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Author(s): Räihä, Antti

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Normative Imperatives and Communal Influences

Antti Räihä

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NORMATIVE IMPERATIVES AND COMMUNAL INFLUENCES

The consistory’s role in proposing Lutheran clergy in the 18th-century Russian border area

Merit was strongly emphasized in the Privileges of the Clergy (in 1723) and legislative reforms, as well as in the formalization of election practices in connection with clerical appointments in the Kingdom of Sweden in the early 18th century. According to existing research, this resulted in a deepening difference between the standpoints of the laity and the ecclesiastical authorities. However, in studying the appointments of clergy in the Lutheran parishes in Russia’s western border area in the mid- and late 18th century, this article argues that the boundary between the opinions of the diocesan board (in this case the Consistory of Fredrikshamn) and those of the parishioners with regard to the candidates’ suitability for vacant clerical posts may have been more fuzzy. The focus is on the consistory’s proposals for investiture. The investitures were structured according to normative rules of procedure, but the wording in the descriptions of the candidates in the consistory’s proposals strongly emphasized the importance not only of merit but also of other factors, such as the parishioners’ opinion and the different parties’ familiarity with the candidates.

Keywords Lutheran clergy, appointment to an office, early modern era, borderland, Russia

Introduction

This article will examine the diocesan board’s – in this context the Consistory of Fredrikshamn’s – impressions of the candidates presented in proposals for investiture as clergy in the Lutheran parishes in the 18th-century Russo-Swedish borderlands lying between the Gulf of Finland and the southern part of the Province of Savolax and Kymmenegård. This area represented a Lutheran enclave within the otherwise predominantly Orthodox Russian Empire. The focus is on the conventions applied by the consistory in evaluating and describing the candidates’ merits and demerits in the investitures. The clergy has often been the object of Nordic historical research, and in
it clergymen have been seen more or less as central actors in local societies. However, in previous research the question of how standpoints regarding the appointment of clergy were justified has been studied mainly on the basis of a few principles that mostly emphasized the parishioners’ perspective. On the other hand, apart from some comments about the candidates’ merits, any more careful analysis of the content of proposals for investitures drawn up by the diocesan board has been exceptional.

It is known that considerations like familiarity with the candidate and ensuring the subsistence of the previous incumbent’s family according to the practice of konservation (father-to-son succession or marriage between the widow and the new pastor), or then through other financial arrangements, were important factors in the parishioners’ decision-making. Furthermore, previous research has emphasized that in the evaluation of a clergyman’s competence (suitability) for a vacant post during the appointment procedures, the diocesan boards’ opinion was more or less discordant with the parishioners’ views.\(^1\) According to Gunnar Suolahti’s well-known study of Finnish clergy in the 17th and 18th centuries, the gap between the lay and ecclesiastical standpoints in the evaluation of the clerical candidates’ competence grew after legislative reforms in the early 18th century. Suolahti justifies his claim by noting that, according to the new regulations that came into force in the early 18th century, a clergyman’s qualifications were measured principally by his merits and seniority. The view has also been presented in other studies.\(^2\)

In investigating the standpoints of the different parties regarding the appointment of clergy, this article argues that, in addition to professional qualifications and merits, which were given the main emphasis by the authorities when officials under regal jurisdiction were appointed after the early 18th century, there were other decisive factors that were considered important in the diocesan board’s proposals for investiture and also in its assessments of local clergymen’s performance of their ecclesiastical duties.\(^3\) In focussing on the factors lying behind the criteria of merit and competence, this study will concentrate on the diocesan board’s operations in connection with the procedures for appointing clergy in the Lutheran parishes in the borderlands of the Orthodox Russian Empire in the late early modern period. The research period begins in 1744, when the Consistory District of Fredrikshamn\(^4\) was created, and continues up to the mid-1780s, when the provincial reforms of Empress Catherine II came into effect in the area annexed to Russia in 1743. As a consequence of these reforms, the procedures for appointing clergy also changed.\(^5\)

The Treaty of Åbo, concluded between Sweden and Russia in 1743, ensured that the existing Swedish law, including the Church Ordinance of 1686, together with the old Swedish privileges and statutes, as well as the freedom to practise the Lutheran religion, remained in force in the area annexed into the Russian Empire.\(^6\) The parishes in the area of the Consistory District of Fredrikshamn\(^7\) had been regarded as regal during the Swedish era, meaning that clerical appointments were in the remit of the king. After the Treaty of Åbo, pastorates were placed under the jurisdiction of the College of Justice for Livland, Estland, and Finland Affairs in St Petersburg. Neither the king nor later the College of Justice was obliged to follow the parishioners’ or the consistory’s opinion in installing new pastors.\(^8\)
In accordance with the Swedish regulations, the appointment of clergymen in the area annexed to Russia in 1743 was enacted after a proposal had been made by the Consistory of Fredrikshamn. The consistory, controlled from 1744 to the 1780s by Cathedral Dean Fabian Gudseus, had the right to propose three candidates, between whom the parishioners could cast their votes. The consistory’s decision-making with regard to the nomination of clergy candidates seemed at least outwardly harmonious. Only in a few exceptional cases do the consistory’s record books indicate difficulties in reaching an agreement over candidates. In such cases, a mutually agreed proposal was arrived at after each member of the consistory had publicly justified his opinion and placed the candidates in order of preference. In the election, the parishioners’ votes were theoretically weighted according to the size of the voters’ homesteads. However, tallying was done until 1770s by a show of hands. Moreover, the parishioners could also apply for a fourth candidate to vote for if they were not happy with those proposed by the consistory. In addition to pastors, the consistory had the autonomous right to propose all other clergymen and teachers (pedagog) in its district.

During the research period, over 70 new clergymen, comprising around 30 pastors and chaplains and roughly a dozen curates (comminster) and assistant ministers (adjunct), were postulated in the Consistory District of Fredrikshamn. Over two-thirds of them were born in the district, while the rest of the appointed clergymen, with a few exceptions, were born in Swedish Finland. Clergymen born in Swedish Finland were mostly appointed initially to lower clerical posts and not immediately as pastors in the Consistory District of Fredrikshamn. Apart from two pastors, who had studied at the University of Uppsala, all the new clergymen who held academic degrees had obtained them at the Academy of Åbo.

A study of the appointments of clergy indicates that the Consistory District of Fredrikshamn was more dependent on interaction with Swedish Finland than, for example, the Consistory District of Vyborg. The latter consistory district, comprising the territory that had already been annexed into the Russian Empire in 1721, was also a part of so-called Old Finland, and it enjoyed basically the same privileges as the Consistory District of Fredrikshamn. This dependence was especially evident in the assessment of clergymen’s academic qualifications. In Ingermanland and in the Consistory District of Vyborg, there was a lack of clergymen, whereas in the Consistory District of Fredrikshamn the consistory announced in the mid-18th century that new ordinations would not be made as long as there were still clergymen without office. However, from the 1760s on, ordinations were made in quite rapid succession. The position of Lutherans living in Livonia, Estonia, Ingermanland, and Old Finland was to a great extent regulated by law in the 18th century; the freedom to practise the Lutheran religion was secured, and the Russian authorities did not seek to convert the new subjects to Orthodoxy. As has been well established in research, Peter the Great’s domestic reforms (the policy of ‘Westernization’) in Russia were carried through with the help of both foreign experts and local officials. In return for their services, the Russian administration was obliged to make some concessions to them, including guaranteeing Lutherans the freedom to practise their religion. It was also part of Russia’s policy for securing the region’s loyalty and stability to allow the inhabitants of the western borderlands of the Empire to keep their old, privileged status.
The empirical materials for this article consist of the documents related to procedures for electing clergymen in the Consistory District of Fredrikshamn produced by both the consistory and the parishioners. After the elections, the consistory delivered the documents to the College of Justice for Livland, Estland, and Finland Affairs. These documents include the Consistory of Fredrikshamn’s evaluative description of each candidate in its proposals for investiture. The sources further comprise electoral registers of the parishes and various correspondence and appeals, etc. related to the elections. In addition to these materials, the Consistory of Fredrikshamn’s records and correspondence and consistorial visitation reports have been utilized. The Consistory of Fredrikshamn organized ecclesiastical visitations in the parishes within its jurisdiction approximately once a decade from 1746−1747 onwards. Although there was an established convention to follow, the visitations focused with varying intensity on the clergymen’s progress in their studies and their doctrinal competence, their composition of sermons, and the relations between the different clerics in the parish and between them and the parishioners. This article will also deal with certain matters resulting from a critical reading of the source material, such as the consistory’s ‘hidden goals’.

Proposed and recommended candidates: professional merits and the parishioners’ support
In 1750, the Consistory of Fredrikshamn proposed three candidates for a pastorship in the Parish of Lappee: Pastors Eric Sylwin and Petrus Walbergius from the consistory district and Andreas Langell, the serving chaplain of the parish. In the election, Langell received nearly 250 votes, while one of the pastors got one vote and the other did not obtain any support at all. Following the rules of procedure, the consistory ranked both the serving pastors above Chaplain Langell in its proposal for investiture. However, the proposal did note the parishioners’ overwhelming support for Langell. According to the consistory, the parishioners had unanimously stated that they were not willing to dispense with Langell but wished to continue confiding the care of their souls to him in the future. The result indicates that the parishioners did not primarily judge the candidates on the grounds of their official merits and seniority.

A year later, the Consistory of Fredrikshamn had difficulty in proposing any reasonably suitable candidate for the position of pastor in the Parish of Ruokolahti. The consistory procrastinated in deciding on candidates until the College of Justice ordered that candidates must be nominated so that the election might take place. The College of Justice also required that Gustav Herkepaeus, the pastor of the Parish of Tyris and Peterhof in Ingermanland, should be one of the candidates. The clerk of the Consistory of Fredrikshamn, Henric Lagus, who was admitted as the fourth candidate in accordance with the parishioners’ demands, won the election, while Herkepaeus did not receive any support at all. Despite its opinion that the clerk was not sufficiently qualified to obtain the position, the consistory noted the parishioners’ particular attachment to and trust in the clerk in its proposal for investiture. Although the consistory emphasized the candidates’ merits and ranked Pastor Herkepaeus in the first position, in its wording it overrode the claims of professional qualifications by referring
to the parishioners’ opinion. The consistory also noted that the pastor had neither showed up for the examination organized by the consistory nor had he given a demonstration of his competence through a sermon. Furthermore, the consistory emphasized the parishioners’ wish not to be afflicted with a strange and unknown person like Pastor Herkepaeus as their pastor.¹⁷

As Maria Cavallin has pointed out in her study of attitudes towards Swedish civil servants from 1750 to 1780, there existed no exact criteria for measuring office-holders’ qualifications and experience, although the selection principles in the 18th century were mainly based on rules of procedure regarding the installation of public servants. Furthermore, in the early modern era, these rules represented goals rather than actualities.¹⁸ The difference between normative directions and practice also meant that the diocesan boards were able, to some extent, to justify their opinions, despite the fact that the decisions were sometimes determined by external realities. For example, the Consistory of Fredrikshamn’s procrastination in deciding on candidates in some processes was not intentional; on the contrary, the consistory was unable to nominate candidates for the position of pastor in the stipulated time because there were not enough applicants.¹⁹

As in the cases mentioned above, the difference in the support given to rival candidates was also clear in the election of a pastor in the Parish of Virolahti in the early 1750s. Gustav Lilius, the curate of the Parish of Valkeala, received the parishioners’ unanimous support, excluding one vote. The Consistory of Fredrikshamn placed the curate in second place, behind the Pastor of the Parish of Pyhätä Jonas Solitander, in its proposal for investiture, although at the same time it underlined the parishioners’ overwhelming support for the curate.²⁰ Again the consistory’s solution clearly emphasized the parishioners’ opinion, thereby subverting the candidates’ merits as an argument of justification. In other cases, too, the consistory demonstrated that the parishioners’ opinion was important; in one proposal, for example, a candidate who had promised to support the previous incumbent’s family and marry his widow and who was the overwhelming winner in the election was, despite his lack of doctrinal competence, included in third place in the consistory’s list of candidates.²¹ Thus, even though the consistory could not because of the requirements of professional merits actually recommend some less-qualified candidates in its proposals for investiture, the call of charity and compassion for the deceased’s heirs combined with the parishioners’ broad support was exploited by the consistory in its argumentation.²²

Comparing this finding with the reading of Peter Lindström, who has examined the appointments of clergymen in the Province of Hälsingland, on the Swedish coast of the Gulf of Bothnia, during the period 1650–1800, reveals a somewhat more complex picture than that proposed by him. According to Lindström, the disparity between the attitudes of the chapter and the parishes became more acerbated from the early 18th century onwards, as the earlier pragmatism of the chapter’s policy in relation to the appointment of pastors was subordinated to considerations of merit.²³ However, although a quantitative analysis of changes in pastorates in the Consistory District of Fredrikshamn in the late 18th century also suggests that consensus between the lay and clerical parties was not a common phenomenon, a close reading of the phrasing used
by the consistory in its proposals for the investiture of pastors allows one to conclude that it definitely took the parishioners’ opinion into account in its decision-making. Additionally, the Consistory of Fredrikshamn used phrases such as ‘recommended in fact’ (in Specie recommenderad) in its proposals for investiture, thereby making its opinion visible beyond the stipulated criteria of merit. For example, the principal of Fredrikshamn Trivial School, Carl Gustav Nicander, who had been ranked in second place in the consistory’s proposal for investiture, was in Specie recommenderad because he had received the bulk of the parishioners’ support. In other words, despite the emphasis of earlier research on the claims of merit, the consistory’s wording in its proposals for investiture suggests that its view of what constituted a suitable clergyman was not so different from that of the parishioners.

By contrast, an examination of the elections of chaplains in the area of the Consistory District of Fredrikshamn indicates that the parishioners’ eagerness to arrange for their own favourites to be included in the lists of candidate chaplains and even to ensure their installation through the elections caused rather more inconvenience for the consistory than was the case with the elections of pastors. In the Parish of Kymi in the mid-1760s, for example, the parishioners complained that the consistory had tried to force them to accept a gymnasium (upper secondary school) student (studiosus) called Nicolaus Mellberg as their new chaplain. The parishioners stated that they had been happy with the three candidates originally proposed by the consistory until Mellberg was also placed in the list of candidates. According to the parishioners, Mellberg had been proposed as a fourth candidate only because of the illegal machinations of Anthon Naht, a burgher from the town of Fredrikshamn. The parishioners’ main argument, that Mellberg’s professional qualifications were clearly weaker than those of the other candidates, was particularly embarrassing for the consistory.

Both the parishioners’ and the contestants’ greater eagerness to bestir themselves in the elections of chaplains compared with the elections for pastorships may, of course, be a kind of misconception arising from the source materials. Unlike the installation of pastors, which was confirmed by the College of Justice, the Consistory of Fredrikshamn had an autonomous right to appoint chaplains in its area of jurisdiction. This suggests that the difference in the decision-making process may have influenced the appointment procedures in two ways: the consistory may have tried to impose its jurisdiction and demonstrate its authority forcefully in deciding about new chaplains, and the parishioners may have been readier to challenge the consistory’s authority. This interpretation supports observations regarding the parishes in the Diocese of Borgå in Swedish Finland on the other side of the 1743 border, where the parishioners had a notable say, especially in appointments to lower clerical positions.

With reference to the hypothesis that the consistory wished to exercise its power, it is interesting to note that there was one fundamental difference between the elections of pastors and those of chaplains in the Consistory District of Fredrikshamn: in the former, the consistory’s proposals for investiture and the parishioners’ voting were seldom congruent, but in the elections of chaplains, the two parties’ opinions were almost consistently in agreement. Although the source material concerning elections of chaplains in the consistory district is more fragmentary than that regarding the elections of pastors, it is quite obvious that those candidates who were victorious in the elections were installed as chaplains.
To conclude, in addition to taking into account professional qualifications and merits, the Consistory of Fredrikshamn emphasized (and thereby applied) the parishioners’ opinion generally in the procedures for the appointment of pastors when it considered that the candidate who received the most support was, despite his lack of formal qualifications in some cases, in other respects suitable to be installed as a new pastor. This conflicts with the research findings on the appointment of pastors in regal pastorates in the north-eastern part of the Province of Uppland in the Diocese of Uppsala from the 1740s to the 1800s, where the diocesan board always wished to appoint the most-qualified candidate for the post. Of course, this difference may be a kind of ‘illusion’ if the diocesan source materials (for example the investiture records) from Uppland have not been analysed in the same way or have not survived. In the elections of pastors, the consistory’s position was more hidden than in the elections of chaplains, at least in cases in which it did not have some fundamental objections to certain candidates. Moreover, it used certain wordings, like in Specie recommenderad, and weighted wording to emphasize either its own opinion or that of itself and the parishioners’ combined, depending on the occasion. The consistory’s actions in questioning and opposing the nomination and appointment of particular candidates during the electoral procedures differed from its proposals for nomination and investiture, as will be discussed in the next section.

Objecting to and rejecting candidates: the subversive use of merits and the normative rules of procedure

The appointment of a pastor for the Parish of Taipalsaari at the turn of the 1770s and 1780s was a long and an intricate process. One of the six candidates who initially applied for the post died during the process, another contested the consistory’s nomination of candidates, and finally the parishioners wanted to have the parish’s serving deputy pastor, Henric Warenberg, as a fourth candidate to vote for. The deputy pastor obtained the majority of the parishioners’ support in the election, but a few days later some parishioners called for the chaplain of the Parish of Säåminki, Anders Hæggroth, who was engaged to the deceased pastor’s daughter, to be installed as the pastor of their parish instead. The Consistory of Fredrikshamn rejected the demand as being both out of order and unjustified. According to the consistory, Deputy Pastor Warenberg was definitely the most-qualified candidate for the post, and there was no room for complaint unless the peasants were ready to appeal to the College of Justice in St Petersburg. Despite this, in August the College of Justice appointed Chaplain Anders Hæggroth as the new pastor of the parish.

Similar procedures for choosing pastors elsewhere indicate that the Consistory of Fredrikshamn expressed its opinion more visibly from the 1770s on. In the late 1770s, the Kymi parishioners voted for four candidates in the election of a pastor: the principal of Fredrikshamn Trivial School Benedict Jacob Ignatius, the chaplain of the Parish of Taipalsaari Henric Warenberg, the curate of the Parish of Joutseno Carl Govinius, and Assistant Minister (adjunct) Johan Baekckman. Baekckman received the parishioners’ unanimous support in the election. According to the consistory, there were three well-qualified candidates and then
there was Assistant Minister Baeckman. Although all the consistory members had accepted Baeckman in his pastoral examination in September 1778, in October the consistory did not recommend him in its proposal for investiture because it considered that he was not sufficiently qualified for the position. According to the consistory, recommending Baeckman would have been contrary to the law, privileges, and rules of procedure.\(^{32}\) In the early modern era, the use of such arguments based on legitimacy was a traditional way of prosecuting one’s own cause, and it was very prominent in the discourse of appeals, for example.\(^ {33}\) However, as has been shown, an analysis of the procedures for choosing a pastor in cases in which the consistory proposed and recommended the appointment of a candidate who was not the most meritorious suggests that it could not invoke the rules of procedure in those processes; possibly because in doing so it would have been acting not only against the Privileges of the Clergy but also the Church Ordinance of 1686. On the other hand, the consistory could appeal to a candidate’s lack of merits and the normative rules in an opposite direction in order to promote its own preferences and object to some appointment.

The appointments of pastors who were installed against the dioecesan board’s proposals for investiture, and thus, according to the Consistory of Fredrikshamn, in contravention of the law, privileges, and rules of procedure, are interesting with regard to the concept of clerical competence. The difference in the opinions of the instances concerned seems to support the interpretation that, unlike the College of Justice, the Consistories of both Fredrikshamn and Vyborg continued, even after the 1770s, to favour an old, purist understanding of Lutheranism.\(^ {34}\) From the consistory’s perspective, all the new pastors who were appointed contrary to its recommendations were more or less unqualified and lacking in merit. Secondly, there was not only disagreement between the consistory and the College of Justice, but the opinions of the consistory and the parishioners were also more or less in conflict in these cases, although it should also be noted that the candidates in question caused some disagreement among the parishioners as well.

Generally, work on behalf of the local community was one criterion both in the nomination of candidates and in the interpretation of the election results in the procedures for electing clergy during the late 18th century. Peter Lindström has highlighted the importance attached by the parishioners, and also by the chapter, to work on behalf of the community in the Province of Hälsingland. The electoral procedures in the Consistory District of Fredrikshamn likewise demonstrate that the consistory emphasized the parishioners’ mandate in its decision-making in different ways.\(^ {35}\) It seems that the community’s mandate was observed most often in connection with the election of pastors when the consistory in its proposals for investiture took note of the parishioners’ collective opinions in the form of unanimous votes or expressions of strong support for certain candidates. However, cases can also be found in which the consistory used lack of popular support to reject some clergyman from the list of candidates, and it was not uncommon for the consistory to try to reject an aspirant’s candidacy for a pastorship on the basis of the low number of parishioners who called for his inclusion as a fourth candidate.\(^ {36}\)

Professional qualifications and merits were emphasized in the electoral procedures when the Consistory of Fredrikshamn rejected the installation of certain candidates in its proposals for investiture. The consistory’s conventions here were thus different from the election
procedures, in which it evaluated all candidates’ competence as being sufficient, or accepted a
given candidate who was otherwise well-known to the consistory. A study of the electoral
procedures for the posts of pastor and chaplain in the Consistory District of Fredrikshamn
during the latter part of the 18th century indicates that, unlike the parishioners, who voted
for a certain candidate and not against anyone, the consistory worked particularly hard to
push its views through when it objected to the appointment of a certain candidate. In
particular, from the 1770s on, the consistory’s proposals for investiture contained explicit
statements not only in favour of candidates but also particularly against the appointment of
certain applicants. This was manifested by the fact that, in some cases, it used specific
expressions to downplay obvious ‘facts’ like proficiency and merits, while in other cases it
employed rhetoric evoking normative rules regarding these qualities in order to reject certain
candidates. If we consider the Consistory of Fredrikshamn’s practices in the light of the fact
that the requirements for formal qualifications and merits were made stricter in Sweden
during the mid-18th century, we can hypothesize that similar demands reached the Russian
border area a little later and were exploited by the consistory for its own ends.37

It is not possible to draw such clear distinctions with regard to the election of
chaplains in the parishes of the Consistory District of Fredrikshamn in the 1770s as in
the election of pastors as the consistory’s and the parishioners’ opinions regarding new
chaplains were to a great extent in agreement in the 1770s and 1780s. However, a few
cases in which the candidates who won the elections were not appointed as chaplains,38
together with appeals made by the parishioners to the College of Justice to have a
fourth candidate in the elections, indicate that the parties’ unanimity was breaking
down on this front as well.

On the basis of our interpretations of the procedures for the appointment of clergy in
the Consistory District of Fredrikshamn, we can state that the appointed clergymen were
competent enough to qualify for their official duties. During the consistorial visitations, the
inspectors asked the parishioners in every parish whether they had any complaints about
the local clergy. The answer was almost without exception the same: the parishioners had
no particular reason to complain. This may, of course, be explained by the fact that the laity
did not usually criticize clergymen who were known to them. The new pastors in the
consistory had all previously served in ecclesiastical posts in the consistory district.39 A
comparison with the corresponding appointment processes in regal pastorates in both the
‘Finnish’ and ‘Swedish’ sides of the 18th-century Swedish Empire indicates some differ-
ences, as there clergymen who were strangers to the local communities were now and then
installed by the king, overriding the will of the diocesan boards and the parishioners. In the
Consistory District of Fredrikshamn, on the other hand, none of the appointed pastors was
a true stranger in his parish.40 Installing officials who were already known in their
communities has been regarded in earlier research as an administrative method of ensuring
their operational legitimacy, but at the same time it is obvious that the candidates’
knowledge of local ways of doing things made for fewer complaints.41 The following
will further indicate that a similar outlook can easily be seen in the consistory’s actions
when it objected to the appointment of candidates from outside.
Controversial candidates: faithful servants and candidates ordered by the college of justice

Curate Fabian Oleander of the Parish of Säkkijärvi obtained the parishioners’ unanimous support in the election for a pastorship in Säkkijärvi in 1748. In the Consistory of Fredrikshamn’s proposal for investiture, the curate was put in last place after Eric Sylwin, the principal of Fredrikshamn Trivial School, and Gustav Lilius, the curate of the Parish of Vehkalahti. The reasoning adopted by the consistory was that, in view of Oleander’s long service of almost two decades in the Parish of Säkkijärvi, it could not exclude him from the list of candidates, but because of his weak reading skills and his unorthodox behaviour the other candidates were better qualified for the post. However, at the same time, the consistory emphasized the parishioners’ support for Oleander, which was manifested, according to the consistory, ‘in a unanimous vote’. Oleander’s doctrinal failings were known to the consistory as in the mid-1740s it had been concerned to obtain information about his progress in his studies. 

In the mid-1750s, Fabian Oleander, now a deputy pastor, was a contender in an election for a pastorship for the fifth time. Although Oleander got the least support (only two votes), he was ranked second in the consistory’s proposal for investiture. In its decision, the Consistory of Fredrikshamn noted that, apart from Oleander, the other candidates had promised to take care of the deceased pastor’s heirs. The consistory also emphasized that Oleander’s qualifications were weaker than those of the deputy pastor, who was placed first in its proposal for investiture. However, Oleander’s years in service and poverty were evidently facts that secured his second position among the contenders. Deputy Pastor Oleander’s repeated candidacy in the elections of pastor was possible because he was never placed first in the consistory’s proposals for investiture. According to the rules of procedure, a candidate who was placed in the first position three times in the proposals for investiture but was not appointed was entitled to receive the next corresponding post. However, this criterion did not apply to Oleander as he was never placed at the head of the consistory’s proposal list.

Fabian Oleander was a candidate for the sixth and last time when an election for a pastorship was held in the Parish of Jääski in the early 1760s. Oleander, who received the great majority of the parishioners’ votes, was placed third among the four contenders in the consistory’s proposal for investiture. According to the consistory, Oleander had faithfully performed his ecclesiastical duties for over three decades, but his limited means, especially during his youth, had prevented him from obtaining a sufficient education compared with the other contenders in the elections. Moreover, as a result of his weakened memory in his advanced age, the deputy pastor had rarely been capable of preaching a sermon. As it turned out, despite the consistory’s objections to Oleander’s installation, it did not totally reject the possibility that he might be appointed as the new pastor of the Parish of Jääski and left the decision to the College of Justice. In the election in question, the consistory also questioned the qualifications of Anders Hæggroth, the chaplain of the Parish of Ruokolahti, who was included in the list of candidates on the orders of the College of Justice after his personal appeal. According to the consistory, there were certainly more meritorious and better-qualified clergymen who should have been nominated instead of him. The consistory
likewise rejected the candidacy of Johan Laurenii, the curate of the Parish of Hiitola in the Consistory District of Vyborg, referring simply to ‘current circumstances’.\textsuperscript{47}

Like Fabian Oleander, Carl Henric Winter, the chaplain and the deputy pastor of the Parish of Sääminki, was a contentious candidate in the opinion of the Consistory of Fredrikshamn. The election of a pastor in the Parish of Valkeala in the early 1770s put the Consistory of Fredrikshamn in a difficult situation because it had to cut down the number of well-matched candidates from five to three. Moreover, Deputy Pastor Carl Henric Winter’s application to stand as a fourth candidate occupied the attention of the consistory. It had already rejected Winter’s candidacy once, and even after he appealed to the College of Justice, the consistory did its utmost to keep Winter out of the list of candidates. It stated that, while Winter had several times used various excuses to avoid sitting his pastoral examination, he was able to undertake a long and expensive journey to St. Petersburg in order to present his complaints against the Consistory of Fredrikshamn to the College of Justice.\textsuperscript{48} However, despite all the consistory’s efforts, the College of Justice ordered that Winter should be included in the list of candidates for the pastorship in the Parish of Valkeala. The consistory set him in fourth place in its proposal for investiture and emphasized that Winter had not received any support from the parishioners and his qualifications were not known.\textsuperscript{49} Instead, the consistory put Carl Gustav Nicander, the pastor of the Parish of Kymi, at the top of its list despite the fact that, according to the consistory, he did not possess the required extensive learning and qualifications. However, he not only had the highest seniority of the candidates but also had worked hard on behalf of Fredrikshamn Trivial School and thus deserved better possibilities than his current pastorate could offer.\textsuperscript{50}

The consistory’s ironic statement that it was difficult to find a suitable post for Deputy Pastor Winter (‘det lärer således blifva svårt, at finna sådan lägehet, som wore tjenlig för honom’), because he had found some parishes in the consistory district too small and some too large for his liking, well illustrates its opinion of Winter’s activities.\textsuperscript{51} Obviously, this kind of personal communication by the candidates with the College of Justice was an issue that also produced dissatisfaction in other consistories, such as that of Vyborg.\textsuperscript{52} Similar communications made by clergymen with the appointing authorities that bypassed the agents at the diocesan level can also be found in regal pastorates in the Kingdom of Sweden. There, if a military padre or a royal chaplain applied for the same pastorate, it was quite obvious that he would be nominated regardless of the parishioners’ or the diocesan boards’ opinion. Although there were no such clerical candidates with corresponding ‘influential’ backgrounds in the Consistory District of Fredrikshamn, turning to the College of Justice was a way for an aspiring postulant to obtain at least a position in the list of candidates.\textsuperscript{53}

In 1774, the election of a pastor was held in the Parish of Ruokolahti. Carl Henric Winter was again included in the list of candidates on the orders of the College of Justice. Initially, a dozen candidates had applied for the post, and, for example, Henric Argillander, the pastor of the Parish of Lempaala in Ingermanland, was left out because the Consistory of Fredrikshamn was unaware of both his doctrinal views and his knowledge, and he had not been born or served in the district. The same argument was invoked when the candidacy of David Starck, the clerk of the Consistory of Vyborg, was rejected.\textsuperscript{54} Interestingly, in addition
to this election for a pastorship, there had already been candidates from the Ingrian parishes for a couple of other pastorships in the district, all of whom were rejected by the consistory. The explanation given by the consistory was that they were foreigners, but one must ask whether the true reason for objecting to their appointment was the consistory’s aim of preventing the spread of the new Pietistic views that were gaining ground not only across Ingermanland but also in the Consistory District of Vyborg.55

All four candidates received some votes in the polls in the Parish of Ruokolahti in 1774; while two contestants obtained but little support, Carl Henric Winter and Andreas Jokelin, the teacher (pedagogen) of the Finnish Evangelical congregation in St Petersburg, received almost equal numbers of votes. In the nomination of the candidates, the consistory had tried to reject both Winter’s and Jokelin’s candidacies by claiming that their qualifications were totally unknown and unexamined. The consistory stated that it could not agree with the College of Justice’s order to nominate Jokelin in the list of candidates.56 It justified its opinion, as in several previous cases, by claiming that Jokelin was an outsider who had not only failed his pastoral examination but had also sat it elsewhere than in the Consistory District of Fredrikshamn. According to the consistory, it had put forward for election two qualified and distinguished candidates, while the other two, Winter and Jokelin, had been nominated by order of the College of Justice. However, although the consistory had condemned the qualifications of Jokelin (who was installed in the post) as being shrouded in mystery, the administration of his office did not later arouse any greater discussion and the shortcomings in the said pastor’s work did not give rise to any further action.57

Generally, there seems to have been an obvious link between the pastoral examination and the candidacy in the nominations of pastors in the Consistory Districts of both Fredrikshamn and Vyborg. Although the materials concerning the appointment of pastors in the Consistory District of Vyborg during the 18th century are much more fragmentary, the preserved cases suggest that a clergyman without a pastoral examination approved by the consistory did not win the consistory’s support. There were over 20 sessions in which pastoral examinations for clergymen operating in its district were organized in the Consistory District of Fredrikshamn during the research period. The connection between the examinations and the procedures for the appointment of pastors is apparent and indicates that the consistories tried to insist on the principle that the pastoral examination should be taken in the district in which the post in question was located.58

The contentious relationship between the consistory and Deputy Pastor Carl Henric Winter can again be seen when the election for a pastorship in the Parish of Savitaipale in 1778 is considered. David Plantan, the deputy pastor of the Parish of Savitaipale, who received the majority of the parishioners’ votes in the election, was ranked in the first position in the Consistory of Fredrikshamn’s proposal for investiture. The other candidates, Abraham Lawonius, a deputy pastor who was the vice-principal of the City of Vyborg Cathedral School, received some votes, while Jacob Corsberg, the deputy pastor of the City of Fredrikshamn, did not get any support at all. Similarly, the fourth candidate, Carl Henric Winter, who was nominated as a candidate by order of the College of Justice, received no votes. The consistory stated once again that it could not recommend Winter’s appointment because, among other things, he had continued to avoid taking his pastoral examination. The consistory further complained that Winter had, in his appeal to the
College of Justice, referred without cause to the management of the deceased pastor’s estate. However, the College of Justice installed Winter in the position regardless of the parishioners’ and the consistory’s joint opposition.  

We can summarize by stating that, in those cases in which the Consistory of Fredrikshamn objected to the appointment of certain candidates, there was generally more than one factor that influenced its opinion. Most commonly, such candidates were regarded as unqualified for the post or unknown to the consistory. However, petitions for candidacy and complaints made by candidates to the College of Justice particularly about the consistory’s proposals and decisions also seem to have had a negative influence on its stance on their installation.

The consistory’s justification of its decisions and clerical competence

This article has demonstrated that the question of the Nordic Lutheran diocesan boards’ overwhelming emphasis on merit in the appointment processes of clergy in the late early modern Nordic region, as stressed in previous research, is not quite so clear-cut. Rather, this article argues that, in addition to professional merits and seniority, which were basically emphasized by the authorities according to the rules of procedure, and to statutes when office-holders under regal jurisdiction were proposed, in the Lutheran parishes in Russia’s western border area in the 18th century there were also other decisive factors that were highlighted in the consistory’s proposals for the investiture of new clergy.

The Consistory of Fredrikshamn’s proposals for the investiture of clergy indicate that consensus between the standpoints of the ecclesiastical authorities and the laity was a more common phenomenon in the mid- and late 18th century than one might hypothesize on the basis of the findings of previous research. From a source-critical perspective, it has to be emphasized that those proposals for investiture in the appointment of pastors in which the consistory included the candidate who had the support of the majority of the parishioners in its list of candidates, albeit at the bottom, do not primarily reflect the consistory’s ‘true’ interpretation. Rather, it is a reflection of the attitude of the parishioners, who did not value formal merit as the most important quality when they expressed their views regarding the appointment of clergy. Consequently, a deeper analysis of the investitures is needed to ascertain the diocesan board’s ‘hidden’ opinions. With regard to the appointment procedures of pastors and chaplains in the Russian border area, it has to be noted that the emphasis on merits became slightly stronger over the course of the article’s research period, and particularly from the 1770s onwards. This is demonstrated by the fact that the consistory’s and the parishioners’ opinion conflicted more often during the latter half of the research period than in the mid-18th century. Furthermore, the fact that the consistory’s opinion was overridden by the College of Justice more often when new pastors were appointed from the 1770s on offers a clear reason to conduct further study into the question of why the consistory’s and the College of Justice’s standpoints regarding the appointment of clergy diverged from each other.

The consistory appealed to normative rules of procedure and privileges to justify its opinions in a traditional way to establish the legitimacy of its proposals. However, the rules of
procedure were not principally used to emphasize the candidates’ merits and seniority as a reason for recommending their appointment, but in a negative way to demonstrate the incompetence of certain candidates as an argument for opposing their installation. Generally, the most compelling criteria seemed to be the parishioners’ support and the candidates’ familiarity with the parish in question. Thus, the wording in the Consistory of Fredrikshamn’s proposals for investiture indicates that the parishioners’ opinion was a significant factor in its decision-making, while, conversely, a lack of merits and seniority was used above all when the consistory objected the appointment of certain candidates whom it definitely regarded as being unsuitable for the post. In other words, in addition to the criterion of merit in connection with clerical appointments, the importance of other factors in the consistory’s decision-making in evaluating clergymen’s suitability, including the candidates’ communication with the appointing authorities bypassing the operators at the diocesan level, should also be given closer consideration.

Although the Consistory of Fredrikshamn’s proposals for investiture were ignored more often in the late 18th century in the appointment of pastors, it did not question the new pastors’ qualifications for their duties after they had been installed. This indicates that a cleric’s competence and ‘suitability’ were evaluated first and foremost during the processes of nominating and proposing candidates for new posts. However, one also has to bear in mind that none of the new pastors was a total stranger in the district. Here, a comparison with corresponding appointment processes in Sweden, for example, reveals some differences. Although some appointments went against the consistory’s opinion, this in itself did not constitute a reason for it to interfere in a clergyman’s administration of his duties; questioning a clergyman’s qualifications without a cogent reason would have weakened not only his legitimacy but also that of the Lutheran Church and the whole ecclesiastical administrative system in the Russian border area.

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Notes

i ståndsamhället; Bergström, Lantprästen, 21ff; Lindström, Prästval och politisk kultur, 98–102; Paaskoski, ’Inkerin kirkko Venäjän keisarikunnassa’. For a historiographical overview of local clergy in local societies, see Markkola and Kajander, ’Paikkallishistorioiden papit yhteisöissään’; see also Karonen, Pohjoisen suurvalta, 365–6.

2 Suolahti, Suomen papisto, 112; see also e.g. Lindström, ’Prästval och politisk kultur’, 105, ’Ämbetsmeriter och inget annat skulle styra vilka präster som tillsattes på de lediga tjänsterna’; Cavallin, I kungens och folkets tjänst, 12–15, 19. According to the Swedish Privileges of the Clergy in 1723: 17§ ’Och skal thet alltid wäl och noga i acht tagas / uti alla Stuffi / at icke någon mindre lärd Persohn / och af ringare merit och skickelighet / i en tienst eller annan / blifwer them föredragen / som lärdare och skickeligare ärö’; see Archive of the College of Justice, No. 218, National Archives of Finland, Helsingfors (NA), which contains the Privileges of the Clergy (1723) sent from the Consistory of Fredrikshamn to the College of Justice in January 1745; also see Swedish Church Ordinance of 1686 (Kyrko-Lag och Ordn, 1668), Cap XIX § 7.

3 Modée, Utdrag urt alle ifrån den 7. decemb 1718 […] Första Delen, 162–3; Samling af Författningar och Stadgar, 71–6 (Kongl. Maj:ts Nådiga För-ordning hwarefter Prestewals anhållande få i Städer som på Landet förfaras bör); see Ingman, ’Ylennysperusteista papinviroissa’, 16–17ff; Heldtander, Prästtillsättningar i Sverige, 115–21; Cavallin, I kungens och folkets tjänst, 76f.

4 The Consistory District of Fredrikshamn was a church administrative unit that was geographically almost equivalent with the Province of Kymmenegård, i.e. the area that was annexed into Russia in 1743. The term ’the Diocese of Fredrikshamn’ (Finnish: Haminan hiippakunta) is also employed in the research literature, but I prefer to use ’the Consistory District of Fredrikshamn’. In spite of sporadic allusions to a ’diocese’ in the sources, there was neither a bishop at the head of the consistory nor are there references to a ’diocese’ in documents concerning the establishment of the Consistory of Fredrikshamn. See e.g. Archive of the Consistory of Fredrikshamn, Received documents (8.12.1743), NA; Archive of the Consistory of Fredrikshamn, Record books (22.5.1744), NA; For the use of a mixed terminology, see Knapas, ’Kirkollista ja maallista kulttuuria’, 164–5.

5 Hartley, ’Införandet av ståthållarskapsförvaltningen’; Paaskoski, ’Vanhan Suomen hallintohistoria’, 76–83; Leppik, ’The Provincial Reforms of Catherine the Great’.


7 The district was made up of 15 parishes, including four chapellries.


9 Archive of the Consistory of Fredrikshamn, Received documents (8.12.1743), NA; Archive of the College of Justice, No. 218, NA; Hannikainen, Vanhan Suomen eli Viipurin läänin oloista, 31–2; Ranta, ’Haminan hiippakunnan tausta’, 12; see also Appelberg,
Prästtjänsternas besättande; Sirenius, ‘Vanhan Suomen luterilaisesta kirkosta’, 259–60; Suolahhti, Suomen papisto; Matinolli, Turun hiippakunnan papinvaalit, 12–16; Laasonen, Papinvirkojen täyttö Suomessa; Bergström, Lanprästen, 72–3.

Väänänen, Pappissivistys Vanhassa Suomessa, 97–9, 118–33.

Väänänen, Pappissivistys Vanhassa Suomessa, 17–21; Paaskoski, ‘Inkerin kirkko Venäjän keisarikunnassa’, 101; see also Sirenius, ‘Vanhan Suomen luterilaisesta kirkosta’, 243–53; Råbergh, ‘Åtgärder för bevarandet’; Knapas, ‘Kirkollista ja maallista kulttuuria’, 184–6, 188. Until 1802, when the University of Tartu was re-established, there were no universities in Russia that trained Lutheran clergy.


See Väänänen, Pappissivistys Vanhassa Suomessa, 181; for a general overview, see Lempiäinen, Piispan- ja rovastintarkastukset Suomessa; Larsson, Biskopen visiterar; Häkli, Biskops- och prostvisitationsprotokoll.

Archive of the College of Justice, No. 502, […] kunna wi icke skiljas ifrån honom, utan anförts honom än framdeles wår siälars wärd ock skiötsel, NA.

Simolin, Wiborgs stifts historia, 153f; Matinolli, Porvoo hiippakunnan papinvaalit, 74ff; Malmstedt, Bondetro och kyrkoro, 80; Räihä, ‘Lutheran Clergy’.

Archive of the College of Justice, No. 566, […] en besynnerlig kärlek och förtroende […] församlingen för thetta i ödmiukhet anhållit at blifwa förskont ifrån en så främmande obekant man som Hr. Kyrckioherden Herkepaeus, NA; Archive of the Consistory of Fredrikshamn, Record books (1.2.1749, 28.11.1750, 25.1.1751), NA. The consistory had already announced in early 1749 that there were many more meritorious candidates in the district for the vacant post than Gustav Herkepaeus.

Cavallin, I kungens och folkets tjänst, 68–9, 78–83; also Frohnert, Kronans skatter och bondens bröd.

See e.g. Archive of the Consistory of Fredrikshamn, Record books (22.10.1779), NA; see Modée, Utdrag utur alle ifrån den 7. decemb. 1718 […] Andra Delen, 1392–3; Samling af Författningar och stadgar, 71–2.

Archive of the College of Justice, No. 557, […] församlingens stora kärlek emot honom, NA; see Lindström, Prästval och politisk kultur, 148ff.

Archive of the College of Justice, No. 781, NA; see Matinolli, Porvoo hiippakunnan papinvaalit, 45–9, 99f; Widén, Änkeomsorg i ståndsamhället, 60–4; cf. Lindström, Prästval och politisk kultur, 91–5.

Archive of the College of Justice, No. 874, NA; Archive of the Consistory of Fredrikshamn, Record books (6.2.1756, 13.2.1756, 16.2.1756), NA.

Lindström, Prästval och politisk kultur, 41–6, 106–10, 190–2.

Räihä, ‘Lutheran Clergy’, 62 (especially Table 2).
25 Archive of the College of Justice, No. 1464, NA; Kaukiainen, Virolahden historia, 487–8; Arpiainen, Virolahden seurakunnan valheita, 71–2.

26 Archive of the College of Justice, No. 1491, [...] berörde Mellberg, vilken icke allenast är oprästwigd och ganska omeriterade at hafwa förtroende framför gammal och skickel Prästman [...], NA; Archive of the Consistory of Fredrikshamn, Electoral registers (Kymi 1766), NA; see Akiander, Herdaminne för fordna Wiborgs, 1, 442; also Archive of the Consistory of Fredrikshamn, Record books (13.9.1762, 16.9.1762, 10.12.1764, 14.12.1764), NA.

27 See e.g. Archive of the College of Justice, No. 1913, 1914, 1931, 2036, 2079, NA; Archive of the Consistory of Fredrikshamn, Record books (3.2.1756, 6.2.1756, 24.2.1756), NA.

28 Matinolli, Porvoon hiippakunnan papinvaalit, 118–19; cf. Lindström, Prästval och politisk kultur, 95, 103–5.

29 See Archive of the Consistory of Fredrikshamn, Record books (8.5.1774), NA; cf. Archive of the Consistory of Fredrikshamn, Record books (28.11.1761, 13.9.1762, 16.9.1762), NA; Archive of the Consistory of Fredrikshamn, Electoral registers (Kirvu 1762), NA.

30 Bergström, Lantprästen, 73.

31 Archive of the College of Justice, No. 2532, 2632, NA; Archive of the Consistory of Fredrikshamn, Orders issued by the College of Justice (27.4.1778, 7.8.1780), NA; Archive of the College of Justice, No. 2705, [...] at de äfwen hafwa frihet at Transportera denne fullmacht på en annan, som de hafwa förtroende till, NA; Archive of the Consistory of Fredrikshamn, Electoral registers (Taipalsaari 1780), NA; Archive of the Consistory of Fredrikshamn, Record books (18.4.1778, 2.5.1778, 9.5.1778, 28.1.1779, 10.1.1780), NA.

32 Archive of the College of Justice, No. 2502 NA; Archive of the Consistory of Fredrikshamn, Electoral registers (Kymi 1778), NA; Archive of the Consistory of Fredrikshamn, Record books (7.2.1778, 6.9.1778), NA; Archive of the Consistory of Fredrikshamn, Orders issued by the College of Justice (8.3.1779), NA.


35 See and compare Lindström, Prästval och politisk kultur, 96ff, 170f. On the parishioners’ unanimity in connection with the election of pastors in the Consistory District of Fredrikshamn, see Räihä, ‘Lutheran Clergy’, 64–9.

36 E.g. Archive of the College of Justice, No. 842, 1491, 2705, 2771, NA.

37 Cavallin, I kungens och folkets tjäns, 14–20, 159–63. For Cavallin’s observation on traditional and modern administration, see Cavallin, ‘En ämbetsmans hederliga leverne’, 209–11; see also Tiihonen and Ylikangas, Virka, valta ja kulttuuri, 119–23.

38 Archive of the Consistory of Fredrikshamn, Record books (7.5.1774, 27.11.1774, 9.12.1774), NA; Archive of the Consistory of Fredrikshamn, Electoral registers (Kirvu 1774, Taipalsaari 1783), NA.

39 Wirilander, Herrasväkeä, 294, 297–300; Väänänen, Pappissivystys Vanhassa Suomessa, 95–6; see Simolin, Wiborgs stifts historia, 165, 175; Suolahti, Suomen papisto, 35–42; Matinolli, Turun hiippakunnan papinvaalit, 120f; Norrman, Från prästöverflöd till
prästbrist, 290f; Malmstedt, Bondetro och kyrkoro, 94, 97–100; Samuelson, Eliten, riket och riksdeleningen, 72–85 (see references); cf. Carlsson, ‘Det skånska prästerskapets rekrytering’; see the Privileges of the Clergy 1723, 21§.

Matinolli, Porvoon hiippakunnan papinvaalit, 104; Widén, Änkeomsorg i ståndsamhället, 64–5; Sandstedt, ‘Prästerskapets ekonomiska och sociala villkor’, 178f; Bergström, Landprästen, 73, 78–9; Lindström, Prästval och politisk kultur, 91–3.


Archive of the College of Justice, No. 2787, NA; Akiander, Herdaminne för fordna Wiborgs, II., 329.

Archive of the College of Justice, No. 371, Som thanne Oleander af swaga Studier, och af mer än Ordinair fromhet och stor stillhet som torde af en dehl obstinate åhörare mißbrukas [...] fattat til honom then kärlek, at the enhälligt wid waalet lämnat honom alla sina vota, NA; see Andersin, ‘Prästlakten Oleander’, 143–8. On the loyalty of some clergymen’s (including Chaplain Fabian Oleander) lto the Russian conquerors during the Russo-Swedish war in 1741–1743, see Manninen, ‘Keisarinnan Elisabetin manifesti’, 134; Laine, Yksimielisyys – sota – pietismi, 159–65. Based on findings in this article there seems to be no obvious connection between clerics’ wartime loyalty and their subsequent career progress.

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**Antti Räihä** is a postdoctoral researcher at the Department of History and Ethnology, University of Jyväskylä. *Address*: Department of History and Ethnology, P.O. Box 35 (H), University of Jyväskylä, Jyväskylä FI-40,014, Finland. [email: antti.raiha@jyu.fi]