highest authorities include Secretaries General, Governors, Directors General, Directors-In-Chief, Directors of Departments and Assistant Directors. The chiefs comprise Budget Secretaries, Secretaries of Finances, Ministerial and Province Secretaries, Administrative Directors as well as various other officials with a corresponding status. Presenting Officers and Inspectors include the civil servants holding a position with that particular official title. The same criterion has been applied to Secretaries, Planning Officers and Research Workers. Other official position refers to any one not listed above.

In the women's interviews all the positions belonging to the highest ranks or the level of chiefs have been combined into one single group: woman directors. This has been done so as to eliminate any possibility of identification.

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APPENDIX

Table 1. Background information of the persons studied

BACKGROUND	QUESTIONNAIRE			INTERVIEWS
	WOMEN %	MEN %	ALL %	WOMEN %
Age				
Over 50 years	14	25	22	36
40 - 49 years	29	33	32	56
30 - 39 years	48	36	40	8
Under 30 years	9	6	7	-
Field of education				
Law degree	16	23	21	44
Degree in social sciences	28	25	26	32
Master-level degree in some other field	46	42	43	24
Bachelor-level degree or none	9	10	10	-
Marital status				
Single	24	8	13	16
Married	64	87	80	60
Divorced or widowed	12	4	7	24
Children				
No children	38	12	25	28
With children	62	88	75	72
Number of children				
1 child	29	20	23	16
2 children	50	45	46	36
3 or more	20	34	31	20

BACKGROUND	QUESTIONNAIRE			INTERVIEWS
	WOMEN %	MEN %	ALL %	WOMEN %
Children under school-age				
Officeholders with children under school-age	18	19	18	16
(N women max 240 - min 234) (N men max 512 - min 504) (N interviewees 25)				

Table 2. The position of the persons studied in the official hierarchy according to gender

The highest authorities	
Women	13
Men	87
Total	100
(N)	(217)
Chiefs	
Women	22
Men	78
Total	100
(N)	(78)
Precenting officers	
Women	57
Men	43
Total	100
(N)	(50)
Secretaries	
Women	44
Men	56
Total	100
(N)	(75)

Inspectors	
Women	39
Men	61
Total	100
(N)	(132)
Planning officers	
Women	57
Men	43
Total	100
(N)	(54)
Researchers	
Women	41
Men	59
Total	100
(N)	(37)
Experts	
Women	23
Men	77
Total	100
(N)	(60)
Other official position	
Women	42
Men	58
Total	100
(N)	(55)

Table 3. Factors affecting women's status within the unofficial organisation

Participation in unofficial meetings and negotiations	
Participates	%
very often or often	31
occasionally	37
rarely or never	33
Total	100
(N)	(235)

Gender of closest colleagues	Female %	Male %
Closest colleague	52	48
Second closest	56	44
Third closest	61	39
(N max 229 - min 218)		

Work of closest colleague	Administrative work %	Office work %
Closest colleague	89	11
Second closest	90	10
Third closest	90	10
(N max 236 - min 217)		

Gender of nearest superior	%
Woman	18
Man	72
Total	(100)
(N)	(239)

Meaning of personal relationships in the workplace	%
Important as regards to motivation, satisfaction and atmosphere at work	73
Indispensable for carrying out official duties	14
Just one factor in working life	13
Total	(100)
(N)	236

The nature of personal relationships in one's own workplace	%
Good	50
Satisfactory	31
Bad	19
Total	(100)
(N)	(233)

Table 4. Factors describing family circumstances

Regular need for day-care of women with children	%
The need	
Yes	28
No	72
Total	100
(N)	(157)

Division of responsibility for day-care	
The responsible person	%
Woman	57
Man	3
Parents together	40
Total	100
(N)	(157)

Division of domestic tasks		
Task	The person mainly responsible	
	Woman %	Joint responsibility of members of the family %
Laundry	84	16
Cooking	77	23
Shopping	72	28
Dish-washing	65	35
Finances	57	43
Cleaning	56	44
Major purchases	51	49
(N max 240 - min 232)		

Daily free time of women with families	%
Less than 3 hours	70
3-5 hours	19
More than 5 hours, daily	12
Total	100
(N)	(144)