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**Author(s):** Ihalainen, Pasi

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## REVIEW

### Finnish Political Culture Reinterpreted Through Conceptual History

Pasi Ihalainen

Our understanding of Finnish political culture – and even Finnish culture as part of Western civilization in a broader sense – reached an entirely new level with the publication of the first volume of the project on Finnish conceptual history in December 2003. The achievements of the volume, entitled *Käsitteet liikkeessä (Concepts in Motion)*,<sup>1</sup> are countless. The anthology not only discusses ten key political concepts shared by all Western political cultures from a Finnish perspective but also includes innovative applications of conceptual analyses in sources that have not previously been studied with an equally high awareness of the centrality of the role of language in the constitution of political reality. With its suggested novel research strategies, this volume – despite its language of publication – should also be considered a contribution to the international debate on conceptual history as an alternative approach to the study of past political thought.

My intention is, firstly, to concisely depict how the ten authors of *Concepts in Motion* seem to have understood conceptual history and, secondly, to provide a summary of some of the most noteworthy findings their research strategies have uncovered. I shall thus endeavour to provide the non-Finnish-speaking audience of *Redescriptions* with preliminary access to this book which does not contain abstracts in English or other widely spoken languages. As an historian focusing on the comparative study of eighteenth-century political cultures, I also wish to ask whether the type of thinking that was characteristic

of pre-modern Sweden (to which Finland belonged for no less than seven centuries) and its continuity in later periods of Finnish political culture have been sufficiently considered in the study of Finnish political thought in general and in this book in particular. Similarly, I am also interested in learning how the potential for comparative research has been applied here.

In many respects, *Concepts in Motion* represents pioneering basic research. For Finnish scholars, students, politicians, journalists, as well as a broader audience, it constitutes an indispensable source of reference. *Concepts in Motion* makes its readers more aware of the historical and contested character of concepts in their day-to-day vocabulary, the meanings of which they often take for granted. For the international audience, the volume provides interesting comparative research on a small Northern European polity with intimate links to political discourse in neighbouring Sweden, as well as a chance to explore a relatively radical democratization process in a rather peripheral country in the early twentieth century. Despite links to Sweden, Finnish political culture retained a number of distinctive features as a result of factors such as linguistic isolation and a period of Russian rule during the nineteenth century. *Concepts in Motion* will be of utmost importance to future scholars of Swedish conceptual history, but many other historians of political cultures will undoubtedly benefit from it as well. This is particularly true as far as articles translated into English and published in the previous volumes of the *Finnish Yearbook of Political Thought* are concerned. Further article translations, and hopefully an English translation of the entire collection of essays, should be published as soon as possible in order to allow the existing linguistic boundaries to be crossed.

While waiting for such translations, however, we can rest assured that *Concepts in Motion* will be relatively easy reading for anyone familiar with the conceptual historical perspective and possessing at least some basic knowledge of Finnish history. This readability reflects the considerable effort which not only the authors but also the editors have made in turning complicated analyses of conceptual history based on very diverse sources into a textual entity in which the various chapters complement each other in a balanced manner. The chapters provide sophisticated and independent scholarly analyses and often aim at serving as a kind of synthesis of previous research and findings based on a close reading of primary sources. They highlight several interesting features of Finnish political culture, including the continuous centrality of the concept of 'governing' in Finn-

ish political discourse, the widespread tendency to see 'society' and 'state' as identical phenomena, the tradition of regarding 'state' and 'politics' as intimately connected concepts, and the rather modest role awarded to 'citizens'.

For readers unfamiliar with conceptual history, *Concepts in Motion* may well serve to be challenging reading, however, as it requires not only some knowledge of the Finnish and European history of ideas but also familiarity with the conceptual historical perspective. The willingness to admit that the conceptual historical 'attitude' does have certain strengths paves the way for a reader to gain a comprehensive understanding of the work. This may prove difficult for social scientists who have learnt to favour precisely defined concepts or historians who consider political events or social and economic structures – as opposed to 'mere' thought – as their main objects of analysis. Despite the long-lasting effects of the linguistic turn, not even all historians of political thought have focused on the study of political language as a means of analyzing past political cultures. Within the field of Finnish historiography, little attention has previously been paid to truly reflective conceptual analyses. As the conceptual approach is still a novelty to many professional historians, as many of the volume's contributors come from outside the field of traditional historiography, and as the articles open some entirely new perspectives into Finland's past, most historians have been rather slow to comment on the book. There is no doubt, however, that the value of *Concepts in Motion* in terms of understanding Finnish history is becoming increasingly recognized among scholars from various disciplines.

### **Pioneering and Truly Interdisciplinary Work**

One of the major achievements of *Concepts in Motion* is that it demonstrates the potential of truly interdisciplinary and multi-university research projects in the humanities and the social sciences, which are fields that are often divided by disciplinary and institutional boundaries. *Concepts in Motion* provides us with a concrete illustration of the capability of political scientists, historians, sociologists and philosophers to combine their specialist expertise in a fruitful manner and to compile a common volume in which diverse perspectives are linked by a shared attitude which regards political language as the most important object of research.

The compilation of the volume has by no means been an easy process. The eight years of planning, source-based research, writing, conference discussions and editing that has led up to the publication of this volume has not been an easy feat within the confines of present-day research funding. Each individual chapter should perhaps be compared to a monograph rather than an ordinary research article in terms of the amount of work that went into them, particularly as each author has usually discussed the history of a concept over a period of up to two hundred years. In most other national projects in conceptual history – the Dutch project providing the most recent example – the editors have considered it necessary to divide the discussion of each concept amongst scholars specializing in different fields of study and different time periods.

The division of labour followed in *Concepts in Motion* entails that the chapters are by no means exhaustive accounts of the history of the discussed concepts, but rather open possibilities for more penetrating conceptual historical analyses in the future. As this is the first volume in what is meant to be a series of reference works on conceptual history, a number of major political concepts have been left out without the editors being entirely convincingly capable of explaining their criteria for choosing the selected concepts. Even after the completion of this volume, we are still missing satisfactory accounts of the history of concepts such as fatherland, nation, democracy, parliamentarism, freedom, justice and equality. As such concepts will hopefully be discussed in future volumes, it is essential to broaden the group of contributors even further.

### **Conceptual History as an Attitude and Common Denominator**

Above all, *Concepts in Motion* demonstrates the potential for innovative research in the humanities and the social sciences arising from a conceptual historical ‘attitude’. Indeed, the editors have chosen to speak about a common ‘attitude’ as opposed to any strictly defined ‘methodology of conceptual history’. What unites the contributors is the conception that the meanings assigned to political concepts by the contemporaries through the use of the concepts and changes in their meaning over time should be seen as the primary object of scholarly analysis. Such a conception or ‘attitude’ is derived from the linguistic turn in the human sciences which has caused scholars in various analytical fields to focus on language use and related disputes.

Conceptual historians are also highly aware of the role of both language as a constitutive element of reality and of the historical and contested character of both concepts in primary sources and concepts used in scholarly texts. Hence, they focus on how participants in past political disputes endeavoured both when speaking and writing to assign meaning to the central concepts of each discourse that supported their own views. In practical research work, they are interested in the creation of new concepts, in the assignment of new meanings to old concepts, and in the frequent disagreements on the proper way of using concepts. Many of them are also interested in the macro-level comparisons between diverse sources and periods of time, which entails a readiness to discuss semantic changes without attempting to meticulously contextualize every standard use of a given concept as a unique speech act. Though highly conscious of the contextual origin of many meanings carried by a concept, conceptual historians thus not only focus on the contextualization of individual uses of concepts but also wish to carry out revealing comparisons between unconventional speech acts, forms of political discourse, and even entire political cultures.

### **Contributions to the International Methodological Debate**

From the point of view of the ongoing international debate on conceptual history, *Concepts in Motion* provides a significant contribution in that its authors share an intention to broaden the field of research known as conceptual history. They clearly wish to establish an understanding of conceptual research that combines two different approaches to past political thought. The contextualist and rhetoric-oriented history of political thought, which has a strong standing in British universities and is best exemplified by scholars such as Quentin Skinner (Cambridge), and German *Begriffsgeschichte*, which focuses on macro-level semantic change and is most widely known in the form advocated by Reinhart Koselleck (Bielefeld), are seen as compatible strategies of research that a researcher can successfully apply even within the same study.

This kind of easy combination of the history of political thought and various versions of Continental conceptual history has not been taken as self-evident either in theoretical discussions or in practical research work, particularly in Anglophone research literature. In fact, quite the opposite is true. The division between the two approaches,

despite their shared interest in past political language, has frequently been emphasized. Not even the term 'conceptual history' is widely known in research published in the English language, despite the work of advocates such as Terence Ball (Arizona) and Melvin Richter (New York) and seven years of active research cooperation and publication within the international *History of Political and Social Concepts Group*. Among previous national projects in conceptual history, only the Dutch project has really attempted to combine the Skinnerian and Koselleckian approaches in a concrete and constructive manner, adding further dimensions such as the use of images as primary sources to the analysis.

The participants in the Finnish project have been open to a variety of approaches. Most researchers have based their work on ideas borrowed from both British and German theorists and have actively adapted them to fit their own research questions and source material. In other words, they have endeavoured to combine short-term rhetorical analyses focusing on how individuals make use of language on the one hand, and long-term semantic analyses based on a collection of numerous instances of both conventional and unconventional language use on the other. Indeed, some of the articles in *Concepts of Motion* simultaneously serve as convincing examples of the possibility of studying the use of words on the macro level and changes in language use introduced by major users of language on the micro level.

One of the major strengths of *Concepts in Motion* is also the willingness of its authors to tackle philosophical problems related to conceptual history. There is no denying the existence of diverse conceptions of the relationship between language and concept, the relationship between language and thought, and the importance of studying either the structure of a given language or the ways in which it is used by individuals. Such disagreements should not be considered a major obstacle to carrying out fruitful analyses on the uses and meanings of concepts, however. Interesting findings appear as attention is focused on the emergence of political concepts, the ways in which they are used, the timing of and reasons for any changes in the meanings attached to concepts, disputes concerning the meanings of concepts, the contexts of their use, counter-concepts and synonyms, and comparisons with other political cultures, which may reveal the peculiarities of a given political culture.

## The Separated Era of Swedish Rule

Because of its extremely versatile character, it is virtually impossible to discuss *Concepts in Motion* exhaustively in one review. The approach I have chosen here is that of an historian whose own research has mainly focused on eighteenth-century politico-religious vocabularies. The study of the interconnections between eighteenth-century political and religious discourses is an important endeavour. Carl Schmitt, for instance, has pointed out that: "All the most significant concepts of modern political science are secularized theological concepts."<sup>2</sup>

Several of the authors of *Concepts in Motion* refer to the secularization of political concepts that began over the course of the eighteenth century, but few of them have truly studied the phenomenon in depth. Instead, the early modern period seems to be considered as little more than a background which can be summarized either on the basis of research literature or by consulting available text corpora or a few selected primary sources. Most of the writers seem to share a 'social scientific' attitude, which is manifested in the fact that only such early modern phenomena which seem to explain the emergence of the 'modern' world are seen as deserving scholarly attention and that the French Revolution or early nineteenth-century intellectual trends tend to be taken as the points of analytical departure. This is understandable, of course, given that 'Finland' as a separate political community did not exist prior to the emergence of an autonomous grand duchy under the Russian Empire in the nineteenth century and that the early modern Finnish language did not yet possess exact equivalents to many modern political concepts. The majority of the Finnish political terminology was only created over the course of the nineteenth century as a deliberate translation project of the so-called Fennoman movement. Despite this late emergence of usable political vocabulary, it is somewhat unfortunate that the authors seem to ignore so much of the intellectual inheritance left by the early modern Swedish realm and later cherished by the Finnish (often Swedish-speaking) governing elite. To put it another way, the Finnish connections to the Swedish political vocabulary may run even deeper than *Concepts in Motion* would suggest.

With this remark I do not wish to challenge the truly pioneering work of Kari Saastamoinen in compiling the first ever survey of early modern Swedish political language, which opens the volume. Saastamoinen's endeavour has been most demanding in that he sum-



marizes no less than seven centuries of political discourse and has had few earlier truly conceptual studies upon which to build his own analysis. His very broad topic has left little room for in-depth conceptual analyses, particularly as so much of the text is dedicated to a survey of political events. What we are provided is an analysis of the language of the written constitution of the Swedish realm, some selected religious and political writings, and the translations of a few theoretical works into Swedish. No doubt we receive a clear interpretation of early modern Swedish political thought set within the framework of its European context. This contextualization brings up such special (but not very surprising) features of the Swedish realm as the relatively independent status of the peasant estate and the lack of deeply dividing confessional conflicts. Saastamoinen also provides an interesting discussion of eighteenth-century attempts to translate the Latin expression *societas civilis* into Swedish. Though the period of estate rule (or the Age of Liberty) was undoubtedly a 'progressive' period in Swedish politics, Saastamoinen may overemphasize the role of theorists such as John Locke in the modernization of the Swedish political language while ignoring more traditionalist trends of thought.

Saastamoinen's article provides background information that is helpful for the understanding of the following articles, but the separation of early modern thought from the rise of 'modern' Finnish political vocabulary in the volume as a whole is hardly an ideal solution. The reader is left with the impression that eighteenth-century Sweden experienced a variety of conceptual changes, but the character and significance of these changes (and continuities) in terms of the development of later Finnish political concepts remains rather unclear. It would certainly have been fruitful to have discussed the key concepts of early modern Sweden based on the joint expertise of historians from both Sweden and Finland, as there is no denying the fact that many long-term patterns of thought in both countries are derived from common early modern experiences. Fortunately, some work is currently being done in both countries to reconstruct the conceptual framework of early modern Swedish political discourse and to decipher its long-term impact on political discourse.<sup>3</sup>

What might such long-term analyses of early modern Swedish political key concepts reveal then? The most obvious instance of continuity is provided by the influence of Lutheranism on political thought, something that is touched on by several of the articles included in *Concepts in Motion*, although on a rather superficial level.

Research carried out by both Swedish and Finnish scholars on the impact of inclusive thought constructions such as 'the Swedish Israel' and 'children of Sweden' on eighteenth-century conceptions of the national community, for instance, have not been considered in the book. Yet recent long-term comparative research suggests that the meanings attached to such concepts as 'people', 'fatherland' and 'nation' in eighteenth-century Lutheran political thought may have remained surprisingly unchanged over the centuries and may still play a role in the conceptions of national community held by some Finnish politicians. While Swedish political culture experienced a major modernization over the course of the nineteenth century, some typical features of the early modern Swedish realm survived in Finland, where social and political change emerged later and where both internal and external conflicts fostered traditionalist conceptions of the political community. Indeed, the old Lutheran understanding of the national community seems to have a stronghold in Finland. Within Finnish political culture, the government and the 'ruler' are still prepared to patronize the spiritual life of citizens, albeit in symbolic as opposed to concrete terms. The appearance of as far-reaching a combination of the political and the religious would be virtually inconceivable in most other present-day political cultures of 'Protestant' Europe.

In his article, Saastamoinen introduces concepts that he has considered relevant to the other articles in the collection, which means that many concepts that were important to the contemporaries themselves or that might have been equally interesting from the point of view of later developments, have received no attention. We receive no satisfactory account of the concepts of 'fatherland' and 'freedom', for instance, even though they were among the most important concepts of the political debate in the eighteenth century. In the Age of Liberty, the festival hall of the Swedish nobility was decorated with the motto *Pro Patria et Libertate*. The meanings attached to the concepts 'fatherland' and 'freedom' have certainly changed after the eighteenth century, but as recently as 2004 the motto of the national day of war veterans in Finland was: 'The inheritance of the veterans: Free fatherland.'

What I wish to suggest is that a more profound excavation of the common roots of Swedish and Finnish political concepts might help us to understand many of the shared features of these two political cultures. Among these common features we should mention the tendency to see the concepts of 'state', 'society' and 'people' as

intimately related and sometimes even interchangeable. A deeper understanding of the political culture of eighteenth-century Sweden might also help us to recognize a degree of secularized Lutheranism in the background of the Nordic concepts of 'society' and perhaps even 'welfare society'. It would be equally interesting to learn how the concept of 'political liberty' developed in political communities which were unusually uniform in confessional terms.

### The Concepts of 'Power' and 'Governing'

The concepts discussed in the ten substantial chapters of *Concepts in Motion* are 'power' (*valta*), 'governing' (*hallitseminen*), 'society' (*yhteiskunta*), 'state' (*valtio*), 'people' (*kansa*), 'citizen' (*kansalainen*), 'representation' (*edustus*), 'party' (*puolue*), 'politics' (*politiikka*) and 'revolution' (*vallankumous*). Next, I shall briefly comment on the approach and findings of each of the chapters.

The first chapter provides a well-informed discussion by Matti Hyvärinen on the versatile semantic field of the concept of 'power'.<sup>4</sup> As far as the early modern period is concerned, Hyvärinen counts on a corpus of old written Finnish, but his analysis of nineteenth-century language is already more profound and based on a high variety of sources. Hyvärinen has analyzed the vocabulary of 'power' in the writings of authors such as Aleksis Kivi, Arvid Järnefelt and Juhani Aho in a most sensitive manner and has also reconstructed the various meanings of 'power' in the translated works. Similarly, he provides an interpretation of the concept of 'power' that was derived from the European tradition of political thought and was used by the politician and historian Yrjö-Koskinen in his works. The contrasting rhetoric of 'power' used by the two sides of the Civil War of 1918 is also the focus of particular interest. As to the period of independence after the Civil War, Hyvärinen has focused on the analysis of the vocabulary of 'political power' in the best available sources, party programmes. He aptly illustrates how the concept of 'the power of the people' only very slowly became part of the Finnish political debate and continued to be assigned quite diverse meanings in the programmes of different political parties. While the parties of the political left gradually began to support the republican constitution, it took a considerable amount of time for the political right to redefine its attitude towards the power of the people. Over the course of time,

however, the left and the right have moved much closer to each other in their definitions of the power of the people.

Hyvärinen's way of combining diverse primary sources appears to be a legitimate research strategy, as it allows him to demonstrate major changes in the use of the concept of 'power'. The variety of source material renders the research report slightly fragmentary however, particularly as Hyvärinen proceeds to a discussion of yet another discourse at the end of his contribution. The discourse on 'power' among social scientists during the latter half of the twentieth century is interesting but slightly disconnected from the previous, more practice-oriented discussion.

Kyösti Pekonen's analysis of the concept of 'governing' provides an excellent illustration of the potential of fundamental conceptual historical research. Pekonen sees the history of the concept of 'governing' as a multi-layered narrative due to the high diversity of past language use. He points out that specific uses of a given concept only become visible once they are contrasted with a high number of ordinary uses of the same concept. He has reconstructed other helpful contexts as well, including a European comparison which illustrates that changes in the concepts of governing have occurred at very different times in different political cultures. A further important context which Pekonen considers is early modern word history, including the long-lasting union between the secular and spiritual powers that be in Finnish political culture. In the nineteenth century, the mystery of governing based on 'Protestantism' started to become more secular, however, as the Diet was reintroduced. Pekonen places this transformation in the context of a pan-European conceptual change and of the interaction between the Swedish and Finnish languages. He also pays considerable attention to the mutual influence of constitutional changes and changes in the vocabulary of governing. Towards the end of his chapter, Pekonen takes his interpretation of conceptual change one step further than most conceptual historians would by building not only on empirical observations but also on the works of theorists of the history of governing such as Max Weber and Michel Foucault. The combination of these research strategies leads to the interesting conclusion that, within Finnish political culture, it is still considered the primary duty of governments to take care of things and to keep them under control rather than to concentrate on political management as such.

## The Concepts of 'Society' and 'State'

Pauli Kettunen's chapter on 'society'<sup>5</sup> bypasses much of early modern history, pointing out that *yhteiskunta* was a neologism invented in the 1840s on the basis of Swedish models and Latin culture conveyed to Finland via Sweden. When characterizing his methodological choices, Kettunen emphasizes the need to reconstruct contexts and to study speech as action in the Skinnerian spirit. As to the practical research work, he underscores the need to compare Finnish conceptual changes with those in Scandinavian languages, particularly Swedish.

The links to other Scandinavian political cultures become evident as Kettunen demonstrates the strong conceptual connection between the Nordic concept of 'society' and that of 'nation state'. The Nordic concept of 'society' refers to an integrated entity which acts as a subject and conveys the assumption that progress also takes place within society. The significance of this common Nordic concept should perhaps be considered by such Swedish scholars who tend to ignore the other 'Swedish' political culture on the other shore of the Gulf of Bothnia. Though the historical experience of the Finnish version of 'Swedish' political culture has diverged from the Swedish experience since 1809, it carries many shared characteristics, one of which is the constant mixture of the concepts of 'society' and 'state' both in Swedish and Finnish political discourse. Kettunen could also have taken this point further by focusing on how the concepts of 'society' and 'state' were used in eighteenth-century Sweden, when the separation between two political cultures did not yet exist. For instance, he could have considered more carefully the significance of the fact that religious and political communities remained identical for so long in the Nordic countries.

Nevertheless, Kettunen's discussion of the diverse conceptual developments in Sweden and Finland after 1809 is fascinating and also illustrates some divergence within the Nordic concept of 'society'. In Sweden, the state is supposed to be built on a foundation laid by the principles of 'society', whereas in Finland 'society' is understood as realizing the normative power of the state, 'society' being an actor defined by the nation state. An interesting recent development is the rise of the ambiguous concept of 'welfare society' as a fashionable alternative to the older and more disputable concept of 'welfare state'. Although the concept of 'welfare society' is present in almost all areas of present-day Finnish political debate, Kettunen suggests

that 'society' is no longer understood as being as central an agent as it was a few decades ago.

The related concept of 'state' receives proficient treatment in the next chapter by Tuija Pulkkinen.<sup>6</sup> According to Pulkkinen, who approaches the theme from the point of view of a philosopher, the glue of conceptual history can be identified in the interconnection between words and meanings, which requires that both words and meanings be studied simultaneously. She wishes to study both the general use of the concept of 'state' and the linguistic change brought about by influential language-users, something that her article, with its interesting findings, proves to be possible.

One of the central results of Pulkkinen's analysis is that, due to the development of the 'state' of Finland in the shadow of the Russian Empire, the Finnish concept of 'state' carried meanings that were closely related to those attached to the concept of 'politics'. Pulkkinen reveals the specific meanings of the concept by placing instances of the word 'state' in Finnish dictionaries and political philosophy in the context of the conceptual history of other European states in general and Sweden in particular, demonstrating that the meanings of the Finnish concept of 'state', as it came into use in the nineteenth century, were derived from meanings strengthened by the French Revolution. Among her other findings we should mention the synonymous and even interchangeable character of the attributes derived from state (*valtiollinen*) and politics (*poliittinen*). The concepts of 'state' and 'politics' are also closely related, as is indicated by the use of terms derived from 'state' (*valtiopäivät*, *valtiomuoto*) to refer to the parliament and the constitution and the tendency of party programmes to see the state both as a major subject and a major object. Pulkkinen convincingly highlights the centrality and surprisingly positive connotations of the 'state' in Finnish.

### The Concepts of 'People' and 'Citizen'

Ilkka Liikanen's chapter on the concept of 'people', though most interesting, hardly fulfils all the expectations of its readers. Liikanen has chosen to focus on the political concept of 'people' held by the nineteenth-century Fennoman movement instead of studying the ethnographical or social meanings of the concept or extending the discussion to include the twentieth century. The concept of 'people' is, of course, a problematic object of study due to the multiple mile

for which the concept has been applied. The political meanings of the term are also diverse, ranging from different forms of nationalism to ideas of popular sovereignty. This is particularly true of the Finnish language, which, unlike most European languages, lacks a clear linguistic distinction between the concepts of 'nation' (*kansakunta*) and 'people' (*kansa*). It follows from this that Liikanen has been forced to reconstruct the two discourses of nationhood and popular sovereignty side by side within the same chapter. The reconstruction of the vocabulary of 'nation' suffers as a result, which is something that Liikanen's discussion of the theories of nationalism cannot make up for.

One consequence of the chosen theoretical approach, which favours modernist theories, is that little can be said about the conceptual changes which took place in connection with the transition from pre-modern national identities to modern nationalism. A deeper analysis of the eighteenth-century Swedish concepts of 'people' and 'nation' (and possibly 'fatherland') might have revealed that there was perhaps neither such a dramatic break between early modern and modern ways of thinking nor an early rise of a 'modern' Finnish rhetoric of nation, as Liikanen suggests. As far as the eighteenth century is concerned, it would be erroneous to claim that concepts such as 'the Swedish Israel' played no role at all in the construction of national community. Indeed, the Swedish idiom of Israel could be used more effectively in the construction of national community than that of England or the Netherlands, for instance, and some aspects of the idea of the nation as an Israel-like politico-religious community may have survived even longer within Finnish political culture than in the Swedish.<sup>7</sup> At the same time, Liikanen may have been overzealous in his reliance on interpretations of the emergence of the modern Finnish nation over the course of the eighteenth century, as they have been shown to be based on anachronistic interpretations.<sup>8</sup>

Liikanen's discussion of the changing concepts of people and nation in the nineteenth century is much more convincing. The author is capable of illustrating how both nationalistic trends of thought and ideas of popular sovereignty made a breakthrough in Finnish political discourse. The developments that took place over the twentieth century, after the days of the Fennoman movement, however, remain to be explored by other scholars.

Henrik Stenius's discussion of the concept of 'citizen'<sup>9</sup> is slightly problematic as well. The chapter differs from the other contributions in that it builds on the creative interpretations of the author rather

than on the kind of empirical analysis followed by most writers. This is a stimulating approach to the extent to which Stenius focuses on the possibilities of diverse linguistic areas to create new political concepts and contemplates the etymological roots of vocabularies. However, some research operations could have been explained more clearly. The extent of the primary sources remains very limited, and not all the comparisons appear to be of any great help in explicating the author's point. The Finnish conceptual change can certainly be compared with those of Sweden, Germany and the Netherlands, but the present reviewer doubts the usefulness of comparisons with Arabic and Argentine concepts.

Stenius builds his analysis on a few instances of the use of the concept of 'citizen' by Elias Lönnrot in his translations from Swedish (*medborgare*) to Finnish (*kansalainen*). Lönnrot certainly deserves to be studied due to his role as one of the leading creators of new Finnish concepts in the mid-nineteenth century. Likewise, it is justified to focus on a translation of a major juridical textbook from one language to another. Yet instances of the use of the new concept of citizen remain sparse, and the author fails to present a sufficient discussion of the vocabulary inherited from the eighteenth century or more widespread nineteenth-century usage. Stenius does succeed in illustrating that the Finnish concept of citizen conveyed a notion of the citizen as a person who withdraws from active duty, but it would have been interesting to see more evidence of Lönnrot's role as a 'modern' political thinker who consciously rejected the old European concept of citizen derived from municipal self-government and judicial discourse.

Likewise, the argument on the incapability of the Finnish concept of citizen to foster horizontal dialogue as an explanation of the cruelty of the Finnish Civil War is a noteworthy hypothesis, but without sufficient empirical evidence that is all that it is. In contrast, Stenius's conclusion that the concepts of 'people' and 'citizen' were intimately related and that the concepts of 'state', 'nation' and 'society' were (and are) interchangeable receive support from other chapters in the volume. The closeness of the concepts meant that Finnish citizenship was long believed to be based on a shared ethnic background. Stenius also suggests that the Finnish concept of citizen has remained non-political and Finnish political culture collectivistic. These are conclusions which few Finnish scholars would deny, but it would have been helpful for the author to have demonstrated them with references to twentieth-century sources as well.



## The Concepts of 'Representation' and 'Party'

Ismo Pohjantammi's chapter on 'representation' does refer to an eighteenth-century transition from the representation of the realm to that of the nation, but most of the attention is focused on the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century debates on representation. The years preceding the radical parliamentary reform of 1906, during which the four-estate Diet was replaced by a one-chamber parliament and universal suffrage was extended to women as well as men, certainly deserve such a detailed discussion. Nonetheless, much of what we read is a summary of parliamentary history rather than conceptual history proper. One of Pohjantammi's distinct merits is the care he takes in contextualizing the Finnish debate with references to theoretical discourse in other European states.

Eeva Aarnio's analysis of the concept of 'party' is also noteworthy due to its consistent and successful use of method. Aarnio follows a Skinnerian approach in her work, focusing on how a speaker carried out political acts by using the concept of 'party' in certain political circumstances and how parties were evaluated in past political discourse. She uses a broad range of primary sources from nineteenth-century party debates to party programmes of the 1980s. The only extensions this reviewer would like to have seen would have been brief discussions of the significance of the Hat and Cap parties of the Age of Liberty and the religion-based party vocabulary. The Hats and Caps have quite recently been said to have enjoyed a higher level of approval within Swedish political culture than political parties in England or the North American colonies.<sup>10</sup> Given this supposed acceptance of parties in eighteenth-century Sweden, it is surprising that this was no longer the case in nineteenth-century Swedish or Finnish political cultures. Aarnio also shows that religious concepts continued to be used in discourse on parties until the adoption of the neologism *puolue* in the nineteenth century contributed to the secularization of the concept. The interaction between the languages of political parties and religious sects prior to the appearance of this conceptual watershed could have been explored more extensively, comparing it, for example, to developments elsewhere.<sup>11</sup>

Aarnio's analysis deepens the closer it moves to present-day party debates, connecting contemporary debates with broader theoretical debates on parties. Aarnio demonstrates how the parliamentary reform of 1906 gave rise to a sudden reorganization of Finnish politics, including political parties. She is able to list an entire scale of dif-

ferent meanings assigned to the concept of 'party' in various sources and to illustrate how intimately the use of the concept was connected with particular contexts.

### **The Concepts of 'Politics' and 'Revolution'**

There is no doubt that Kari Palonen's interpretation of the Finnish concept of 'politics'<sup>12</sup> represents one of the most profound conceptual historical studies ever done in Finland. Palonen's contribution clearly demonstrates the usefulness of a conceptual historical attitude in the study of past politics. It also shows that any and all exhaustive attempts to define political concepts are doomed to failure due to the constantly contested character of concepts.

The early vocabulary of politics does not seem to interest Palonen, who prefers instead to focus on twentieth-century conceptual changes, particularly those which have taken place since the Second World War. His outspoken strategy is to study "the performative use of speech on politics as a conscious medium of action". This means that Palonen focuses on how individuals used the concept of 'politics' unconventionally instead of merely reporting on the conventional uses of the concept. It also means that Palonen studies how concepts were introduced, established, marginalized and forgotten without attempting to pinpoint the precise timing of or present quantitative data on such changes. The corpus of texts he uses has been compiled with this strategy in mind so that times of change receive more attention than more tranquil periods.

Palonen's strategy has led to several noteworthy findings, some of the most important of which being the obvious connections between the Finnish vocabulary of 'politics' and Western European political discourses, the relatively quick transformation of Finnish political culture, and the substitution of the long-favoured attribute derived from 'state' with that derived from 'politics' in political discourse in the mid-1960s. Palonen has also contributed another chapter to the book in which he summarizes the findings of the preceding chapters, discusses the question of translation, and also introduces the possibility to engage in a comparative study of political cultures as overcoming national traditions of historiography.

Risto Alapuro's final chapter on the concept of 'revolution' is also the work of an author who possesses an absolute mastery of the theme of research. Alapuro pays considerable attention to the tradi-

tionally pejorative connotations of the vocabulary of rebellion in the Finnish language, emphasizes the original character of the Finnish word *vallankumous* ('subversion of power') when compared with the international terminology of 'revolution', and discusses the consequences of this difference for Finnish political culture. Importantly, it was the Russian 'Revolution' of 1905, the Civil War with its 'Red Rebellion', and the leftist radicalism of the 1960s that rendered the meanings of the concept of 'revolution' concrete and understandable to Finns. These events meant that a loathsome phenomenon that was typical of 'foreign' countries could suddenly become seen as a force with the potential to either transform the community in a positive sense or facilitate the illegal seizure of power.

### **More In-depth Comparisons as a Means of Achieving Supplementary Findings**

Comparisons not only within one political culture but also between different political cultures should be seen as an established part of the conceptual historical approach, as it is only through comparisons that the common and specific features of political cultures can become visible. The authors of *Concepts in Motion* have made great bounds in that direction in their comparisons of translations from Swedish to Finnish in many of the chapters in this volume and by viewing Finnish developments in European contexts. This has proved to be a fruitful research strategy, especially with regard to the nineteenth century, when the modern vocabulary of Finnish political discourse was in the process of formation.

Yet much remains to be done in the field of comparative conceptual history also after the publication of this volume. The work of the Finnish authors has been hindered by the fact that little such basic conceptual historical research exists in various European countries which could have facilitated comparisons between the Finnish and other political cultures. The massive German example of *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe* has been important to many Finnish authors, of course, and not least because of the high relevance of German political thought in much of Northern Europe over the centuries. Some authors have also been able to refer to the findings of the Dutch project on conceptual history, which has produced five collected volumes thus far. At the same time, such important objects of comparison as

the Swedish and British political cultures lack parallel collections of conceptual histories with which the development of the Finnish language of politics could easily have been compared. Indeed, the study of the conceptual history of these countries, together with an extended study of the conceptual past of Finnish political culture, opens future research prospects for Finnish scholars as well.

As a whole, the ambitious project which led to the publication of *Concepts in Motion* has been quite successful in attaining its goals. Some key concepts of Finnish political culture have been analyzed in great detail and with an admirable degree of objectivity, keeping the relevant historical contexts in mind. It is obvious that the publication of this volume will not mark the end of the conceptual historical study of Finnish political culture but will instead motivate the rise of new and equally intellectually stimulating projects in the future.

## NOTES

1. Matti Hyvärinen, Jussi Kurunmäki, Kari Palonen, Tuija Pulkkinen & Henrik Stenius (eds.), *Käsitteet liikkeessä. Suomen poliittisen kulttuurin käsittehistoria* [Concepts in Motion: The Conceptual History of Finnish Political Culture], Tampere: Vastapaino 2003, 617 pages; An earlier Finnish version of this review has appeared in *Historiallinen Aikakauskirja*, 102:3, 2004, 408ff.

2. This quote opens Kyösti Pekonen's chapter on 'governing'.

3. These include Bo Lindberg's project for the conceptual history of early modern Sweden and the project 'Enlightened loyalties' led by Pasi Ihalainen, in which some late eighteenth-century key concepts are analyzed.

4. Two articles by Hyvärinen related to this chapter have been published in *Finnish Yearbook of Political Thought* in Vol. 2, 1998, 203ff, and Vol. 7, 2003, 36ff.

5. An earlier English version of Kettunen's article was published in *Finnish Yearbook of Political Thought*, Vol. 4, 2000, 159ff.

6. An earlier English version of Pulkkinen's article has appeared in *Finnish Yearbook of Political Thought*, Vol. 4, 2000, 129ff.

7. Nils Ekedahl, "'Guds och Swea barn" Religion och nationell identitet i 1700-talets Sverige', *Nationalism och nationell identitet i 1700-talets Sverige*, eds. Åsa Karlson and Bo Lindberg, Uppsala 2002, 49-70; Pasi Ihalainen, *Protestant Nations Redefined: Changing Perceptions of National Identity in the Rhetoric of the English, Dutch and Swedish Public Churches, 1685-1772*, forthcoming in Leiden & Boston 2005; The preliminary findings of the study are discussed in Pasi Ihalainen, 'Lutherska drag i den svenska politiska kulturen i slutet av frihetstiden. En begreppsanalytisk undersökning av fyra riksdagspredikningar', *Riksdag, predikstol, kaffehus. Frihetstidens politiska kultur 1766-1772*, eds. Marie-Christine Skuncke och Henrika Tandefelt, Stockholm and Helsinki 2003, 82, 87.

8. Juha Manninen, *Valistus ja kansallinen identiteetti. Aatehistoriallinen tutkimus 1700-luvun Pohjolasta*, Helsinki 2000; See also Jonas Nordin, *Ett fattigt men fritt folk. Nationell och politisk självbild i Sverige från sen stormaktstid till slutet av frihetstiden*, Stockholm 2000; Cf. Pasi Ihalainen, 'Varhaismodernien kansallisten identiteettien historiaa kansallis-

esta ja vertailevasta näkökulmasta', *Historiallinen Aikakauskirja* 99:4, 2001, 402-417, and Jouko Nurmiainen, 'Frågan om "etnisk nationalism", nationell självbild och 1700-talets Sverige', *Historisk Tidskrift för Finland*, 88:3, 2003, 257-275.

9. A shorter English version of Stenius's article has appeared in *Redescriptions*, Vol. 8, 2004, 172ff.

10. Michael F. Metcalf, 'Hattar och mössor 1766-72. Den sena frihetstidens partisystem i komparativ belysning', *Riksdag, predikstol, kaffehus. Frihetstidens politiska kultur 1766-1772*, eds. Marie-Christine Skuncke and Henrika Tandefelt, Stockholm and Helsinki 2003, 39-54; Cf. Ihalainen 2003, 84, 87, 90.

11. On the secularization of the concept of party in early eighteenth-century England, see Pasi Ihalainen, *The Discourse on Political Pluralism in Early Eighteenth-Century England*, Helsinki 1999.

12. An earlier English version of Palonen's article is to be found in *Finnish Yearbook of Political Thought*, Vol. 5, 2001, 113ff.