

The Political Dynamics of Administrative Turnover:

*The effects of political change on the careers of top
civil servants in Norwegian ministries 1884-2021*

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Abstract

This master's thesis contributes to the growing body of literature on the politicization of administrative turnover in parliamentary democracies with a longstanding tradition of employing civil servants on meritocratic criteria. It does so by expanding on the findings of previous research that has found a connection between political change in the executive and the turnover rates of top civil servants, exploring to what extent the political dynamics that increase administrative turnover depend on the type of political change. Deploying Cox-Regression on a novel dataset on top civil servants in Norwegian ministries between 1877 and 2021 I show that a change in government increases the hazard of turnover among top civil servants by about 35%, and that this hazard is more than doubled when the turnover in government results in a political party taking office for the first time.

Similar to the effect of a change in government resulting in increased risk for the individual top civil servant leaving office, if the change in power results in the party that hired the top civil servant leaving office, the risk of turnover is 25% higher than when the hiring party remains in office. This also implies that the negative effect of government turnover on the tenure of top civil servants is mitigated if the incoming governing party is the one that initially hired the civil servant. Moreover, top civil servants are not only more prone to leave their position directly following the change in government, but also generally more likely to exit their position when the government has a different ideological orientation than the government that appointed the top civil servant.

However, not all types of political change are significant enough to impact administrative turnover. A change in just the minister without a change in government is insufficient to impact top civil servant turnover in Norway. For political change to impact administrative turnover in the ministries there must also be an ideological change. Whereas politicians' motives for politicizing top civil servant turnover should increase the more time has passed since the last change in government, top civil servants in Norwegian ministries exhibit patterns of being increasingly likely to stay in office after a change in government the more years that have passed since the last change in government. Lastly, the thesis finds mixed evidence that all in all, points towards more politicization of administrative turnover in Norway since the introduction of state secretaries in 1947 – particularly for the highest level of civil servants in the ministries.

These findings highlight that there are nuances in how political change affects turnover rates among top civil servants that depend on new governments' trust in the political responsiveness and ideological compatibility of the civil servants. Suggesting that operationalizations of political change can affect the findings of studies on political events effects on administrative turnover in the meritocratic context, and thus that these nuances should be considered in future studies of politicization.

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I started working on this thesis the summer of 2020 as an extension of previous work that I had submitted for a course I attended during the spring term on Norwegian institutional history, and research assistant work on top civil servants' careers that I had worked on for Professor Jostein Askim and Professor Tobias Bach at UiO – who both encouraged me to dig deeper into the dynamics of political events and the careers of top civil servants. Thank you both for opening my eyes to the field of public administration. I'm particularly grateful to Jostein for believing in my academic capabilities and choosing to supervise my master thesis work. Thank you for excellent suggestions and guidance, and for always believing that I would be able to finish my thesis in time and keeping me to it, in spite of me deciding to take a 6-month break from working on the thesis to work in the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The recruitment of top civil servants¹ seldom garner the people's attention in administrative systems where appointments are formally based on merit. Yet, sporadically recruitment cases garner media attention because the person being hired has a political career background or personal ties to the government that might hint at not only merit being considered in their recruitment – particularly if their political background is one of affiliation with the recruiting government parties. A recent example from Norway is the Støre government's appointment of former prime minister (PM) and leader of the Labor Party Jens Stoltenberg as Director General of the Central Bank of Norway in the winter of 2022 (Finansdepartementet, 2022). The appointment of Stoltenberg spurred a lot of public attention and debate about how the government had weighed Stoltenberg's political qualifications in their decision and to what degree Stoltenberg's political and personal ties to the government had impacted its decision.

Similarly, the debate of the use of political criteria in the recruitment of top civil servants has been resumed on multiple occasions in democratic countries throughout the last century, resulting in differing limitations to the involvement of civil servants in politics across political contexts (Peters et al., 2022, p. 34). In countries with a merit based administrative tradition countries such as the United Kingdom (UK) or Canada this has resulted in formal rules prohibiting civil servants from becoming members of political parties, while such party membership have remained permitted in other countries with a merit based civil service system – i.e. Denmark, Norway and Sweden. Lately, political scientists have also brought attention to political events such as a government turnover co-occurring with changes in the patterns of top civil servants leaving their positions in these merit-based administrative systems (Askim et al., 2022; J. G. Christensen et al., 2014; Cooper, 2017, 2020; Dahlström & Holmgren, 2019). In other words, politicization—that is “the substitution of political criteria for merit based criteria in the selection, retention, promotion, rewards, and disciplining members of the public service” (Peters & Pierre, 2004, p. 2)—also occurs in merit-based systems. Moreover, Bach (2020) reviews the current literature on analysis of administrative careers, and suggests research methods moving forward to gain more systematic knowledge of the interaction between politics and administrative careers – arguing that studies on the interactions between politics and administrative careers should be pursued also in meritocratic

¹Defined as a collective term for the most senior bureaucrats in a government ministry or arm's-length agency under the authority of a minister that are not politically appointed (Bach, 2020, p. 36).

contexts.

This thesis will focus on illuminating under which conditions political change affects the tenure of top civil servants in ministries in the meritocratic context, using Norway as a case. The focus on top civil servant turnover in this thesis means that politicization will imply that the minister or government on the basis of political criteria want to appoint a new top civil servant into an already occupied position, in spite of a lack of formal discretion to do so.

1.1 The Janus-Face of Politicization

Although politicization is not formally permitted in merit-based civil service systems, it remains an empirical question whether or not its effects on bureaucratic performance are strictly negative. On the one hand, scholars have found a link between politicized recruitment to public administration and higher levels of corruption (Meyer-Sahling et al., 2018). As politicized appointees are more susceptible to political rent-seeking and pressure, and have less incentive to hold other civil servants or the government accountable for abuse of public office for private gains (Meyer-Sahling et al., 2018, p. 278). Similarly, if elected officials are free to dismiss civil servants, then employees may be pressured into politically motivated corruption motivated by job stability (Meyer-Sahling et al., 2018, p. 281). Even so, the lack of tenure will cause the top civil servants to be more concerned with short-term organizational goals and not long-term development as they can be replaced if the current government finds them to be under performing.

Politicization can also negatively affect the work motivation of top civil servants, and lead them to leave the organization (Kim et al., 2021). Moreover, high turnover of top civil servants can be a problem in itself as it may cause the loss of bureaucratic expertise (Kim et al., 2021, p. 2).

Studies relying on survey data have found that agencies managed by political appointees perform worse than agencies managed by career managers, particularly if they have formal partisan affiliation with the politicians that appointed them (Fuenzalida & Riccucci, 2019, p. 549). Political appointees must maintain their political loyalty to keep their position or advance their career, which can lead to policy-decisions that are in the interest of their political principal, but have practical imperfections that in reality make them inefficient and unpreferred by the principal (Fuenzalida & Riccucci, 2019, pp. 550–551). When political criteria is used to hire top civil servants this practice usually spirals down through the hierarchy affecting the criteria that the top civil servants utilizes when making appointments to the civil service – which overall may result in a worse performing administration (Fuenzalida & Riccucci, 2019, p. 552). Simultaneously, civil servants will become disincentivized to attain more professional competence as they perceive it as less important for career-progression, consequently the overall performance of the administration will stall or decline (Fuenzalida & Riccucci, 2019, p. 553).

On the other side, Ebinger et al. (2019) have–based on 40 in-depth interviews with top civil servants in ministerial departments in Germany–found that civil servants with a party political background carry out their tasks with the same responsibility (willingness to tell

ministers what they do not want to hear when necessary to safeguarding public interest) and responsiveness to political signals as other civil servants, implying that politicization does not necessarily have negative effects. Moreover, there may even be some benefit to hire top civil servants with political expertise, if they also have strong professional qualifications. These individuals with a hybrid career of both politics and administration, have both what Goetz (1997) calls *political craft*, that is in depth knowledge of the political process and competence to provide political-tactical advice – alongside traditional managerial skills and sector specific knowledge. In other words, the minister can trust these types of top civil servants to also take the political implications of policy decisions into account when they are implementing or advising the minister on policy.

Even in the authoritarian context Duong (2021) have found empirical support for the combination of political and merit-based criteria in the recruitment and promotion of civil servants in Vietnam (a one-party state) having positive effects, as it leads to better responsive competency and improved efficiency in governance. Driven by political motives of increased regime legitimacy and stronger party rule, governments with complete freedom from formal and informal constraints on politicization (as all appointments are made under the discretion of the communist party) still have incentives to take both merit and political criteria in to consideration when making appointments to the civil service (Duong, 2021, p. 52).

Hence, politicization mainly becomes a problem when politicians use their discretion to appoint top civil servants to reward loyal candidates with doubtful qualifications for the job at hand, leading to a less efficient central administration (Bach, 2020, p. 36). Accordingly, this thesis follows the suggestion of Peters and Pierre (2004) to take a neutral normative approach towards politicization as a phenomenon, and simply ask whether or not and under which conditions it occurs in the meritocratic context.

1.2 The Puzzle of Political Events and Top Civil Service Turnover in Norway

Despite formal rules for hiring top civil servants in Norway that emphasize merit and the exclusion of political criteria, Norway has seen a number of top civil servants with political background (Askim & Bach, 2021). In similar vein the risk of replacement for permanent secretaries in ministries in years of wholesale government turnover has been found to be larger than otherwise, in spite of formal rules disallowing discretionary firing (Askim et al., 2022). In previous work, I have also found that this higher risk of replacement after a change in the governing party was not the case between 1906-1940 for directors general of ministry departments – in fact the relationship was the opposite in this period (Forum, 2021). This finding was contrary to the expectations of most other studies of top civil servant politicization in the meritocratic context (Askim et al., 2022; Cooper, 2020; Dahlström & Holmgren, 2019, see for instance), but in line with findings on government turnover not affecting the careers of permanent secretaries in Denmark (J. G. Christensen et al., 2014). Furthermore, top civil servant turnover increasing significantly in the wake of government change since 1970 (Askim

et al., 2022) but not between 1906-1940 (Forum, 2021) is in line with the theory of western democracies having become more politicized in recent years (Peters & Pierre, 2004, p. 1). Yet, a puzzling aspect of the Norwegian case is that the turnover of top civil servants also appears to increase in conjunction with government turnovers prior to 1906 (Forum, 2021). Hence, in this master thesis I will seek to do a comprehensive empirical analysis on the politicization of top civil servants in Norway in a long term perspective, from the dawn of political parties in the parliament in 1884 until 2021. Seeking to answer the following three-part research question: *Does political change increase the rate at which top civil servants leave their positions? Do different types of political change cause top civil servants to leave their positions at varying rates? And does the relationship between political change and top civil servant turnover increase over time?*

To assess the impact of political change on top civil servant turnover rates, I will be looking at both wholesale government turnover, and turnover of the minister that the top civil servant is serving under. A replacement of a minister can take place within a government's governing spell, and the new and the old minister may not even differ in which political party they represent – making the change in minister a less notable political shift, as the governing platform stays the same.

Studies on politicization of top civil servant turnover has studied political events in two main ways, either looking at a change in the minister (Staronova & Rybar, 2021) and/or whole sale government turnover (Askim et al., 2022; Cooper, 2020), or at incongruence in policy preferences between the top civil servant and the government or minister (J. G. Christensen et al., 2014; Dahlström & Holmgren, 2019). No study has yet to study a change in government in conjunction with policy incongruence, hence in this thesis I will be looking at whether policy congruence mitigates the effect of a change in government. As the incumbent top civil servants may be more or less aligned with the policy preferences of the new government after a change in government, this political change may not have the same effect on all top civil servants. Particularly, as the top civil servants may have been hired by the previous government that had a different political agenda—or simply due to having served under the previous government—the incoming ministers during wholesale government turnover may be skeptical of whether or not the incumbent top civil servants policy preferences align with their own – or if they truly can follow the principle of party neutrality (Jacobsen, 1960).

Moreover, the temporal dimension and the frequency of government change has yet to be studied quantitatively, thus this thesis tests the hypothesis of whether or not parties that have never held office before are more inclined to replace top civil servants. Jacobsen (1955, p. 140) have shown, by analyzing the comments made by the Parliamentary Protocol Committee and the parliamentary debates on the governments recruitment of top civil servants between 1885 and 1950, that allegations of politicization were abundant throughout the period, except from between 1910-1930 when no new parties assumed office. Furthermore, Jacobsen (1955, p. 141) notes that party neutrality in the appointment of civil servants were given an increasingly thorough justification as it clashed with the Labor Party's perceived preferences for using party political considerations in its recruitment. The Labor Party met a state administration that was purely appointed by rival political parties, and whose members just about in their entirety had a different social background than that of the Labor Party politicians that assumed

office (Lægreid & Olsen, 1978, pp. 13–14). Hence, they were uncertain on whether or not these civil servants could carry out their tasks in line with the new government's preferences. In 1947, a faction within the Labor Party even argued that a government turnover was incomplete if the ascending government could not also turnover key administrative employees (Jacobsen, 1955, p. 142).

Occasionally one also see long lasting governments that may last for more than two election cycles, particularly in the wake of the second world war (WWII) social democratic parties held office for long periods of time in many European countries, in Norway for instance, a coalition government of center right parties first put an end to 18 years of governance by the Labor Party in 1963. This leaves ample time for the previous government to install top civil servants that share their policy preferences, and should increase the skepticism with which the incoming government views the top civil servants in the ministries. Hence, in this thesis I will also consider if the effect of a change in government on administrative turnover depends on the time that has passed since the last change in government.

Lastly, I will consider if the political dynamics of top civil servant turnover have changed over time. Testing the theory of whether or not larger political entourages for ministers increases their willingness to politicize administrative turnover (Askim et al., 2022) on a split time series. Investigating if the introduction of state secretaries in Norway in 1947 was a turning point towards increased politicization of administrative turnover in Norway.

Deploying event history analysis to model the data—estimating effects with Cox-Regression—I draw upon a novel dataset on the three highest civil service positions in Norwegian ministries between 1884 and 2021, covering 793 directors general of ministry departments (ekspedisjonssjefer)², 16 deputy permanent secretaries (assisterende departementsråder) and 122 permanent secretaries (departementsråder)³. The data have been collected from yearly registers of government employees—in line with conventional approach in studies of politicization in the meritocratic context (Askim et al., 2022; J. G. Christensen et al., 2014; Cooper, 2017, 2020; Dahlström & Holmgren, 2019)—in the case of Norway this information is available in *Statsskalenderen* (Regjeringen, 1877-2011) which was published annually until 2011. For the years after 2011 only the position of permanent secretary is covered using data from Askim et al. (2022).

1.3 Outline of the Thesis

The remainder of this thesis is structured into six chapters. First I will present an overview on the current state of the politicization literature in chapter 2. Subsequently in the latter half of chapter 2 I will use the politicization literature to theorize six expectations about the relationship between political change and the turnover of top civil servants. The chapter will posit six hypotheses about how: a change in the minister, a change in the government, and the preference congruence between governments and top civil servants increase the probability

²Which were the chief administrative position in Norwegian ministries for most of the time period

³The Norwegian government's official translation of this position is *secretary general*, but as the term *permanent secretary*, which is the name for this position in the UK, is used in most of the literature that I am building upon I will be referring to these top civil servants as permanent secretaries

of top civil servants exiting their position – as well as how the temporal dimension of and surrounding these changes impacts their effects.

Following the review of the literature and the development of the hypotheses, chapter 3 provides an overview of the research on politicization of top civil servants in Norway, as well as how Norwegian institutions and civil service legislation have changed in the 137 year long time period considered in this thesis. Chapter 4 starts with a section on how the data was collected. Subsequently the chapter will discuss strategies to model event history data and present the estimation strategies that will be deployed in the following chapter. I then continue by operationalizing the theoretical concepts needed to assess the hypotheses put forward in chapter 3, as well as control variables posed by the literature and the historical context. The empirical data is then presented and analyzed in chapter 5 and subsequently discussed in chapter 6. These two chapters will show that not all political changes have the same impact on administrative turnover, and that for political change to impact administrative turnover in the ministries it must come with an ideological change. The last chapter, chapter 7, will summarize the thesis, discuss whether the level of politicization of top civil servants in Norwegian ministries is a problem, and suggest potential research paths going forward.

Chapter 2

Related Literature and Theoretical Background

The thesis contributes to the literature on politicization of bureaucracy in meritocratic political systems. This field of politicization research has seen a surge in the last decade, as an increasing number of studies have found significant covariation between political change and the turnover of top administrative employees (Askim et al., 2022; Cooper, 2020; Dahlström & Holmgren, 2019). As the literature on politicization is vast and scattered across different fields and journals, and the subject of the studies vary across country and administrative contexts, I have conducted a systematic literature review (Denyer & Tranfield, 2009) using the Web of Science to find research of relevance to this thesis.¹

2.1 Formal, Administrative and Functional Politicization of Bureaucracy

The conventional definition of politicization in the literature is that of Peters and Pierre (2004, p. 2): that politicization implies “the substitution of political criteria for merit based criteria in the selection, retention, promotion, rewards, and disciplining members of the public service”. This definition encompasses the formal actions of governments and ministers in securing politically responsive top civil servants through recruitment and other personnel oriented actions (Derlien, 1996, p. 149). Limbocker et al. (2022, p. 15) further expands on the concept of formal politicization, arguing that it should include any formal rules or procedures that regulates politicians abilities to intervene in the actions of bureaucracies – hence expanding the concept to also include politicians ability to change the institutional context that the bureaucrats function within, i.e. through reorganizing ministries and agencies, ability to instruct or overturn administrative decisions and other measures to limit top civil servants managerial autonomy. Different countries have employed a variety of formal and informal institutions to safeguard the political neutrality of the civil service—thus limiting the government’s formal politicization tools—for instance by prohibiting formal affiliation

¹See appendix A for a more detailed overview of how the litterateur review where conducted and appendix B for the Web of Science search-string used to find relevant literature.

between civil servants and political parties, or making civil servants ineligible for election to national assemblies. At minimum, most countries do not allow people to hold political office at the national level and simultaneously work as a civil servant (Derlien, 1996; Peters et al., 2022).

These different institutional solutions mainly come down to how countries have solved the dilemma of a democratic need for civil servants that are responsive to any government's policy preferences, and governments wishing to recruit their own civil servants (Peters et al., 2022, p. 40). With the goal of designing rules and structures that allow ministers to fully access the expertise of the bureaucracy in pursuit of implementing their democratically elected mandate (Hustedt & Salomonsen, 2014, p. 748), governments are faced with two basic options, to further politicize or neutralize the ministerial administration (Derlien, 1996, p. 150). The incentives of politicians to politicize vary between political environments as "[p]oliticization is contingent upon the constitution and administrative traditions, resulting in considerable variations between Western democracies" (Hustedt & Salomonsen, 2014, p. 747).

Hustedt and Salomonsen (2014) have argued that Peters and Pierre (2004)'s definition of politicization leaving the actions of the civil servants themselves outside of the scope of research. Hustedt and Salomonsen (2014) thus purpose a typology of three types of politicization: formal, functional and administrative. The distinction between two different types of behavioral politicization is made as functional politicization implies that the permanent civil service exhibits politically responsive behavior, and administrative politicization refers to politically appointed ministerial advisers relationship with the civil service – where the ministerial advisors can politicize the civil service's output before it reaches the minister (Hustedt & Salomonsen, 2014, p. 750). Functional politicization is, on the one hand, the delegation of tasks and responsibility of political nature from the political executive to the bureaucracy, and on the other, the bureaucrats taking political criteria into account when carrying out their work (Derlien, 1996, p. 149). The tasks of civil servants in ministry departments have never been purely administrative (as championed by Weber and other early twentieth-century scholars) or political in nature (Peters et al., 2022, p. 36). In any administrative system civil servants always operated in the purple zone, between the red of politics and the blue of administration (Alford et al., 2017). Even so, a countries civil service can be more or less functionally politicized depending on the blend of administrative and political responsibility in their tasks – furthermore, it can change over time with civil service reforms changing the political discretion of bureaucrats – for instance by introducing politically employed actors in the ministry (i.e. state secretaries and political advisors) (Derlien, 1996). The more functionally politicized a top civil servant position is the larger the political gains of politicizing the positions should be, if the motive for politicization is to secure trusted advice or party politically sound advice (Hustedt & Salomonsen, 2014, p. 750).

As touched upon in the last chapter, a recent claim in the politicization literature has been that western democracies have become more politicized over the last few decades (Peters & Pierre, 2004, p. 1). Two reasons for this that are highlighted in the literature is the governments need to find new ways to control the bureaucracy in the wake of policy-competences being delegated to state agencies at an arms rest from the ministers control – and the mediatization of

politics causing the government to require a new type of staff in communications, with a need for more political tactical advice than before (Askim et al., 2021, p. 165). Empirical evidence in support of this claim have, however, been mixed both between countries and between different aspects of politicization – there have for instance been an increase in the number of political actors in the ministries in the UK (Aucoin, 2012), but no increase in turnover rates of top civil servants over time (Cooper, 2020), and in the US Limbocker et al. (2022) finds mixed evidence of increased politicization. Cross-country studies in Europe have found persistent higher levels of politicization in Eastern Europe, that are attributed to legacies of communist regimes in these countries (Gherghina & Kopecky, 2016, p. 408). But also here there is a large variety in levels and modes of politicization (Gherghina & Kopecky, 2016, p. 408), and some Eastern European countries such as Estonia have even been observed to become less politicized over time (Gajduschek & Staronova, 2021).

For administrative systems where governments do not have the formal discretion to turnover top civil servants at will, Limbocker et al. (2022, p. 17) highlights the governments need of a civil service that is functionally politicized to being responsive to political signals of no longer being wanted. But, as the section after the following will show, governments also have a number of tools at their disposal to incentivize unwanted top civil servants to willingly leave their position. As this thesis focuses on the political events and turnover of top civil servants in the meritocratic context, it operates in the cross-section between formal politicization with the focus on politicians motives after a change in government to replace the existing top civil servants, and functional politicization in terms of the top civil servants responsiveness to ministers seeking to force them out or reshuffle them to less important positions (Limbocker et al., 2022, p. 17).

The remainder of this chapter will firstly take a look at why politicians always will have incentives to manipulate the recruitment and turnover of top civil servants. The subsequent section will then look at how these politicization incentives manifestes themselves differently in meritocratic and politicized administration systems. Guided by the literature in these two sections, the last part of the chapter turns to the development of six hypotheses of the political dynamics of administrative turnover in the meritocratic context.

2.2 Why Politicians Seek to Influence Administrative Appointments

Public bureaucracies are key instruments in governments implementation of their policy agendas. In liberal democracies democratic accountability requires public bureaucracies to be both politically responsive and party-politically neutral in the professional policy expertise served to governments (Limbocker et al., 2022, p. 12). As the people working in the ministry affect policy, the personnel-decisions of ministers are policy (Peters et al., 2022, p. 39). In particular, the top civil servants in government ministries are deeply involved in policy-making (Rhodes, 2005; Trangbæk, 2021), and their discretionary managerial-choices definitely affect the policy output of the ministry (Askim et al., 2021, p. 167). Thus, incoming ministers

face a delegation problem: they must rely on civil servants as agents to draft and implement the government's desired policy, yet they cannot be certain that the agents share the same preferences as the government, and that they will not attempt to move policy towards their own preferences (Bach, 2020, p. 35; Gherghina & Kopecky, 2016).

To minimize the risk of bureaucratic drift, that is civil servants shirking their tasks to draft and implement the government's desired policies, or civil servants drifting policy towards their own preferences, ministers as principals can employ different ex-post strategies that monitor the performance of the agent. They can for instance employ political state secretaries with responsibility to police the actions of untrusted top civil servants (Shaw & Eichbaum, 2020, p. 843), alerting the principal of shirking. Or, ex-ante by recruiting agents that the minister trusts to share the policy preferences of the minister.

There are some differences between presidential and parliamentary systems of governance when it comes to which political actors are parties of decision-making on appointments of civil servants and their specific goals behind politicization (Limbocker et al., 2022, p. 14). Presidents do for instance usually appoint top civil servants from within their own networks, whereas party governance is usually the objective of politicization in parliamentary systems (Kopecky et al., 2016, p. 419). However, the underlying goals of governments in politicizing administration remain the same across political-administrative systems (Limbocker et al., 2022, p. 13). That is to improve the administrations responsiveness to the governments political agenda, thus seeking policy output that are in line with the governments preferences – and securing reelection or personal career progression (Rhodes, 2005, p. 16). The two primary motives of ministers in politicizing top civil servants are being able to hire staff with “particular professional qualifications that are traditionally not provided for by the ministerial bureaucracy (professionalization) or merely staff which the minister prefers as advisers from a personal point of view (personalization)” (Hustedt & Salomonsen, 2014, p. 749).

In a research note Kopecky et al. (2016) presents results on the extent of party patronage from a cross-national expert-survey in 22 countries from five regions, finding that experts in all countries thought that politicization of appointments to the public sector occurred to at least some extent. There are, however, variations in which policy areas, institutions and levels of the bureaucracy that politicians target (Kopecky et al., 2016). They find that ministries to a larger extent than agencies and state owned enterprises are targets of politicization, and that institutions related to the economy, health and media are targeted to a larger degree than other institutions (Kopecky et al., 2016, p. 422). With data from a large-scale survey of top civil servants in ministries and agencies in 18 European countries, Bach et al. (2020, p. 11), also finds that politicization of top civil service appointments are lower in agencies, than in ministries.

Politicians have both stronger incentives and formal powers to influence senior-level appointments in ministries compared to agencies (Bach et al., 2020, p. 11). Firstly this has to do with top civil servants tasks in ministries being more functionally politicized. Secondly, government influence on turnover inside ministries are less visible and more legitimate to the public, reducing potential electoral costs to politicization. Lastly, as top civil servants in ministries are usually chosen from within the ministry, the minister have more knowledge of the candidate pool and the tasks that are to be carried out, hence the risk of adverse selection

is lower in ministries than in agencies (J. G. Christensen et al., 2014, p. 234)

Even if politicization of top civil servants are higher in ministries, than in agencies, governments still have incentives to politicize recruitment and turnover of agency heads, as the ministers control with the outputs of such institutions are limited, whereas they are held accountable for the agencies performance – if not formally then at least in the eye of the public (Limbocker et al., 2022, p. 11). On the one hand, formally moving policy functions outside of the ministers direct influence increases the ministers incentive to appoint a trusted like-minded agent—a member of a political party in government—to head the agency (Ennser-Jedenastik, 2016b). These incentives increase with the legal autonomy of the agency, as the more discretion an agent holds the larger the gains of the principal becomes from ensuring that the agent shares their policy preferences (Ennser-Jedenastik, 2016b, p. 510). But, on the other hand, the formal independence of agencies makes political interference more illegitimate in the eyes of the public. Moreover, the tasks of agencies are usually more administrative than those of the ministries, and governments have other managerial tools to politicize the output of agencies (such as through performance contracts) which lessens the need to politicize appointments to control agency output (Bach et al., 2020, pp. 17–18). Hence, Bach et al. (2020) have found that agencies with more financial freedom and highly institutionalized goals are less likely to be perceived as politicized, particularly compared to ministries – but, as Ennser-Jedenastik (2016b) have shown, governments still prefer to appoint party political allies as agency heads given the opportunity.

In the US, Limbocker et al. (2022) finds that there is little variation between governments in the extent to which they politically appoint top civil servants to state agencies, and that different governments tend to perceive the same agencies as important to politicize – regardless of party ideology. Dahlstrom and Niklasson (2013) have also shown that governments from both sides of the political spectrum in Sweden recruit top civil servants with a political background at around the same rate. Similarly, Askim and Bach (2021, p. 181) have shown that regardless of the party make-up of Norwegian governments, appointments of former politicians as agency heads have been made. Hence, concluding that there should be no difference in the incentives of governments to politicize on grounds of ideology.

2.3 Formally Politicized Systems and Meritocratic Systems

Formal rules regulating the hiring and firing of top civil servants regulates the usages of criteria other than meritocratic in such decisions, limiting the politician’s discretion (Hustedt & Salomonsen, 2014, p. 749). If a position is formally politicized then turnover after a change in government is a swift process, unless appointments need to pass the scrutiny of parliament (Limbocker et al., 2022, p. 19). In the meritocratic context governments looking to replace existing top civil servants are contingent on the cooperation of the incumbent top civil servant, as they cannot formally be forced out. Studying the impact of new civil service legislation in the Czech Republic introduced in 2015 with the goal of depoliticizing the bureaucracy

(by hindering executive replacement of civil servants after a change in government), Rybar and Podmanik (2020) finds that fewer deputy ministers are appointed directly from political positions after the introduction of the reform—which limited the discretion of the government to only take merit into consideration when appointing deputy ministers—hence more career bureaucrats were appointed as a result of the formal legislation. However, there were still a significant share of the appointed top civil servants that had a party political career, and ministers still used their informal discretion to appoint top civil servants with whom they had personal ties (Rybar & Podmanik, 2020).

European countries in the Napoleonic, Central European or Continental Administrative tradition² are systematically more politicized—as a larger number of top civil servant positions in these countries are politically appointed and party political association is more common among civil servants—compared to that of the countries in the Scandinavian and Anglo-Saxon administrative traditions (Bach et al., 2020, p. 13). There are however, also variation in the degree to which countries within the same administrative traditions are politicized, with for instance Denmark appearing to have the least politicized central administration of the Scandinavian countries (Askim et al., 2022; J. G. Christensen et al., 2014), while Sweden is the most politicized (Dahlstrom & Niklasson, 2013).

In spite of ministers having discretion to remove permanent secretaries in Denmark, there is little evidence that the turnover of permanent secretaries is politicized in Denmark (J. G. Christensen et al., 2014). A recent study by Askim et al. (2022) on the effects of political events on the turnover on permanent secretaries in Denmark and Norway 1970-2020 shows no signs of an increase in turnover risk among permanent secretaries as a result of government turnover in Denmark – it does however find robust evidence on government turnover increasing the risk of turnover among permanent secretaries in Norway. A difference the authors attribute to the existence of political state secretaries in Norway. Where this political entourage makes permanent secretaries expendable after a change in government, as the minister can appoint state secretaries to carry out the tasks of the permanent secretary, without such an option “the new minister’s chance of getting off to a good start is vitally dependent on the incumbent permanent secretary” (Askim et al., 2022, p. 11). A cultural difference in the scrutiny and salience that is placed on the use of political criteria in the appointment of top civil servants in both countries is also discussed as a contributing factor to why they observe less politicization of turnover in Denmark (Askim et al., 2022, pp. 26–27).

Some states have always had formal politicization mechanisms, such as the ability of German governments to temporarily retire top civil servants they no longer consider trustworthy or politically reliable which has existed since 1848-49 (Hustedt & Salomonsen, 2014, p. 753). Allowing the German governments to “dismiss civil servants in the top two ranks of the departmental hierarchy (administrative state secretaries and heads of division) at any time and without any given reason” (Hustedt & Salomonsen, 2014, p. 753). These rules result in between 50-70% of all such top civil servants being switched out following a change in government (Fleischer, 2016). Although, if political parties from the previous government

²Administrative tradition here pertains to “persistent patterns of administrative thought and practice shared among country groups” (Bach et al., 2020, p. 7).

remain as a junior partner in the new coalition government the share of dismissed top civil servants is more moderate (Hustedt & Salomonsen, 2014, p. 753).

In Belgium the ministers have large cabinets of both civil servants and external employees selected based on political-affiliation and personal loyalty to the minister (Hustedt & Salomonsen, 2014, p. 754). Recruitment is still usually made from existing candidates within the ministries, but additional experience in offices close to party politics enables people to achieve appointments to top civil servant positions faster – as it signals party political preferences and loyalty (Veit & Scholz, 2016, p. 529). Furthermore, as political criteria is largely used in recruitment to top civil servant positions in these countries, civil servants are also incentivized to become party members (Derlien, 1996).

Civil service systems in meritocratic countries limit the discretion of governments to remove top civil servants from their positions (Askim et al., 2022). But, formal restraints on politicians ability to politicize turnover of top civil servants can be insufficient to maintain a meritocratic civil service, if informal institutions against politicization are not also present, as the formal restraints can be subverted by politicians wishing to politicize important positions in the civil service (Gajdushek & Staronova, 2021). They can for instance reshuffle the current crop of civil servants, thus removing untrusted or undesired officials from important roles in the ministry, placing them in positions that are less politically sensitive (Derlien, 1996, p. 156). Another option is to simply reorganize the ministry departments moving politically sensitive tasks to (new) departments with trusted civil servants, allowing the government to recruit their desired candidate into this new position (Derlien, 1996, p. 156). Within the limitations of not being able to use political criteria in recruitment, the government ministers still have the ability to tailor the appointment criteria to suit the merits of their desired candidate.

Informal constraints on politicization of recruitment and turnover of civil servants, such as media attention and parliamentary scrutiny (Hazell, 2019), may be more important constraints as governments seeking to retain office have to weigh the costs and benefits of politicization. A less critical and a more partisan civil society can increase government's discretion to politicize recruitment and turnover, and functionally politicize the top civil servants through their interactions in the policy-process (Peters et al., 2022, p. 38). The existence of parliamentary scrutiny does by itself have a deterring effect on governments incentives to politicize appointments, as they need to be certain that their appointments can pass parliamentary scrutiny, and the public attention that comes with it (Hazell, 2019, p. 226). On the flip side, parliamentary scrutiny can also be a vehicle for the opposition to politicize appointments, as they can allege that the government is using political criteria in their decisions, regardless of the actual criteria used by the government (Hazell, 2019, p. 227). Such scrutiny can thus have a deterring effect on candidates applying, but empirical evidence supporting this claim has yet to be found (Hazell, 2019, p. 237). If both bureaucrats and politicians are aligned in their goals of achieving and maintaining a merit based civil service, then formal institutions against politicization may not be necessary (Gajdushek & Staronova, 2021, p. 2).

2.4 The Varying Effect of Political Change on Top Civil Servant Turnover

The thesis point of departure in theorizing why different political change may have varying strength and effects on turnover of top civil servants is that politicians have a fundamental interest in having top civil servants that share their policy preferences (Peters et al., 2022, p. 37), and that formal rules and norms against politicization make such practice more costly, but do not inhibit governments from politicizing turnover (Askim et al., 2022; Cooper, 2020; Dahlström & Holmgren, 2019). As a starting point, the least notable political change in the executive that this thesis will consider is a minister being replaced by another stemming from the same (coalition) government.

The incoming minister's trust in top civil servants in the ministry affects the minister's preferences for switching out or reassigning top civil servants when entering office (Peters et al., 2022, p. 37). As there are formal rules against discretionary dismissal in the meritocratic context the degree to which the minister can act on these preferences depends on the informal pressure they can enact on the top civil servant as their superior in the ministerial hierarchy (Peters et al., 2022, p. 37), and how the top civil servants respond to the pressure (Limbocker et al., 2022). Furthermore, the minister must evaluate the costs of the move in the eyes of the public, which may be dependent on the top civil servant leaving willingly.

Whereas top civil servants are not required to be responsive to dismissal requests from ministers, empirical studies have shown that top civil servants are loyal to the minister's decisions even in these situations (Rhodes, 2005, p. 15). In part this is because having the ministers' trust is a necessity to be kept in the loop and execute the responsibility of a top civil servant (Ebinger et al., 2019, p. 868). Furthermore, as Rhodes (2005, pp. 15–16) notes in his ethnographic study of permanent secretaries in the UK, top civil servants are socialized into believing that “the greatest crime in the civil service canon is to betray one's minister”. Hence, if a top civil servant receives notice from the minister that they are no longer wanted, the top civil servant is likely to not only comply, but do so gracefully, setting the minister and his replacement up for success during the transitional time.

When the top civil servants have served under a minister from the same party as the incoming minister, or a coalition partner of the incoming minister, then the incoming minister should largely trust that the top civil servants are responsive to the political agenda of the government. However, the reason for the departure of the previous minister may affect the incoming minister's skepticism towards the leaders of the ministry administration. For instance if the PM decided to replace the last minister because of unsatisfactory performance, then the incoming minister can be expected to be more distrustful of the ministry administration, than if the previous minister left on his own accord to pursue another work opportunity. But, regardless of the reason for the last minister's departure, new ministers will seek to hit the ground running by influencing the affairs of the ministry and put their mark on the government's policy development within their portfolio (Askim et al., 2022, p. 8).

Politicization research that view the individual ministers and not the cabinet government or the PM as the central figures in governing a ministry have found that just a change in

the minister or the ministers party can result in increased turnover rate among civil servants (Ennser-Jedenastik, 2014; Staronova & Rybar, 2021). In this case the politicization mechanism appears to be based on personal loyalty rather than party political loyalty. If politicians can have their cake and eat it they prefer to appoint top civil servants with both personal and party political loyalty, as well as professional expertise (Kopecky et al., 2016), but as long as some of these characteristics are present, then the minister's trust in the top civil servant may be sufficient to disincentivize further politicization. In general, Kopecky et al. (2016, p. 425) finds that politicians in western Europe deems personal connection to the top civil servant as less important than party political allegiance to qualify for the position.

Evidence of personal politicization in the meritocratic context is mixed, with Askim et al. (2022) finding no effect of minister turnover on the turnover of permanent secretaries in Denmark, and finding evidence to the contrary in the turnover of permanent secretaries in Norway – concluding that a change in minister may not be sufficient to influence bureaucratic careers in meritocratic systems. Politicization on the grounds of personal loyalty may thus be less prevalent in the meritocratic context than in the politicized context (Staronova & Rybar, 2021). The need for a partisan change in government to impact top civil servant turnover may stem from the ministers policy agenda largely being predetermined by detailed government coalition agreements, leaving less policy discretion to the individual ministers, thus resulting in a change in minister not having much influence on the policy-output of the ministry. It could also be because the achievements of ministers are highlighted as the achievement of the government as a collective and not of the minister as an individual, prompting ministers to seek personal glory to a lesser extent in the Scandinavian context.

As top civil servants have to be appointed by the cabinet and not by the individual minister it could also be that cabinet decision-making on changes to personnel in top civil servant positions are centralized in the hands of the PM. Cooper (2017) have found evidence of such a trend in Canadian provincial bureaucracies where a change in the first minister after an election is enough to cause higher trends of top civil servant turnover even if the new first minister is from the same party as the previous one. Thus, with mixed expectations in finding support for the effect of minister change on the turnover of top civil servants, I hypothesize that:

H1: *The risk of turnover of a top civil servant is higher in conjunction with a change in minister than in the absence of such political events.*

Next I consider the effect of wholesale government turnover³ on the turnover rates of top civil servants. Barring the aforementioned lack of effect of government turnover on the tenure of permanent secretaries in Denmark (Askim et al., 2022), research on the effect of government turnover have found that a change in government leads to higher rates of turnover among top civil servants in ministries in meritocratic systems (Askim et al., 2022; Cooper, 2017; Cooper et al., 2020) – as well as in formally politicized systems (Fleischer, 2016; Staronova & Adamcova, 2016). The incentives of ministers to dismiss top civil servants are stronger than in the H1 situation, since a change in government not only involves a change in the person controlling the ministry, but also an ideological change. The incoming government can thus be expected

³A change in government that involves a change in the party that holds the Prime Ministers Office, and thus also a turnover of the cabinet in its entirety, with or without an election.

to have lower levels of trust in the incumbent top civil servants, even if they are expected to be loyal and responsive to the at any point sitting government (Hustedt & Salomonsen, 2014, p. 750). Moreover, in the UK, Cooper et al. (2020) have found that top civil servants are not only replaced at increasing rates in the years following a change in government, but also increasingly filled with candidates from outside the civil service – thus highlighting new governments distrust of incumbent civil servants after a change in government.

As governments primary objectives are to “claim credit and avoid blame from voters” (Hood, 2002, p. 17), one can expect that new governments incentives to politicize turnover is particularly high in salient policy areas – where their policy is drastically different from the former government. In these policy areas governments will view the political responsiveness of top civil servants as integral to deliver on their political agenda and maintain the support of the public.

However, the work loads of top civil servants has been noted to be very high, and political shifts do result in this load increasing (Rhodes, 2005, p. 8). This can by itself increase the likelihood of top civil servants leaving their position of their own accord – particularly if they have been there for more than an election cycle. Moreover, top civil servants that do not share the new government’s policy preferences may also leave their positions of their own accord after an ideological shift in government as they may no longer be able to pursue their preferred policy solutions (Rattus & Randma-Liiv, 2019). In either case a change in government that brings all new ministers from new parties—and thus constitutes an ideological change in the policy agenda in the ministries—should increase the rates at which top civil servants leave their positions. I thus posit the following hypothesis:

H2: *The risk of turnover of a top civil servant is higher in conjunction with a change in government than in the absence of such political events.*

Whereas the turnover of governments causes an immediate change in the preferred political output of ministries, and thus the policy advice and solutions that the top civil servants are supposed to pursue in the day to day governance of the ministry, these events do not necessarily have the same implications for all top civil servants. Top civil servants have their own policy preferences that may be more or less in line with those of a government (Dahlström & Holmgren, 2019). To maximize their policy gains and minimize their monitoring costs by delegating tasks to top civil servants governments seek to follow the logic of the ally principle: that they can delegate more autonomy to top civil servants the greater their ideological agreement (Ennser-Jedenastik, 2016a, p. 454). As the government thus cares about employing top civil servants that they can trust, top civil servants with preferences that are in line with the new government are more likely to stay in their positions. That is if they are able to signal similarity in preferences with the government (Veit & Scholz, 2016).

In most formally politicized systems top civil servants that are affiliated with an opposition party have been found to be switched out at higher rates (Ennser-Jedenastik, 2014, 2016a; Limbocker et al., 2022). This finding does however not seem to hold in all formally politicized systems, as Fleischer (2016) has found that, while in office ministers are more likely to dismiss top civil servants from their own party than top civil servants affiliated with coalition parties.

Limbocker et al. (2022) also finds that turnover in the Senior Executive Service (SES) in the US is lower in agencies with the same political orientation as the incoming president, arguing that “Career SES turnover rates among high-level career civil servants in some agencies reflect ideological disagreements with politicians”.

Turning to the meritocratic context, where civil servants either are prohibited from becoming members of political parties or rarely are affiliated with political parties even if they are allowed to—as it may have negative consequences for their civil service career (J. G. Christensen et al., 2014)—research on policy incongruence between top civil servants and ministers have been focused on the parties that appoint and dismiss top civil servants. In Denmark, J. G. Christensen et al. (2014) does not find evidence for the tenure of permanent secretaries being shorter if they are dismissed by a different party than the party of the minister that appointed them. Contrary to the findings from Denmark, Dahlström and Holmgren (2019, p. 831) do find evidence for agency heads in Sweden leaving their “posts at higher rates when they are accountable to an ideological opponent of the appointing government than when they are accountable to an ideological ally of the appointing government.”

Ministers can also be afraid of being replaced by the PM, and particularly in response to crisis within the minister’s own portfolio, can be prompted to use the dismissal of a top civil servant as a scapegoat tactic to show resolve in handling the issue, and getting back to performing (Rhodes, 2005, p. 11). In such situations it is likely that ministers would want to scapegoat a top civil servant that was hired by the opposition as this gives the added effect of shifting blame over on the opposition (Hood, 2002).

In summary, governments are expected to put more trust in the top civil servants that they are responsible for having appointed, and be more distrustful of top civil servants recruited by opposition governments, thus:

***H3:** The risk of turnover of a top civil servant is higher while surviving under a government that does not contain the party that appointed the top civil servant, than when the government contains the appointing party.*

I now turn to the temporal dimension of the effect of political change on top civil servants careers. Firstly I consider that a change in government that brings a party to office for the first time drastically enhances the new government’s incentives to replace the incumbent top civil servants. In Norway, Jacobsen (1955) have found that debates about politicized appointments are more frequent in periods where a new party have ascended to office for the first time. Other scholars have pointed out that there are reasons why parties attaining office for the first time may have stronger incentives to politicize the bureaucracy (Askim et al., 2021; Haaland, 2004; Lægreid & Olsen, 1978). However, no study has yet to empirically investigate if these parties attaining office for the first time actually act upon these politicization incentives.

When parties assume office for the first time they are faced with a civil service that in its entirety have been appointed by opposition governments (Askim et al., 2021), which should impact the level of trust that the new government has in the ability of the civil service to be politically responsive to the agenda of the new government. Moreover, when a party assumes office for the first time its ministers have little to no governing experience and thus

do not know if the civil service can practice the bureaucratic virtues of neutrality and serial loyalty to governments. However, what parties taking control of the government for the first time do have is information about how other governments have appointed and removed top civil servants in the past (Jacobsen, 1955). As parliamentary debates around politicization of the civil service usually take the form of the opposition making allegation against the government of making appointments based on political criteria and the government defending their recruitments labeling them as based on merit (Jacobsen, 1955, p. 142). It is likely that parties taking office for the first time will believe that these appointments have been politicized – hence wanting to remove top civil servants installed by previous governments.

The mechanism of distrust between new governments taking office for the first time and top civil servants can be further enhanced in situations where the party taking office for the first time also represents social groups that have never governed before. These parties face a civil service that has a completely different social background than that of their own, making it more difficult for the new government to trust the civil servants ability to understand and carry out the new policy-agenda (Lægreid & Olsen, 1978, pp. 13–14). As have been fronted by members of parliament from parties representing new social groups that have just taken office for the first time in Norway: a change in government that brings new parties to office for the first time is incomplete if it does not also come with changes in the beliefs and policy-preferences of the civil service (Jacobsen, 1955, p. 138). Hence, these parties do not only seek to politicize top civil servant turnover to enhance their political control over the bureaucracy, but also to make sure that their social group is represented among the top civil servants (Haaland, 2004). Thus, desiring a more representative bureaucracy (Lægreid & Olsen, 1978), where the social background of top civil servants is more proportional to the size of these social groups in society. Patterns of top civil service appointments being made to secure a more politically representative civil service have for instance been found in the Netherlands where most top civil servants have formal party affiliation (Ennser-Jedenastik, 2016a, p. 464).

In Germany, Fleischer (2016) found no significant impact of ministers having held office before on the turnover of administrative state secretaries. However, this study does not take into account whether or not any member of the party has ever held office before, but it does highlight that just inexperienced ministers are insufficient to politicize top civil servant turnover. As it is parties that are presumed to be the essential actors in politicization (Ennser-Jedenastik, 2016a). The expected result when parties attain office for the first time should still be one of increased politicization, hence:

H4: *The risk of turnover of a top civil servant is higher in conjunction with a change in government that lets a party assume the position of prime minister for the first time, than in periods with regular change in government.*

Another temporal factor that can affect the political dynamics of government change on top civil servant turnover is the time in between government turnover. In terms of governments decision-making on changing civil service rules to allow for more politicization, Ting et al. (2013) finds that the rate of government turnover affects new governments preferences for making the bureaucracy more or less politicized. In their logic, governments that do not expect

to lose power in the near future should want to increase the politicization of the civil service, as that should increase their chances of keeping office (Folke et al., 2011).

On the other hand, governments that perceive defeat in an upcoming election as a likely outcome may focus on insulating the neutral expertise of the bureaucracy, securing a system of top civil servants with serial loyalty that do not actively work against their policies the next time they assume office (Ting et al., 2013). In other words increased partisan competition should decrease the incentives of governments to design rules of formal politicization as they will also be (ab)used by future governments of opposition parties to maximize electoral success (Ting et al., 2013, p. 364). Moreover, with less expected time in office governments cannot be sure that they will have time to install their own top civil servants regardless of the formal rules, as government turnover comes with transitional constraints that slows the ability of the incoming government to take full advantage of their offices.

Having to quickly get up to speed with current affairs in the ministries may cause the replacement of top civil servants to impede their ability to hit the ground running in implementing their policy-agenda. Particularly as ministers receive additive benefits from the tenure length of the top civil servants—as they become more competent and more efficient over time—provided that they are responsive to the policy agenda of the government (Ting et al., 2013, p. 365). However, the existence of a larger political executive in the ministries may mediate the government's dependency on the incumbent top civil servants in the transitional period after a change in government, thus still enabling new governments to quickly switch out unwanted top civil servants (Askim et al., 2022).

However, the mechanisms of time since a change in government may not be as straightforward as more frequent changes in government making all governments more dependent on a neutral civil service, it could also incentivize new governments to politicize appointments to the civil service to ensure political influence after they leave office. If a government is expecting their time in office to be short, politicizing top civil service turnover should be an attractive strategy to install top civil servants that share the government's policy preferences, thus ensuring continued influence in key policy areas for years after leaving office (Dahlstrom & Niklasson, 2013).

Moreover, whether or not a government is a minority or majority government may impact their emphasis on politicizing top civil service positions (Dahlstrom & Niklasson, 2013). Majority governments that are relatively confident in their prospect for reelection could be expected to put less of an emphasis on politicizing top civil servants to ensure that their policy agenda is carried out effectively, as such governments are not as contingent on policy-making through the administration, as they do not risk having the parliament block their policy propositions (Folke et al., 2011). Minority governments on the other hand should be expected to put more emphasis on installing trusted top civil servants to ensure policy influence. Although majority governments are less contingent on politicizing top civil servants, they can do so without facing any risk of removal as the opposition in the parliament is not able to remove them from office even if they all agree that the government is misusing its influence on the civil service (Dahlstrom & Niklasson, 2013). Hence majority governments seeking to both keep office and to maximize policy influence should still be expected to politicize top

civil servant turnover.

In the Swedish context, Dahlstrom and Niklasson (2013) does not find evidence for neither majority governments nor long lasting governments politicizing recruitment of top civil servants in a different manner than minority governments and short lived governments. If governments regardless of electoral strength and longevity all politicize administration similarly, then the longer a government is in office the stronger its expected grip on the administration becomes. As the longer the previous government was in office, the more time they had to appoint ideologically aligned top civil servants and socialize top civil servants into the governments ideological preferences (Kappe & Schuster, 2021). Following this logic, Kappe and Schuster (2021) have found that governments have lasting effects on the civil servants policy preferences after the government leaves office. Hence, governments that replace a long lasting government should be more distrustful of the incumbent top civil servants ability to carry out the changed policy agenda effectively, thus having stronger incentives to change top civil servants. I thus posit the following hypothesis:

H5: *The risk of turnover of a top civil servant increases with the number of years that have passed since the last change in government.*

Finally, Having posed expectations for how five different political events may affect top civil servant turnover, it is time to consider how the relationship between these political events and top civil servants leaving their positions have changed over time. Aucoin (2012) argues that civil servant systems in the Westminster tradition, characterized by meritocratic recruitment, have become increasingly politicized in the last 40 years. He labels this turn in the administrative tradition as New Public Governance, a tradition that is now characterized by a growing culture of top civil servants being increasingly dependent on being politically responsive and having the (prime) minister's trust to retain their positions (Aucoin, 2012, pp. 187–188). Other scholars have also theorized that western democracies have become more politicized in recent years (Peters & Pierre, 2004, p. 1) in response to increased external pressure on government generated by mediatization and globalization (Hustedt & Salomonsen, 2014, p. 747) – and an increasingly sizable, complex and decentralized central administration (Bach et al., 2020, p. 4). Moreover, the tasks of top civil servants in ministries have increasingly shifted from being primarily administrative, towards providing the minister with policy and political-tactical advice (J. G. Christensen et al., 2014; Grindheim et al., 2019, pp. 125–126). Thus, the position of top civil servant has become more functionally politicized over time (Hustedt & Salomonsen, 2014, p. 750).

Empirical findings on politicization having increased over time in countries with a meritocratic recruitment system have however given mixed empirical support to the claim of increased politicization of top civil servant turnover over time (Bach, 2020, p. 37; Askim et al., 2022; J. G. Christensen et al., 2014; Dahlström & Holmgren, 2019; Forum, 2021; Nerland, 1998). Cooper (2020) studies permanent secretary turnover in the UK between 1949 and 2014, and does not find empirical proof of the connection between a change in the governing party and turnover of top civil servants having increased over time – instead he finds that a change in the governing party have had a significant impact on turnover rates of top

civil servants independent of temporal variance. Whereas Dahlström and Holmgren (2019) does not explicitly investigate if politicization of agency heads in Sweden have increased over time, they do find that top civil servant turnover becomes more frequent in the later half of their study, after the government increased its discretion to remove agency heads in 1987 – and thus its ability to politicize agency head turnover. In Denmark the tenure of permanent secretaries are noted to have become shorter over time, yet their exits from the ministries remain consistently unaffected by political change over time (Askim et al., 2022; J. G. Christensen et al., 2014). In Canada, Cooper (2017) found that a change in the party of the first minister increased bureaucratic mobility both before and after 1980. However, in favor of increased personal politicization and centralization of power in the hands of the PM over time, he also found that a change in the first minister without a change in party only increased top civil service turnover after 1980.

In Norway I have previously found that government turnover does not appear to negatively impact the tenure of directors general of ministry departments between 1906-1940 (Forum, 2021), whereas Askim et al. (2022) have found evidence to the contrary for permanent secretaries between 1970-2020. Moreover, as Askim et al. (2022) are attributing the differing effect of government turnover in Norway and Denmark on the tenure of permanent secretaries on the existence of state secretaries in Norway. A natural cutoff point to consider for a turn towards increased politicization in Norway is thus the introduction of state secretaries in 1947 (T. Christensen et al., 2014, p. 53).

Askim et al. (2022) argument for state secretaries enabling politicization of top civil servants follows the logic of the ministers being less dependent on the incumbent top civil servants in the transitional period after assuming office, as the minister also has an entourage of state secretaries to rely on. Moreover, the ministers dependency on the top civil servants to hit the ground running—repealing and replacing the policy of the former government—is decidedly lower if their state secretaries have professional expertise relevant to the ministry portfolio (Askim et al., 2022). In the context prior to the introduction of state secretaries, the incoming ministers only have the incumbent top civil servants to turn when getting up to speed with the inner-workings of the ministry, thus making it more risky to dismiss top civil servants in the early face of governing – even if the minister are aware of some of the top civil servants having conflicting policy preferences. Hence, political events that cause a change in the minister should be expected to have less of an impact on top civil servants leaving the ministry when the political entourage of the minister did not include state secretaries.

The introduction of state secretaries in ministries is by itself a tool for governments to increase the political control of the ministry (Shaw & Eichbaum, 2020). Another theory in the politicization literature has been that a larger politically appointed cabinet around the ministers should decrease ministers' need to politicize the staffing of top civil servant positions (Hustedt & Salomonsen, 2014). However, studying civil service politicization in New Zealand, Shaw and Eichbaum (2020) does not find any tendencies to politicization of the civil service being lower in the presence of political state secretaries in the ministries – rather, they conclude that both politicization of the civil service and administrative politicization in terms of larger political executives have increased over time. All things considered, the introduction of state

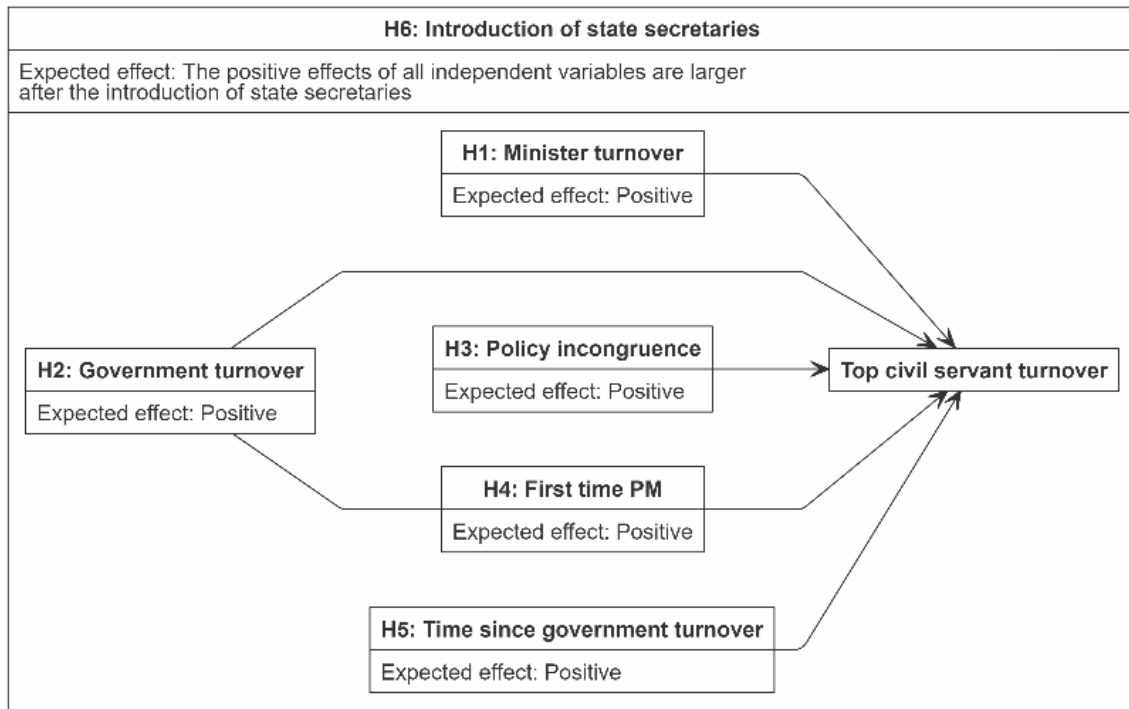


Figure 2.1: Directed acyclic graph of the different political events and their hypothesized effects on the rate of top civil servant turnover.

secretaries in 1947 should be a turning point towards more politicization in Norway, thus:

H6: *The risk of turnover of a top civil servant is higher in conjunction with a political change when the ministry also employs political state secretaries, than in the absence of political state secretaries in ministries.*

Figure 2.1 summarizes the hypotheses and their expected effect on top civil service turnover, showing that all political events are expected to have a positive effect on the rate of top civil service turnover, and that their effects are hypothesized to be stronger after the introduction of state secretaries. Having derived the hypotheses, I now turn to presenting the Norwegian case of top civil servant politicization in more detail in the following chapter.

Chapter 3

Research Context

Politicization has received scares but increasing scholarly attention in the Norwegian context. Apart from Askim et al. (2022) study on the turnover of permanent secretaries, most politicization studies have focused on top civil servant appointments or other aspects of politicization (Askim et al., 2021). In the following paragraphs I will briefly summarize important findings from three key studies of politicization of top civil servants in the Norwegian context (Askim & Bach, 2021; Jacobsen, 1955, 1960; Nerland, 1997, 1998). Subsequently, the next section will give an overview of the changing civil service legislation and institutional context in Norway from 1814-2021. Lastly, as changes in governments are the main component of the hypothesized effects of political change on administrative turnover. The final section looks at the distinctive characteristics of Norwegian governments throughout the period, and describes how the transitional period between two governments are handled in the Norwegian context.

Jacobsen (1955, 1960) wrote on the different loyalties of Norwegian civil servants and how the civil servants prioritization between these loyalties were affected by changes in political leadership as early as in 1955. Jacobsen (1955, p. 149) found that the rules and expectations to the role of the civil service may change over time as different social and political groups (as well as the bureaucrats themselves) strive to influence the policy preferences of the civil servants. Furthermore, he categorizes the conflict lines in parliamentary debates on the use of political criteria in the recruitment of top civil servants between 1885 and 1950, finding that these debates mainly take the form of the opposition positing that the government have made appointments based on political criteria and the government defending their recruitment's as based on merit (Jacobsen, 1955, p. 142). However, there were some exceptions where governments received support from opposition parties in these debates, such as the Liberal Party's parliamentarian leader in 1938 Johan Ludwig Mowinckel defending the Labor Party government's decision to appoint Karl Evang as Chief Medical Officer (Jacobsen, 1955, p. 136). Mowinckel argued that for the most important positions in the civil service it is only natural for governments to appoint a qualified candidate that they wholeheartedly know will work for their policies and not against them (Jacobsen, 1955, p. 136).

The custom of top civil servants not being appointed on the basis of political criteria has formal support from almost all parties since the dawn of parliamentarism in 1884, with the exception being parliamentarians from the Labor Party in the 1930s voicing the need for a

political appointed civil service, to ensure that the administration is responsive to the policy agenda of new governments (Jacobsen, 1955, p. 143). The parliamentarians from the Labor Party further argued that this was particularly important in the wake of new social groups gaining power for the first time, as they felt that the administration had little understanding for their political agenda (Jacobsen, 1955, p. 143). Following this logic, Jacobsen (1955) finds that allocations of politicization of top civil servants are most rampant in two epochs during the period, in the years after the Liberal Party gains office for the first time in the 1880s, and in the years after the Labor party attains office for the first time in the 1930s.

Following in the footsteps of Jacobsen (1955, 1960), Nerland (1997, 1998) investigated the extent to which Norwegian top civil servants had political background on a sample of 538 directors general of ministry departments, agency heads and permanent secretaries in the years 1936, 1956, 1976 and 1996. Nerland (1997, 1998) posed the question of whether Norway over time had moved towards a system for employing top civil servants where professional merits were given less consideration than political merits. Nerland (1998) concluded that, whereas the career patterns of top civil servants changed over the 60 year period—from most top civil servants having had lifelong careers of servitude in ministries and agencies, to a larger extent of recruitment to top civil service positions being made from outside the central administration—there are no indications of a shift towards politicization of the central administration over time. For the top civil servants with political background he finds that $\frac{2}{3}$ also have relevant experience from civil service positions, arguing that there might have been a shift towards a revolving door between politics and administration over time (Nerland, 1998, pp. 44–45). However, the percentage of top civil servants that had a political career background between 1936 and 1996 varied steadily between 5-11% (Nerland, 1998, pp. 44–45). In a study of agency heads in Norway 1980-2020, Askim and Bach (2021) finds that 14% of their sample of agency heads had a political career background, further indicating that politicization in terms of appointing top civil servants with a formal political affiliation have not increased largely over time.

Nerland (1997, 1998) also notes that in the later half of the time period of his study, that the appointments of top civil servants with a political career background are increasingly made by opposition governments. Furthermore, he finds that top civil servants with a political career background have professional merits that are comparable to those of the not politically affiliated top civil servants (Nerland, 1998)[42]. Askim and Bach (2021) do on the other hand find that top civil servants with a political career background have less sector specific expertise than other top civil servants, and that it is mainly the top civil servants which are appointed by governments with which they have party affiliation that are less qualified.

3.1 Politicization of Top Civil Servants in Norway: Institutions and Legislation

Norway gained its independence from Denmark in 1814, but was subsequently forced into a union with Sweden that lasted until 1905. Negative parliamentarism was later introduced

in 1884 as a result of the parliament's impeachment of the Selmer government in 1880 over Swedish King Oscar II's abuse of his power to veto the legislation of the parliament. The political union between Norway and Sweden reached its end in 1905. Norway has since been a sovereign nation—barring the German WWII-occupation of Norway 1940-1945—with a constitutional symbolic monarch, and party-governments requiring the implicit support of the parliament.

The central-administration in Norway grew steadily throughout most of the period, increasing both in the number of policy areas under the domain of each minister as well as the number of civil servants and administrative units the ministers are in charge of – making it increasingly useful for ministers to install trusted top civil servants in key positions to increase the control of bureaucracy. During the union-period the Norwegian Government grew slowly in personnel size, from 52 employees serving in the ministerial organizations in 1815 to 475 in 1905, further increasing to 1089 in 1940, 2000 in 1945, 3000 by 1980 and about 4500 today (Kolsrud, 2001, 2008, p. 135).

During the political union with Sweden the Norwegian central administration was split in two: into the Norwegian government in Kristiania (Oslo) and the Norwegian Ministry in Stockholm (Kolsrud, 2001, p. 60). Ministerial turnover was particularly high in this period as two of the Norwegian government's ministers had to serve in the Norwegian Ministry in Stockholm, and these two ministerial posts were rotated between the cabinet-ministers at one year intervals (Kolsrud, 2001, p. 104).

Formal decision-making power to appoint and dismiss top civil servants are made by the cabinet in its plenary sessions, and formalized by resolutions of royal decree as put forward in §§21-22 of the Norwegian Constitution (Grunnloven, 1814). This formal decision-making power was in the hands of the Swedish King until the end of the union (Kolsrud, 2001, p. 52). Since the end of the political union with Sweden, the Norwegian Government has had the sole responsibility for the recruitment and dismissal of top civil servants, and traditionally each minister is responsible for the recruitment within their portfolio (Lægreid & Olsen, 1978, p. 15). Moreover, all top civil servants in Norwegian ministries are dismissible top civil servants, meaning that they can be dismissed by royal decree, as opposed to other civil servants (primarily judges, but also some top civil servants in agencies) who are only dismissable by court order (Grunnloven, 1814). In 1966 a public committee reviewed the civil service legislation on the dismissal of civil servants, resulting in the civil service also being regulated by the 1983 legislation on public servants – but not changing their general protection against dismissal for political reasons (Borgerud et al., 2020, p. 23).

Legal custom since the 1890s (Jacobsen, 1955), and civil service legislation since 2017 (Borgerud et al., 2020) have prohibited governments use of political criteria as the formal reason for the removal or recruitment of civil service members. Hence, there have been no instances of political criteria being formally mentioned in such matters since the first half of the 1800s (Lægreid & Olsen, 1978, pp. 14, 50). Moreover, the Norwegian Supreme Court made it clear in a judgment from 2014 (Rt. 2014 s. 402) that the courts have limited jurisdiction to try appeals on government appointments of top civil servants as the government has substantial discretion in who they see as the most competent candidate for such positions (Borgerud et al.,

2020, p. 45).

The minister decides how the ministry is organized, which top civil servant positions are needed and which qualifications that are to be considered when appointments are made to the top civil servant positions – and ultimately selects the candidate that is to be appointed by the cabinet (Borgerud et al., 2020, p. 58). Hence, the minister has a lot of discretion regarding top civil servants, leaving ample room to politicize. For instance, the former state secretary for the Conservative Party, Osmund Kaldheim, was appointed as agency head in two different agencies on two separate occasions by a conservative government, after the competence requirements for appointment were altered post initial publication—to not include higher education as a requirement—thus making Kaldheim a qualified candidate (Haugan & Hvistendahl, 2017).

Until 1953 empty top civil servant positions were not advertised publicly, limiting the possible candidates for these appointments to existing civil servants, and outsiders that the government wanted to hire (Lægreid & Olsen, 1978, pp. 49–50). Moreover, prior to the second world war the top civil servants were a largely homogeneous group of university educated men from the upper layers of society and the geographical center of Norway (Forum, 2021). Norwegian ministers in the period also had a similar ethnography, hence when new social groups gained power in Norway in 1931 (Farmers Party) and 1935 (Labor Party)¹ they faced a civil service that were distinctively different from themselves (Lægreid & Olsen, 1978, pp. 13–14).

When it comes to ministers discretion to dismiss top civil servants on grounds other than malpractice, the ministers can do so by reorganizing the ministry or by arguing that a top civil servant no longer has the required competences for the position (Borgerud et al., 2020, p. 72). However, when dismissing top civil servants for such reasons they need to offer the top civil servant another fitting position in the ministry, and the formal reason for the dismissal must be well founded (Borgerud et al., 2020, p. 72). When reorganizing a ministry to move unwanted top civil servants into less important positions, the minister usually cannot change their top civil servant status nor lower their remuneration (Borgerud et al., 2020, p. 129). Although the minister can dismiss civil servants when reorganizing a ministry, there are no known examples of top civil servants being formally dismissed as a result of reorganization of ministries in the post WWII period (Borgerud et al., 2020, p. 203). Lastly, the minister can as discussed in the theory chapter exert informal pressure on the top civil servant to resign.

The parliament does not have the competence to halt or block any government recruitment decisions, however, it does have the right to review the minutes from cabinet meetings, including decisions on the appointment and dismissal of top civil servants (Nerland, 1998, p. 47). The Parliaments only tool for blocking a government decision is to make a motion of no confidence against a minister or the cabinet as a whole, a measure so drastic that it has only been used once for suspected politicization – a motion of no confidence was made against the Brundtland II Labor party minority government in 1994 in response to the appointment of

¹The Labor party actually first gained office in 1928, but their government were removed by the opposition in parliament after just 18 days, not having the opportunity to make any decisions on civil servants. However, the 1928 Labor government was able to pardon a number of arrested party members before being removed (Skjævesland, 2021)

former Labor Party state secretary Torstein Moland as Director General of the Central Bank of Norway, but the motion ultimately failed (Nerland, 1998, p. 47).²

During the 1990s more scrutiny was placed on the government, as the Parliament's Standing Committee on Scrutiny and Constitutional Affairs (henceforth the SCA-committee) criticized the Labor Party government on the Moland-appointment mentioned above, and the appointment of former Labor Party state secretary Bjørn Aamo as Director General of the Financial Supervisory Authority of Norway (Nerland, 1998, p. 38). Furthermore, the SCA-committee criticized the unregulated revolving door between politics and civil service after Håvard Helland—a director general in the Ministry of Children and Families—in 1996 had been hired as a state secretary in the Ministry of Finance for 27 days, before moving right back to his top civil service position (Nerland, 1998, p. 38; Kontroll- og konstitusjonskomiteen, 1997). The Parliament's increased scrutiny of potential politicization of top civil service appointments culminated in 1997, when the parliament asked the government to raise an inquiry into the revolving door of political and administrative affairs in the ministries (Nerland, 1998, p. 38; Kontroll- og konstitusjonskomiteen, 1997). The inquiry ended up in the Quarantine Act of 2015 (LOV-2015-06-19-70) which now regulates the ability of members of government, state secretaries and political advisors to move directly from their position in government to a top civil service position in the ministries within the first six months of having left their political position (Karanteneloven, 2015).

In 2021 the Solberg Government was accused of breaking an over 100-year-old custom of sitting government not appointing its own members of its cabinet to top civil service positions by the majority of the SCA-committee—after appointing two ministers as county governors in 2014 and 2018, and the at the time Minister of Defence Frank Bakke-Jensen as Director General of the Directorate of Fisheries (Kontroll- og konstitusjonskomiteen, 2021). Whereas it is true that no government had appointed any of its own members to civil service positions since the Løvland government in 1908, governments often recruited former members of the cabinet to civil service positions during the same period.

Norwegian governments also occasionally recruit top civil servants with a political background from a party that is part of the opposition, such as the appointment of former Minister of Finance for the Labor Party Gunnar Berge (Askim & Bach, 2021, p. 32) to Director General of the Oil Directorate in 1990 by a conservative government, and the 2016 appointment of former Minister of Labor for the Labor Party Hanne Bjurstrøm to Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud by the Solberg government (Barne- og familiedepartementet, 2015). Likewise, Social-democratic governments such as when the Stoltenberg II government appointed former state secretary in the Ministry of Finance for the Conservative Party Øystein Børmer as Director General of The Norwegian Agency for Public and Financial Management (DFØ) – a directorate that in its 17 years of existence only have seen three agency heads, all with a background as state secretary in the Ministry of Finance (Finansdepartementet, 2012). Hence, at least some of the politicized appointments in Norway appear to be made on the basis of the candidates in dept understanding of the political dimensions of a top civil service

²Other applicants to a position have the right to raise a formal complaint to the parliament if they feel that they unjust-fully were not appointed, but as Nerland (1998) also points out the plaintiffs have never received a favorable verdict in such cases.

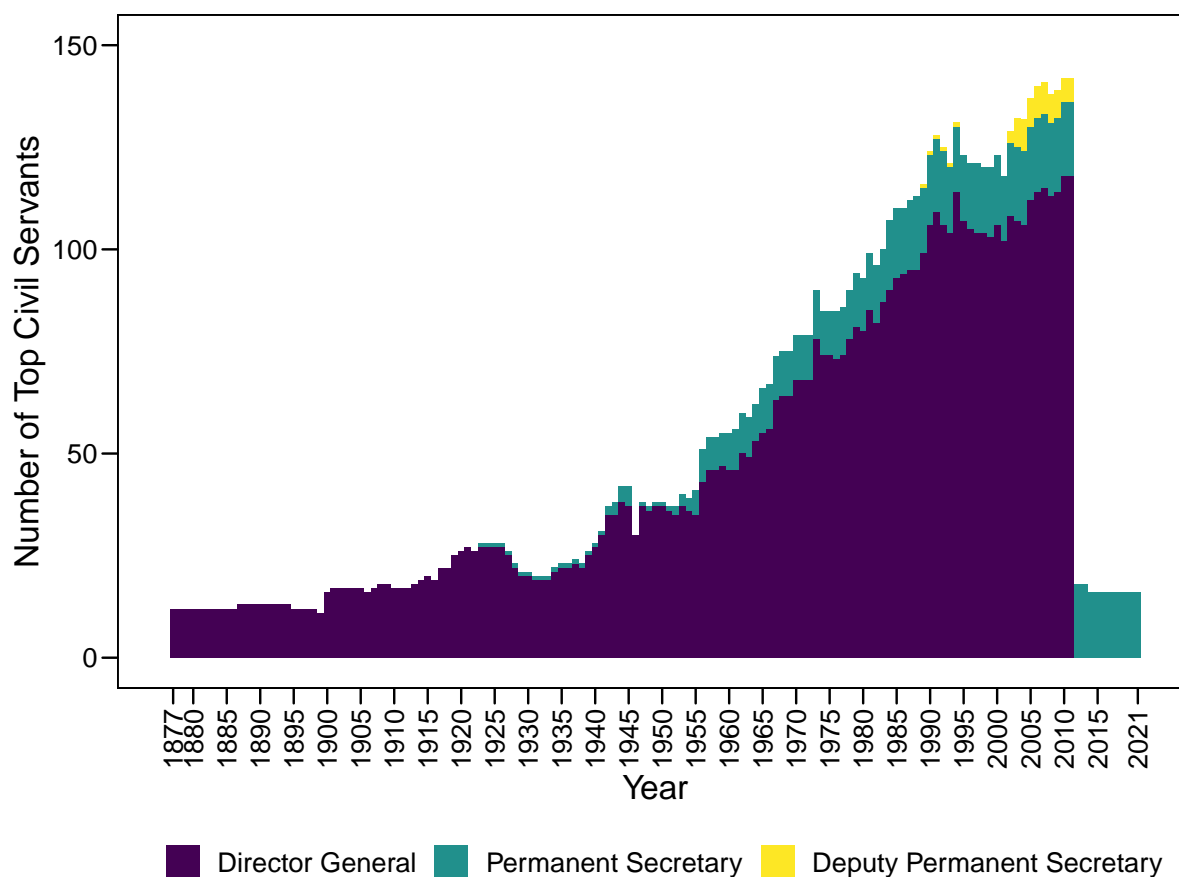


Figure 3.1: The number of top civil servants in Norwegian ministries 1877-2021³ subset by position.

position, and not because they share the government’s policy preferences (Askim & Bach, 2021, pp. 9–10).

Top civil servant positions in Norwegian ministries between 1884 and 2021, entails the Directors General of Ministry Departments (Ekspedisjonssjefer), the Deputy Permanent Secretaries (Assisterende departementsråder) and the Permanent Secretaries (Departementsråder). As can be gleaned from a look at figure 3.1 Norwegian ministries gradually employed permanent secretaries in all ministries in the first 40 years of the post WWII period (Eriksen, 1988, pp. 77–78), although the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had employed a Permanent Secretary since 1922. The responsibility as administrative leader of a ministry was shared between one or more Directors General until a ministry implemented the position of permanent secretary as the administrative leader of the ministry. Furthermore, figure 3.1 shows that some ministries also appoints deputy permanent secretaries from 1989 and onward.

³From 2012-2021 only the number of permanent secretaries are included as the dataset of top civil servants only covers this position for these years (see the about dataset section in chapter 4). The number of Directors General have remained around 100, and the number of Deputy Permanent Secretaries between 3-6 in the post 2011 period.

3.2 Government Types and Change of Government

As changes of government and other political events are hypothesized to be driving forces behind bureaucratic turnover, I will now briefly lay out the essential background information concerning the relevant political events that occurred in Norway during the period studied.

The Norwegian electoral system went through multiple reforms since the dawn of democracy in Norway in 1814 that impacted the types of governments that could be formed and the risk of governments being removed from office. As parliamentarians primarily vote along party lines, a government's risk of receiving a successful vote of no confidence against it is tied to the number and strength of the opposition parties in the parliament. The number of parties in the parliament increased from two in 1884 to nine in 2021 – and the number of effective parties fluctuated between 2.2 and 5.4 (Aardal, 2010). These changes in the number of parties in the parliament are not only a result of changes in Norwegian citizens voting-patterns⁴, but also the statutes that determine how ballots are transformed to parliamentary seats.

From 1814-1905 the electoral system in Norway was one of indirect elections with plurality rule (Fiva & Smith, 2017). In 1906 direct elections were introduced in the form of single-member district systems using a two-round plurality runoff, lasting until 1918 where it was replaced with a multi-member districts closed-list proportional representation system (Fiva & Smith, 2017). The proportional representation system has since been kept but the algorithm used to allocate seats has since been switched – and adjustment seats were added in 1989 (Fiva & Smith, 2017). Of these changes the most notable is the change to a proportional representation system that propelled the Labor Party to become the largest party in the parliament by 1927. Furthermore, the introduction of adjustment seats in 1989 have also been heralded as the change that put the final nail in the coffin for the possibility of forming single party majority governments in Norway (Aardal, 2010). However, regardless of the changes to electoral rules, most Norwegian governments have still been minority governments. But, since the 1989 changes to the parliamentary election legislation gave smaller parties more proportional representation, coalition governments have become more common on both sides of the political spectrum after this change (Fiva & Smith, 2017; Grindheim et al., 2019, pp. 113–114).

The political parties have been the dominant actors in the Norwegian parliament and government, uncontestedly so since the 1930s (Grindheim et al., 2019, p. 97). This also implies that any politically designed turnover of top civil servants in ministries would be the result of party political decision-making and not of individual ministers. Such decision-making do get more difficult in coalition governments, depending on the role one attributes to the PM and the dominant coalition party. On the one hand, the PM is considered the most influential politician in Norway, as a “political organizer but no superstar” (Olsen, 1983, p. 83). The reason for the PM not being a superstar is, on the other hand, found in the PM not having any more formal power over government decision-making than other ministers. In case of disagreement in the cabinet, the Constitution holds that the cabinet is to make decisions by simple majority where

⁴Which in turn also changes due to changes in enfranchisement

one minister holds one vote – however, in practice there seldom is votation in the cabinet, as most decisions are made by consensus (Grindheim et al., 2019, p. 107). The power of the PM thus rests on the PM's informal influence on the consensus decision-making of the cabinet in its plenary sessions, and the control over how the Prime Ministers Office (PMO) prepares cases from the different ministries for cabinet decision-making (Grindheim et al., 2019, pp. 103–104). There is little cooperation across ministries in Norway, thus pointing toward only the PM and the party leader having a say in a minister's decision to replace a top civil servant, making the call on whether this is a decision that could hurt the government or not.

State secretaries were introduced in 1947, with the trend being one state secretary per ministry. The number has since increased to an average of 2-3 state secretaries per ministry, but some still only employs one, with the most important ministries—such as the PMO or the Ministry of Finance employing upwards of eight state secretaries (Grindheim et al., 2019, p. 106). Moreover, the number of state secretaries in ministries are usually higher in coalition governments where state secretaries are also appointed across party lines as watchdogs for their parties (Askim et al., 2018). Political advisors have also been introduced in the post-WWII period, limited to one political advisor per minister (Grindheim et al., 2019, p. 106). Both state secretaries and political advisors are linked to the minister heading the ministry, and must thus leave their positions if there is a change in minister.

From 1945 to 1965 the Labor Party held office, primarily as a one-party government, with one irregular break in the continuity of their reign with the short lived opposition government that was formed after a vote of no confidence in 1963 (Grindheim et al., 2019, p. 46). From 1945-1961 the Labor Party government also held over 50% of the seats in the parliament (Grindheim et al., 2019, p. 53). This period has been labeled as an era of more elite circulation between political and administrative posts (Grindheim et al., 2019, p. 46). Civil society became a more intricate part of policy making in this period which might imply less of a need to politicize top civil servants, as there now are other channels that can be politicized to influence policy-making (Grindheim et al., 2019, p. 48).

Counting every election and every change in the PM as a change in government, Grindheim et al. (2019, pp. 112–114) finds that Norway have had 58 different governments since 1905, and that about 66% of these have been minority governments, governing for 57% of the years between 1905-2015. Furthermore about 50% of the governments have been single party governments, with 77% of these being minority governments (Grindheim et al., 2019, pp. 112–114). Using the NSD (2022c) data on governments, we can see that there have been 35 years between 1884-2021 where there was a change in the party of the PM, of these changes, 20 occurred without an election, and only 15 resulted from an election – moreover, 23 out of the 38 elections held in this period resulted in the reelection of a PM from the same party. All 7 instances of a new party gaining office for the first time took place in years without an election.

3.2.1 Government Turnover in Norway

General elections are held at fixed intervals in Norway, taking place in September every four years – until 1936 elections were held every three years. The new parliamentary session then opens on the first weekday of October. If a government turnover takes place after a

general election, the norm is for the change in government to take place as soon as the sitting government has submitted their budget proposal for the coming year. As the government submits the national budget as the first government white paper of a parliamentary session, government turnover in Norway usually takes place in the middle of October (Regjeringen, 2021).

The incumbent government continues to govern as usual from the time of the election until it is clear if the opposition parties can form a new government, at which point the incumbent prime minister informs the King of Norway—after first informing the parliament—of the current cabinets wish to withdraw from government, and who the King should ask to form a new government. Only then is the incumbent government formally considered a lame duck government (*forretningsministerium*), that continues to govern until the new government can be appointed by the King in Council. This period usually only lasts a few days. Despite the government still formally having the same decision-making power up until this point, it has been the norm that the government halts its decision-making in cases that are either politically controversial, irreversible or of a principle manner until the question of continued governance is resolved (Regjeringen, 2021). Such cases may be new international agreements, or the appointment of top civil servants or board members to state owned enterprises.

The actual turnover of government involves the lame duck ministers being formally dismissed, and the new ministers of the incoming government formally appointed in the same session of the King in Council (Regjeringen, 2021). After the new government has been appointed, the new government holds another meeting of the King in Council, where any structural or formal changes are made to the number of ministries, and state secretaries are appointed. The start of this second meeting of the King in Council marks the formal change in government. After the second meeting of the King in Council the new government meets the press outside the Royal Palace, before each minister heads to their ministry for the first time for a short formal ceremony where the *key* to the ministry is transferred from the dismissed minister to the new minister.

As the new ministers will have limited knowledge of the inner-workings of the ministries that they now head, it is the job of the permanent secretary and the directors general of the ministry departments to give the minister an overview of current and upcoming affairs in the ministry, and to provide expertise on how the government can amend the national budget of the former government within their portfolio to fit their political agenda. It is also the permanent secretaries job to inform the new minister on how the relationship between political leadership of the ministry and the bureaucracy is regulated. Moreover, within the first few weeks of the new government being formed, the minister also usually meets with the agency heads of the ministries subordinate agencies.

The new government is thus quickly introduced to the top civil servants within the different ministry portfolios, gaining a first impression on the civil servants preferences. Thus assessing the risk of policy drift, to form an opinion on whether or not a top civil servant might need to be replaced. But, as amendments to the national budget are due in November, it is not very likely that a minister has neither the time nor the will to make any personnel changes in these key positions within their first month in charge of a ministry.

Chapter 4

Research Design

In this chapter the novel dataset of top civil servants in Norwegian ministries 1877-2021 will be presented in more detail. Subsequently, the theoretical concepts of top civil servant turnover and the political events described in chapter 2 will be operationalized empirically. Lastly, the chapter presents and discusses the analysis strategy of Cox-Regression.

4.1 About the Dataset

The dataset consists of the 841 top civil servants who served as either director general of a ministry department¹, deputy permanent secretary or permanent secretary in Norwegian ministries between 1877 and 2021. For Directors General and Deputy Permanent Secretaries the final year of the collected data is 2011 as this was the final publishing year of the Norwegian register of government employees, *Statskalenderen* (Regjeringen, 1877-2011). Whereas each new appointment to these positions are available from the digitally published minutes from government council meetings, *Offisielt frå statsrådet* (Regjeringen, 1994-2022), in the years after 2011, it is difficult to use this information to keep track of which top civil servant has left their position when a new appointment is made – as the minutes does not contain information on which director general position or deputy permanent secretary position that a person is appointed to. For permanent secretaries this is easier as there is only one PS per ministry, and this data had already been collected by Askim et al. (2022) for the years 1970 to 2021, so I simply merged my data with theirs for the years after 2011.²

4.2 Dependent Variable

Following the methodology of Askim et al. (2022) I organized the 841 people in continuous employment spells as top civil servants. Meaning that an employment spell is only considered

¹Only considering the top civil servants that held a civil service position of *Ekspedisjonsjef/Ekspedisjonssekretær* to ensure that these civil servants had comparable responsibilities throughout the period. However, there are some positions with other titles where the position also involved heading a ministry department, but following the logic of wanting comparable top civil service positions, these positions have been omitted as the register data do not contain enough information to separate these positions from less important civil service positions.

²I was also responsible for collecting the permanent secretary data of the Askim et al. (2022) as I worked as a research assistant on this paper.

to have ended if a top civil servant that holds a position in year t no longer holds any of the top civil servant positions mentioned above in year $t + 1$. In other words, if a top civil servant for instance holds the position of director general in the ministry of Finance in 1980, but his department is moved to another ministry in 1981 this is not counted as the end of an employment spell. Similarly, if an individual goes from being a director general in year t to becoming a permanent secretary in year $t + 1$ or vice versa this is not considered to end the employment spell. Moreover, as the formal retirement age in the public sector in Norway is 70 (65 for women until 1956) all top civil servants that are still in office the year they turn 70 are right-censored, as they would need to leave their position that year regardless of any confounding political events (J. G. Christensen et al., 2014).³ Individuals that still held their position in 2011 (for directors general and deputy permanent secretaries) or 2021 (for permanent secretaries) are right-censored at these points in time. Hence, the variable *Top civil servant turnover* only takes the value 1 in the last year of a consecutive top civil servant employment spell, if the top civil servant is less than 70 years old that year and it is not the last year of observation.

In total the 841 persons have 990 employment spells. 133 people had more than one employment spell, of these 120 people had two employment spells, 11 people had three employment spells and 2 people had four or five employment spells. Erik Himle had the most employment spells as he had breaks from his civil service career to take multiple political positions as state secretary and minister. Moreover, Himle was appointed as both director general and permanent secretary in two different ministries. Looking at which positions the 841 top civil servants held, there were 793 people that had at least one position as director general as well as 16 people who served as deputy permanent secretary until 2011, furthermore, 122 individuals held the position of permanent secretary until 2021.

Figure 4.1 shows the lengths of the 990 employment spells, differentiating between top civil servants that exited their position during the period of observation, and the top civil servants that were still in office at the end of the observation period (right-censored). The figure shows that most top civil servants do not have life long careers in such positions in the ministries, as most employment spells last less than 6 year – including top civil servants appointed by constitution, but excluding right-censored individuals, the median number of years of continuous employment were five. However, a significant number of employment spells also lasted more than 12 years, and the longest employment spell was 36 years, which when viewed in combination with the median age at the point of appointment being 49 years-old shows that some top civil servants stay in position until they reach the retirement age. Furthermore, the median number of years in a top civil servant position have changed throughout the period, but does not follow a distinct pattern of shorter tenure lengths over time, but rather that top civil servants that are appointed in decades of political regime stability have longer tenure. For instance, the median tenure length was 12 years for top civil servants employed prior to 1884, subsequently falling to 7 years for top civil servants employed between 1884-1919. Top civil servants appointed in the 1920s had a median time in office of 13 years, and similarly

³The ministry do however have the ability to prolong a top civil servants employment for up to 5 years over the formal age of retirement (Borgerud et al., 2020, p. 32), but this rarely happens.

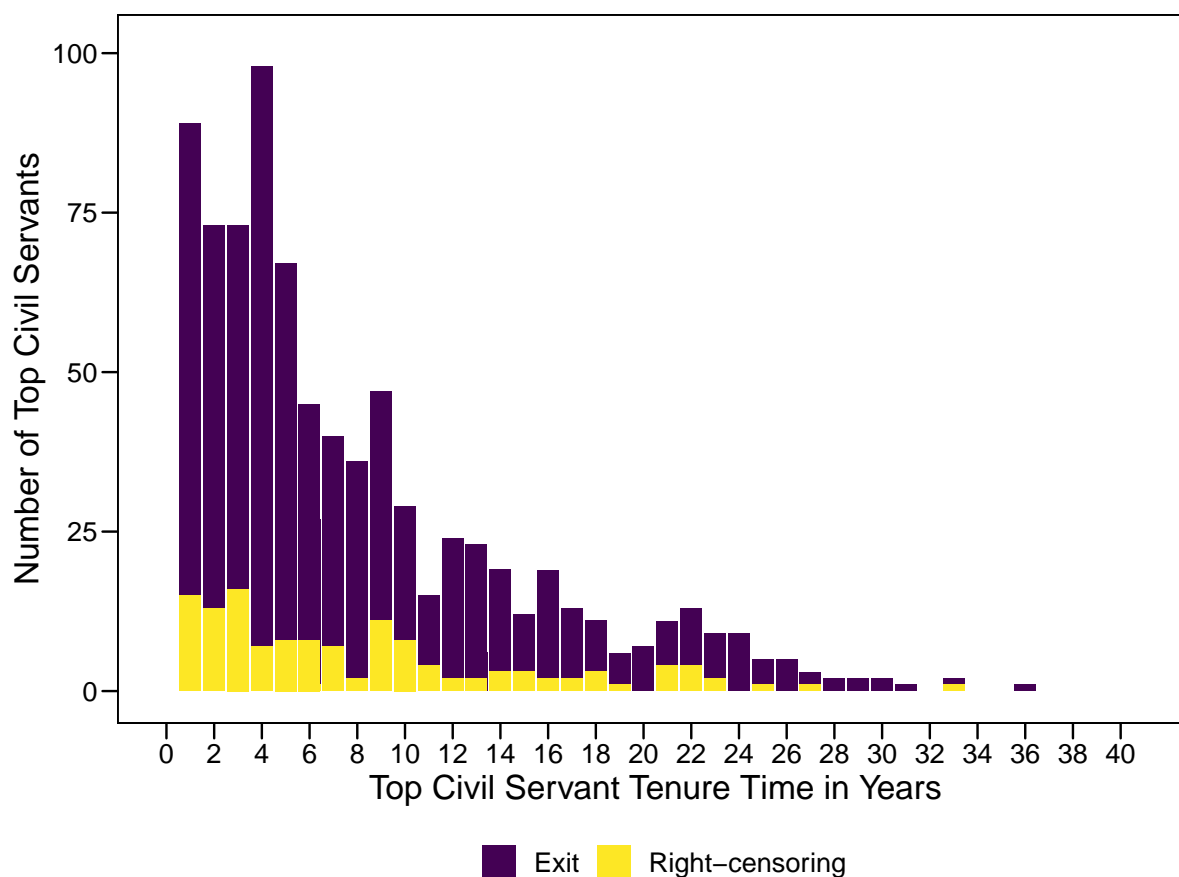


Figure 4.1: The number of top civil servants that exited their position at different intervals of tenure in years. For Right-censored top civil servant employment spells the figure shows tenure length in years at point of censoring.

individuals appointed in the 1950s had median employment spells of 12 years – whereas individuals appointed in the 1930s and 1940s, where new parties gained office for the first time and Norway was occupied by Germany, resulted in top civil servants with median tenure time of 4 years. From the 1960s and onward top civil servant careers do seem to follow a general trend of shorter tenure, going from a median time in office of 9 years in 1960 to 5 years for top civil servants employed in the 1990s.⁴

How the proportion of top civil servants exits from the ministries changed over time is shown in figure 4.2 and 4.3. The figures make apparent that in general the share of top civil servants that exits a ministry each year has been fairly consistent at between 5-20%, with the main exemptions being 1940 where 53% of top civil servants left their positions after the occupation of Norway, and 1945 where 81% of the top civil servants exited office following the end of the WWII occupation of Norway. The fact that a larger share of top civil servants left office when Norway was liberated than when it came under occupational control, highlights the returning Norwegian government’s lack of trust in not only the top civil servants that were installed by the occupational-regime, but also the top civil servants that appointed prior that had chosen to keep on working for the occupational regime. However, apart from the two

⁴With the caveat of a few top civil servants appointed in the 1990s still being in office at the end of the observation period

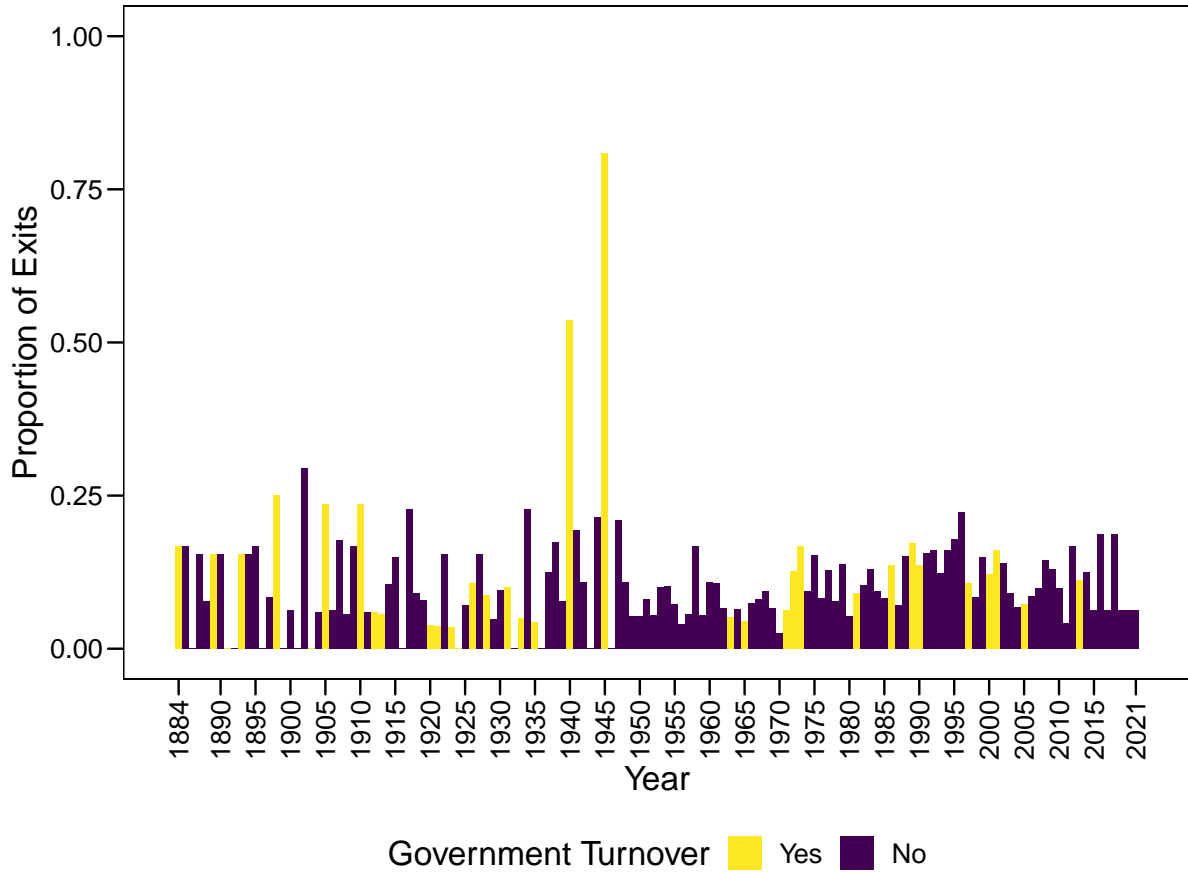


Figure 4.2: The proportion of top civil servant exits 1884-2021 subset by whether or not there was a change in government within a given year.

instances of government turnover in 1940 and 1945 top civil servants appear to leave office at roughly the same rates in years with and without a change in government.

Furthermore, the figure 4.3 show that the proportion of top civil servant exits varied more in the before state secretaries period than in the after state secretaries period. In 13 of the years in the before state secretaries period none of the top civil servants left their positions, whereas in other years in this period 25% of the top civil servants were dismissed. Moreover, after relatively low turnover rates in the years after 1945 the proportion of top civil servant exits started to increase in the 1970s.

4.3 Independent Variables

Following Askim et al. (2022, p. 14) I operationalize *minister turnover* as a dichotomous variable that takes the value 1 if there are more than one person serving as minister for ministry k in year t —without there also being a change in the party that holds the prime minister’s office in year t —and the value 0 otherwise. In other words, this variable considers the political events of a change in minister while the party that controls the ministry stays the same, and a change in minister that also results in another party in a coalition government gaining control

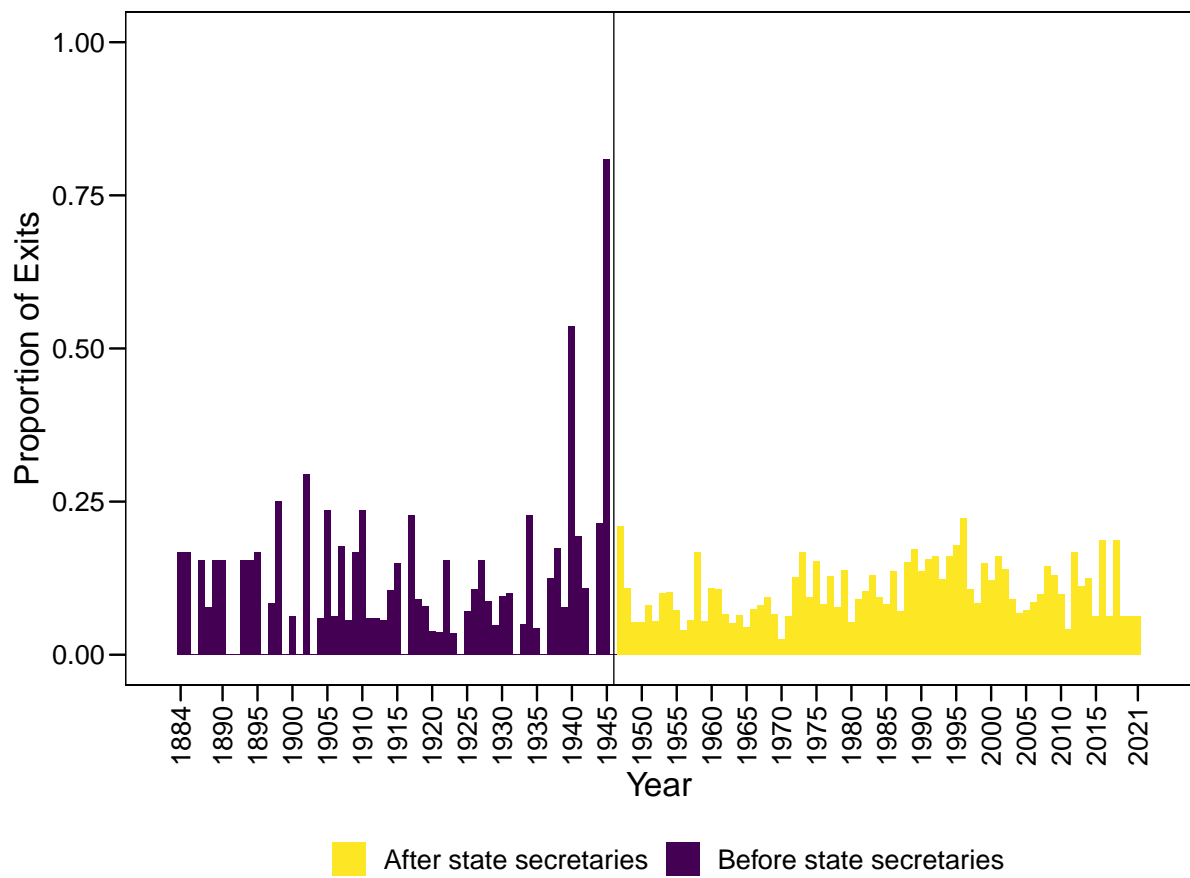


Figure 4.3: The proportion of top civil servant exits 1884-2021 subset by the existence of state secretaries in ministries.

of the ministry.⁵In the case of a ministry having multiple minister positions in a give year—for instance in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs where there is both a minister of foreign affairs and a minister of international development—only a change in the most senior minister position is considered as a minister turnover. This choice is made to avoid having to make manual judgments on which top civil servant positions that should be considered as a part of the portfolio of each minister in the ministry. Moreover, I exclude minister turnovers where the new minister is only constituted for a short period, while the previous minister is on leave (i.e. on parental leave), as it is doubtful that the temporary minister has the power to make changes in top civil servant personnel based on their own preferences. Data on ministers and governments tenure in Norwegian ministries are collected from the NSD database on Ministers in Norway (NSD, 2022c).

Drawing upon the same database of Ministers in Norway, *Government turnover* is operationalized as a wholesale change of government, where all ministers are replaced simultaneously as a result of a change in the party of the prime minister (Askim et al., 2022, p. 14). I make no distinction between the change in the party of the prime minister taking place after an election or as a result of the opposition being able to form a new government in between election years as the purpose of the variable is to see how turnover rates among top civil servants are affected by all top civil servants having to work for a new minister from a new party. However, as operationalizing government turnover in conjunction and in the absences of an election is also commonly used in the literature, I rerun all regression models with this operationalization as a robustness test (Cooper et al., 2020, p. 9).

The *First time PM* (Prime Minister) variable is operationalized as a special case of the government turnover variable, taking the value 1 in years where there are government turnover (as described above) that results in a party gaining control of the prime minister's office for the first time, and 0 otherwise. In this case top civil servants are faced with all new ministers, with the majority hailing from a party that the top civil servants have never worked for before.

Time since government turnover is operationalized as the number of years that have passed since the last change in the party holding the office of the PM. The purpose of this variable is to catch the effect of incoming governments potentially being more distrustful of whether or not the incumbent top civil servants can execute their tasks in line with the new government's policy preferences the longer the top civil servants have had to pursue other policy objectives than that of the new government. Hence, the number of years that have passed since the last government took office, when the new government takes office is held constant for the new government's entire period in office.

Policy incongruence is operationalized in line with what Dahlström and Holmgren (2019, p. 829) labels cabinet turnover, and J. G. Christensen et al. (2014, p. 229) labels party difference between appointing and dismissing minister. Specifically, it is operationalized as a dichotomous variable that keeps the value 0 in years where the party of the PM is the same as in the year when the top civil servants were appointed, and 1 in years where the

⁵The change in minister could also be a result of a party leaving or joining a coalition government, and take place after an election where the party that holds the prime minister's office remains the same.

PM hails from a different party. The choice of using different parties as an operationalization of policy incongruence—as opposed to making a distinction between left and right oriented governments as Dahlström and Holmgren (2019, p. 829) does—comes down to the long timeline that is considered in the thesis, since the parties positions on the ideological spectrum are changing over time.⁶ Moreover, a simplified left-right policy incongruence variable does not consider that governments on the same side of the ideological spectrum may still have varying preferences in whether or not they think a top civil servant is suitable to carry out their policy objectives. Additionally, using the difference in political party between current and appointing PM allows for the variable to be generated without the author making subjective judgment of which governments should be considered as ideologically different and similar. Lastly, the focus on the party of the PM as opposed to that of the minister in charge of the top civil servant comes down to previous studies finding that a change in just the party of the minister being insufficient to increase turnover rates among top civil servants (Askim et al., 2022; J. G. Christensen et al., 2014).

Finally to assess if the turnover of top civil servants have become more politicized after the introduction of state secretaries, I split the dataset into two on the year that state secretaries were introduced in Norway. Splitting the dataset into an earlier and a later period is a method that has been employed by other scholars to evaluate whether or not politicization has increased over time (Cooper, 2017, 2020; Ennser-Jedenastik, 2014). Hence, I make a dataset of all top civil servants in Norwegian ministries between 1884-1946 (before state secretaries) and a dataset of all top civil servants in Norwegian ministries between 1947-2021 (after state secretaries). I then proceed to evaluate and compare the effect of the four independent variables in the time periods, to assess if and in what ways top civil servant turnover has become more politicized after the introduction of state secretaries.

4.4 Control Variables

There are of course not only political events that can affect the turnover rates of top civil servants, but also the individual characteristics of the top civil servants, institutional factors and features of the time period that an employment spell is located within. The following section lists and explains in turn the included control variables, before ending with a discussion on the use of matching on top civil servants being exposed to government turnover, or being the highest level of top civil servant in the ministry to remove variance caused by unobserved confounders (Samii, 2016).

Firstly I control for the following individual characteristics:

- *Political career*: controlling for whether or not the top civil servant also held office at the national level as a politician, either as a state secretary (NSD, 2022d), minister (NSD, 2022c) or member of parliament (NSD, 2022b), as these top civil servants can be expected to be in office for a shorter period as a change in government could result in them being offered a political position.

⁶For instance, in the late 1800s governments shifted between the Liberal Party and the Conservative Party, whereas both parties were a part of the same coalition government in the 2010s

- *Constituted*: a variable that checks if the employment of the top civil servant—for their entire employment spell—were done by method of constitution. On the one hand employment by constitution can entail that the person were only employed in the position as a placeholder until a desired candidate could be appointed to the position (or in the interim between the desired candidate being appointed and the candidate being able to start in the position). On the other hand, employment is made by constitution if the top civil servant position is supposed to only exist for a limited time period (Statsansatteloven, 2017). Hence, there are legal differences between appointed and constituted top civil servants—also when it comes to discretionary dismissal—which should be controlled for (Borgerud et al., 2020, p. 43).
- *Age*: the age of the top civil servant at each year of the employment spell is controlled for as on the one hand, younger top civil servants generally have more alternative employment opportunities than top civil servants that are approaching retirement age. On the other hand, as the top civil servants are closing in on the formal retirement age, the chance of them leaving their position to retire earlier, or to wind down their career with a less taxing job increases.
- *Gender*: is controlled for as there could be differences in the length of tenure of female and male top civil servants. Gender is coded based on the top civil servants first name being most common among males or females in Norway between 1880-2021 using data from Statistics Norway.
- *Exposed to government turnover*: controls for the fact that 226 top civil servants never experienced a change in government during their tenure. This is in part caused by short employment spells, but also due to government duration occasionally lasting more than the median top civil servant employment spell—for instance, after The Second World War the Labor Party held office for 18 consecutive years. Accordingly, this group of top civil servants were never at risk of leaving their positions due to a change in government.

Next, the following institutional factors are included as control variables:

- *Election year*: controls for years with parliamentary elections, as the probability of top civil servants leaving their positions in the months prior to an election may be different than in other years (Dahlström & Holmgren, 2019, p. 830). Moreover, following an election, governments electoral mandates are reaffirmed or refreshed prompting governments to (re-)evaluate the suitability of incumbent top civil servants to put new priorities into practice (Askim et al., 2022). Data on years with parliamentary elections in Norway is collected from the Varieties of Democracy dataset (Coppedge et al., 2021).
- *Ministry terminated*: Whereas Cooper (2020, p. 316) argues that the termination of a ministry and the creation of a new one also involves a political decision of whether or not to keep or let go of a permanent secretary, Askim et al. (2022, p. 15) considers turnover of permanent secretaries that coincides with organizational change to not automatically be an instance of politicization. Political considerations of being able to

remove unwanted top civil servants may be part of the calculus of government decision-making on reorganizing the ministry structure, but it is unlikely to be a primary concern of the government, as they have the ability to reshuffle top civil servants to other positions without making such drastic change (Grunnloven, 1814). Particularly as my study considers a broader number of top civil servants, than just permanent secretaries, it is natural to follow Askim et al. (2022, p. 15) in controlling for a year being the last year that a ministry existed, using data on ministries from NSD's Norwegian State Administration Database (NSD, 2022a). This database prioritizes continuity in what is to be considered as the same ministry, assigning a unique identification number to every ministry that remains unchanged in cases of minor structural change (Askim et al., 2022).⁷

- *Time since ministry created*: The age of ministries has been considered by some scholars as a factor that could influence governments desire to control them, as they become more institutionalized over time (Cooper, 2017; Ennser-Jedenastik, 2016b). To address this possibility I include a continuous variable that increases by a value of one for each year after the ministry was established according to NSD's Norwegian State Administration Database (NSD, 2022a).
- *Pm-party share of cabinet*: There may also be a connection between the electoral strength of a government and their ability and will to politicize top civil servant turnover (Dahlstrom & Niklasson, 2013). With governments facing a weak opposition having less ramifications to fear for politicizing top civil servant turnover, and governments that need to take less input from other parties in cabinet decision-making being able to politicize top civil servant turnover more effectively. If the PM needs to take less input from other parties in a coalition government they can more easily politicize top civil servants according to their preferences. The share of minister posts a party holds in a coalition government is also usually proportional to the difference in the parties share of seats in the parliament (Grindheim et al., 2019, p. 108). Hence, I control for the share of ministers in a given year that have the same party affiliation as the PM.
- *Permanent secretary in ministry*: As the tenure of directors general may be different after the creation of another top civil servant position above them in the bureaucratic hierarchy, the existence of a permanent secretary in the ministry is controlled for. Hence the directors general were directly subordinated the minister prior to the implementation of the permanent secretary position, this also enables me to see if the implementation of a permanent secretary position affects how exposed directors general are to the political leadership of the ministry and thus if it mediates their risk of replacement after a change in the government.
- *Director General*: a dummy variable that controls for whether the top civil servant position

⁷Since the majority of the top civil servants that are included in the dataset have employment spells that are not only nested within ministries but also further nested in ministry departments, a control variable for ministry departments being terminated has also been considered, but ultimately dropped as a change to a ministry department is more likely to involve a political considerations of removing a top civil servant.

is one of Director general of ministry department or deputy permanent secretary (1), or permanent secretary (0), as these positions may be differently exposed to political pressure, and thus have differing turnover rates.

Thirdly, to control for time period effects I estimate models with fixed effects for each decade of observation. Moreover, instead of considering the hazard of turnover to be different across decades, I use dummy variables for time periods where the employment context of the top civil servants was different. Hence, including a control variable for whether an observation is before 1906, that is in the 1884-1905 period when Norway were still in a political union with Sweden, and any government decisions regarding top civil servants had to be made from Sweden (Kolsrud, 2001). Furthermore, I control for turnover rates being impacted by the two world wars, which mainly was the case with the second world war where Norway was occupied by Germany from 1940-1945. As figure 4.3 shows, turnover of top civil servants were at its highest with the government change to and from the Quisling led Nasjonal Samling occupation government. Finally, as the public sector grew dramatically in the post-WWII period a dichotomous variable for whether or not an observation is taking place after WWII is included.

Lastly, as the inclusion of the 226 top civil servants that did not experience a change in government in the analysis contributes variance to the hazard of top civil servant turnover in years with no change in government, but no variance to the hazard of top civil servant turnover in years of government turnover or policy incongruence, the inclusion of these top civil servants may cause us to underestimate the effect of these political events (Samii, 2016, p. 944). As these people were never exposed to a change in government it is uncertain how they would have been affected by such events, and it is reasonable to remove this variance from the effects of government turnover and policy incongruence. Exact matching on top civil servants experiencing government turnover is thus done to assess if the effects of the political events changes when both the control group and the treatment group for these events consist of the same individuals (Ho et al., 2007). Thus removing any variance caused by unobserved individual characteristics of the top civil servants that never experienced a change in government.

Similarly, directors general of ministry departments may increasingly view this position as a stepping stone for a different top civil servant position when the ministry also employs (deputy) permanent secretaries, hence turnover patterns for these positions may change accordingly. Governments cost benefit calculations of politicizing directors general of ministry departments may also change when these top civil servants no longer are the highest level of civil servant in the ministry. Hence, it is useful to also run the analysis on a dataset that excludes directors general when they are no longer the highest level of civil servant in the ministry, and on data of just the permanent secretaries to see if the most senior civil servant position is affected differently by political events than directors general serving under a permanent secretary.

For descriptive statistics on all variables employed in the analysis see table C.1, as well as table C.1 and table C.1 for descriptive statistics before and after the introduction of state secretaries in Appendix C.

4.5 Cox-Regression

To estimate the effects of the independent variables on the risk of top civil servant turnover I employ Cox proportional hazard regression (Cox, 1972). Cox-Regression have certain features that makes it the preferred method of analysis on event history data of top civil servant careers (Askim et al., 2022; J. G. Christensen et al., 2014; Dahlström & Holmgren, 2019; Fleischer, 2016; Forum, 2021; Petrovsky et al., 2017). Firstly, as opposed to logistic regression models, Cox-Models can easily handle censored observations (Ward & Ahlquist, 2018, p. 226), that is information about the top civil servants that were employed prior to 1884 (left-censored) or top civil servants that were still in office as of 01.01.2021 (right-censored).⁸ Secondly, as Cox-Models are semi-parametric models, no ex-ante assumptions about the distribution of the baseline hazard of top civil servant turnover over time is needed to estimate the hazard ratios of the covariates (Ward & Ahlquist, 2018, pp. 225–226). Lastly, given a correctly specified model, Cox-Regressions only makes one assumption about the effect of the covariates, the proportional hazards assumption, that is that the effects of the covariates are constant over time (Ward & Ahlquist, 2018, p. 230). In the case of top civil servant career data, this implies that the effect of a covariate on the risk of top civil servant turnover is the same for a top civil servant that have been employed for 1 year, as for a top civil servant that have been employed for 5 years, or a top civil servant that have been employed for 15 years etc.

I test the proportional hazards assumption using formal tests of the Schoenfeld residuals (Ward & Ahlquist, 2018, p. 232; Box-Steffensmeier & Jones, 2004). These tests indicate that none of the independent variables violate the proportional hazards assumption ($p < 0.05$) in the models that considers the entire time period (1884-2021). However, when I split the dataset into two based on the existence of state secretaries in the ministries the proportional hazards assumption appears to be violated for the government turnover and the time since government turnover variables in the before state secretaries (1884-1946) data. To address this issue I also ran the models on the 1884-1946 data with time transformed versions of these two covariates that interacts the variables with the natural logarithm of time, as this is a common way to adjust for time in Cox-Regressions (Therneau et al., 2013, p. 13).

Different ministries could have varying cultures for how long it is normal to stay in one top civil servant position before moving to a different position. In the foreign ministry it is for instance normal for the top civil servants to rotate between being a top civil servant in the ministry and serving as Ambassador in a different country. Moreover, ministries such as the Ministry of Finance have top civil servants with competences that are more sought after in private sector companies that can provide higher wages, thus giving them more alternative employment options. Hence, the models are estimated with standard errors clustered on the ministry that an employment spell is in, in a given year, to control for ministry specific characteristics that could impact top civil servant turnover (Cooper, 2020, p. 319; Dahlström & Holmgren, 2019, p. 831).

⁸Directors General of ministry departments are right censored as of 01.01.2011

Chapter 5

Results

Table 5 shows the result of six specifications of the Cox-Regression model on the complete dataset.¹ Model 1 includes only the independent variables, in model 2 control variables of characteristics of the different top civil servants, and properties of the ministry they served in are included, model 3 further adds decade fixed effects to the model – before model 4 finishes the model by controlling for top civil servants being exposed to government turnover. Model 5 and 6 are alternative versions of model 3 and 4 that instead of decade fixed effects controls for the contexts of the different time periods that might affect top civil service turnover rates. As most of the independent variables do not yield significant results at conventional confidence levels across all models, but give estimates that are consistently in the same direction across all models, I will primarily emphasize the effects of the variables in model 6—which is the most theoretically funded model—when making inferences.

Taking the results of the five independent variables across the six models in turn, the table firstly shows that the hazard of minister turnover remains non-significant across all models. Hence, contrary to H1, a turnover of just the minister does not appear to be enough to increase turnover rates of top civil servants in Norway – furthermore, the estimated effect of minister turnover is negative. Next, when it comes to a change in government, the table shows that government turnover has a positive effect on the hazard of top civil servant turnover, and that this effect is significant at $p < 0.1$ in Model 1 that only includes the independent variables, and in model 4 and 6 which controls for top civil servants being exposed to government turnover. These models show that as expected by H2 government turnover increases the risk of top civil servant turnover by 32 – 37%. Moreover, as expected by H3 the hazard of top civil service turnover is 22 – 29% higher when the post of prime minister is held by a different party than what it was when they were hired. The hazard ratio of First time PM becomes significant at conventional p-values in model 2 – something it also is across all other models. In congruence with H4 the hazard of turnover of top civil servants is 48 – 102% higher in years where a new party holds the office of the PM for the first time.

¹Tables showing the results by adding the control variables step wise, and alternative specifications of the models and other robustness tests are available in appendix C. The R-scripts and the dataset are available upon request.

Table 5.1: Cox-Regression results

	Dependent variable					
	Turnover of top civil servant					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Minister turnover	0.960 (0.150)	0.907 (0.158)	0.917 (0.172)	0.956 (0.175)	0.932 (0.163)	0.961 (0.158)
Government turnover	1.239* (0.118)	1.110 (0.123)	1.131 (0.128)	1.324** (0.131)	1.143 (0.129)	1.366** (0.127)
Policy incongruence	1.066 (0.080)	1.103 (0.083)	1.024 (0.095)	1.221** (0.098)	1.029 (0.087)	1.258** (0.094)
First time PM	1.333 (0.243)	1.808*** (0.215)	1.900** (0.267)	2.021** (0.287)	1.506* (0.215)	1.487* (0.212)
Time since government turnover	0.972** (0.012)	0.978* (0.013)	0.976** (0.012)	0.967** (0.014)	0.967*** (0.013)	0.959*** (0.014)
Political career		1.570*** (0.113)	1.576*** (0.124)	1.586*** (0.129)	1.625*** (0.112)	1.683*** (0.109)
Election year		1.038 (0.081)	1.054 (0.082)	1.013 (0.083)	1.029 (0.083)	0.983 (0.081)
Constituted		3.839*** (0.168)	3.313*** (0.172)	2.840*** (0.138)	3.186*** (0.150)	2.729*** (0.115)
Age		1.020*** (0.006)	1.024*** (0.006)	1.025*** (0.005)	1.023*** (0.005)	1.025*** (0.005)
Gender		1.130 (0.094)	1.077 (0.088)	1.102 (0.110)	1.187* (0.100)	1.189 (0.111)
Ministry terminated		2.588*** (0.226)	2.008*** (0.196)	1.633** (0.197)	2.091*** (0.190)	1.617*** (0.203)
Time since ministry created		1.001 (0.001)	1.001 (0.001)	1.001 (0.001)	1.001 (0.001)	1.001 (0.001)
PM-party share of cabinet		1.569*** (0.119)	1.482*** (0.145)	1.551*** (0.157)	1.502*** (0.120)	1.565*** (0.122)
Permanent Secretary in ministry		1.664*** (0.158)	2.371*** (0.198)	2.439*** (0.169)	2.062*** (0.194)	2.377*** (0.156)
Director General		1.007 (0.113)	1.024 (0.116)	0.981 (0.124)	1.029 (0.112)	1.008 (0.125)
Exposed to government turnover				0.271*** (0.113)		0.283*** (0.100)
Before-1906					1.583* (0.254)	1.691** (0.232)
WWI					1.351 (0.282)	1.540 (0.292)
WWII					3.229*** (0.184)	2.226*** (0.177)
After-WWII					0.993 (0.178)	0.827 (0.176)
Decade fixed effects	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
Number of events	743	743	743	743	743	743
Number of top civil servants	947	947	947	947	947	947
Observations	7,248	7,248	7,248	7,248	7,248	7,248
Log Likelihood	-4,452.367	-4,356.736	-4,322.461	-4,259.972	-4,335.822	-4,274.167

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01
Estimates reported as hazard ratios. Robust standard errors clustered by ministry reported in parentheses.

Contrary to the expectation of H5 the amount of time that has passed since the last change in government reduces the hazard of top civil servants leaving their positions after a change in government. The effect of time since the last change in government is significant across all models in table 5, with the reduction in the hazard of top civil servant turnover being 2.2 – 4.1% for each year that has passed since the last change of government. In other words, the hazard of top civil servant turnover is 9.2 – 16.6% lower if there has been 10 years since the last government turnover, than if the last change in government happened the year before.

A quick look at the effects of some of the control variables in table 5 shows that top civil servants that also have had a political career leave their posts earlier than other top civil servants. Top civil servants that are employed by constitution have shorter employment spells, and similarly the risk of turnover is higher if there is a permanent secretary in the ministry. There does not appear to be any difference in the rate at which directors general and permanent secretaries leave their positions at different points in their employment spells, nor does there appear to be a similar distinction between male and female top civil servants.

The risk of top civil service employment spells ending is higher in years where the ministry they were employed at is terminated, as this entails that the top civil servant would be moved to a different ministry if they do not leave their post. Moreover, the results show that the more ministries the prime minister's party holds in a government, the larger the risk of top civil servant turnover becomes – implicating that the hazard of top civil servant turnover is at its highest under single party governments and at its lowest during broad coalition governments. Lastly, with regard to the time period variables, the results show that the hazard of top civil servant turnover was significantly higher when Norway were in a political union with Sweden, and during WWII than in the 1906-1914 and 1918-1940 periods – furthermore the basic rate at which top civil servants leave their positions appears to be similar after WWII.

5.1 The Results for Subgroups of Top Civil Servants

Figure 5.1 illustrates the hazard ratios of the independent variables with 95% confidence intervals using model 6 in table 5 on the complete dataset (same as model 6 in table 5) and three subgroups of top civil servants. The effect of government turnover is significant and positive across all four subgroups of top civil servants considered in figure 5.1. Moreover, the effect of government turnover is estimated to have a larger effect on the highest level of civil servants in the ministry. The effect of policy incongruence still increases the hazard of top civil servant turnover when only the highest level of civil servants and permanent secretaries are considered, but its effect is more uncertain. Similarly, the negative effect of time since government turnover is also more uncertain in these two models. The First time PM variable does not have a significant effect in the model that only includes permanent secretaries, which makes sense as most of these events happened when directors general of ministry departments were the highest position in the ministries.

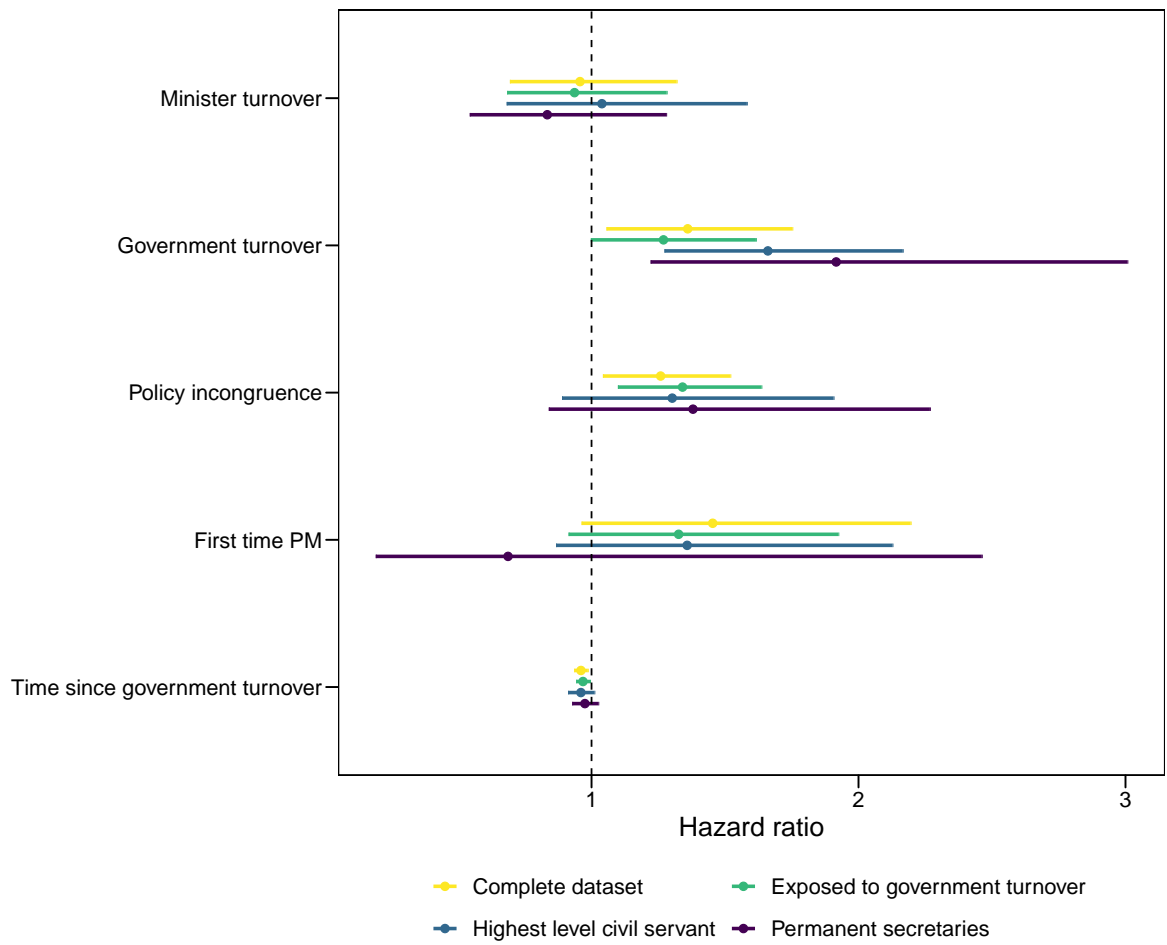


Figure 5.1: Hazard ratios with 95% confidence intervals of the independent variables using model 6 in table 5 on four subsets of data: The complete dataset, a dataset of only the individuals that experienced government turnover, a dataset that only includes the highest level of civil servant in the ministry, and a dataset only containing the permanent secretaries.

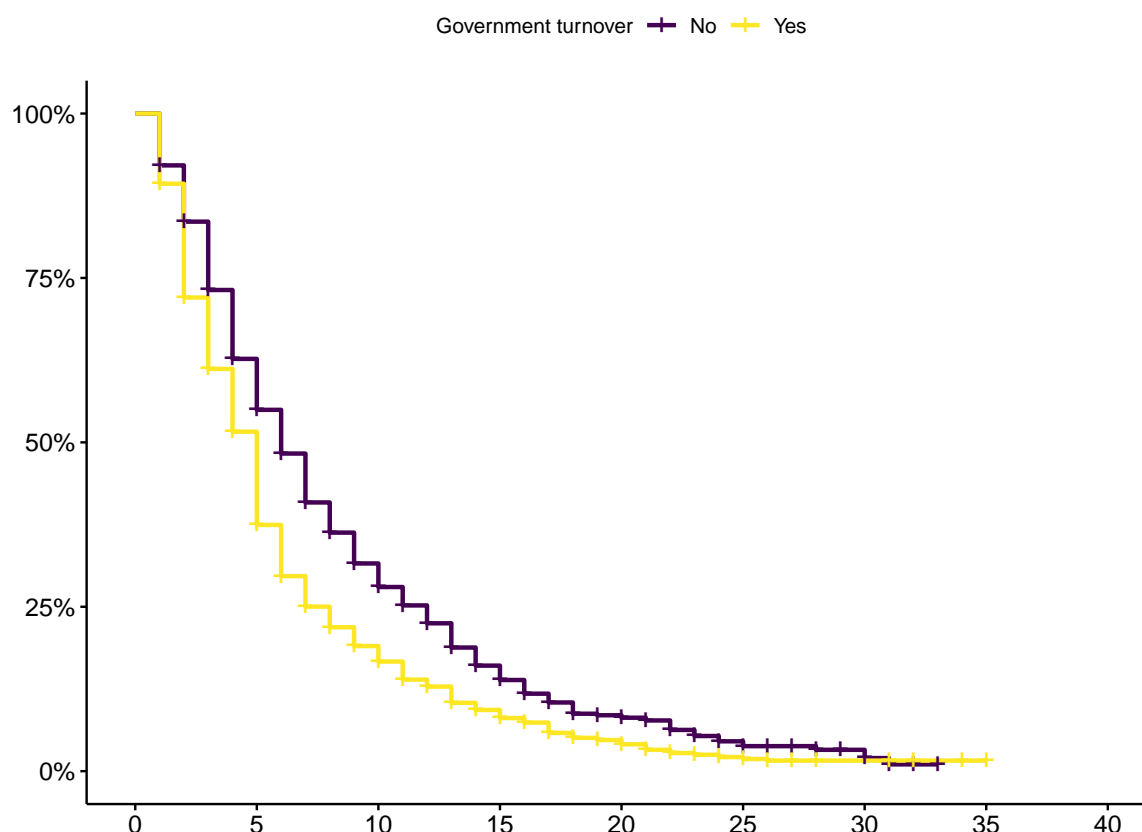


Figure 5.2: Predicted survival curves for top civil servant turnover in years with and without a change in government. The survival curves are estimated using model 6 in table 5, holding government turnover constant at either 1 or 0 for all years.

5.2 The Predicted Effects of Political Change

As Hazard ratios can be hard to interpret substantially, figure 5.2 instead uses model 6 in table 5 to estimate the survival curves of top civil servants in years with an without government turnover – showing that the probability of turnover of top civil servants is higher in years of government turnover. For instance, if a top civil servant has been employed for 5 year, the probability of turnover is 45% in years with no government turnover, and 63% if there is a change in government. Similarly if the top civil servant has been in their position for 10 years the probability of them remaining in office is 12% higher in years with no government turnover.

As it is not only the effect of government turnover that is of interest, but also other political changes, figure 5.3 shows the predicted probability of top civil servant turnover for three different scenarios of political events and a baseline scenario of no political event, under the median and the maximum number of years since last government turnover. Turning first to the probability of top civil servant exit in the scenario with only 4 years having passed since the last change in government. Here the figure shows that after 10 years there is a 50% chance that a top civil servant leaves their position if there is no political event that year. In the case

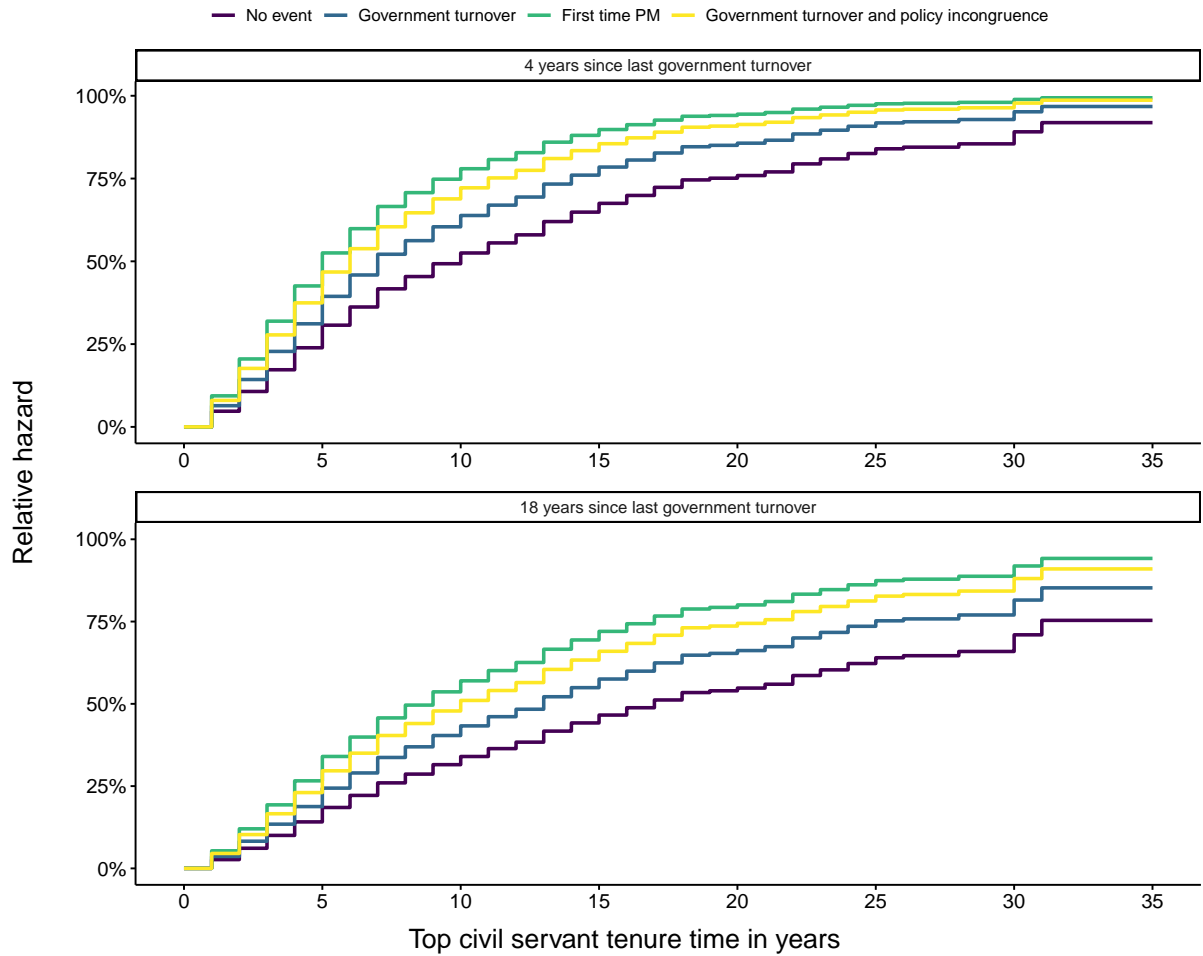


Figure 5.3: Predicted probability of top civil servant turnover for three different scenarios of political change and a baseline scenario of no political event, under the median number of years since last government turnover (4) and the maximum number of years since last government turnover (18). The predicted probability of top civil servant turnover is estimated using model 6 from table 5 holding all control variables constant at their median values.

of there being a government turnover, 50% of top civil servants leave their position after 7 years, and the probability of top civil servant turnover after 10 years is 64%. In the case of the government turnover bringing a party to office for the first time there is a 50% probability of top civil servants leaving their positions after 5 years, and a 78% risk of top civil servants leaving their positions after 10 years. Lastly, if the government turnover brings a different party than the one that appointed the top civil servant to office, 50% of top civil servants are predicted to leave office after 6 years, and the probability of an event after 10 years in office is 72%.

In the 18 years since the last government turnover scenario, the probability of turnover in all 4 scenarios is significantly lower. 50% of top civil servants are first predicted to leave office after 17 years in the baseline scenario, after 13 years when in conjunction with government turnover, after 10 years if there is both government turnover and policy incongruence, and after 9 years when a party assumes office for the first time.

5.3 More Politicized Over Time?

Turning to H6 and the hypothesis of politicization of top civil servants having increased over time, the Kaplan-Meier survival curves in figure 5.4 shows the percentage of top civil servants who left their position after a given number of years (0-35) for the dataset as a whole, and before and after the introduction of state secretaries. The figure shows that the length of top civil service employment spells were quite similar both before and after the introduction of state secretaries, but top civil servants left their positions at a bit higher rates after about 5-15 years before the introduction of state secretaries. The median length of an employment spell was 5 years prior to 1947 and 7 years in the 1947-2021 period. Furthermore, the table of cumulative events in figure 5.4 highlights that most of the employment spells and turnovers happened after the introduction of state secretaries, as the number of top civil servants increased steadily in the post world war II period, hence the survival curve of the complete dataset is about the same as the after 1947 data.

Figure 5.5 illustrates the hazard ratios with 95% confidence intervals of the independent variables using model 6 in table 5² on the complete dataset (same as model 6 in table 5), and splitting the dataset into two on the year of introduction of state secretaries into Norwegian ministries, 1947. Moreover, as permanent secretaries are introduced in all ministries during the after state secretaries period, a model that only considered the highest level of civil servant in the post-1947 period is also estimated.

The plot gives mixed results of politicization being higher after the introduction of state secretaries, than in the prior period. In favor of more politicization after the introduction of state secretaries the plot shows that policy incongruence between top civil servants and the PM's party first have a significant positive effect on the hazard of top civil servant turnover after the introduction of state secretaries. However, the 95% confidence interval of policy incongruence in the post-1947 period for only the highest level of civil servants also partially covers hazard ratios lower than 1, implying that the effect of policy incongruence being less certain for permanent secretaries.

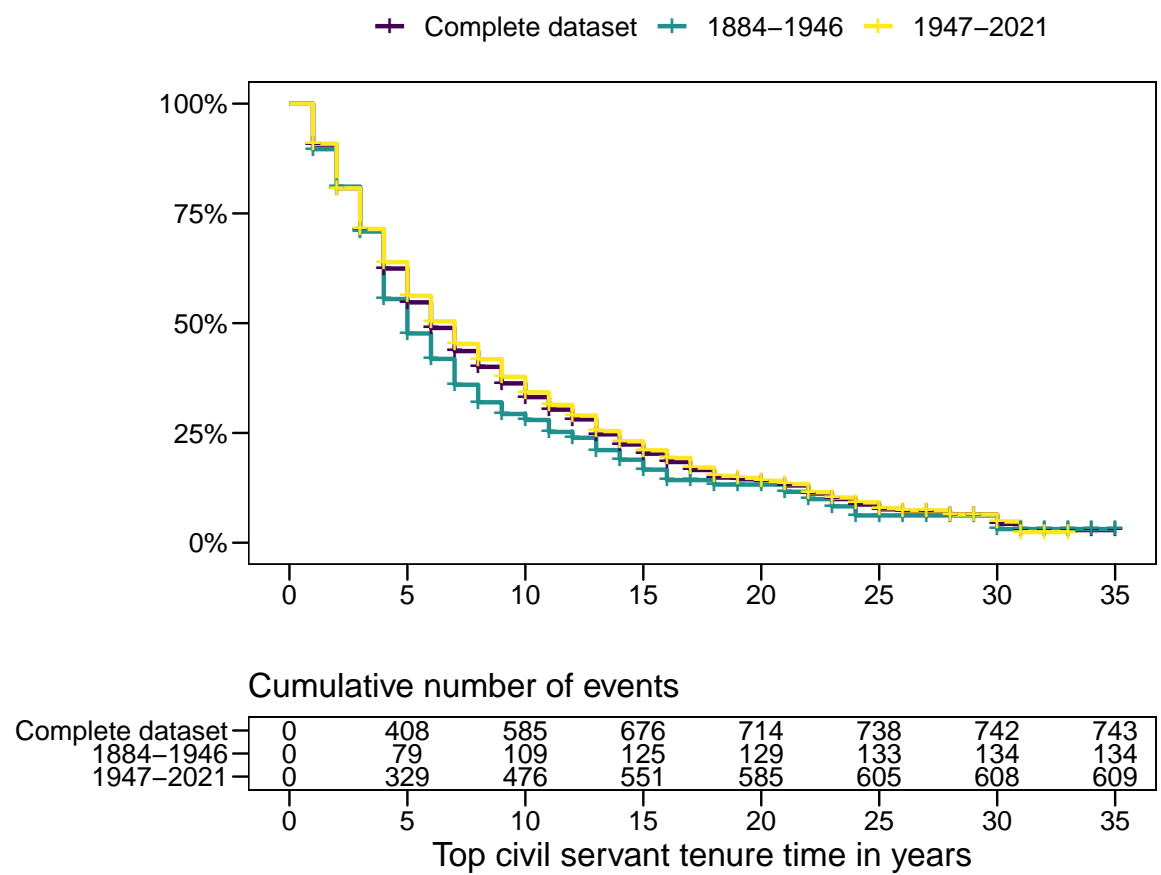


Figure 5.4: Kaplan-Meier survival curves for the complete dataset, and split into the two periods 1884-1946 (before state secretaries) and 1947-2021 (after state secretaries).

As evidence contrary to H6, a party assuming the office of the PM for the first time only significantly increased the risk of top civil servant turnover before the introduction of state secretaries, which makes sense as only one party assumed office for the first time in the post-1947 period. Moreover, the hazard of government turnover is significantly positive in both periods, although it is more uncertain in the before state secretaries period – only significantly increasing turnover rates of top civil servants that have been in position for less than six years. Lastly the negative effect of time since government turnover is only significant in the post state secretaries period, which as will be discussed in the next chapter may be a sign of increased politicization, despite running contrary to the expectation of H5.

5.4 Robustness Tests³

Some politicization studies considers turnover to be politicized if it happens within two years of a political event (Aucoin, 2012), and thus include lagged (t-1) independent variables—these variables gives estimates of the effect of there being a political event last year, whereas the regular variables provides estimates of the effect of political events in the observation year—for such events (Askim et al., 2022; Petrovsky et al., 2017). Including lagged variables for minister turnover, government turnover, and first time PM does not change the direction of any of the independent variables in model 6 in table 5, but first time PM is no longer statistically significant at $p < 0.1$. None of the lagged independent variables yield statistically significant results at $p < 0.1$. In other words, it appears that the political events of government turnover and first time PM only affects top civil servant turnover in the year that the events happen – meaning that politicization of top civil servant turnover happens during the early stages of the new government taking office.

Subsequently, if the model is estimated with a distinction between government turnover taking place after an election and government turnover between elections, only the coefficient for government turnover after an election win is statistically significant ($p < 0.1$). The hazard ratio of top civil servant turnover after a change in government without an electoral win appears to be roughly the same as in other years. Moreover, the increase in the hazard of top civil servant turnover in conjunction with a change in government taking place after an election is about 20% higher than that of the combined estimate of government turnover in model 6 in table 5.

Controlling for whether or not an individual is at his position for at least two years as a proxy for whether or not a position is temporary does not change the results. Likewise, estimating the models without right-censoring top civil servants in the year in which they reach the mandatory retirement age does not alter the results. Furthermore, the results are

²As noted in the last chapter, the proportional hazards assumption is violated for the government turnover and the time since government turnover variables in the before state secretaries data. As the inclusion of time transformed covariates does not appear to change the substantive effect of the two variables, estimates from the model that violates the proportional hazards assumption is used in figure 5.5 to ease the comparison. The relative hazard of the two variables are shown in figure C.1 and C.2 in appendix C, displaying how the effect of the two variables changes over time. It is worth noting that the effect of government turnover appears to be diminishing over time in the before state secretaries period, only having a positive effect on the hazard of top civil servant turnover that is within a 95% confidence interval for the first six years of the top civil servants tenure.

³Regression tables for robustness tests are made available upon request.

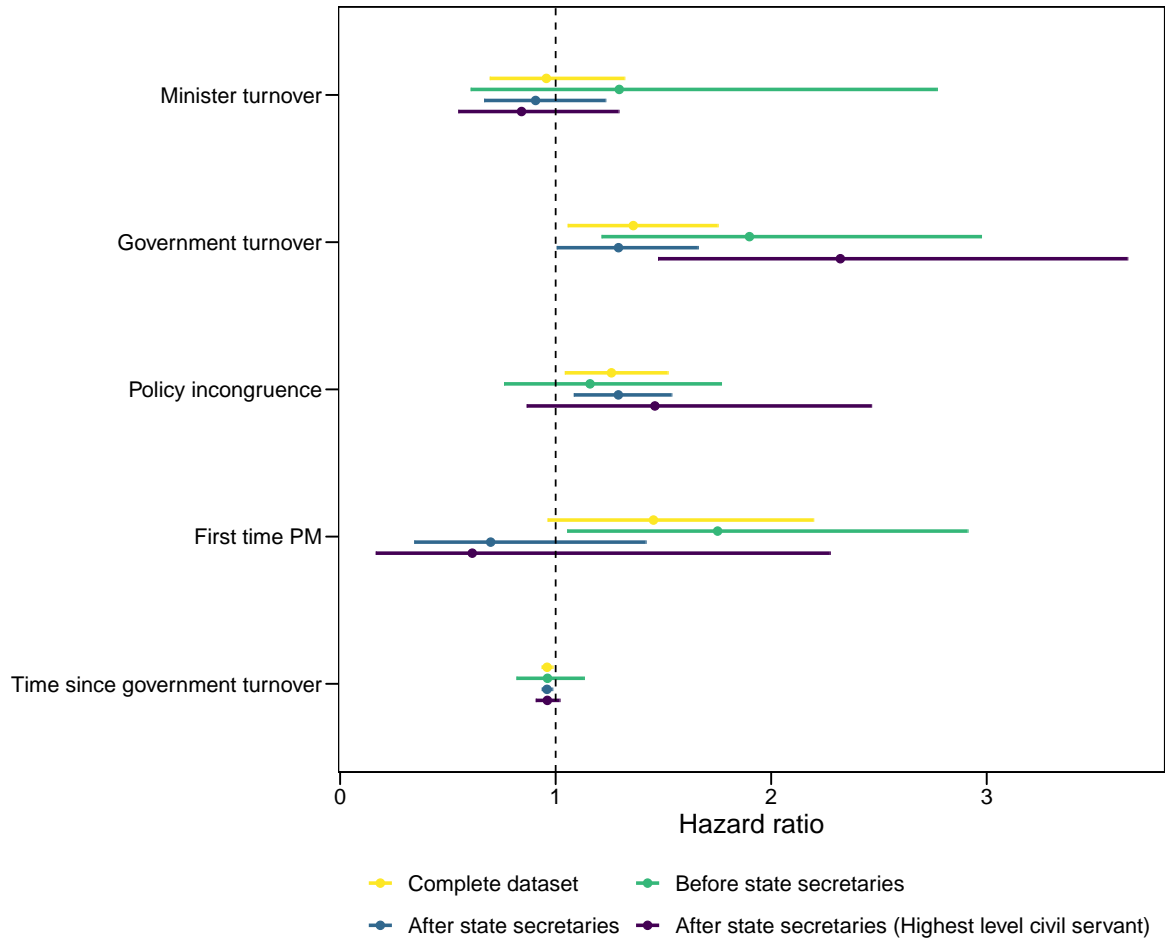


Figure 5.5: Hazard ratios with 95% confidence intervals of the independent variables using model 6 in table 5 on four subsets of data: The complete dataset, a dataset that only includes the observations between 1884 and 1946, a dataset that only includes the observations between 1947 and 2021, and a dataset that only includes the observations between 1947 and 2021 for the highest level of civil servant in the ministry. For the model that only includes observations before 1947 the post-WWII variable has been excluded due to a lack of observations after WWII. Similarly for the after state secretaries data no time period controls are included.

robust when estimated with fixed effects for ministries. As controlling for whether or not a top civil servant has a political career may impact the estimates of policy incongruence, omitting this control variable from the models yields statistically similar results. Replacing the government turnover variable with a continuous measure for the number of years that the party of the PM has been the same, shows that top civil servant turnover is highest in the year that the party of the PM changes, the hazard of top civil servant turnover then falls with about 6% for each year the party of the PM remains the same (significant at $p < 0.001$).

Changing the operationalization of policy incongruence to instead check if the party of the minister that hired the top civil servant is a part of the (coalition) government each year yields identical results of policy incongruence increasing the risk of top civil servant turnover. Moreover, adding a policy incongruence variable that checks if the ministry in any given year is under the control of the party that appointed the top civil servant to model 6 in table 5 only yields a significant effect for the party of the PM being the same.

Finally, turning to robustness tests of H6, if a later point in time than the introduction of state secretaries is considered as a turning point towards more politicization, the results remain similar. The effects of all political events baring time since government turnover—which yields similar results to the after state secretaries estimates—are smaller and not statistically significant at conventional levels of inference if results instead are estimated post-1983⁴ or post-1991⁵. Hence, if anything the results suggest that politicization of top civil servant turnover have diminished during the last 30-40 years – at least when all top civil servants in the ministry are considered. However, when just the highest level of top civil servant is considered in these two time periods, the effect of government turnover turns significant, increasing the hazard of top civil servant turnover by 100 – 120%, which is roughly 40 – 60% larger than the hazard in the before state secretaries data, and 70 – 90% larger than in the after state secretaries data.

⁴A year which introduced “Tjenestemannsloven” a new legislative framework for civil servant employment

⁵A year in which a new financial rewards scheme for top civil servants was introduced (Statens lederlønnssystem), which were supposed to link bureaucratic performance and top civil servant remuneration, as well as increase ministers ability to remove underperforming top civil servants

Chapter 6

Discussion

The theoretical expectations and the findings of the analysis is summarized in figure 6.1 which revisits the directed acyclic graph of the hypotheses posited in chapter 2. As can be gleaned from the figure, only three of the hypotheses are supported by the analysis, two of the hypotheses are rejected in the Norwegian case – and H6 only finds conditional support in the analysis. These findings will be discussed below in light of the theoretical expectations and the politicization literature.

The chapter is divided into five sections, with the first section discussing the findings on changes the three different types of change in the minister, namely a change of just the minister, a change in minister as a result of a government turnover, and a change in minister as a result of government turnover bringing a party to office for the first time. Next the findings on policy incongruence is examined, followed by a discussion on the potential reasons for the findings on time since government turnover being contrary to H5. In the penultimate section, whether or not the results on before and after the introduction of state secretaries implies increased politicization over time is considered, before I lastly turn to discuss the limitations of the inferences that can be made based on the quantitative analysis of top civil servant turnover – proposing alternative research strategies for future research to address these shortcomings.

6.1 The Differing Effect of Minister Turnover With or Without an Ideological Change

The effect of just a change in minister is consistently not statistically significant across the analysis in the last chapter, hence resulting in the conclusion that such political events do not seem to be dramatic enough to increase the rate at which top civil servants leave their positions. This finding is consistent with what Askim et al. (2022) finds for minister change on the risk of Permanent Secretary turnover in both Norway and Denmark. When viewed in conjunction with wholesale change in government increasing top civil servant turnover, the absence of such a finding for minister turnover, brings support for a theory of the more notable the ideological change of a political event is, the more likely top civil servant turnover is to be politicized. Further support for such an explanation can be found in parties taking control of the government for the first time increasing the turnover rates of top civil servants more than

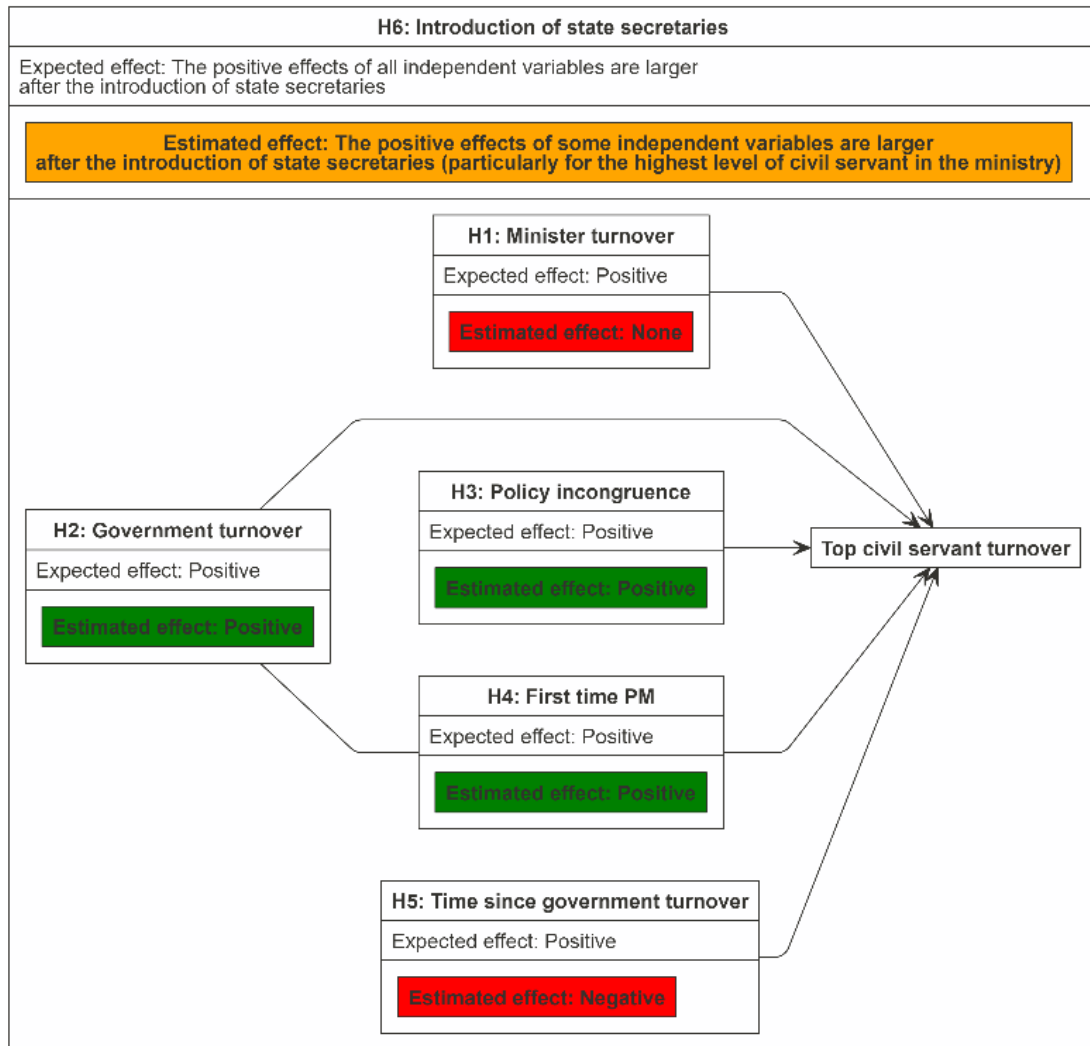


Figure 6.1: Directed acyclic graph of the different political events, their hypothesized and estimated effects on the rate of top civil servant turnover.

a regular change of government. Moreover, it suggests that in meritocratic administrative systems with a strong party tradition, politicization of civil service is driven by partisan motives, and not personal loyalty as can be the case in formally politicized systems (Rybar & Podmanik, 2020).

The robustness tests did, however, show that not all government turnovers have the same effect on top civil servants. There seems to be a difference between wholesale government change with or without winning an election, where top civil servants are only switched out at increasing rates after a change in government that not only causes an ideological change, but also a change in the parliamentary strength of the government. This finding is similar to those of Cooper et al. (2020) on the turnover of top civil servants in the UK. Government change in the absence of an election means that the previous government was removed from office by the parliament or due to internal disagreements between coalition partners, hence the replacing government has to be mindful of the consequences of having removed the last government when they assume office. Without an election the new government has no clear democratic mandate to change the policy agenda of the previous government, and may thus primarily focus on continued governance on the previous governments platforms until after an election is held. This logic particularly follows from the new government needing the support of parties in the parliament that previously supported the last government, until its removal, to stay in office (Grindheim et al., 2019, p. 115). Hence, removing top civil servants may not be a desired move for governments that come to power in such a way, at least not in their initial year of governing, as the results also show that policy incongruences increase turnover rates independent from there being a change in government within a given year.

Contrary to the finding of government turnover without an election not leading to top civil servants leaving their positions at higher rates, all 7 instances of a new party gaining office for the first time in Norway have happened in years where there were no election, and as have been shown such events significantly increase top civil servant turnover. It could be that the parties that attain office for the first time are not limited by the same mechanisms as other governments that attain office without an election. Since it is the first time the party achieves this power they have more to gain by using it to change policies and top civil servants regardless of the increased risk of being removed. Disregarding the effect of elections, the main takeaway has to be that top civil servants do not resign from their posts at abnormal rates unless a political event comes with ideological change in the government's policy preferences.

There could still be some types of ministerial turnovers without an ideological change in government that increases the risk of turnover among top civil servants. Populist ministers have been found to prefer civil servants that implement their policy agenda without professional discretion to a larger extent than non-populist ministers (Sasso & Morelli, 2021). Hence, minister turnover that brings populist politicians to power may still result in politicization for reasons of personal loyalty. Moreover, a change in the minister to respond to a political scandal or public dissatisfaction with the government's performance in a given policy field, should lead to the government having more of an incentive to make changes in top civil service personnel, than when the PM has to replace a minister for other reasons.

In a country that allows civil servants to have political affiliation, it is also possible that the

increased rates of turnover in conjunction with government turnover mainly affects this group of top civil servants. Due to their political affiliation incoming governments can make stronger assumptions about whether or not these top civil servants share their policy preferences, than for non-partisan top civil servants. Moreover, these top civil servants are also likely to be considered for political positions in the ministries when their political party attains power. Examples of such top civil servants in the data-material can for instance be found in Karin Stoltenberg (Labor Party) who revolved between being a top civil servant in the Ministry of Children and Families in 1985 under a conservative government, to serving as state secretary in two other ministries after the change in government in 1986 (NSD, 2022d), returning to her top civil servant position after the change in government in 1989. A similar example from conservative governments is Kjell Colding who had two breaks from his civil servant career in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to serve as state secretary under the conservative governments in 1970-1971 and 1981-1984. The control variable for a political career that were included in this study already shows that top civil servants that also had held political positions have shorter tenure in their top civil servant positions than other top civil servants, but the mechanics behind this effect have yet to be investigated in countries with a meritocratic administrative tradition that allows civil servants to be members of political parties.

The impact of a match or mismatch of demographic factors between the minister and the top civil servant has also not been controlled for, which may have affected the estimated effects of minister turnover. Gron et al. (2021) have for instance found that turnover risk among Chief Administrative Officers in danish municipalities are higher when there are gender differences between the Chief Administrative Officer and the mayor – or if the Chief Administrative Officers is older than the mayor. Hence, it could be that these or other personal dynamics between ministers and top civil servants are at play in some of the instances where a turnover of the minister also leads to top civil servant turnover. Furthermore, it could be that a similar logic to first time PM also holds when parties gain office for the first time as a junior partner in a coalition government. Lastly, there is also variation in the political importance of the different top civil servant positions to different governments and ministers that have not been considered. Hence, more research is needed on political changes that are less notable than wholesale government turnover, future studies should thus try to dissect the effects of different types of minister turnover while the party of the PM remains the same.

6.2 Policy Incongruence: the PM as More than Just a Political Organizer?

As expected, top civil servants are more likely to leave their positions under policy incongruent governments, based on the political make-up of the appointing and dismissing governments. This effect is separate from the effect of political events within a given year affecting top civil servant turnover, implying that even if a top civil servant with policy preferences that are in conflict with the governments are not dismissed or willingly leave their position in response to a change in government, they are still more likely to be switched out as long as

the government remains in power. Furthermore, it could be that the effects of policy conflict between the government and the top civil servants are even higher in policy areas where different governments have largely incongruent policy preferences (Dahlström & Holmgren, 2019), but the data does not allow for any conclusions on such differences. But, as policy incongruence has a significant effect in spite of treating all ministries and departments as equally important, and irrespective of years with changes in the minister, a conclusion can be made of the political preferences of top civil servants in ministries being a factor in both their appointment, and their reasons for leaving. However, no conclusions can be made on the mechanisms with which policy incongruence affect the departure of top civil servants, as they could be leaving on their own accord, as their policy congruence with the appointing government may have been a primary factor in seeking the position in the first place – hence, the mechanism could be one of bureaucratic self selection (Dahlström & Holmgren, 2019).

The effect of policy incongruence is found to be consistent both when the difference between appointing and dismissing government is estimated on the basis of the party of the PM, and on the basis of the party of the hiring minister being a part of the (coalition) government at both points in time. When viewed in conjunction with just a change in the minister being insufficient to increase top civil servant turnover, it may be plausible that top civil servant turnover can only be politicized when it is in the PMs preferences. A finding that is consistent with the centralization of power thesis, where Cooper (2017) have found that in the last 40 years in Canada a change in the First Minister without a change in party is enough to increase top civil servant turnover, particularly as the effect of policy incongruence mainly appears in the post 1947 period in Norway. In other words, the politicization of top civil servants is a multiple principal problem where both the responsible minister's and the cabinet's or the PM's preferences have to be aligned for a change to happen. Hence, the preferences of the individual ministers, or junior parties in coalition governments to switch out a top civil servant during a government's tenure is insufficient if the top civil servant has the PM's trust. These findings may thus lend support to research that have argued that the PM has become increasingly more important for government decision-making also in countries with a tradition of consensus based decision-making in the cabinet (Cooper, 2017; Kolltveit, 2012) – particularly as this effect is only found to be significant in the post state secretaries period.

6.3 Time Since Government Turnover

The negative effect of time since government turnover runs contrary to the expectation of H5. This might be explained by changes in government having a different effect on a new government's desire to politicize top civil servant turnover than what has been hypothesized. Whereas the theoretical expectation of governments being more distrustful of top civil servants ability to carry out their policy-program the longer they have worked for a government with a different policy-agenda should still be at play, it is possible that the government is unable to act on these preferences. Firstly, as the selection of top civil servants to ministries is largely made from candidates inside the ministries (Askim et al., 2022), the pool of candidates with suitable

professional experience that the government trusts to share their policy preferences are more limited after longer spells of opposition-governments. This also makes it more difficult for aspiring top civil servants to signal policy comparability with the new government (Veit & Scholz, 2016). Second, governments that replace long lasting opposition-governments may view their possibility to stay in power for a longer period of time as not very likely, and with little governing experience they may to a larger degree need to rely on the existing top civil servants in the ministry in their initial governance, as larger changes in top civil servant staff can result in increased risk of the government being removed by the parliament. Lastly, parties that have been out of office for a significant amount of time might not have leadership that is experienced enough in governing to systematically politicize top civil servants even if they know that they would largely gain from it in influence over policy (Dahlstrom & Niklasson, 2013; Folke et al., 2011).

Most Norwegian governments have also been minority governments which may have caused even long lasting governments to feel uncertain about their outlook on continued governance. Thus, making both long lasting and short lived governments view politicization of top civil servants as an equally important strategy to ensure long term policy influence. Subsequently, the significantly lower top civil servant turnover numbers the more time has passed since the last change in government, can be explained by governments that have been in office for a longer period in time being more efficient at politicizing.

6.4 The Political Dynamics of Top Civil Servant Turnover Over Time

The question of whether or not top civil service turnover in Norway has become more politicized over time has proven difficult to answer. Putting the comparative explanation of Askim et al. (2022) of the existence of political state secretaries as the cause of the stronger relationship between political events and top civil servant turnover in Norway than in Denmark to the test in Norway before and after the introduction of political state secretaries into the executive, have given inconclusive evidence for politicization being higher in the era of state secretaries. On the one hand, the effect of a change in government appears to be similar in both periods, hence not indicating an increase in politicization. On the other hand, policy incongruences between top civil servants and governments only have a significant positive effect on the hazard of top civil servant turnover in the years after 1947. However, this effect could simply be a result of the change in top civil servants career patterns in the post-WWII period, with top civil servants no longer having life long careers in the same central administration organization. Moreover, it is natural to think that the top civil servants are more likely to be dissatisfied with their current position under a government with diverging policy preferences from their own, thus nudging the top civil servant towards seeking other work opportunities. On the flip side, this alternative explanation still implies increased politicization in recruitment in the post state secretaries period, as if top civil servants were truly neutral actors hired strictly on the basis of professional merits, without the minister taking into account

if their political views aligned with that of the hiring government, then turnover rates among top civil servants should remain the same regardless of a change in government away from the hiring party.

Making any judgment on the effect of a party taking office for the first time before and after state secretaries is difficult as there was only one such event post 1947. This event does, however, not appear to have had the same effect on the top civil servants as parties taking office for the first time in the previous period. The most likely explanation for this is that the change in government in 1972 that brought the Christian Democratic Party to office for the first time did not bring a new social group to office, such as when the Liberal Party and the Labour Party had gained power in the previous period. Moreover, the Christian Democratic Party ascended to office as part of a minority coalition government, where they in spite of holding the office of the PM was the weakest party in the government in terms of electoral support.

When it comes to the effect of the time that has passed since the last change in government the hypothesized politicization effect does not appear in any of the time periods. In the post 1947 period the number of years that have passed since the last change in government even has a significant negative effect on top civil servant turnover. This might be explained by changes in government being more frequent in the before 1947 period, where most governments lasted less than 3 years, and no government lasted longer than 7 years. In the post 1947 period the average government lasted closer to 4 years, three governments stayed in office for 8 consecutive years, and one government even governed uninterruptedly for 18 years. In other words, little variation in the time between government turnover in the before 1947 period may have caused governments to act similarly regardless of the number of years that had passed since the last change in government. The time that had passed since the top civil servants had worked under a different government may simply not have been long enough on most occasions to where it impacts the new government's trust in them. With changes in government being further apart after the introduction of state secretaries, governments start to take this factor into account when deciding whether or not to politicize top civil servant turnover – but it does not result in increased level of top civil servant turnover, instead the opposite happens. This may in the Norwegian case be caused by conservative governments attaining power for only a short period of time in between longer time periods of social democratic governments, thus making the conservative governments chances of staying in power for a longer period less likely, and making larger changes in top civil servant staff more risky.

It is possible that the results on the relationship between political events and top civil servant turnover before the introduction of state secretaries is driven by the 1884-1905 and 1940-1946 periods, as baring to the effects of governments attaining office for the first time increasing turnover, none of the other political events has a significantly positive effect in the 1906-1940 period. This might point towards the political culture towards making changes in the staffing of top civil servants after a change in government having been transformed by the 5 year disconnect from normal governance under the occupational regime of the second world war.

A possible explanation for why there does not appear to be any particular increase in

politicization of top civil servants over time may be found in the increasing number of political employees in the ministries in the same period. The ministers are still dependent on having top civil servants that they trust to control their portfolio, but have limited ability to remove unwanted top civil servants at will, hence needing to use the state secretaries instead to police the work of top civil servants with diverging preferences (Shaw & Eichbaum, 2020). Particularly as the inner workings of the ministries have become less shrouded to the public over time, and the growth in independent news media scrutinizing the governments every move (Figenschou et al., 2019), it has at least not become less costly to politicize top civil servant turnover in the post 1947 period. Moreover, the existence of state secretaries, as well as permanent secretaries in the post 1947 period might have made the Directors General of Ministry Departments more insulated from politicization. As the robustness tests did show the effects of political events on only the highest level of civil servant in the ministry is significantly larger in the last 30-40 years for permanent secretaries, compared to that of the highest level of top civil servants before the introduction of state secretaries – as well as the estimates for all top civil servants after the introduction of state secretaries. This could also in part be driven by the permanent secretaries having a more functionally politicized position in the ministries. And especially in the first couple of decades after the introduction of state secretaries in Norway the line of duties and responsibility between them and the permanent secretaries in the ministries were noted to be blurry (Eriksen, 1988, pp. 46–47).

In summary, some of the results point towards increased levels of politicization of top civil servant turnover after the introduction of state secretaries, whereas other results show that top civil servants were politicized in both periods. The results also show that the political event of parties attaining office for the first time had more of an impact on top civil servants before the introduction of state secretaries – whereas policy incongruence appears to be more important after 1947. When only the highest level of civil servant positions are taken into account in the post 1947 period the results largely point towards increased politicization of these positions, and the directors general being less affected by political events. All in all, with regards to H6, the evidence points towards more politicization of top civil service turnover since the introduction of state secretaries – but only for the highest level of civil servants in the ministries.

6.5 The Limitations of Quantitative Studies of Administrative Turnover

The main short-coming of quantitative studies of politicization is that they do not allow for a distinction between politicians forcing top civil servants out, and top civil servants willingly leaving their positions at larger rates in conjunction with political events. The main pillar that mine and similar studies findings balance on is the *ceteris paribus* assumption of other factors than the political event affecting turnover being the same in years without political events. In the words of Cooper (2020, p. 316), this assumption “is not to suggest, however, that the only cause of turnover following a political event is the political motivations of governments

to increase control. Factors such as retirement, death, and illness likely affect turnover. Importantly, however, there are no reasons to believe that these non-political factors are more likely in years following a political change than in other years.” Whereas this assumption should hold, meaning that the increased rate of top civil servant turnover that coincides with a political event is caused by the political event – the mechanisms of how the political events affect top civil servant turnover remains unconfirmed.

On the one hand, it could be the politicians’ level of trust in the top civil servants’ suitability to carry out their policy agenda that causes top civil servants to be forced out, or reshuffled into less politically important positions. On the other hand, the mechanism could be one of politicians having particular people in mind that they want to work with to pursue their policy objectives, or simply wanting to reward political supporters or personal ties that causes them to dismiss or reshuffle existing top civil servants. A third possibility is that it could simply be that the top civil servants consider the start of a new governmental period as a natural end to a part of their career—or that they are dissatisfied with the policy-priorities of the new government (Rattus & Randma-Liiv, 2019)—thus leaving of their own accord.

A counter argument to an explanation of top civil servants voluntarily leaving their positions when they disagree with the policy objectives of a government could be raised. The top civil servants are in a better position to influence policy-output towards their own preferences—thus limiting the damage that a government can do to the existing policy that the top civil servant prefer—if they stay in their position, than if they voluntarily yield their position to a civil servant that shares the governments preferences. But, be that as it may, anthropological research into the values that are held by (top) civil servants have largely confirmed that they also in practice subscribe to the bureaucratic virtues of loyalty to the decisions of the at any point sitting government (Rhodes, 2005), hence the natural reaction of top civil servants when they believe themselves unable to follow this principle may be to resign.

A different scholarly approach to the analysis of the relation between top civil servant turnover and political events is needed to gain more insights into the mechanisms at play. A potential strategy could be to employ a mixed-methods approach that combines quantitative data on political events and top civil servant turnover with interviews or surveys of the same individuals. With the qualitative element of asking the top civil servants and the politicians about the circumstances around a top civil servant resignation one does however run the risk of the subjects not remembering all aspects that went into the decision, or mending the truth to protect the image of an unpoliticized central administration. Conducting survey experiments on top civil servants and ministers could also be a fruitful approach to gain information about how ministers would act when faced with a top civil servant that they do not trust, or how top civil servants evaluate their potential options when nudged towards resigning by the minister. The main drawback of this approach would be that the data would be hypothetical, making it difficult to ensure that the respondents interpret the dilemmas similarly.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

Starting from the puzzle of previous studies on top civil servants in meritocratic administrative systems having found that different types of political change increased administrative turnover in most but not all countries, as well as mixed findings of this effect being a phenomenon of the last 50 years, this thesis set out to test six different hypotheses on the political dynamics of top civil servant turnover in Norwegian ministries between 1884-2021. The thesis has shown that not all political changes have the same impact on administrative turnover. A change in just the minister without a change in government is insufficient to impact top civil servant turnover in Norway. For political change to impact administrative turnover in the ministries there must also be an ideological change. Moreover, the thesis has shown how the governments trust in the incumbent top civil servants to be a capable agent for the government's policy agenda is a driving factor for a new government's desire to use their political discretion to impact the ministry administration. The thesis has demonstrated that a change in government increases the rate at which top civil servants leave their position. Moreover, it has shown that whereas an ideological change in government is necessary for administrative turnover to increase, the circumstances of the ideological change in government also matters.

On the one hand, a change in government that brings a party to office as PM for the first time comes with administrative turnover that is even larger than in other instances of government turnover. On the other hand, a change in government without an election appears to not increase administrative turnover in the same manner as a change in government in conjunction with a change in the relative strength of the parties in the parliament in a context of negative parliamentarism. However, if it is the first time the party ascends to office, the change in government taking place without an election is still sufficient to increase top civil servant turnover rates, pointing towards new parties being less risk-averse when first getting the opportunity to impact ministry policy-making.

Aside from considering what happens to administrative careers when a party assumes office for the first time, the thesis has also considered the temporal effect of what happens to the motives of ministers to politicize top civil servant turnover when the time since the last change in government increases. Starting from a theoretical expectation of a new government's trust in the sitting ministry administrations being lower the longer it has been since the last change in government, thus increasing their preferences towards switching out existing top

civil servants. This thesis found evidence to the contrary in the context of top civil servants in Norwegian ministries. Whereas the theoretical mechanism should still be sound, I considered three contextual factors: minority governments, largely ministry-internal recruitment of top civil servants and governments replacing long lasting governments only staying in office for short periods of time, that could be the reason for the time since a change in government not increasing the dismissal of top civil servants in Norway. Future research is needed to assess if these three possible explanations hold some merit, and if time between changes of government also has a negative effect in other countries with a meritocratic administrative tradition.

When it comes to policy incongruence between top civil servants and governments this thesis has built on the framework of previous studies in Denmark and Sweden. Whereas J. G. Christensen et al. (2014) did not find that top civil servants were either more or less likely to be dismissed if a ministry was controlled by the same party that initially appointed a top civil servant (J. G. Christensen et al., 2014), Dahlström and Holmgren (2019) have found that top civil servants are less likely to be dismissed if the ideological orientation of the government is the same as at the point of appointment agency. This thesis showed that in Norway top civil servants are more likely to leave their positions when the party of the PM is different from what it was at their time of appointment, supporting that political change must come with a change in government ideology, and not just a change in the party that controls the ministry. Moreover, estimating a model that both considers policy incongruence with the minister's party and the PM's party shows that only a mismatch between the appointing and dismissing party of the PM affects top civil servants tenure time – thus raising the question of the PM potentially being more important for top civil servant decision-making in countries where ministers are presumed to be the primary decision-maker in personnel decision within their portfolio. Lastly, as this thesis analyzed the effects of policy incongruence side by side with political changes of years with minister turnover, it contributes to the literature by showing that policy incongruence between top civil servants and ministers are a driving factor for administrative turnover not only in the install 2 years of a change in the minister, but during the entire employment spell of the top civil servant.

As to the question of the relationship between political change and top civil servant turnover having increased over time the thesis finds mixed results. The results suggest that the impact of a change in government on top civil servants career was present also prior to the introduction of state secretaries in Norway in 1947 – and that for all top civil servants considered in the thesis the effect remained at roughly the same level after 1947. When analyses were made on only the highest level of top civil servants in the ministry in both periods, the results show that the effect of a change of government were in fact larger in the post-1947 period. This also suggests that when a permanent secretary is added to the top of the ministerial hierarchy that the directors general of ministry departments become more insulated from the political dynamics of a change in government. Conversely, all top civil servants appear to be more prone to leave their position when the government is in control of parties that were not responsible for the top civil servants appointment after 1947. Showing a trend towards political alignment between governments and top civil servants becoming more important over time, be it for reasons of administrative self selection or governments

politicizing.

All in all, the evidence points towards more politicization of administrative turnover in Norway since the introduction of state secretaries—particularly for the highest level of civil servants in the ministries. The findings does however, not give particularly strong support for the theory Askim et al. (2022) of the existence of a political entourage for ministers in Norway being the reason for government change impacting administrative careers in Norway, and not in Denmark. Why top civil servant careers in the Danish central-administration appear to be unaffected by political change in spite of studies in other countries with a meritocratic administrative system remains an anomaly in need of more research.

The thesis has also discussed the methodological limitations of quantitative studies of the political dynamics of administrative turnover, namely the issue of not being able to discern between involuntary and voluntary administrative turnover. Whereas this problem may prove to be unsolvable in practice, as more direct studies of politicians and civil servants motifs in these situations runs the issue of the involved parties mending the truth, I discussed two potentially fruitful strategies for future research on the issue. Namely, combining quantitative data on administrative turnover with qualitative interviews, and survey experiments.

Whereas this thesis has shown that political change also brings forth administrative turnover, and that this relationship has been existing at higher or lower levels since the introduction of parliamentarism in Norway, it still does not appear that this form of politicization is large enough to be a problem. The total rate of top civil servant turnover in years with and without political change in Norway is still generally low, at about 5-20% of top civil servants exiting the ministries each year. To put these numbers into perspective, in formally politicized countries such as Germany 50-70% of top civil servants are usually purged from their positions following a change in government (Fleischer, 2016). With top civil servant turnover rates being similar in most years regardless of changes in government, the conclusion has to be inline with that of Askim et al. (2021) that the administration in Norway is far from overtly politicized. However, as political change does impact administrative turnover, more research should be aimed at finding out if the price of political control is the loss of bureaucratic expertise in these instances in meritocratic administrative systems. Are for instance the replacing top civil servants for instance less merited than the top civil servants that leave in conjunction with political change?

Independent of the question of whether or not political events prompt the turnover of top civil servants, a question should be raised of what the ideal tenure length of top civil servants should be. On the one hand, it is important for government performance to keep highly skilled top civil servants around – particularly as continuity in ministry leadership allows for long term planning and policy-development. On the other hand, for governments to actually be able to appoint and keep high quality top civil servants over time, there has to be consequences of reassignment or dismissal for under-performing top civil servants. Moreover, it is important that some degree of politicization of top civil servants is permitted to ensure that the top civil servants are politically responsive to the democratically mandated policy program of the government, and at least not actively work against the will of the people for their own political reasons. If the level of political influence on top civil servant staffing in

Norway is ideal to equip governments with politically responsive, trusted top civil servants, without political control coming at the loss of bureaucratic expertise remains a question for politicians and practitioners – as well as for future research.

As has been shown in this thesis, Norwegian ministries are far from overloaded with top civil servants that remain in position for multiple decades, but there are still a significant number of top civil servants with tenure longer than 10 years. Moreover, a large number of top civil servants leave their positions after only a few years. A possible remedy to decrease the impact of politicization and reduce the frequency of both long and short tenure times are fixed term contracts. Such contracts—limited to two six-year-terms per person—are already in use for most agency heads in Norway and could thus readily be extended to top civil servants in the ministries. Whereas fixed term contracts have not been found to insulate top civil servants from leaving their positions due to political change (Dahlström & Holmgren, 2019), it does limit the length of tenure of top civil servants to a level that should both secure institutional memory, and politically responsive top civil servants. As if the top civil servants want to be reappointed after their first six-year-term they would need the trust of the minister. Moreover, this will reduce the long term impact of individual government's decisions to appoint political allies as top civil servants – hence strengthening and safeguarding the party political neutrality of the ministry administration.

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Appendix A

About the Literature Review

The thesis contributes to the literature on politicization of bureaucracy in high-merit political systems. This field of politicization research has seen a surge in the last decade, as an increasing number of studies have found significant co-variation between political events and the turnover of top administrative employees (Askim et al., 2022; Cooper, 2020; Dahlström & Holmgren, 2019). As the literature on politicization is vast and scattered across different fields and journals, and the subject of the studies vary across country and administrative contexts, I have conducted a systematic literature review (Denyer & Tranfield, 2009) using the Web of Science to find research of relevance to this thesis. The goal of the literature review was to get an overview of the current frontier of politicization research, to leverage the findings of studies of politicization of top civil servants in different administrative contexts, to theorize and generate hypotheses of the mechanics of government turnover on the careers of top civil servants in high-merit political systems.

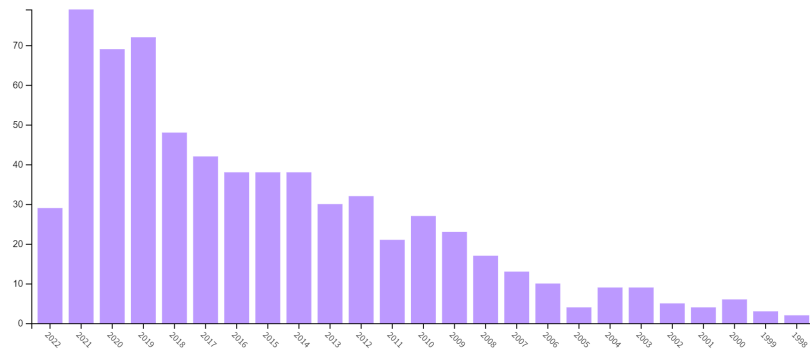
The Web of Science were used to conduct the search as it contains a database of quality publications, and allow for combination of multiple search terms, which is helpful as what is labeled as politicization in the European-literature often is referred to as "patronage" or "spoils-system" in the American-literature. However, as search-strings will never be perfect, and some studies of relevance may be published in journals not listed in the Web of Science database, chances are that some relevant studies may have been excluded, reducing the validity of the literature review. As the goal of this thesis is not to do a rigorous review of the politicization literature but rather to get an overview of what is going on at the research frontier and find relevant theory and empirical findings on the effects of political events on bureaucracy, I have chosen to use quite open criteria (listed underneath) during the screening of the literature.

The Criteria for Inclusion in the Literature Review:

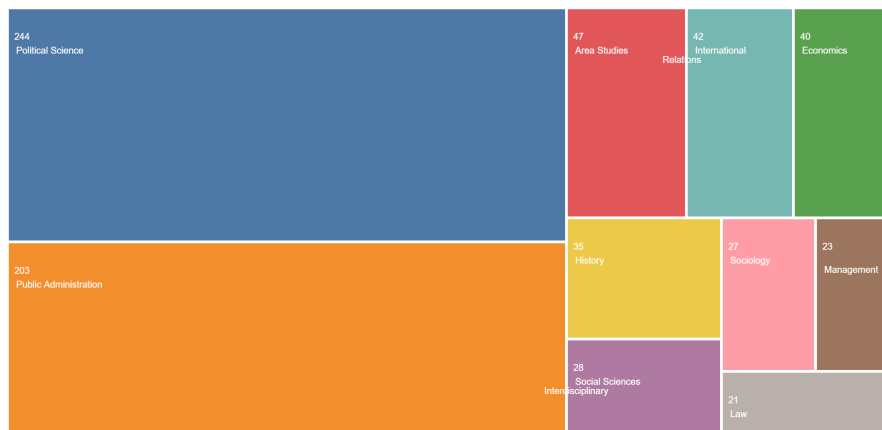
1. Empirical studies on the effects of political change on administration.
2. Empirical studies on the relationship between ministers and top civil servants.
3. Empirical studies of administrative turnover.

To create the Web of Science search-string¹, I used key terms from studies that I already

¹See Appendix B



(a) Number of politicization studies published 1997-2022.



(b) Number of politicization studies by journal subject field.

Figure A.1: Visualization of Web of Science search results.

knew of and considered relevant to the thesis. Using the search strings listed below my initial search on the Web of Science found 689 articles, research notes, conference papers and book chapters. 633 were journal articles. I then excluded 91 studies that were written in other languages than English. A.1b breaks the articles down by field, showing that the majority were published in political science and public administration journals (which both had about the same share). A.1a further illustrates that politicization of public administration is an emerging subject of study that has gone from less than 10 papers being published each year prior to 2007 to 72 articles being published in 2019 and 69 in 2020. Of the authors that have published the most on politicization, Meyer-Sahling (See for instance 2016) has written extensively on politicization in Eastern Europe and Cooper (See for instance 2020) has primarily worked on the politicization of countries within the Westminster tradition.

I then proceeded to screen the title and the abstract of the 697 articles on the criteria listed below, removing 584 studies that were found to be outside of the scope of interest of this thesis – mainly due to being about politicization in other areas than the civil service. At which point I fully screened the remaining 113 papers that passed the previous step more thoroughly, only including papers that deal with political events and politicization of bureaucracy in parliamentary democracies, as well as some of the most cited papers on politicization of

bureaucracy in other contexts. Leaving me with 54 relevant papers to base the review upon. The review will start of more broadly with how the concept of politicization of bureaucracy has been understood and whether or not politicization of bureaucracy only have negative effects. Before I will narrow in on what is at the heart of the thesis—the relationship between political events and turnover of top civil servants—that is why do politicians seek to influence the turnover of top civil servants, and to what extent the formal power of politicians to do so affects their decision-making.

Appendix B

Web of Science Search-String

ts=(((*politicization AND bureaucracy) OR (*politicization AND "civil service") OR (*politicization AND administration) OR *politicization AND official\$ OR "spoils system" AND effect\$ OR "spoils-system" AND effect\$ OR *politicization AND "public appointments" OR patronage AND politicization OR "party patronage" AND "civil service" OR "party patronage" AND bureaucracy OR *politicization NEAR/10 effect\$ OR administrative turnover AND Government OR "bureaucratic turnover" OR "government turnover" OR "administrative careers" AND Norway OR patronage AND "public appointments" OR politicization AND recruitment)

Appendix C

Additional Statistics

C.1 Descriptive Statistics

Table C.1: Descriptiv statistics: complete dataset

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
Top civil servant turnover	7,248	0.103	0.303	0	1
Minister turnover	7,248	0.171	0.377	0	1
Government turnover	7,248	0.238	0.426	0	1
Policy incongruence	7,248	0.502	0.500	0	1
First time PM	7,248	0.025	0.156	0	1
Time since government turnover	7,248	3.669	2.978	0	18
Political career	7,248	0.054	0.225	0	1
Election year	7,248	0.254	0.435	0	1
Constituted	7,248	0.054	0.227	0	1
Age	7,248	53.875	7.966	29	70
Gender	7,248	0.105	0.307	0	1
Ministry terminated	7,248	0.021	0.144	0	1
Time since ministry created	7,248	67.842	57.287	0	203
PM-party share of cabinet	7,248	0.747	0.304	0.000	1.000
Permanent secretary in ministry	7,248	0.781	0.414	0	1
Director general	7,248	0.862	0.345	0	1
Before-1906	7,248	0.039	0.193	0	1
WWI	7,248	0.012	0.110	0	1
WWII	7,248	0.026	0.159	0	1
After-WWII	7,248	0.844	0.363	0	1
Exposed to government turnover	7,248	0.897	0.304	0	1
Top civil servant tenure length in years	7,248	13.422	7.831	0.997	35.995

Table C.2: Descriptiv statistics: before state secretaries

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
Top civil servant turnover	1,164	0.115	0.319	0	1
Minister turnover	1,164	0.196	0.397	0	1
Government turnover	1,164	0.342	0.475	0	1
Policy incongruence	1,164	0.581	0.494	0	1
First time PM	1,164	0.088	0.284	0	1
Time since government turnover	1,164	2.785	1.783	0	7
Political career	1,164	0.069	0.253	0	1
Election year	1,164	0.290	0.454	0	1
Constituted	1,164	0.154	0.361	0	1
Age	1,164	51.773	9.239	29	70
Gender	1,164	0.000	0.000	0	0
Ministry terminated	1,164	0.026	0.159	0	1
Time since ministry created	1,164	56.138	42.169	0	128
PM-party share of cabinet	1,164	0.872	0.246	0.000	1.000
Permanent secretary in ministry	1,164	0.085	0.279	0	1
Director general	1,164	0.972	0.166	0	1
Before-1906	1,164	0.242	0.429	0	1
WWI	1,164	0.076	0.264	0	1
WWII	1,164	0.162	0.369	0	1
After-WWII	1,164	0.026	0.159	0	1
Exposed to government turnover	1,164	0.890	0.313	0	1
Top civil servant tenure length in years	1,164	14.150	8.629	0.997	35.995

Table C.3: Descriptiv statistics: after state secretaries

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
Top civil servant turnover	6,084	0.100	0.300	0	1
Minister turnover	6,084	0.167	0.373	0	1
Government turnover	6,084	0.219	0.413	0	1
Policy incongruence	6,084	0.487	0.500	0	1
First time PM	6,084	0.013	0.112	0	1
Time since government turnover	6,084	3.838	3.127	1	18
Political career	6,084	0.051	0.219	0	1
Election year	6,084	0.247	0.431	0	1
Constituted	6,084	0.036	0.185	0	1
Age	6,084	54.277	7.634	33	70
Gender	6,084	0.125	0.331	0	1
Ministry terminated	6,084	0.020	0.141	0	1
Time since ministry created	6,084	70.081	59.485	0	203
PM-party share of cabinet	6,084	0.723	0.308	0.000	1.000
Permanent secretary in ministry	6,084	0.914	0.281	0	1
Director general	6,084	0.841	0.366	0	1
Before-1906	6,084	0.000	0.000	0	0
WWI	6,084	0.000	0.000	0	0
WWII	6,084	0.000	0.000	0	0
After-WWII	6,084	1.000	0.000	1	1
Exposed to government turnover	6,084	0.898	0.303	0	1
Top civil servant tenure length in years	6,084	13.283	7.662	0.997	32.997

C.2 Relative Hazard Plots of Time Dependent Covariates

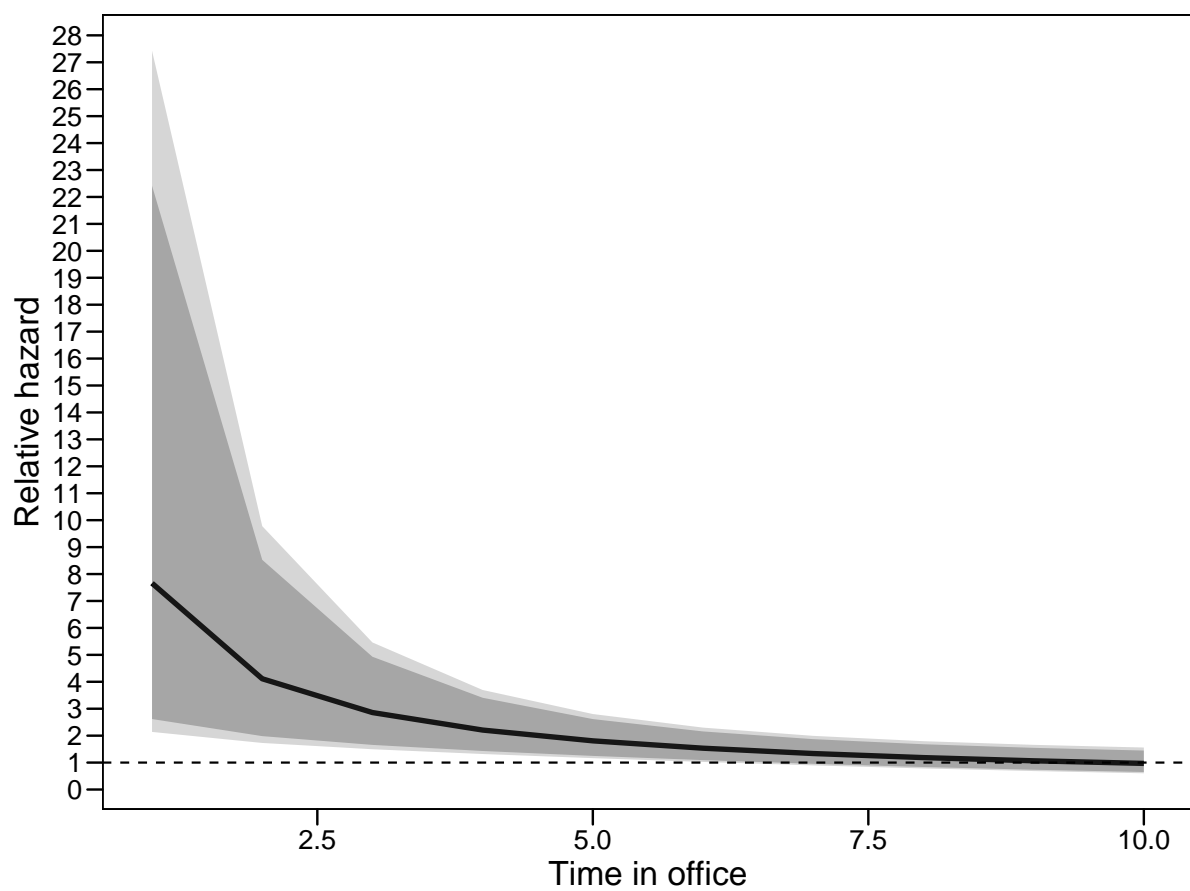


Figure C.1: The Relative hazard of government turnover on top civil servant turnover in the before state secretaries time period.

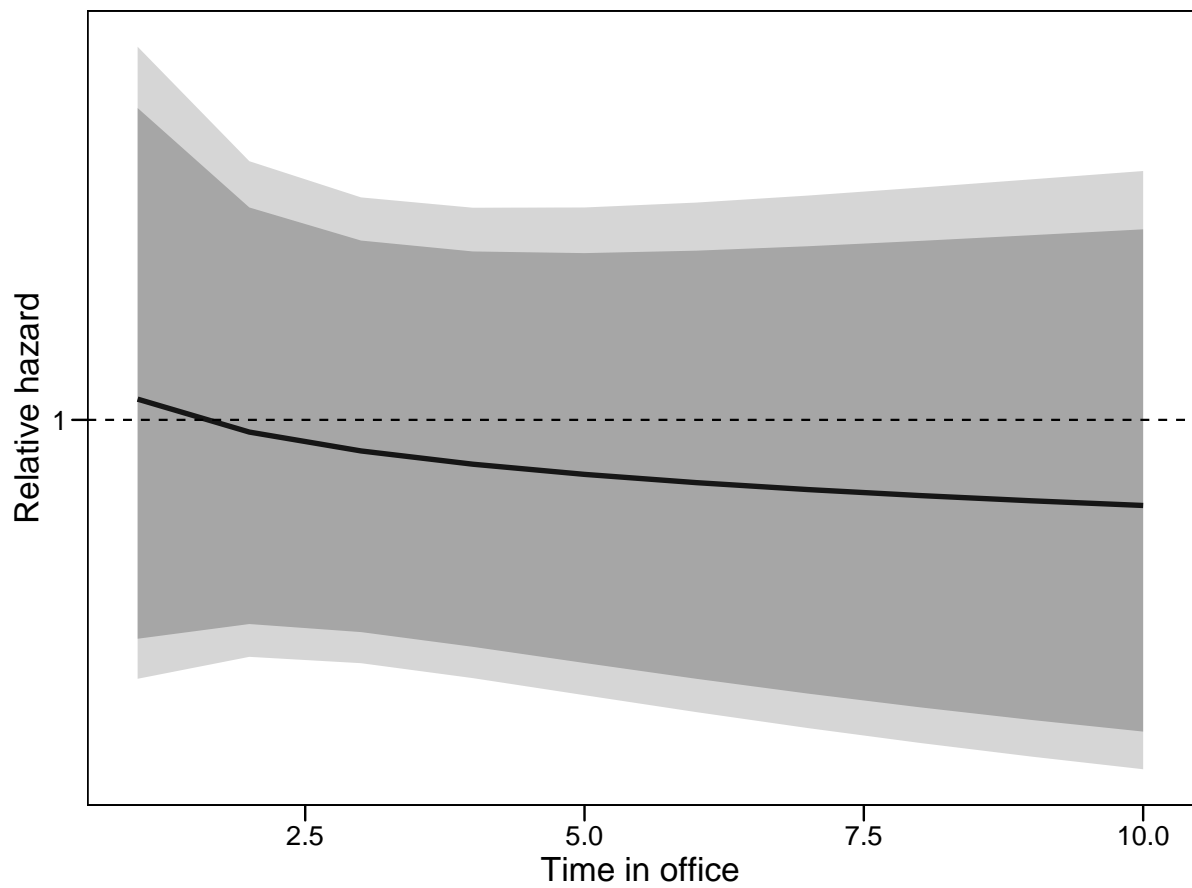


Figure C.2: The Relative hazard of time since government turnover on top civil servant turnover in the before state secretaries time period.

Table C.4: Cox-Regression results with stepwise introduction of control variables 1/3

	Dependent Variable					
	Turnover of Permanent Secretary					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Minister turnover	0.960 (0.150)	0.954 (0.149)	0.954 (0.150)	0.955 (0.157)	0.962 (0.158)	0.958 (0.158)
Government turnover	1.239* (0.118)	1.231* (0.119)	1.238* (0.124)	1.229* (0.124)	1.234* (0.124)	1.235* (0.125)
Policy incongruence	1.066 (0.080)	1.066 (0.082)	1.066 (0.081)	1.079 (0.083)	1.084 (0.084)	1.078 (0.084)
First time PM	1.333 (0.243)	1.332 (0.244)	1.321 (0.246)	1.261 (0.233)	1.267 (0.236)	1.294 (0.232)
Time since government turnover	0.972** (0.012)	0.973** (0.012)	0.973** (0.012)	0.975** (0.013)	0.974** (0.012)	0.974** (0.013)
Political career		1.632*** (0.119)	1.632*** (0.120)	1.533*** (0.113)	1.546*** (0.115)	1.535*** (0.114)
Election year			0.985 (0.075)	0.986 (0.078)	0.989 (0.078)	0.991 (0.078)
Constituted				3.359*** (0.203)	3.595*** (0.194)	3.623*** (0.194)
Age					1.024*** (0.006)	1.024*** (0.006)
Gender						1.190* (0.095)
Observations	7,248	7,248	7,248	7,248	7,248	7,248
Log Likelihood	-4,452.367	-4,446.368	-4,446.355	-4,396.984	-4,387.344	-4,386.228

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01
Estimates reported as hazard ratios. Robust standard errors clustered by ministry reported in parentheses.

Table C.5: Cox-Regression results with stepwise introduction of control variables 2/3

	Dependent variable					
	Turnover of top civil servant					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Minister turnover	0.924 (0.157)	0.932 (0.157)	0.911 (0.159)	0.907 (0.158)	0.907 (0.158)	0.917 (0.172)
Government turnover	1.173 (0.123)	1.170 (0.123)	1.136 (0.120)	1.111 (0.120)	1.110 (0.123)	1.131 (0.128)
Policy incongruence	1.055 (0.080)	1.057 (0.080)	1.109 (0.086)	1.103 (0.083)	1.103 (0.083)	1.024 (0.095)
First time PM	1.398 (0.229)	1.405 (0.230)	1.468* (0.231)	1.807*** (0.214)	1.808*** (0.215)	1.900** (0.267)
Time since government turnover	0.980 (0.013)	0.980 (0.013)	0.979 (0.013)	0.978* (0.013)	0.978* (0.013)	0.976** (0.012)
Political career	1.542*** (0.116)	1.571*** (0.117)	1.556*** (0.118)	1.568*** (0.115)	1.570*** (0.113)	1.576*** (0.124)
Election year	0.973 (0.076)	0.974 (0.076)	1.003 (0.077)	1.038 (0.080)	1.038 (0.081)	1.054 (0.082)
Constituted	3.523*** (0.188)	3.512*** (0.186)	3.455*** (0.187)	3.839*** (0.168)	3.839*** (0.168)	3.313*** (0.172)
Age	1.024*** (0.006)	1.023*** (0.006)	1.023*** (0.006)	1.020*** (0.006)	1.020*** (0.006)	1.024*** (0.006)
Gender	1.156 (0.091)	1.176* (0.094)	1.238** (0.096)	1.130 (0.095)	1.130 (0.094)	1.077 (0.088)
Ministry terminated	2.532*** (0.233)	2.651*** (0.231)	2.662*** (0.225)	2.589*** (0.225)	2.588*** (0.226)	2.008*** (0.196)
Time since ministry created		1.001 (0.001)	1.001 (0.001)	1.001 (0.001)	1.001 (0.001)	1.001 (0.001)
PM-party share of cabinet			1.373*** (0.115)	1.569*** (0.119)	1.569*** (0.119)	1.482*** (0.145)
Permanent secretary in ministry				1.662*** (0.148)	1.664*** (0.158)	2.371*** (0.198)
Director general					1.007 (0.113)	1.024 (0.116)
Decade fixed effects	No	No	No	No	No	No
Number of events	743	743	743	743	743	743
Number of top civil servants	947	947	947	947	947	947
Observations	7,248	7,248	7,248	7,248	7,248	7,248
Log Likelihood	-4,373.919	-4,372.266	-4,369.265	-4,356.738	-4,356.736	-4,322.461

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01
Estimates reported as hazard ratios. Robust standard errors clustered by ministry reported in parentheses.

Table C.6: Cox-Regression results with stepwise introduction of control variables 3/3

	Dependent variable				
	Turnover of top civil servant				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Minister turnover	0.956 (0.175)	0.942 (0.157)	0.967 (0.167)	0.932 (0.163)	0.961 (0.158)
Government turnover	1.324** (0.131)	1.257** (0.113)	1.416*** (0.118)	1.143 (0.129)	1.366** (0.127)
Policy incongruence	1.221** (0.098)	1.026 (0.103)	1.235** (0.104)	1.029 (0.087)	1.258** (0.094)
First time PM	2.021** (0.287)	1.702* (0.286)	1.628 (0.298)	1.506* (0.215)	1.487* (0.212)
Time since government turnover	0.967** (0.014)	0.967** (0.013)	0.969** (0.014)	0.967*** (0.013)	0.959*** (0.014)
Political career	1.586*** (0.129)	1.634*** (0.122)	1.606*** (0.137)	1.625*** (0.112)	1.683*** (0.109)
Election year	1.013 (0.083)	1.000 (0.078)	0.970 (0.079)	1.029 (0.083)	0.983 (0.081)
Constituted	2.840*** (0.138)	4.407*** (0.126)	3.877*** (0.117)	3.186*** (0.150)	2.729*** (0.115)
Age	1.025*** (0.005)	1.022*** (0.005)	1.022*** (0.005)	1.023*** (0.005)	1.025*** (0.005)
Gender	1.102 (0.110)	1.193 (0.134)	1.172 (0.140)	1.187* (0.100)	1.189 (0.111)
Ministry terminated	1.633** (0.197)	2.233*** (0.236)	2.077*** (0.263)	2.091*** (0.190)	1.617** (0.203)
Time since ministry created	1.001 (0.001)	1.027*** (0.009)	1.009 (0.009)	1.001 (0.001)	1.001 (0.001)
PM-party share of cabinet	1.551*** (0.157)	1.518*** (0.141)	1.378** (0.158)	1.502*** (0.120)	1.565*** (0.122)
Permanent secretary in ministry	2.439*** (0.169)	1.631*** (0.185)	1.719*** (0.204)	2.062*** (0.194)	2.377*** (0.156)
Director general	0.981 (0.124)	1.047 (0.110)	0.971 (0.119)	1.029 (0.112)	1.008 (0.125)
Exposed to government turnover	0.271*** (0.113)		0.314*** (0.138)		0.283*** (0.100)
Before-1906				1.583* (0.254)	1.691** (0.232)
WWI				1.351 (0.282)	1.540 (0.292)
WWII				3.229*** (0.184)	2.226*** (0.177)
After-WWII				0.993 (0.178)	0.827 (0.176)
Decade fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Ministry fixed effects	No	Yes	No	No	No
Number of events	743	743	743	743	743
Number of top civil servants	947	947	947	947	947
Observations	7,248	7,248	7,248	7,248	7,248
Log Likelihood	-4,259.972	-4,227.728	-4,183.857	-4,335.822	-4,274.167

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01
Estimates reported as hazard ratios. Robust standard errors clustered by ministry reported in parentheses.

Table C.7: Cox-Regression results on top civil servant sub-groups

	Dependent variable			
	Turnover of top civil servant			
	Complete dataset	Experiences government turnover	Highest level civil servant	Permanent Secretaries
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Minister turnover	0.961 (0.158)	0.941 (0.169)	1.042 (0.224)	0.796 (0.245)
Government turnover	1.366** (0.127)	1.368** (0.136)	1.924*** (0.131)	2.135*** (0.245)
Policy incongruence	1.258** (0.094)	1.334*** (0.096)	1.281 (0.192)	1.242 (0.246)
First time PM	1.487* (0.212)	1.401* (0.204)	1.475 (0.248)	0.911 (0.660)
Time since government turnover	0.959*** (0.014)	0.968** (0.016)	0.959* (0.022)	0.979 (0.026)
Political career	1.683*** (0.109)	1.717*** (0.130)	1.405** (0.171)	1.669* (0.276)
Election year	0.983 (0.081)	1.018 (0.100)	0.839 (0.154)	0.691 (0.256)
Constituted	2.729*** (0.115)	3.250*** (0.137)	2.838*** (0.151)	3.937*** (0.301)
Age	1.025*** (0.005)	1.031*** (0.006)	1.011 (0.009)	1.076** (0.029)
Gender	1.189 (0.111)	1.205 (0.156)	1.347 (0.258)	1.155 (0.290)
Ministry terminated	1.617** (0.203)	1.625** (0.220)	2.418*** (0.256)	5.159*** (0.352)
Time since ministry created	1.001 (0.001)	1.001 (0.001)	1.003** (0.001)	1.003 (0.002)
PM-party share of cabinet	1.565*** (0.122)	1.393** (0.140)	1.584** (0.234)	0.934 (0.295)
Permanent secretary in ministry	2.377*** (0.156)	2.458*** (0.155)	8.260*** (0.305)	
Director general	1.008 (0.125)	0.959 (0.121)	2.937*** (0.308)	
Exposed to government turnover	0.283*** (0.100)		0.273*** (0.190)	0.413*** (0.312)
Before-1906	1.691** (0.232)	1.628* (0.269)	1.656** (0.224)	
WWI	1.540 (0.292)	1.405 (0.374)	1.783** (0.282)	
WWII	2.226*** (0.177)	2.703*** (0.263)	2.410*** (0.205)	1.432 (0.448)
After-WWII	0.827 (0.176)	0.807 (0.188)	0.703 (0.217)	0.584* (0.312)
Number of events	743	568	238	110
Number of top civil servants	947	707	335	139
Observations	7,248	6,500	2,586	1,001
Log Likelihood	-4,274.167	-3,175.794	-1,058.382	-379.096

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01
Estimates reported as hazard ratios. Robust standard errors clustered by ministry reported in parentheses.

Table C.8: Cox-Regression results before and after the introduction of state secretaries

	Dependent variable			
	Turnover of top civil servant			
	Complete dataset	Before state secretaries	After state secretaries	After state secretaries (Highest level civil servant)
Minister turnover	0.961 (0.158)	1.279 (0.371)	0.911 (0.152)	0.844 (0.201)
Government turnover	1.366** (0.127)	1.710** (0.237)	1.293** (0.125)	2.218*** (0.227)
Policy incongruence	1.258** (0.094)	0.954 (0.214)	1.289*** (0.088)	1.466 (0.265)
First time PM	1.487* (0.212)	1.695* (0.289)	0.726 (0.359)	0.568 (0.659)
Time since government turnover	0.959*** (0.014)	0.987 (0.087)	0.959*** (0.013)	0.959 (0.028)
Political career	1.683*** (0.109)	1.175 (0.292)	1.737*** (0.128)	1.354 (0.233)
Election year	0.983 (0.081)	1.167 (0.272)	0.919 (0.093)	0.634** (0.203)
Constituted	2.729*** (0.115)	1.829*** (0.140)	3.167*** (0.179)	5.252*** (0.259)
Age	1.025*** (0.005)	0.982** (0.007)	1.034*** (0.006)	1.057** (0.022)
Gender	1.189 (0.111)		1.124 (0.114)	1.105 (0.277)
Ministry terminated	1.617** (0.203)	1.969** (0.292)	1.627* (0.281)	4.050*** (0.344)
Time since ministry created	1.001 (0.001)	1.000 (0.002)	1.001 (0.001)	1.003 (0.002)
PM-party share of cabinet	1.565*** (0.122)	2.697*** (0.332)	1.273** (0.120)	1.008 (0.301)
Permanent secretary in ministry	2.377*** (0.156)	1.108 (0.211)	3.317*** (0.336)	
Director general	1.008 (0.125)	0.706 (0.255)	1.037 (0.134)	0.349*** (0.258)
Exposed to government turnover	0.283*** (0.100)		0.278*** (0.111)	0.232*** (0.270)
Before-1906	1.691** (0.232)	1.327 (0.285)		
WWI	1.540 (0.292)	1.583* (0.271)		
WWII	2.226*** (0.177)	4.389*** (0.298)		
After-WWII	0.827 (0.176)			
Number of events	743	134	609	120
Number of top civil servants	947	178	799	192
Observations	7,248	1,164	6,084	1,493
Log Likelihood	-4,274.167	-510.076	-3,406.323	-453.504

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01
 Estimates reported as hazard ratios. Robust standard errors clustered by ministry reported in parentheses.