Liberal Impact in the 1906 Parliamentary Reform of Finland

Maija Karjalainen

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Supervisor: Lars M Andersson
Examiner: Torkel Jansson
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Abstract

This is a study of the liberal ideology in the 1906 parliamentary reform of Finland. The study seeks to find out whether liberalism had any impact on the reform, and the kind of impact it possibly had. Or was the reform in fact a thoroughly democratic endeavour as it is often portrayed. In the reform a unicameral parliament elected in universal and equal suffrage of both genders was founded. The principles of the reform thus sound very democratic, but the study focuses on finding out whether liberalism, seen as an “opposing ideology” to democracy, had any impact in the making and the outcome of the reform.

The reform was designed by a multi-party reform committee, instituted by the Finnish Senate, the discussions and decisions of which are the object of analysis in the thesis. The debates reflect ideological motivations of the committee members in relation to the decisions taken in the reform. The final law, the Parliament Act, is analysed in relation to the reform discussions. This approach establish which aspects of the law should be regarded as a result of liberal input and in general to explain why the final result looks the way it does.

The thesis shows that liberalism had a significant influence on the parliamentary reform. The political elite was liberal at the time, and succeeded in influencing the reform through its position in the Senate, the reform committee, and the Diet. The reform was thus executed within the old, liberal political system. The impact of liberalism in the reform is visible not least in its design and inclination to restrain democracy. In the thesis the specific liberal measures that were implanted in the new parliamentary system are enumerated. The thesis reveals that the outcome of the reform was much less democratic than has been previously presumed.

Keywords: liberalism, Finland, parliament, reform, democracy, 1906.
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This is a study of the impact of liberal ideology on the 1906 parliamentary reform in Finland. The parliamentary reform was often heralded as a breakthrough of democracy. In the reform a unicameral parliament was established – there were only three such in Europe at the time – based on universal and equal male and female suffrage, which was more than any other country in the world could boast.\(^2\) Parliament was elected in proportional elections, a model used only in one other European country.\(^3\) The size of the electorate increased tenfold - from about 125 000 people to circa 1 125 000.\(^4\) The fact that made the reform so astonishing, too, was the great institutional jump from the Diet of the Estates to a unicameral parliament. Based on these remarkable advancements, the reform was a great step towards democracy, even its breakthrough. The thesis seeks to find whether this was really the case, was the reform a breakthrough of democracy?

At the outset, it is quite easy to challenge the democratic interpretation of the reform. After the reform, Finland still remained a part of Russia and did not have an independent government. The Tsar’s prerogatives, which assigned wide powers to the sovereign, remained almost untouched. Democracy remained, so to speak, at the mercy of the Tsar.\(^5\) How do we define democracy, the question arises. Joseph Schumpeter defines democracy as majority rule via popular elections, the endresult of which is a society marked by equality and liberty.\(^6\) Traditionally democracy is considered as “government made legitimate by the consent of the governed”.\(^7\) There are different kinds of democracy, but the modern democracy can be divided roughly in two: participatory democracy and representative democracy.\(^8\) In the thesis democracy simply connotes the principle of government in which the decisive power in a political process lays in the hands of the majority of the adult population of a nation, and in which political decisions will reflect “the will of that

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3. In Belgium.
5. The Tsar had, inter alia, the absolute power of veto.
majority”; it connotes the “sovereignty of the people”. From that follows that democracy is not fully implemented if in a parliamentary system parliament, which represents the will of the majority, is not the source of supreme legitimacy in the political process. Is democracy an ideology or just a system of government? What do we mean by ideology? Ideology is defined, in John Schwarzmantel’s *Ideology and Politics*, as presenting “a broad range of views which cover the central aspects of how society should be organised, answering such questions as what the role of the state should be, what forms of difference or differentiation between people should be accepted, and which rejected.” ⁹ Along the lines of this definition democracy is an ideology: it clearly suggests ways in which the society should be organised. At the heart of this ideology lays the idea of equality, rights, and the popular will. According to a democratic idea a person is equal with his or her peers, and everyone has the right to political participation. Aristotle notes: “the democratic idea of justice is in fact numerical equality, not equality based on merit.” ¹⁰

The popular will is also a concept entwined with democracy – the idea that the will should manifest in the outcome of elections. But is democracy a doctrine as well; is it thus a body of coherent philosophy? For Schumpeter “democracy is a political method…and hence incapable of being an end in itself”. ¹¹ Schumpeter would not perhaps recognise democracy as an ideology, either. He understands democracy as an “institutional arrangement”, as a means to an end, and explains that democracy guarantees certain ideals, like the freedom of speech. ¹² Even though democracy has never prompted that amount of philosophical deliberations than liberalism has, it can be regarded as having a certain doctrinal tendency. It is an ideology, but perhaps less than a doctrine – it has never been really established by the political philosophers. The doctrinal believes of democracy float freely in the air; they exist but remain an incoherent body of thoughts.

Besides the fact that parliamentarism did not triumph in Finland, as the Tsar retained most of his prerogatives, we can scrutinise the level of democracy that the reform itself sought to establish. And by establishing the level of democracy in the reform, we will also see the impact of liberalism. The object of the study is thus the impact of liberalism in the reform. What was the impact of liberalism on the reform, if there were any? How did Finnish liberalism look alike? And what is liberalism? are the central questions in the thesis.

I am choosing to study liberalism in the parliamentary reform because the reform is usually considered as a triumph of democracy; the reform is thus not examined from liberalism’s point of view that was, however, a prevailing political ideology in Europe at the time. It would be important to understand liberalism and its impact on the parliamentary reform that created the modern parliamentary system in Finland, in order to comprehend the current political system of Finland. What were the principles behind the parliamentary reform, the study asks. What were the political goals and ideology of the men that created the reform? It would be very important to know answers to these questions in order to understand the reform and its implications. Why to concentrate on liberalism? Liberalism is neglected and overlooked subject as a political practice in Finland and beyond. It has, however, a closely related relationship to democracy, and its influence was considerable at the time of the reform. In liberalism political rights, which is a key element in the democratic ideology, are seen very differently. It is important to consider the reform from the point of view of an ideology that is in fact taking an opposing outlook on political participation than democracy wanted to further. The reform is seeing as a triumph of democracy, but the obstacles that liberalism created on democracy have not been considered and studied thoroughly enough before.

What is the liberalism, then, that I am talking about? Liberalism is a concept that defies definition. It is a political ideology that is very much historically rooted – i.e. its development and aims stem from the circumstances of its birth. Liberalism today is quite a different liberalism from yesterday. Pierre Rosanvallon claims that “there is no doctrinal unity to liberalism”, and for that reason liberalism is a *culture of government*.\(^{13}\) His view is that liberalism is a culture that has since the beginning of the seventeenth century been attempting to win emancipation from both divine right and popular sovereignty.\(^{14}\)

In the thesis we are thus going to deal with this hybrid concept of liberalism. We are going to try to find out what does it mean as a political culture. We are going to talk about the characteristics that made politics “liberal”. We will examine those characteristics in relation especially to democracy because it was the essential issue in the parliamentary reform. Democracy was the central issue that liberalism had to face in Europe in the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century in general. We will consider liberalism in Finland in relation to political liberalism in other European countries. It is feasible to talk about “European liberalism”, albeit it is diverse. “Liberalism was the


\(^{14}\) *Ibid.*
common response by a segment of European culture to the French Revolution...if ever there was an ‘organic’ European political language, liberalism was it”, Alan Kahan writes.15

In connection with Finnish liberalism, we are going to talk about “traditional liberalism”, which could also be called conservative liberalism. It means deference to especially nineteenth century liberal values, the most distinct characteristics of which were its opposition to democracy. The traditional liberals have been divided between those who promoted capacity of the individual voters and those who promoted capacity of the social groups in relation to suffrage. “The individualist” wanted to find those individuals that had the capacity to take part in politics, the social version of it sought to find “classes or interests which deserved to participate in politics”.16 Alan Kahan writes in *Liberalism in Nineteenth Century Europe: The Political Culture of Limited Suffrage* that the language that defined and distinguished liberals as liberals in nineteenth century Europe was the “discourse of capacity” – a political discourse that sought to connect politics with individual or social capacity.17 “The discourse of capacity expressed liberalism’s intermediate stance between the dead world of aristocracy and the world of democracy”.18 According to Kahan the discourse of capacity was the “foundation of liberal political culture”.19

We are also going to talk about “new liberalism”, which is a term that refers to a political culture that promoted social reform, and cultural progress. The reader will soon find out that liberalism was an ideology that opposed some of the key features of democracy. In the parliamentary reform committee that will be the subject of the study, there existed roughly two blocks: those that promoted democracy and those that opposed it. The former group can be called the democrats, and the latter the liberals.

The Finnish liberalism in the nineteenth and early twentieth century was very much concentrated on defending Finland’s constitution and therefore autonomy.20 It sought to strengthen “lawful order” in Finland that it saw as the best means to defend autonomy. The Finnish liberals were ready to reform the parliamentary system during the nineteenth century, and promoted bicameral parliament that would have created a liberal political system, similar to many other European countries.

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16 Ibid., p. 24.
17 Ibid., pp. 5-6.
18 Ibid., p. 6.
19 Ibid.
At the same time as we will be discovering the impact of liberalism in the reform, we will negatively find out whether the reform was forged according to an agreed pursue of democracy. The hypothesis of the thesis could then be that liberalism did not have much impact on the reform, or that the reform was a breakthrough of democracy in Finland; either way. The approach to studying history through a hypothesis is endorsed by Professor Jorma Kalela. According to Kalela, historical research is “evaluation of the prevailing understanding about historical events”: the historian will weigh authenticity of the claims pertaining to history. The claims about history that are evaluated should not be based only on those made by researchers, but can also be based on everyday thinking about an event, because understanding of a historical event does not arise solely from historical research. In other words, the researcher of history should take into account the history of “lay persons”, too, since the majority of presentation of history are created outside the study of history (in our case, although we are in fact studying the impact of liberalism, the more prevailing understanding of the reform is that it was a breakthrough of democracy – not that it was lacking in liberalism). For Kalela the writing of history is struggle over the dominant position in the discourse. He also discusses the relationship between the interpretations of history and the present. He notes that the aim of all history is to make the present more understandable to the people living in it with the help of “the light of the past”.

I will approach my subject by first seeking to understand what liberalism is and how it manifested itself in Finland. Based on that research I will identify liberalism in the debates leading up to the reform, and will demonstrate what was liberal in the Parliament and Electoral Act. I expect that this approach will help to perceive the impact and the possible existence of political liberalism in the reform process. The thesis also seeks to show what kind of impact liberalism had (i.e. what goals did liberalism want to promote), and also, quite importantly, to understand liberalism.

The sources consist mainly of quite detailed minutes of the committee that drafted the reform bill. The Parliamentary Reform Committee was a multi-party assembly instituted by the Finnish Senate that convened between 8 December 1905 and 28 February 1906, the period of which the sources cover. In the discussions it is possible to distinguish what kind of opinions the committee

22 Kalela, Historiantutkimus ja historia, p. 70.
23 Ibid., p. 36.
24 Ibid., pp. 36-8.
25 Kalela, Historiantutkimusprosessi, Metodinen opas oman ajan historiaprosessille, pp. 23-4.
26 Seitkari, "Eduskunnan uudistus 1906", p. 86.
members held, and see whether they expressed any liberal ones. There exist an original and a transcribed version of the minutes. I will primarily use the original version for reasons of authenticity. The minutes are written in the first place in order to document what was said in the committee, made by a stenographer. The language used in the committee is mostly Finnish, but also Swedish is used. The minutes are the best sources for the purposes of the thesis, since they present motivations and background to the decisions taken. They also show the ideological tendencies of the committee members. The materials have previously been used at least in the three major works that deal with the reform.  

The thesis will thus seek to discern liberalism in the process of making the reform mainly through the reform discussions, and through the committee members. Therefore, I first try to divide the more liberal and the more democratic members via the members’ party memberships. I will then examine their other political background and possible writings or opinions outside the committee. I then look at the members’ utterances in the committee. I will seek to identify liberalism in the reform discussions by relating the committee’s liberal opinions to the manifestations of political liberalism in other European countries, as well as to liberalism’s philosophical framework. The central issue in the committee was the question of the extent of democracy in the new Parliament Act.

One of the main theoretical premises in this work is that what matters in determining a historical event, are the thoughts behind it, as I will concentrate on studying the thoughts that created the Parliament Act. This view is supported by the ideas of Professor R. G. Collingwood (1889-1943). Collingwood distinguishes the study of history from natural sciences and writes in the posthumously published book *The Idea of History* that the object, in history, to be discovered “is not a mere event, but the thought expressed in it.”28 The origin of the event is “the thought in the mind of the person by whose agency the event came about”.29 Finding out an historical event should be about studying the thoughts that influence it. The thought is “the inside of the event itself”. Collingwood maintains, “All history is the history of thought”; the historian is thus looking for “processes of thought” while studying an event.

Collingwood notes: “The history of thought, and therefore all history, is the re-enactment of past thought in the historians own mind.”30 The method that Collingwood is proposing for investigating

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historical events is to “critically re-think the thoughts that are behind the events in the historian’s own mind”.31 The thoughts so formed are thus not immediate experiences, but always “reflection or self-knowledge, the knowledge of oneself as living in these activities.”32 A thought does not solely depend on the “immediacy”, on a certain moment and context. Collingwood remarks: “The peculiarity of thought is that, in addition to occurring here and now in this context, it can sustain itself through a change of context and revive in a different one”, even though the immediacy as such can not be re-enacted.33 “There is no past”, Collingwood writes, “except for a person involved in the historical mode of experience; and for him the past is what he carefully and critically thinks it to be.”34

Furthermore, Collingwood notes that the object of history is “the actions of human beings that have been done in the past.”35 The historian David McCullough says, “Try to find…who were these people. History is about human nature. It's about trying to understand people.”36 Moreover, history is, according to Collingwood, for human self-knowledge: the value of history is that it “teaches us what man has done and thus what man is.”37 I could also add that history can help us understand the world as a human construct.

1.1 Previous Studies

Has the question about the nature of the parliamentary reform been studied before? There have been three major studies conducted in the field of the parliamentary reform. All of these studies do evaluate the question how democratic the outcome of the reform really was. The studies mention universal and equal suffrage as the most important end result of the reform, but the studies differ in evaluations about the extent of democracy that the reform created. Two of the studies have been written in collaboration with the Finnish parliament: that of O. Seitkari’s “Eduskunnan uudistus 1906” in Suomen kansanedustuslaitoksen historia, V; and Juhani Mylly’s Edustuksellisen kansanvallan läpimurto in the series of Suomen eduskunta 100 vuotta, published in 2006. Seitkari’s work was written in 1958 and is one part in the history of national representation of Finland. The

32 Ibid., p. 297.
34 Ibid., p. 155.
36 Manouse, Ernie, InnerVIEWS, [video online], http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N64v5STEPc, 2011-12-14.
“Eduskunnan uudistus 1906” describes systematically what happened in the institutions that performed the reform. The work is insightful and offers sound reasoning of the nature of the reform.

Seitkari discusses the reasons that made the reform possible, and writes that the foremost of them was “the so-called first Russian revolution of 1905”.\(^{38}\) Seitkari claims that without the revolutionary proceedings a bicameral parliament would have probably succeeded the Diet of the Estates in Finland.\(^{39}\) He also states that the unicameral parliament was created so that it would unite the whole nation as a powerful body against possible renewal of the Russian repression.\(^{40}\) Seitkari mentions, however, that those who had supported bicameralism sought to find other ways to instil checks against “tyranny of the majority” into the new system.\(^{41}\) He mentions the desire to secure “minority rights” in the reform, but claims that the so-called Grand Committee, which was a committee that performed some of the tasks normally accorded to an upper chamber, afforded only a pale imitation of a bicameral setting.\(^{42}\) He notes that other measures were more powerful in that regard. The strongest fence against “tyranny of the majority”, according to Seitkari, was that Parliament did not in fact get any new powers, since the Tsar retained all his prerogatives.\(^{43}\)

Juhani Mylly’s *Edustuksellisen kansanvallan läpimurto* follows in the lines of Seitkari, although the work is more detailed. Mylly choose to characterise the reform as a “breakthrough of democracy”, however. He describes the reform as courageous and explains that the reform put Finland, in terms of political modernisation, well ahead of the Scandinavian and Western European countries.\(^{44}\) Mylly lists some of the measures that “the old political elite” sought to implant into the Parliament Act in order to secure its position. These were: party-list proportional representation, the Grand Committee, multistage legislation, the fact that one third of parliament could reject a bill and send it to the next legislative session, and the difficulty to change the constitution (a change had to be left to rest until the next legislative session – a clause that is still valid).\(^ {45}\) Mylly also mentions that the Tsar’s wide prerogatives worked as a shield for the old political elite.\(^ {46}\) Mylly stresses the meaning

\(^{38}\) Seitkari, “Eduskunnan uudistus 1906”, pp. 159-160.
\(^{39}\) Ibid., p. 160.
\(^{40}\) Ibid., pp. 160-1.
\(^{41}\) Ibid., p. 161.
\(^{42}\) Ibid.
\(^{43}\) Ibid.
\(^{44}\) Mylly, Juhani, *Edustuksellisen kansanvallan läpimurto*, 2006, p. 292. [The Breakthrough of Representative Democracy in Finland]
\(^{45}\) Ibid., pp. 293-4.
\(^{46}\) Ibid., p. 294.
of the reform as a breakthrough of democracy in Finland, but adds that parliamentarism did not appear until 1917.\textsuperscript{47}

Jussi Teljo’s \textit{Suomen valtioelämän murros 1905-1908}, is written in 1949 and differs from the other two in that it concentrates on the workings of the first parliament, and does not, for instance, deal with the reform committee. Teljo describes that the first parliament was rife with conflict and worked much less effectively than the Diet had done.\textsuperscript{48} He enumerates reasons for the ineffectiveness and mentions, besides party conflicts, the low level of experience and education of the representatives, the clash between the two political ideologies – that of the “bourgeois” and the socialist, who spoke totally different languages and could not understand each other; and also the difficult policies to deal with. In addition to these reasons Teljo discusses at length the problematic relationship between the Senate and Parliament: the Senate was very cautious and conservative, whereas Parliament would had wanted to advance reforms.\textsuperscript{49} The “constitutional Senate” saw that it and Parliament’s main task was to defend Finland’s constitutional position.\textsuperscript{50}

Teljo does not dismiss the reform as completely lacking in parliamentarism, however. He notes that the reform made the relations between the Senate and Parliament less complicated and straightforward since Parliament could present interpellations to the Senate. Teljo also claims that the Senate and Parliament could have advanced parliamentarism by mutually agreeing to it; the Senate could, for example, have resigned in cases it did not reflect Parliament’s composition.\textsuperscript{51} The discrepancy between the democratically elected Parliament and the autocratic government stirred radicalism: the political programs of the parties could be brought to extremes since the political responsibility remained ultimately with the Tsar.\textsuperscript{52}

Conflicts between the Finnish and the Russian government began a new, and the concentration on the fight against “Russification” prevented development of Parliament, as well as an eruption of a political crisis and societal confrontation.\textsuperscript{53} Societal reforms were hindered and stopped by St. Petersburg; these decisions by the Imperial government were by the Finnish socialists regarded as the results of the machinations of the domestic political elite.\textsuperscript{54} It was not until the First World War

\begin{footnotes}
\item[49] Ibid., p. 233.
\item[50] Ibid., p. 234.
\item[51] Ibid., p. 239.
\item[52] Ibid., p. 241.
\item[53] Ibid., p. 242.
\item[54] Ibid.
\end{footnotes}
and the revolution that the political crisis erupted in Finland – first as a civil war, then as a slow adjustment to the democratic life in the independent country.  

All of these studies thus discuss the lack of democracy in the new parliamentary system. It is interesting that Mylly’s work, which is the most recent one, regards the reform as the most democratic one. It perhaps reflects the views that people currently hold about the reform. Seitkari is the most critical about the level of democracy that the reform created, and Teljo’s understanding of the reform is found in between the two.

The studies mention a conflict of interest between the socialist and the non-socialists political elite in the reform process. The study does not, however, go much further in the evaluations about the two political orientations. Who were the non-socialists, the study does not reveal in any detail. Nor does it ask what was the ideology of the political orientations involved in the reform process, or assess the motivations behind them. This present study seeks to provide more insight into the liberal ideology and its origins in the reform. The study seeks to widen the understanding of the liberal reasoning in the reform process. I thus believe that the study brings new insights into the subject matter by opening up the ideological dimension.

Liberalism in Finland is not a widely studied subject matter. Lolo Krusius-Ahrenberg has, however, done research on the subject. Der Durchbruch des Nationalismus und Liberalismus im Politischen Leben Finnlands 1856-1863 provides certain backgrounds to liberalism in Finland from the period before the reform. Her input to the history of the Finnish Parliament is also helpful in understanding liberalism in Finland. These contributions, however, only cover the period till 1870’s. There is, curiously enough, also a lack of evaluations of the impact of liberalism on politics in general. There are plenty of books on the philosophy or theory of liberalism in the world, but a very few on its real impact on politics. Alan S. Kahan’s Liberalism in Nineteenth Century Europe is the best work I could find on the subject. Kahan has studied parliamentary discussions in England, France, and Germany in the nineteenth century, and anchors his study to the concept of the “discourse of capacity”, which, he argues, was the foundation of liberal political culture in Europe. Pierre Rosanvallon, who himself has dealt with the study of liberalism in politics, notes:

Liberalism as an exercise of political reflection and the so-called liberal state as a political form and as a political practice are not thought to have their own independence. They are taken into account only on the condition that they point somewhere else: the difficult emergence of political democracy or the rise of the capitalist mode of production. […] To

55 Teljo, Suomen valtioelämän murros, p. 242.
this extent, the question of liberalism in French political culture of the nineteenth century is “missing” in contemporary thought.\textsuperscript{56}

Everyone who writes a Master’s thesis has to come in terms with the question about the extent to which one should conform to the conventions of thesis writing. The conventions should form the framework of the study, but never to limit its originality. The composer Matthew Whittall has noted that “his job is not to give the audience what they want, but to give what they did not know.”\textsuperscript{57} In this work I wish to meet expectations that exist about a Master’s thesis, but I also want to provide “the audience” with something they did not know. And I believe that the most important contribution of new that this work is creating is in the broadening of understanding of liberalism in the 1906 parliamentary reform and in Finnish politics at the turn of the century.

\textsuperscript{56} Rosanvallon, Democracy Past and Future, p. 119.

\textsuperscript{57} Yle Radio Yksi 5 March 2012.
2. Confronting Liberalism

Liberalism is a political movement or ideology that is quite difficult to define. Part of the difficulty may derive from liberalism’s position as the pervading dogma of the Western societies. It can be tricky to define something that is so widespread and common and has so many forms of manifestation; liberalism was in the very core of our societies. Liberalism is also full of contradictions that can be seen as a result of its ambiguous position between the left and the right: it could never endorse Jacobinism or the Terror connected with the French revolution, but on the other hand supported enthusiastically the “Declaration of the Rights of Men” and the abolition of the feudal privileges. Liberals, since the French Revolution, opposed all revolutions, but could “never (and never really wanted to) sever their connection with the mother of all European revolutions”. What might be a description of liberalism, a scholar of J. S. Mill writes, that a comprehensive assessment of Mill’s thought is essential to “any evaluation of liberalism itself”, but “such an assessment has proved to be elusive”. In the documentary history of liberalism E. K. Bramsted and K. J. Melhuish describe liberalism as a “complex web that was closely allied with the rise of the middle classes, reflecting self-assertion of especially its upper strata”. Liberalism was a middle class movement and remains ideology-wise in the middle.

This thesis concerns mainly early twentieth century liberalism. Essential for liberalism at that time was its relationship to democracy. Democracy was then a rising ideology, and was rapidly gaining ground. Liberalism had to defend itself, but it was difficult in theoretical terms, since some of the postulates that democracy held were in direct reference to liberal doctrines. “That all men are created equal”, echoed as an essential foundation for both of the political ideologies. But still, the two ideologies saw equality differently. In democratic theory people had equal political rights,

60 Ibid., p. 1.
61 Ibid., pp. 1-2.
which derived from the “natural rights” that men were born with. Political equality was seen differently in liberal theory, which I will seek to shed light on in what follows.

John Locke (1632–1704) is often cited as the “father of liberalism” (and certainly so if you look at liberalism from the American point of view), which is also testified to by the many subsequent liberal writings that follow in the lines of his thought. His thinking will provide a philosophical foundation for this work as well. Those who swear on the maxim of Quentin Skinner would not perhaps agree with using Locke, or any other past liberal theoreticians, as the basis for a work that analyses development in the early twentieth century. Skinner writes, “No agent can eventually be said to have meant or done something which he could never be brought to accept as a correct description of what he had meant or done.” Skinner thus implies that a thinker should not be removed from his or her own period. We therefore have to be careful when using Locke as the provider of the conceptual foundations for this work. Alan Kahan sees using thoughts of past thinkers as a reference in another period possible when it happens in a framework of history of ideas. He notes, however,

While constructing this kind of context may have its own validity, it serves to remove the history of political thought from the history of political action. It illuminates neither Locke’s nor Guizot’s era. No action or idea of Locke’s time could have been motivated by Guizot, and while the ideas of Locke might have been influenced Guizot. Locke has no idea of the political issues central two hundred years later or of the nineteenth-century cultural context. Although Aristotle or Machiavelli both wished to limit the political influence of the masses, their purposes were not the same as those of Guizot.

Is it, then, possible to use past thinkers as a guide to another period’s thinking or not? “Rational reconstruction” versus Skinner’s “historical reconstruction” may provide a solution to the dilemma. Rational reconstruction is a “methodological attitude” for the reconstruction of theoretical knowledge, and has been developed initially by F. P. Ramsey and Rudolf Carnap. Rational reconstruction uses past knowledge as a guide to another period’s thinking. Jürgen Habermas has used rational reconstruction in the social sciences to develop theory of communicative action and reason. Habermas, for example, uses it to show that “the structures of consciousness are ruled by a

64 Macpherson, C., B., notes in The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism (1962) that “the principles which were to become basic to liberal democracy were all developed” in “the political theory and practice of the English seventeenth century”, p. 1.


developmental logic, that it is possible to reconstruct this logic, and that it has universal validity…”69 Habermas believes in the “logic of development of consciousness” in history.70

Habermas wants to “combine an interpretative and explanatory approach to reality, but this approach must be descriptive as well as normative simultaneously. More precisely, this entails a systematic reconstruction of competent subjects’ intuitive knowledge”.71 He seeks to find, with the help of rational reconstruction, “communication and argumentation between (and within) different theory-laden languages.”72 The researcher Jørgen Pedersen notes that “contrary to empirical analytical sciences, which seek to replace pre-theoretical knowledge with a more adequate scientific explanation, reconstructive sciences seek to understand and uncover the structures on which our pre-theoretical knowledge is built.”73 The aim of reconstructive science is to find the “underlying rules and structures as conditions” for the studied phenomena.

Pedersen notes: “one must, so to speak, fetch out the knowledge the actors possess, and of which they are not reflexively aware”.74 In this study I will thus seek out liberal knowledge that the members of the reform committee possess: in studying their thought I adhere to Habermas’ method of looking for a liberal “structure” as a condition to their thinking. In formulating a critical social theory, Habermas says that two frameworks should be constructed with the help of rational reconstruction. The first framework is a synchronic or horizontal analysis in which intuitive, universal knowledge is reconstructed. Habermas wants to reach a normative element through this analysis (of language users), which may serve as a critical standard.75 The second framework is established through a diachronic or vertical reconstruction in which “the historical development of language use is subjected to a thorough reconstruction.”76 In relation to linguistics:

We are becoming increasingly aware of the existence of consciousness structures, which determine our understanding of ourselves and the world around us, and we consider it unlikely that these structures of consciousness are of an ahistorical character. This is why

72 Ibid., p. 460.
73 Ibid., p. 464.
74 Ibid., p. 462.
75 Ibid., p. 467.
76 Ibid.
we need a historical account of the way in which the structures of consciousness embedded in our use of language change over time.\textsuperscript{77}

Habermas recognises potential fallibility of rational reconstruction, however. He writes,

\begin{quote}
All rational reconstructions, like other types of knowledge, have only hypothetical status. There is always the possibility that they rest on a false choice of examples, that they are obscuring and distorting correct intuitions, or, more frequently, that they are overgeneralising individual cases.\textsuperscript{78}
\end{quote}

Richard Rorty has discussed rational reconstruction in relation to the study of history: in comparison to Skinner’s “historical construction” rational reconstruction gives an account of the past thinkers in our terms, in present terms.\textsuperscript{79} Rational reconstruction helps to underline a point of view: “If we want self-justification through conversation with the dead thinkers about our current problems, then we are free to indulge as much of it as we like, as long as we realize that we are doing so.”\textsuperscript{80} There are different contexts in which a thinker’s work can be placed. Rational reconstruction is a way to converse with the past thinkers, aiming at self-justification. Rational reconstructions are usually written in light of some recent work in philosophy, which can “reasonably be said to be about the same question as the great philosopher was discussing”.\textsuperscript{81} If rational reconstructions are “conducted in full knowledge of their anachronism, they are unobjectionable.”\textsuperscript{82}

I will thus seek to establish the liberal framework that the liberal actors depended upon (a vertical analysis). I will also analyse the usage of liberalism of the individual actors in the committee (a synchronic analysis), in which I will take advantage of the vertical framework that I have established. I will hence expect to reach the norms that the liberal members of the committee are applying.

Now it is time to return to Locke. In \textit{The Two Treatises of Government} (1689) he formulates his political postulates. Locke talks about the state of nature as the foundation for a society. In the state of nature the laws of nature reigned, and according to these natural laws a person was free and equal with his peers.\textsuperscript{83} Natural law was the law of reason and “common equity, which is that measure

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{77} Pedersen, “Habermas' Method: Rational Reconstruction”, p. 462.
\item \textsuperscript{78} Habermas, cited in Thomassen, \textit{Guide for the Perplexed: Habermas}, p. 62.
\item \textsuperscript{79} Rorty, et al., eds., \textit{Philosophy in History, Essays on the historiography of philosophy}, p. 54.
\item \textsuperscript{80} \textit{Ibid}.
\item \textsuperscript{81} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 57.
\item \textsuperscript{82} \textit{Ibid}.
\end{itemize}
God has set to the actions of men, for their mutual security.\textsuperscript{84} To remedy some of the grievances that the state of nature caused (like that of the state of war, which stemmed from the breaches of the law), and thus to secure the largest extent of freedom in their lives, men entered by their own consent into a “politic society”.\textsuperscript{85} Locke writes:

> The liberty of man, in society, is to be under no other legislative power, but that established, by consent, in the commonwealth; nor under the dominion of any will, or restraint of any law, but what that legislative shall enact, according to the trust put in it.\textsuperscript{86}

An essence of Locke’s philosophy in the \textit{Second Treatise} is in the notion of “the majority rule” that guarantees freedom to the largest possible extent. The individual that left the state of nature had to relinquish “political power” on behalf of the majority of the community.\textsuperscript{87} The people appointed a legislative body that had the sole power to make laws. That legislative body was formed by the consent of the majority. “And thus every man, by consenting with others to make one body politic under one government, puts himself under an obligation, to every one of that society, to submit to the determination of the majority”, Locke writes.\textsuperscript{88} What is the majority that Locke speaks about? Who are “the people” that form the “body politic”, i.e. can everyone take part in the legislative, or vote? Does Locke really mean that suffrage is to be given to everyone?

Locke leaves the definition of the majority rather open-ended, but in one section of the \textit{Second Treatise} he notes that the legislative should be comprised of those “that have a right to be distinctly represented, which no part of the people, however incorporated, can pretend to, but in proportion to the assistance which it affords to the publick”.\textsuperscript{89} That statement has often been interpreted to indicate that Locke had an elitist view on representation, and that taxation determined the right to take part in political life in the Lockean state.\textsuperscript{90} The question of the majority remains open-ended for Locke, “for the public he addressed and the cause which he served, the universal manhood suffrage was anything but a pressing issue”, but it is rather safe to say that Locke did not advocate universal suffrage.\textsuperscript{91}

\textsuperscript{84} Locke, \textit{The Second Treatise of Civil Government}, Chapter II, Sec. 8.
\textsuperscript{85} This idea was introduced by Plato, and in the modern era developed by Grotius.
\textsuperscript{86} Locke, \textit{The Second Treatise of Civil Government}, Chapter IV, Sec. 22.
\textsuperscript{87} \textit{Ibid.}, Chapter VIII, Sec. 99 and ., Chapter XVI, Sec. 171.
\textsuperscript{88} \textit{Ibid.}, Chapter VIII, Sec. 97.
\textsuperscript{89} \textit{Ibid.}, Chapter XIII, Sec. 158.
\textsuperscript{91} Seliger, Martin in \textit{The Liberal Politics of John Locke}, cited in MacDonald, Virginia, “A Guide to the Interpretation of Locke the Political Theorist”, p. 621.
Locke does not elaborate how extensive powers the legislative would have (this omission might have contributed to the ideological feud between the federalists and republicans in the newly-born U.S), but he does note that a person has freedom to follow his own will in all things, “where the rule prescribes not; and not to be subject to the inconstant, uncertain, unknown, arbitrary will of another man.”\(^92\) It is thus important that the legislative is popularly elected, and that the positive legislation should be limited to the protection of property, life, and liberty, which was the reason that men entered into a “civil society”. Locke notes that people “are absolved from obedience when illegal attempts are made upon their liberties or properties”; and in cases where an individual defends his own rights, he should not be charged, but those who invaded his rights.\(^93\)

Locke’s work revolves around the concept of law; whether natural or civil. He believes that civil, or positive law has to be based on natural laws. “Is a man under the law of nature?” Locke asks, and answers that a man is always under the natural law and free within those boundaries, save in the cases when he has not reached “a state of maturity wherein he might be supposed capable to know that law, that so he might keep his actions within the bounds of it.” When a person has acquired a state of maturity, “he is presumed to know how far that law is to be his guide, and how far he may make use of his freedom, and so comes to have it.”\(^94\) Before that “some body else must guide him, who is presumed to know how far the law allows a liberty.”\(^95\)

The demand of reason in the decision-making was a principle that was greatly utilised by liberals at the turn of the century 1900, too. There was a vast debate among European liberals in the nineteenth century concerning who should be regarded as capable of voting. The alleged inability of being able to govern one’s own life, or the claim of the lack, was one of the strongest arguments against granting of suffrage.

Even though Locke saw people as equal by nature, he did not “understand all sorts of equality”.\(^96\) He acknowledged “precedency of age or virtue” and added that,

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\text{excellency of parts and merit may place others above the common level; birth may subject some, and alliance or benefits others, to pay an observance to those to whom nature, gratitude, or other respects, may have made it due: and yet all this consists with the equality, which all men are in, in respect of jurisdiction or dominion one over another; which was the equality I there spoke of, as proper to the}
\]

\(^92\) Locke, *The Second Treatise of Civil Government*, Chap. IV, Sec. 22.
\(^93\) Ibid., Chap. XIX, Sec. 228.
\(^94\) Ibid., Chap. VI, Sec. 59.
\(^95\) Ibid.
\(^96\) Ibid., Sec. 54.
business in hand, being that equal right, that every man hath, to his natural freedom, without being subjected to the will or authority of any other man.\textsuperscript{97}

Locke thus promoted equality between people in the face of law and rejected repression, but at the same time claimed that society could retain differences in equality. In liberal eyes, everybody was equal and free under the law, but at the same time liberals were ready to tolerate inequality between people, which was based on merit.

Bramsted and Melhuish call liberalism “an attitude” that has sought to “challenge and limit the strength and scope of the powers that be.”\textsuperscript{98} What was the order that liberalism came to challenge?

2.1 Out of the Middle Ages

By the mid-fifteenth century the long-lasting medieval order began to crumble. The post-Hundred Years’ War period was time of “revulsion and reaction”, the time of the fall of Byzantium and the Plague.\textsuperscript{99} The economic hardships forced the structure of the “respublica Christiana” to begin to change, and by the end of the Middle Ages, the controlling power was given to the state, which was harnessed to advance peace in favour of order and material power; and was needed to manage the overseas trade.\textsuperscript{100} The Reformation was beneficial to the King, and for instance in England, the nobility, and the upper middle class accepted the Reformation since it shifted them a considerable bulk of wealth from the church.\textsuperscript{101} In Sweden the King used the Reformation for paying back war debts. The Reformation also represented a new kind of thinking in which vested interests were challenged by individualism.

The English Revolution of 1688 signified a “middle-class rebellion” against absolutism, the results of which included separation of the judiciary from the executive power as well as putting the state finances and the army under the control of an elected legislature. These were acts aiming to secure middle-class political power and property.\textsuperscript{102}

The series of Revolutions between 1770 and 1850 enhanced the position of the middle classes’ in the European societies. Historian Jaques Godechot links the ascendancy of the bourgeoisie to the

\textsuperscript{97} Locke, \textit{The Second Treatise of Civil Government}, Chap. VI, Sec. 59.
\textsuperscript{98} Bramsted and Melhuish, eds., \textit{Western Liberalism}, p. xviii.
\textsuperscript{101} Ibid., p. 38.
\textsuperscript{102} Ibid.
The structure of society, in Western Europe, pushes the bourgeoisie, which holds the financial power, wanting to exercise the real political power, and to its own profit; it leads the farmers to demand the abolishment of the last vestiges of the feudal regime.\textsuperscript{103}

The state was now to serve more and more the interests of the new class. John Locke insisted that God had given the world to the “industrious and rational, and by their own consent the state was there to protect their exploitation of it”.\textsuperscript{104}

The liberalisation of the politico-economic sphere was matched with psychological liberalisation.\textsuperscript{105} An individual was dependant on the markets alone and thus the owner of property could be independent and make decisions based on profitability.\textsuperscript{106} Private and public became separate spheres of life.\textsuperscript{107} The liberalisation was reflected in the new “nuclear family”, where an individual could be her- or himself.\textsuperscript{108} The new family allowed cultivation of skills for their own sake, and at home an inner world freed of any external purposes could find its completion, which was the ideal of “pure humanity”.\textsuperscript{109}

The bourgeoisie world was based on hierarchy, upheld by rules. Those men who held power in the bourgeoisie societies were distinguished by symbols of status, represented in attire, behaviour, morals, and the mode of life: those being also signs of political capacity.\textsuperscript{110} The young George Washington of Virginia, carefully studied the 110 Rules of Civility and Decent Behaviour in Company and Conversation, of which rule number one read: “Every action done in company ought to be with some sign of respect to those who are present.”\textsuperscript{111} Kahan explains that liberal language was spoken in a world in which hierarchy and segregation were an assumption.\textsuperscript{112} Thomas Jefferson, for his part, wrote in connection with slaves in the Notes on the State of Virginia: “Nothing is more certainly written in the book of faith, than that these people are to be free, nor it is

\textsuperscript{103} Godechot, Jacques, Les Révolutions 1770-1799, p. 103. My translation: “La structure de la société, en Europe occidentale, pousse la bourgeoisie, qui détient la puissance financière, à vouloir exercer elle-même, et à son profit, la réalité du pouvoir, elle entraîne les paysans à réclamer la disparition des derniers vestiges de régime féodal”.


\textsuperscript{105} Habermas, Jürgen, Julkisuuden rakennemuutos, 2004, p. 82 [The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society].

\textsuperscript{106} Ibid., p. 83.

\textsuperscript{107} This is a very interesting stream of development that has been dealt with by Habermas, among others. Charles Dickens brings it up in Great Expectations. Wemmick’s character describes his life between home and work like this: “When I go to office, I leave the Castle behind me, and when I come into the Castle, I leave the office behind me.”

\textsuperscript{108} Habermas, Julkisuuden rakennemuutos, p. 83.

\textsuperscript{109} Ibid., p. 84.

\textsuperscript{110} Kahan, Liberalism in Nineteenth Century Europe, p. 154.

\textsuperscript{111} McCullough, David, 1776, 2005, pp. 44-5.

\textsuperscript{112} Kahan, Liberalism in Nineteenth Century Europe, p. 154.
less certain that the two races, equally free, cannot live in the same government.”

People were considered on the one hand equal, but on the other, differences in people were recognised: only those who had the necessary capacities (chiefly expressed by property or/and education, i.e. “intelligence”) could fully exercise their responsibilities in public and private life. “The language of political capacity was considered egalitarian, rightly understood”. The liberal axiom in nineteenth century England was neatly summarised by Lord Palmerston:

We have shown the example of a nation, in which every class of society accepts with cheerfulness the lot which Providence has assigned to it; while at the same time every individual of each class is constantly striving to raise himself in the social scale.

There was a chance of upward social mobility, at least in theory, that liberal societies began to rely upon.

Liberals stressed the importance of good governance, i.e. a government of those with intelligence and virtue. The task of the government was, in turn, to promote virtue and intelligence in the governed, as John Stuart Mill envisioned. A French liberal Senator wrote in the 1880’s that the lower classes were “so backwards, so ignorant, so egoistical, often so corrupt” that they could not be considered capable of government or even administration of their own interests. The liberal ideal was that suffrage was to be based on “free and enlightened judgement”. Those that did not have the capacity were considered dangerous in politics: “One cannot admit everyone to political participation without admitting a quantity of the incapable and the unworthy whose actions will hurt the nation”, the French Senator claimed. At the same time liberalism sought to promote progress. Kahan writes: “Democracy merely wished to give people rights they already possessed, in democratic theory. Liberals wanted to create political capabilities in vast number of people who did not have them.”

113 Cited in Forbes, Pierce, Robert, “‘The Cause of This Blackness’: The Early American Republic and the Construction of Race” in American Nineteenth Century History, Vol. 13, No. 1, March 2012, p. 81.
114 Kahan, Liberalism in Nineteenth Century Europe, p. 156.
115 Ibid., p. 115.
116 Ibid., p. 162.
118 Kahan, Liberalism in Nineteenth Century Europe, p. 119.
119 Ibid., p. 49
120 Ibid., p. 119.
121 Ibid., p. 4.
2.2 Liberalism on the Defensive

Harold J. Laski notes that in the nineteenth century liberalism confronted two rival political ideologies: that of conservatism and socialism. Conservatism, presented for example by Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831) was suspicious of liberal individualism and saw that liberalism could possibly lead to disintegration of nation states. The other attack, which was more essential, came from the socialist front. Laski claims that liberalism was the ideology of the propertied, which left the proletariat in misery. But the proletariat began to organise, and was potentially dangerous. E. J. Hobsbawm remarks that liberalism had no “theoretical defences” against extended democratic rights.\(^\text{122}\) From legal equality, promised in liberalism, there was but a short road to political equality. “The conception of progressive taxation in the interest of the masses then became an essential part of the liberal idea,” Laski writes. “The revolutionary challenge was to be evaded by the gospel which, as Mr. Chamberlain termed it, of ‘ransom’, a gospel which, in essence, was the notion that wealth must justify its possessors by paying for reasonable amenities for the poor,” he adds.\(^\text{123}\)

The Finnish 1906 reform took place in the period of declining liberalism. The first part of the nineteenth century had been the heyday of liberal thinking, both in politics and on the societal front of Europe, but by the end of the century liberalism had give way to democracy. “The democratic consensus” in politics grew initially partly from the liberal theory that emphasised autonomy of the people. “While this consensus largely adopted liberal views of civil rights, ‘it is true that this extension of liberal norms occurred to some extent at the expense of the political and intellectual core of liberalism’”, Kahan notes. Also the bourgeoisie culture was ever more available to everyone. In Finland, for instance, people became more educated and the habit of reading was spreading. In the new thinking everyone was a part of a policy, a nation comprised of the people.

In the period 1866-85, European liberalism began to look “increasingly old and withered”.\(^\text{124}\) Liberals became more and more divided as they disagreed about the right means to remedy the evil of the approaching masses.\(^\text{125}\) Nationalism was hence an additional reason for the disarray in liberalism, since “For the sake of national unity it was problematic that liberalism upheld distinctions between people”.\(^\text{126}\)

Unlike in the past, liberals became ever more unable to “weigh heads”, as Kahan notes, in the evaluation of political capacities, and had to accept the notion of “counting them”\textsuperscript{127}. Liberal language of capacity began to be replaced by the language of rights. “This was a tendency that the language of capacity, i.e. liberalism, could no longer overcome in the late nineteenth century,” Kahan writes.\textsuperscript{128} Liberalism was to be replaced by democracy, but not entirely, surely.

2.3 Liberalism in Finland

Vi tala här om människans frihet att använda sin förmåga och sina krafter.\textsuperscript{129}

“Sök sanningen och afstå ej, förr än du finner och följer den.”\textsuperscript{130}

Economic liberalism became one of the leading societal trends of mid-nineteenth century Finland. Industrialism had slowly made advance, from the 1830’s onwards, and it put wind in the sails of liberalisation. Liberal thoughts made a breakthrough at the executive level of civil servants by the 1840’s, even though the bourgeoisie elite resisted dismantlement of the mercantilist structures till the mid-century.\textsuperscript{131}

One of the earlier advocates of economic liberalisation was Johan Vilhelm Snellman. He was the primus motor behind the Finnish national movement, which drew inspiration from the European national romantic movements, and especially that of Germany’s. Snellman believed that a “nation” had a particular spirit that resided in its language. In Finland it was the majority language Finnish; Swedish was a dying language there, Snellman argued. The people should be educated in their own language and the language of administration ought to be made Finnish.\textsuperscript{132} To “awaken” the people, to provide education, was the best means to reduce poverty. Snellman endorsed freedom of trade under the guidance of the state.\textsuperscript{133}

The Russian defeat in the Crimean War, its subsequent loss of hegemony in Europe, and the change of the Tsar, marked significant developments in the Finnish society and in its attitude towards Russia. The Finns lost their fear and respect for the great Russia, and at the same time the

\textsuperscript{127} Kahan, \textit{Liberalism in Nineteenth Century Europe}, p. 119.

\textsuperscript{128} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 139.

\textsuperscript{129} J. V. Snellman. \textit{We are speaking here of man’s freedom to use his abilities and powers}. My translation.

\textsuperscript{130} \textit{Ibid. Seek the truth and do not stop before you find and follow it}. My translation.

\textsuperscript{131} Kekkonen, Jukka, \textit{Merkantilismista liberalismiin}, 1987. \textit{[From Mercantilism to Liberalism. My translation.]}\textsuperscript{131}


\textsuperscript{133} Kekkonen, \textit{Merkantilismista liberalismiin}, p. 33.
willingness to bring Finland closer to Russia developed into a readiness to take distance. By 1861 Finns defined their territory as a separate state (instead of a province) of the Empire, which illustrates their mood change from pro-Russia to pro-Finland.

When Alexander II became the Tsar of Russia in 1855, dismantlement of mercantilism gained momentum and economic liberalism became the official politics of the country. Snellman sarcastically maintained that suddenly with the accession of the new sovereign “loudmouthed liberals popped up like mushrooms in the rain.” Now there was room for the long-awaited modernisation of the country: politics, as well as economics, needed some urgent measures of reform. The bureaucratic autocracy of Nikolai I was drastically outdated by the end of the Crimean War and the estates demanded clarification for and enlargement of their position, as well as a clearer definition of Finland’s judicial status within the Empire; this political liberalism was common to the spectrum of political opposition.

Snellman was a liberal in his earlier days, but was considered a nationalist by the 1860’s as well as a conservative. This illustrates well the overall change that was taking place in the Finnish politics. In 1859-60, Snellman had a newspaper debate with August Schauman about Finland’s constitution and judicial position in the Russian Empire. Snellman represented government’s view – liberal nationalism that pledged allegiance to the Tsar – whereas Schauman liberal opposition – more inclined to internationalism and Scandinavianism. Scandinavianism was the Romantic Movement, especially strong in Sweden, that believed in brotherhood of all Scandinavian people and aimed at forming of a great Scandinavian union. In the debate Schauman, who used to be a follower of Snellman, formulated the stance of the liberals on the question of nationality. For liberals a nationality was made up of different peoples united by common laws, religion, institutions, history, and interest; whereas Snellman claimed that common language and culture were more important. Snellman thought that institutions and laws could be developed without them being national, and could not, therefore, be the common denominator in forming a stronger nation.

The new, more liberal era, thus meant a revival of politics in Finland: political “parties” of the 1850’s and the beginning of the 1860’s composed of liberals (conservative liberals, which were partly set up of the leading civil servants), young liberals, and “fennomans” (nationalists, who were

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135 Jussila, among others, talks about this in Suomen Suuriruhtinaskunta.
136 Kekkonen, Merkantilismista liberalismiin, p. 106.
137 Ibid., p. 39.
followers of Snellman). The most homogeneous of these groupings was the “ultra-liberals”, which was a wing of the young liberals, strongly influenced by European liberalism.\textsuperscript{139} The ultra-liberals were considered radical and demanded a “lawful order” for the process of the reforms. The liberals argued that the Diet had to take part in the drafting of the bills. After the Crimean War, the young liberals wanted to free Finland from the Russian Empire, and subsequently form a union with Sweden.\textsuperscript{140}

The new Tsar was favourable to the Finnish program that Snellman had outlined. That was seen as a stabilising element against the Swedish influence, and Snellman was appointed to the Senate in 1863. The Senate thus began to change slowly towards becoming “Finnish-minded”. The Finnish-minded, or fennomans, were loyal to the Tsar, and endorsed economic liberalisation. Liberals became the new opposition after the Finnish-minded ascended to the Senate; the liberals’ main agenda was political liberalisation, and as its main feature the demand for constitutional rule. By the 1880’s liberals were not ideologically as homogeneous a group than fennomans. The latter had a remarkably wide appeal and fervour in their activity: Finnish speaking schools, the Finnish Literature Society, Finnish-speaking theatres, and an opera were established with great enthusiasm. The “common cause” connected people to labour with ideological ardour. Liberals did not have that appeal. Snellman called them “bloodless”. Lars-Folke Landgren has described the transition from the bureaucratic-autocratic state as relatively smooth and after the shift liberals lost their central agenda.\textsuperscript{141}

The Finnish liberalism of the early nineteenth century thus was economic in its tone, represented by Snellman. During the 1860’s liberalism had become more state oriented, and more “nationalistic”, having constitutionalism as its main feature.

2.4 Parties in the Diet

With the revival of the Diet in 1863, the division between radical and conservative liberals became less important and the young liberals took the lead in the liberal camp.\textsuperscript{142} At this point liberals planned founding a party organisation, but in the end the young liberals only decided to present a party program. The program was strongly influenced and inspired by John Stuart Mill’s

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\textsuperscript{139}Krusius-Ahrenberg, Lolo, ”Valtiopäiväajatus etsii toteutumistaan, 1856– 1863”, in Suomen Kansanedustuslaitoksen historia, 2, 1981, p. 52. [“The Idea of Diet Coming to Reality”. My translation.]

\textsuperscript{140}Ibid., p. 54.

\textsuperscript{141}Landgen, Lars-Folke, För frihet och framåtskridande, Helsingfors Dagblads etableringsskede 1861-1864, 1995, pp. 23-24. [For Freedom and Progress, Helsingfors Dagblad’s establishment stage from 1861 to 1864. My translation.]

\textsuperscript{142}Krusius-Ahrenberg, ”Säätyedustuslaitos 1850-luvun puolivälistä 1870-luvun loppuun”, p. 106.
\end{flushright}
Considerations on Representative Government, which outlines the principles of modern parliamentarism.\textsuperscript{143}

In the 1882 Diet the fennomans and the liberals were still the largest political groupings, but already in 1885 the “svekomans” had taken over that position from the liberals, although it was in many cases difficult to say whether a person was a supporter of the liberals, the svekomans, or both, since modern political parties were not developed.\textsuperscript{144} In general, however, the language question was now seen as more important than the constitutional one. The svekomans was a political movement that defended the status of the Swedish language in Finland. Both language parties’ had their “liberal” and “conservative” adherents.

A liberal party was founded in 1880 in Finland. The Liberal Party was the first party to publish an official party program in Finland (even though no official party organisation was founded). But the time was already too late for the party to emerge. Major steps towards liberalisation of the economy had been taken; the climax of the period of liberalisation was reached in 1879 when Finland realised full freedom of trade, somewhat later than in most European countries.

The program of the Liberal Party stressed the importance of constitutionalism.\textsuperscript{145} “Our politics is, above all, politics of steadily, on historical grounds, progressing politics of judicial development,” the program stated.\textsuperscript{146} The Liberals wanted a new constitution in which there would be improvements to the functioning and rights of the Diet. They also wanted to develop state administration and to define relations between Russia and Finland more clearly, among other aims.\textsuperscript{147} The Liberals’ goal was to strengthen Finland’s precarious autonomy through especially developing the constitution’s parliamentary requisites. “Legality” thus became the most important agenda for the Liberal Party and mirrored the thinking of its leader, Leo Mechelin.

Snellman resolutely criticised the program, arguing that it was “fundamentally just a contract script between those who had always alone held the education, wealth, and power; to the maintenance of that privilege till eternity.”\textsuperscript{148} The emergence of the Swedish Party meant the beginning of the end

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{143} Landgen, \textit{För frihet och framåtsskridande}, p. 103.

\textsuperscript{144} Tuominen, Uuno, “Säätyedustuslaitos 1880-luvun alusta vuoteen 1906”, in \textit{Suomen kansanedustuslaitoksen historia, III}, 1964, pp. 35-6. [“The Diet of the Estates from the early of the 1880s to the year 1906”. My translation]

\textsuperscript{145} ”Liberaalisen puolueen ohjelma, 1880” in Borg, Olavi, \textit{Suomen puolueet ja puolueohjelmat}, p. 13. [“The Program of the Liberal Party” in \textit{Political Parties and Party Programmes of Finland}. My translation.]


\textsuperscript{147} ”Liberaalisen puolueen ohjelma”, in Borg, \textit{Suomen puolueet ja puolueohjelmat}, pp. 13-14.

\end{footnotesize}
for the Liberals, and already in the 1885 Diet the tide had changed. The Liberal Party faded away, and many of the 53 signatories of the original party program joined the Swedish Party. Liberalism continued its existence especially in the workings of the Swedish party, but had permanently lost its widest appeal.

2.5 New Liberalism

By the 1880’s a “progressive liberal” group inside the fennoman movement had emerged. The group was gathered around the magazine *Valvoja*, founded in 1880. Its driving zeal was to “modernise and civilise the nation, and nationalise the modernisation and civilisation.” The group wanted “to waken the will of free research and create liberal-mindedness in fennomans, and to awaken a national spirit in the Swedish-minded minorities.” The aim of the group was to spread especially cultural liberalism in the nation. The group was found in the political map between radical and conservative fennomans. The group defined itself as “idealistically liberal,” as opposed to “naturalistic liberalism”, which meant that spiritualism and religion were acknowledged and embraced as long as they were practiced in freedom and tolerance. Although the group was well acquainted with the English “democratic liberalism” (for instance J. S. Mill and Charles Darwin), it claimed that liberalism alone was not enough and wanted to combine liberalism with nationalism. By the 1890’s the group called itself the “Young Finns”, as opposed to the “Old Finns”, the original wing of the Finnish party, that were now holding the key government positions. Th. Rein and J. R. Danielson from the parliamentary reform committee, that is a subject of analysis of the thesis, were active members of the Valvoja group.

In the end of the 1870’s a radical democratic group took shape in the University circles of the Finnish movement. It had its roots in the pietism of the province of Ostrobothnia, and it

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153 Vares, Vesa, *Varpuset ja pääskyset, Nuorsuomalaisisuus ja Nuorsuomalainen puolue 1870-luvulta vuoteen 1918*, 2000, p. 28. [*Sparrows and Swallos, The Young Finns and The Young Finnish Party from the 1870s to the year 1918*. My translation.]

154 Mylly, *Edustuksellisen kansanvallan läpimurto*, p. 66.

emphasised a man and a woman’s personal relation to God and criticised consumerism and bourgeois lifestyle.\textsuperscript{156} The movement aimed at social improvements on behalf of the “people”. They also demanded hegemony of the Finnish language and supported the emancipation of women.\textsuperscript{157} They argued that politicians should represent the people. But the support for the movement declined rather quickly and the adherents mostly joined the Young Finns.

The Young Finns represented a new kind of liberalism that concentrated on cultural and social issues instead of constitutional or economic questions. They represented liberalism that Alan Kahan calls “New Liberalism” that developed strongly after 1885, and “adopted democratic rhetoric and was liberal in name only”.\textsuperscript{158} The new liberals of Finland could oftentimes adhere to some aspect of the liberal culture, like being interested in the cultural currents of Europe, but did not share all liberal views on politics. They were more democratic in rhetoric, stressing social reforms through strengthened political participation and calling themselves as “socially liberal”.\textsuperscript{159} An individual was free, they argued, but was to be equipped with a social conscience.\textsuperscript{160} The Young Finns were therefore more willing to elevate the situation of the lower classes than the “real liberals” were.

The party program of the Young Finns in 1894 devoted much space to a proposal of the electoral reform. The Young Finns wanted to extend the suffrage, but their overall electoral suggestions remained quite modest.\textsuperscript{161} The Young Finnish program demanded also wider use of the Finnish language in state connections and setting up of compulsory primary education.\textsuperscript{162} The former radicals of the party demanded nonetheless universal suffrage in the 1885 Diet.\textsuperscript{163} To the 1904 Diet, the Young Finns polled a great victory, and became the biggest “Finnish party”. They represented modernisation and progress that the rising Finnish-speaking middle class could identify with.

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item\textsuperscript{156} Klinge, \textit{Keisarin Suomi}, p. 281.
\item\textsuperscript{157} Vares, \textit{Varpuset ja pääskyset}, pp. 28-31.
\item\textsuperscript{158} Kahan, \textit{Liberalism in Nineteenth Century Europe}, p. 140.
\item\textsuperscript{159} Vares, \textit{Varpuset ja pääskyset}, p. 32.
\item\textsuperscript{160} \textit{Ibid}.
\item\textsuperscript{161} “Nuoren suomenmielisen puolueen ohjelma”, in Borg, \textit{Suomen puolueet ja puolueohjelmat}, p. 23. [“The Party Programme of the Young Finns.” My translation]
\item\textsuperscript{162} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 24.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
3. Background

How did it become possible to execute the 1906 parliamentary reform in a country that had the most outdated system of representation in Europe at the time?\textsuperscript{164} How was it possible to move all at once from the Diet to a unicameral parliament? Why did the old domestic political groupings consent to the reform? And why did the Russians agree to a reform that would strengthen the Finnish autonomy, especially after an intense period of constitutional debacle? There had to be a near revolution to make it all possible. This chapter follows the dramatic events leading up to the reform, and concentrates on the liberal input in influencing the developments.

3.1 Developments in Suffrage and Parliament

The nineteenth century Finnish constitution derived from the Swedish period and granted broad powers to the sovereign in comparison to the estates. The 1772 constitution stated that the King could not pass laws or reverse old ones without consultancy and agreement of the estates, nor could the estates pass or reverse laws without the King.\textsuperscript{165} What was not defined, however, was the concept of law, and in practice only constitutional questions or “matters of general law” were considered as such. Other legislation was treated as “regulations”, which, under the Russian reign, the Grand Duke could pass by administrative action, and thus without hearing the estates, albeit in cooperation with the Finnish Senate (technically an advisory body, appointed by the Grand Duke). The estates did not have the right of legislative initiative, but they could make petitions and complaints.\textsuperscript{166}

Finland had a fifty years period, from 1809 to 1863, when the Diet was not convened at all and decisions were made by administrative action alone. However, this became increasingly complicated after the economy took off in the 1860’s, not least since the estates had to take part in the drafting of legislation that made changes in taxation according to the constitution. The “ultra-liberals” mistrusted the reforms that the new Tsar was initiating because they were not given in


\textsuperscript{166} Ibid., p. 479
“democratic order”, i.e. not in cooperation with the Diet. The ultra-liberals wanted to develop the Finnish constitution, parliamentary system, and autonomy.\textsuperscript{167}

The moderate liberals (a large portion of the younger civil servants and academics) were much more optimistic about Russian willingness to carry out reforms in Finland. They believed that the moment to announce their demand for the assembling of the estates had arrived.\textsuperscript{168} They were pressing quite hard for it; the reconvening of the Diet was the liberals’ predominant aim till 1863. The Diet’s regular functioning was seen as a safeguard against the potentially arbitrary government. Additionally, in 1861, when the coming of the new Diet already dawned, the young liberals called for accountability of the Senate to the estates, regular summoning of the Diet, the right of the estates to present bills, increased financial autonomy for Finland, the abolishment of censorship, clearer separation of powers, the instituting of an ombudsman for the Diet, and the right to use Finnish in schools and state contexts.\textsuperscript{169} The Finnish political elite wanted to have a new constitution that defined new rights for the Diet and reformed the government in order to circumscribe the Governor General’s powers and increase the rights of the estates. The liberals also wanted to define the boundaries between Russia and Finland theoretically.\textsuperscript{170} They stressed, for example, the separateness of the constitutional Grand Duke of Finland and the Tsar of Russia, and considered that Russia and Finland were in union with each other.\textsuperscript{171}

From the 1860’s on, the political leaders realised that franchise had to be extended before long, but there were hopes that the development would be as gradual as possible. The majority of the representatives in the estates did not want to have universal suffrage even in the 1880’s.\textsuperscript{172} The estates also considered it to be wise to be very mellow in the dealings with the Tsar, and did not want to present too radical reform suggestions because they feared that the Tsar then would refrain from accepting any.\textsuperscript{173} It was already a great step forward that the Diet was finally summoned in 1863.

The liberals of the 1860’s demanded that franchise, which was based on property, should be expanded to include, especially, that part of the gentry that was still without the vote, which was an

\textsuperscript{167} Krusius-Ahrenberg, Lolo, \textit{Der Durchbruch des Nationalismus und Liberalismus im Politischen Leben Finnlands 1856-1863}, 1934, p. 70. [\textit{The Breakthrough of Nationalism and Liberalism in the Political Life of Finland from 1856 to 1863}. My translation.]

\textsuperscript{168} Ibid., p. 71.

\textsuperscript{169} Krusius-Ahrenberg, ”Valtiopäiväajatus etsii toteutumistaan, 1856–1863”, pp. 81-2.

\textsuperscript{170} Krusius-Ahrenberg, \textit{Der Durchbruch des Nationalismus und Liberalismus}, p. 16.

\textsuperscript{171} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{172} Tuominen, Uuno, “Äänioikeustaistelut Suomessa 1880-juvulla”, \textit{Historiallinen aikakausikirja}, 1931, p. 13. [“The Struggles over Suffrage in Finland in the 1880s”. My translation.]

\textsuperscript{173} Ibid., pp. 12-3.
estimated one fifth of it. The population growth was, however, strongest in the poorest strata of the population, which fell completely out of the estate system. The young liberals advocated the dismantlement of the Diet, and its replacement with a bicameral parliament. The reform of the parliamentary system was not, however, the most important issue for the liberals at the time. Reinstituting the position of the Diet and indeed the pressing need for new legislation took precedent, and only the estate of the Peasants wanted to petition to reform the parliamentary system in the 1863 Diet. In the 1863 Diet, there highest number of liberals was to be found in the estate of Nobles (an estimated 37% of them).

Instead, the estates petitioned the Grand Duke in the 1863 Diet to reform the system of government; and the Duke gave a promise that committees would be appointed to draft proposals for the reform of the constitution and the government. Tsar Alexander II gave instructions to reforming committees, in which, for instance, the right of the Governor General to act as the President of the Senate had been removed. The reform proposal was not, however, successful in St. Petersburg. The Governor General and members of the Slavophil movement of the late 1860’s rejected it.

In the 1860’s, the golden age of liberalism in Finland, liberals were thus heavily involved in the attempts to advance autonomy and parliamentarism in Finland. They also wanted to develop democracy, even though they saw it primarily in terms of enlarging the rights of the estates in relation to the Grand Duke, rather than just having a larger electoral base.

In the next Diets, in 1872 and 1877, the share of liberals had already significantly decreased. In 1873, a reform of the municipalities extended the right to vote in municipal elections to all tax paying inhabitants, including women, which was an important step towards universal suffrage. These rights were partly extended in state elections to the estate of Burghers, by the government’s initiative, as well, although it did not involve women, and in practice wealthy citizens determined outcome of the elections. Also a number of “rules of exception” were applied and only 6,7% of all city dwellers had the right to vote in state elections in 1900. The situation was even worse in the countryside, where only 4,3% of the population had the voting rights to the estate of Peasants in

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176 Ibid., p. 151.
177 Ibid., p. 130.
178 Ibid., p. 253.
179 Ibid., pp. 326-27.
180 Additionally, in 1900 only 41, 9 % of taxpaying citizen were entitled to vote. Tuominen, “Äänioikeustaistelut Suomessa 1880-luvulla”, p. 5.
1900; votes in this estate were also allotted according to wealth. In 1890 over 70 per cent of the adult population did not belong to any of the estates represented in the Diet.

The domestic political scene became inflamed by the 1880’s. The Finnish party sought to gain majority in the estate of Burghers by expanding its electoral base. The Swedish speakers who had majority in the estates of the Burghers and Nobles fiercely fought back, and during the 1880’s and 1890’s only unsatisfactory compromises in the reform of franchise were reached. Nevertheless, in 1886 the estates obtained the right of petitionary motions, notwithstanding constitutional law.

The first party programme to demand equal and universal suffrage was that of the Labour Party in 1899. The program also called for “perfect equality between men and women”. In 1899 a struggle against Russian laws coming into effect in Finland began as well. In the infamous February Manifesto issued by the Tsar, the re-coordination of the legislative order was now openly announced, which thus meant that some nationwide laws could emanate from Russia. The manifesto was part of the Russian efforts to centralise and streamline the Empire’s policies. In the end, only one law was drafted under the stipulations of the manifesto, the conscription law, for which purpose the manifesto was in the first place given. At this point half of the Senate was against publishing the “unconstitutional manifesto”, which is a good illustration of how the Senate’s allegiances were slowly changing.

3.2 The War and its Consequences

Russia lost the war with Japan in September 1905. The war had resulted in louder and louder calls for reform in Russia, and cleared the ground for revolutionary movements. Russian activists organised a vast workers’ demonstration on 22 January 1905 in which for example social reforms, popular representation, and universal suffrage were requested from the Tsar. The peaceful manifestation was met with violence, and an estimated thousand unarmed workers and members of

183 Seitkari, ”Eduskunnan uudistus 1906”, p. 38.
184 Tuominen. “Säätyedustuslaitos 1880-luvun alusta vuoteen 1906”, p. 43.
185 Borg, Suomen puolueet ja puolueohjelmat, p. 29.
186 Jussila, Suomen Suuriruhtinaskunta.
their families were killed.\textsuperscript{188} The incident became known as the “Bloody Sunday,” and it prompted a series of strikes and demonstrations throughout the Empire.\textsuperscript{189}

The Finnish started demonstrating two days after the Bloody Sunday. The workers and the constitutionalists jointly arranged them.\textsuperscript{190} “The constitutionalists” was an umbrella term for the non-socialist opposition parties and persons that defended Finland’s constitutional autonomy. The demonstrators expressed solidarity with the Russian demonstrators, manifested against the strengthening of the Russian government in Finland, and in general voiced sentiments that were burgeoning against the “dictatorial rule” of the Russian government in Finland.\textsuperscript{191} The Slavophil Governor General Nikolai Bobrikoff put Finland under Martial law in 1903 and was exercising extraordinary powers, under which he could, for example, exile disobedient citizens. Leo Mechelin, the founder of the Liberal Party was among the exiled in 1903-4. Throughout January 1905 people were demonstrating “against autocracy and for freedom”.\textsuperscript{192} There had been terrorism and unrest in Finland since 1901 against the Russians and “their allies”, as the Old Finns were called, and the unfortunate Governor General Bobrikoff was killed in 1904.

Demonstrations and terrorism went on during the spring and summer 1905 and for example in February a well-organised mass rally took place on behalf of the extension of voting rights, in which nine thousand people took part.\textsuperscript{193} In August workers around the country arranged rallies on behalf of franchise and unlimited autonomy for Finland.\textsuperscript{194}

By the second half of 1905, Russia was on the brink of revolution, and on 25 October 1905 a general strike broke out (at this point Leo Mechelin, the leading Finnish liberalist tried to prevent strike’s spreading to Finland).\textsuperscript{195} The Russian general strike pressurised the Tsar to make

\textsuperscript{189} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{190} Already in year 1875, 79 % of city dwellers were workers. Tuominen, “Äänioikeustaistelut Suomessa 1880-luvulla”, p. 10, although it amounted only to about 10 % of the whole population. The constitutionalists consisted of the Young Finns and the Swedish Party, which had been demanding that the rule of law would be restored after the starting of the russification acts. The constitutionalists had also won most seats in the 1904 elections to the Diet.
\textsuperscript{191} Klinge, \textit{Keisarin Suomi}, p. 405.
\textsuperscript{192} Hultin, Tekla, \textit{Päiväkirjani kertoo 1889-1914, I}, 1935, pp. 94-95. [From the Pages of my Diary 1899-1914, I. My translation.]
\textsuperscript{194} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{195} Jussila, Osmo, \textit{Nationalismi ja vallankumous venäläis-suomalaisissa suhteissa 1899-1914}, 1979, p. 66. [Nationalism and revolution : political dividing lines in the Grand Duchy of Finland during the last years of Russian rule]
substantial concession, and in the October Manifesto he promised to give up absolutism and form a Duma with legislative powers.

At the end of October 1905, the Finns started to strike as well. The “Great Strike” was not undesirable for the constitutionalists, since they hoped that it would make Finland’s then Governor General Ivan Obolenski more attentive to their demands, and hence the constitutional activists, among whom many students, were enthusiastically involved in adding fuel to the strike “for freedom”. The Finns were striking essentially for “restoration of autonomy and the rule of law”, and eventually for modernisation of the representative system, as well as for universal suffrage. Once the strike developed, “the bourgeoisie” and the workers fell out, since the Social Democrats were willing to elect a national assembly to decide over the planned parliamentary reform, instead of the Diet. A parliamentary reform was the primary demand of the workers in the strike. The constitutionalists, on the other hand, saw the demand of a national assembly as illegal and revolutionary. The workers distrusted the bourgeoisie, and did not want to grant the prerogative of drafting the reform to the old political elite. It was an absolute imperative for the workers to reach the goal of a unicameral parliament elected in universal and equal vote.

The constitutionalist assured that they agreed on universal (male) suffrage. It had been apparent for the political and social elite for some time that a concession to the policy of universal suffrage would eventually have to be made. One of the reasons that have been offered in explanation as to why the constitutionalists came to accept universal suffrage was that national unity and cohesion was of vital importance to them.

On 4 November the Tsar issued a manifesto in Finland that had been drafted by Leo Mechelin called “a manifesto for restoration of lawful order in Finland”. “The November Manifesto” thus cancelled the extralegal measures that had been taken since 1899 for “Russification” and for controlling of the country. Thus the enforcement of the February Manifesto was interrupted for the time being, and the “dictatorial rights”, i.e. martial law of 1903 was withdrawn. Most importantly, the manifesto promised that a parliament based on universal and equal suffrage would

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196 Nordenstreng, Sigurd, Leo Mechelin, Hans Statstmannagärning och politiska personlighet, Del 2, 1937, pp. 260-61. [Leo Mechelin, His Statesmanship and Political Personality. My translation.]
197 Ibid., pp. 246-279.
198 Jussila, Nationalismi ja vallankumous venäläis-suomalaisissa suhteissa, p. 81.
200 Ibid.
be formed.\textsuperscript{201} It also stipulated that the new parliament would get the right to supervise the lawfulness of the acts of the Senate; that freedom of speech, of assembly, and association would be guaranteed, and it also promised freedom of the press as well as the abolishment of censorship.\textsuperscript{202}

In the strike the constitutionalists thus essentially demanded the restoration of the autonomy, and the workers universal suffrage. The outcome of the strike was therefore a compromise between the two, in which the constitutionalist got restoration of the lawful order and the workers a promise of the universal suffrage. Even though the granting of the universal suffrage could lead in the strengthening of the national sentiment in Finland, it would also weaken the liberals that had been the opposition’s leading group. The people had looked upon the Tsar as a special protector of Finland in the past, which might have also enhanced the Tsar’s confidence in agreeing on the parliamentary reform, so as to regain some of his lost popularity.

3.3 Party Stances on the Reform

The Old Finns had decided to favour a unicameral parliament based on universal and equal suffrage at the outset of the strike – they believed that the promise of a unicameral parliament would be the best way to calm the workers.\textsuperscript{203} The Old Finns were now left in the opposition, and adopted a platform that opposed “the Vikings”, as the adherents of the Swedish Party were popularly called, and, in line with the “Finnish program”, endorsed democracy.\textsuperscript{204} The Old Finns subscribed, in principle, to the Social Democratic idea of a national assembly deciding over the reform, but insisted that the Tsar and the Diet should first recognise it.\textsuperscript{205} The Old Finns endorsed single member electoral districts.\textsuperscript{206}

Many of the Young Finns advocated a bicameral parliament, though they believed that after the Great Strike it was no longer a possibility.\textsuperscript{207} They had to be ready to make concessions to the workers’ demands, or the situation could have deteriorated, thereby threatening their then key position in politics.\textsuperscript{208} There was also genuine support for unicameralism among the Young Finns,

\textsuperscript{201} "Keisarillisen Majesteetin Julistuskirja 4.11.1905".
\textsuperscript{202} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{203} Jussila, \textit{Nationalismi ja vallankumous venäläis-suomalaisissa suhteissa}, p. 80.
\textsuperscript{204} Seitkari, "Eduskunnan uudistus 1906", p. 27.
\textsuperscript{205} Ibid., pp. 26-7. The Old Finns thus rejected the idea in practice.
\textsuperscript{206} Ibid., p. 29.
\textsuperscript{207} Ibid., p. 30.
\textsuperscript{208} Hultin, \textit{Päiväkirjani kertoo I}, p. 246.
especially in the countryside. In any event, the Young Finns supported universal and equal suffrage.

The views of the Swedish Party were in accordance with those of the Young Finns. The Swedish Party was pleased that “legal conditions” were reinstalled by the manifesto and that it was possible to execute the reform. They thought that the idea of a national assembly was “fundamentally too radical”. It was unfortunate, but obvious to the Swedish Party, having held a majority in the estates of the Nobles and the Burghers till 1904, that their dominant position in Finnish politics was to be fundamentally circumscribed. They had to do everything in their power to diminish the effect of the transition of power.

The majority of the members of the Swedish Party advocated a bicameral parliament, in which the upper house would be dominant. R. A. Wrede, who was about to serve in the new Senate, proposed a bicameral set-up, in which the upper house would be composed of the representatives of the estates, and the lower chamber would be elected in equal and universal suffrage and in which the seats would be divided between the cities and the countryside. Emil Schybergson, a future member of the reform committee, noted, however, that even a unicameral parliament could be an option because in Finland most people lived in the countryside and were thus conservative, while the few radicals (workers) lived in the cities. Therefore the actual composition of the unicameral parliament would become rather conservative. He was, however, worried that the population in the countryside had too low a level of civilisation and interest in cultural life.

The Swedish Party decided not to adopt any common platform to the reform; each member was entitled to their personal views and allowed to advocate them in the coming elections to the Diet (which was to decide over the reform). Many “Swedish-minded” thought, however, that the Great Strike had rendered a bicameral parliament impossible.

210 Seitkari, “Eduskunnan uudistus 1906”, p. 34.
211 Ibid.
212 Ibid., p. 35.
213 Ibid., p. 34.
214 Ibid., p. 35.
215 Ibid.
4. To Conserve and Progress

“Who are the liberals? They are all those who have acquired, by an intelligence cultivated through study, a certain development which allows them to imagine an ideal less confused and more fixed than the vague and unclear aspirations which circulate among the masses.”

“Let us recognize that society, in order to govern itself, must be governed not by the numerical majority of individuals, too often exploited by an aristocracy that is the enemy of freedom, and by intrigues which are the enemy of order, but by the majority of real powers, whose independence offers society most guarantees.”

In the previous chapters I have sought to establish a framework for liberalism in which its historical context has been sketched out. This so-called vertical framework serves as the basis for the phenomena studied here. In this chapter I will conduct a “synchronic analysis” in which “intuitive, universal knowledge” of the individual liberal agents is reconstructed. I will seek to identify liberalism in the reform discussions, and analyse its content.

As we have seen, as a prevailing political power liberalism had been declining in the period before 1906. On the other hand, liberalism was firmly established in the constitutional movement that sought to defend Finland’s constitutional position. The dominant form of the late nineteenth century liberalism in Finland sought to strengthen the state, not to work against it. The constitutionalists were the parties in which the liberal ideology was the most discernible in Finland at the time. The Old Finns was a nationalistic party, and to a lesser degree liberal, and the Social Democrats, who had become Marxists-influenced by 1903, was the least liberal of the parties at the time. There were no conservative parties as such, but the liberals, the Swedish Party foremost, represented most conservative views in relation to the reform.

Finland got a new Senate on 4 December 1905, in which the “constitutional parties” had most representatives. The Old Finns resigned to the opposition, but the Social Democrats got their first representative to the Senate, Teacher J. K. Kari. Leo Mechelin became the Vice-President of the Department of Finance and thus held the second most senior position of the Senate. That suggests that the liberals were very much in charge of the political situation at the time. Finnish

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218 According to the 1903 party program, the Social Democrats had as their “most immediate goal”, inter alia, universal and equal suffrage for both genders, proportional representation, unicameral system, and remuneration for all MPs. There were about 45 000 members in the Social Democratic Party in 1905. Borg, *Suomen puolueet ja puolueohjelmat*, pp. 32-6.
219 The Governor General acted as the president of the Senate.
became the primary language of the Senate for the first time (another expression of the language shift is the dramatic change in naming customs – some 100 000 Swedish names were translated into Finnish or replaced by Finnish names).  

Some of Vice-President Mechelin’s friends moaned in the face of the coming reforms. C.G. Estlander, a Professor of Literature and a Swedish-minded liberal wrote to Mechelin on 10 December 1905:

…but also liberalism and expertise become sacrificed in our representation for the sake of a unicameral system with 21-year-old men and women electors; so I venture to maintain that there exists an inner bond between the decline of our old liberal culture and the coming of the new democracy, or in other words that the very society of ours has been injured by too strong compliancy to the so called will of the people.  

Clearly, there existed resistance among the liberals against the large-scale democratisation. But it must be remembered that there was unrest and a real threat of revolution in Finland, and Mechelin was a very skilled politician and no doubt able to see that all the measures available had to be taken so that the prevailing social order could prevail.

Mechelin’s relationship to democracy illustrates liberal thinking in Finland and deserves therefore to be cited here at some length. Mechelin was very interested in the question of democracy and dealt in detail with de Tocqueville’s *Democracy in America* in his professor’s thesis *Om statsförbund och statsunioner*, in 1872. In the beginning of the 1880’s, Mechelin made plans for a reform of representation. It was a plan for a unicameral parliament, not elected in universal suffrage, however, and keeping the estates as the basis of the representation. In the 1882 Diet he defended the unlimited voting scale in the cities, because he thought that the poor people were neither sufficiently independent nor mature enough to vote. In 1897, he had changed his perception somewhat and now promoted bicameral parliament, but not universal suffrage. He commented universal suffrage in these words:

Political science did not recognise the right to vote as a so-called natural right. Franchise was a political function that was granted to citizens to that extent, and according to that organisation, that was proved appropriate. Because public service seemed to be politically educative and built a tie between people and

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223 Ibid.

government, did most constitutions move away from the system of high election census and introduced or moved closer to the system of universal suffrage. This system has in practice, however, shown many downsides.\textsuperscript{225}

Unfortunately Mechelin did not specify the mentioned downsides, but it can be imagined that he shared his friend’s views, quoted above, that democracy would jeopardise true freedom. In 1897 Mechelin was thus ready to dismantle the Diet. He wrote: “Reorganisation of our Diet into a unicameral system is according to us a reform, the need of which is all more obvious to an attentive observer.”\textsuperscript{226} The estate system was quickly becoming outdated by international comparison.

According to Sigurd Nordenstreng the beginning of the “years of oppression”, or of Russification in 1899, convinced Mechelin that a broad basis of the people had to be summoned together in order to built up resistance to Russification.\textsuperscript{227} This could be attained by extending political citizenship to the lower classes. Accordingly by 1902, Mechelin was promoting the idea of universal and equal suffrage.\textsuperscript{228} It is difficult to say what were all the reasons behind his change of mind, but one could imagine that in the atmosphere of the “years of oppression” he saw the tremendous possibility of the unified people. It was important that the Finnish people would appear single-minded. Maybe also the old nationalistic idea of J. V. Snellman’s played a part in Mechelin’s equations: that only people with national consciousness could govern themselves – a consciousness that had now been raised in the resistance to Russification.\textsuperscript{229}

For the elections of the 1904-5 Diet, worker activists agitated forcefully for universal and equal suffrage. In April 1905, Mechelin gave a speech in which he defended “wholesale reform” of Parliament instead of just repairing faults of the old system. He advocated a bicameral parliament or a unicameral one of a type that “has not been seen before” that would bring together advantages of the bicameral parliament, but escape its disadvantages and extend the franchise to women too”, Mechelin argued.\textsuperscript{230} Mechelin’s opinion was rather radical in comparison to the general opinion in the Diet. The Diet designed to perform a reform according to a government proposal in which

\begin{itemize}
  \item\textsuperscript{225} My translation: Statsvetenskapen godkände icke, att den politiska rösträtten vore en av människornas s.k. naturliga rättigheter. Valrätten vore en politisk function, som genom lagstiftningsåtgärd tillerkändes medborgarna i den utsträckning och enligt den organisation som prövades ändamålsenliga. Emedan utövandet av samhällsvärv verkade politisk uppfostrande och bildade ett samband mellan folk och styrelse, hade de flesta statsförfattningar frångått systemet av hög valcensus och infört eller närmast sig systemet av suffrage universel. Detta system hade dock i tillämpningen visat många skuggsidor. Nordenstreng, \textit{Leo Mechelin}, p. 322.
  \item\textsuperscript{226} My translation: Vår lantdags ombildning till ett tvåkammarsystem är enligt vår tanke en reform, vars behövligth et allt mera framträder för den uppmärksamma granskaren. p.322
  \item\textsuperscript{227} Nordenstreng, \textit{Leo Mechelin}, p. 323.
  \item\textsuperscript{228} \textit{Ibid.}
  \item\textsuperscript{229} There exists a proverb in connection to the years of oppression: “The railways and Bobrikoff unified Finland”, in Jussila, \textit{Suomen Siuuruhtinaskunta}, p. 635.
  \item\textsuperscript{230} Nordenstreng, \textit{Leo Mechelin}, p. 324.
\end{itemize}
income boundary that entitled franchise would be lowered, and in which everyone would be given just one vote. The estates decided, however, to postpone the reform till the next Diet.

In a non-dated draft for a program of the reform of representation, Mechelin plans a bicameral system, which “would be the guarantee of highest intelligence and experience in Parliament”. This program is believed to be Mechelin’s proposal given to the reform committee. In the new Senate’s program, there was a remark that unicameral system had become popular in Finland, but that the Senate did not want to bind the committee’s decisions to that. Mechelin seems thus to have preferred a bicameral Parliament, but thought that a version of unicameral system could work too.

It is not without significance that the leading liberal of the country, Leo Mechelin, held so democratic-minded ideas about the suffrage and representation. Many of the liberals at the time were certainly more conservative. For example Robert Hermanson that became the chair of the reform committee, could not endorse universal and equal suffrage even in 1921. Some of Mechelin’s views can possibly be attributed to his political ambitions, since he might have wanted to win political support by endorsing universal suffrage. Mechelin was well connected and cooperated for example with the Young Finns. But it was Mechelin, after all, that was in charge of appointing the reform committee and its chairman.

According to Sigurd Nordenstreng, Mechelin was able to convince his Senate that a unicameral system was recommendable because of the safeguard of proportional elections. The question about the suitable form for the voting system came under discussion in the committee after the endorsement for unicameral Parliament had been decided. The question of electoral system was by far the most discussed topic in the reform committee, reflecting the significance, novelty, and technical nature of choosing such a system.

The final parliamentary reform committee that prepared the bill for the Parliament Act comprised fourteen men and the places were allocated to the existing parties. To the Young Finnish Party were allocated four seats, to the Swedish party four, for the Social Democrats three, and for the Old Finnish Party three in this committee appointed by the Senate. Professor Robert Hermanson of the

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231 Mylly, *Edustuksellisen kansanvallan läpimurto*, p. 91.
237 The committee started to discuss the voting system on 9 December 1905.
Swedish party became the chairman. The other members from the Swedish party were Bank Manager Emil Schybergson, Chief Justice T. J. Boisman, and Bank Manager Felix Heikel. The Young Finns were represented by Professor Emil Nestor Setälä; Author Santeri Alkio; Councillor of State Proper Thiodolf Rein, and Assessor Pehr Evind Svinhufvud. The representatives of the Old Finns were Councillor of State Johan Richard Danielson, Director General Juho Kusti Paasikivi, and Farmer Juho Torppa. The Social Democrats’ seats went to Merchant Heikki Lindroos, Journalist Edvard Valpas, and Journalist Yrjö Sirola. Svinhufvud and Rein had served in the estate of the Nobles; Schybergson, Heikel, Boisman, and Lindroos in the estate of the Burghers; Hermanson, Setälä, and Danielson in the estate of the Clergy; and Torppa in the estate of the Peasants. Everyone from the Swedish Party thus had experience from the Diet, but only one of the Social Democrats. The committee was rather “constitutionalist”, i.e. the majority of the members belonged to a “constitutional party”. As described above, the Swedish Party represented the most traditional liberalism, but also the Young Finns retained a liberal outlook on some issues.

Felix Heikel had been member of the former Liberal Party.238 Emil Schybergson had a reputation for being a “constitutional fighter” and had for that reason been banished to Novgorod for a year in 1904.239 The Young Finns for the most part represented “new liberalism”. Thiodolf Rein was nevertheless more traditional liberal than the other delegates of the Young Finns. He had held a chair in philosophy at the University of Helsinki, as well as the post of the Vice-Chancellor of the University, and was the oldest member of the committee.240 Rein had published a study of John Stuart Mill’s inductive logic in 1868.241 In his philosophy, Rein wanted to understand the relationship between inner and outer existence.242 P. E. Svinhufvud was also known as an active constitutionalist. Rein and Svinhufvud were affiliated with the more nationalist minded Young Finns; Setälä and Alkio with the more “liberal-minded” fraction of the Young Finns, a fraction that was known to endorse parliamentarism and social reforms.243 Alkio was the most democratic one of the Young Finns in the committee in the light of his views in the reform discussions. He had been active in the attempts to improve the plight of smallholders.244

238 Mylly, Edustuksellisen kansantäytyvän läpimurto, p. 107.
239 Ibid.
240 Ibid.
242 Ibid., p. 91.
243 Mylly, Edustuksellisen kansantäytyvän läpimurto, p. 105.
244 Ibid., p. 108.
The Chair, Robert Hermanson, was a close friend of Leo Mechelin, and his ideas were the most doctrinally liberal of the committee members. He represented in many respects nineteenth century liberal thinking and view on politics. Hermanson was a professor of international law at the University of Helsinki, and took active part in the discussions on Finland’s constitutional position in the Russian Empire. He was known as the leading expert on Finnish constitutional law and one of the key figures in the constitutional struggle. ²⁴⁵ His view about the relations between Russia and Finland was in the end of the nineteenth century that Finland and Russia were a “sammansatt stat”, i.e. formed a union, where Russia had a dominating status.²⁴⁶ That view brought him closer to the then conservative Old Finns than Mechelin was. Mechelin argued that Finland was a sovereign state (had constitution of its own) and formed a union with Russia, although the sovereignty was only partial, since Russia was responsible for the common foreign policy.²⁴⁷ When the committee began its workings, the principle of universal and equal suffrage was already agreed upon in the manifesto.

4.1 We Need Intelligentsia in Parliament!

“Electoral laws are the dynasties of national sovereignty.”²⁴⁸

The committee began to discuss the electoral system on 9 and 11 December 1905. During the first day of the debate the delegates concentrated on the vital topics of whether there should be indirect or direct elections to Parliament; and whether there should be proportional representation or majority elections in Finland. The liberals, i.e. the members of the Swedish Party, defended indirect and proportional elections. The Young Finns were on the side of direct, proportional elections; the Old Finns were ambivalent, but seemed to prefer single-member districts combined with indirect elections; and the Social Democrats advocated direct elections with single-member constituencies. The actual opinions were more diverse than this, however, and no party in the committee had a particularly clear stance on the matter during the first days.²⁴⁹

²⁴⁵ Mylly, Edustuksellisen kansanvallan läpimurto, p. 105.
²⁴⁶ Hermanson, Robert, Fredrik, Finlands statsrätsliga ställning, 1892. [The Constitutional Position of Finland. My translation.]
²⁴⁷ Mechelin, Leo, Om statsförbund och statsunioner. Häfte 1, 1873. [Of Confederations and Unions. My translation.]
In the discussion, the Swedish Party stressed the importance of preserving minority rights. For that reason, for example, Schybergson advocated proportional, indirect elections.\textsuperscript{250} The party seemed to be referring on the one hand to the Swedish-speaking population (although it was not audibly mentioned) as the minority, and, on the other, to the “minority of intellectuals”. The “minority of intellectuals” came up in the thinking of J. S. Mill (1806-1873), too, who claimed in 1838 that majority rule without regard to minorities would mean making “one narrow mean type of human nature universal and perpetual, and to crush every influence which tends to the further improvement of man’s intellectual and moral nature.”\textsuperscript{251} Mill insisted that representation had to include all, so that the minorities would be included in representation according to their strength.\textsuperscript{252}

Robert Hermanson insisted that Parliament had to be composed of the “best forces of the nation”.\textsuperscript{253} He favoured indirect elections because the electors would choose with more prudence, i.e. they would elect more “stable”, wiser representatives, he argued. It was, however, not only the fear of revolution and disarray that made the liberals try to get representatives to their liking; they were also defending a way of life that they felt was under attack. In his speech, Hermanson pointed out that minorities should be given a chance to express their opinions alongside the majority. He noted that “Nobody wants to deny the predominance of the majority” and that “One does not want intellectuals to Parliament so that they would get the power, but because the treatment of topics would become more comprehensive and profound.”\textsuperscript{254}

These utterances reflect well some of the key aspects of liberalism. One can discern a conflict in liberalism in relation to majority rule. Liberals dedicated a good part of the nineteenth century to deliberations about the best means to prevent majority repression without sacrificing the majority principle. In the period after the French Revolution liberals thought that the majority rule had to be tempered with the “ability to govern”, which the middle classes exemplified. Liberalism became at once democratic and aristocratic; at once endorsing some aspects of democracy and opposing others.\textsuperscript{255} Liberals generally thought that majority rule meant the rule of the “real powers”; i.e. political power should be given to those who had the capacity to take part in political decision-making. Suffrage was in liberal eyes “a sacred trust conferred for the public good”.\textsuperscript{256} But there

\textsuperscript{250} Schybergson, Emil, Eduskunnanuudistamiskomitean memoriaalipöytäkirjat (from here on: Euk. ptk.), 1905-12-09. [Minutes of the Parliamentary Reform Committee].
\textsuperscript{251} Bramsted, and Melhuish, \textit{Western Liberalism}, p. 24.
\textsuperscript{253} Hermanson, Robert, Euk. ptk., 1905-12-11.
\textsuperscript{254} \textit{Ibid.}, 1905-12-09.
\textsuperscript{255} Kahan, \textit{Liberalism in Nineteenth Century Europe}, p. 4.
\textsuperscript{256} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 24.
were the more democratic liberals, like J. S. Mill, who believed that even people with fewer capacities could take part in politics, if only minorities were included in the representation. Hermanson was forced to accept universal suffrage, but he tried to find ways to ensure the ascent of “superior personalities”, which could hold the lower classes in check.

In the discussion of the electoral system, Hermanson claimed that Parliament should represent all social classes, and become a “reflection of the nation as perfectly as possible”. By these kinds of utterances liberals often meant that political power should be given to those who had social standing. For that reason, it was important for them to listen to public opinion; not to the “mere popular cry”, however, but to the “informed opinion” that reflected the opinion of the educated classes. According to liberal ideal, the educated middle-classes would guide the opinions of other voters and lower classes, as for example James Mill envisioned. J. S. Mill claimed that: “Many have let themselves be guided (which in their best times they always have done) by the counsels and influence of a more highly gifted and instructed One or Few... The honour and glory of the average man is that he is capable of following that initiative; that he can respond internally to wise and noble things, and be led to them with his eyes open.” The rule of the enlightened middle classes would guarantee an ordered and stable progress in society, liberals believed.

Thiodolf Rein of the Young Finns represented a form of “socially oriented liberalism” in the question concerning electoral system. Rein suggested that different corporations, like teachers and universities could send their representatives to Parliament. He thought that it was of paramount importance that not only people’s “sporadic views” were represented, but also “permanent interests”. He preferred a bicameral Parliament and claimed that a unicameral parliament would have to become “less democratic” than the lower chamber in a bicameral system would become. Hermanson agreed and claimed that if Parliament did not contain a country’s “best forces”, it could inflict unpredictable moral and economic losses to the country. Moral values were important for Hermanson, as in general for liberals, a fact that tends to be overlooked. The arguments concerning

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257 Hermanson, Euk. ptk., 1905-12-11.
258 Hultin, Päiväkirjani kertoo I, pp. 269-70.
259 Kahan, Liberalism in Nineteenth Century Europe, p. 31.
260 Bramsted and Melhuish, Western Liberalism, p. 23.
261 Mill, John, Stuart, “Of Individuality, as One of the Elements of Well-Being”, in Bramsted and Melhuish, Western Liberalism, p. 352.
262 Rein, Thiodolf, Euk. ptk., 1905-12-09.
263 Ibid.
264 Ibid.
265 Hermanson, Euk. ptk., 1905-12-11.
moral values seem to derive from natural law. According to that tradition a human being possesses a natural sense of right and wrong. Adam Smith (1723-1790) wrote that moral conduct was based on the sentiment of “natural sympathy between men”; natural laws for Smith were thus connected to social relations, to “propriety and impropriety of conduct”. The moral sense was not an inborn quality in men, but acquired in the relationship with others, led by an invisible hand, Smith argued. In *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* Smith examines the nature of morality in the light of the writings of the “ancient philosophers”. For Plato, for instance, the state of justice, a concept so important for Hermanson too, derived from a harmony between different faculties of the soul. When reason was in harmony with passions, a state of justice could be attained, which was the perfect propriety of conduct. For Plato, justice thus “comprehends in it the perfection of every sort of virtue.” Morality, or perfect conduct, therefore had become an essential part of the societal thinking of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

In the initial stage of the electoral discussions, the delegates in the committee therefore concentrated on the question whether there should be a system to guarantee that the intelligentsia got elected. During the first day, 12 of the 14 members expressed their views on the subject. The Swedish Party was in favour of indirect elections. In the new Parliament, the influence of the Swedish Party would be fundamentally circumscribed, and it was important for them to secure some form of continuity. They could wield political power more easily in the system of indirect elections since things then would stay under party control.

Three of the four Young Finns expressed their views and gave very differing opinions, thus reflecting the overall heterogeneity of the party: Alkio strongly endorsed democracy by talking of the reform in general terms in which he gave his endorsement to single-member electoral districts and unicameral parliament elected by men and women over the age 21; Rein stressed the importance of the “permanent interests” (against momentary passions), and Setälä suggested three men electoral districts. The Old Finns, of whom all spoke in the issue, and the Swedish Party, were the most active in the discussion. Hermanson expressed the most ideologically founded views. His thoughts were also most in accordance with liberal doctrines.

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270 The Young Finns, Euk. ptk., 1905-12-9.
The Social Democrats were notably the least active members during the initial stages of the reform discussions. Two of the three Social Democrats shortly discussed the question, but only expressed the view that the electoral system should not favour the intelligentsia. The Social Democratic members did not have an official permission from the party leadership to take part in the committee, since it was not sure whether the decision to uphold an election strike to the Diet was to be extended to the committee as well.\footnote{Mylly, \textit{Edustuksellisen kansanvallan läpimurto}, p. 109.} The party’s permission came only on January 1906.\footnote{\textit{Ibid}.} It seems that Lindroos, Valpas, and Sirola expressed more personal views prior to that. The ambivalence concerning the reform committee in the Social Democratic party reflected the situation in the party itself: there were those who wanted to be active in the reform process, and those who believed that taking part in the process would force the Social Democrats make too many concessions to the non-socialist parties that they mistrusted.\footnote{Sirola, Yrjö, ed., \textit{Sosiaalidemokraattisen puolueen neljännén (Ylimääräisen) kokouksen (VII:nnen työväenyhdistysten edustajankokouksen) Pöytäkirja}. Tampere, 20-22 November 1905, Tampere: Työväen puoluehallinto, 1906. [The Protocol of the fourth (Extraordinary) meeting of the Social Democratic Party. My translation.]} The majority of the Social Democrats did not think that they had a fair chance to influence the reform in the Diet that was to decide over the reform. They believed that another general strike would be a more effective way to get what they wanted, which was, above all, a unicameral Parliament.\footnote{Sirola, \textit{Sosiaalidemokraattisen puolueen neljännén (Ylimääräisen) kokouksen Pöytäkirja}.} Did not the Social Democrats recognise that the crucial place to influence the reform was not in the Diet, but in the small reform committee?

During the following sessions of the electoral discussion, the delegates talked about the differences between the inhabitants of cities and the people living in the countryside, and asked if and how it should be reflected in the electoral system. In the cities a large part of the gentry resided, but also the workers. Felix Heikel wanted to give cities proportionally higher representation than the countryside.\footnote{Heikel, Felix, Euk. ptk. 1905-12-11.} Schybergson, on the other hand, believed that cities should not get more representatives since people in the countryside were “more conservative and reasonable”. He believed that the vote turnout would in any case be higher in the cities than in the countryside.\footnote{Schybergson, Euk. ptk. 1905-12-12.} Boisman from the Swedish Party, noted that it was not the industrial workers that would decide the elections, but the rural population. He claimed that the best way to preserve the “cultural interests” was to install appropriate eligibility regulations, not indirect elections.\footnote{Boisman, T, J, Euk. ptk., 1905-12-12.} Paasikivi of the Old Finns noted that there would be nothing wrong in that that the farmers’ rights got a more substantial
position in the new Parliament, since it was the most important occupation in the country; and when the industry grew, it would naturally get more representatives too. Rein wanted to favour the cities. In the end, the argument about favouring the cities seemed to be dying away, since most delegates of the Swedish Party could not believe in the cities’ superior conservatism.

4.2 Are Minority Rights Guaranteed?

“The natural liberty of man is to be free from any superior power on earth, and not to be under the will or legislative authority of man, but to have only the law of nature for his rule.”

The discussion about the electoral system continued between 18 and 21 December. The committee received proposals for the election law from three experts: Professor Valfrid Vasenius, Professor Theodor Homén, and Doctor Georg von Wendt. Vasenius proposed single-member districts, so that voters could be part of local constituencies or form constituencies of their own. The system was, he claimed, both democratic and at the same time give minorities a chance to win seats by forming independent constituencies. Theodor Homén, a Young Finn, proposed a system based on geographical proportional elections, in which votes would be allocated according to d’Hondt’s distribution method. The number of representatives per district would be three, and votes would be given to three candidates in order of preference. Georg von Wendt, a member of the Swedish Party, proposed a system based on voluntary voter associations. He suggested that the voter associations could be divided along ideological and local lines. In this system minorities would have a chance to win seats by their own activity. The whole country would act as one constituency, so that proportionality would be best realised. He had quite strict eligibility requirements for voters; people in bankruptcy and those under guardianship or supported by the state could not vote. Valfrid Vasenius noted that the prevailing demand was to find a system that would fend against repression of the majority. That shows that the proposals came from the old political elite.

278 Paasikivi, Juho, Kusti, Euk. ptk., 1905-12-12..
279 Robert Hermanson citing this in Oikeus ja uskonnolliset totuudet, p. 6. Will or Violence is not the land’s law. My translation.
281 Mylly, Edustuksellisen kansanvallan läpimurto, p. 168.
282 Ibid., p. 173.
283 Ibid., pp. 174-5.
284 Ibid., p. 174.
286 Vasenius, Valfrid, Euk. ptk., 1905-12-18.
The expert proposals stirred a debate about the minorities in the committee. Paasikivi of the Old Finns, for instance, stated the important thing in the electoral law was that the larger minorities were not repressed. For that reason, he preferred Homén’s proposal, but thought that instead of three men, there should be four to five men electoral districts. He did not endorse Heikel’s proposal of indirect elections, since “it was easy to persuade and impact isolated electorates”. Nor did he endorse Heikel’s proposal to divide cities and the countryside into separate districts, without regard to population size.\footnote{Paasikivi, Euk. ptk., 1905-12-19.} Schybergson criticised Wendt’s proposal on the grounds that it “did not provide enough guarantees” – it could be exploited by the socialists.\footnote{Schybergson, Euk. ptk., 1905-12-19.} Schybergson was in favour of Vasenius’ proposal, but in case Homén’s proposal was to be used, five men electoral districts should be formed, and three men in the countryside.\footnote{Schybergson, Euk. ptk., 1905-12-19.} Setälä thought that Homén’s proposal of proportional elections was the “best that far”. It should be improved so that representation of small minorities was secured, however. He thought that Wendt’s proposal was “not bad at all”, even though more active constituencies would get the upper hand in it, but “it was just after all”.\footnote{Setälä, Emil, Euk. ptk., 1905-12-19.}

On 20 December, Schybergson of the Swedish Party had changed his mind, and now said that it would be better to form single-candidate districts, “in order to protect minorities”, if only the districts were small enough.\footnote{Schybergson, Euk. ptk., 1905-12-20.} Juho Torppa from the Old Finns defended majority elections forcibly again, but also stated that he could accept three men districts at most.\footnote{Torppa, Juho, Euk. ptk., 1905-12-20.} The Social Democrat Yrjö Sirola said that he would align with Torppa in that three men districts were the largest he could accept.\footnote{Sirola, Yrjö, Euk. ptk., 1905-12-20.} Boisman of the Swedish Party thought that Wendt and Vasenius’ proposals would favour women voters, something he regarded as unfortunate.\footnote{Boisman propaply thought that women could exploit the system, Boisman, Euk. ptk., 1905-12-20.} The Social Democrat Heikki Lindroos also thought that Homén’s proposal was the best, “even though it did not guarantee representation of the minorities”, but he endorsed it because he saw it as the simplest proposal of them all. He argued that there should be two to four men districts according to population size and that the Swedish speaking districts should have separate constituencies.\footnote{Lindroos, Heikki, Euk. ptk., 1905-12-20.} Santeri Alkio from the Young Finns was now of the opinion that one-man districts would infict conflict in the population, and therefore endorsed three men districts. In addition, there should be freedom to form free electoral districts, he added. He thought that the Swedish speaking and the
Finnish speaking districts should be separated so that there would be no more need for the language fight. 296

Thus the opinions were diverse and changing and new proposals were still made in addition to the expert ones. Heikel, who was well acquainted with the electoral question, presented three points that he claimed had to be taken into consideration in the making of the reform. Firstly, he said, all the parties and different ideologies had to be represented according to their strength; that is why proportional elections were the best solution. Secondly, it had to be ensured that able and principled men would get elected; and, thirdly, that the electoral system would be simple and easy to understand. 297

In similar vein, Mill argued that representative government had to be “representative of all” in which “the interests, the opinions, the grades of intellect which are outnumbered would nevertheless be heard”. 298 Mill argued that democracy should be organised so that “no single class” could usurp the system to its sole benefit. 299 He stressed the importance of “popular government”, but listed a number of features that in his opinion disqualified from the franchise. Non-payment of taxes or illiteracy, for instance, were in Mill’s opinion reasons for disenfranchisement, although he at the same time maintained that no one should loose his vote, except “through their own default”. 300

Rein, on the other hand, noted that “it had been claimed that representation was just, only if all the parties and ideologies would be represented according to their strength in the nation”, though he did not believe in that thought. 301 His view was that the main purpose of the reform should be that experienced persons and those who were “worthy” of the task would offer independent opinions and reasoning. He did not believe in proportional elections, because they would just bring in “party people”, and instead wanted impartial representatives. Rein was thus less democratic than Mill. Somewhat surprising and inconsistent, Rein however admitted that proportional elections were necessary in order to protect minority rights, and in the end gave his endorsement to Homén’s model. 302

Rein’s opinion can also be seen as contrasting to his view earlier in which he calls for different corporations to have their representation in Parliament. Can Rein said to have been a socially

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296 Alkio, Santeri, Euk. ptk., 1905-12-20.
297 Heikel, Euk. ptk., 1905-12-19.
299 Ibid., pp. 326-7.
300 Ibid., pp. 329-333.
301 Rein, Euk. ptk., 1905-12-20. My translation: Det har påståts att representation endast då är rättvist sammansatt ifall de skilda partierna, meningsriktningarna i landet äro representerade där i förhållande till sin styrka.”
302 Rein, Euk. ptk., 1905-12-20.
oriented liberal, or an individualist liberal? The contradiction in Rein’s speech perhaps indicates that Rein was not a highly doctrinal liberal: in the committee he did not present a very clearly formulated vision concerning suffrage and representation. Rein, as well as Heikel, Schybergson, and Boisman, had adopted liberalism as their political ideology, but had not formulated a doctrinal version of it. Only Hermanson never contradicted himself. This suggests that the other liberals were politicians in relation to their political ideology; Hermanson, on the other hand, had developed a distinguishable political philosophy that made him consistent in the committee.

Hermanson preferred von Wendt’s proposal because it “ensured representation for small minorities”. He was, nevertheless, doubtful whether the system could work purposefully in Finland, which was sparsely populated and “underdeveloped”. Hermanson said that he supported Homén’s proportional election proposal with the improvement that Heikel had suggested, and then offered a long argument on behalf of indirect elections that “were opposed by so many”. He thought that “the task of the legislator was to uphold such an order in society that every member of it could work towards those goals that Providence had ordained them to fulfil. In order to fulfil their tasks, citizens should be allowed to perfect their faculties and qualities and to work together with others in associations, and in the state.” He added “that it was natural and possible in such a system, a principle almost already universally acknowledged, that the so called lower stratums of society could climb upwards, develop, act, and improve their economical situation. This was right and simultaneously required by justice. What kind of state arrangement, and what kind of changes there should be made to the political order, so that all actions of the citizens would be based on higher, natural order, and made possible?” he asked, and noted that it would not be easy for individual citizens to say. There ought to be wise men to scrutinise all the impacts of political actions, and, most importantly, the men who negotiated and decided over those kinds of issues had to be honest and conscientious men and have the courage to follow their conscience.\(^\text{303}\)

In his opinion, there seemed to be some ideologies that were “forgetting these simple truths” that he had just presented. He meant those who “claimed to represent the will of the people” and who believed that knowing it, sufficed for the task of a representative alone. He could not understand the idea that it was enough for a good legislator to act according to the “will” of the people. In his opinion laws had to be based on the more lasting principles of justice.\(^\text{304}\) There could be completely

\(^{303}\) Hermanson, Euk. ptk., 1905-12-20.  
\(^{304}\) Hermanson, Oikeus ja uskonolliset totuudet, p. 6. According to the general perception, that preceded the democratic thinking of the twentieth century, a law was just by definition. Schröder, Jan, “The Concept of (Natural) Law in the Doctrine of Law and Natural Law of the Early Modern Era”, in Daston, Lorraine and Stolleis, Michael, eds.,
opposite opinions among the people, he said, and continued to argue that even if “general opinion” were to be found, it could be dangerous to listen to it, since first of all there was always a substantial number of people who could not agree with the view and on top of that the general opinion was seldom the outcome of calm and profound deliberation. There would have to be a parliament that had the people’s trust, it would have to mirror the whole nation, and it would have to be able to make calm and wise decisions.  

Hermanson believed that the best means to attain this kind of parliament was to have two different election methods. Almost everyone was to be enfranchised and it was not likely that everyone could know all the candidates and evaluate their abilities, he argued. Newspapers, for one, were biased. “Would it not be wise to institute another election method through which we would get another constituency that would be more skilful in judgement as to whom should be elected as deputies?” he asked referring to indirect elections. These electors could be selected while applying universal and equal suffrage so as not to arouse suspicion in the people. Nowhere in the world had a political system gone as far as Finland was going, and for that reason Parliament had to be capable of guarding the best interest of the nation, or else the consequences could be disastrous, he claimed.

It was again Hermanson, and to an extent Rein that presented the most ideologically founded views in the discussion. Rein stressed the importance of experience and impartiality of representatives. Hermanson’s thinking that Providence or God had established “an order” that should be completed in people’s lives was quite unique. He most definitely had an original philosophy that he applied in the committee. The philosophy was original especially in the point that talked about people’s vocations, which became possible to follow through a carefully constructed judicial order; this was the essence of the concept of justice for Hermanson. A person’s vocation was the “highest good” that was meant to the person; not according to his own measures alone, but also according to the ideal of the person. The calling was a sort of a “metaphysical instinct” that the person possessed.

This thinking is again related to the concept of natural laws. What exactly were the “natural laws”? It is quite difficult to give a comprehensive response (which seems to be the case with most things related to liberalism), but, to begin with, it can be said that the thinking of natural laws derives from

Natural Law and Laws of Nature in Early Modern Europe: Jurisprudence, Theology, Moral and Natural Philosophy, 2008, p. 58.

305 Hermanson, Euk. ptk., 1905-12-20.
306 Ibid.
307 Hermanson, Oikeus ja uskonnolliset totuudet, pp. 164-175.
308 Hermanson, Oikeus ja uskonnolliset totuudet, p. 182.
the age-old idea that universe, God, or gods established laws that people should follow in their lives. Natural laws, related to jurisprudence, “variously derived from universal human nature, the dictates imprinted by God in the human heart, or the participation of rational creatures in the divine lex aeterna.”\textsuperscript{309} The presocratic philosopher Heraclitus wrote: “all the laws of men are nourished by one law, the divine law.”\textsuperscript{310} The ancient thinking of natural laws was revived in seventeenth century Europe. The desire to find “certain and calculable rules” for the social realm, as were emerging in natural sciences \textsuperscript{311}, was connected to the development of nation states, and the general tendency to attempt to find order in the universe. Locke wrote: “Thus the law of Nature stands as an eternal rule to all men, legislators as well as others…The rules that they make for other men’s actions, be conformable to the law of Nature, i.e., to the will of God, of which that is a declaration...”\textsuperscript{312} By the eighteenth century natural laws were perceived as an order that was initiated by God, but legal norms were at the same time in the process of secularisation, and legal and philosophic theorists thought that God did not necessarily take part in the world, but had imprinted the laws into the “nature of things”.\textsuperscript{313} Natural laws in the eighteenth century emphasised the role of the human himself, instead of God, as the executor of the laws.\textsuperscript{314} Legal theory was based on natural law especially in the eighteenth century, but was still practiced in the nineteenth.\textsuperscript{315}

Natural laws that were followed in jurisprudence were thus based on the “lasting principles of human nature”. Some sources emphasise moral aspects that stem from following the natural laws because morality was “grounded in human nature”.\textsuperscript{316} In the same way these regularities, or laws, have been under study in natural philosophy, i.e. in the physical nature. The thinking has persisted in the “natural sciences”, but lost ground in jurisprudence.

Liberal philosophers have understood the character of natural law in different ways. Samuel von Pufendorf believed that natural laws derived from the “disposition of man”.\textsuperscript{317} In order to preserve himself, a man had to cherish and adapt to “laws of sociability”, which were thus the fundamental,

\textsuperscript{312} Locke, John, “Of the Extent of the Legislative Power” in Bramsted and Melhuish, \textit{Western Liberalism}, p. 178.
\textsuperscript{313} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{315} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 50.
natural law.  \textsuperscript{318} God was the initiator of natural laws, since he had “enjoined upon the human race that they observe those dictates of the reason” manifested in the natural law.  \textsuperscript{319} Leibniz also attempted to derive a code of laws from the human nature. \textsuperscript{320} And to Montesquieu natural law was the law that human nature recommended as “reasonable”. \textsuperscript{321}

In Hermanson’s times “the laws of jurisprudence” and “the laws of natural sciences” were growing rapidly apart, and judicial laws were perceived more and more as culturally based and therefore “in order to justify a legal order it was no longer enough to invoke God”. \textsuperscript{322} Legal positivism was gaining ground. There are different definitions and understandings of legal positivism too. It refers, at least, to “positing of ordinances”. This means that a legal system depends on the formulated laws within a system, and it thus encourages the practice of constitutionalism, as well as the belief in the written law in general. In positivism “the existence of laws depends, then, upon their being established through decisions of human beings in society”. \textsuperscript{323} Does positivism therefore contradict natural law? Some scholars do take that stand. \textsuperscript{324} Others claim that according to positivism any legal system could be recognised as authoritative, and thus positivism does not necessarily contradict natural law. \textsuperscript{325} Modern critics of positivism have often seen the separation between law and morality as a weakness of legal positivism, however. \textsuperscript{326}

Ironically, Robert Hermanson is considered to be the person who introduced German positivism to Finland. \textsuperscript{327} German positivism emphasised the role of the state. Positivism was a suitable legal approach to Finnish constitutionalists that wanted to ascertain the stability of the legal order in Finland. But as mentioned, positivism does not necessarily exclude the application of natural law. Norberto Bobbio has defined three different types of legal positivism, of which one is “ideological

\textsuperscript{319} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{320} Daston and Stolleis, “Nature, Law, and Natural Law in Early Modern Europe”, p. 6.
\textsuperscript{321} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 50.
\textsuperscript{324} For example see Pino, “The Place of Legal Positivism in Contemporary Constitutional States”, \textit{Law and Philosophy}.
\textsuperscript{326} Pino, “The Place of Legal Positivism in Contemporary Constitutional States”, \textit{Law and Philosophy}, p. 525.
positivism”. One strand of ideological positivism regards the positive law as just, and “tends to grant moral value to the state”. Hermanson can be said to subscribe to this moral version of positivism. Hermanson wanted to combine a conscience that derived from God with the legislated state order; he wanted to supplement positive law with natural rights thinking, or vice versa. This attitude was not uncommon among Western liberals in Europe. For liberals, there was the problem of “natural rights” (often written declarations of rights, like the “Declaration of Rights of Man”), thinking that derived from the tradition of natural law. Hermanson was not convinced that the influence of natural rights thinking had been altogether positive; in fact it had even been abused in revolutions. Hermanson regarded these deviations as undermining the thinking of natural laws: the foundations of natural law had become uncertain. In politics the argument about rights were utilized by those who promoted democracy, who in essence believed that everyone had the right to take part in politics. Hermanson continued to see “something right” in natural laws, however, and claimed that it was important to understand the concepts of law and justice rightly. Further, he believed in the metaphysical existence of just and right, whether it was expressed in the positive law, or not. Hermanson therefore sought after a synthesis between positive and natural law.

The reform committee was in the end siding overwhelmingly with Homén’s proposal, “because it was the most practical” and also the most predictable and therefore could not be abused by “arbitrary groups”. All delegates, save Heikel and Hermanson, now abandoned the idea of indirect elections. As far as can be derived from the discussions, the majority of the Old Finns were on the side of larger districts, the Young Finns on the side of larger than single member districts, the majority of the Social Democrats endorsed single members districts; and the Swedish Party seemed to be tilting towards single member districts. A very divided committee indeed.

The committee finally decided in favour of the three member districts, but so that there could be single-member districts in the cities and in the Swedish speaking regions. Heikel’s proposal of indirect elections was abandoned. The decision was thus a compromise. During these the fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh days of the electoral discussion, the delegates therefore seemed to be finally reaching a decision about a suitable system. On 21 December, the committee decided to appoint a

328 Pino, “The Place of Legal Positivism in Contemporary Constitutional States”, p. 517.
329 Ibid., pp. 518, 521.
330 Hermanson, Robert, Oikeus ja uskonnolliset totuudet, p. 115.
331 Ibid., pp. 110-11.
333 Ibid., p. 115.
334 Ibid., p. 116.
delegation to prepare the division of electoral districts.335 It was comprised of Homén, Alkio, and Torppa. Heikel still wanted to remind the delegation of all the most important points that should be included in their proposal, and consequently the debate continued. Heikel underlined that the Swedish- and the Finnish-speaking areas ought to be separate districts, cities should get relatively higher representation, and different economical interests ought to be separated.336 Paasikivi replied that, in his opinion, cities could form separate districts, but solely on the basis of the size of population, not because of special interests, or else political conflicts could arise.337 Heikel noted that in Sweden and Norway cities had been given pre-eminence over the countryside; in other countries it was not necessary since the cities were more populated. Danielson said that the system had already caused quarrels in Sweden and Norway.338 Heikel considered that abandoning the three men districts in order to get “suitable electoral districts” could solve the problem.339 The committee decided that cities would form separate districts in cases where the size of the population was “close enough to sufficient”.340

The delegation did not manage to conclude its work, however, and on 10 January the committee decided to appoint a subcommittee to prepare the Electoral Bill.341 From the discussions it becomes clear that the whole committee was now more or less on the side of proportional elections, and on 16 January even Schybergson yielded.342 Homén, von Wendt, mathematician Ernst Lindelöf, and Johan Serlachius, a former senator who worked as a legal assistant to the committee, were appointed to the subcommittee.343 The subcommittee presented a proposal on 15 January. It suggested setting up of 15 constituencies, in which 12-21 representatives would be elected according to the size of population. Homén and von Wendt argued that in the larger constituencies proportionality would work best.344 Parties and other groups could form lists of maximum five candidates and the voter would then vote for three candidates in an order of preference.345 Seats would be allocated according to parties or groups’ overall votes, so that the candidate that had most

335 Mylly, Edustuksellisen kansanvallan läpimurto, p. 181.
336 Heikel, Euk. ptk., 1905-12-21.
337 Paasikivi, Euk. ptk., 1905-12-21.
338 Danielson, Johan, Richard, Euk. ptk., 1905-12-21.
339 Heikel, Euk. ptk., 1905-12-21.
340 The committee, Euk. ptk., 1905-12-21.
341 Mylly, Edustuksellisen kansanvallan läpimurto, p. 182.
342 The committee, Euk. ptk., 1906-1-10 and 1906-1-16.
343 Mylly, Edustuksellisen kansanvallan läpimurto, p. 182.
344 Ibid.
345 Ibid. One vote for the first candidate, half a vote for the second, and three thirds a vote for the third candidate.
votes would get the highest distribution figure of the party, the second half of it, and so on, according to d’Hondt’s calculation method.\textsuperscript{346}

The proposal was, however, not universally endorsed in the committee, and the debate about the right size of constituencies continued, not least since some of the delegates still preferred three men constituencies. It is interesting to note that in these discussions Sirola admitted that the Social Democrats would have better chances in a system of single-member constituencies, but that he still had decided to support “a more proportional setting” because of the “principle of justice”.\textsuperscript{347} By this time the Social Democrats had gotten permission from the party leadership to take part in the committee, and the official stance of the party was to endorse proportional elections. At the Social Democratic Party Congress on 20-22 November 1905, it was noted that an “agrarian parliament” was by no means desirable for the Social Democrats, since the countryside was “conservative”, and constituted “henchmen of capitalism”.\textsuperscript{348} The decision to endorse proportional elections was most likely a consequence of considerations like this. Sirola, Lindroos, and Valpas now all endorsed big constituencies. It is interesting that both the socialists and liberals could support proportional elections, although for different reasons. The majority of the committee thus now supported the subcommittee’s proposal. In the end, it was only the Old Finns and Alkio that voted against it.\textsuperscript{349}

The electoral system decided upon looked a lot like the one Mechelin planned in the beginning of the process. Proportional elections could therefore be regarded as a liberal victory. The system was not as cautious as Hermanson would have desired, but it did provide checks against the “repression of the majority”, which was the distinctly liberal argument. In the “justifications”, an annex to the reform proposal, the argument was also explicitly used.\textsuperscript{350} The main point in the reform was, so the text read, that the best forces of the nation would not be excluded from Parliament, even though the majority had the decision-making authority.\textsuperscript{351} Parliament should always reflect the nation as a whole, and reflect its aspirations, interests, and pursuits.\textsuperscript{352}

The motivations for the Social Democrats endorsing proportional elections were, as we have seen, different from those of the liberals. Yrjö Sirola and the other Social Democrats did not take part in

\textsuperscript{346}Mylly, \textit{Edustuksellisen kansanvallan läpimurto}, pp. 182-3.
\textsuperscript{347}Sirola, Euk. ptk., 1906-1-16.
\textsuperscript{349}Mylly, \textit{Edustuksellisen kansanvallan läpimurto}, p. 186.
\textsuperscript{351}Ibid., p. 58.
\textsuperscript{352}Ibid.
the drafting of the “justifications” to the bill. In the “protests” to the bill Sirola wrote that “suspensions were aroused” when in the justification it was written that proportional elections would avert “dangers” of the unicameral system. Furthermore, he did not want that the Electoral Law to become a constitution, since it would then be that it would be much more difficult to change it in case it proved unjust. Finally, it was only the Old Finns that would have preferred single-member districts. They expected them to be advantageous to the party in the countryside.

4.3 A Bicameral Parliament after All?

“Remember, you are accountable to you Maker for all your words and actions.”

The issue that the committee handled first, was the question whether Parliament ought to be uni- or bicameral. The question had been left open in the manifesto, but unicameralism was an “imperative requirement” for the Social Democrats and had been, according to them, promised by all the non-socialist parties. The question concerning the number of chambers was discussed in the committee on 8 and 9 December 1905.

There was no consensus on unicameralism, however. There were still delegates that favoured a bicameral solution. Felix Heikel’s opinions were the most radical in this regard. He advocated a bicameral parliament in which the first chamber would have the final say, and it would be elected in indirect elections, and be composed of representatives over the age of 35. Other members of the Swedish Party were a little less “liberal”: Schybergson thought that the Members of Parliament (MPs) should be elected via both direct and indirect elections to a unicameral parliament, in which legislation ought to be conducted in two different “departments”, divided between indirectly and directly chosen representatives. T. J. Boisman simply endorsed bicameralism.

Chairman Hermanson did not express any preference as to the number of chambers, but certainly once more presented the most philosophical reasoning to support his views. He claimed that the main concern was that Parliament would represent all social classes, not how many chambers it

353 “Perustelmat”, p. 58.
355 Ibid., p. 178. (“Protests”)
358 Heikel, Euk. ptk., 1905-12-8.
359 Schybergson, Euk. ptk., 1905-12-8.
360 Boisman, Euk. ptk., 1905-12-9.
had. 361 For that reason, he said, it was very important to combine direct elections with indirect ones. That was the only way to ensure that all social classes would be represented in Parliament in a fair way. The task of society was to ensure such an order in which its every member could fulfil his or her mission in life. 362 Indirect elections would bring in different sorts of people to Parliament than what direct elections alone could do.

The other important point for Hermanson, as well as for other liberals, was that Parliament would be comprised of the best, the most knowledgeable members of society, who had the ability to balance and weigh all the difficult questions. 363 “The will of the people” did not suffice for making informed decisions. Large crowds had often erred in the past because of their momentary passions. For that reason the electoral law had to be written in such a way that it ensured the election of the best forces. 364

The other members of the other parties were more democratic in this question. Rein, however, sided with the liberals again. He defended bicameralism, but at the same time added that a proposal for a unicameral parliament ought to be made, since it was the general wish in the country. 365 Rein listed a number of reasons for a bicameral parliament saying, for instance, that “legislation would become calmer, more constant, and diverse in a bicameral setting”. Bicameralism would thus prevent the “tyranny of the majority”. He did not trust “the masses that were not civilised” and were “once conservative, once ultra radical”. 366

Some of the Old Finns and Young Finns tried to figure out some sort of compromise between bi- and unicameralism. J. R. Danielson suggested that a minority could get the right to postpone legislation until the following legislative session. 367 Paasikivi also claimed that other guarantees than bicameralism against “rash decisions” could be incorporated into the system. 368 Emil Setälä of the Young Finns was a promoter of two “departments” to Parliament, i.e. a system akin to Norway’s “lagtinget” and “odelstinget”. 369 Torppa, Svinhufvud, Alkio, Sirola, and Lindroos all defended unicameralism. Some of them highlighted the positive effect that a unicameral parliament

361 Hermanson, Euk. ptk., 1905-12-9.
362 Ibid.
363 Ibid.
364 Ibid.
365 Rein, Euk. ptk., 1905-12-8.
366 Ibid.
367 Danielson, Euk. ptk., 1905-12-8.
368 Paasikivi, Euk. ptk., 1905-12-8.
369 Setälä, Euk. ptk., 1905-12-8.
would have on the unity of the people. Lindroos warned the delegates that in case a unicameral system was not adopted, a revolution might break out.\textsuperscript{370}

Liberal ideas were apparent in the speeches of the Swedish Party members on the question, as well as in some of the Young Finns and Old Finns’ remarks. They all wanted to have securities against rash decisions and guarantees that Parliament would entail the best possible representatives. These considerations were a common feature in liberal theory, too. J. S. Mill thought that the most important element of a good government was “the degree in which it tends to increase the sum of good qualities in the governed”, the other important element was “the quality of the machinery itself, that is the degree in which it is adapted to take advantage of the amount of good qualities which may at any time exist, and make them instrumental to the right purposes.”\textsuperscript{371} The best forces had to be harnessed, and thus more and more competent individuals would gradually get involved in politics. The liberals wanted “to define an ideal order toward which human beings will strive through education and by shedding their bondage to the grosser appetites.”\textsuperscript{372}

Hermanson’s vision of a society of different classes fits well into the thinking of especially “socially oriented” liberal politicians in Europe at the turn of the century. At the time of the reform liberal language was on the defensive. It was difficult to uphold, for example, Hermanson’s ideal of gradual social progress, when the doctrine of political rights (democracy) gained sway. “Liberalism had become an influence, not a power,” Kahan writes.\textsuperscript{373}

In the end the committee decided to endorse unicameralism, and not even Heikel or Boisman voted against.\textsuperscript{374} Apparently the demand and support for unicameralism was so widespread in the nation. The influence of liberalism was strong, but in this too weak to be able to avert the unicameral model. But as we saw, the liberals and the “new liberals” were already planning to install another safeguards that would ensure “the best intelligence” in Parliament. The Social Democrats feared this in November 1905 when they noted that “if the non-socialist parties were allowed to draft the reform, they would put 70 back gates into the system, which would allow them to maintain power for themselves.”\textsuperscript{375}

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\textsuperscript{370} Lindroos, Euk. ptk., 1905-12-8.


\textsuperscript{372} Kahan, \textit{Liberalism in Nineteenth Century Europe}, p. 12.

\textsuperscript{373} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 120.

\textsuperscript{374} Seitkari, ”Eduskunnan uudistus 1906”, p. 47.

4.4 Votes for Women?

"Todellinen laki on terve järki…" 376

The committee started to discuss whether women should be given the right to vote on 12 December 1905. It was not a long discussion: all members, except Hermanson, were in favour of granting the right. Hermanson opposed women’s suffrage because he thought that it would be “against women’s nature to take part in state affairs, as their constitution testified”.377 He also believed that “women would vote with extremists”. In taking part in politics, “the woman’s essence would suffer and she would become less capable of fulfilling her real tasks to which she should remain faithful” (he did not enumerate the tasks, however). If women started to take part in political life, it would become obvious, perhaps too late, that women’s occupation on their rightful arena was of uttermost importance to society, Hermanson claimed.378

As we have seen, Hermanson believed that legislation had to follow the requirements of justice.379 The state of justice in society meant, according to him, that everyone was able to act freely on behalf of his or her tasks that the order obligated – each according to his or her gifts and inclinations.380 Would it be compatible with justice to give women the right to vote? Hermanson asks. “Bringing justice forth in society asked for talent and skill, and hence it was not everybody’s inborn right to take part in legislation,” Hermanson argued.381 He further asked whether the active participation in politicis by women was essential for bringing justice forth. It was not, he claimed. A woman’s essence, and thus her tasks, would suffer in political life, and therefore it was not right that women should take part in politics, he reasoned.382 And because it was against the higher order that women should vote, women’s participation in politics would become a burden to the whole society.383 Hermanson did admit that some men abused their position in relation to women, but “those tendencies were deeper than what legislation could correct”.384 The reasons for not wanting to grant suffrage to women were not just narrow mindedness, old prejudices, or man’s lust for

378 Ibid., p. 122.
379 Ibid., p. 123.
380 Ibid.
381 Ibid.
382 Ibid.
383 Ibid.
384 Ibid., pp. 123-4.
power, Hermanson claimed. He concluded, however, that it might be better to grant the suffrage to women because “circumstances had gone so far already”.386

In his book *Det rätta och dess samband med religiösa sanningar*387 Hermanson talks about the concept of justice, and what it means. For him justice entailed a “higher, sacred order” about right and wrong; an order of norms.388 Hermanson believed that there was a purpose behind the order, and the purpose was that everyone could act according to his or her calling.389 People’s vocations were independent of their will. The order of justice became sacred and thus binding because it stemmed from God.390 A person was free only when he followed his inborn sense of right and wrong, which was the expression of God’s will.391 If the link between God and the sense of right and wrong were “philosophised away”, there would be disastrous consequences, Hermanson argued.392 He thus tried to advocate the significance of God’s will in the positive law. Hermanson writes in his book that universal and equal suffrage did not base on the requirements of justice, since suffrage existed for the sake of public interest, and should be judged according to this requirement.393 Hermanson can said to have been a conservative liberal.

In the committee, Heikel also claimed that suffrage was not “any personal right”. This opinion reflects the general liberal outlook in Europe. Liberals did not believe in suffrage as a right. Voting was “a public trust, given for public purposes”.394 Suffrage was seen as an office and a duty. People were not seen as voters purely by the virtue of their humanity, but evaluated according to their position in society. The idea was to give people a place in government similar to the position they had in society.395 Heikel did not want to give the vote to women at first because, in his view, women were not fully capable of exercising the right.396 This was a more common liberal formulation against women’s suffrage by the time of the reform than that of Hermanson’s view of a natural order.

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386 Ibid.
389 Ibid., p. 137.
390 Ibid., pp. 138-9.
391 Ibid., pp. 97-8.
392 Ibid., pp. 250-5.
393 Ibid., p. 154.
395 Ibid., p. 30.
396 Heikel, Euk. ptk., 12 December 1905.
The other committee members were thus in favour of granting the vote to women, including Rein. Schybergson of the Swedish Party, for example, did not see any reason to deny it. Women’s suffrage had been under discussion at least since 1869, when J.S. Mill’s *The Subjection of Women* was discussed in a newspaper. Some liberals had made a proposal for granting suffrage to taxpaying women in the 1897 Diet to the estate of Burghers. According to the majority of the reform committee members, not granting suffrage to women would have been unjust. It would furthermore have been very difficult to deny the vote to women, since they were an active and integral part of the Finnish society and had, for instance, fought alongside the men against Russification. In general, women had quite equal position to men in the agrarian communities and the sphere of activity between the sexes was not highly segregated in Finland. For example, in 1866 a state school system was established in which boys and girls had equal right to education, and in 1901 14 % of the university students were women. Women also held posts in state administration. In England, the majority of women were against women’s suffrage before 1914. It would be difficult to imagine that Finnish women would have taken that stance even a decade earlier.

It was young working class, and subsequently Social Democratic women, that took the lead in the campaign for women’s universal suffrage. In December 1905 Työlääsinaisten liitto (The Women’s labour union) arranged demonstrations in 63 cities, gathering some 22 000 protesters. By 1905 all women association, the liberal ones included, endorsed universal suffrage for women. The Young Finns had endorsed suffrage for unmarried women to the estate of Burghers in the 1894 program, but in 1904 all of them did not endorse women’s universal suffrage. In the 1905 party convention, that was to prepare the party’s agenda in relation to the reform, the Young Finns

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397 Schybergson, Euk. ptk., 12 December 1905.
400 The committee, 12 December 1905.
405 Utrio, *Suomen naisen tie*, p. 65.
adopted a stance in favour of universal suffrage for both sexes. 407 Tekla Hultin, a Young Finn, describes in her diary how women lobbied for the adoption of women’s suffrage among the constitutionalists during the Great Strike. 408 Women suggested, for instance, that there should be women in the reform committee (Alkio also proposed that the reform committee should include women as additional members at the beginning of the committee’s work). 409

Hermanson was thus left alone to oppose women’s suffrage in the committee.

After deciding in favour of women’s suffrage on the previous day, the committee debated, on the next, whether women should also be given the right to stand for elections. There was much more resistance to that issue in the committee. The Swedish Party as a whole opposed granting this right. Schybergson, for example, very fiercely protested, believing that society would change permanently if women took up seats in Parliament; Heikel feared that the Parliament would become overwhelmingly female and did not believe that it would be beneficial for the country. He also claimed that women were not educated in state affairs and that their presence in Parliament would create conflicts between the sexes. 410 The Old Finns took an ambivalent attitude in the question. Danielson admitted that the right to vote called for the right to stand for elections too, but suspected that the issue might become an obstacle for the reform’s success in Russia. 411 Torppa, too, hesitated, because he believed that a woman “naturally belonged under the tutelage of a man”; Paasikivi regretted that the reform was “so radical”. 412

The Young Finns were a great deal more optimistic about the right. Alkio believed that the right to vote and the right to stand for elections belonged together, Svinhufvud agreed with Alkio and added that married women were reasonable and mature enough to use the right; Rein was a little more doubtful, but said that the right to vote already showed that “women did not have to stay outside the political life”, and believed that there were women as capable as men. 413 Rein even added that Finland should take the lead in this question, not least since it was lagging behind other countries in so many other matters. All of the Social Democrats were in favour of granting the right to stand for elections for women. Edvard Valpas noted that “women have to work outside the home nowadays,
and are therefore as independent as men.”414 He added that women suffered “much greater misery than men in modern society, and should thus be given a chance to speak for themselves.”415 In this question the delegates were amazingly one with their parties.

The European male liberals in the nineteenth century were generally against women’s suffrage – by the end of the century normally on the grounds, as they argued, that women were not qualified enough to take part in politics. This opinion was not perhaps in such sharp contrast with some of the more democratic minded liberal theoreticians, like J. S. Mill, who argued against “the subjection of women”, as it seems, since it was the stated intention behind liberalism that all people would gain political rights, sooner or later. Kahan writes: “Both social and individualist liberalism were open, in theory and sometimes in practice, to changing their criteria to meet changing social circumstances, e.g. the progressive spread of capacities throughout society.”416 Liberals thus by the end of the nineteenth century did not have any strong theoretical arguments against women’s suffrage, even though women’s suffrage is more connected to “new liberalism”. Mill argued that it was against the liberal principle that women as individuals should not be given full responsibility of the conduct of their own affairs, since “any regulation of them by authority…is sure to be mischievous.”417

Hermanson was in this sense much more conservative when he believed that women should never take part in political life since it was against their “nature”. This was as we have seen a minority opinion in the committee but Hermanson would not have had any difficulty in finding like-minded liberals in other European countries.418 In England “maternal reformers” was the most important group among women anti-suffragists, and they were arguing from premises similar to those of Hermanson.419 The maternal reformers opposed women’s suffrage on the grounds of it being in opposition to “essential womanhood” in the Victorian era. They “drew insistently upon maternal ideals to support the case for alternative, more appropriate forms of womanly civic duty”, Julia Bush explains.420 The woman’s spheres were primarily the home and social care (Bush mentions Rousseau’s contribution to the polarization of gender roles).421 The anti-suffragists wanted to “harness women’s talents and enhance their future citizenship in a manner fully consonant with

414 Valpas, Euk. ptk., 1905-12-13.
415 Ibid.
419 Bush, Women Against the Vote, p. 23.
420 Ibid.
421 Ibid., pp. 24, 47.
respect for gender difference.”422 Motherhood became particularly important in the evaluations of women’s role in society. A woman’s duty was in the virtuous fulfilment of wifehood and maternity.423 The dignity of womanhood provided the central didactic message for innumerable sermons, books, papers, and speeches, and percolated as an ideal through all social classes”, Bush writes. In breaking up the “essential womanhood”, the whole basis for society would be undermined, these reformers thought.

Nevertheless, the majority of the reform committee decided to grant also the right to stand for election to women.

4.5 Parliamentary Departments

The question whether Parliament should be divided in two or more departments for legislation also caused ideological strife among the committee members. The issue was close to heart for the liberals, who had just been defeated in the chamber question – they saw in the departments a chance to instil some of the principles of bicameralism into the unicameral Parliament. The ensuing debate became protracted; it began on 21 December, and did not finish until 18 January 1906.

The committee was initially quite convinced of the need of two departments for the legislative process. There were only a few protests. Alkio was the most audacious of the objectors. He agreed, however, with the majority of the committee that a system that guaranteed temperance and rigour in the legislative process should be put in place, but feared that “two departments would resemble too much bicameralism”.424 Alkio suggested that an “expanded Legal Affairs Committee” should be established instead, which would guarantee a scrupulous process of legislation.425 Sirola and Torppa, too, raised some objections against the departments. Sirola said, for instance, that the two-department-solution could easily flip being in fact two chambers; but he was still not very adamantly opposed to the department idea.426

Felix Heikel was the most enthusiastic proponent of the model with two departments. He argued that there was a need for a system that offered guarantees against hasty decisions and the repression of the majority, and in which legislative issues would be thoroughly examined.427 For that reason it

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422 Bush, *Women Against the Vote*, p. 23.
423 Ibid., p. 24.
424 Alkio, Euk. ptk., 1905-12-21.
425 Ibid.
426 Sirola, Euk. ptk., 1905-12-22.
427 Heikel, Euk. ptk., 1905-12-22.
was important that the two departments were composed of different kind of members, hence the other department would comprise the eldest MPs.428 The other members of the Swedish Party all supported the department-idea, and thought that the departments should be differently composed. The Old Finns, save Torppa, were also enthusiastic proponents of the model. Paasikivi subscribed to the idea that the departments should be divided according to age.429 In the same vein, Danielson proposed setting up a sort of “elders council”.430 The Young Finns, save Alkio, also adhered to the department-idea, but were slightly more democratic-minded than the Swedish Party or the Old Finns. Setälä wanted the members to the departments to be appointed through proportional elections.431 In case the departments did not agree, a two-thirds majority would be required in the plenum to settle the matter. Rein was nevertheless more conservative and suggested that age was to be the deciding factor in the allocation of the departments.432 Svinhufvud thought, however, that the departments should be similarly composed.433

On 21 and 22 December the committee made a decision that Parliament would be divided in two departments during legislation, that the departments would be one-third and two-thirds of the MPs, and that the members would be elected in proportional elections among MPs over the age of thirty-five that had been representatives for at least one term.434

The decision was reversed soon enough, however. After the New Year the Social Democrats and the Old Finns had become critical towards the departments which the Social Democrats now perceived as “disguised bicameralism”.435 Finally, Heikel came up with a compromise, “an extended committee”, called “the Grand Committee”, a proposal that was later adopted. The Grand Committee would consist of 60 representatives elected in proportional elections among the MPs. It would handle all legislative issues. In the legislative process, a committee would draft a report considering a bill, which would be discussed in a plenary session in Parliament and then be sent to the Grand Committee. The Grand Committee’s report would then in turn be discussed in the plenary session. If Parliament made changes to the bill, it had to be sent back to the Grand Committee. If not, Parliament could then vote to accept or to refuse the bill, but at least one third of the MPs could refer the bill to the next parliamentary session. If not, Parliament could then vote to

428 Heikel, Euk. ptk., 1905-12-22.
429 Paasikivi, Euk. ptk., 1905-12-22.
430 Danielson, Euk. ptk., 1905-12-21.
431 Setälä, Euk. ptk., 1905-12-21.
432 Rein, Euk. ptk., 1905-12-22.
433 Svinhufvud, Euk. ptk., 1905-12-22.
434 The committee, Euk. ptk., 1905-12-21-22.
accept or to refuse the bill, and at least one third of the MPs could refer the bill to the next parliamentary session. In case the Grand Committee and Parliament were of a different opinion whether a bill had to be accepted or turned down, Parliament could outvote the Grand Committee by simple majority (Heikel had suggested two-thirds majority).

The Grand Committee was a compromise, perhaps cold comfort for the liberals but still, it had some features of an upper chamber. It introduced the principles of ability (achieved through elections of the members in proportional elections) and caution (the “inert” legislative process) into the political decision-making. Later, in the newly established Parliament the Social Democrats were suspicious about the Grand Committee, and made motions for abolishing it during the first five parliamentary sessions. In the objections to the reform bill, Sirola questioned the necessity of the Grand Committee. In the first parliamentary sessions, the Grand Committee was quite an obstacle to the legislative work, since the bills jammed in the committee, but it gradually became evident that the Grand Committee was not a conservative upper chamber, and that it “lacked distinctive political character”. Setälä noted in 1916, however, that the Grand Committee corresponded to its design, since it added more consideration to the legislative process. The obligatory circulation of bills in the Grand Committee ended only in 1991.

4.6 Who is Eligible to Vote?

The question about eligibility of voters and candidates also raised some ideological discussions between the democrats and liberals in the committee. Especially the liberal delegates wanted to attach some moral principles to the electoral franchise, i.e. give suffrage and candidacy to “good citizens”. Not even the Social Democrats objected to all of these principles imprinted in the political tradition, even though they were once again the most democratic-minded.

436 Seitkari, ”Eduskunnan uudistus 1906”, p. 57.
437 Ibid., p. 59.
438 Nousiainen, Jaakko, “Valiokuntalaitos” in Suomen kansanedustuslaitoksen historia X, p. 399. [“The system of committees”]. My translation.]
441 Ibid.
Liberalism always believed in order and progress and saw human nature as amendable and cultivable. By introducing moral conditions to suffrage, liberals aimed at ameliorating and maintaining high moral standards in societies. Kahan remarks:” The individual’s capacities were often evaluated in moral terms.” Moralism was the yardstick of society. In a discussion of whether or not people who benefitted from poor relief should have the right to vote, Hermanson claimed that “through drunkenness many had caused poverty to their families”, and were thus morally responsible for the plight of their families. Boisman, however, noted that a “decent worker” could many times be “forced to turn to poor relief”; in other words Boisman was ready to grant suffrage to those who were not poor by their “own wrongdoing”.

Even more important than the moral aspects, independence of the voters mattered to the committee members in the eligibility question. This was again a common feature of liberalism. “The possession of property,” Kahan writes, “was seen by liberals of all kinds as a guaranty of ‘independence’.” Sir James Graham, a British statesman, observed that the best representative system gave representation to the “largest number of persons whose circumstances were independent; and the system, on the contrary, was the worst, which embraced the largest number of voters, were incapable of deliberation, and must act as they were commanded.” The independence of voters was important for liberals because it was supposed to prevent corruption in politics, as well as uphold integrity in politics and society. Independence was also a safeguard against political extremism and revolutions, because people in needy situations could be easily lured to join the revolutionaries, it was argued.

In this vein, Hermanson claimed that “votes could be easily bought from impoverished drunkards”. The committee in general wanted to penalize the buying and selling of votes by disenfranchisement. The Social Democrats, however, suggested that the matter should be left to the criminal code, or at least to determine the period for how long the suffrage would be forfeited. Setälä supported the idea that buying and selling of votes would result in the loss of suffrage. Schybergson stated that those who sold their votes should loose their suffrage forever; those who

443 Albeit for at least to Hermanson within the limits of “justice”, i.e. within the limits of divine order.
445 Hermanson, Euk. ptk., 1905-12-14.
446 Boisman, Euk. ptk., 1905-12-14.
449 Hermanson, Euk. ptk., 1905-12-14.
450 Valpas, Euk. ptk., 1905-12-14.
451 Setälä, Euk. ptk., 1905-12-14.
bought votes should loose it for the duration of the following elections only. Schybergson argued that selling votes “showed immorality” while buying them could be regarded as a result of “excessive eagerness”. The committee decided to propose denying suffrage from “those who had been proven guilty for selling or buying votes in a parliamentary election, attempting to do so, voting more than once, or disturbing elections through violence or threat of violence, until the end of the sixth calendar year in which the final judgment was delivered.”

The majority in the reform committee rejected the idea that poor relief could be a reason for disenfranchisement. Hermanson, Boisman, Heikel, Rein, and Schybergson contested the decision, however. They did not think that a person who benefitted from poor relief was independent enough. The person did not obviously have any property, the men argued, and suggested that, unless the help was only temporary, those who benefitted from poor relief should be excluded from suffrage. The Social Democrats were vehemently against these arguments. Valpas said that the denial would make universal suffrage only a “mockery”, and added, in that case, “what was given with one hand, would be taken away with the other”. The issue was finally decided in favour of the restriction in the Senate, and those who “got help from the poor relief, unless the help was just occasional”, were excluded from voting.

Another issue concerning the voters’ eligibility question was whether those who were in bankruptcy could vote. Heikel claimed that bankruptcy often showed irresponsibility, and therefore wanted to maintain the 1869 suffrage law that denied suffrage to those who had gone bankrupt. The majority of the committee did not agree with him, however, and bankruptcy was not accepted as a reason for disenfranchisement. Schybergson, for example, observed that “bankruptcy per se did not signify dishonesty”. Later on, the committee decided nevertheless to recommend the denial of suffrage to those that “had relinquished their possessions to their debtors until they had attested to that fact under oath.” It was adapted to the final law, too.

452 Schybergson, Euk. ptk., 1905-12-14.
453 Eduskunnanuudistamiskomitea, Ehdotus Suomen Suurruhtinaanmaan valtiopäiväjärjestykseksi, 5 §.
455 Ibid., p. 126.
456 Valpas, Edvard, Euk. ptk., 1905-12-14.
457 “Suomen Suuriruhtinaanmaan valtiopäiväjärjestys”, in Mylly, Edustuksellisen kansanvallan läpimurto, p. 306. [“The Parliament Act of the Grand Duchy of Finland”]
458 Hermanson, Euk. ptk., 1905-12-14.
459 Schybergson, 1905-12-14.
460 Eduskunnanuudistamiskomitea, Ehdotus Suomen Suurruhtinaanmaan valtiopäiväjärjestykseksi, 5 §.
The question about franchise of those who had not paid their taxes also stirred some ideological conflict in the committee. Schybergson thought that paying taxes was a “minimum responsibility” and those who did not fulfil that duty should be left without the vote.461 The Social Democrats argued that poverty could not be made an obstacle of voting. Hermanson noted that there were many who did not have the responsibility to pay taxes and the provision would thus only concern those under the obligation.462 In this question the Old Finns agreed with the Swedish Party.463 In the end, the committee decided to withhold suffrage from those “who had not paid their taxes, for other reasons than poverty”.464 

Voting age was an issue for liberals by which they strove to exclude some of the “less capable”. The committee was divided over the question of suitable voting age. The more conservative members, the Swedish Party, as well as Rein, Danielson, and Paasikivi advocated 25 years, others 21.465 The former group therefore wanted to raise the voting age from the current 21 years. Paasikivi said that “guarantees for stable composition of Parliament ought to be acquired”.466 Hermanson pondered what was the justice in the question.467 He thought that it was justice that the vote would be “given to those who could exercise it”. He also repeated the claim that in his opinion voting was no “personal right”. But this idea did not resonate very well in the committee, since it was becoming rapidly outdated. The committee decided to recommend 21 years as the suitable voting age, because the Old Finns decided to vote according to the prevailing public opinion that demanded a lower age.468 Hermanson, Boisman, Heikel, Rein, and Schybergson objected, arguing that the “youth was not independent and therefore prone to be influenced by instigators”.469 In this attitude the characteristic concern of liberalism against revolutions is discernible. “The voters’ ability to resist coercion, was an antidote of revolution,” as Kahan puts it.470 In the final law voting age was 24 years, because the Senate decided to take the more cautious stance.471 

461 Schybergson, Euk. ptk., 1905-12-14. 
462 Hermanson, Euk. ptk., 1905-12-14. 
463 The Old Finns, Euk. ptk., 1905-12-14. 
464 Eduskunnanuudistamiskomitea, Ehdotus Suomen Suurruhtinaanmaan valtiopäiväjärjestykseksi, 5 §. 
465 The Committee, Euk. ptk., 1905-12-14. 
466 Paasikivi, Euk. ptk., 1905-12-14. 
467 Hermanson, Euk. ptk., 1905-12-14. 
468 Mylly, Edustuksellisen kansanvallan läpimurto, p. 149. 
471 Ibid.
4.7 Last Issues

One last important issue in the reform, in the context of the thesis, was the question whether Parliament would have the right to introduce motions, even in constitutional questions. The Diet in 1886 had obtained the right of petitional motions, thus the right to make motions (i.e. to introduce bills) would be an extenuation to the motions right. The Social Democrats defended the right, while the Swedish Party was again more reluctant than the others. Hermanson argued that the manifesto did not give the right to extend parliamentary powers; Heikel claimed that the right to introduce motions could create conflicts between Parliament and the government, and Boisman claimed that the committee had to be very cautious when trying to extend parliamentary powers.472 The committee decided, nevertheless, to grant the right to Parliament on 28 December, a decision that was supported by the Senate, albeit not in constitutional matters.473 That formulation was in line with the manifesto, the Senators argued.474

In addition to the restrictions already mentioned, the liberals also got through a quite high eligibility age (24), for those standing for election; the committee recommended with success, as well, denying suffrage to the following categories of people: those “who were under guardianship”; those “who, based on a statutory judgment, were considered to be without good reputation or be unqualified to serve their country or represent others”; those “who were convicted to public work of vagrancy until the end of the third year of their release from the workhouse”; those “who were in regular military service”, and those “who had not been registered in the country for the past three years”.475

According to statistics, 13 % of the electorate was excluded from voting by the force of these restrictions in the first elections.476 Only 45 % of the overall population that was registered in the country was entitled to vote (in 2003 it was 81%).477

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472 Hermanson, Heikel, Boisman, Euk. ptk., 1905-12-28.
473 Seitkari, ”Eduskunnan uudistus 1906”, p. 96.
474 Ibid.
475 “Suomen Suuriruhtinaanmaan valtiopäiväjärjestys”, in Mylly, Edustuskselisen kansanvallan läpimurto, p. 306, Rahikainen, Marjatta, “Who were denied suffrage?”, Centenary of women’s full political rights in Finland, http://www.aanioikeus.fi/en/articles/denied.htm, 8 February 2012. It was not until 1972 that most of the eligibility restrictions were lifted, even though those under guardianship could stand for elections for the first time only in 1976, from Laki valtiopäiväjärjestysen muuttamisesta 12.5.1972/357, and Laki valtiopäiväjärjestysen 7 §:n muuttamisesta 3.6.1976/455.
477 Ibid.
The final reform proposal was signed on 28 February 1906. The socialists were not altogether pleased with the outcome of the work, however. They would have preferred a more democratic solution. Interestingly, it was, nevertheless, the liberals, and notably Hermanson, as well as Boisman, Heikel, Schybergson, and Rein, that made most objections to the reform bill. Most of the objections were thus rather conservative in their nature, some of them mere particulars, and dealt with the eligibility and the parliamentary prerogatives. The liberals’ activity demonstrates, more than anything, that they were invested and involved in steering the reform process, and wanted to utilise every opportunity to influence the Senate in getting a more liberal outcome. Some of these final propositions were successful in the Senate, though surprisingly many were not. Women, for instance, were allowed to stand for elections. Hermanson, together with Boisman, also objected Parliament’s right to make interpellations to the Senate – a right that was taken to the final law however.

The alterations made to the committee’s bill in the Senate were mostly formal, and those already mentioned. After the Senate, the bill went to a Russo-Finnish Advisory Board that had been established by the initiative of the General Governor. In the Advisory Board the Tsar’s prerogatives were sharpened. In addition the Russian members of the Board (three members) intervened, for example, in the right of Parliament to decide by one thirds minority to send a bill to the next parliamentary session. The Russians saw that the right could prolong legislation initiated by the Tsar. Mechelin, who was one of the two members of the Senate that took part in the Board, defended the right, and assured that the right was introduced in order to produce some of the advantages of bicameralism; that a minority would have a chance to slow down the legislative process. In the Board the reform committee’s attempts (Paasikivi especially had been active) to increase Parliament’s budgetary prerogatives were hampered, and the power of the purse remained largely the prerogative of the Tsar.

The Diet dealt with the bill between 9 May and 1 June 1906. There was general sentiment among the members of the estates that as little changes as possible should be made to the bill in the Diet so

478 Mylly, Edustuksellisen kansanvallan läpimurto, p. 187.
479 Ibid.
480 “Vastalauseita”, in Ehdotus Suomen Suurruhtinaanmaan valtiopäiväjärjestysteksi.
482 Mylly, Edustuksellisen kansanvallan läpimurto, p. 211.
483 Ibid. That right was objected by Setälä.
484 Ibid., pp. 212-16.
that its success in St. Petersburg would not be jeopardised by prolonged procedures.\footnote{Seitkari, "Eduskunnan uudistus 1906".} The Senate was also zealous that the bill should be accepted as swiftly as possible, and prompted the Diet, on several occasion, to endorse the formulations of the bill.\footnote{Ibid., p. 119.} One has to remember that all the while Russia teetered on the brink of revolution. Many of the clauses were, however, thoroughly discussed in the Diet. In the Constitutional Law Committee, Yrjö Mäkelin, the committee’s only socialist,\footnote{There were only four socialists in the Diet, in the estate of Burghers. Seitkari, "Eduskunnan uudistus 1906", p. 118.} criticised vigorously the clauses that denied suffrage to the impoverished, and also argued that the voting age should be 21 years.\footnote{Mylly, Edustuksellisen kansanvallan läpimurto, pp. 139-140.} In the end the Diet made only minor, largely formal, alterations to the bill.\footnote{Ibid., p. 143.} That also shows how important a role the Senate had in comparison to the Diet and, on the other hand, how the Diet reflected the Senate at the time. The Tsar ratified the law on 20 July 1906.\footnote{On the following day the Tsar would dismantle the Duma.}

4.8 Concluding Remarks

These were the most central issues that the committee dealt with in consideration of the degree of democracy in the new Parliament. In the end, the liberals were thus quite successful in getting what they wanted, i.e. to restrain democracy. On the other hand, the liberals were quite moderate and lenient in their demands, which is explained by the threat of revolution, and by the strong democratic movement in the country. The liberals wanted to implant checks to the reform against too violent ascendancy of the masses. The liberals suffered a loss in bicameralism, but managed to instil other, less obvious limitations to majority rule. Instead of a first chamber, the liberals got the Grand Committee. It was there to make sure that legislation was carried out in stable, able, and thorough fashion. The liberals also got a major victory with the proportional electoral system. It was clearly a favourable system to the liberals, since it ensured ascendancy of the minorities. Proportional elections were not what all the liberal delegates wanted from the beginning, but it was promoted by leading figures, namely Leo Mechelin and Robert Hermanson. Thirdly, the liberals got strict eligibility clauses.\footnote{Suffrage was given to the citizens of Finland, i.e. not to Russians living there.} All these factors added up to a significant hampering of the democratic principles in the reform.
One could of course argue that the reform was quite democratic according to the standards of the time. The liberals had made many compromises. The Social Democrats were, however, protesting against the outcome, which suggests that not even then everyone considered the reform democratic enough. Sirola criticised, for instance, the reform’s stated desire to restrain the masses (even though he did accept some of the restrictions to suffrage, for example from those who had been convicted of vagrancy); the fact that one third of Parliament could reject a bill and send it till next legislative session; and that Parliament’s committees were elected in indirect elections.\textsuperscript{492} The most blatant violation of the democratic principle in the workings of the new Parliament was, nevertheless, a lack of parliamentarism caused by the Tsar’s extensive prerogatives. In Norway, to which the reform committee often referred in its discussions, the principle of parliamentarism had been executed already before 1905.\textsuperscript{493}

\textsuperscript{492} Sirola, “Vastalauseita”, pp. 175-7. Sirola would have also wanted to grant the suffrage to Russians living in Finland, as well as to those who did their military service, p. 176.

\textsuperscript{493} Teljo, Suomen valtioelämän murros, p. 238.
5. Conclusion

“We must find our duties in what comes to us, not what we imagine might have been.”

In this thesis I have sought to analyse the degree and impact of liberalism in the 1906 parliamentary reform. To that end, I have established the liberal framework that the liberal actors in the reform committee depend upon (vertical analysis). I have also studied the usage of liberalism of the individual actors in the committee (synchronic analysis). I have reflected the synchronic framework on the vertical context in order to substantiate the acclaimed committee liberalism, and in order to establish the liberal thinking in the reform. In addition, I have wanted to widen the understanding and knowledge about liberalism. The thesis has therefore had the potential to reveal the “real nature” of the reform from the political ideologies point of view. Was the reform really as democratic as it is often perceived, and had liberalism any impact on it? the thesis asked.

The thesis has shown that the reform was thoroughly impacted by liberalism. The facade of the reform was very democratic – universal suffrage for men and women, as well as a unicameral parliament – but because the reform was executed within the old political system, the liberals managed to hold the strings of the forming of the reform. The impact of liberalism was, perhaps surprisingly, a major one.

Further, the thesis has revealed that the impact of liberalism in the reform was mostly a restraining one in relation to democracy. It has showed that historically liberalism sought to challenge the vested interests originating from the Middle Ages, and to promote parliamentarism and economic and political liberalisation. But liberalism was a middle class movement: it did not endorse total equality, not in the way democracy did. Many liberals throughout Europe believed in stable, gradual progress, and by the nineteenth century wanted to hold on to the existing societal structures. “By rejecting a permanent social and political hierarchy based on the past, liberals acted in conformity with democratic, egalitarian trends. But by rejecting demands for immediate political equality and refusing to accept the idea of a universal right to political participation, liberals opposed democracy”, Alan Kahan writes.

The thesis traced back the development of the Finnish liberalism, as part of establishing the thinking of the liberals in the reform committee that designed the parliamentary reform. For Finnish liberals constitutionalism became an essential part of their ideology: the liberals wanted to have a stable legal order, in order to better defend Finnish autonomy. They also wanted to strengthen

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parliamentarism in relation to the Tsar. The thesis has shown that the liberals of the reform committee came from the constitutional parties, that they were the most conservative members, and in the reform they had the desire to restrain democracy, and to endorse government of capacity. We can say that all members of the Swedish Party in the committee were against relinquishing the political power “to the people”, i.e. against democratisation in varying degrees. The Young Finns and sometimes even the Old Finns, agreed with the liberals on some points pertaining to the extending of democracy. The liberals’ relationship to democracy was akin to that of other European liberals in general: they were ready to expand democracy, to expand suffrage for instance, but preferred that those who voted or took part in politics would be part of the gentry, or otherwise proven “reliable”.

In the reform committee liberal impact thus presented itself as a tendency wanting to control spreading of democracy. The liberals consented to unicameralism, they could not reject it in the face of the overwhelming public pressure, but implanted the Grand Committee that worked as a brake in the legislative process. They accepted universal suffrage, but instilled plenty of restrictive eligibility requirements, so as to remove some of the, in their eyes, incapable and dependent voters, so that only 45 % of the population was entitled to vote in the first elections. The liberals also managed, with the help of the Social Democrats, to establish a proportional electoral system in which minorities had better chances. The parliamentary reform can be seen as a struggle between the old and the new social order.

Previous research has brought to light some of the restrictive measures that liberals used, too, and especially O. Seitkari emphasises that the new Finnish political system was only a far cry of parliamentarism, since the ultimate political power remained in the hands of the Tsar and his close circle.\footnote{Seitkari, ”Eduskunnan uudistus 1906”} That was consequently the most powerful check on democracy in the country, and has probably made the liberals more inclined to accept some of the demands that the Social Democrats were making. In comparison with the previous studies this study has sought to reveal the ideological background and motivations of the liberal actors in the reform process. It has been important to examine the thinking of the liberals, so as to understand the thinking of the period, and to better understand the Finnish politics then and today.

In summary, the result of the study is thus that liberalism impacted the parliamentary reform in various ways. The impact of liberalism came through the old political elite that steered the reform process. Liberalism’s impact in relation to democracy, the extent of which was the essential
question in the reform was a restraining one. The liberals managed to implant several checks on the popular governance in the Parliament Act. The main reason for the liberals’ unwillingness to grant universal political rights was that they saw political participation differently from the democrats: as a serious task, not as a right. The age of mass politics came partly about the nation building process.

The implications of the thesis for further study are that the parliamentary reform should be seen only as a partial victory of democracy in Finland. Furthermore, the reform was not forged in a spirit of consensus among the Finnish, but there existed a clear dividing line in the nation between those that demanded democratic rights, and those that wanted to restrain them. The impact and roots of liberalism in the Finnish politics are deeper and more widespread than generally appreciated. In addition, the ideology of liberalism should not be seen as an ally of democracy, but actually as having a very critical attitude towards it.

Has democracy, then, won liberal politics to date? Many perceive that European Social Democrats have attained all their goals, and are therefore experiencing downturn in their support. On the other hand, democracy still faces many challenges. Liberals in the committee wanted to avoid a situation where politics would become a profession. That has taken place, and at the same time people experience that they cannot really affect their surroundings through the political process. People are still lacking a voice in politics. Is this a fault of liberalism or perhaps social democracy? It can be said to be a fault of liberal ideology that promotes politics of “those who have the capacity”\textsuperscript{497}, but on the other hand the fault can be shifted to Social Democrats that have politicised politics, i.e. have through their influence made politics into a power struggle between parties, not just into a simple taking care of common issues.

In the subsequent studies, it would be very interesting to examine the impact of a political dogma at the level of people’s behaviour. Has universal democracy really crumbled the moral sense, as the liberals feared? In the postmodern world right and wrong have become subjective concepts. Like there is no “truth” according to positivism, there is no absolute truth in behaviour between human beings, whereas in the liberal era, right and wrong were much more clearly defined in accordance to the natural laws. Additionally, it would be interesting to deal with the question in the light of a legal theory – how has constitutionalism affected people’s morals? Is the fact that the law is written (what can be done and what cannot be done is enumerated), erasing people’s sense of their personal

\textsuperscript{497} Professor Risto Alapuro claims that being knowledgeable is the deciding element according to which people choose their representatives in today’s Finland. In his study he has asked why women should be elected to Parliament, and the common answer was “because they are as \textit{qualified} as men”, thus not because it would be democratic, or simply because they had the right to it. Alapuro, Risto in \textit{Yle Radio 1}, “Ykkösaamu” April 19 2011, http://yle.fi/radio1/asia/ykkosaamu/
responsibility? This theme has been touched upon by, at least, Paul DeHart, who talks about the
difference between natural law and natural rights and writes in *Uncovering the Constitution's Moral
Design*: “the modern teaching begins with the claim that all people, by nature, possess a right to
everything.”498 It would be interesting, as well, to study the difference and similarities in
Hermanson and Mechelin’s thinking. Their correspondence could be a good source for the study,
which might reveal more of the nature of the Finnish liberalism. The Finnish liberalism could also
be examined in more detail by studying liberal expressions in the debates of the Diet.

I hope that the main results of this study have helped the reader to understand liberal ideology, its
premises, aims, motivations, and its expressions especially in Finland.

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