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UNIVERSITY OF TARTU
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Institute of Government and Politics, Faculty of Social Sciences and Education, University of Tartu, Estonia

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"Begin at the beginning and go on till you come to the end: then stop" (Lewis Carroll)

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INTRODUCTION

Puzzle and research question

This dissertation explores a state's foreign policy making process under high external constraints, focusing on the role of the state and society relationship within this process. History has shown that states in an asymmetrical conflict situation, hence facing a state with higher material capabilities, often follow the logic of the international system and comply with the power actor's demands. However, history also provides examples where even during a crude power situation, such as a World War, states sometimes choose an alternative action, such as resisting either politically or militarily or simply ignoring the situation. There are cases where several states with similarly limited power capabilities, facing the same aggressor, chose different foreign policy actions. For example, in 1956, when popular uprisings took place both in communist Poland and in Hungary, the former made a deal with the Soviet Union whereas the latter decided to resist. In World War II, the Netherlands, which had a historical tradition of neutrality and relatively low military capabilities, responded to German military aggression with military resistance and fought for five days, whereas Czechoslovakia, with relatively high military capabilities, capitulated without firing a shot. In the autumn of 1939, the Soviet Union presented Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Finland with demands on mutual non-aggression pacts that also included Soviet military bases on the territories of particular states, all of which had the potential to severely undermine their declared neutrality and put them into the Soviet Union's sphere of influence. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania signed the demands within a few days, which kept them away from the war in 1939, but led them to gradually lose their independence over the summer of 1940. Finland did not agree to the Soviet demands and as a result ended up waging a war with the Soviet Union in 1939–1940. The abovementioned examples raise some questions, the first of which is where the differences between these decisions come from. Since states in these examples were all states with arguably limited capabilities under an acute foreign policy crisis situation, and as a result faced similar systemic constraints, how could they develop such different preferences in their foreign policy making?

One illustrative pair of cases of this puzzle, and the one the current dissertation will focus on, is that of Estonia and Finland in autumn 1939 with regard to their response to the demands of the Soviet Union. These two neighbouring countries received demands from the Soviet Union in late September (Estonia) and early October (Finland) 1939, justified by the Soviets with their own strategic security concerns within the volatile international situation of the freshly begun war. The demands entailed mutual non-aggression pacts and included Soviet military bases on the territories of these states. In the case of Finland, the demands also comprised territorial concessions. Estonia signed the demands five days after their presentation by the Soviets. Finland's negotiations with the Soviets lasted over a month, as Finland did not agree to the demands. The talks

broke off in mid-November and on 30 November 1939 the Soviet Union attacked Finland, which started off the Winter War of 1939–1940.

In both cases, there was a clear power disparity with the aggressor, a context of international crisis and the events of the recent destruction of Poland and Czechoslovakia. Both countries had declared neutrality at the beginning of the war and neither of them had signed military agreements with a powerful state. Hence, where did the differences in the foreign policy making of these two states come from? The vast literature on the foreign and defence policy of Estonia and Finland in autumn 1939 offers a wide array of possibilities[1]. One prominent approach focuses on the logic of the international system, consequently on external factors and constraints: the volatility of the international system, Soviet intentions and security concerns, interests of the big powers and a disparity in military capabilities between the aggressor and the weaker state. In case of Estonia, some works focus on the international system and external constraints, such as the security interests of the Great Powers, the context of large-scale war and the limited military options of Estonia (see for example Medijainen 2000a, 2000b; Arumäe 2006; Myllyniemi 1977). In case of Finland, the scholars focusing on external constraints, writing mainly in the 1950s to 1970s, argue that Finland failed to recognise the depth of systemic constraints, as the strategic security needs of the Soviet Union had to be accommodated. This approach blames the Finnish decision-makers to for their failure to accommodate the security needs of the Soviet Union and deems their understandings of the situation unrealistic and inflexible (Paasikivi 1958, 1986c; Kirby 1979; Vital 1971b). It has been argued that the country's top leadership undermined the Soviet security needs and believed the Soviets to be bluffing (Paasikivi 1958, 1986c; Jakobson 1961).

In addition, some authors pay attention to the previous foreign policy orientation and choices as factors leading to this particular behaviour. In case of Estonia some authors bring out the Estonian German orientation as an important factor (for example Warma 1993, 1960, 1955; also Ilmjärv 2004a, 2004b, 2004c; Parming 1979). In case of Finland, for example Soikkanen (1983) focuses on the role of Finland's domestic politics in shaping its foreign policy priorities. Another cause for the particular decisions is seen in the domestic politics of these two countries. In case of Estonia, for example Ilmjärv (2004a, 2004b, 2004c, 2004d) argues that it was the nature of the political regime, considered authoritarian, that should be seen as one of the main causes, as it allowed for the isolated political choices (such as non-mobilisation) and the foreign policy orientation, and effectively abandoned the neutrality policy (also see Parming 1979). In case of Finland the angle is a bit different, but it is often argued that the overall political scene supported the government's policy, and therefore, that the government's space of manoeuvring was limited (Soikkanen

[1] The current paragraph gives a brief overview of some of the debates on these two cases. The gap in this dissertation is defined in terms of theory, not in terms of historical research on these cases.

1983; Jakobson 1961, Ylikangas 1986). In both cases the personal characteristics, preferences and sympathies have been listed by some authors as important factors. In case of Estonia see for example Turtola 2003, 2008 and his reading of Estonian decision-makers' personal characteristics and sympathies to explain the Estonian foreign policy behaviour in autumn 1939. In case of Finland, many authors in the 1950s-1970s mention the optimism or unrealistic attitudes of Finland's foreign minister as a factor in the decision-making process (Paasikivi 1958, 1986c; Tanner 1957; Jakobson 1961; Kirby 1979; Vital 1971b).

In both cases, there is also a focus on the role of society in these two countries. In the case of Estonia, it has been argued that the connection between the state and society was, due to the authoritarian state regime, weak or lacking (see Parming 1979; Ilmjärv 2004a, 2004b). In the case of Finland, the notion of society is usually part of different explanations of Finland's foreign policy behaviour. The scholars focusing on external constraints, who argue for the failure of Finnish politicians to acknowledge these constraints, still point out that understandings of these politicians "echoed the feelings of the nation" (Kirby 1979, 122; see also Paasikivi 1958, 1986c). The full support of the parliament and the society as a whole for the government's policy has been emphasised in most studies on Finland's behaviour in autumn 1939. It is sometimes also presented in the framework of domestic constraints, as the government knew that society would support it as long as it would not agree with the demands. As Ylikangas has put it, a different decision would have required a different government, different political elites and a different society (Ylikangas 1986). Within this understanding, the historical experiences Finland had with Russia have been emphasised (for example Jakobson 1961) and in more recent literature, the question of public opinion has been explored in more detail (Ahto 1989).

To sum up, the external constraints dominated the decision-making in autumn 1939 for Estonia and did not dominate in case of Finland. Reasons have been found, among others, in the material capacities of the countries, in the international system and interests of the Great Powers, in the nature of political regimes, in the competence/incompetence of the top leadership of these countries and in personal characteristics of the decision-makers. In both cases, the question of the link between the state and society has been brought out as well. Next, the international relations theories in regard to the puzzle of this dissertation will be discussed.

The theoretical approaches of International Relations (IR) see the state's preference formation in different terms. The rationalist approaches, such as realism, neorealism, liberalism, neoliberalism and institutionalism, focus mainly on material factors and states as rational actors attempting to maximize their power when explaining a state's foreign policy behaviour. For realism, as argued by Morgenthau, states must act "on the international scene […] in power-political terms" (Morgenthau 1950, 836). According to neorealism, one of the most prominent IR theories, in the anarchic international world the state's preferences are linked to the notion of ensuring its survival, which this theory as-

sumes to be the main goal of every state. The main defining characteristic of a state for neorealists is its position in the international arena, defined by its material capabilities, and therefore they neglect domestic factors in their analysis (Waltz 1979). Waltz stated: "To say that a country acts in its national interest, means that, having examined its security requirements, it tries to meet them" (Waltz 1979, 134). Realist approaches mainly focus on so called power states, while for those states that do not belong to this category they allow limited room for manoeuvring in terms of their preference formation on foreign policy actions. Survival is particularly problematic for a weak or small state[2] in a foreign policy crisis situation when threatened by a power state. Weaker states in this situation have only two options: either to balance or to bandwagon (Walt 1987). This logic would imply that a state in an asymmetrical conflict situation would assess the situation based on its limited capabilities. In the pursuit of its main goal, which is to survive, it would choose to agree with the demands of the power state in order to avoid even worse consequences. Vital argues that a small state "may be sure of retaining identity and autonomy [...] only so long as its capacity for autonomous action is not put to the test. Conflict with a great power is, ultimately, a conflict over autonomy. [...] The aim of the minor power must therefore be to avoid such conflict" (Vital 1971a, 27). Liberal approaches go beyond a state's capabilities and focus on the state's intentions and preferences. Liberalism argues that actors are more concerned with absolute gains and not relative gains, as realist approaches would assume. Nevertheless, both liberal and realist approaches see states as rational unitary actors, hence value-maximizers, whose interests are "determined by the state's position in the international political system" (Smith 2000b, 382). Rationalist approaches would assume that within an asymmetrical conflict situation the preference formation of the weaker state will be dominated by external pressures, hence by the logic of the international system. These approaches do not provide sufficient explanation on why a state under acute external constraints would decide to go against the power current.

Therefore, the current study suggests that this kind of behaviour could be better explained by looking through constructivist lenses, the approach of IR

[2] The current study uses the terms "small", "weak" and "minor" actors/states interchangeably. In the field of IR there are several definitions of the concept of "small states" and one of the debated questions is whether this concept can be defined by arbitrarily setting the limits for certain characteristics of the state, for example population size (for definitions based on certain measurable characteristics such as size, population, economic development and military capabilities see East 1973, Crowards 2002) or whether the concept is relevant only when a small state is referred to as "small" in relation to a greater one (see Bjøl 1971). The third concept argues that it is the self-perception of the state and its leaders that matters; if people perceive their state as small, it should be considered a small state (see Hey 2003). Since the current research project is interested in asymmetrical conflicts and the self-understanding of the state, the relativity and perceptions concepts will be used – it is the relationship between any two states, based on the perceptions of each other and of the self – that distinguishes a big state from a small state. For recent studies on small states, see Maass 2009, Kassimeris 2009 and Ingebritsen, Neumann, Gstöhl and Beyer 2006.

that sees the world as socially constructed by shared social ideas, identities, norms and practices (Wendt 1999). Constructivists explain the state preference formation focusing on its identities and interests, or as Alexander Wendt puts it: "[i]dentities are the basis of interests" (Wendt 1992, 398). According to Jutta Weldes, constructivism "allows us to examine the intersubjectively constituted identities and interests of the states and the intersubjective meanings out of which they are produced" (Weldes 1996, 280). When looking through constructivist lenses, it seems that the reason why some states might choose to behave in opposition to the rationalist understanding under very crude power conditions might not be because they are ignorant of the international political climate or because they are somehow suicidal and do not want to survive. The answer might lie either in what is meant with 'survival' for the state in question, and/or in the presence of domestic, societal pressures, besides the external pressures, that influence the decision-making process.

Furthermore, the questions on where these differences in decisions by states facing similar high systemic constraints come from point to the logical inference that the question *why* they decided to resist or not would give an incomplete answer. *Why*-questions are incomplete, because "[t]hey generally take as unproblematic the *possibility* that a particular decision or course of action could happen" (Doty 1993, 298). While *why*-questions focus on why a certain outcome was acquired*, how-possible* questions explain how this particular course of action became "common-sensible" for the decision-makers, so that they came to "understand its national interest in one particular way, rather than in some other way" (Weldes 1996, 284). Hence, this research project will attempt to provide a possible explanation to this puzzle by answering the *how-possible* question: how does the relationship between the state and society make a state's foreign policy practices either thinkable or unthinkable under high systemic constraints?

While focusing on the state and society relationship, the dissertation will follow and build on the theoretical framework developed by constructivist Ted Hopf[3] on the relations of domestic identities and foreign policy decision-making. Hopf's societal constructivism focuses on how domestic understandings influence states' foreign policy actions: the self-perceptions of the society influence the decision-makers' understandings on other states and subsequently the foreign policy decision-making. Hopf argues that "[*s*]*ocietal* constructivism concentrates on the domestic identity relationships between a state and its society and how these stand with regard to other states in the world" (Hopf 2009, 295). For Hopf domestic identities make a certain understanding of the outside world possible and others impossible (Hopf 2009). The dissertation will follow Hopf's approach that domestic discourse influences a state's foreign policy decisions. It will also follow Hopf's argument that the state and society operate within the same social cognitive structure, hence the decision-maker's understandings are embedded in the societal understandings

[3] See: Hopf 2002, 2005, 2009, 2010.

(Hopf 2002). However, it will part from Hopf's approach on how this state and society relationship is constructed and how this construction influences the decision-making. For Hopf, the assumption that the state, hence the decision-maker, and the society operate within the same social cognitive structure, leads to a uniform domestic construction. To be able to argue this, Hopf brackets the tensions between different societal discourses, focusing on the dominant state discourse. Subsequently, he also rejects the tensions and debates at the moment of decision-making, as in his opinion the decision-maker is in most cases presented with one option, based on the dominant discourse. This dissertation aims to problematize the question of decision-making and argues that the relationship of the state and society is over-simplified in Hopf's approach. It will be argued that if there are different dominant discourses based on conflicting state identities, the decision-maker does not have coherent given practices at his disposal, but needs to mediate the tensions between the different discourses. The decision-maker has to process the constraints and pressures coming from the carriers of other discourses, such as opposition politicians, pressure groups and media. However, this process does not happen in a vacuum of objectiveness: how the decision-maker is socialised within these societal discourses also matters. Therefore, the dissertation will explore the main discourses present in the society, but in addition will explore the social construction of the decision-maker. It will be further argued that the decision-maker makes the decision based on his interpretation of the domestic and external situation, which in turn is based on his understandings of the state and society relationship and his own social construction.

To answer the research question, the theoretical framework built on Hopf's approach on the relation of social identities and foreign policy will be applied to two cases: the foreign policy decisions of Finland and those of Estonia in autumn 1939 regarding the demands of the Soviet Union. The case selection was based on the idea that the aim of the study was to explore situations where resistance would be, within the understanding of rational calculations of material capabilities, particularly problematic. Therefore, the context of a freshly started war would provide a good background context. Secondly, for the purpose of the study, an appropriate case study would be a small state in an asymmetrical conflict situation with no obvious military alliances with a power state. This was the case for both Finland and Estonia. By exploring the state actions from the period where the realist power theory seemed to hold, I will also address the criticism of constructivism that it mainly deals with 'good' or 'ethical' norms and issues such as "imposing a stigma on the use of nuclear or chemical weapons" (Checkel 1998, 339) and explore its suitability for explaining the 'realist home base period': World War II.

In terms of the case studies, the dissertation will limit its focus to the events and decisions made in autumn 1939 in reaction to the Soviet demands, and not, in the case of Finland, on the period of the Winter War, or in the case of Estonia to the events after signing the agreements or developments in 1940. The focus of this dissertation is on a *how-possible* question: how this decision became

possible for the decision-makers. Therefore, it will not assess the decisions of Finland and Estonia in terms of right or wrong behaviour. It will also not engage in a discussion on what might have happened in case of a different behaviour, what should have been done differently, or whether any other course of action would have led to any other outcome. The focus and choices of the dissertation will be further explained in the Chapter 1.

The dissertation comprises seven parts: the first part (Chapter 1) will lay out the theoretical and methodological foundations of the study. The dissertation will follow the constructivist approach, in particular the theoretical framework developed by the constructivist Ted Hopf on the relations of domestic identities and foreign policy decision-making. The study is focused on a specific foreign policy decision and centred on a 'how-possible' question: how this course of action became commonsensical for the decision-makers. Hence, its close focus lies on the immediate decision-maker and the discourse he carries. Therefore, the study will first explore the dominant discourses existing in the society, but it will differ from Hopf's approach in that it will separately explore the social construction of the decision-maker. It will further argue that the decision-maker makes the decision based on his interpretation of the domestic and external situation, which in turn is based on his own reading of societal discourses. Therefore, exploring how the decision-maker is socialised within the societal discourses is necessary to answer the research question as it shows how he interpreted the external/domestic constraints in this particular situation and how this translated into a particular course of action/decision.

The two empirical case studies both consist of three parts. The first parts (Chapter 2 in the case of Estonia and Chapter 5 in the case of Finland) will explore the foreign policy decisions in question focusing on the systemic pressures and showing the different reactions of these two states to similar systemic pressures. The second parts (Chapter 3 in the case of Estonia and Chapter 6 in the case of Finland) will analyse the dominant domestic discourses in the respective states: their emergence, development and interactions as it is argued that domestic discourses influenced how the situation was understood by the society and the decision-makers. The third parts (Chapter 4 in the case of Estonia and Chapter 7 in the case of Finland) of the empirical case studies discuss the influence of the domestic discourses on the decision-making process in autumn 1939. First, the social construction of the primary decision-maker is analysed, and it is argued that it is he who by processing the on-going tensions between the domestic discourses must balance between external and internal pressures. Secondly, it is shown how the decision-makers' understanding on the external and domestic spheres translated into the foreign policy decision.

CHAPTER 1.
STATE AND SOCIETY RELATIONSHIP IN CONSTRUCTIVISM

The aim of this chapter is to lay down the theoretical framework of the dissertation. First, the rationalist approaches and their shortcomings in explaining the puzzle the dissertation aims to tackle will be briefly discussed. Next, the constructivist approach to international relations, the framework this dissertation will follow, will be explored[4]. Then, the chapter will focus on different constructivist approaches with regard to their focus on domestic and systemic factors in explaining the states' preference formation, focusing on the systemic approach as presented by Alexander Wendt and the societal approach developed by Ted Hopf. The next part will discuss the state and society relationship within Hopf's approach. The last part of the chapter will explain the research design of the dissertation.

1.1. Rationalist approaches of International Relations

Rationalist approaches, such as realism, neorealism, (neo)liberalism and institutionalism, see states as rational goal-maximizing actors. These approaches focus principally on material factors and either bracket the ideational factors or see the interests and identities of the states largely as fixed and given[5]. Therefore, "the actors, in the context of these models, merely enact (or fail to) a prior script" (Ruggie 1998, 876). There are distinct differences between the approaches, for example in their approach to conflict and cooperation and in their understanding of state preferences. The realists, neorealists in particular, assume that what states do is primarily determined by material capabilities, as Mearsheimer argues, "the distribution of material capabilities among states is the key factor for

[4] The current dissertation will not concern itself in the "the paradigm battle of the 'isms'" (Finnemore and Sikkink 2001, 404), in the sense that it will not argue that one particular IR paradigm explains the international world better than the other ones. It rather follows the argument of Fearon and Wendt, who provide for the option to see rationalism and constructivism as analytical tools, which "do not in themselves force the researcher to make ontological or empirical commitments." However, as they do differ in their understanding of society: "rationalism from the 'bottom-up' and constructivism from the 'top-down' […] they tend in practice to ask somewhat different questions and so bring different aspects of social life into focus" (Fearon and Wendt 2002, 53). Hence, this chapter will explain why constructivist lenses would be well-suited for tackling the puzzle the dissertation is interested in.

[5] Adler building on Caporaso: "Realism, neorealism, game theory and strategic studies, along with neoliberal institutional approaches, share a rationalist approach to states, which they all view as 'conscious goal-seeking agents pursuing their interests within an external environment characterised by anarchy and the power of other states. The paradigmatic question is how states pursue their goals given the constraints under which they operate. When goals are interdependent, the question assumes a strategic form: How can one state achieve what it wants, given the preferences and capacities of others?'" (Caporaso 1992, 605, cited in Adler 1997, 348).

understanding world politics" (Mearsheimer 1994/1995, 91; also see Waltz 1979). If the realists assume that what states do is primarily determined by strategic considerations – what they can get or what they know – then liberal theory gives more attention to a state's intentions (for the liberal approach see for example Milner 1997; Moravcsik 1997). Moravcsik has stated, "what states want is the primary determinant of what they do" (Moravcsik 1997, 521–522). For liberal theorists it is the configuration of state preferences that matters most in world politics (Moravcsik 1997, 513). Nevertheless, within the focus of this dissertation, it is more important to explore how these approaches are similar, that is, in their metatheoretical approach, which is rationalism. Hence, this section will focus on the limitations of the rationalist approach in explaining the puzzle of the dissertation. Although rationalists assume that states' choices are based on their interests, the main criticism towards their treatment of interests is that they see them as exogenous. For example, they see them as given (Waltz 1979) or through the lenses of material capabilities and factors (see for example Moravcsik 1997 and Krasner 1988). Neorealists mostly focus on external factors that constrain the state's behaviour and as states are seen as rational value-maximizers, their behaviour is analysed within the framework of these external constraints. Hence, neorealism argues that within the asymmetrical conflict situation that the current dissertation is interested in, the foreign policy decision-making of a state with lesser capabilities will be governed by the logic of the international system, hence the preference formation will be dominated by external pressures. Handel argued that "[d]omestic determinants of foreign policy are less salient in weak states. The international system leaves them less room for choice in the decision-making process. Their smaller margin of error and hence greater preoccupation with survival makes the essential interests of weak states less ambiguous. Kenneth Waltz's 'third image' is therefore a most relevant level of analysis" (Handel 1990, 3). According to neorealist understanding[6], when a state's physical survival is at stake, this concern will overshadow all others in forming a state's behaviour. The state will aim to balance the threat, if possible with external help. The state's decision-making is extensively influenced by the state's relative military and economic power; in a conflict between two states where one has relatively higher military capabilities, the weaker one must focus on solving the conflict by all means, as any conflict is a conflict over autonomy for that state. Also, an increase in systemic pressures should have a constraining effect on the state's foreign policy manoeuvring space. Therefore, an increase of the external threat or failure in balancing the threat should influence and change a state's foreign policy behaviour (Telhami 2002). Another assumption of realist approaches, in the light of the question the

[6] It has been pointed out, for example by Telhami 2002 and Telhami and Barnett 2002, that although Kenneth Waltz has always stated that neorealist theory is not a theory of foreign policy, "many scholars of foreign policy employed his work as if all state interests can be derived from the relative position of the state in international politics [...] Although they did not in principle exclude domestic sources of interests, in practice many assumed that international politics holds a monopoly on the state's interests" (Telhami and Barnett 2002, 2).

current dissertation aims to tackle, is that realism "deals with the perennial conditions that attend the conduct of statecraft, not with the specific conditions that confront the statesman" (Tucker 1961, 463). Although neoliberals do give attention to norms and ideas, they treat them as enabling actors to maximize actors' material capabilities (Checkel 1998, 327).

The following examples illustrate the shortcomings of rationalist approaches in fully explaining the decision-making process of the states under high systemic pressures, both in cases where they decide to go against the power current and where they do not. David Vital, who in general saw small states preference formation under limited realist conditions (see introduction of this dissertation (Vital 1971a and Vital 1971b), ends up explaining the behaviour of Czechoslovakia during the Munich crisis by arguing that its behaviour was founded on dominant ideas of the decision-makers. Vital argues that the decision to capitulate was not based on military capabilities and rational calculations of the power disparity between Germany and Czechoslovakia, as realist theory would commonly suggest. Vice versa, he suggests that if it would have been rationally calculated, Czechoslovakia should have chosen to resist, since it had relatively high military and economic capabilities and although it had lost France as its ally, it had a possibility to bandwagon against Germany and Western countries as the Soviet Union had suggested backing it. Vital's conclusion is that Czechoslovakian foreign policy was not determined by its material capabilities, but by the framework of dominant ideas that the decision-makers had about the state and its foreign policy. These ideas held that "Czechoslovakia must be linked to the West; Czechoslovakia must not fight alone; Czechoslovakia must not enter into an relationship with the Soviet Union unaccompanied by France; Czechslovakia must preserve its reputation" (Vital 1971b). Therefore, Vital concludes that Czechoslovakia's decision was based on a set of ideas about the identity and foreign policy of Czechoslovakia, which were "employed together as a system of rules for political conduct" (Vital 1971b, 52). Hence, focusing on domestic understandings and norms and pressures deriving from these factors is necessary to better explain the decision-making process even under high systemic constraints.

The prominent realist Henry Kissinger provides another example when he explains the behaviour of the Hungarian government in 1956. Kissinger argues that Imre Nagy's decisions were not a result of his failure to recognize the external constraints, but because of the immense domestic pressures. He states that Nagy "could not have failed to understand the import of the Soviet warnings, or of the changes he was himself fostering," but could not control the domestic pressures, when being "caught between the fury of his people and the implacability of his communist allies, was riding a tide he could neither control nor direct" (Kissinger 1994, 556–561). As a result of the domestic pressures, Hungary withdrew from the Warsaw pact, declared neutrality and asked the United Nations to recognize it. An important aspect here is that the kind of domestic constraints the decision-maker faced are unexplainable by a rationalist account, as within the existing state system people could not pressure the government

with for example election or poll results. In the case of Hungary in 1956, the constraints related to remaining in power for the decision-maker strongly depended on its relations with the Soviet Union. Therefore, the dissertation suggests that in order to explain state's foreign policy decision-making under acute external pressures, its domestic ideational factors, such as domestic understandings and ideas must be explored. Hence, the dissertation will follow the constructivist approach in order to explain how the foreign policy decisions in Finland and Estonia in 1939 became possible.[7]

1.2. Constructivist approach of International Relations

The constructivist approach of International Relations sees the world as socially constructed by shared social ideas, identities, norms and practices[8]. This school argues that an outcome cannot be explained only by studying the power distribution, but that "[o]ne will need to know about the culture, norms, institutions, procedures, rules, and social practices that constitute the actors and the structures alike" (Hopf 1998, 173). Constructivists "are not interested in how things *are* but in how they *became* what they are" (Adler 2002, 101). Hence, the focus of the constructivist question-setting is not on why something happened, but rather on *how-possible* questions. While *why*-questions focus on "*why* a particular outcome was obtained", *how-possible* questions explain "*how* the subjects, objects and interpretive dispositions were socially constructed in such a way that certain practices were made possible" (Doty 1993, 298). Constructivists see the international world as consisting of both ideational and material factors and identities as not only individual but also collective. As summed up by Guzzini, constructivism "is epistemologically about the *social construction of knowledge,* and ontologically about the *construction of social reality"* (emphases original) (Guzzini 2000, 160). Constructivism concerns itself with social facts, such as marriage, human rights, money or Christmas, that exist only because of human agreement (Searle 1995, 1). To understand how these social facts change and the impact of this change on political life is central to the constructivist approach (Finnemore and Sikkink 2001, 393). Constructivism does not argue that the material world does not matter, but "suggests that material forces must be understood through the social concepts that define their meaning for human life" (Hurd 2008, 301). The ideas that constructivism focuses on are not only the ideas held by individual people, but include intersubjective and institutionalised ideas (Hurd 2008). Historical contextualizing has an important

[7] This dissertation will not discuss the foreign policy analysis literature, which could have been one alternative or additional course to take, since the puzzle from its beginning has centred around the international relations metatheories, particularly on the shortcomings of rationalism in explaining the puzzle and constructivism in offering possibilities to understand it.

[8] For different categorizations and types of constructivism see for example Ruggie 1998, Hopf 1998, Hopf 2002, Adler 1997, Adler 2002, Finnemore and Sikkink 2001.

role to play in constructivism, since "constructivism has history 'built in' as part of theories. Historicity, therefore, shows up as part of the contexts that make possible social reality, the path-dependent processes involving structural and agent change, and the mechanisms involved in the explanation of change" (Adler 2002, 102).

Constructivists explain the state preference formation by focusing on its identities and interests, or as Alexander Wendt puts it: "Identities are the basis of interests" (Wendt 1992, 398). Hurd argues that "what distinguishes a specifically *constructivist* story on interests is that the influences on interest formation are *social"* (Hurd 2008 303, emphasis original). Constructivism "treats identity as an empirical question to be theorized within a historical context" (Hopf 1998, 175). Constructivist lenses enable us to see why people have collective understandings of certain norms and values, and can help to explain where the interests come from (Adler 2002, 102). According to Weldes, constructivism "allows us to examine the intersubjectively constituted identities and interests of the states and the intersubjective meanings out of which they are produced" (Weldes 1996, 280). Constructivism does not focus on rational bargaining or capabilities, but on social communication and the subsequent meaning of bargaining and capabilities (Adler 2002, 102). For constructivism, extensive military capabilities per se do not make a state a threat to its neighbours; it is the social context that gives meaning to that material capability. In an example provided by Wendt, for the United States, the fact that Britain and North Korea have nuclear weapons does not mean that these countries are considered equally threatening, as the meaning of possessing these weapons is interpreted through the relationship the US has with these respective countries. "500 British nuclear weapons are less threatening to the United States than 5 North Korean nuclear weapons", because of the perception the US has of these countries: "the British are friends and the North Koreans are not" (Wendt 1995, 73).

The current dissertation is concerned with the process of a state's foreign policy preference formation and the role the state and society relationship plays in this process. The particular interest of the dissertation is to study this state and society relationship under very crude power conditions and to understand whether and how the domestic discourses influence the state's foreign policy decision-making while their physical survival is at stake, since there is a threat of invasion or of a large-scale war. The dissertation does not argue that only ideational factors matter or that ideational factors always *a priori* dominate over material factors, but claims that ideational factors matter even during the most acute external pressures, because we never fully see these pressures objectively, but through the social construction of the external threat. How domestic understandings influence the understandings of the external threat is well-illustrated by the case, explained in Mercer 2010, on the evaluation of American and Israeli intelligence services on whether Iran may get nuclear weapons. "The Israelis believed that the Iranians might acquire nuclear weapons in two years and the Americans expected it to take five to ten years. Both groups relied on the same knowledge base and frequently consulted each other. The difference was

over analysis and assessment, not information" (Mercer 2010, 19). When asked to explain the difference, the US representative stated "sometimes what the Israelis will do – and I think that perhaps because it's a more existential issue for them, they will give you the worst-case assessment" (cited in Mercer 2010, 19). This suggests that domestic understandings of both Self and Other do influence the way the risk is perceived, which subsequently influences the state's foreign policy making process.

Therefore, the dissertation aims to show that even in a situation with acute international pressures, domestic understandings are needed to fully explain the state's foreign policy decision-making. Furthermore, with this approach the study also addresses the criticism towards constructivism that it is mainly concerned with 'good' norms or issues, or as Mearsheimer saw it, being a theory of global peace that aims to transform the power-maximizing states of realism to states that would prioritize the international interests over national ones (Mearsheimer 1994/1995, 38–39)[9]. A large part of constructivist scholarship deals with issues that rose to prominence after the 1990s: 'good' norms such as control over certain weapons, environmental norms, sanctions against apartheid or the end of the Cold War (Checkel 1998). However, the world was also socially constructed during the World Wars, the Armenian genocide and the Yugoslav wars. Therefore, as Adler argues, "constructivism is a set of paradigmatic lenses through which we observe *all* socially constructed reality, 'good' and 'bad'" (Adler 1997, 336). Hence, the current dissertation is aimed at exploring the suitability of constructivism for explaining the realist home base period: World War II.

The chapter will next discuss different constructivist approaches with regard to their focus on domestic and systemic factors in explaining the states' preference formation. It will be shown that a state's preference formation happens both on a systemic and a domestic level. Next, the theoretical framework that the current dissertation follows and builds on, the societal constructivism as developed by constructivist Ted Hopf, will be discussed. The dissertation will follow Hopf's approach on the relation between formative discourses and foreign policy decision, but it will disagree with Hopf in respect of how the state and society relationship is constructed and its impact on the state's foreign policy making process. The empirical part of the dissertation will focus on the foreign policy decision-making of a state with limited material capabilities under acute systemic pressures. Therefore, this angle of high external constraints will guide the discussion while exploring the different approaches in constructivist preference formation.

[9] Mearsheimer labelled early constructivists, such as Wendt and Ruggie, critical theorists (Mearsheimer 1994/1995).

1.2.1. Systemic constructivism

Constructivists explain the state preference formation by focusing on its identities and interests. In contrast to non-constructivist studies, constructivism does not argue that certain levels of analysis, such as the domestic or the systemic, must be seen as the essential starting point or focus of the empirical analysis. As argued by Hurd, "the co-constitution of actors and structures means there is no impetus in constructivism for a zero-sum debate over 'which' level provides the most leverage over puzzles. There is no point in constructivist research to arguments over whether, for instance, domestic politics 'matters' or not in international relations" (Hurd 2008, 306). Nevertheless, constructivists differ on their focus regarding domestic and systemic factors in the process of social construction. Systemic constructivism, developed and most prominently represented by Alexander Wendt[10], focuses on the systemic identities and brackets the domestic ones (Wendt 1992, 1999). Wendt treats states as unitary actors, arguing that "States are people too" (Wendt 1999, 194)[11]. Wendt explains the international world only through the inter-state interactions and thus explicitly brackets the domestic factors within his theory stating that it is aimed at explaining the "logic of anarchy" and therefore focuses on the international system (Wendt 1992, 1999). Wendt's systemic theory assumes that the domestic and systemic levels can be analysed separately as there is a boundary between these systems (Wendt 1999, 13). Wendt acknowledges that social construction also happens on the domestic level and therefore that this level must be considered in case someone is interested in the complete identity formation of the state. He states that society influences the identity formation, since "when states interact they do so with their societies conceptually 'in tow'", (Wendt 1999, 201) and "states are internally related to societies over which they rarely have complete control" (Wendt 1999, 222–223, also 210–211). However, he does not include the domestic identities in his account. Instead, he argues that there are reasons to assume that systemic theorizing "can be studied relatively autonomously from other units and levels of analysis in world politics" (Wendt 1999, 14). He also refers to Waltz stating that "structural theorizing is likely to yield a high rate of explanatory return" because "Structure confronts actors as an objective social fact that constrains and enables action in systematic ways, and as such should generate distinct patterns" (Wendt 1999, 184).

Wendt's approach has been criticised by other constructivists for treating the state as a black box, ignoring the aspect that states do not go into the international arena "with a blank slate", but with their own understandings of the world and their place in it, which is rooted in "domestic political and cultural con-

[10] See also Reus-Smit 1997, Frederking 2003.

[11] Wendt argues that it is very common not only in academia but also in everyday context to treat states as people "as they had the same kinds of intentional properties that we attribute to each other" through talking about them as having "legitimate" actions, beliefs and interests (Wendt 1999, 195). More on Wendt's discussion on state 'personhood', see Wendt 2004. Wendt on collective identities see also Wendt 1994.

texts" (Weldes 1996, 280), and for rejecting the aspect that domestic processes also can influence identity and interests "independently" of intrastate interactions (Copeland 2000, 203).[12] As a result, Wendt's approach is incomplete, since "the problem of identity formation is constantly seen from the perspective of the state and never as a problem each state and each statesman has to grapple with" (Ringmar 1997, 283). Therefore, the early constructivism was criticised for being "weak on the microlevel" as it failed to "explore systematically how norms connect with agents" (Checkel 1998, 342).

In terms of explaining a state's preference formation under acute external constraints, Wendt emphasizes the constraints that material capabilities have on the outcomes of the actors' behaviour, stating that "militarily weak states typically cannot conquer powerful ones, powerful states typically can conquer weak states", and therefore "the distribution of capabilities has independent effects on outcomes. If a weak state attempts to conquer a strong state it will encounter these effects" (Wendt 1999, 110). This once again does not tell anything about whether this state would take this action, or in case it would, how it can be explained. However, he does assume that a state's actions will be to some extent determined by the material capabilities as "composition of material capabilities at any given moment help define the possibilities of our action" (Wendt 1999, 113). Nonetheless, "[w]e can ignore those effects, like the Balinese marching into Dutch machine guns or the Polish cavalry charging German tanks, but we do so at our own risk" (Wendt 1999, 113). His understanding here is that a weak actor can "march" into a power actor's "guns", but is not likely to, as the urge to survive physically is its pre-given interest (Wendt 1999, 112).

Therefore, Wendt's approach offers a limited explanation of the international world, as in addition of ignoring domestic factors, he also treats main state interests as given[13] and attributes fixed roles for state relationships (Wendt 1999). Hopf argues that this is typical for all systemic theories, in that they simplify and "make a priori assumptions about the nature of its units and their interactions that may do so much violence to empirical reality as to cast doubt on the utility of the project" (Hopf 2002, 268). Since Wendt built his theory with the purpose to explain the increase of cooperation in the international world, he mainly focuses on outcomes, and not on what is socially possible. Thus, in terms of this dissertation's puzzle, Wendt's framework is not suitable as it leaves us in the dark on the domestic part of the story, which as the examples of Czechoslovakia 1938 and Hungary 1956 pointed out, has a role to play in explaining the state's foreign policy decision-making. Therefore, the current study will focus on the societal constructivism that explores the domestic understandings and their impact on foreign policy decision-making.

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[12] For critical discussions on Wendt's approach see Guzzini and Leander (eds.) 2006, Doty 2000, Smith 2000a, Ringmar 1997, Zehfuss 2002.

[13] Wendt defines four pre-given national interests: "physical survival, autonomy, economic well-being, and collective self-esteem" (Wendt 1999, 198, 235–238). Wendt does not explain why these interests are pre-given, but suggests that "the underlying needs are common to all states" (Wendt 1999, 235).

1.2.2. Societal constructivism

The majority of constructivist scholarship focuses on domestic factors. One of the main schools is the norm-oriented constructivism that focuses on the question why states comply with certain norms in the international world.[14] According to Hopf, although this stream of constructivism does not explicitly neglect the domestic level as Wendt does, it does not pay much attention to "the domestic context within which any international norm is embedded. […] It merely identifies the international norm and then explores how it became 'adopted or rejected by states'" (Hopf 2002, 278–279).[15] Hopf states that the point where normative constructivists stop their study should be the start of reconstruction of "the social discursive context that made possible the particular understanding of that norm so that it could be adopted by the decision maker" (Hopf 2002, 279; also see Checkel 1998; Sterling-Folker 2000). Hopf brings out that although there are several authors that do focus on "the public at large", such as Berger 1998, Hall 1999 and Katzenstein 1996, too often constructivists pick certain domestic actors or groups such as the elites, the legislature, civil society pressure groups, and ignore the broader societal fabric (Hopf 2009, 294–295). Hence, Hopf argues that "[w]hat is mostly missing from social constructivism, paradoxically enough, is society" (Hopf 2009, 294). Building on Ruggie, who criticised constructivist researchers for not "beginning with the actual social construction of meanings and significance from the ground up" (Ruggie 1998), Hopf argues that constructivists "have to bring society back" (Hopf 2009, 295) to the constructivist research.

Hopf, in his works on state identity and foreign policy and the decision-making logics in international relations (2002, 2005, 2009, 2010), proposes *societal* constructivism (emphasis original), which focuses on how domestic understandings influence a state's foreign policy actions; hence, the way society perceives itself matters for the way the decision-maker sees another state. His approach concentrates on "the domestic identity relationships between a state and its society and how these stand with regard to other states in the world" (Hopf 2009, 295). Hopf states that "identities categorize people according to common features, making the other's actions intelligible and an individual's own actions vis-à-vis them intelligible to himself" (Hopf 2002, 5). This logic of intelligibility explains why people routinely end up choosing only a fraction of possible actions. Therefore, to explain the foreign policy choices of a country one has to understand "how states understand themselves through domestic others, how state identities are constructed at home as well as through interstate interaction" (Hopf 2002, 10). Hopf argues, and demonstrates on empirical case studies, that "the state's own domestic identities constitute a social cognitive

[14] For norm-oriented constructivist studies see for example Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, Finnemore 1996, Tannenwald 1999, Price 1998.

[15] Both Sterling-Folker (2000) and Hopf (2002) argue that liberal studies on domestic politics and preferences (such as Milner 1997, Moravcsik 1997) treat the domestic level similar to normative constructivists.

structure that makes threats and opportunities, enemies and allies, intelligible, thinkable, and possible" (Hopf 2002, 16).

Hopf's account of identity is "social, cognitive, and structural" (Hopf 2009, 280). Hopf sees identities as "social structures that both enable and discourage particular understandings of the external world" (Hopf 2009, 281). Every member of society has multiple identities, which are relational. "Every society is bounded by a social cognitive structure within which some discursive formations dominate and compete. An individual's identities contribute to the creation and recreation of discourse and social cognitive structure; at the same time, those identities are constrained, shaped, and empowered by the very social products they have a hand in creating" (Hopf 2002, 1). Although Hopf argues for bringing society back in, he does not suggest to bracket the external identities. Instead, he suggests that the state's identities are "socially constructed in interaction with both domestic and international society" (Hopf 2005, 226). "[I]t is only in interaction with a particular Other that the meaning of a state is established" and these "meaningful Others" exist for social constructivism "both at home and abroad" (Hopf 2002, 288–289, 1998). This means significant others can effect changes in a state's identity, working within the constraints of that state's domestic identity terrain. It is in this way that "the US and Europe are in fact 'causing' Russian foreign policy, but only insofar as the identities that are reproduced also resonate with the discourse(s) of identity that predominate in Russia's domestic context" (Hopf 2005, 227). Hopf also points out that general international relations literature sees Self and Other as if the Other could only be a state actor and it is assumed that the relationship between Self and Other is always conflictual. Hopf argues that there is "no a priori theoretical or, indeed, empirical reason to believe so" as "the Self has not only multiple Others, but multiple kinds of Others" (Hopf 2002, 9, 263). For example, when explaining Russia's military intervention in Georgia in the 1990s and how Russia itself came to see it as an internationally legitimate action, Hopf shows how "the discourse of Russian identity is simultaneously the product of both domestic identity construction and the interaction between the Russian state and international actors. What Russia considered to be legitimate actions by a 'great power' depended on the identity that was produced by both domestic and external interactions" (Hopf 2005, 225).

Hopf brings out that most of the international relations literature focuses either on the logic of consequences, the rationalist logic that follows the realist understanding that states make their decisions based on rational calculations about anticipated consequences or the logic of appropriateness, the institutionalist logic that sees actions as rule based.[16] The logic of habit, which he argues plays a crucial role in determining which course of action an actor takes from all the options available, has been largely ignored in the study of international

[16] On the logic of consequences and the logic of appropriateness see March and Olsen 1998. Recent constructivist literature also suggests alternative logics, such as a logic of arguing (Risse 2000), a logic of habit (Hopf 2002, 2009, 2010), a logic of practicality (Pouliot 2008) and a logic of emotional beliefs (Mercer 2010).

relations. He argues that "[h]abit, custom, and tradition, neither conscious cost-benefit calculations nor considerations of oughts and shoulds, enforce social order most of the time" (Hopf 2009, 282). Logic of habit explains why individuals routinely choose only a limited number of options available for them. As Hopf puts it, "their choices are effectively bounded by the social cognitive structure, its discourses, and their identities" (Hopf 2002, 5).

1.2.3. The state and society relationship

This dissertation follows Hopf's approach that domestic discourses influence a state's foreign policy decisions. Hopf argues that "[*s*]*ocietal* constructivism concentrates on the domestic identity relationships between a state and its society and how these stand with regard to other states in the world" (Hopf 2009, 295). However, the study will aim to problematize two aspects that Hopf largely brackets: the social construction of the state and society relationship and its effect on the decision-making. In terms of these issues, Hopf argues for a very straightforward, nearly automatic approach: the state and society relationship is seen as uniform: society carries certain identities, and as the decision-maker "has been socialized within that community" (Hopf 2009, 298), these identities will determine "how a decision-maker regards another state" (Hopf 2009, 298). Following from this, at the moment of decision-making, the decision-maker is presented with one option based on the dominant state discourse. Next, these two problems will be discussed in more detail.

In his approach, Hopf focuses on the dominant state discourse, that is, the discourse that is "institutionally empowered" (Hopf 2005, 236). This enables him to treat the domestic discourse at the moment of decision-making as uniform: the decision-maker operates within this discourse and this discourse will determine how he will understand a certain foreign policy situation. At the same time, Hopf acknowledges that states have multiple conflictual discourses. "In most cases, we will find a predominant discourse and at least one competitor" (Hopf 2009, 291). Nevertheless, in his approach he largely brackets the interactions and tensions between the different discourses. Hopf does not explain how one discourse becomes dominant or how the interaction between different discourses affects the decision-making process. This might be partly because his immediate focus is on how understandings of Self determine understandings of Other and thereby influence foreign policy decisions, not on a particular decision-making process or decision-making. However, the questions on the decision-making process rise when he turns to empirics. For example, in his 2005 article on Russian identities in relation to the military intervention in Abkhazia, Hopf suggests that there were three main competitors for Russian identity in the 1990s, each one "was socially constructed in interaction with both domestic and international society" (Hopf 2005, 226). At one point, one of these discourses became "institutionally empowered" and therefore *the* state identity (Hopf 2005, 236). However, he treats this process of one discourse becoming *the* state

discourse as a black box, by simply assuming that one will win out and neglecting the specifics of this particular process.

Likewise, in his book on identities in Moscow (2002), Hopf argues that in 1955 different leaders understood the meaning of 'difference' on the domestic level differently. This subsequently influenced their understanding on difference abroad, which translated into a foreign policy decision. He brings out that Khrushchev believed difference to be non-threatening (Hopf 2002, 92–94). Hopf's emphasis is on establishing the link between the domestic and the international, while Khrushchev's understanding was based on a broader domestic identity, which influenced how he understood the international sphere. However, he does not focus on how different leaders came to understand the meanings of different concepts differently within the country where certain domestic identities mattered. Although he argues that it mattered that Khrushchev believed that 'difference' is natural and non-threatening, he does not explain how this understanding became possible. For example, in his explanation of the Sino-Soviet split, Hopf argues that "[w]hat the state chooses is already somewhat predetermined by what is already taken for granted by society" (Hopf 2009, 299). But if these societal understandings are multiple and conflictual then it is not justified to simply assume that the decision will be automatic, someone needs to negotiate between these different understandings prior to making the decision. Hence, the political decision is not given, but also socially constructed. As Dessler and Owen have argued: "Both of Hopf's case studies leave us with the question of how one discourse or combination comes to dominate. His prototypical decision-maker has multiple identities, each of which has some influence; both preferences and policy choices are thus indeterminate" (Dessler and Owen 2005, 607). Therefore, there is no reason to *a priori* assume that the decision-maker operating within the dominant state discourse can ignore the pressures coming from other formative discourses existing within the society and therefore when one discourse has emerged as the dominant one, others have no influence on decision-making process.

As Hopf does not address the question of tensions between discourses, the relationship between the society and state, that is, the decision-makers, for him is a very straightforward one. Society carries certain identities of itself, which will translate to "how a decision maker regards another state" because "the decision-maker herself has been socialized within that community" (Hopf 2009, 298). Hopf suggests that there is always some correspondence between the state, that is, the decision-makers, and the society, and therefore that they will always operate within the same social cognitive structure (Hopf 2002). Hopf argues that

> [e]very foreign policy decision maker is as much a member of the social cognitive structure that characterizes her society as any average citizen. Charged with the daily responsibility of understanding other states in world politics, she is most unlikely to be able to escape from this structure. Her understandings of other states rely on her understandings of her own state's Self. In large part, understandings of Self are constructed domestically out of the many identities

> that constitute the discursive formations that, in turn, make up the social cognitive structure of that society (Hopf 2002, 37).

So, there is no need to focus on a particular decision-maker, as this is "a social, not a personal" approach. "The theory expects these identities to operate independently of whoever occupies the position of head of state" (Hopf 2009, 286).[17]

This approach creates the black box of the decision-maker and also brackets the complex dynamics of the decision-making process: the aspect of competing discourses and how the dynamics between them influences the decision-making process and the outcome. It largely ignores the domestic and external pressures that the decision-maker has to consider at the time of decision-making. Although he did open the black box of society, he created another black box with the decision-maker and decision-making. Checkel commented that "to get from identities to interests and choice requires some kind of politics and debate […]. At that moment of choice, were options debated, arguments advanced and justifications proffered – all linguistic acts that could easily influence dominant discourses and thus their actual impact on foreign policy interests" (Checkel 2004, 234).[18]

For Hopf, this near-automation of the decision-making is made possible by the logic of habit. For him, habits "imply actions by giving us ready-made responses to the world that we execute without thinking" (Hopf 2010, 541). He argues that "[w]e do not apprehend what is out there, and then categorize it. Instead, what is perceived as reality is already pre-cooked in our heads" (Hopf 2010, 541). For Hopf, within the logic of habit the actors will act on their "pre-cooked reality", which defines the thinkable courses of action for the particular actor. Hopf, building on Kahneman (2003), has stated: "Decision-makers rarely need to choose between options because in most cases a single option comes to mind" (Hopf 2010, 549). The current study will suggest that Hopf's claim that the course of action the decision-maker will take is determined only by this fixed "pre-cooked reality" is over-simplified. To have a straightforward argu-

[17] Hopf justifies bracketing the decision-maker by stating that his theory is "an intersubjective theory of identity, not a subjective one; a structural, not an individualistic one; a social, not a personal one" (Hopf 2009, 286). Hence, Hopf seems to suggest that it is either one or another: either it is the broad, societal fabric or it is the individualist decision-maker.

[18] Another suggestion on the reason why Hopf brackets the decision-making process and diminishes the agency of the decision-maker is methodological. As Hopf himself points out, he is aiming for "a more precise and determinant" approach than the systemic constructivism and a "more generalizable" approach than normative constructivism (Hopf 2009, 297). The intersubjective approach enables the researcher to "generate many more falsifiable implications for the theory than we would if it were a decision-making approach concentrating on the belief system or cognitive heuristics of an individual decision maker" (Hopf 2009, 287). However, the current dissertation is interested in a particular decision and decision-making process under specific conditions. Therefore, it follows Price and Reus-Smit's understanding of constructivist research being question driven and its claims being made in the context of a certain phenomenon, time frame and evidence (Price and Reus-Smit 1998, 272).

ment that societal identities, enforced by habit, determine a state's action, Hopf brackets the tensions between different discourses, minimizes the agency of decision-maker and largely neglects the complex dynamics of the decision-making process, where both external and domestic pressures need to be mediated. Because even if we assume that the state as decision-maker acts on the "pre-cooked reality", then how can we take for granted that the decision-maker is homogenous on the content of this reality. Secondly, even if there is one monolithic understanding within the decision-making body, there can still be other competing discourses and thereby pressures both on the domestic and international level that need to be processed by the decision-maker. Moreover, even if one could argue that there was one uniform option, this should not be *a priori* assumed. Weldes suggests so much, when he states that the question "what 'degree of freedom' do state officials enjoy in constructing narratives about international relations and thus constructing the national interest" is an empirical question "that requires a response grounded in extensive empirical analyses" (Weldes 1996, 286).

This dissertation will address these issues by considering the following aspects. First, if there are conflicting discourses present in the society, there are always tensions between these discourses that create pressures that need to be processed at the time of decision-making. The political decision is not given, but socially constructed. Even if there is no visible debate between the discourses or no other discourses present at the decision-making process, this is not because societal construction is *a priori* uniform, but because of certain social conditions that were in place, and therefore made this situation possible. These conditions are the results of long term social processes that can be traced in order to explain how a certain decision became possible. Therefore, the emergence and development of the domestic discourses that were present at the time of decision-making needs to be explored as this will help to understand how these social conditions that were present for the decision-maker at the time of decision-making came to be.

The dissertation will suggest that in order to better understand how a certain decision became commonsensical, hence possible, for the state, the relationship between the society, carrying these discourses, and the state, negotiating between these discourses, must be explored. The state, that is, the decision-maker does not operate within one coherent discourse, but needs to process the constraints and pressures coming from other discourses and also external actors. However, this process does not happen in a vacuum of objectiveness, but the decision-maker's own social construction influences how he understands the external and domestic tensions and subsequently the particular situation that needs to be decided. For that reason, this research project does not follow Hopf's *a priori* assumption that since the decision-maker operates within the same social structure as everyone else, the relationship is automatic. It will be argued that it is constructed and to understand how it is constructed, we need to open the black box of the statesman and see how he processes the different tensions between the discourses. This analysis on the decision-maker does not

focus on his personality, but on how his social construction and the social conditions under which he operates as these influence his understanding of the current situation and therefore make a certain decision possible. As Hopf argues, states' choices are "rigorously constrained by the webs of understanding of the practices, identities, and interests of other actors that prevail in particular historical contexts" (Hopf 1998, 177). Therefore, when certain understandings exist in the public sphere, this introduces social constraints for the decision-makers, and so makes certain practices acceptable and commonsensical and other practices unacceptable. Therefore, in order to understand how a decision became possible for the decision-makers, one needs to explore the domestic discourses that exist in the society, but also the interactions and tensions between the discourses and how these dynamics and external pressures are processed by the decision-maker. When this dissertation discusses societal/ domestic pressures or constraints, it does not see them as instrumental pressures coming from different interest groups aimed at influencing government's policy, but in terms of domestic discourses that are present in the society, that the decision-maker is part of.

The current dissertation follows Hopf's approach that domestic understandings influence foreign policy decision-making as they influence the way the decision-maker understands the situation. However, can one simply assume that it is always the case or can there also be cases where the state and society relationship is conflictual? Hopf provides for a possibility where there is no correspondence between the domestic identity and the identity of the state, hence, the decision-maker. He argues that this can happen either when the decision-maker is idiosyncratic – her personal views are so unique that they do not have a trace in a discursive record – or if the decision-maker operates within other discourses than the people – her ideas are shaped elsewhere and not within the particular domestic society (Hopf 2002, 37). However, for Hopf these cases are not part of the account of the identity offered in his approach. This dissertation argues that by problematizing the decision-maker and his social construction, one can go beyond an *a priori* assumed relationship between the state and society and empirically explore this relationship, by focusing on the social construction of the decision-maker in regard to the domestic societal discourses.

This dissertation is not aimed at creating a societal constructivist theory on the state and society relationship. Nevertheless, it aims to contribute to the literature on societal constructivism by problematizing the aspects of the state and society relationship and its subsequent influence on the decision-making. This will be done by exploring these aspects in the following two case studies. It will be shown that in the process of making the political decision, the decision-maker does not have coherent given practices at his disposal, but needs to mediate the tensions between the different formative discourses existing in the state and the external pressures. It will be further argued that the decision-maker makes the decision based on his interpretation of the domestic and external situation, which in turn is based on his understandings on the state and society relationship, hence his own social construction.

1.3. Methodology

To explain how a particular foreign policy decision became commonsensical for the decision-makers the dissertation will follow a three-step model. First, the extent of the external pressures that the decision-maker had to process will be established. This is necessary as the research project is interested in a particular foreign policy decision under acute systemic constraints. Therefore the first part of the empirical case study will explore whether systemic constraints were recognised and balanced against, whether the pressures increased during the decision-making process and whether this changed the state's foreign policy behaviour. The second part of the case study will explore the emergence and development of the formative discourses through interaction with each other and particular Others. The third part of the case study will focus on the actual decision-making: how did the decision-maker come to understand the situation the way he did. Therefore, first the social construction of the decision-maker will be explored. Then it will be examined how the decision-maker negotiated between different discourses and subsequent pressures (external pressures as established in the first part of the case study and domestic pressures as established within the second part of the study). It is important to note that the international system and pressures will be discussed, in line with the societal constructivist framework, through domestic understandings of the international system, external threats and pressures.

The question the current study focuses on is the impact of domestic ideas and practices on the foreign policy decision-making process under high systemic constraints. Hence, discourse analysis as a qualitative and interpretive study about the meaning of the language that actors use to understand social phenomena will be used (Abdelal et al. 2009, 6). Discourse analysis is a contested concept in IR (See Hardy, Harley and Phillips 2004; Crawford 2004; Hopf 2004; Laffey and Weldes 2004; Fierke 2004). The current dissertation uses the broad concept of discourse analysis offered by Abdelal et al.: "[s]cholars who write rich descriptions of cases are engaged in discourse analysis, especially in the sense that they are relying on their own interpretive skills and social knowledge to write convincingly about the content and contestation of an identity. Discourse analysis thus can be considered the qualitative contextualisation of texts and practices in order to describe social meanings" (Abdelal et al. 2009, 7).

As the dissertation is aimed at exploring how certain foreign policy decisions become unthinkable or thinkable, discourse analysis is a suitable methodology because "[i]t constrains […] how people categorize and think about the world. It constrains what is thought of at all, what is thought of as possible, and what is thought of as the 'natural thing' to do in a given situation" (Neumann 2008, 62). Discourse analysis has a constructivist ontology: reality is seen as socially constructed. Its epistemology assumes that "meaning is fluid and constructs reality in ways that can be posited through the use of interpretive methods" (Hardy; Harley and Phillips 2004, 21). Other qualitative methods focus on explaining

the social world 'as it is', whereas discourse analysis "endeavours to uncover the way in which it is produced". It "[t]ries to explore how the socially produced ideas and objects that populate the world were created in the first place and how they are maintained and held in place over time" (Phillips and Hardy 2002, 6). As explained by Laffey and Weldes, "Discourse analysis reasons backward to establish a structure from its empirical manifestations. It asks what the conditions of possibility are for this or that particular discursive production. At the same time, it also examines how discourses are naturalised in such a way as to become common sense […] 'Method' in this context thus refers to the conceptual apparatus and empirical procedures used to make possible this retroduction" (Laffey and Weldes 2004, 28).

1.3.1. Case selection

The research for this dissertation started with the following puzzle: in case of high systemic constraints, can it be taken as a given that systemic pressures will dominate the decision-making, as rationalists would assume; or, as history seems to suggest, can domestic factors and pressures become the deciding constraint for the decision-maker in the foreign policy making process? In order to better understand a state that would go against the existing power current, I decided to explore two states facing similar systemic pressures, where one went against the existing power current and the other did not, or, in Checkel's analogy, to also consider a case where the dog did not bark (Checkel 1998, 339). This helps to explore where differences in state choices under similar external pressures may come from. Its purpose is to better understand the impact of the domestic level factors to the decision-making. Doing cross-national research will also help to reduce one of the threats that single study constructivist research face, the "problem of overdetermination that is evident in many constructivist analyses, where social structures, usually norms, are invoked as one of the several causal variables with little or no insight given on how much of the outcome they explain" (Checkel 1998, 339).

The aim of the study was to explore situations where resisting systemic pressures would be, within the understanding of rational calculations of material capabilities, particularly problematic. Hence, the case selection was based on the idea that the prospective cases should be situated as much in a *Hobbesian* environment as possible. The selection of "extreme cases" is supported both by positivist and post-positivist methodologies, as it helps to clearly see the subject of inquiry (Phillips and Hardy 2002; Eisenhardt 1989. I started with making a list of possible case studies using the help of Brecher et al.'s comprehensive quantitative study "Crises in the Twentieth Century Volume I: Handbook of International Crises" (1988). In this study, the authors compile a data set of 278 international crises from 1929 to 1979. The reason why I focused on the period in that study was that I wanted to explore the state actions from the period where the realist power theory seemed to hold: either during World War II or the Cold War.

Brecher et al. (1998) defined a foreign policy crisis as a situation with three conditions: a threat to basic values, along with an awareness of limited time for response to the external value threat, and a high probability of involvement in military hostilities. My guidelines for selecting prospective case studies, built on these conditions, were: a demand from a state with higher material capabilities that would be perceived as threatening the existing social order of the weaker state. Next: awareness of limited time; an on-going large-scale military and political crisis (such as war involving major powers); and the absence of any obvious military allies. Furthermore, I tried to find cases where I could pair the behaviour of two weaker states in a conflict situation with the same aggressor. I developed a short-list of cases, several of which I also mentioned in the introductory part of the dissertation.

The case studies chosen for analysis are those of Finland and Estonia and their foreign policy decision-making regarding the demands of the Soviet Union in the autumn of 1939. In September and October 1939, the Soviet Union presented Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Finland with demands on mutual non-aggression pacts that also included Soviet military bases on the territories of these states, all of which had the potential to severely undermine their declared neutrality and put them into the Soviet Union's sphere of influence. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania signed the demands within a few days, which kept them away from war in 1939, but led them to gradually lose their independence over the summer of 1940. Finland's negotiations with the Soviets lasted over a month, as Finland did not agree to the demands. Subsequently the negotiations broke off and the Soviet Union attacked Finland on 30 November 1939, which was the beginning of the Winter War of 1939–1940. The case selection is based on the idea to explore situations where resistance would be, within the understanding of rational calculations of material capabilities and high systemic constraints, particularly problematic. In the cases of Finland and Estonia there was a context of a freshly started world war, the recent destruction of Czechoslovakia and Poland, the absence of military allies (no promises for military aid). Both states had declared neutrality at the beginning of the war and allowing foreign military bases to the country would undermine that neutrality. The demand was made with the notion that there is a definite time limit to reply to it. Also, there was a clear power disparity between the Soviet Union and Finland/Estonia in regard to material and military capabilities. The differences between the two countries' situations are also relevant. In the literature, it is sometimes mentioned that the difference between Finland and Estonia while facing Soviet demands was that Finland had conducted mobilisation in late August 1939, whereas Estonia had not, therefore that Finland had bigger manoeuvring space in the beginning of the talks. These aspects demonstrate the suitability of how-possible questions, as these questions acknowledge that decisions are taken within a particular context, and are related to previous decisions. One difference in systemic pressures to keep in mind and come back to, is that the Soviets asked for territorial concessions from Finland, but not

from Estonia. The conclusion will discuss this difference and see whether this systemic difference influenced the countries' understanding of the situation.

As explained in the theory part of the chapter, the analysis focuses on the state and society relationship and how that makes certain foreign policy practices thinkable or unthinkable. For the reasons outlined in the theoretical part, the social construction of the society and the primary decision-maker will be explored separately. The empirical part of the study is structured as follows: Chapter 2: Foreign policy decision in Estonia in autumn 1939; Chapter 3: Dominant societal discourses in Estonia; Chapter 4: Decision-maker and decision-making in Estonia in autumn 1939; Chapter 5: Foreign policy decision in Finland in autumn 1939; Chapter 6: Dominant societal discourses in Finland; Chapter 7: Decision-maker and decision-making in Finland in autumn 1939.

1.3.2. Data collection and sampling texts

An important and challenging step while doing discourse analysis is to delimit the discourse both in its scope of time, extent of data and type of data. As Doty has stated, "[d]iscourse is inherently open ended and incomplete. […] Any fixing of a discourse and the identities that are constructed by it, then, can only ever be of a partial nature" (Doty 1996, 6). As constructivist discourse analysis is interested in how certain understandings and meanings within the state emerged, changed and interacted with each other, discourse analysis commonly involves going back in time. Crawford has argued that "[a]nalysis of political arguments must thus be context sensitive, looking for the deeper beliefs that are the starting points and background assumptions without which the arguments would be unintelligible. This entails tracing the process and examining the content of decision-making over long periods of time within particular historical and cultural contexts" (Crawford 2004, 23–24).

While exploring the emergence and development of the discourses, the focus was on concepts of state, nation, and society: how was the meaning of these concepts constructed, how were they understood in relation one another, what was seen as necessary for their development and how was the external threat to these concepts constructed. Nevertheless, the research followed the constructivist understanding of trying to avoid pretheorizing, hence by casting the net as wide as possible while starting the research. An important choice while doing discourse analysis is to identify the period to be analysed and to see how far back one needs to go. Here I followed the advice by Neumann by first reading the secondary historical literature, in order to identify the cut-off points (Neumann 2008). Since an important part of the puzzle is the meaning of state survival, which is closely related to the dominant understandings of state and nation, I identified as the cut-off point for Finland the emergence of the concept of Finnish statehood and nationhood in the early nineteenth century. For Estonia, the cut-off point was the politicization of the national movement in the second half of the nineteenth century. Going back that far enabled me to see how the dominant ideas about the state and society emerged, developed and interacted

with one another in the respective societies. As the study aims to explain a certain outcome, the ending cut-off point was the point when the decision was made (in case of Finland the break-off of the negotiations, in case of Estonia signing the demands).

During my research for the societal chapters (Chapters 2 and 5), one of the main challenges was that the study covers extensive periods of time: in case of Finland from 1809 to 1939 and in case of Estonia from the 1870s to 1939. Therefore, I followed the idea of Phillips and Hardy, who suggested that researchers could focus on "important" texts, such as the ones that are widely circulated or distributed, associated with changes in certain practices or reactionary: written or made as a reaction to something (Phillips and Hardy 2002, 73). To find the main discourses in Finland and Estonia I worked with both secondary and primary sources, such as newspaper articles, speeches, diaries, political police reports, memoirs, parliament minutes and historical and cultural studies covering the period in question.

The second part of the empirical study consists of the social construction of the decision-maker and the process of decision-making. In terms of sampling data, I again focused on the monuments: speeches and texts that were often cited and mentioned in secondary sources. For social construction of the decision-makers I focused on articles, speeches and well-known statements made by them. For the second part of the chapters on decision-making, which focuses on the outcome of the puzzle, I worked with both secondary and primary studies, such as minutes of political meetings, newspaper articles, speeches, memoirs, political police reports and historical studies.

Within the text I have referred to the decision-makers in the discussed period as 'he'. This choice reflects the reality of the day: all of the decision-makers at the time were male.

1.3.3. Analysing the data

In contrast to quantitative approaches, there are no standardised methods for discourse analysis. Discourse analysis is aimed at identifying "(some of) the multiple meanings assigned to texts, which means that more systematic, labour saving forms of analysis (such as traditional content analysis) are counter-productive because they aim at rapid consolidation of categories" (Phillips and Hardy 2002, 74). Hence, a researcher using discourse analysis is always expected to "customize" his method of analysis and justify one's choices. While analysing the data, I also focused on the practices that influence the availability of the texts, such as the legal systems and censorship. As in case of Estonia there was a censorship in late 1930s, I focused on the censorship instructions and emergency regulations that defined constraints on public speech and assembly and also how these were enforced. Because the circulation for certain ideas was constrained in the media, I had to look for venues where the alternative ideas and information may have circulated. This is why I included diaries and memoirs of politicians, civil servants and military, but also ones that were

written by people not explicitly related to the state structures, such as members of the intelligentsia.

In the case of memoirs, I had to acknowledge in both cases that these were personal accounts, written often many years later, when the dominant understandings on what is acceptable and what is not had changed in both societies. In case of Finland, some of the prominent sources, such as the ones written by Juho Kusti Paasikivi after the World War II, have been arguably written under very different social conditions than the ones under which the decision-makers operated in 1939. This was also the case for many Estonians who wrote their memoirs years later in Western countries. Therefore, I tried to acknowledge the situation of people writing retroactively and under different social conditions, and if possible I used contemporary texts. Nevertheless, in case I included a memoir (also, many memoirs have primary sources, such as letters, articles, and documents in them), I tried to take that in consideration and include or look up alternative sources. In some cases, such as Paasikivi's, I explicitly pointed out the different social conditions under which he wrote his memoirs in the dissertation. While mapping the discourses, I also started exploring the contestation between them. How did the dominant discourse emerge and why did it become dominant? What were the alternative discourses and how did they circulate? What were the interactions between the different discourses and how did these interactions develop and change the societal understandings?

The second part of the empirical study consisted of 1) the social construction of the decision-maker, and 2) the decision-making process. In the second part of the empirical study, I first focused on the social construction of the primary decision-maker: analysing how he (the primary decision-maker was he in both cases) was socialised within societal discourses. The aim of this part was to explore how he became to understand the situation in 1939 and how this understanding translated into a geopolitical decision. The decision-making part of the chapter(s) focused on how the dominant discourses influenced particular foreign policy decision. It focuses on the state and society relationship, hence how the societal discourses influenced the way how the decision-maker understood the systemic and domestic pressures.

CHAPTER 2.
ESTONIA'S FOREIGN POLICY DECISION IN AUTUMN 1939

2.1. Introduction

The following three chapters will discuss how the foreign policy decision of Estonia in autumn 1939 to accept the Soviet demands became commonsensical and possible for the decision-makers. The second chapter will outline the Estonian foreign policy decision-making in autumn 1939 with regard to the Soviet demands. The third chapter will explore the dominant societal discourses in Estonia, their emergence, development and interaction and the evolution of the understanding on the state and society relationship. The fourth chapter will examine how the state discourse and subsequent practices influenced the decision-makers' understanding of the situation in autumn 1939 and made the decision to follow the logic of the international system and thereby the decision to accept the Soviet demands commonsensical for the decision-makers.

The current chapter will discuss Estonia's foreign policy decision-making in autumn 1939 with regard to the Soviet demands. These demands included a mutual military assistance pact and a Soviet military base on Estonian territory. The chapter focuses on the period between 24 September 1939, when the demands were presented by the Soviet Union, and 28 September 1939, when Estonia signed the Soviet-Estonian Mutual Assistance Pact. The chapter will show that there was a uniformity of opinion among the decision-makers to follow the logic of the international system, hence to focus on external constraints: a volatile international situation, no possibility to receive external help and an extensive power disparity between Estonia and the Soviet Union. The chapter will suggest that although the external constraints dominated the state's preference formation in autumn 1939, the focus was more on avoiding the conflict and less on balancing the threat by looking for external help.

2.2. Estonia's foreign policy in 1939

Estonian foreign policy in 1939 was one of neutrality.[19] Until the mid-1930s, Estonia's foreign policy had a strong Western orientation, focusing on the United Kingdom and Poland. The Soviet Union was seen as the primary external threat to Estonian security and independence. The Commander and Chief of the Estonian Army, General Johan Laidoner stated at a meeting with Estonian newspaper editors in October 1938: "Our danger is that with the strengthening of Soviet Russia we could also disappear" (cited in Ilmjärv 2004c, 85). In the late 1930s, Germany was seen in some Estonian circles, particularly within the

[19] For Estonian foreign policy in interwar period see Jaanson 2005, Made 2008, Medijainen 2001, Medijainen 2000a, Medijainen 2000b.

military elites, as a balancer of the Soviet Union and co-operation with Germany strengthened (see Ilmjärv 2004c; also Warma 1955, 1960, 1993; Parming 1979). According to Warma, the military elites chose a German orientation as Germany was arming itself at fast pace, was strongly anti-communist and it was thought that in the case of a military conflict between the Soviet Union and Germany, the latter would win (Warma 1955, 82; Warma 1960, 12).[20] This close co-operation between Estonia and Germany was noted by foreign representatives serving in Estonia. In 1935 the British military attaché Major R. Firebrace noted: "Here a recognition has taken hold, that a small state like Estonia should have a Great Power backing it, that would deliver effective support in case of a war. Estonians feel that Great Britain is not able to fill this role, and thus all eyes are turned toward Germany as a worthy opponent of the Soviet Union" (cited in Ilmjärv 2004b, 225). In July 1939, the British consul Galienne had pointed out to the Estonian foreign minister Karl Selter that Estonia, meaning the military, economic and political elites "was tending to become pro-German" (Warma 1955, 83). In spring 1939, Germany proposed non-aggression treaties to the Baltic and Nordic countries. Norway, Sweden and Finland refused, whereas Estonia and Latvia agreed to it. Estonia signed the pact with Germany in June 1939.

In March 1939, the Soviet Union started its demonstrations that it considers Estonia within its sphere of interests by presenting Estonia with a diplomatic note, stating that the Soviet Union will consider unacceptable all agreements which would result in undermining Estonian independence, allowing a third country to gain influence in political, economic or other spheres or giving any extraordinary rights or privileges to a third country on Estonian territory. In Estonia this incident was perceived as a way to pressure Estonia, a demonstration that the Soviet Union saw Estonia within its sphere of interest and thus could interfere in Estonian internal affairs (Arumäe 2004, 97–98). Also, in spring 1939, Soviet cavalry units conducted offensive manoeuvres on Estonia's Eastern border (Luts 2004, 64). The Soviet Union's increasing interest towards Estonia and the Baltic states continued during the tripartite talks between Britain, France and the Soviet Union that were held in spring and summer of 1939. One of the questions covered in the talks were security guarantees to Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Finland, as demanded by the Soviet Union. The Soviet understanding of these guarantees was that the Soviet Union would intervene in case the Baltic states would be attacked and also in case of "indirect aggression". The Soviets defined the latter term as when a state would give its territory

[20] Since 1936 many visits by Germany's intelligence, military and political officials took place to Estonia and Estonian military officials visited Germany. In 1936, after a visit of Admiral Canaris, the head of the Abwehr, the secret intelligence organisation of the German army, Estonia and Germany started co-operating on intelligence (Ilmjärv 2004b, 70–72). These visits continued and for example in the summer of 1939, Admiral Canaris once again visited Tallinn. This was followed by other visits such as the German Chief of General Staff General Halder who was received by the President, General von Tippelkirsch and the Japanese general Kawabe (Parming, 1979).

or resources over to a third party aggressor. Furthermore, the interpretation of when this indirect aggression would have had taken place, would have been determined entirely by the Soviet Union (Arumäe 2004, 104–105). Estonia strongly protested against these guarantees. The tripartite talks became stalled during the summer of 1939.

On 23 August the Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact (Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact) was signed. According to the secret additional protocol of this pact Finland, Estonia and Latvia fell into the Soviet sphere of influence. The government received the first reports on the pact concerning Estonia during the last days of August from its diplomatic missions (Ilmjärv 2004d, 360; also see Torma 1955, 94). On 30 August the army received reports that the Soviet Union had started moving its armed forces and military resources at the Estonian border (Maasing 1955, 46; also Luts 2004). On 1 September Germany attacked Poland and World War II began, and Estonia declared its neutrality on the same day. However, unlike Finland, Latvia or Lithuania, Estonia did not conduct any type of mobilisation. During the night between 17 and 18 September 1939, the Polish submarine "Orzel", which had sought refuge in neutral Estonia and was interned in Tallinn harbour since 15 September, escaped. This became the pretext for Soviet demands to the Estonian government. On 19 September the Estonian ambassador to Moscow, August Rei, was summoned by Molotov who declared that the Soviet navy was to launch a search for the submarine around Tallinn. After "Orzel", the Soviet Union began military demonstrations close to the Estonian borders and from 19 September "the Soviet Navy controlled all sea routes, thus cutting off links between Estonia and the rest of the world, except the land routes through Latvia" (Ilmjärv 2004b, 359; see also Selter 1955, 39).

2.2.1. Demands

The Soviet demands were presented to the foreign Minister Karl Selter on 24 September 1939 in Moscow. The official account by the Estonian government was that Selter was invited to Moscow to sign a trade agreement and was taken by surprise when the Soviet side raised politically sensitive issues (*Päevaleht* 1 October 1939[21]; Selter 1955; Kirotar 1955; Ant 1999). Other accounts by contemporary Estonian diplomats and politicians have disputed this claim and argued that in the atmosphere of Soviet power demonstrations on the Estonian borders, which followed the escape of submarine "Orzel", it was either the government's initiative or Selter's own initiative[22], supported by the top leadership, to

[21] On 29 September 1939 President Päts in his radio speech stated: "I do not deny that these negotiations came unexpectedly to us, that no explanations preceded them and that they implicitly came next to signing the trade agreement" ("'Eesti riik on niisama kindel nagu ennegi.' Vabariigi presidendi K. Pätsi raadiokõne kokkuvõte'", *Päevaleht*, 266, 1 October 1939, 1).

[22] Editor-of-chief of newspaper *Päevaleht* Harald Tammer stated in early 1940 that starting with a diplomatic note in March, the Soviet Union had repeatedly demonstrated that it considers the Baltic States to belong to "the sphere of its vital interests. […] The Soviet

go to Moscow to see what could be done about the situation (see Warma 1993; Rei 1970, Uustalu 1982, 139–141; Myllyniemi 1977; Tammer 1990; see also Ilmjärv 2004d, 367).[23] During Selter's meetings with the Soviet delegation, Soviet foreign minister Molotov referred to the "Orzel" incident and stated that Estonia put Soviet security in danger. The Soviets demanded a mutual military aid treaty that would include a Soviet military navy and air force base in Estonian territory. At the second meeting at midnight of the same day, the discussions on the mutual assistance pact began. The draft saw for mutual military assistance during "international conflict" and two Soviet naval bases and some air bases in Estonian territory with up to 10,000 Soviet soldiers in these bases (Ilmjärv 2004b, 366). The delegation returned to Estonia to get instructions from the government (Warma 1993).

2.2.2. Government's decision on demands

On 26 September a Cabinet meeting[24] and after that a joint meeting of the Foreign and Defence Committees of both houses of Parliament took place to discuss the Soviet demands. At both meetings there was consensus on the position that the main aim of Estonia must be to avoid military conflict, and there-

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Union defended this position throughout the talks that it had with England and France. Since the Soviet positions had been established before the aforementioned talks, there was no reason to think that they should have faded away as the talks failed. They stayed the same when the general constellation changed, which happened in Eastern Europe with the German-Soviet treaty and the collapse of Poland" (Tammer 1990, 22). Estonian diplomat Alexander Warma has pointed out that Selter's departure for Moscow was unexpected in some circles of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, since according to the initial plan the Ambassador to Moscow, August Rei, was supposed to sign the trade agreement. Warma describes the opinions of the representative of the army and the head of the foreign trade director Meri who stated that it is "unwise and careless" for Selter to go to Moscow at a time when the Soviets seemed to be so upset because of the escape of the Orzel and that there is certainly something behind this. Later, there were opinions expressed that Selter, with his initiative to go to Moscow himself, chose the wrong tactics and made it easier for the Soviets to implement their plans (Warma 1993, 18). It was also not an everyday matter for the Estonian foreign minister to visit Moscow. A visit like this had taken place only once during the period of Estonian independence, in 1934. Subsequently, Selter's visit to Moscow can be interpreted that he was sent there as a special envoy of the government instead of under the normal auspices of the Foreign Ministry.

[23] According to Ilmjärv, Selter has given inconsistent information regarding the decision to go to Moscow. Selter has once spoken about a secret meeting with Päts, Eenpalu and Laidoner where it was decided that he should go to Moscow to save the situation, but later had forgotten about this meeting. Ilmjärv also argues that the government's decision to send him to Moscow to sign the trade agreement was done retroactively on 23 September when Selter had already left Estonia and therefore the decision as such was made in a very narrow circle and the Cabinet members heard about it later (Ilmjärv 2004a, 614–615).

[24] On 26 September the Estonian government gathered for a meeting. Present were the President, all Cabinet members, the Commander-in-Chief, the State Auditor, the State Secretary, the Chancellor of Justice and Ambassador Rei (Ilmjärv 2004b, 367).

fore that the Soviet demands must be met. This was stated by President Päts as he pointed out that the foremost task of the government is

> [t]o take the Estonian people and the state as a whole through the current great war. So far, we have been successful in the implementation of this task. War has been going on for a month. During that time the great state of Poland and its army have been destroyed, its towns and lands have been ravaged, and many tens of thousands of its people have been executed. Estonia, together with the other Baltic states, though being located in the immediate neighbourhood of the war zone, has been able to find itself the independent neutrality course at the right time, with which it has happily distanced itself from the armed conflict (Warma 1993, 30).

The main arguments were the following: first, there was a high likelihood for a Soviet military attack if no agreement would be reached. According to the delegation that had attended the negotiations, the Soviets had threatened to use force in case the Soviet goals would not be achieved through the proposed pact (Arjakas, Arumäe et al. 1989, 125; See also Warma 1993, 28).[25] Ambassador to Moscow Rei stated that the proposal "if not in its form then in its substance" has the "character of an ultimatum" and that the threat of using military force if the proposal would not be accepted, should be taken seriously (Warma 1993, 28). Second, as a result of the freshly begun war and the destruction of Poland, Estonia would not be likely to receive any external military support and in case of military confrontation would end up fighting alone (Warma 1993, 28–29, Arjakas, Arumäe et al. 1989, 139). As General Laidoner stated at the meeting with the Parliamentary committees: "Can we hope for help? I say with certainty that we will not be getting it currently from anywhere, because no one can give it to the extent strong enough and they will not want to give it either, because it would be pulling themselves into the conflict and everyone tries to avoid that. Currently everyone is an egoist" (Arjakas, Arumäe et al. 1989, 139). At the Cabinet's meeting Laidoner stated that in addition to Western states not being able to help, small states were too scared after what happened to Poland and therefore would not interfere either, and that Latvia would follow the same course (Warma 1993, 28–29).

Thirdly, Estonia would not be able to wage a war against the Soviets as its military leadership considered its long-term military capabilities insufficient (Warma 1993, 30; Arjakas, Arumäe et al. 1989, 140–141). The Head of the Army, General Johan Laidoner, stated that the Estonian forces, which "can be considered only capable of resistance, would not be able to resist for long, especially if one considers that the activities of a hostile air force could paralyze the implementation of the mobilisation" (Warma 1993, 30). Hence, military conflict should be avoided, as was stated by President Päts at the meeting with the Par-

[25] According to foreign minister Selter, Molotov also threatened the Estonians with force: "If you do not wish to sign the mutual aid pact with us, then we need to use other ways in order to ensure our safety, maybe rougher, maybe more complicated ones. I ask you, do not make us use force towards Estonia" (Arjakas, Arumäe et al. 1989, 125).

liamentary committees: "It looks like we can choose one path. Aid cannot be hoped for. If war will come, our whole state with the whole intelligentsia will be destroyed and we will be destroying many of our people's resources and many people" (Arjakas, Arumäe et al. 1989, 140). The notion that there was no choice was repeated by the other government members and parliamentarians (see Warma 1993; Arjakas, Arumäe et al. 1989, 137–145). The government acknowledged that a mutual assistance treaty with the Soviet Union would mean giving up its neutrality policy. As parliamentarian Ants Piip stated: "This treaty is a hidden protectorate; this has to be clear to us" (Arjakas, Arumäe et al. 1989, 141). As stated by President Päts at the meeting with the Parliamentary committees: "From the other side, then [after signing the treaty] we do not have neutrality anymore. When we sign the treaty there will be communist groups and it will be difficult to fight against them. But there does not seem to be a choice" (Arjakas, Arumäe et al. 1989, 140).

On 27 September, the Estonian delegation arrived to Moscow and on 28 September, the Soviet-Estonian Pact of Mutual Assistance with its confidential protocols and a Trade Agreement was signed in Moscow. The parties agreed that the Soviet side had the right to have up to 25,000 soldiers during the war in Estonia instead of the 10,000 that had been proposed a few days earlier. This was achieved through Molotov's aggressive tactics, using a fake incident in the Narva bay to argue that the situation has changed and that a more extensive Soviet presence was needed. In this staged incident, an unknown submarine had torpedoed a Soviet steamboat called "Metallist" (Ilmjärv 2004b). Although the Estonian side first stated that this proposal was unacceptable to Estonia, by the next morning, 28 September 1939, the government in Tallinn had given a positive answer to Molotov's proposal. This confirms that the government's foremost priority was to avoid conflict, because the Soviet's proposal for changing conditions could have been used by the negotiators for slowing the pace of the talks down, as they could have stated that for this new situation new instructions are needed and therefore they must go back to Tallinn. However, this was not done (Warma 1993, 32–37).

2.2.3. Balancing the threat

By emphasising the high systemic constraints and power disparity between the Soviet Union and Estonia, and therefore focusing on avoiding the military conflict, Estonia was seeing the situation through realist/rationalist power-capabilities lenses. Did Estonia attempt to balance the threat? Estonia's decision not to mobilise at all contrasted with the behaviour of its immediate neighbours. Although none conducted full military mobilisation, Latvia, Lithuania, Finland and Sweden all conducted partial mobilisations in autumn 1939.[26] The main

[26] Lithuania called four years of reservists to the service in late August and on 17 September, after the Soviet Army invaded Poland, announced partial mobilization. Latvia called its reservists to the service on 11 September (Ilmjärv 2004d, 363). Finland moved

reason for not mobilising was to not provoke the Soviets. According to Maasing, in early September the government and representatives from the parliament discussed mobilisation and decided that Estonia's size, location and democratic state order does not allow for a secret mobilisation and that announcing a general mobilisation could be considered as a provocative act and be used as a justification to attack Estonia. (Maasing 1955, 46)[27]. General Laidoner in his letter to President Päts from 20 October 1939 stated that "[i]n the past September, during difficult crisis times, I was convinced that the questions between Estonia and Soviet-Russia in this situation must be, if possible, solved through peaceful talks and not to provoke a military conflict between us and Soviet Russia. Keeping that in mind, since the beginning of Soviet mobilisation, I have never considered mobilisation or partially calling up the reservists necessary" ("Sõjavägede Ülemjuhataja Vabariigi Presidendile" 2004, 536). Hence, this suggests that a mobilisation was not conducted because the government's foremost aim was to avoid military conflict, and therefore it was determined not to irritate the Soviets.

Did Estonia try to balance the Soviet threat by asking for external aid? General Laidoner did not believe that any help would be realistic. Nevertheless, the government did turn to Germany for help both through military and political lines (Warma 1993). Although Germany formally replied that no help would be coming forward, there were also informal statements that implied that the German position was not permanent, which led some government members to maintain their belief that Germany would balance the Soviet influence at one point (Maasing 1955; Ilmjärv 2004d; Warma 1955).[28] For example, at a meeting

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extra defense brigades to the border in Kannas and on 10 October the government called for extra reserve trainings, which in practice meant partial mobilization (Tanner 1957).

[27] According to Ilmjärv eight Cabinet meetings were held from 1–20 September, but their protocols do not mention discussions on state security. Ilmjärv assumes that these questions could have been discussed on 4 September as only the names of participants are stated in that protocol (Ilmjärv 2004a, 592). According to Luts state security was discussed by the government on 2 September (Luts 2004, 69), Maasing does not specify the date of the meeting or which government members or parliamentarians participated (Maasing 1955).

[28] According to Colonel Maasing, he was sent to Germany on 24 September to ask whether Germany would aid Estonia in case of a Soviet attack. Maasing met with representatives of the German army in Königsberg, but received a negative reply (Maasing 1955, see also Ilmjärv 2004d, 374–375). According to Warma, the German Ambassador Frohwein had replied to the request from the Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the possibility of Berlin's intervention that "the Estonian government knows itself what it will do, but if it wants to consider Berlin's recommendations, then it should sign the treaty, the sooner the better. This is Estonia's only escape" (quoted in Warma 1955, 82). However, there were also informal statements made from the German side that implied that the German position was not permanent. On 26 August the Estonian and Latvian Army Chief of Staffs, Reek and Hartmanis, had spoken with the German military attaché Rössing and requested that the German government would officially state that it does not agree to the occupation of the Baltic states. Rössing had stated that Germany's hands are currently tied in the West, but "[t]he entering of the Soviets to the Baltic states is very unpleasant for us and creates a problem that Germany needs to solve in the future" (quoted in Ilmjärv 2004d, 374).

with the Parliament's Defence and Foreign Affairs Committees on 26 September, foreign minister Selter argued that "the stronger Germany is in in the East, the better it is for us" (Arjakas, Arumäe et al. 1989, 44). At the same meeting president Päts expressed the hope "that also in the future Germany will not want us to be destroyed. Currently Germany had to make concessions, because otherwise it would have become difficult for her" (Arjakas, Arumäe et al. 1989, 140). According to Warma, Estonia turned only to Germany for possible aid (Warma 1955, 82). The government later stated that the Finns had turned their request to discuss Finnish aid down. According to Ilmjärv, no archive materials exist that would show that Estonia asked external help from Finland or from any other state but Germany (Ilmjärv 2004d).[29] Also, they did not consult with the Brits, since the British embassy was informed after the decision to accept the demands had already been made (Ilmjärv 2004d, 377). An important indication that shows Estonia's focus on *realpolitik* and power disparity is that although Estonia had a military defence union with Latvia since 1923, Estonia did not invoke it. Though foreign minister Selter claimed that this was because Latvians themselves had postponed a meeting between military leaders, in September General Laidoner argued that there was no need to spend time to consult with Latvia, as Latvia would follow the course of other states, being too anxious to interfere after what happened to Poland (Warma 1993, 30). Furthermore, when foreign minister Selter went back to Estonia from Moscow after receiving the demands from the Soviet Union, he went through Riga, but did not inform the Latvians about the demands (Ilmjärv 2004d). This suggests that the government's focus was on power capabilities and not on legal aspects or institutions. Hence, the government followed its German orientation and consulted with Germany as a strong power. Possibilities to consult with other states were not considered, because it was assumed that either they would not be interested or their own power capabilities were too low to be of sufficient help.

2.3. How-possible?

The aim of this chapter was to show that there was uniformity of opinion among the decision-makers in autumn 1939 to follow the logic of the international system. The decision to agree with the demands was based on the notion of a military threat, the lack of possible allies due to the on-going war, the recent experiences of Poland and Czechoslovakia and the great disparity between the military capabilities of the Soviet Union and Estonia. Hence, the decision-maker perceived the external constraints as dominant. The chapter showed that the government made the decision to accept the demands within one day and

[29] Although in terms of Finland Estonia later argued that Finland had turned Estonia down and at the government's meeting foreign minister Selter argued that Finland's attitudes towards Estonia "seem to be externally distant, but substantially irritated" (Warma 1993, 29), the Finnish foreign minister at the time, Eljas Erkko, later claimed that no proposal for talks was received from Estonia (Ilmjärv 2004d, 376, also see Pakaslahti 1970).

that this decision was consistent with the policy line the government had kept already since late August: to avoid a military conflict. The commitment to this policy was firm, thus when the Soviets increased their demands during the second round of talks, the Estonian negotiators did not need to return to Tallinn for new instructions, since their aim was to reach an agreement with the Soviets. The chapter also discussed that the government's strategy to balance the threat by trying to find allies was conducted through a power/capabilities angle. This is consistent with the government's policy since the mid-1930s that there was a need to orientate on one great power that would help Estonia in times of crisis. As this state was Germany, the government focused on consultations with Germans, and there were voices within the government that Germany would help to balance Soviet influence in the future. In addition, the government did not invoke the military defence union with Latvia, which suggests that the legal and institutional aspects were not considered important compared to the external pressures and power disparity.

Nevertheless, while exploring the speeches and statements by the country's top leadership until September 1939 on the subject of the external threat, the main idea, stated over and over again, is that if the country's independence would be threatened, Estonia would protect its independence. In January 1939, Chief of Armed Forces General Laidoner spoke at a church service held for young people in Tartu. He said: "We must not be afraid if fate would force us to protect ourselves with arms. We are not going to do that passively, but will attack bravely" (cited in Ant 1999, 30). Propaganda Minister Oidermaa explained the meaning of neutrality to the people by claiming: "Neutrality is most effective if it is clear that the nation that has declared it wants and can protect itself by all means" (cited in Ant 1999, 31). In May Oidermaa stated: "If someone would attack us, we will bravely face it and hit the enemy back. This is our oath and testament" (cited in Ant 1999, 31). President Päts stated in his Victory Day speech (23 June 1939), that "we will never allow strangers to put their hands onto our fatherland and property" (cited in Ant 1999, 32).

This need and obligation to defend one's country was explained as an issue of domestic principles. In his speech at the Estonian Military Academy in December 1938, Laidoner criticised Czechoslovakia's foreign policy during the Munich crisis arguing that the country lacked "the necessary military mentality" (paraphrased in Ilmjärv 2004b, 293). In April 1939, in his speech at the anniversary of the Tondi military academy, Laidoner spoke about Austria and Czechoslovakia vanishing

> without anyone of their citizens raising a weapon. If fate would put us in front of these challenging times, then we could not disappear like this. We all read how some Czech soldiers, when they were ordered to lay down their swords, broke their swords. According to our understandings and principles one should not break his sword, but fight with it. And it seems more and more that the reason for the perishing of these countries was the lack of courage to defend their independence. Our principles tell us that if someone would touch our country,

> then our army will step towards the enemy. The whole nation will come along with the army (cited in Ant 1999, 31).

The State's Propaganda Service's overview of the second quarter of 1939 to the national broadcasting and Esperanto union explained the opinion of the state's leadership in the following terms: "A nation which is not ready to defend itself and which lacks the firm belief into its defence capacities and will, will never find itself friends and supporters during difficult times. If one does not resist bravely at times of danger, there is no hope for external help. If one wishes for friends, one needs to be brave, since the brave have friends but the cowards never will" (cited in Ant 1999 31). According to Ant, after mid-August 1939 the number of this kind of speeches decreased. However, President Päts continued until early September. On 21 August 1939, President Päts had stated in a speech that "these would no longer be Estonian men and women, if they hesitate to fight for our beloved homeland when there is a need for it" (*Päevaleht*, 21 August 1939). The understanding that at times of danger it is important to take a non-Czechoslovakian course was also present within the society. As shown by a nation-wide study conducted in April 1939 by the State Propaganda Office in co-operation with the Fatherland League on the public opinion, attitudes and assessments on the international situation, people stated that they were "not going to act like Czechoslovakians" (cited in Ant 1999 35). The need to avoid the behaviour and fate of Czechoslovakia was brought out by a proposal that leading statesmen should not be allowed to take any visits abroad in order to make sure they would not be made to sign unequal treaties (Ant 1999, 37).

The public rhetoric of Estonia's top leadership until August 1939 focused on the obligation to defend one's country as a principal issue and as a precondition for receiving external help. This begs the question how in September 1939 the same people in the top leadership based their arguments regarding the demands solely on the logic of the international system. How did this dichotomy, between the previous public statements and the subsequent action, when "the times of danger" actually happened, become possible? The rationalist answer would be that as states are always concerned with physical survival, it is expected that with increasing volatility on the systemic level the international logic took priority. The theoretical part of the dissertation argued that when certain understandings enter the public sphere, this introduces social constraints for the decision-makers, and therefore makes certain practices, such as decisions, acceptable and others unacceptable. So, the question here is: how did it become possible that this discourse, widely promoted by the top leadership, on seeing the obligation to defend one's country as an issue of principles and prerequisite for external help, did not seem to create constraints on the decision-making process? How did this uniformity of decision-making become possible? This takes us to the question of state and society relationship and the role it played in making the government's understanding of the situation and the following actions possible and commonsensical for the decision-makers. Hence, what was the relationship between state and the society and how was the

decision-makers' reading of the situation constructed regarding the domestic discourses? In order to understand how the decision to accept the Soviet demands became commonsensical as the only possible choice for the decision-makers in Estonia in autumn 1939, the dominant national discourses and identities in Estonia in 1939, their emergence, development and interaction, with a focus on the state and society relationship, must be explored.

CHAPTER 3.
DOMINANT SOCIETAL DISCOURSES IN ESTONIA

This dissertation follows the constructivist understanding that anything that happens, happens because it has been made socially possible, by the inter-subjective practices, identities and interests embedded in the societal understandings. Therefore, this chapter will explore the main domestic discourses that were present in Estonia prior to and in 1939, their emergence, development and interactions and their understanding of the state and society relationship. Ted Hopf's argument that it should not be *a priori* assumed that Other is an external actor, such as another state, and that there can be multiple Others and multiple kinds of Others, will be followed (Hopf 2002, 2005). The chapter will suggest that the main domestic discourses relevant for the dissertation's argument are the following: 1) Radical-nationalist, 2) Collectivist-nationalist, 3) Liberal-individualist. It will also explore how one of these discourses, the Collective-nationalist discourse, became privileged and evolved into the state discourse, while other discourses were marginalised. It will be shown that during the emergence and development of Estonian national identities, the Estonian society developed outside the state decision-making sphere, which was seen as represented either by the Baltic Germans or Imperial Russia. Therefore, within Estonian society, the state was seen as the Other. Hence, when Estonia became independent, Estonian politicians and society in general had limited experience with statehood and what it entailed. As a result, the economic crisis of the early 1930s paved the way to a political crisis where the solution to political stability came to be seen in a strong executive leadership, as this was the governance experience the society knew. As a result, the dominant state discourse saw the state and society relationship in the following terms: the supremacy of national collectivist interests over individual interests was a necessary precondition for national development. Hence, the decision-making sphere and the societal sphere were seen as separate as this would ensure more political stability and better incentives for the nation's development.

3.1. The emergence, development and interaction between the main dominant discourses

3.1.1. Introduction

This section will discuss Estonian societal and political developments prior to its independence in 1918. During the time of Estonian national awakening in the 1860s, Estonia had been part of the Russian Empire since 1710. However, the Baltic German elites held nearly absolute power in Estonia for several centuries, although they comprised only three per cent of the overall population (Rohtmets

2010, 37).[30] The period of the Estonian national awakening was characterized by an ethnic and social conflict between Estonians and Baltic Germans. Due to the exclusive power position that the Baltic Germans held in Estonian territory, Baltic Germans, and through them Germans and Germany in a wider sense, came to be seen as the Other and "the national enemy" for Estonians (Mertelsmann 2005, 44).[31]

The politicization of the national movement, which first had mainly focused on cultural and language issues, started in the late 1870s. This process was characterized by the first political debate among Estonian nationalists, which is known as the Hurt-Jakobson debate. Jakob Hurt and Carl Robert Jakobson, two influential activists of the nationalism movement, broadly shared their understanding on nationalism as something determined by birth and natural characteristics of a person (Jansen 2001, 96). They disagreed on the issue whether Estonian nationalism should stick to its cultural-linguistic focus (Hurt) or also work on creating advantageous political circumstances for the existence of the nation (Jakobson). Jakob Hurt, a cleric by profession, stated that "the word nation is for me not a political but an ethnographical term" and recommended in 1892 not to "touch politics, it will sting you lethally" (cited in Laaman 1936, 48). To Carl Robert Jakobson, for a free development of the nation, political rights of the Estonian people and realistic reform attempts were important (see Jansen 2004, 100–101). Political equality with Germans became the leading motive of him and his newspaper *Sakala* (Jansen 2004, 45). Jakobson saw "the Baltic German dominance as a historic disaster for the Estonians and he was the first Estonian nationalist to demand equal representation for the peasantry and urban dwellers (mainly of Estonian origin) in the Baltic Diet" (Raun 1987, 65). Jakobson advocated the Finnish model where the peasant estate was equal to other estates in the Diet (Laaman 1936, 45). The Finnish culture, society and national awakening also significantly influenced the Estonian nationalist movement. As Jansen points out, Finland became a political role model for Estonia, as it had its own constitution and was a so-called "state within a state" (Jansen 2004, 113).

Although the political debates between the Estonian political activists disagreed on questions of where the immediate focus of the national movement should lie, at the centre of the Estonian nationalist movement were confronta-

[30] The Baltic German elites were the successors of the Teutonic Knights who had conquered the region in the thirteenth century (Parming 1975, 8). In the nineteenth century the Baltic German landowners owned most land, had an exclusive representation at the Diets *(Landtag*) of the local areas and controlled the judiciary and the police (Raun 1987, Jansen 2001, 89, Jansen 2004, 156).

[31] One of the main aims of the first wave of Estonian nationalism was to work against Germanization. As the language had been the indicator of social affiliation, it had been considered natural that when an Estonian moved upwards socially, they would also become Germanized (Jansen 2004, 39–40). Hence Estonian nationalists actively campaigned for anti-Germanization, and to remain Estonian was seen as an ethical obligation for everyone born into native families (Jansen 2001, 96).

tions with the Baltic German elites. Baltic Germans tried to maintain the status quo and keep political power in Estonian territory in their own hands, and therefore this group largely opposed the Estonian cultural and political aspirations (Raun 1999, 343). The Baltic Germans were not willing to involve Estonians into its society, as Estonians were not accepted to the educational, cultural or corporative associations of Germans and were kept away from the political sphere. Therefore, Estonian nationalists looked for alternative ways to get some say in the public sphere by establishing an 'Estonian society' next to the existing German society (Jansen 2001). The opposition of Baltic Germans towards Estonian cultural and political initiatives and their unwillingness to involve Estonians in their society created strong anti-German sentiments among Estonian nationalists. Hurt called the Baltic Germans "the colonizers without a people, a fragment of a big German nation whose supreme power in the region is not legitimate" (paraphrased in Karjahärm and Sirk 1997, 274). Jakobson in his "First Fatherland Speech", given in 1868 in Tartu, established the historical approach which became strongly embedded in the Estonians' national consciousness, where the period when the Baltic Germans held power in Estonian territory became characterized as the "age of darkness" and "the 700-year night of slavery" (Rohtmets 2010, 37; Tamm 2008, 503, 505).

In the 1880s, nationalistic sentiments were on the rise in Russia, which resulted in Russification policies in Estonia. Nevertheless, Russification period resulted in a decrease in Baltic German influence (Mertelsmann 2005, 45).[32] The historical experiences with Baltic Germans had made the Estonian nationalists consider the West a larger threat for the young national identity than the East (Medijainen 2001, 113) and therefore Russification was seen as a lesser evil of the two. Estonian nationalists largely agreed on that, which is shown by statements of the political opponents Päts and Tõnisson. The nationalist Jaan Tõnisson was afraid that if Germany would win World War I, Estonians and Latvians would be denationalised, similar to the Danes in Schleswig, the French in Alsace and the Poles in Silesia. Tõnisson considered Russification less dangerous, because "in his view the Slavic character lacked singleness of purpose in the national subjugation of other peoples" (Karjahärm and Sirk 1997, 396). This was the reason why Estonian nationalists, in spite of their ideological differences, were "the most loyal citizens of Russia and Russian patriots" (Tõnisson quoted in Karjahärm 1997 and Sirk, 276). Konstantin Päts said in 1914 "Our homeland will remain part of the Russian state. We do not desire that our

[32] Initially, Estonian and Russian nationalism had shared goals, as "both interpreted the Estonian peasants to be oppressed by the Germans, whose influence should be decreased in the future" (Mertelsmann 2005, 45). Also, a national identity had already been developed by that time and only a limited number of Russians were living in Estonia, lacking their own well-established elites (Mertelsmann 2005, 46). Another aspect of it was that Russification balanced against Germanization. Although the usage of the Russian language in schools increased, the exclusive position that the German language had held as the 'lingua franca' decreased and subsequently the influence of the Baltic Germans decreased (see Mertelsmann 2005, Raun 1987).

little homeland would become the fighting arena for the big states. As the shore of the Russian state we have broad possibilities for development and the Russian state will not have a reason to look at the inhabitants of our homeland with suspicion" (Päts 1914, 1).[33]

In the early twentieth century, a second wave of Estonian nationalism emerged, which focused more on nation building and had stronger political aspirations than the earlier wave. A political debate emerged between the "men of ideals" gathered around the *Postimees* newspaper in Tartu and led by its editor-in-chief Jaan Tõnisson on one side and "the men of economy" in Tallinn who were gathered around the *Teataja* newspaper in Tallinn and led by Konstantin Päts, founder of this newspaper, on the other (Karjahärm and Sirk, 1997). The debate concentrated on the question of the priorities and the right focus of the nationalist movement. For Tõnisson, the essence of societal life were the nationalist patriotic ideas that had to be developed and promoted. He saw the "nation as a value in itself, the highest level of the development of humankind" (Jansen 2004, 122). Päts at the time represented the radical group and for him societal life was not only about patriotic ideas, but also about improving the socio-economic conditions of the population, because a "serf does not have a nationality" (Päts 1904, 1). However, the crucial trait of Estonian nationalism that united different streams was the confrontation with Baltic German elites who opposed the political aspirations of Estonians. Baltic Germans argued that Estonian national intelligentsia agitated Estonian peasants against the nobility and aimed to incite ethnic conflict. Both Päts and Tõnisson argued that the Estonian nationalists criticized the Baltic Germans only because of the latter's resentment of Estonians cultural and political aspirations. Tõnisson wrote in 1903 that they [*Postimees*] would have not criticized the Germans if the "Germans would have not so often worked against our nation's development and would not have tried to push us off from our natural path of development" (Tõnisson 1903, 1). Along similar lines, Konstantin Päts wrote in *Teataja, in* 1914, as a response to a letter by one representative of the Baltic German nobility who argued that Estonian intelligentsia agitated Estonian masses against the Baltic Germans: "I agree with you that the nobility has been the only

[33] The resentment and mistrust towards Germans and Germany played an important role in shaping Estonia's independence aspirations. Until 1917, the focus of the Estonian national movement was on the development of the Estonian culture and society and on a greater cultural autonomy in the Russian empire with political rights for Estonians. Even in 1905, the most radical demands of Estonian nationalists were within the limits of a federal state order. There was a widespread belief that first one would have to fight for strengthening democracy in Russia and only then for evolving and strengthening Estonian autonomy. As argued by Medijainen, it is thereby fully understandable that even liberal Estonian politicians, who had to flee to western countries after the 1905 revolution to escape persecution, came out with the autonomy project and did not advocate for an independent country (Medijainen, 2001, 113). This was not because they would have preferred a Russian sphere of influence over Estonian independence, but because of political realities, where a stronger Russian political order was seen as a balance against Baltic Germans' influence and power and Germany's expansion aspirations.

political actor here for a long time and that our current situation carries the consequences and characteristics of this leadership of the nobility. I do not wish to prove that the Baltic nobility has not been clever enough to lead politics according to *their views* [italics original]." But for Päts, these views had benefited only the Baltic Germans. He accused the Baltic Germans of not building any institutions for Latvians and Estonians and of preventing the emergence of these institutions (Päts 1914, 1).

In the early twentieth century, Estonians came to power in some city councils, for example in Tallinn, where Estonians won elections against Baltic Germans with the co-operation of Russians. Estonian nationalists at the time were loyal to the tsar and did not explore alternative forms of government to the Russian empire (Raun 1987, 66). The resentment and mistrust towards Germans and Germany played an important role in shaping Estonia's independence aspirations. Until 1917, the focus of the Estonian national movement was on the development of the Estonian culture and society and on a greater cultural autonomy in the Russian empire with political rights for Estonians (Medijainen, 2001, 113). The impetus for Estonian national independence at that particular time came through an increasing German threat. In September 1917, the German army had taken Riga and approached Estonia and there was a clear threat of German occupation. In October 1917, the Bolshevik revolution took place and the existing political order collapsed. As a result, the Estonian nationalists did not have the option to balance the German influence with Russian influence anymore. Therefore, in December 1918, the Committee of Elders of the Estonian *Maapäev* (Landtag), that had been elected earlier that year, decided to declare Estonian independence in case of a German occupation (Raun 1987, 104). In February 1918, Germans invaded the Estonian mainland[34] and on 24 February 1918 Estonia declared its independence.[35] From 1918–1920 Estonia

[34] The German occupation from February to November 1918 further increased the anti-German sentiments within the society. Many Baltic Germans collaborated with the German occupiers "dreaming of a Baltic satellite state of the German Empire under their rule" (Mertelsmann 2005, 46). Journalist and national activist Georg Eduard Luiga stated: "What they have done during seven hundred years we can forget, but what they have done now during these seven months is impossible to forget" (quoted in Rohtmets 2010, 39). The confrontations between Estonians and Baltic Germans reached its peak during the Landeswehr war in 1919, where Estonian forces won from a Baltic German military force called the Landeswehr and the Iron Division that consisted of Baltic and Reich Germans. The Landeswehr war, which was perceived as a "holy war against the archenemy" (Rohtmets 2010, 40), further strengthened the understanding of the Baltic Germans as the archenemies.

[35] On 19 February 1924 the Committee of Elders of the Maapäev decided on the text of the independence manifesto to form the *Eesti Päästekomitee* (*Estonian Rescue Committee*) consisting of Konstantin Päts, Konstantin Konik and Jüri Vilms with the task to declare Estonian independence. "On 24 February 1924, *Eesti Päästekomitee* declared Estonia an 'independent and democratic republic' within its 'historical and ethnographic borders'" (Raun 1987, 105) and also designated to the office the first Estonian government, called the Estonian provisional Government and led by Päts.

waged the War of Independence against the Red Army and the Baltic German military force called the *Landeswehr*.

3.1.2. Understandings on the state and society relationship

The state and society relationship in interwar Estonia was strongly influenced by the pre-1918 experience of Estonians where the state, represented exclusively by the Baltic Germans, was seen as the Other, separated from the Estonian society that carried Estonian cultural and political aspirations. In 1918 Estonia became independent and turned from "a *Kulturnation* into a *Staatsnation*" (Karjahärm and Sirk 1997, 391). The development from a national movement with limited experience with political representation to an Estonian statehood was a rapid change for Estonian national activists who had promoted the idea of greater autonomy within a more democratic Russia until 1917. While this development was sudden for the nationalist leaders, it must have been even more rapid for the wider public. This suggests that until 1918 the "state", either as Estonian and Livonian provinces governed by Baltic German elites or by Imperial Russia, had had the role of the "Other" with regard to Estonian society. In both cases, the state as the decision-maker stood outside of the Estonian society. Hence, the Estonian society where the Estonian cultural and social life happened and the state as a decision-making body were separated. Therefore, it was not surprising that the society was first not consolidated on the question of the necessity, importance and meaning of Estonian statehood. As Pajur points out, in the early 1920s parts of society had only lukewarm feelings towards an Estonian nation state and criticism of the Estonian state was strong (Pajur 2005b, 75). This scepticism did not necessarily mean that critical people or groups would have also been critical towards Estonian culture or societal life, but rather suggests that they did not see that these two spheres, the cultural and societal, where the national values are embedded, and the political, where the decision-making happens, must necessarily be united.

This gap between the societal and the political spheres became visible during the economic crises of 1923–1924 and 1931–1934, which developed into a crisis of democracy in 1932–1934. In the early 1920s, the mixed societal positions towards Estonian statehood and the economic crisis of 1923–1924 resulted in leftist ideas gaining popularity. This led the Estonian communists, an illegal underground party with the goal to conduct a revolutionary coup and to unite Estonia with the Soviet Union, to attempt a coup on 1 December 1924. The coup failed and it also ended the Estonian Communist Party as an active political body. One of the important consequences of the coup was that it helped strengthen Estonian nationhood and consolidate society in this question. The coup was followed by a period of political stability as a wall-to-wall coalition government was formed to show the unity of Estonian nationalist political groups (Parming 1975, 13).

The weak civic and political culture became once again visible during the global economic crisis, which hit Estonia fully in 1931, when unemployment

increased rapidly. As the standard of life decreased, people started looking for a scapegoat, finding it mainly in politicians and political parties. "The reputation of the politicians and political parties sunk extraordinarily low and people's alienation from the state became visible" (Pajur 2005c, 83). The economic crisis brought the doubts and disappointments, existing within the society towards Estonian nationhood and the Estonian decision-maker, again into the limelight. Writer Anton Hansen Tammsaare, in his 1934 essay "About happy and unhappy times", brings out that people had had very high hopes and illusions on how life in an Estonian-governed Estonia would be like: "for very many the own state flickered as some sort of country of idlers, where vodka and milk rivers run through shores of scrambled eggs and semolina porridge" (Tammsaare 1990, 54). Therefore, during the devastating economic crisis and grave unemployment, many people started pointing their finger at the Estonian statesmen.

> Our disappointments started later, because that big and difficult thing, which was our freedom fight, could never be accomplished without certain illusions. We had long dreamt of if not about our own national independence, then still about our own room and our own permission.[36] We had thought of it as our ultimate happiness, if Estonian men themselves would manage Estonian business, because it seemed to us that the Estonian man, when handling Estonian things, is an entirely special man. He was supposed to have certain special virtues, which Russians, Germans and even Swedes who in turns had governed over us, lacked. […] Thus it happened, that when we achieved national independence and the Estonian man started to handle Estonian affairs, we got disappointed in him. We found that he lacked the dreamt hopes, as if he would not be a true Estonian man. […] We found that the Estonian man in the Estonian state does not care enough for the other Estonian man, as if he would be some Russian or German. In any case, we certainly believe that the Swede took better care of us than our own Estonian man is doing (Tammsaare 1990, 53–55).

The reason why the economic crisis led to such a wide-spread political crisis has been found in the weak civic and political culture which resulted from the short period of statehood. Taagepera argued that "democracy consists not only of a legal framework, but also of what Almond and Verba[37] have called the civic culture, which cannot be instantly created". Since Estonians hardly had any experience with self-government before 1918, it had had "little opportunity to develop a civic culture to match their legal 'instant democracy'" (Taagepera 1974, 407). Although Estonians had a strong national identity, due to the existing state system, the Estonian society had until 1918 largely stood outside of participatory politics. Therefore, when Estonia became a *Staatsnation* through independence, Estonians had limited experience with what this entailed. The following sections will explore the main domestic discourses, their emergence,

[36] Reference to a word game in Estonian: "oma tuba, oma luba", which means that within one's own space one is free in his actions, behaviour

[37] Almond and Verba 1963.

development and interactions focusing on the understandings on state and state and society relationship.

3.2. Radical-nationalist discourse

The radical-nationalist discourse became the dominant discourse during the devastating economic crisis in 1931–1934 and the political crisis or crisis of democracy that unfolded in 1932–1934. For this discourse, the foremost priority of the state was to ensure the unity of the society, as the interests of the state and society were seen as collective not individual. In this discourse, the focus on national unity was based on the Estonian historical tradition, but had been interrupted by the political fragmentation where political parties prioritised group interests over national interests. The solution for this situation was found in a strong executive president that would take care of the decision-making and provide political stability, which was necessary for ensuring the nation's development.

The main carrier of the radical-nationalist discourse was the Central League of the Veterans of the War of Independence *(Eesti Vabadussõjalaste Keskliit)*. This movement, that had started as an apolitical advocacy organisation for veterans' rights, grew rapidly into a factual non-parliamentary political group, which was one of the biggest, if not the biggest, political organisation in Estonia (Marandi 1991, 476).[38] The veterans' solution for political instability was a strong executive branch of government, which was to be achieved through constitutional change.[39] Therefore, this period is often described as the "constitutional crisis" in Estonian history, a crisis that started because of deficiencies of the constitution, the lack of an executive branch and too extensive powers of the parliament in particular[40]. As a result of the shortcomings of the constitutional

[38] According to Marandi, the number of members of Veterans increased from around 500 in the summer of 1929 to 10,000 in late 1932 to 60,000 on 12 March 1934. Their support was high mainly in urban areas, whereas Estonia itself was predominantly a rural country, with 69% living in rural areas in 1934 (Marandi 1991, 476–477).

[39] Until the Veterans emerged, constitutional change had been the monopoly of the Farmers Union in general and of Konstantin Päts in particular. In autumn 1926, the Farmers Union presented a draft bill, aimed at maintaining the core principles of parliamentarism, but which was also to give more power to the head of state. As the Socialists were against it and other parties were neutral, the issue was not taken further. However, the idea of constitutional changes had entered the sphere of interests of lawyers and politicians. In 1929, the Farmers Union and the National Centre Party presented similar projects, but the question faded once again (Pajur 2005b, 88). Although the idea had been present since the 1920s, it was the Veterans movement that took it to the masses and made it a national level issue.

[40] The 1920 Constitution was influenced by the Weimar, Swiss, French and U.S. constitutions, and thereby, as Raun points out, "reflected the democratic idealism of the centre left majority in the Estonian Constituent Assembly" (Raun 1987, 112–113). It provided for a unicameral Parliament (*Riigikogu*) consisting of 100 members, elected in every three years. The parliament was based on proportional representation, with universal voting rights: all citizens from the age of 20 could vote. The 1920 Constitution did not provide for an

system, governmental crises occurred frequently. However, several authors, such as Pajur, Marandi and Parming, have argued that the fragmentation of the political scene and the subsequent popularity of the Veterans movement was related to the devastating economic crisis and the subsequent political crisis and not constitutional deficiencies[41] (Marandi 1991; Pajur 2005c; Parming 1975).

The Veterans saw themselves as "a moral elite", the "creators of the state" (Kasekamp 2000, 64) and this view was embedded in the general Estonian domestic discourse (Kasekamp 2000, 64). As the Veterans were the ones who had achieved Estonian independence, they also saw it as their responsibility to safeguard it (Kasekamp 2000, 65). As stated by General Põdder, the Veterans were not united in their status or former profession as war veterans, but the Veteran movement was about the "idea" that the War of Independence was allegedly based on (Põdder 1932, 2). This central idea of the radical-nationalist discourse was national unity, the so called integral nation. The Veterans' congress stated that Veterans fight for "the development of the Estonian people into a free and strong integral nation, the interests of which stand above and are more powerful than individual or class interests" ("Kongressil vastuvõetud resolutsioonid" 1932, 1). Hence, the aim of the Veterans was to create a state based on national unity, "a system which unites the Estonian nation into one organic whole where each class asserts itself only through the organic whole" (Vardja 1933, 2). For the Veterans, this kind of system, where the focus was on national unity, not on different social classes, was rooted in the Estonian historical tradition, but had been lost in the Estonian political system where political parties stood only for the interests of certain societal groups, not for the nation as a whole (Vardja 1933, 2).

As the Veterans were focused on creating a society based on national unity, they strongly criticized the political parties which they believed responsible for fragmentizing and dividing the nation. They contrasted themselves as a "dy-

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independent executive branch of government, as the cabinet was formed in and fully responsible to the Parliament. The head of the Cabinet was the State Elder (*Riigivanem*) elected by the Parliament, and he was simultaneously the Prime Minister and the Head of State (Parming 1975, 8). The Constitution saw for popular initiative and a referendum through which at least 25,000 citizens could introduce and enact legislation (Raun 1987, 113; Ruusmann 1998, 208)

[41] Parming states that although there were a large number of parties participating in the elections in the 1920s,[41] there were only "three important political groups: the Socialists, the Centrists, and the Agrarians", which altogether received 80–90 % of the seats. Even in the peak of the depression, the National Centre Party got 23 % of the seats and the United Farmers 42%. Therefore, Parming argues that the constitutional factor cannot be the main reason for the political crisis (Parming 1975, 17). Also, historians have shown that the frequent changes in the government were not anything extraordinary at the time. There were 16 governments formed based on the 1920 Constitution with an average length of 10.5 months. The average length in Finland was 10 months and 28 days and in Latvia 11 months and 12 days. Pajur further points out that instability of the governments mainly occurred during times of societal crisis, such as the communist coup of 1924 and the economic crisis of the early 1930s and that otherwise the average length was longer (Pajur 2005a, 72).

namic" movement within the current political system, which they saw as "a false democratic party system in its stagnant forms and alienated from the people" (Vardja 1933, 2). Therefore, the Veteran movement aimed at "replacing false democracy with a new democracy: the national state" (Vardja 1933, 2). The Veterans' solution to the political instability and creation of national unity was to create a strong presidential institution, "to put a master in the house" (Kasekamp 2000, 66) and to curb the mandate of the parliament. The Veterans advocated corporatism, "co-operation between all classes and occupations, but gave little thought specifically to economic issues and had only the vaguest notions of what corporatism might actually entail." The Veterans were vague on the content and organization of this corporate system in Estonia (Kasekamp 2000, 80).

When the Veterans worked at creating national unity that reached over the different social classes and groups of the society, their internal Others were the societal groups they saw as focusing only on certain groups in the society, and therefore responsible for fragmentizing and dividing the nation: the political parties. As the Veterans saw the class divisions as undermining national integrity, they were vehemently anti-Marxist and fiercely criticized the Socialist party. Kasekamp argues that the Veterans' influences and contacts with the Nazis in Germany and Fascists in Italy have been exaggerated in contemporary works and later studies (Kasekamp 2000, 69, Valge 2011 803). The Veterans shared the strong anti-German sentiments that were present in the Estonian society. In addition to the former Baltic nobility, the most hated Baltic Germans for the Veterans were the so-called "Landeswehr men" who fought against the Estonian forces in the Landeswehr war in 1919 (Kasekamp 2000, 74). Also, the Veterans' ideology was not racist. "There was also none of the racism characteristic of the Nazis among the ex-servicemen. Estonians were indeed seen as special, but not as superior. The ideology of the ex-servicemen – and, what is more important, the practice – rejected the concept of a charismatic leader *à la* Hitler in a quite obvious manner" (Valge 2011, 803). The Veterans' hostility towards the Russian minority was modest for a radical-nationalist organization, which might have been due to the low socio-economic status of the majority of the Russians, but which meant that they were not seen a threat in the way the Baltic Germans were perceived. However, the Soviet Union was seen as the main security threat and Nazi Germany was seen as the balancer of the Soviets (Kasekamp 2000, 76–77). Conclusively, the Veterans' attitude towards external Others reflected the mainstream societal understandings of the external threats and influences: the mistrust and resentment towards the Baltic Germans, relative lack of hostility towards local Russians and suspicion towards Bolsheviks and thereby Soviet Russia.

Since for the Veterans the solution to political instability was the creation of a strong executive power, the number one issue of their agenda during the peak of their popularity was changing the constitution. In 1932–1933 three referendums were held on constitutional proposals: two bills proposed by Parliament were rejected by the public, whereas the third one, proposed by the Veterans,

through a popular initiative, won with a landslide in September 1933.[42] The new Constitution provided for a powerful executive, elected directly by the people for a five-year term. The executive had the right to appoint and dismiss the government and had broad veto rights over the laws passed by the parliament (Raun 1987, 117–118).

3.2.1. Strong societal support for the Veterans' idea of a strong president

The reason why the economic crisis led to such a wide-spread political crisis and why the Veterans' call for a strong executive to restore the political order won such popularity among the public has been found in the weak civic and political culture which resulted from the short period of statehood. Although debates on the meaning of nation, its interests and its roles had started in the 1860s, they had first taken place among small, educated circles. According to Jaan Tõnisson: "The period when our nation had to work persistently to achieve freedom was apparently too short for people to become internally ready to use and carry freedom" (cited in Laaman 1949, 287). Similarly, Arnold Susi has stated that the popularity of the Veterans' constitutional bill showed the devaluation of democratic values, boredom with freedoms and rights, so that there was readiness to transfer all these rights "to one master in the house" (Susi 1938, 214).

The separation of the societal and decision-making spheres in pre-1918 Estonia helps to explain why the public looked for a strong executive who would take the decision-making responsibility, instead of seeing themselves as potential solvers of the crisis in their country. Pajur observes that the head of state was seen as someone who possessed nearly "supernatural leverage". A president would bring back order, end the fights between political parties "and bring back the 'good old time' in an economic sense" (Pajur 2005c, 88). A high civil servant had remarked in 1933 that "if one listens to the people, then everyone seems to want one thing. Not some sort of constitution, parliament or something like this. Everyone just wants absolutism. Enlightened absolutism. The kind of absolutism that would know what to do and would be able to do it" (Laaman 2010, 254). This once again refers to the notion that people's understandings of the state originated from the historical experience of living in the Russian Empire. This is not to say that most people would have wanted it back, but that absolutism was the state system they knew. Tammsaare explains this development with the fact that Estonian political culture and tradition had emerged during times of absolutism, from which a direct leap to democracy was at-

[42] The first bill was rejected very narrowly in a referendum (49.2% of the voters were for the bill and 50.8% against). The second bill presented by the Parliament also failed to get the support of the electorate, but in this case 32.7% of the voters supported the bill and 67.3% were against. In addition to the repeated opposition of the Socialists and the Veterans against the bill, the result was also influenced by the deepening economic crisis and the subsequently deepening dissatisfaction with the parties in parliament (Pajur 2005b).

tempted. He stated: "We think that democracy is to be blamed for everything. Democracy, of which we actually do not have much idea. And how would we get an idea of it? All our politicians are from the days where one autocrat sat in Piiter *[St. Petersburg],* one autocrat sat in Toompea, and one autocrat sat in his mansion […] This is our political tradition, our political culture. And then we tried to leap to democracy" (Tammsaare 1990, 28). Tammsaare also addresses the criticism that the Estonian constitution of the time was ultra-democratic and therefore inefficient, by saying that the problem lies in a lack of political culture and tradition:

> But now we suddenly say together with Italians and Germans that this is the fault of democracy. […] But how can it be the fault of democracy if it is truly missing for us? Or does someone think that a person becomes a democrat when he calls himself a farmer, settler, clergyman or socialist? Culture creates democracy, but we lack the culture. Culture requires tradition, but also that we lack, or it [the tradition] is against democracy (Tammsaare 1990, 28).

Also Eduard Laaman argued in 1936 that the biggest shortcoming of "the first republic", as he calls the pre-1934 period, was that it did not concentrate enough on political and civic education of the nation. In the society

> spread this carefree view, how we would not need any political education. One did not see culture in the democratic order, which needs practice, responsibility, efforts. It was taken as a natural condition, which simply exists. For Estonians, it was as natural to be a democrat, as it was natural for the bird to sing. Our politicians suffered most themselves from this carefree attitude. Because these non-politicized masses were not taught to see that our system lacks something. When the shortcomings of the system were encountered, then the rulers were blamed for it (Laaman 2010, 199–200).

The strong executive for whom the new constitution provided emerged soon, although in a different form than the Veterans expected. The governments had changed frequently during the crisis and in the autumn of 1933 Konstantin Päts became the head of state. After the success of their constitutional bill and an overwhelming victory in the local elections in January 1934, the Veterans prepared for Presidential elections, which were scheduled for the second half of April, with an increasingly aggressive tone towards the existing state system in their propaganda. On 12 March 1934, Päts, under the pretext of an "urgent state necessity" based on an alleged planned coup attempt by the Veterans, declared the state of emergency for six months and appointed General Laidoner as commander-in-chief of the armed forces. All Veterans' organisations were shut down and more than 800 people were arrested (Kasekamp 2000, 100) and all political activities were prohibited. These steps were approved by the Parliament, who considered it a temporary step to curb the Veterans who had openly positioned themselves against all political parties and parliament as such. In his speech in parliament on 15 March 1934, where he explained and justified his

actions, Päts emphasized the Veterans' condemnation of the existing political system:

> First, they started to prove in front of the entire nation that the Government of the Republic of Estonia, the state institutions and the leading powers have not been able to do anything else for 15 years than to cause calamities to people. […] Second, everyone who did not go along with the new course was threatened with the harshest punishment and they said that if they would get state power, they would revenge. And that there was no doubt that the power would switch [to them]. If this would not happen through elections or according to law, then it would be taken over (Riigikogu V koosseis: täielikud protokollid 1934, 1435–1438).

Päts's accusation that there was the threat of a coup by the Veterans has never been proven.[43] He also stated that there would be an external threat to Estonia's existence in case the Veterans would take power (see Valge 2011). Yet another reason for his actions was that the nation, in his words, was ill. He stated: "We also cannot think that when people that have been abetted, when from one side there is an anger and revenge and from the other side a fear-wave, that under these conditions somebody could fulfil his obligations as a citizen and make decisions. The people have to withdraw, instead of agitation, the explaining should be done, it must be explained that our state had a difficult illness" (Riigikogu V koosseis: täielikud protokollid 1934, 1435–1438).

Päts's approach at first was supported by many politicians, since the Veterans had fiercely attacked the existing parties and because the situation was seen as temporary. The Socialist party supported Päts since they had been the main recipient of the Veterans' attacks and were afraid of the consequences of the Veterans taking power. Additionally, in August 1933, Tõnisson, who at that time held the head of state's position, had enacted a nation-wide state of emergency, prohibited the Veterans' organisation and enacted a pre-censorship. These measures were lifted after the Veterans Constitutional bill passed. However, since the state of emergency had been declared recently before and the Veterans had strongly attacked the existing political system, parliamentarians supported these measures and Tõnisson at first publicly stated that this was the right course to take. After the Parliament had given its consent, Päts postponed

[43] Firstly, as Marandi points out, the statutes of the organisation, the constitutional bill and the political resolutions of the congresses all remained within the existing democratic state order. Many public statements and articles of Veterans emphasised that the aim was to improve, not to overthrow the existing governing system. Another significant factor is that in 1933, after the Veterans' constitutional bill won a landslide victory in the referendum, and the masses of supporters demanded a revolutionary coup from Sirk, he refused to go for it (Marandi 1991, 494). Furthermore, the Veterans did not really need a coup as they were at the peak of their popularity. Therefore, their idea was to take power using the tools available in the existing democratic system, such as through the popular initiative and elections. Kasekamp has argued that "[t]hough the Veterans sought to amend the constitution to strengthen the power of the state by establishing a strong presidency, they did not aspire to erect a one-party authoritarian state, much less a totalitarian one" (Kasekamp 2000, 66).

the elections for the parliament and for the head of state until the termination of the state of emergency. Like other political parties, the Veterans themselves reacted to the situation passively. Kasekamp explains that this was because they thought that Päts would remain within the limitations of the rule of law. Also, they thought the situation would be similar to that of the summer of 1933 when Tõnisson's government had banned the Veterans and enacted the state of emergency (Kasekamp 2000, 100–101). As the Veteran leader Artur Sirk stated just before his arrest: "Let them imprison us, the people will vote us out of jail" (Marandi 1991, 414). In spring 1935, trials of the Veterans were held and their sentences were considered mild (Raun 1987). However, in December 1935, plans for an armed coup were discovered by the political police. This time the leaders of the Veterans received long prison sentences, although they were gradually freed in 1937 and 1938. This was the end of the Veterans as their public support faded fast, which showed that their support had been based on people's yearning for political and economic stability and strong leadership. The Veterans' ideas of strong leadership, unity, patriotism and national integrity continued to dominate the society as they merged into the Collectivist-nationalist discourse, the official state discourse of post-1934 Estonia developed by Konstantin Päts. Parming argued: "By the end of 1935 Päts had adopted almost every one of the Veterans' probable ruling methods" (Parming 1975, 57).[44]

3.3. Collectivist-nationalist discourse

The Collectivist-nationalist discourse was the official state discourse in post-1934 Estonia. In terms of the role of the state and the state and society relationship, the state was seen as the decision-maker, the societal and political initiatives and ideas had to be coordinated from the top down as only this ensured a coherent national development, which was based on unity and on collective values and interests. National collective interests were seen as supreme over individual or group interests.

3.3.1. The development of the discourse into state discourse

The discourse became a dominant one with the regime change of 12 March 1934, when the head of the interim government Konstantin Päts declared the state of emergency for six months, banned the Veterans' organisations and appointed General Laidoner as commander-in-chief of the armed forces. He also postponed the elections for the parliament and presidency until the termination of the state of emergency. These steps were approved by the Parliament as temporary measures to stabilize the volatile political situation. As Veterans had

[44] Kasekamp also points out that radical right-wing movements were more successful in states with a strong perception of Communist threat, which did not exist in Estonia (Kasekamp 2000, 156).

attacked all existing political parties, socialists in particular, and had been enjoying wide public support, the parties were in favour of curbing the power of Veterans. Therefore, Päts's actions in March 1934 were received in parliament with an applause, rather than a protest or further inquiries. Also, all of the party newspapers agreed to the government's steps (Valge 2008, 8). The first signs that the situation might not be temporary came in August 1934, when Karl Einbund (later Kaarel Eenpalu) became Minister of Interior Affairs and Vice-Prime Minister (later Prime Minister). Eenpalu became the third leading figure next to Päts and Laidoner during the post-1934 period, which he christened *the Silent Era* (Ruusmann 1998, 281). The name was meant to contrast with the pre-1934 time, which the regime dubbed noisy and unstable. In early September, Päts extended the state of emergency for another year and the elections were again postponed. This time, he did not ask for the parliament's consent, which was an unconstitutional action (Marandi 1997, 18). In response, the parliamentarians demanded a special session, which convened on 28 September 1934.

On that day Eenpalu had a speech before the parliament where he stated that the state of emergency must be maintained as certain political groups have not given up their "malicious attack" (cited in Valge 2008, 9). He also stated that in order to guarantee the necessary healing and unity, "this irresponsible political fight has to step aside to give place to cultural, positive and united political activities" (Eenpalu 1995, 86). During the negotiations on 2 October, some parliamentarians such as the socialists, a Russian minority party and the Farmers Unions expressed support for the government's actions. A representative from the United Farmers argued that the government has ignored the parliament unconstitutionally and called for the elections. According to Valge, only one parliamentarian, the Marxist Aleksander Jõeäär gave an assessment on the regime change of 12 March, stating that as this was supposedly an anti-fascist action, then "[i]f there would have been a will to truly protect democracy and fight fascism there would have been no need to curb the anti-fascist parties and to limit the basic rights of the citizens in general" (cited in Valge 2008, 9–10). Independent parliamentarian Mihkel Juhkam criticised the limitations of the parliament's power and its implications for the political system:

> The current trend of the government's politics seems to promise anything but democracy. This argument, that in case the government is not getting along with parliament the government can follow the principle salus populi suprema lex, in other words, everything is justified in the name of people's well-being, is not very convincing. Who has not explained it like this? Marius and a bit later dictator Sulla, Louis XVI and later the États Généraux, Robespierre and later Napoleon, Wilhelm II and later Hitler. Everything happened in the name of people's security and well-being. […] Before, there was indeed too much politics, but now too little. […] Even the government does not seem to do politics. Politics is conducted by a very narrow, invisible circle, which is so busy with it, that it cannot see the forest for the trees. Therefore, life is rather comfortable to the previous political organisations: nobody has to do anything and nobody is responsible (Juhkam 1995, 88–94).

Juhkam also pointed out that this state system isolates and alienates the state from the society: "if this way of doing politics, that began on 15 September, will continue, then I am afraid that it will lead the government to isolation and into a dead end with no exit" (Juhkam 1995, 88–94). Juhkam's speech was the last speech held in the fifth parliament. After this speech Eenpalu handed parliament a decree from Päts that ended the session of this parliament. The parliamentarians followed the order and left the room and the fifth parliament never convened again (Pajur 2005a, 93–94). Ilmar Raamot, who was present, stated that "[n]othing happened. No one protested or promised spontaneously to continue the fight for the rule of law and people's freedom. The people's representatives went quietly home" (Raamot 1991, 60). However, the board of the parliament continued receiving salary and allowances (Valge 2008, 9). The question is why the parliamentarians left. They had the people's mandate and therefore not only had the right but also the responsibility to represent the people. In this session of the parliament the non-government forces had a majority, as their candidate won the elections for the speaker's position over the government nominated candidate. Furthermore, Päts was not a president elected by the people according to the new constitution, but the head of government, a post many of them had held before, as the governments had been changing often. Therefore, one could argue that there was no constitutional basis for his decree to end the parliament's session. No in-depth study has been conducted on the subject, but several assumptions have been formulated. For example, the parliamentarians may have left because the situation was still considered temporary, because of the deep division between the Veterans and the rest of the political scene (Valge 2008, Pajur 2005a), or because the parliamentarians were still afraid of the Veterans because of their high popularity among the society and therefore still perceived the government's measures to be primarily directed against the Veterans. Parliamentarian Juhkam in his speech blamed the politicians for being content with not doing actual politics, but leaving it to a narrow circle. What is striking here is that postponing the elections was unconstitutional, as was prolonging the state of emergency without the parliament's consent. However, no politician protested against this violation of the constitution (Valge 2008, 4). This suggests that the focus was more on realpolitik than on legal or institutional aspects, which may have resulted from the limited experience in independent statehood and a lack of political culture and traditions.

On 12 October 1934, Eenpalu announced to journalists that the Parliament would be put on "silent mode" (Ruusmann 1998, 282). Political parties were abolished in March 1935 and from 1934 to 1937 the President ruled by decree. The new regime consolidated itself in 1934–1935. In December-January 1934–1935 regulations introducing censorship and curbing the freedom of expression were introduced. It was prohibited to print publications that were disrespectful or critical towards the regime, leaders or state institutions. In 1934 the State Propaganda Office was founded, which was a body supervising media censorship (Pajur 2005a, 95). In 1935 some of the newspapers were closed. The most notable action was sequestering *Postimees* and removing Jaan Tõnisson, its

editor since 1896, one of Päts's long-term opponents and most vocal critics of the new order, from his position. This severely constrained Tõnisson's possibilities to express his political opinions and views and to reach a nation-wide public (Aru 1996).

In 1936, a referendum was organized on the question whether the Constituent Assembly should be convened in order to amend the constitution or draft a new constitution. Since no campaigning against the government's proposal was permitted and because it was believed to be the first step in returning to a democratic system, the government won the referendum with a landslide (Kasekamp 2000, 126). The National Assembly convened in February 1937 and worked on the new Constitution based on the draft prepared by Päts. A strongly debated issue was the undemocratically selected upper chamber to the Parliament, which found only modest support even among Päts's closest supporters (Kasekamp 2000, 126). Nevertheless, the 1937 Constitution did not contain significant changes from the draft Päts had prepared.[45] It provided, similar to the 1933 Constitution, for a powerful head of state that was to be elected for a six-year term. In 1938 Konstantin Päts was elected president of Estonia by the two houses of parliament and an assembly of local government representatives.[46] The new constitution provided that in case all these three bodies nominated one candidate, public elections were not required, but the President could be then elected at a special joint meeting of all three bodies.

The 1937 Constitution restored the rule of law in the country. However, political parties remained abolished. Mati Graf has argued that until the last days of independence, the government had no political will or plan to restore the multi-party system (Graf 2000, 421). Any kind of spontaneous political organisation remained prohibited. The government claimed that in the future there would be a new type of political party, which would not aim at gaining power, but left unclear what these parties then would do (Pajur 2005a, 101). The state of emergency was continuously extended until the summer of 1940, when Estonian independence perished (Marandi 1997, 18). Since the appointment of a commander-in-chief during peacetime and the suspension of the elections were

[45] The 1937 Constitution, similar to the 1933 Constitution, provided for a powerful head of state, now called the president, who was to be elected for a six-year term. "The chief executive would appoint and dismiss the cabinet, have a suspensive veto over legislation, and be able to dissolve both houses of parliament". However, "the president could only issue decrees when the legislature was not in session" (Raun 1987, 121). For Karjahärm the elements in the constitution, such as constraining the fundamental rights of the citizens for the interests of the state, extensive presidential powers and the system for presidential and parliamentary elections are all signs of a conservative political system (Karjahärm 2001, 298). Typologically the new constitution was semi-presidential where the executive was dominating over legislative (Pajur 2005a, 99). The adoption of the new constitution led to the restoration of the rule of law in Estonia.

[46] "Candidates for this office were to be nominated by the two houses of parliament and an assembly of local government representatives. However, the people were allowed to elect the president only in case if all three institutions did not nominate the same candidate" (Raun 1987, 121).

both unconstitutional actions, "Päts's and Laidoner's actions in March 1934 cannot be termed anything but a *coup d'état*" (Kasekamp 2000, 104; see also Valge 2011, 793; Marandi 1991).[47] As Valge claims, "although the 1934 coup is one of the most important events in the history of Estonian domestic politics, there has not yet been a study that has concentrated on the reasons, events, results and meaning of the loss of democracy" (Valge 2011, 793). The following section will explore the ideas and understandings that the discourse carried and promoted. It will also discuss the reasons why the majority of the society seemingly supported the regime and the understandings promoted by it and why there was no significant nation-wide opposition to the regime.

3.3.2. Characteristics of the discourse

This section will discuss the ideas carried by the collectivist-national discourse and its understanding on the state and society relationship. It will be shown that the central characteristics of the discourse were collectivism, as opposed to individualism, national unity, solidarity, singleness of purpose, corporatism and statism. Next, the practices carried out within this discourse will be discussed. During the first years of the regime, its ideology was based on the idea of a nation in crisis. One of Päts's main justifications for enacting the state of emergency in March 1934 was that the nation was ill and must be healed (*Riigikogu V koosseisu protokollid, IV istungjärk, 15. märtsil 1934,* 1438). On 28 September 1934, prime minister Eenpalu in his speech before the parliament stressed the notions of unity, solidarity and integral nation that were about to become the central features of the government's ideology: "from the nation's life these actors that prevent the cooperation must be removed, while taking under consideration, that the nation is a family from one flesh and blood, which is carried and given impetus by the power that directs the actions, common aspirations, and a common will that is stronger than the separate aspirations of different movements" (Eenpalu 1995, 79). In 1938, after the adoption of the new constitution, "a more definitive 'ideology of the 12th of March' began to emerge" (Raun 1987, 122).

In terms of the state and society relationship, the discourse emphasized the supremacy of collective interests and values over individual or group interests as a necessary precondition for national development. For Karjahärm and Sirk, the most important doctrine of the new order was solidarity, which "postulates that societal prosperity is a norm both for the state and the individual. The state can require certain sacrifices for the public good from the individual" (Karja-

[47] Valge argues that "appointing a commander-in-chief during peace-time – that is, appointing Laidoner as commander-in-charge – was not possible, according to Article 80 of the Constitution, and the decree issued by Päts on 19 March to postpone the elections was also illegitimate, since Article 60 of the Constitution specifically did not permit an amendment of the electoral law by decree. Elections based on the 1933 Constitution were never again carried out in Estonia" (Valge 2011, 793).

härm and Sirk 2001, 286). As stated by Prime Minister Eenpalu in October 1938: "the people have supremacy over the individual; the task of the individual is to serve the people and in the interests of the people's solidarity and unity the actions of the individual should be constrained and restrained" (paraphrased in Karjahärm and Sirk 2001, 287). This principle was also stated in paragraph 8 of the 1938 Constitution: "the supreme obligation of each citizen is to be loyal to the Estonian state and its constitutional order" (cited in Kalmo 2010, 122). Prime Minister Eenpalu called the new order "guided democracy" (Raun 1987, 122). The new regime argued that in contrast with the chaotic old system, in the new system the political organization of the people must happen only through organized ways, on instigation by the state. Political organization was permitted through state initiated and coordinated new institutions: The Fatherland League (*Isamaaliit)* and corporative organisations.

A key element of Collectivist-nationalist discourse was corporatism. As political parties were banned, the government promoted political organisation through professional associations as an alternative that was more effective in achieving national unity than political parties were. This was also based on the idea of prioritizing so called unified collective interests over the individual or group interests. Päts stated: "Organising according to professional lines must ensure that the person does not have to kneel before the parties, but he has to feel that those, to whom he turns, are his closest colleagues and that they can assert themselves with unified power and they must do so. […] Therewith everyone must feel that they are one big family and that they can live only when they have the common roof of the Estonian Republic" (Päts 1935, 6). Corporatism was associated with the notion of collectivism: as stated by Eenpalu, the purpose of organising through professional chambers was "to engage all of our occupational groups, without class conflict, in our joint effort to develop our state toward our common national and state goals" (Toomus 1937, 199).

There was no nation-wide discontent to the post-1934 regime and the government enjoyed broad public support (Parming 1975, Kasekamp 2000, 124). The major political parties first supported the regime change, as they had felt threatened by the Veterans. An explanation is that the regime relied on existing societal understandings. First, there was an understanding in society that favoured a strong executive state and strong nationhood (Karjahärm and Sirk 2001, 285) and believed that these would provide political stability. Parming argues that "[i]n a sense, it was irrelevant who provided political stability. It could have been democratic parties, but it was Päts who provided it instead" (Parming 1975, 62). The other important factor was that prior to regime change there had been general public discontent and a lack of trust in political parties. As people were tired of aggressive political agitation and endless political battles and they appreciated the structured and consistent actions of the government (Ruusmann 1998, 284; Roolaht 1990, 242). This explains people's apparent satisfaction with the strong executive and the absence of protests against abolishing the political parties. An additional aspect was that the economic crisis, which had led to resentment of the political

system, was largely over by 1934. Although this was due to the end of the global economic crisis, the stability contributed to the understanding that a strong executive power worked better than a politically fragmented parliament. Furthermore, the government both in its rhetoric and its actions focused on the other central idea that the society had liked, as the Veterans' popularity had shown: promoting patriotism and nationalism in every sphere of society. The State Propaganda Office, which was set up to direct the public opinion, organized several nation-wide campaigns, which became popular among society, such as Estonianizing family names, beautification of Estonian homes, popularizing the national flag and language and folk customs (Rajasalu 1993, 99).

Another reason for a lack of nation-wide resentment was that considering some other countries at the time, the regime was still comparatively moderate and mild. Although political parties had been banned since 1935, the opposition did exist and was able to contest the elections; all main political groups were represented in the bicameral parliament that convened in 1938. Although the opposition was not eliminated, it was made irrelevant by curbing its means of reaching the general public and efficiently participating in the decision-making process. For example during the elections for the lower chamber (Chamber of Deputies, Riigivolikogu) of the bicameral parliament in 1938 all political activities or campaigning were prohibited, except by the government's own National Front for the Implementation of the Constitution (*Põhiseaduse elluviimise rahvarinne*) and criticism of the government or the National Front was prohibited (Pajur 2005a, 99).[48] Because of the single member constituencies and the fragmentation of the opposition, the National Front received 47% of the votes, but 57% of the mandates (46 seats). The opposition won 26 seats, including all four mandates in Tartu and 5 out of 12 in Tallinn (Pajur 2005a, 99). When Parliament convened, ten people who had campaigned as independents joined the government's side. Therefore, although opposition candidates had a clear victory in Tartu, the results did not significantly increase the possibilities to participate in the decision making process for non-governmental parliamentarians, such as opposition leader Jaan Tõnisson's. The opposition lacked the means to initiate draft bills, which required at least 16 votes, or to make inquiries about government activities, for which 20 votes were needed. It did not help matters that the opposition was not united, consisting of the 'Democratic bloc' (6), socialists (6) and two independent workers representatives.[49] The only tool left to the opposition was to criticize the government from the parliament's lectern. However, as the media were not allowed to cover critical statements, their criticism remained concealed from the general public.

[48] Pajur points out that although the National Front officially was apolitical and aimed at uniting all citizens who wanted to work for the implementation of the new constitution, its board members were mainly people from the Fatherland League, ex-Farmers Unions and the employees of the State Propaganda Office (Pajur 2005a, 99).

[49] In the lower chamber of the 1938 bicameral Parliament, the liberals formed the "Democratic" faction, which consisted of the representatives of the former Centre Party, the Settlers and two representatives associated with the Veterans (Kasekamp 2000, 130).

3.4. Liberal individualism

In contrast to the Collectivist-nationalist discourse and its focus on collective values and unity, the Liberal-individualist discourse focused on the individual's rights and responsibilities. Although there was a clear ideational dichotomy between the collective-nationalist and liberal-individualist discourses, there was no broad nation-wide public debate between these two approaches, since the possibilities of the liberal-individualist opposition to freely express their opinions within the public sphere were effectively curbed by the state after 1935. With regard to the state and society relationship, the liberal-individualist discourse saw the development of the individual into an active citizen as a precondition for the development of the state and the nation. The maxim by Hans Kruus, "Individual, get up!" became one of the main slogans for this discourse in the late 1930s as it summed up the anti-statist and -authoritarian position (Karjahärm and Sirk 2001, 314). The discourse argued that for the state's and the individual's development, a democratic state order that follows the rule of law and allows for the freedom of speech and of assembly is crucial.

The stronghold of this discourse was the university town Tartu, its circles of intelligentsia and academics in particular. However, the nation-wide reach of this discourse was severely constrained after 1935 as political parties were abolished, censorship regulations in place and several opposition newspapers, such as *Postimees*, either closed or curbed. Therefore, the ideas promoted by this discourse were mainly limited to the circles of Tartu's intelligentsia and academics. Elo Tuglas describes the existence of debates in Tartu and their limited reach, hence the incapacity of the ideas circulated to reach the national level:

> Yesterday [6 February 1938] Jaan Tõnisson held a meeting in "Vanemuine" with around 1,500 people. The hall was packed with people, also the adjoining rooms. A meeting like this had not been organized since 1917. And it was one of the best speeches of Tõnisson. Overall, a great and heartfelt sympathy. But what does the curbed *Postimees* write? It writes about the day of scouts, women's day and then somewhere on the edge of the paper somehow that Tõnisson had been speaking to "his own folks and supporters". As if he would have been sitting at home, in front of the fireplace and would have had a conversation with his close acquaintances (Tuglas 2008, 423).

This shows that although alternative ideas existed and were expressed, the manoeuvring space for a liberal opposition on the national level was limited in post-1934 Estonia. After the regime change, Tõnisson, similar to many other politicians and many other public figures, took first a 'wait and see' position. However, after the parliament was put on "silent mode" in autumn 1934 and it became obvious that Päts's ruling by decree was not the short-term development that had been expected at first, Tõnisson started criticizing the government's actions in *Postimees*. In 1935, Tõnisson's editorials focused on the sovereignty of the individual, the importance of the development of an

individual into a conscious citizen and the democracy and rule of law as preconditions for this development (Aru 1996, 19–20). In the summer of 1935, the state sequestered *Postimees* and removed Tõnisson, its editor since 1896, from his position. The official reason for the decision was the problematic financial situation of *Postimees*, but the real reason was to curb the voice of the opposition. This severely constrained Tõnisson's possibilities to express his political opinions and views or to reach a nation-wide public (Aru 1996). Although he continued using all legal possibilities to criticise the existing system, his public reach was largely limited to the circles of the Tartu intelligentsia. Tõnisson held many speeches in the lower chamber of Parliament in 1938–1939, but as the media was not allowed to publish them, they never reached the general public (Aru 1996, 18).

That the carriers of the discourse also enjoyed wider public support in Tartu was shown during the 1938 elections for the lower chamber of the bicameral parliament where the opposition candidates won all four mandates in Tartu. Nevertheless, this did not increase their options to participate in effective decision-making, as the opposition lacked the necessary number of members to initiate legislation. In the bicameral Parliament, the liberal individualist ideas were promoted by the 'Democratic Faction' whose chief spokesman was Jaan Tõnisson, who was also considered the opposition leader. As the opposition had limited means to organise through institutions or to openly express its views in the media, alternative ideas spread orally and hidden between the lines in theatre and on radios. Since media were censored, the most important places for exchanging fresh information, expressing opinions and sharing stories for the wealthier part of urban society were the cafés. As this was the place where oppositional ideas spread, the opposition was also called "café opposition" (Ruusmann 1998, 309), or "café liberals" (Roolaht 1990, 129). However, these information channels had not much influence on the majority of the people, who lived in the rural areas.

As the main stronghold of the liberal-individualist discourse was Tartu, the political and social thought popular in Tartu was also called "Tartu's spirit", which as phrased by Tõnisson was embedded in "Freedom, rule of law, democracy, culture" (Tõnisson 1995, 160). Tõnisson's political thought is described by Hans Kruus as "ethical individualism" (Kruus 2005, 229). In terms of the state and society relationship, the discourse, as expressed by Tõnisson, argued that there was an integral link between the individual and society as "[t]he individual is the starting point of the nation's development. It is through individuals that the general success of society will materialize" (Kruus 2005, 230). As the state discourse prioritised collectivism over individualism, Tõnisson defended the role and importance of the individual. In 1938, he stated in the Parliament: "We nowadays hear that the individual as such has no value […] but only people have value. This is the same as to say that the forest is the pride and beauty of the nature; so, why does one need trees!" (quoted in Kruus 2005, 230).

Liberal individualism stressed the importance of the rule of law to the stable development of the state. Therefore, Tõnisson disagreed with Päts's idea on the new Constituent Assembly whose task would be to improve the constitution. For him, changing the constitution could only be conducted in accordance with the existing constitution. He wrote: "Our constitution provides for a public referendum as the method for amending the constitution […] The other irrefutable essential requirement for changing our constitution is that it must be based on the principles of democratic statehood" (Tõnisson 1935c, 2). In the memorandum of 1936, the four former head of states argued: "The important precondition for maintaining Estonian independence and for the development of its societal order is the rule of law. A small nation cannot rely as much on its military power as on its sense of justice and moral self-consciousness" (Tõnisson et al. 1995, 134). The letter argued that the new order had undermined the importance of the rule of law.

One of the key demands of the opposition was reinstatement of the political parties, which were banned in 1935. As Tõnisson argued, "Political parties are the necessary organs of the democratic state, through which an organised people can express and implement their will on state affairs" (Tõnisson 1935b, 2). Oskar Mänd wrote in 1938 that the "question of political organisation is unsolved until the current day. The previous organisations are dissolved, but nothing has been created to replace them. Therefore the development of the political ideologies and the nation's political education has been stagnant already for several years" (Mänd 1997, 1398). For the liberal individualist discourse the Fatherland League did not fill the void left by the political parties. As argued by the former heads of state in their 1936 Memorandum:[50] "As it [The Fatherland League] does not have ideals or aims, it cannot be expected to unite the citizens around itself in a united and cohesive cooperation for the sake of their country. It is one-sided propaganda that invites citizens to give up their principles and self-assertion, without giving them any positive aims, and brings only harm instead of gain. This does not improve the creative abilities of people, but slumbers them" (Tõnisson et al. 1995, 136). To remedy the situation, the former state elders asked for loosening the emergency regulations, the restoration of the rule

[50] One of the most important actions of the liberal opposition of the period was the memorandum by the four former heads of government, Jaan Tõnisson, Jaan Teemant, Johan Kukk and Ants Piip, in 1936. Because of the censorship, the memorandum was not printed in Estonia, but was published in the Finnish *Helsingin Sanomat* in November 1936. It is not clear how well-known it was within Estonian society, but it clearly defined the main priorities of the liberal opposition. The pretext of this letter were the planned elections to the Constituent Assembly. Prior to that Päts had declared the nation to be healthy enough to return to a constitutional order. Hence, the opposition had hoped that prior to the elections for the Constituent Assembly activities of political parties would be permitted again. However, the government stated that before adopting the new constitution political fights could not be allowed. As a response, four former heads of state wrote Päts a memorandum stating that as the nation according to Päts was healthy again, the state of emergency and rule by decree should be ended and the constraints on the civil and political rights should be lifted (See Tõnisson et al. 1995).

of law, including freedoms of speech, association and meetings and to allow for free elections, for example by allowing other groups and individuals to present candidates in addition to the committees created by the government (Tõnisson et al. 1995, 137).[51]

For the liberal individualism discourse, active citizens were the necessary precondition in order to protect the state against an external threat. Tõnisson wrote that "[t]he best defence against an external threat is internal strength and readiness of our people. […] In order to get over dangerous foreign policy perspectives, our state has to be based on such national enthusiasm which would make every citizen of an independent Estonia a voluntary fighter for the national determination and independence against external threats" (Tõnisson, 1935a, 2). The liberal individualist understanding that collectivism and statism lead to the alienation between the society and the state was expressed by Hans Kruus in 1937. Kruus emphasizes that in a situation where the state sees itself as the caretaker lies a danger that the state "cannot escape the obsession that the one it is taking care for, which are the society and the individual, is and will be underage, which has to be guarded and 'directed' everywhere. The state power will alienate from people, becomes autocratic, starts living its own life and loses the viable link with the society, which is the only source of the vitality for the state" (Kruus 2005, 402–403). Kruus's solutions for preventing the dangers of statism were the rule of law and the development of the individual. He wrote: "Individual, get up! One should not say from the standpoint […] of 'collectivism' that this would mean the fragmentation of our societal and state thinking. No, in the right implementation this would mean ensuring the foundations of the state and society and their total strength" (Kruus 2005, 405). In conclusion, the liberal individualist discourse argued that the individual alertness and emphasis on individual principles is necessary for the development of the state, national cohesion and for balancing the external threat.

3.5. Conclusion

The chapter discussed the main societal understandings in interwar independent Estonia, which were the Radical-nationalist, Collective-nationalist and Liberal-individualist. The chapter explored how the collective-nationalist discourse came to be the state discourse and how the state and society relationship was constructed within this understanding. It was discussed that during the emergence and development of Estonian national identities, the state, represented by the Baltic Germans and/or Imperial Russia was seen as separate, or the Other, in

[51] Because of the censorship the memorandum was not published in Estonia, but still spread rather extensively in Estonia, because of being printed by *Helsingin Sanomat* in Finland. As a protest the opposition boycotted the elections to the Constituent Assembly, which resulted in a largely pro-government Constituent Assembly. The discussions for the new Constitution were based on Päts's proposal and the constitution was approved in July 1937 (Pajur 2005a, 97–98).

respect to Estonian society. When Estonia became independent, the society and politicians had limited experience in the sphere of political decision-making and there was a lack of political culture and traditions. Furthermore, as the state had been seen as the Other, the society was first not consolidated on the meaning of an Estonian state. Although the situation did improve after the attempted Soviet coup, the weak link between the state and society became visible during the economic crisis in 1931–1934. The economic instability led to a political crisis where the dominant discourse during the crisis, Radical-nationalism, saw the solution in strong executive leadership and in an integral nation and unity. As a strong statehood was the governance experience the society knew and because the fights between political parties and frequently changing governments seemed to show that parliamentary democracy was not able to provide stability, this position had strong public support. After the regime change in 1934 the Collective-nationalism discourse became the official state discourse. It built on the ideas of Radical-nationalism and saw the state and society relationship in terms of a strong executive state and the supremacy of national collectivist interests over individual interests as necessary preconditions for national development. Therefore, the state system saw for the centralised top-down political and societal organisation. Hence, the decision-making sphere and societal sphere were seen as separate as this would ensure better political stability and incentives for nation's development.

There also existed another societal position, labelled here the Liberal-individualism that emphasized the role of the individual and the political education of the individual as a prerequisite for the development of the society and strengthening of national unity. In this understanding, societal initiatives and activism through political parties was a necessary precondition for the development of political thought and through that for the general development of the state. Nevertheless, the reach of the Liberal-individualist discourse was limited due to censorship regulations and the abolishment of political parties, and its ideas did not reach the overall public. As a result, the dominant state understanding of the state and society relationship was that of the Collectivist-nationalist discourse under which the state as a decision-maker and the society as the carrier of national values were separated.

The next chapter will focus on how this state discourse came to be for the decision-maker, how these understandings that the discourse embedded developed into institutional practices and how these practices enabled the decision-maker to focus on the logic of international system in autumn 1939.

CHAPTER 4.
THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS IN ESTONIA IN AUTUMN 1939

The aim of this chapter is to explore how Estonia's foreign policy decision to accept the Soviet demands became possible and commonsensical for the decision-maker in autumn 1939. The first part of the current case study (Chapter 2) showed that in autumn 1939 there was a uniformity of opinion among the country's top leadership on the focus of external constraints and the logic of the international system. The second part of the case study (Chapter 3) showed that there were variations within the societal understandings, but these were not able to play as the alternative discourses were not part of the public sphere on the national level and were also excluded from the sphere of decision-making. The current chapter, the third part of the case study, will explore the understandings of the decision-maker on creating the social conditions that excluded alternative discourses from the effective decision-making and the public sphere.

The theoretical chapter argued that decision-makers are never presented with a single automatic option. Even if there is a uniformity of opinion or no visible debate between the discourses, this is not because of a natural condition of the society in question, but because of certain social conditions that made it possible. It was suggested that in order to understand these social conditions, the relationship between the society, where these discourses are embedded, and the state/decision-makers, who need to negotiate between these discourses, must be explored. The decision-makers do not have a fixed set of domestic discourses at their disposal; there are always tensions between the domestic discourses and, besides, these discourses are not static: they change with external and internal events. Hence, there is always a need for a political decision. The chapter will suggest that the decision-maker's own social construction regarding the domestic discourses determines how he understands the state and society relationship and consequently the domestic and external pressures. This is why to explain how the decision became commonsensical for the decision-maker, his or her own social construction must be explored. The aim of the chapter is to discuss how the decision-maker in autumn 1939 came to understand the situation in such a way that the systemic constraints dominated. The focus of the chapter is not on the personality of the decision-maker, but on his social construction, hence on his ideas and understandings on the state and society relationship and how the social conditions under which he operated came to be, as these influence his understanding of the current situation and therefore make a certain decision possible. The first part of the chapter will focus on the social construction of the decision-maker, his ideas and understandings on the role of state, state design, decision-making and the state and society relationship. Next, how these ideas were developed into institutional arrangements, hence practices, will be explored. The third part of the chapter will discuss how these practices, the way the political reality was constructed, made the decision to accept the Soviet demands commonsensical for the decision-makers in autumn 1939.

4.1. Social construction of the decision-maker

This section explores the social construction of Estonia's primary decision-maker in 1939, the Estonian President Konstantin Päts. First, the choice for the primary decision-maker will be explained. The section will then show how the decision-maker was positioned within the dominant domestic discourses, how he came to understand the state and society relationship the way he did and how this understanding influenced shaping the social conditions that were present in 1939. Next, the section will explore how these conditions made the state's focus solely on external constraints possible in 1939.

4.1.1. President Päts as the primary decision-maker

Konstantin Päts was an Estonian statesman of four decades. In 1917, Päts became one of the three members of the Estonian Päästekomitee (*Defence Committee*) that announced the Estonian independence on 24 February 1918 and nominated a temporary government, where Päts held the position of prime minister. After the independence war from 1918–1920, Päts became an active politician within the Farmers Union. He was the head of government for five times and a minister in several cabinets. On 12 March 1934, after a public initiative led by the extreme right Veterans' movement had changed the constitution, Päts as Prime Minister conducted together with General Johan Laidoner a regime change by enacting a state of emergency. By 1939, Konstantin Päts had served as head of state since 1934 and had been the President of Estonia since 1938. The Estonian Parliament did not convene between 1934–1938 and during that period Päts, as acting head of state, had ruled by decree. This practice partially continued after the Parliament convened under the new Constitution in 1938. The 1937 Constitution, which was based on the draft prepared by Päts, provided for a powerful head of state who was elected for a six-year term. The President had the right to appoint and dismiss the government, veto legislation and disband both houses of parliament (Raun 1987, 121). Regarding the decision on the Soviet demands, the 1937 Constitution granted the right to sign international defence agreements to the President without Parliament's ratification. Though the law required the President to consult with the State Defence Council and the respective parliamentary committees, their opinion was an advisory one and not binding (Ilmjärv 2004b, 415). Although it has been acknowledged that General Laidoner played a major role in foreign policy questions (see Ilmjärv 2004b; Warma 1993), Päts shaped the state design and the way the state and society was constructed. Therefore the current section will focus on him as the primary decision-maker and it will be explored how the state discourse of Collective-nationalism came to be and how it played out in decision-making in autumn 1939.

Several scholars have emphasized Päts's high political ambitions and political pragmatism in achieving his goals (See Kasekamp 2000; Ruusmann 1998; Pajur 2005a). He has been considered a political opportunist and deal-maker,

which explains how he could publicly support the Veterans' constitutional bill in 1933, negotiate with the Veterans on becoming their presidential candidate in early 1934, prohibit their organisations in April 1934 and start criticizing the Veterans' constitution, which he himself had campaigned for, already in 1934 (see Ruusmann 1998; Raun 1987). Furthermore, Päts's government took over the Veterans' logic of blaming all instability on the political parties and adopted other popular ideas from the Veterans, such as the central focus on patriotism in every sphere of society. Hence, Karjahärm and Sirk has argued that the government's platform from 1934 to 1940 was adapted to political circumstances, as "[f]or liberals there was a story of individual freedoms, for nationalists about national cohesion, for socialists it was about the equality of all professions and occupations" (Karjahärm and Sirk 2001, 291). This chapter aims to show that although Päts had pragmatic and opportunistic policies, these alone are not sufficient to explain his political framework. The current chapter follows the social constructivist theoretical framework and thus will focus not on the personal characteristics of the decision-maker, but on his social construction: the formation of his understandings on the design and role of the state, the state and society relationship and decision-making. Päts was the initiator, and to a large extent, the designer of the National-collectivist discourse explored in the previous chapter, which was the official state discourse in post-1934 Estonia.

Päts's understandings of state, society and the relationship between these two were based on the notion of the integral nation. A perfect society for Päts, as stated by Karjahärm and Sirk, was "a balanced whole, in which the individual parts had to work in immaculate harmony, like the organs of a living organism" (Karjahärm and Sirk 2001, 302). His ideas were influenced by scholars whose works he studied and translated, such as Francis Lieber, Adolf Damaschke, Rudolf Diesel and Theodor Hertzka, but also from his experiences on the constitutional debates of 1918 and economic and political crisis of 1932–1934. Next, Päts's understanding of the state and society relationship and the main aspects of his political thinking, strong corporative institutions and executive leadership, will be discussed.

4.1.2. State design

One of the central ideas of Päts's political thinking since the beginning of his statesman's career was that a state must be based on strong institutions. He stated: "The strength of the states lies in the state institutions" (26 January, 1936, quoted in Laaman 1999, 21). His understanding of institutions directly relied on the approach of Francis Lieber[52], a nineteenth century American politi-

[52] Francis Lieber was a nineteenth century American political scientist, born and educated in Germany. Lieber, influenced by anti-revolutionary German liberals, was a proponent of the organic view of the state. The German liberals, in their reaction to the Revolution and the Napoleonic occupation, rejected the individualist approach of the Revolution and saw the nation as an organic whole "containing clusters of associations and groupings held together

cal scientist, and on his book *On Civil Liberty and Self-Government,* which Päts translated into Estonian in 1908.[53] For Lieber, stability and continuity can be ensured only through institutions, also the rights, privileges and ideas can last only if "embodied in vital institutions" (Brown 1951, 79). In his understanding of institutions, Päts's followed Lieber's approach:[54] "An institution is a body of certain customs, laws or regulations with a fixed effect; this body has its external tools or organs with which it can be independently active and take care of its preservation and future expansion" (Päts 1908, 1).

In a letter to a member of Baltic German nobility published in 1914, Päts argued, building on Lieber, that institutions are crucial for a state as they provide continuity and stability. He stated:

> Organised life, political life cannot be imagined without a variety of institutions. Institutions make it possible that within certain borders ever-changing and renewing societal groups are working, that they always lead their activities according to firm principles, so that the successors will continue what the predecessors have left pending. Only the institutions will ensure in this way the continuation of a certain course and only these will make the progress possible (Päts 1914, 1).

For Päts's, strong institutions on which the "organised life" was based, were not the political parties, but the corporative/professional organisations. According to Laaman, Päts always instinctively preferred the "natural" origin organisations, *Gemeinschafts,* to arbitrary *Gesellschafts* (Laaman 1999, 22). Päts's contemporary biographers tended to argue that Päts had never been a big supporter of political parties, as he had always favoured professional corporations over them (See Raud 1938, 46; Laaman 1949, 310; Toomus 1937). Organisation by profession had been one of Päts's central ideas already since the early twentieth century. For example in 1903, Päts encouraged people to create more professional associations based on different professions such as cattle farming

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by a political relationship" (Brown 1951, 88). Lieber developed this focus of the German liberals on "the existence of social groups between the individual and the state" further "in his theory of institutional liberty" (Brown 1951, 88). Lieber criticised Rousseau's contract theory for its neglect of the notion that society always exists. Hence, the state is not based on an arbitrary contract, but as explained by Bernard Edward Brown, "[t]he state, then, as an aspect of society, like society always exists, and is never created by contract or any other conscious action" (Brown 1951, 42).

[53] Jüri Adams has argued that Lieber's book is "the greatest known influence on his political world view" (Adams 2001, 12–13). Eduard Laaman has stated that all Päts's later goals and agendas and the 1937 constitution in particular "carry the mark of this book" (Laaman 1999, 20).

[54] Lieber's definition of institutions: "An institution is a system or body of usages, laws, or regulations of extensive and recurring operation, containing within itself an organism by which it effects its own independent action, continuance, and, generally, its own further development. The idea of an institution implies a degree of self-government. […] The institution is the opposite of subjective conception, individual disposition, and mere personal bias. The institution implies organic action" (Lieber 1853, 255, 267).

and shipping as this would help to improve the economic conditions of the lower classes (Päts 1903, 1). In 1924 and in 1931 the Parliament, following Päts's initiative, created two professional chambers: the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Chamber of Agriculture. In 1934–1936 Päts issued decrees for the establishment of fifteen other professional chambers, from which delegates were later assigned places in the upper house of the Parliament of 1938 (Kasekamp 2000, 121).[55]

For Päts, the democratic crisis of the early 1930s was clear proof that people should be organised through corporative institutions and not political parties. In a speech on 31 December 1934, he stated:

> Coming from the Russian state and not knowing the weak sides of democracy, it was thought in Estonia that we will be happy once we implement the most far-reaching democratic order. But now we see that first the people have to be organised, and this is what the government currently works on. We first organize the people and then the high state institutions. We do not want to create the kind of institutions that the people could laugh and point at, as they did to the highest representative body even very recently. We want to create a democratic institution, which would be worthy of its people, like in England, where parliament is respected and honoured. […] Our previous order, built only on political parties, showed its weaknesses and therefore we now have to organise the nation based on different principles – and this is gradually happening" (Päts 1935, 1).[56]

Organisations through corporative organisations would, according to Päts, also ensure the unity of the society and nation, which the political parties had compromised. As Päts explained in 1935:

> We have to organise our people according to the big economic professions and broad intellectual professions. […] It should not be forgotten that nothing should be created on an empty spot, but the creation has to be based on what has been developed throughout the ages and which is known in history or is hidden in our subconsciousness, even though it cannot be knowingly explained. Organising according to professional lines must ensure that the individual does not have to bow before the parties, but he has to feel that those, to whom he turns, are his closest colleagues and that they can assert themselves with unified power and they must do so. Then the farmer does not need to run to the parties, but the farmer will stand in its own organisation, the artisan in his own, and the merchant in his own organisation. Therewith everyone must feel that they are

[55] Professional chambers were created for the following groups: engineers, doctors, pharmacists, houseowners, veterinarians, agronomists, housewives, co-operatives, dairy-workers, fishermen, rural workers and small landowners, workers, teachers, artisants, and employees of private enterprises (Kasekamp 2000).

[56] Here, one can see again the links with Lieber, who argued that "[t]he true and staunch republican wants liberty […]. He wants the real rule of the people, that is an institutionally organised country, which distinguishes it from the mere mob. For a mob is an unorganic multitude, with a general impulse of action" (Lieber 1853, 369).

> one big family and that they can live only when they have the common roof of the Estonian Republic (Päts 1935, 1).

Päts supported the constitutional design of a strong executive branch already at the Constituent Assembly in 1919, but since the left had the majority in the Constituent Assembly, the parliamentarian model without a head of state won. Päts himself argued in the Constituent Assembly in 1920 that he did not consider the new state system, that the Constitution would provide for, parliamentarian. Though the Constitution foresaw the government to be responsible for the legislative body, which meant that it had to resign in case parliament so required, the other side of parliamentarianism, that the government would have had a degree of independence from the legislative body, was not there. According to Päts, "[o]ur legislative body is free in its activities from the government's influence, the government cannot in any way put its decision side by side with the legislative body's decision, it also cannot turn to the people for the protection of its position" (Päts 2001c, 142–143).

In his discussion on constitutional design Päts kept coming back to the argument that the parliament's and political parties' powers were too broad, and thereby that they did not sufficiently represent the will of people. He emphasized repeatedly that the Estonian constitution, compared to other parliamentarian type constitutions, was a different and uncommon one (Päts 2001d, 155; 2001e, 187; 2001a 273; 2001f, 355). Päts continued working on the Constitution, presenting Constitutional change proposals in the Parliament in his own name (1924) but also on behalf of the Farmers' Union (1926 and 1929). However, his idea gained nation-wide popularity only when the Veterans took it up in 1932 in the context of the devastating economic crisis and the subsequent political instability. Although Päts and the Farmers' Union publicly supported the Veterans bill in 1933, already a year later Päts started to criticize the 1933 Constitution for granting too extensive powers to the executive. In 1936, Päts declared the nation to be healthy enough to return to a constitutional order and called for a referendum on the question of calling for the new Constituent Assembly. Since the opposition had no means to campaign for its candidates, a part of it boycotted the elections and therefore the Assembly was pro-government. As a result the draft bill presented by Päts himself was accepted and the new Constitution was adopted in 1937.

The 1937 Constitution followed the institutional approach of Lieber in several angles. Prior to the adoption of the Constitution, Päts issued decrees which established fifteen corporative chambers based on different professions. The new Constitution saw for a bi-cameral parliament: the upper-chamber comprised the representatives of these professional corporations, the heads of universities and churches and ten people nominated by the head of state. Here, Päts seemed to follow Lieber's argument that the experience of Anglo-Saxon countries has shown that bicameral parliaments were effective, whereas the unicameral system had proven to be unstable. Lieber saw the bi-cameral parliament as one of the guarantees of liberty. Two houses represented "the impulse as well

as the continuity, the progress and the conservatism, the onward zeal and the retentive element, which must ever form integral elements of all civilization" (Lieber 1853, 160–161). Lieber points out that there are different modes of comprising the upper house, worst of them the French system where the members served in their personal capacity and more effective being the ones that were based on either certain class or by different bodies such as in the United States (Lieber 1853, 161). By creating the professional chamber, Päts followed Lieber's principle that the state has to be based on institutions, and basing an upper chamber of the parliament on these corporations, one could see the attempt to ensure the stability and tradition within the state system, which for Päts the political parties were not able to provide. Again in his justification for the necessity of the bi-cameral system, Päts follows Lieber's argument that "[t]he excellence of the bicameral system" lies "on the different modes of composing the houses" (Lieber 1853, 162). In a speech delivered in 1935 Päts explained:

> It was thought here that if we already elect one chamber, then this one, as a body of smart people, will not make mistakes. But it is known that there are many smart people who do not want to be involved in politics and there are many, who are not smart, but do want to be involved in politics. Therefore we cannot cherish the hope that only the best people will be elected to the representative organ, and therefore it is not redundant, if we would form the future Parliament in such a way that the people would come from different levels (Päts 1999a, 237).

The Constitution also took over the Anglo-Saxon plurality voting system since the lower chamber voting system was based on single-mandate constituencies. The president was formally elected by the people, but there could be a maximum of three candidates nominated by the two chambers of parliament and a temporary body consisting of the representatives of local municipalities. Also, in case these three institutions would nominate the same person, this person became a president without popular elections. This was exactly what happened in 1938 and Päts became president by the nomination of these three bodies and not through elections. Another change compared to both the 1920 and 1933 Constitutions was that the new Constitution did not allow for the popular initiative.

4.1.3. Understandings of the decision-making and state and society relationship

Päts's understanding of the state and society relationship was related to his understanding on the decision-making: on the one hand, he saw the head of state as representing society directly, without the interference of political parties, while on the other hand, society for him was not capable of effective decision-making. This was partly because of his understanding of the decision-making, as he argues that decisions have to be taken firmly and intuitively. For both of these reasons Päts was, throughout his career, a strong proponent of the

constitutional design with a strong executive president. In 1928, Päts pointed out in a speech that

> [i]n other places people have created a balance for executing the powers. Although this power, president, cannot do more, it can under certain circumstances remove parliament and address the people. This is the greatest democratic principle. We do not have it. We do not have this institution that could address the people. We cannot remove parliament, it will calmly sit its time out, can even adopt a law that prevents the institute of referendum. We have created for ourselves a hundred-headed monarch, fully enforcing itself as all the other organs depend on it. It has been said that the people have supreme power, but this power is dependent and people should see how this supreme power is governing. We need a president that could execute the people's will, otherwise our state is not democratic (Päts 1999a, 274).

In March 1934, Päts justified the regime change he and General Laidoner had conducted in the following terms:

> The supreme power in our country is our people. Our people have to execute their supreme power with a clear mind, based on sober pondering. One cannot demand that a person who has a fever can make elaborate decisions. We also cannot think that people that have been agitated, where from one side there is anger and revenge, and from the other side, a wave of fear, that under these conditions somebody could fulfil his obligations as a citizen and make decisions. The people have to withdraw, instead of agitation, explaining should be done, it must be explained that our state had a difficult illness (Riigikogu V koosseis: täielikud protokollid 1934, 1435–1438).

As Päts's supporters argued, by conducting a regime change in 1934 and changing the state system, Päts represented the people directly as in his decision followed the will of the people, who had understood the need for it already earlier. Toomus argues that

> people, and I do not mean here the agitated masses, had dissolved parliament already long before the state elder did it. And then followed what the masses had wanted: the implementation of a single power against parliament, but not led by a will as was seen in the 1933 Constitution; not the way as was advocated by Sirk, that it does not matter whether the people delegate their power to one or a hundred men. Päts was forced to take the role as the caretaker of power (Toomus 1937, 68).

Within this approach, "people" are not seen as individuals or a sum of different pluralist understandings, but as a unified actor.

Päts saw the relationship between the state and society as the head of state representing people directly. Hence, the role of the head of state is to understand the spirit of the nation and therefore to carry out the sovereignty of the people. As Toomus put it, the pre-1934 political system acknowledges "the mandate, not the natural calling" (Toomus 1937, 35). Päts himself explained the role of

the leader as someone who guides his people and nation, and does not try to please people or individuals before the elections, which he considered a weakness of political parties. He stated: "Our leaders should have the courage to choose the path themselves, show the people which road to take" (29 November 1936, quoted in Toomus 1937, 128).

Päts's understanding of the decision overlaps with his understanding of a head of state who intuitively understands the spirit of the people as politics for him is an art where intuition and inspiration hold very high positions. He stated: "I have to say that doing politics is an art. It is certain that it is not some kind of research work, some kind of scientific experiment, but there are several elements in politics that overlap with art." He gives an example of Pilsudski: "If he has a difficult political moment, he would go to a lonely place, and wait for an intuition, and if that has arrived then he would exert all his strength to execute his plan" (Päts 2001b, 369–370). He quotes Bismarck who has said that politics is not a handicraft that anyone can learn and continues that "if politics is like this, that it depends on the intuition then one cannot say that politics can be conducted according to some programme; that you can take a manual where everything is included and do politics without mistakes according to it" (Päts 2001b, 370). From his understanding of the politician, Päts moves to the notion of decision that for him follows inspiration. "When the doers will get inspired, they have to decide immediately, the decision-maker has to find the most appropriate option and implement it." (Päts 2001b, 371). In Päts's understanding, authority makes the decision and firmly implements it.

Another part of Päts's understanding of the state and society relationship was based on his belief that society, as represented by different political parties, was not capable of effective decision-making. For Päts one of the main reasons why the previous parliamentarian system was so ineffective was that it did not provide enough space for the head of state to make decisions. In 1932 Päts as a head of state argued in his speech before parliament that

> everyone orders the government around. […] The government lacks authority, it is not acknowledged. Everyone comes with their own proposals and if the government does not fulfil them, then government will be shouted at. I have not become the head of the government to be ordered around, I want to lead the government myself according to the Estonian constitution. I have to say I cannot permit giving orders to the government. The government must have authority, we cannot govern if everyone keeps giving us instructions (Päts 1999a, 203).

Päts's opinion on society is that society is important, but society and parliament, which does not have a clear hierarchical structure, cannot efficiently make decisions. He saw the democratic parliament of the 1920s as an inefficient talking shop where opinions were presented, but that did not have enough agency for taking decisions and implementing it.

The possible shortcomings of this type of state and society relationship were pointed out in a memorandum by the four former heads of government, Jaan Tõnisson, Jaan Teemant, Johan Kukk and Ants Piip, in 1936. The letter points

out that Päts was creating social conditions, under which he had to operate as a statesman and these conditions of "guided democracy", where individuals were always expected to wait for the government's directions and where all political organization was centrally initiated and organized, curbed the self-initiative and alertness of the society. This, in turn, could lead to the people's alienation from the state. "We have not only been without freedom of speech, assembly and association for three years, which has a particular importance to the rule of law and is necessary for people's political education in order to link people's wills with the state's destiny, but there is also a lack of feeling that the situation will improve in the near future" (Tõnisson et al. 1995, 134). The letter argues that by enforcing emergency regulations and giving laws and orders by decrees in cases on very broad areas, where there is no imminent emergency for the state's development, the government has changed "emergency legislation into ordinary legislation" (Tõnisson et al. 1995, 134). The letter focused on the gradually weakening link between society and the state and the possible consequences of excluding society from the public/decision-making sphere: "We see with concern that our people's activeness and the defence will is diminishing, and subsequently that the government is forced to seek support, not from the people, but from an administrative defence apparatus. This situation will change our nation state into a police state (Tõnisson et al. 1995, 136). The letter points out that the choices currently made and the conditions created, under which the society is not actively participating in the political life, can have consequences in times of crisis. Also, concentrating that extensively on ensuring internal control and stability reduces the state's ability to focus on possible external problems. "Using all government's forces primarily for protecting its own security will weaken the necessary attention to foreign policy questions and will cripple our alertness during this time of international crisis" (Tõnisson et al. 1995, 136).[57]

Päts did not give a written reply to the letter, but he did discuss it in a public speech, where he argued:

> Revising the Constitution needs to happen in co-operation with the government apparatus, with people who have common sense and experiences to state their firm opinion on every small constitutional issue. If we would now open the option to hold meetings and would give candidates the possibility to speak freely about what every one of them would like to see in the new constitution, we

[57] To remedy the situation, the former state elders asked for loosening the emergency regulations, the restoration of the rule of law, including freedoms of speech, association and meetings and to allow for free elections, for example by allowing other groups and individuals to present candidates in addition to the committees created by the government (Tõnisson et al. 1995, 137). Because of the censorship the memorandum was not printed in Estonia, but was published in the Finnish *Helsingin Sanomat* in November 1936. As a protest the opposition boycotted the elections to the Constituent Assembly, which resulted in very pro-government Constituent Assembly, the discussions for the new Constitution were based on Päts's proposal and the constitution was approved in July 1937 (Pajur 2005a, 97–98).

> would get a situation for which the head of the recently opened Institute of Technology warned me, that if one would call for several specialists from different areas and ask them for a decision for one question every day, then we get many different decisions. And that is because everyone will look at it from their particular angle and will not adopt the other's angle, but consider themselves as the bigger specialists. This would be the same about the details in the Constitution. Our people have already decided through voting [the 1936 referendum whether a new Constitution would be necessary] what they want (Päts 1999b, 256).

Hence, for Päts, if everyone would keep coming up with different opinions, this would not get you to a better decision, but would result in a large number of different decisions that makes the overall picture messy and slows the effective decision-making down. The reason for that is that everyone comes with their individual agenda and is unable to see the broader picture. The solution for Päts was a head of state who is above all these individual agendas and considers the general benefit of the nation and who has the authority and responsibility to take the decision and implement it.

4.1.4. Conclusion

The current dissertation follows the social constructivist theoretical framework and thus it focused on the social construction of the decision-maker, formation of his understandings on the design and role of the state and the state and society relationship. The chapter showed that Päts believed that the stability and the continuity of the state rest in strong organic institutions and therefore it is the obligation of the statesman to create these institutions. He focused on institutions from the beginning of his career when he urged people to create more associations and saw them as the cornerstone for national development and criticized the Baltic Germans for not creating a single national level institution. He believed that only a strong executive institution is crucial for political stability, because only then the people's will is properly considered.

Although there certainly were changes in his understandings, the chapter has shown that Päts was consistent in his belief that a strong state has to rest on strong institutions, focusing on a strong presidential institution and the corporative professional institutions. This consistent firm belief in a certain state design may also be one of the explanations on Päts's behaviour towards the Veterans. Päts had been fighting for a system with a strong executive since 1919, but then his approach did not gain support. He continued throughout the 1920s, presenting several constitutional drafts, but there was not much public interest. The crisis of the 1930s probably further crystallized his opinion that his state design's approach would be more suitable for building a strong, stable state. However, unlike the Veterans, Päts had never managed to take the issue of a constitution to the masses. Therefore it is understandable that when suddenly this

issue, which he had been talking about for more than ten years, became central, he took his chance.

Päts's opinion of society is not that society should be disregarded or not considered important, but that society cannot efficiently and effectively make decisions. For him, a parliament with extensive powers without any executive control reflects a model of society that results in inefficient governance since at one point a decision needs to be made. His argument on the inefficiency for this type of state system was for him proved by the political and constitutional crisis of 1932–1933, although his belief in hierarchical institutions and in strong institutional power goes further back. For Päts, society's opinion should be considered, but if these individual opinions would not correspond to the state ones, the state was not obliged to change its position every time to please society before elections, but should rather explain its position better. This was evident for example in a speech in 1936 where he argued that the leader should choose the path and "[s]how the people which road it should take" (29 November 1936, quoted in Toomus 1937, 128). Therefore, Päts did not question the importance of the society but he saw the society and state as separate in the sphere of decision-making, as it is the state that makes decisions and society that carries the national values.

4.2. Institutional practices

The current section will discuss how these ideas on the state and society relationship and decision-making developed into institutional arrangements, hence determined how the political reality was constructed in Estonia. The current dissertation argues that the decision-makers are constrained by the existing social conditions. These social conditions can emerge partly by their own making, but when they are in place, they cannot be ignored. Päts was the main initiator and shaper of the state's design and the state and society relationship in post-1934 Estonia. To ensure the stability and effective decision-making he created a system where he separated the societal sphere and the political, that is, the decision-making sphere.

Building on the Veterans' idea on national unity, the state discourse prioritised national collective interests over individual interests. Therefore, the state system saw for the centralised top-down political and societal organisation, where the societal activities and initiatives were coordinated by the state to ensure the focus on nation's interests. As one of the central elements of the state discourse was corporatism, one of the state practices for organised political organisation was the creation of professional chambers. From 1934–1936 fifteen corporative chambers were established which assembled people by professions. Representatives of these chambers were later assigned seats in the upper houses of the National Assembly and the 1938 Parliament. In 1938 Päts founded the State Economic Council (*Riigi Majandusnõukogu)* with 15 members elected by the occupational chambers and 10 appointed by Päts to advice the government

(Kasekamp 2000, 121). The corporative organisations "were supposed to fulfil the roles of state institutions, political parties, trade unions, educational institutions and other tasks" (Karjahärm and Sirk 2001, 288). In reality they were not that active, for example the State Economic Council's role was limited "since the government rarely asked for advice" (Kasekamp 2000, 121).

In addition to corporate organisations, the other type of political organisation permitted and supported by the government was the Fatherland League (*Isamaaliit)*, which was founded immediately after the abolishment of political parties in 1935. Officially it was not a party, but a cultural organisation, which had as a goal an "internally and externally strong Estonian state and Estonian fatherland" (Statute of the Fatherland League, 1935, § 1, quoted in Toomla 1999, 185). However, according to some, such as Pajur and Toomla, the Fatherland League was a political organisation (Toomla 1999, 186). It was supported by the government, had top-down leadership and its members had to support the political course taken by the government (Pajur 2005a, 94). Officially, it promoted the core elements of the state's discourse within the society, such as "a spirit of harmony, solidarity, co-operation among all classes, and singleness of purpose" (Kasekamp 2000, 22). However, the organisation did not become popular. First, its membership consisted mainly of previous members of Päts's Agrarian Union, but gradually also members from other parties joined and it became recommendable to all civil servants[58] (Pajur 2005a, 94). The Fatherland League focused on unifying political groups supporting the government's course, promoting state propaganda, and shaping the new political elite (Pajur 2005a, 94). Kasekamp argued that "[t]he Fatherland League, with its nebulous nationalist ideology, hierarchical structure, and pretence of being something other than a party, was in many respects a pale imitation of the Veterans' League" (Kasekamp 2000, 122). The government's course to organise through associations and thereby to reduce the means of the opposition was in general effective, with student organisations and the academic community in Tartu being the notable exception. Therefore, in 1935–1937, the government took centralizing actions that limited the autonomy of the University, such as moving the technical faculty from Tartu to Tallinn and making the rector, pro-rector and deans, who until then had been elected by the University, government appointees (Karjahärm and Sirk 2001, 293).

The government practice for ensuring the top-down political organisation was enforced with maintaining the state of emergency and by the regulations that prohibited public meetings and anti-government publications. By 1939 the state of emergency had lasted for five years and had been announced to be a universal governing instrument by Prime Minister Eenpalu in September 1938 (Pajur 2005a; Roolaht 1990, 128–129). Political parties had been abolished since 1935 and any kind of spontaneous political organisation remained prohibited. The government claimed that in the future there would be a new type of

[58] Among people the Fatherland League, *Isamaaliit* in Estonian, was also called "saamaliit" (*saama* means to get) (Pajur 2005a, 94).

political party, which would not aim at gaining power, but left unclear what these parties then would do (Pajur 2005a, 101). Mati Graf has argued that until the last days of independence, the government had no political will or plan to restore the multi-party system (Graf 2000, 421). The assembly law and printing law prohibited public meetings and publications that were disrespectful towards the Estonian state, nation, existing political order and state institutions. As Pajur states, this vague formulation could be used by the government to fight oppositional occurrences (Pajur 2005a, 101).

The bicameral Parliament that convened in 1938 had a passive role. For example, it did not initiate a single piece of legislation in two years since the opposition did not have enough votes to initiate a draft bill and the pro-government side lacked interest. The parliament further worked mainly on legislation of secondary importance, whereas for key laws the President continued giving out decrees during periods when the Parliament was not in session. Nearly all these decrees were ratified by the parliament's commissions. The National Front faction, the pro-government majority in the parliament, did not have a coherent political agenda and therefore focused on approving the government's draft bills (Karjahärm and Sirk 2001, 290). Also, several non-governmental newspapers were closed already in 1935. Many of the clashes and disagreements that existed between the government and certain parts of society, and the ideas this clashes were based on, did not reach the nation-wide public through media channels. For example, although the clashes between academic circles and the government were well-known in Tartu, the media were not allowed to write about it in detail and therefore did not reach the national level (See for example Tuglas 2008, 401 or Roolaht 1990). Under these state practices the alternative ideas and understandings could not reach the wider public and, more importantly, the public discussion between different discourses was curbed.

One illustrative example of the separation of the state and societal spheres and the practices that were created as a result of that separation is the government's increasing military cooperation with Germany since the mid-1930s in spite of strong anti-German sentiments in the society. As the third chapter pointed out, there were strong anti-German sentiments in Estonia as the Baltic Germans, and through them Germany in a wider sense, came to be seen as the Other and "the national enemy" (Mertelsmann 2005, 44). In pre-independence Estonia Germany was seen as the main threat to Estonian national aspirations and political development. The narratives and understandings of the Baltic German rule of Estonian territory as "the age of darkness" and "the 700-year night of slavery" spread rapidly within the society and came embedded in the domestic understandings. Russian influences and Russification policies were considered less of a threat because they had decreased the influence of the Baltic Germans. These anti-German sentiments were present in the society in the late 1930s as shown by a nation-wide study conducted in April 1939 by the State Propaganda Office in co-operation with the Fatherland league on the public opinion and attitudes towards the international situation. The study showed that the society perceived Germany and German influence as the main threat. It

asked whether Germany's or Russia's dominance would be more favourable to Estonia and nine out of eleven counties saw Germany as a bigger threat (Ant 1999, 35). Some people felt that falling into the Russian sphere of influence would be better than German domination, as "one could get rid of the Russians more easily" (cited in Mertelsmann 2005, 48).[59] The feelings that the nationalist leaders expressed before World War I, that Russians, unlike Germans, lacked the urge to control a single nation fully, or would be a lesser threat to the Estonian national culture and identity, still seemed to be present.

The first part of this case study, chapter 2, discussed the gradually strengthening German orientation among the Estonian political and military elites since the mid-1930s. The British consul Galienne pointed out in July 1939 that "Estonia was tending to become pro-German", but specified that he did not mean the general public, but the military and economic elites and that this was encouraged by the government (Warma 1955, 83). In June 1939 Estonia signed a non-aggression treaty with Germany, which Norway, Sweden and Finland had refused. How were these government policies possible amidst strong anti-German societal sentiments? This chapter would suggest that it was the way the state and society relationship was constructed and the subsequent institutional practices that made the government's de facto German orientation possible. The separation of the societal and decision-making spheres was enforced by the emergency and censorship regulations and by the state discourse that stressed the need to focus on collective values. In practice this meant that initiatives came from the top down as that would ensure political stability and the nation's development. Therefore, anti-German sentiments in the society did not constrain the government's room for manoeuvring, as the decision for foreign policy orientation was seen as a political decision, belonging to the government's sphere and separate from societal ideas.

This example, of the government's decision for a de facto German orientation versus anti-German societal sentiments, shows the state's decision-making practices that were made possible under the current social conditions. In 1938, the government closed two newspapers, the liberal *Vaba Maa* and the socialist newspaper *Rahva Sõna,* as their articles and caricatures critical of Germany undermined the government's foreign policy orientation. These steps by the government were instigated by the German ambassador who repeatedly demanded the constraining of Estonian press in foreign policy matters in 1938. As he wrote in October 1938, prior to closing the socialist *Rahva Sõna*: "Even if the official stance of the Estonian government favours neutrality, despite widely spread panic in the population, the same cannot be said about the attitude of the Estonian press. […] The inciting publications of the press have caused regrettable reverberations among the populace" (cited in Ilmjärv 2004b, 294). In case of *Vaba Maa,* Foreign Minister Friedrich Akel had written to the Ministry of

[59] As argued by Ilmjärv, the different attitudes "toward Germans between the Estonian people and their government" (Ilmjärv 2004b, 321) were exposed during the visit of the military ship "Admiral Hipper" that visited Tallinn in the summer of 1939 as there were violent clashes between German soldiers and Estonians.

Internal Affairs several times arguing that their articles significantly undermined Estonian-German relations. *Vaba Maa* was closed in March 1938 after it published a cartoon were Hitler trampled on pieces of paper that represented the treaties of Versailles and Locarno (Ilmjärv 2004b, 293). The closure of *Rahva Sõna* was the result of German-critical articles published in August and September 1938 (Ilmjärv 2004b, 295). As the government in its foreign policy focused on keeping and strengthening the relations with Germany, then to ensure the implementation of that policy, distractions, such as the ones created by critical articles or caricatures, had to be removed.

These state practices were made possible by the separation of the political and societal spheres. Although there were alternative positions present, such as the opposition arguing against signing the German-Estonian non-aggression pact in Spring 1939 (Arumäe 2004), these ideas did not have a nation-wide reach. The carriers of these ideas were able to present their approaches in certain constrained spheres, but they were not able to effectively participate in the decision-making. This separation of ideas became possible because of the societal positions that found political stability in a strong executive leadership, possibly caused by society's limited statehood experience, and with that a lack of political traditions and culture. In the theoretical chapter, it was stated that social ideas and understandings constrain the decision-makers. However, as in this case the societal and decision-making spheres were kept separately and the alternative societal ideas were not available in the public sphere, the decision-maker was not constrained by the societal understanding of Germany, but could base his decision on realpolitical needs.

4.3. Decision-making process in 1939

This section will explore how the state discourse and practices embedded in this discourse explain the foreign policy decision-making in autumn 1939. The current study argues that the decision-making is not simply about the private beliefs of the decision-maker, but that these beliefs are based on certain broader societal understandings and that the subsequent decision-making is influenced by the interaction of the decision-makers' understandings and other societal understandings. It will be suggested that the government was able to focus only on the systemic constraints as the dominant state discourse saw the decision-making and societal spheres as separate. Therefore, the government practices were developed in a way that societal pressures did not reach the government and the government was able to focus solely on external constraints and assess the situation from a realpolitical perspective.

4.3.1. Decision-making in 1939

In September 1939, in the decision-making process regarding the Soviet demands, the decision-maker's aim was to avoid a military conflict with the So-

viet Union, Päts considered it the government's foremost task "[t]o take the Estonian people and the state as a whole through the current great war" (Warma 1993, 30). In order not to provoke the Soviets and to prevent a military conflict, Estonia, in contrast to its immediate neighbours, did not conduct a mobilisation. The policy line of Päts, and the government in general, concentrated solely on external constraints: disparity in military capabilities, a volatile international situation and lack of external aid. For Päts, the demands were an expected move from the Soviet Union considering the current international situation, hence ordinary state behaviour of a great power. He stated at the cabinet meeting that "the incident of submarine "Orzel" gave a convenient occasion for the demands, but these demands would have been presented to us in any case sooner or later" (Warma 1993, 31). Military conflict had to be avoided, as aid was not to be expected and "[i]f war will come, our whole state with the whole intelligentsia will be destroyed and we will be destroying many of our people's resources and many people" (Arjakas, Arumäe et al. 1989, 140). As was shown in the second chapter, the government actively requested assistance only from Germany, seeing the situation through realpolitical lenses.

Did the position of society also figure in government discussions on the subject? The government acknowledged that signing the treaty would have a negative influence on the nation's self-conscience, which parliamentarian Jürima confirmed: "The treaty will affect people very negatively. The majority of the people certainly do not want an increase in Russia's influence, but there is no choice" (Arjakas, Arumäe et al. 1989, 139–140). The Speaker of Parliament's Lower Chamber Jüri Uluots stated: "This treaty will certainly curb part of our sovereignty and will also strongly wound the nation's self-consciousness. If we resist, the consequence will be that we will be taken away from our country. This is the system Soviet Russia uses" (Arjakas, Arumäe et al. 1989, 144). However, the understanding of having "no choice" came from the systemic level, hence through external constraints and although the issue of public opinion was discussed and it was noted that it would not be positive, the public opinion was not present in the discussion as a constraining factor to the decision-making process.

The Soviets presented their demands to the Estonian foreign minister in Moscow on 24 September 1939, the decision to agree to the demands was made at the cabinet meeting and subsequent Parliament's Foreign and Defence Committee meetings on 26 September, after which the mutual assistance pact between Estonia and the Soviet Union was signed on 28 September 1939. In all, the entire decision-making process took five days, including a trip between Tallinn and Moscow. This straightforward approach became possible because the country's top leadership was free to focus only on the systemic level pressures. The decision-maker, to create an effective decision-making system and ensure domestic stability, had created social conditions where the other societal understandings were not part of the decision-making sphere. By suggesting that the domestic pressures did not reach the government, the dissertation does not suggest that there were people protesting on the streets demanding for an alterna-

tive position, which the government ignored. Instead, it does suggest that within the state discourse the state practices were constructed in such a way that alternative understandings were not able to enter into the nation-wide public sphere, through for example newspapers, radio or organised societal initiatives. As a result, there was no societal debate on the issue from where these pressures, such as alternative understandings, could have emerged.

An illustrative example is provided by Tõnisson. The first part of the case study showed that the decision-making was uniform, as everyone agreed that accepting the demands was inevitable. However, although opposition leader Jaan Tõnisson at the meeting of the Parliamentary Committees agreed that the treaty must be agreed to, he argued on the tactics of the negotiations, stating that the parliamentary committees should not give their consent to sign the treaty without deciding on its scope beforehand. He also stated that although the situation was difficult, the treaty should not be immediately signed, but the negotiators should try to bargain as much as possible (Arjakas, Arumäe et al. 1989, 142–143). These ideas were not further considered. Also, in spring 1939 Tõnisson was against signing the non-aggression pact in Germany and spoke against it in the Parliament (Arumäe 2004). However, he was not able to present these ideas publicly, as the media were not allowed to publish Tõnisson's speeches (Aru 1996, 18). If he could have done that, for example through a radio speech, this would have introduced an alternative idea to the public sphere and as a result, this could have created an option that the government would have needed to process this idea or react to it somehow.

As the decision-maker's understanding was that unorganised opinions undermine effective decision-making, the government's policy since the beginning of World War II had been to minimize the possibility for spreading alternative accounts that would undermine domestic stability and slow the decision-making down. From early September 1939, the government further enforced the state practices that controlled public opinion and alternative societal positions. From early September 1939, the government implemented additional censorship measures to control public access to foreign information. The media were allowed to use only political information from foreign sources that had been confirmed by the Estonian Information Agency (ETA). If any unapproved information was published nonetheless, the edition had to be confiscated (Ilmjärv 2004b, 354; Ant 1993, 41). In addition, the government began to actively enforce the state of emergency regulations. These regulations prohibited showing any disrespect towards the state order, parliament, the head of state, the government or its ministers. It was forbidden to provoke societal alarm, damage foreign relations or put the protection of the state order into danger. Furthermore, any meetings or gatherings that were not in accordance with the existing order were prohibited. These regulations also gave the right to the Commander of Internal Security (*Sisekaitseülem*) to arrest people whose actions or behaviour were considered dangerous to the state security or public order. The regulations that were first enacted for organising domestic affairs were now

used to control the influence of the international situation on domestic politics (Ant 1999, 80–81).

The first part of the case study described the statements the country's top leadership made until August 1939 on the necessity to fight for one's country. The chapter asked how to explain this rhetoric in the context of the government's decision in autumn 1939. Since the societal sphere and decision-making sphere were separated, the government's rhetoric with the focus on the logic of the international system was not part of the public discourse. The government did not present the pact as an inevitable choice to avoid military conflict. First, the public was not informed about the agreement before it was already signed. The first comments about the pact were published in the Estonian press on 29 and 30 September (Ilmjärv 2004b, 368). On 29 September President Päts in a radio speech justified the demands through the volatile international situation as the Soviets needed the military bases to satisfy their legitimate security needs. He emphasised that the negotiations were unexpected, but after both parties had presented their views it became clear that "our big Eastern neighbour will fully respect the treaties that have been signed with it after the Freedom War to confirm our independence […]. The signed treaty will not violate our sovereign rights, our state will remain independent". The President also stated that "there was nothing really special in these demands and considering our history and our geopolitical location, it was clear that we need to enter into a treaty with our big Eastern neighbour. As a coastal country we have always been a mediator between West and East and this has given a firm distinctiveness to our entire cultural and national independence." He also emphasized that the pact was an agreement between two equal partners and that "the Estonian state is as strong as before" *(Päevaleht*, 1 October 1939). Also, on 3 September 1939 President Päts held a public speech where he emphasised: "We will be defending our country – if necessary then with words, if necessary – then with the help of whole nation" (Päts 1939, 1) said that if necessary, Estonians could defend the independence of their country". This suggests that government's aim with these statements was to enhance the national unity and defence will in case there would be a military conflict.

One could also argue that the decision to sign the treaty was not seen as the ultimate decision, not to fight under any circumstances, but as an intermediary decision to avoid a military attack at that particular moment. The statements by Päts and other politicians and by military elites suggest that the situation was seen as temporary and that they were still hoping for Germany's aid. As Päts stated at the cabinet meeting: "Let's hope that also in the future Germany does not want us to be destroyed. Currently Germany had to make concessions, because otherwise it would have become difficult for her" (Arjakas, Arumäe et al. 1989, 140). However, the focus of the current case study were not the government's long-term strategies, as one would need to cover the period until Summer 1940, but to understand how this rapid decision became socially possible in Autumn 1939. The study found that the decision was made possible by the separation of the societal and decision-making spheres and lack of interactions

between different societal discourses, which made it possible for the state to only focus on the systemic constraints.

4.3.2. Conclusion

What was possible and acceptable for the Estonian decision-makers in autumn 1939 was strongly influenced by the state and society relationship, hence the separation of the decision-making sphere and societal sphere and the subsequent state practices, as a result of which the decision-makers were able to focus solely on systemic constraints. Subsequently, the focus of the government's discussion was on realpolitical perspectives, not on domestic aspects, such as laws or institutions. As the alternative discourses were neither part of the nation-wide public sphere, nor of the political sphere, there was no need to negotiate between these understandings and therefore the government could focus on effectively implementing the decision of avoiding military conflict. The way the practices, such as emergency regulations, were further enforced in autumn 1939 was consistent with the decision-makers' understanding that during a time of crisis the domestic situation must be stable, so that the government could focus on effective decision-making.

4.4. Conclusion of the case study

The current case study focused on the how-possible question of the foreign policy decision of Estonia regarding the Soviet demands in autumn 1939. The case study comprised three parts: the first part (Chapter 2) focused on the decision from the angle of the external pressures and showed that Estonia followed the international logic, hence saw the external constraints as dominant, in its decision to accept the Soviet demands. The second part (Chapter 3), explored the dominant domestic discourses, their emergence and interactions as the dissertation argues that these domestic understandings influenced how the situation in 1939 was understood by the society and the decision-makers. The focus of the chapter was on understanding the external threat and the state and society relationship, as it was suggested that the way this relationship was constructed influenced the decision-makers' understanding of the balance between domestic and systemic constraints. It was argued that as the Estonian territory, during the emergence and development of Estonian national identities, was administered by the Baltic German nobility and the Estonian society had no part in the political/ decision-making sphere, the state was seen as the Other. Therefore, when Estonia became independent, the meaning of the Estonian state was not consolidated within the society and there was limited understanding on what independent statehood entailed. As a result of this lack of political culture and tradition, during the economic crisis the gap between societal and political spheres became visible. The solution for political instability, as advocated by the Radical-nationalist discourse, came to be seen in strong executive leadership. This paved

way to the Collectivist-nationalist discourse that became the state discourse in post-1934 Estonia. This discourse saw the supremacy of national collectivist interests over the individual or group interests. Therefore, the state and society relationship was constructed in a way where the decision-making sphere and the societal sphere were separated and the political organisation and directions for the state development were initiated by the government. Although there was an alternative discourse labelled Liberal-individualism that saw the development of the individual into an active citizen as a precondition for the nation's development, state practices greatly limited the reach of this discourse and the carriers of the discourse were not able to effectively participate in the decision-making system.

The third part (Chapter 4) focused on the logic behind the decision-making process in autumn 1939. It first explored the social construction of the primary decision-maker, the logic behind his understanding on state design and state and society relationship and how he processed the tensions between different discourses while developing the collectivist-nationalist discourse. The chapter showed that President Konstantin Päts as the primary decision-maker was consistent in his belief that a strong state has to rest on strong institutions, focusing on a strong presidential institution and corporative professional institutions. The decision-maker's understanding on the state and society relationship was that the head of state represents people directly and that society cannot effectively make decisions. Therefore, he saw the society and state as separate in the sphere of decision-making, as it is the state that makes decisions and society that focuses on cultural and social values. The second part of the chapter discussed how these ideas developed into institutional arrangements, hence state practices. Third part suggested that the government was able to focus only on the external constraints in autumn 1939, because due to the state system and dominant practices, under which the decision-making and societal spheres were separated, the societal pressures did not reach the government. As the alternative discourses were not part of the public sphere, there was no need to negotiate between these understandings and therefore the government could focus on effectively implementing the decision of avoiding military conflict.

4.4.1. How-possible reversed

The first case study of this dissertation discussed the state's foreign policy decision-making under high systemic constraints to explain how it became commonsensical for the decision-makers to follow the logic of the international system, hence to concentrate on external constraints while deciding on the Soviet demands in Autumn 1939. The next case study, the Finnish foreign policy decision-making regarding the Soviet demands in Autumn 1939, will show the domestic factors and constraints dominating in the decision-making process and explore how these societal understandings and the subsequent decision to not agree with the demands became possible for the decision-makers. This dissertation argues that in order to understand how a decision becomes possible, the

societal understandings and practices must be explored. Therefore, the decision-maker's personal traits do not matter in the end of the day, but the social conditions under which he operates. One aspect to support this point is that the primary decision-makers in these two cases, President Päts of Estonia and Foreign Minister Erkko of Finland, as described by their contemporaries and biographers, or by themselves, had some rather similar personal traits. Both of them have been described as spontaneous men who tended to make rapid intuitive decisions without lengthy consultations and wanted these decisions to be implemented without delay (Brotherus 1973, 73; Pakaslahti 1970, 34; Laaman 1999, 16; Päts 2001b 369–371). Both believed in strong and centralised leadership (Brotherus 1973, 51; Pakaslahti 1970, 49; Virkkunen 1995; Päts 1999a) and neither of them was very close to his respective political party (Laaman 1999, 1949, 310; Raud 1938; Brotherus 1973, 51). However, their decision-making paths diverged because they operated under different social conditions, which influenced their understanding of the situation. The current dissertation suggests that focusing on how the state and society relationship was constructed helps to understand the complexities of the decision-making better and the decision-makers can be seen as exemplifying this construction. The next case study will focus on societal understandings and practices that made Finland's foreign policy decision possible in autumn 1939.

CHAPTER 5.
FINLAND'S FOREIGN POLICY DECISION IN 1939

5.1. Introduction

The following three chapters will tackle the question how Finland's decision not to accept Soviet demands became possible for the decision-makers. This chapter will outline Finland's foreign policy line and show that despite increasing external pressures, the policy did not change significantly in autumn 1939. The sixth chapter will explore the dominant societal discourses in Finland, their emergence, development and interaction. The seventh chapter will focus on how did these societal discourses influence the decision-makers' and society's understanding of the situation in autumn 1939 and made the decision not to accept the Soviet demands commonsensical for the decision-makers.

The current chapter will explore the foreign policy decision-making as conducted by Finland's government in autumn 1939 with regard to the Soviet demands. These demands included territorial concessions and the establishment of a Soviet military base on Finnish territory. The chapter focuses on the period between 5 October 1939, when the Soviet Union invited Finnish representative to Moscow, and 30 November 1939, when as a result of not reaching an agreement on the Soviet demands, the Red Army attacked Finland. The section will outline Finland's policy, focusing on the assumptions of rationalist thinking of a state's foreign policy behaviour under high systemic pressures. According to the rationalist understanding, when a state's physical survival is at stake, this concern will overshadow all others in forming state's behaviour. The state will aim to balance the threat, if possible with external help. The state's decision-making is, according to the rationalist view, extensively influenced by the state's relative military and economic power; in a conflict between two states where one has relatively higher military capabilities, the weaker one must focus on solving the conflict by any means as it is a conflict over autonomy for that state. Also, an increase in systemic pressures should have a constraining effect on the state's foreign policy manoeuvring space. Therefore, an increase of the external threat or failure in balancing the threat should influence and change a state's foreign policy behaviour.

The chapter aims to show that Finland's foreign policy did not change significantly during that two month period, despite several moments where the systemic pressures increased. Hence, it will be argued that the systemic conditions, the volatile international climate and the gradually increasing external pressures alone do not offer a sufficient explanation for Finland's foreign policy behaviour in autumn 1939. To demonstrate this, the chapter will explore how the external threat was perceived and how the government understood the systemic power distribution. In order to explore these aspects I first trace the policy decisions. I identify the starting point: how Finland's policy line was formulated by the government at the time the invitation to negotiate was received on 5 October; next, were there any considerable changes in their policy line and what

were seen as the reasons for these changes; the end point: what was the policy before the launch of the Soviet military attack. Throughout this process I focus on the notion of external threats and pressures, meaning the moments where the external constraints increased and whether and how they changed the policy. Also, I follow the rationalist and/or systemic understanding of a state as a unitary actor, hence the focus will be on the formal policy decisions of Finland's government.

5.1.1. Finland's foreign policy in 1939

Finland's foreign policy in 1939, prior to the beginning of the World War, was based on policy of neutrality and a Scandinavian orientation.[60] One of its main foreign policy priorities in the late 1930s was the fortification of the Åland islands together with Sweden. In 1939 the treaty on the fortification plan was signed, but as the Soviet Union's attitude towards it was negative, Sweden stated in June 1939 that it would not proceed.[61] However, it continued to be a priority for Finland and Finland continued working on it in the spring and summer of 1939. In 1938 the Soviet Union initiated unofficial, so-called, Jartsev talks[62], where it requested to move the border in Karelia in order to secure Leningrad and to rent some islands in the Gulf of Finland, but no agreement was reached. In March 1939, the Soviet Union initiated official negotiations regarding renting islands. The Soviet government stated that if agreement would be reached it would then support the fortification of the Åland islands. The Finnish government refused, arguing that this would violate the Finnish neutrality policy. In the spring of 1939, when Germany proposed non-aggression pacts to

[60] For Finland's foreign policy in the interwar years see Soikkanen 1983, Suomi 1973, Korhonen 1971, Kallenautio 1985, Paasivirta 1968, Apunen and Wolff 2009.

[61] Finland proposed the plan to develop a joint program to fortify the Åland islands to Sweden in 1937. The reasoning behind the plan was that in their current situation the islands were unprotected and in case of an external threat third countries could invade the archipelago between Finland and Sweden. Sweden first required the blessing from the Soviet Union, but after the *Anschluss* agreed to proceed with talks on the fortification of the islands. The inter-governmental treaty on the plan was signed in January 1939. One of the prerequisites of the treaty to take effect was that the Soviet Union should have agreed to it, but this did not happen. In June 1939 Sweden withdrew the issue from the parliament and thereby indefinitely withdrew from the process (Kallenautio 1985, 164, Paasivirta 1968, 100, Hentilä 1999, 176). Nevertheless, Finland continued pursuing the issue.

[62] In 1938, the government (Prime Minister A.K. Cajander, Foreign Minister Rudolf Holsti and Finance Minister Väinö Tanner) had been conducting unofficial negotiations with a KGB Officer, Boris Jartsev, who was officially a second secretary of the Soviet Embassy. On behalf of the Soviet government Jartsev requested to move the border in Karelia in order to secure Leningrad and also expressed the wish of the Soviet Union to rent some islands in the Gulf of Finland. After Eljas Erkko became the Minister of Foreign Affairs he broke off these unofficial negotiations. In March 1939, the Soviet Union initiated official negotiations and Boris Stein was sent to Helsinki to propose that Finland could rent some islands in the Gulf of Finland. Erkko refused, arguing that this would violate the Finnish neutrality policy. On the Jartsev talks see Tanner 1957, Suomi 1973, Apunen and Wolff 2009.

the Baltic and Nordic countries, the Finnish government first supported the idea. However, after Norway and Sweden refused, Finland followed them in refusing the non-aggression pact as its priority was a neutrality policy and its Scandinavian orientation.

One of the main foreign policy concerns of Finland in the spring and summer of 1939 was the tripartite negotiations held between Britain, France and the Soviet Union, which included the security guarantees to Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Finland demanded by the Soviets. Although little information of these talks was available for the Finns, the government knew that the Soviet Union's understanding of these guarantees was that the USSR would intervene if one of these countries would be attacked, even if this attack would be "indirect". As such understanding would have given the Soviet Union a possibility to intervene in its internal affairs, Finland strongly protested to Western states against these guarantees (Tanner 1957). The tripartite talks became stalled over the summer of 1939.

The international climate in early October 1939, when Finland received the invitation for talks from the Soviet Union, had become more tense and volatile compared to the situation a few months earlier, as the long-term adversaries Germany and the Soviet Union had signed a non-aggression pact and the second World War had just begun with the invasion of Poland. The signing of the pact had come as a complete surprise. At first it was seen as a relief, as it finally stalled the tripartite negotiations on the Soviet guarantees to Finland and gave hope that Finland's security situation would be stable with Germany and the Soviet Union no longer having a looming conflict with each other. However, the government received reports in early September that the pact did concern Finland, leaving it to the Soviet sphere of influence (Soikkanen 1983). Also, rumours about the Soviet Union's intentions started spreading in Finland at the same time and were strengthened by the invasion and division of Poland (Soikkanen 1983; Blücher 1950). On 1 September, when World War II began, Finland both independently and together with other Nordic states issued a declaration of neutrality. The tensions increased when in late September the representatives of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania had all been invited to Moscow, and Estonia and Latvia had signed mutual assistance pacts with the Soviet Union (Estonia on 28 September and Latvia on 5 October), which included allowing Soviet military bases on their territories. Lithuania was to follow shortly and signed the pact on 10 October.

5.1.2. Demands

This was the international situation when Finland's government received an invitation on 5 October 1939 to go to Moscow to discuss "concrete political questions" (Tanner 1957, 21). One of the tactics implemented by Finland's foreign minister Eljas Erkko was to slow down the pace of negotiations. The Soviet talks with Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania had been conducted within a few days, with the Soviets enforcing the speed of the talks. Erkko's tactic was

not to allow the other side to dictate the tempo.[63] He decided not to go to Moscow himself, as the Latvian, Lithuanian and Estonian foreign ministers had done, but to send the Ambassador to Stockholm Juho Kusti Paasikivi instead. Paasikivi was a distinguished statesman and diplomat, very knowledgeable on Russia and had been the Finnish negotiator during the Tartu Peace Treaty in 1919–1920. However, he was not a government minister and hence did not have decision-making authority. This meant that the Finnish delegation had to consult Helsinki about every step of the talks, which subsequently meant that the negotiators had to travel back and forth by train between Moscow and Helsinki, which slowed the tempo of the talks down.

Before the visit, the government outlined its instructions for the negotiator. The instructions were based on the idea that Finland would keep to its foreign policy course, its neutrality policy and its Scandinavian orientation. Any mutual assistance pact, territorial concessions or boundary changes were out of the question, as they would violate the inviolability of Finnish territory (Tanner 1957). The government started looking for external support immediately after the invitation from the Soviet Union had been received on 5 October. On 6 October the foreign minister met with the German ambassador to assert that Russia's advances in Finland would be against German interests. Likewise, the Finnish ambassador in Berlin met with the head of the German Foreign Office to require support for Paasikivi's position in Moscow. However, because of the Soviet-German pact, the German side stood away from the issue (Jakobson 1961, 109–111). On 7 October, the Finnish ambassador met with the US Secretary of State to request a diplomatic intervention. On 12 October the US Ambassador to Moscow gave a note to Molotov from Roosevelt. Roosevelt wrote that the US wishes the Soviet Union to only present Finland with requests that do not go against peaceful and friendly relations and do not affect the independence of other countries (Manninen and Salokangas 2009, 241–242). Also, the Swedish, Norwegian and Danish ambassadors to Moscow presented notes to the Soviet government on 12 October, stating that Finland's neutrality and the Scandinavian cooperation should be respected. These notes did not impress the Soviet side much. In case of the US, Molotov in a public speech told Roosevelt to focus on the independence of the Philippines and Cuba and in the case of the Scandinavian ambassadors, Molotov did not receive them (Jakobson 1961, 112–113).

The government recognised the external threat and started balancing against it: on 6 October military units were moved to the border and on 10 October the government called for extra reserve trainings, which in practice meant a partial mobilisation. It also urged city residents to move to less exposed locations and

[63] Hence on 7 October, two days after presenting the invitation to Moscow, the Russian ambassador called Erkko to press for an answer stating that Finland's attitude "was different from that of the Baltic countries", to which Erkko, according to Tanner, replied that "he did not know how the Baltic countries had acted but that the Finnish government had not lagged in preparing and dispatching its answer; rather, it had considered the matter in the normal course of business" (Tanner 1957, 22).

air raid warnings and blackouts were practiced in Helsinki. Also, on 13 October the government extended its support base by including two representatives of the Swedish people's party in the government (Tanner 1957). The changed international conditions were recognised publicly, for example Minister Tanner in his speech on 8 October 1939, just after the invitation had been received, stated that "one now has to put away the idea that we live under ordinary circumstances" (Tanner 1956, 295).

5.1.3. Policy after receiving the demands

The negotiations between Finland and the Soviet Union lasted around one month and involved three visits to Moscow by the Paasikivi-led Finnish delegation. On 14 October 1939, the Soviet Union, whose negotiators included Stalin and Molotov, presented demands to the Finnish negotiator Paasikivi. The Soviets based their demands on the justification that in the changed international climate and the freshly begun war the security requirements of the Soviet Union were altered and that it required security guarantees from Finland regarding the Gulf of Finland. Therefore, the Soviet Union demanded a mutual assistance treaty, territorial concessions, such as certain islands in the Gulf of Finland, a rather extensive border change on the Karelian Isthmus and the Finnish part of the Kalastajasaarento peninsula in Petsamo, the right of Soviet naval forces to use Lappohja Bay as an anchorage and the establishment of a naval base with Soviet military personnel at the port of Hanko.[64] In compensation, the Soviets offered some territory in Eastern Karelia.

After receiving these demands, Paasikivi required further instructions from the Finnish government. The latter replied that a mutual aid treaty and military bases and border changes or other territorial concessions were out of question as these demands would undermine Finland's neutrality policy and would leave Finland defenceless. It allowed the negotiator to negotiate only over some islands in the Gulf of Finland that were closest to the Soviet coast. During the

[64] Soviet demands included: leasing the port of Hanko and the surrounding area for a period of 30 years in order to establish a naval base with 5,000 Soviet military personnel there. Also, in order to guarantee the security of Leningrad, a border change on the Karelian Isthmus was requested. It further requested cession of some islands, parts of the Petsamo peninsula, destruction by both parties of the fortified areas on the border on the Karelian Isthmus and the right of Soviet naval forces to use Lappohja Bay as an anchorage. The Soviet side also proposed a reciprocal aid treaty which it later (after the Finnish position that it would be out of question) changed to the reinforcement of the nonaggression pact that was in effect between the Soviet Union and Finland, by adding a stipulation to the effect that the contracting parties bind themselves to refrain from participation in such groupings or alliances of powers as may be directly or indirectly hostile to the other contracting party. During these negotiations the question of ceding the port of Hanko was the key issue for both delegations, with the Soviet Union constantly demanding it as their military base and Finland constantly opposing ceding Hanko (Tanner 1957, Manninen and Salokangas 2009). For Finland, this would have meant, similarly to Estonia, having a Soviet military base with Soviet soldiers on the Finnish mainland, not far from the capital.

next meeting with the Soviet negotiators they stated that this offer was completely inadequate and refused to negotiate on it. Finland's negotiator then returned to Helsinki to receive further instructions.

After receiving the demands, Finland's government tried to achieve a compromise with the Soviet side by working out a counterproposal that could in their opinion satisfy the Soviet 'security needs. The key issue for the Finnish government from the beginning of the process was that the port of Hanko, one of the demands by the Soviet Union, could not be ceded as allowing foreign military base to Finnish territory would undermine its neutrality policy and Scandinavian orientation and would make it very difficult to Finland to defend itself. During the negotiations, which lasted around one month and involved three visits by the Finnish delegation led by Paasikivi to Moscow, the official position of the government on which the instructions to the negotiators were based did not change significantly. During the second round of negotiations Stalin claimed that the Soviet demands were minimal, and therefore non-negotiable. Also, the Soviet side continued to emphasise the need for the military base at Hanko. Although the government agreed that some territorial cessions could be discussed[65], it maintained that cession of the Hanko port was out of the question and did so with the approval and support from all the political party groups represented in parliament (Tanner 1957). [66]

5.1.4. Increasing external pressures

There were two developments which from an external pressures and material capabilities angles should have influenced Finland's foreign policy decision-making. The first was the question of Swedish military aid that the Finnish government had high hopes for. However, already in the second half of October, the government was aware that assistance from Sweden was highly unlikely.[67] Nevertheless, this did not change the course of the Finnish state to keep

[65] The concessions in question were: a few small islands in the Gulf of Finland and the option to discuss the Southern part of Suursaari and Ino and also Kalastajasaari. The Government was also ready to make minor concessions regarding the Karelian Isthmus (Manninen and Salokangas 2009, 261, Tanner 1957).

[66] On 29 October 1939, the Government had a meeting with the chairmen of Parliament factions. Prior to that the preparatory committees of all party factions had discussed the content of the demands and the government's counterproposal it had presented to the chairmen of the factions on 28 October. At the meeting of 29 October, the heads of the factions expressed their satisfaction with the negotiations and the government's counterproposal. According to Tanner all party groups stated that cession of Hanko is totally out of question (Tanner 1957, 52–55).

[67] In the beginning of the negotiations Finland started looking for balancing against a possible Soviet threat by asking Sweden for assistance. This was done just after the first round of negotiations on 18–19 October 1939 when Finland's President Kallio and foreign minister Erkko flew to Stockholm to a regular meeting of the Nordic heads of states and foreign ministers. Although publicly the meeting was a success, during the meeting with the Swedish leaders Prime Minister Hansson said rather bluntly that Finland should not expect

its neutrality policy and Scandinavian orientation. The second development, which from an external threat perspective had a high potential to change the government's policy, or at least have them very seriously reconsider it, was Molotov's speech on 30 October 1939. In it, he outlined in detail all the demands made to Finland, which the latter had kept in strictest secrecy. Preceding that speech, the Finnish foreign minister Erkko had stated on 16 October that there was no danger as long as the content of the proposals was not made public, but the situation would be different if it would become a prestige question for Stalin (Manninen and Salokangas 2009, 253). Hence, Molotov's speech could have increased the Finnish motivation to reach a settlement, because the Soviet Union now also had to save face and the option that it would just drop the demands decreased after making them public. Nonetheless, neither this development, nor any other Soviet's attempts to increase the pressure, such as incidents at the border and anti-Finnish radio propaganda (Nevakivi 1976, 30), created substantial changes in the government's instructions for their negotiators in Moscow. A crucial moment arrived during the third round of negotiations, as the government's instructions for the Finnish delegation foresaw that if the Soviet Union did not agree to the Finnish offer, the negotiators were allowed to break off the talks as the Finns could not go further in their concessions. During the negotiations the Soviets kept requesting the port of Hanko and stressed that their demands were minimal. The new instructions came from Finland on 8 November stating that Hanko could not be discussed and that Stalin's alternative option (for a group of islands to the east of Hanko) was out of the question too. The delegation left Moscow on 14 November. Nevertheless, the Finns did stress their readiness to continue the talks (Nevakivi 1976, 35).

After the negotiations broke down, Finland's government started discussions on demobilising some of the soldiers. This action, supported mainly by Foreign Minister Erkko and Finance Minister Tanner was strongly opposed by Field Marshal Mannerheim, the Chairman of the Defence Council and by Defence Minister Niukkanen. However, this discussion was interrupted by the incident that later became known as "the shots of Mainila". On 26 November, the Soviet side accused Finland of firing on the village of Mainila, which was on the Soviet Union's side of the Karelian Isthmus, and demanded that the Finnish army withdrew 20–25 kilometres from the border. Finland argued that it could not have fired on the village as there was no Finnish artillery in the area and sug-

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any military assistance, as the Swedish nation wished to stay out of the war as long as possible. It has been later argued that Erkko was not entirely clear about this outcome to the other government members, who remained publicly optimistic about Scandinavian help and told the Parliament's delegation that Sweden would make its decision only after the war had started (Manninen and Salokangas 2009, 259–260, also see Tanner 1957). However, other government ministers, such as the Social Democrat Finance Minister and second Finnish negotiator Väinö Tanner (Tanner 1957) and Defence Minister Juho Niukkanen were also aware of Sweden's position through the information received from their party counterparts in Sweden.

gested that both sides would withdraw. In reply, the Soviet Union regarded the 1932 Finnish-Soviet non-aggression pact void. The Finnish government suggested setting up a joint committee to settle the issue, but before that proposal had reached the Soviet side, the latter had broken off its diplomatic relations with Finland. On 30 November 1939, the Red Army launched a military attack on Finland, which was the beginning of Winter War of 1939–1940.

5.2. How was Finland's foreign policy behaviour possible?

The aim of this outline of Finland's foreign policy behaviour in the autumn 1939 was to show that despite increasing systemic pressures and a growing external threat, Finland's foreign policy did not change significantly in autumn 1939. The behaviour of Finland during that period has been called inflexible, stubborn and unrealistic (Kirby 1979; Vital 1971b; Soikkanen 1983; Paasikivi 1958)[68]. The British Ambassador to Helsinki, T.M. Snow, called Finland's stance in autumn 1939 "purely fatalistic" (cited in Nevakivi 1976, 30). This raises the question how the Finnish government could ignore the international situation of 1939. Did it understand the seriousness of the situation and the possibility of a war in case no agreement was reached? At the war cabinet meeting on 16 October 1939, negotiator Paasikivi defined the possible options in case no agreement with the Soviets could be achieved in the following terms: "1) war would break out; 2) nothing would happen *(although the demands would not be officially dropped)*, or 3) the Russians would drop their demands" (emphasis original, Tanner 1957, 31). Foreign Minister Erkko called Soviet pressure a bluff and argued that the Russians were fighting a war of nerves. Therefore, Erkko strongly argued that Finland had to stick to its foreign policy line and stay firm (Manninen and Salokangas 2009). These issues were discussed also at the meeting with the chairmen of the factions in Parliament on 29 October. The chairmen of the Parliament's factions all stated that their parties supported the government's policy line. Field Marshal Mannerheim and negotiator Paasikivi disagreed with Erkko's optimism and argued for more extensive concessions (Paasikivi 1986a; Tanner 1957). Also, Finnish military options were seen differently by Field Marshal Mannerheim, who argued for greater concessions as he felt that the Finnish army was not in a position to fight, and therefore that a conflict should be avoided, and Defence Minister Juho Niukkanen who argued that Finland would be able to resist until mid-spring (Tanner 1957). Hence, although some of the government members favoured greater concessions than others, the possible implications of not finding a settlement with the Soviets were considered. Defence Minister Niukkanen stated that "since Finland had agreed to keep to its absolute neutrality position through international agreements and since ceding any military bases to a large state would contradict the

[68] For example, Kirby (1979, 122) states that one reason for the breakdown of the talks was "the obduracy and unrealistic attitudes of the Finnish politicians."

aforementioned neutrality policy, it was clear that we were about to get into a most difficult crisis situation" (Niukkanen 1951, 81).

How could the Finnish government have had such a rigid position considering the great disparity in the military capabilities of Finland and the Soviet Union and the volatile situation in the rest of Europe? Why did the increasing systemic pressures, such as the Soviet side suddenly making the content of the negotiations public, fail to influence Finnish foreign policy? After the negotiations broke off and in the aftermath of the war, the answer of some Finnish statesmen to this question was that it was the unrealistic expectations of some Finnish politicians and their failure to conduct a comprehensive foreign policy analysis, as they were convinced that the Soviets were bluffing, that took Finland to war. This thought was further strengthened by the aspect that a part of Finland's military, most notably Mannerheim, had been a strong supporter for greater concessions based on the dangerous international situation and the great disparity between Finland's and the Soviet Union's military capabilities. Mannerheim was also backed by Paasikivi, the Finnish negotiator. Nevertheless, these concerns did not change the government's decision that it is impossible for Finland to allow Soviet military bases on the Finnish mainland.

The current section showed that Finland's foreign policy did not significantly change in spite of high systemic constraints in 1939. It also showed that there were moments where the external threat increased, but these did not effectively affect the foreign policy either. Hence, focusing only on systemic factors does not explain the state's foreign policy behaviour even under very high systemic constraints. Likewise, the simple assumption that decision-makers had idiosyncratic beliefs that made them fail to understand the extent of the systemic pressures does not explain this state's foreign policy behaviour either. In terms of Finland, the factor that Finnish politicians relied on some broader societal understandings and public support was mentioned already in the sources written in the 1950s-1970s, which mainly operated within the realist understanding of material capabilities and systemic constraints. For example, Kirby, who otherwise focused on Finland's failure to solve the long-term security problems with the Soviet Union, argues that the government's behaviour "echoed the feelings of the nation" (Kirby 1979, 122). Jakobson also draws on the Finnish historical experiences with Russia and states that when a Finnish delegation had its first meeting with the Soviets in Moscow, it was an informal one without an agenda. "And yet, in a historical sense, the meeting did not take place in a vacuum; it was not the beginning of something unknown, but rather one more in a long series of Finnish-Russian encounters stretching back several centuries" (Jakobson 1961, 114).

The current study argues that the state's decision-making cannot be fully explained by focusing only on the external constraints or the private beliefs of the statesman, but domestic discourses and understandings do have a role to play. Hence, in order to understand how this foreign policy decision became possible, the study will first focus on the national identities and dominant discourses in Finland. What were these "feelings of the nation", how had they emerged and

developed? Why was the question of letting the Red Army base into Finnish territory so unacceptable within the domestic understandings? Was there a consensus between different societal groups in this question and how had that been achieved? In order to answer these questions, the next chapter will explore the dominant national discourses and identities in Finland in 1939, their emergence, development and interaction, with a focus on the understanding of Russia and Russian-Finnish relationship within these discourses.

CHAPTER 6.
FINLAND'S SOCIETAL DISCOURSES

The previous chapter showed that focusing only on external factors does not explain the Finnish foreign policy decision in 1939; therefore, other factors must be explored. In line with the approach presented in the theoretical part, the next chapter will focus on the domestic factors and understandings. The aim of this chapter is to analyse the development and dynamics of dominant domestic discourses and interaction with relevant Other(s). Hence, to understand how Finland's foreign policy decision in the autumn of 1939 became possible for the state, both domestic identity construction and interactions between the state and external actors must be considered. It will be shown that from the identity formation angle, the most significant external Other for Finland was Russia; interactions and confrontations with Russia ran through Finland's history since the emergence of the Finnish national identity in the nineteenth century. Therefore, while focusing on dominant identity discourses within the society, the chapter will look how the emergence and development of dominant domestic identity discourses were influenced by the interactions with Russia and how it shaped the understandings of Self and Other. Hopf's notion that there can be multiple Others who are not all necessarily state actors, and that the relationship between the Other and Self must not always be conflictual and that there can be multiple kinds of Others, will be followed (Hopf 2002, 2005). The chapter will show that there were six broad understandings that had developed in the process of shaping the Finnish national and state identity and its relations and confrontations with Russia, with other relevant external actors and with each other during this process.

6.1. The emergence, development and interaction between the main dominant discourses in Finland

The aim of this chapter is to focus on the main domestic identity discourses present in Finland in 1939. It will be shown that the main domestic discourses relevant for this study are the following: 1) Constitutional; 2) Conciliation; 3) White Finland; 4) Red Finland; 5) Radical-nationalist; 6) Lawfulness front. The relevance was determined by the following aspects: 1) the discourse was dominantly politically oriented. 2) The discourse had a broad and nation-wide reach – although certain understandings were more dominant in either urban or rural areas or among certain societal classes, all these six discourses spread nation-wide and were not just understandings from a small circle (although they might have started like one). 3) The discourse was present in state and societal understandings in 1939.

These six discourses are presented as three chronological debates or cleavages (1–2 Constitutional-Conciliation, 3–4 White and Red Finland, 5–6 Radical-nationalist and Lawfulness front). Although they are presented as three

pairs, it does not mean that the previous discourses had disappeared by the time the next one had evolved: although the importance of different understandings varied at different times, all six were present in 1939. Hence, earlier discourses did influence the development of later discourses and interacted with them. It is important to note that although some of these discourses are conflictual and/or developed as a reaction to another discourse, some are closer to each other and have overlapping characteristics. However, this does not mean that one developed into another. For example, the White Finland and the Radical-nationalist discourses had much in common, but still both had their own distinguishable characteristics and narratives and interactions with the Others.

6.2. Constitutional-Conciliation debate

6.2.1. Introduction

The beginning of Finnish political existence started in 1809 when Finland went from Swedish rule, under which it had been since the twelfth century, to Russian rule and became an autonomous Grand Duchy under the Russian Emperor. Before that, Finland "was a concept, but it was neither administratively, economically nor culturally, a definite unit" (Klinge 1982, 181) as different regions had separate connections to the administrative and economic centres. In March 1809, the Diet of Finnish estates convened in Porvoo[69]. Finland's autonomy was extensive: Finland had its own senate (a body appointed by the tsar, composed of Finns), direct representation to the tsar, its own legal system and bureaucracy and in the second part of the nineteenth century also its own currency, postal system and customs border with Russia. The separation from Sweden and the 1809 Diet became increasingly seen by Finnish national activists as the beginning of the Finnish state (Jussila 1999). Although at first the meaning of the state was a "finance state" with a focus on its administrative role, soon after, Finnish national enthusiasts, who mainly consisted of Swedish civil servants, came to interpret the meaning of these events and the term 'state' in broader terms. This started in the 1840s through the writings of Professor Israel Hwasser who applied the natural law theory of the origins of the states to the act of pledging allegiance to the Tsar in 1809. Thereby he argued that at the Porvoo Diet Finns made a bilateral state treaty with the emperor and thereby the Finnish state had been founded (Jussila 1989 and 1999). By the 1860s these ideas developed into an understanding, popular among the Swedish speaking

[69] The Porvoo Diet of Finnish estates that convened in 1809 was the birth of the concept of the Finnish state, as there Tsar Alexander I pledged to "confirm and ratify the religion and fundamental laws of the land as well as the rights and privileges which each Estate of the said Grand Duchy, in particular, and all the inhabitants, in general, both low and high, have hitherto enjoyed according to the constitution: We promise to maintain all those privileges and laws strongly and inviolably in full force" (cited in Huxley 1990, 83). The Diet consisted of four Estates: the Burghers, the Peasants, the Clergy and the Nobility.

civil servants and intelligentsia, that Finland was a state of its own, although not a sovereign one, governed by Finnish constitutional laws which had been affirmed by the Emperor at the Porvoo Diet. The Constitutional laws were the 1772 and 1789 Swedish Constitutions and accompanying protocol. At the same time, a cultural awakening, led by the Fennoman movement[70], was taking place in Finland. The political ideology of the Fennomans, largely developed by J.V.Snellman, was commonly considered a young-Hegelian stream, centred around idealism and nationalism and focusing on the strengthening of the importance of the Finnish language (Klinge 1993 165, 199; Klinge 1982, 200).

In the 1880s in Russia the sentiments of national chauvinism and aspiration to develop into a "one and indivisible" state were on the increase (Jussila 1999). Under circumstances where Russian media was increasingly attacking Finland's special status, Leo Mechelin, a Finnish university professor and liberal politician, published in 1886 a book titled *Précis du Droit public de la Grand-Duché de Finlande* (*The Features of the Grand Duchy of Finland's Constitutional Law)*. Mechelin further emphasized the understanding that the Finnish constitutional laws formed the basis of Finnish government and that these laws had been affirmed by the Emperor at the Porvoo Diet (Jussila 1999). These two understandings, the one in Finland that argued that Finland had gained a special status in 1809 and the understanding of Russia that strived for one centralised Russian state[71] collided.

This was followed by Russification periods (1899–1905 and 1909–1917), known in Finland as the *Years of Oppression (sortovuodet)*. The period started with the Emperor's February Manifesto of 1899, which stated that Finnish legislation was subordinate to imperial legislation. It changed the role of the Finnish Diet into merely an advisory one, which meant that the Senate could not reject legislature coming from Russia. The Manifesto was followed by the 1900 language act, which made Russian the administrative language in Finland, and by the new conscription law, which incorporated the Finnish army into Russia's army. The February Manifesto and the following period gave an impetus of emergence and development of two significant domestic discourses in Finland, the Constitutional and Conciliation lines, which sharply contrasted with one

[70] By 1860s the Fennoman movement had gradually transformed itself into the Finnish Party, which was a political party group, loosely organised around its leaders and newspapers (Soikkanen 1984a, 28; Mylly 1984, 15).

[71] Russia's dissatisfaction with this Finnish understanding of its special status grew gradually. Although the Russification policies were implemented during the reign of Nicholas II, they were initiated already by the previous emperor, Alexander III who reigned from 1881–1894. He did not accept that Finland seemed to consider itself fully separated from Russia with all separate institutions, such as army, postal service, custom tariffs. Therefore, he started the Russification program when he understood that "the Finns, especially the Senate, regarded Finland as a separate country" (Jussila 1999, 64). In his answer to a communication from the Finnish senate on the issue of customs, the postal service and currency, he wrote "Does Russia belong to Finland or Finland to Russia?" (Jussila 1999, 64).

another and produced ideas and understandings that were still present in the political debates and public understandings in the autumn of 1939.

6.2.2. Constitutional discourse

The Constitutional discourse *(perustuslaillisuus)* was built on ideas that had been circulating since Hwasser's writings in the 1840s: that Finland was a state with rights of its own, albeit not a sovereign one, and that its governing system was based on its constitutional laws. Although Constitutionalism is mainly associated with the Russification periods from 1899 onwards, the roots of this thinking can be found in the liberal reaction to the April Manifesto of 1861 (Hyvämäki 1960; Huxley 1990). With this Manifesto, tsar Alexander II, in an attempt to compromise between the attitudes of Russia and Finland, declared that instead of convoking the Finnish Diet (which had not been convoked since 1809) in order to adopt necessary legislation, a Committee composed of the representatives of the Estates would be convoked. This mobilised the early liberals, the oppositional group in the emerging Finnish political scene,[72] who saw that as a violation of constitutional laws. As a response, the liberal senate members organised a signature collection to protest, addressed to the tsar, and the first mass political demonstration in Finland was organised by students in Helsinki, where the demonstrators shouted, "Long live the constitution" (Huxley 1990, 96). As argued by Huxley, "1861 set the pattern for future Finno-Russian political confrontations. It is no mere coincidence that many of those who adopted the ideology and methods of passive resistance at the turn of the history, as well as those who opposed them, had their first experiences of political action in 1861" (Huxley 1990, 97). These actions were followed by concessions from the tsar and the Finnish Diet was convened in 1863.

In the 1880s, liberalism was growing in importance within Finland's political and cultural debate as the focus switched from Snellman's political idealism to empiricism and positivism (Luukanen 1994, 23). As a result, two new political groups emerged in addition to the Fennoman movement that by that time had gradually developed into a political group called the Finnish Party *(Suomalainen puolue)*. The first group, called 'Suecomania', were pro-Swedish liberals who did not focus only on defending the role of the Swedish language, but also on the threat that the Finnish national movement presented to the old Swedish upper class. A second opposition group emerged within the Finnish Party in the 1880s. The group, called Young Finns (*Nuorsuomalaiset*), consisted

[72] In 1861, no official political parties existed. The two general groups were called the "opposition"and the "government party". "The border between the two was not clear and the opposition contained many disparate elements including a variety of still politically unorganised liberals and nationals. The opposition could be characterized by its adherence to certain principles such as freedom of speech and the press, lingual equity and the awakening of constitutional and national spirit. The term "government party" generally signified conservatives, which were by no means unified. Both terms, reflecting the politics at the time, were extremely vague" (Huxley 1990, 94).

mainly of urban intellectuals and was a liberal urban bourgeois political group. The split between Young and Old Finns (as the rest of the Finnish party came to be called) took place in 1894[73] (Soikkanen 1984b, 61, 63). It was the liberal Young Finns group, together with the Swedish Party and some workers groups (later the Social Democrats) who became the supporters and developers of the Constitutional discourse.

The main idea of the Constitutional discourse was that Finland's governing system was based on the Finnish constitutional laws, hence these laws held supremacy in Finland. According to the Constitutionalist understanding, the relations between Finland and Russia were regulated at the Porvoo Diet where the Emperor gave Finland a special status, regulated by the Constitutional laws. Therefore, the meaning of the February manifesto of 1899 that provided that Finnish laws became subordinate to Russia's legal system was seen within the Constitutional understanding as a one-sided violation of the previous agreement by Russia and therefore perceived as "perjury", "*coup d'état*", "the instigation of military law" and "the murder of Finland", (Jussila 1999, 70; Huxley 1990, 145; Luukanen 1994, 33). Therefore, the relationship between Finland and Russia became one of mistrust for Constitutionals, as the existing agreement had been broken.

Within the Constitutional discourse, compliance with the Finnish laws was seen as a sort of guarantee for the existence of Finland's special status. As the 1906 programme of the Young Finns party, the forerunners of the Constitutional movement, stated: "The strongest support for the preservation of the Finnish people's sense of justice, the national independence based on it and the condition for peaceful reforms, is strict compliance with lawfulness and legal procedures" (quoted in Kulha 1989, 18). Finnish laws were seen as something that made Finland as worthy of being a state. As J.H. Erkko, a poet and Constitutional activist wrote in 1900: "Law is the finger of justice. The sentinel of civilisation. Protect Finnish law" (Erkko 1900, 5).

Since for the Constitutionalist discourse Finland's national identity was based on constitutional laws and Finland's special status, it was argued that law had always to be followed, regardless of the political situation. As Klinge points out, the constitutionalists were very strict in their formal legalism, which "rejected on principle any appeal to nationalism. Its opposition to 'illegal' legislation, espionage, bureaucracy in general and other expressions of authoritarianism and autocracy was unrelenting" (Klinge 1993, 256). This was because, as historian Eirik Hornborg wrote in 1907, for constitutionalists following the law and not recognising orders that were against the Finnish law was not "a

[73] The foremost focus of the Young Finns was the prioritisation of the Finnish constitutional laws and legal system. They also stood for the reforms in the political system, such as extending the franchise and improving the conditions for the workers and women. In contrast to the Old Finns, the language issue was not the foremost priority. Because of their focus on election reforms and broadening the franchise, they also participated in giving impetus to the beginning of the Finnish labour movement (See: Luukanen 1994, Mylly 1984, 16, Soikkanen 1984b, 63–65).

political program that the party could change according to the circumstances. It was a principle based in the end on the sentiment of individual values and dignity, for what one stood for and fell" (quoted in Paasikivi 1986a, 33). As the Constitutional publication *Fria Ord/Vapaita Sanoja* wrote: "those of our political rights which we voluntarily allow to be taken from us cannot be retrieved, but those which are seized from us by violence can be redeemed" (quoted in Huxley 1990, 188).

Therefore, refusing an order that they perceived to be illegal was not a choice for Constitutionalists, since they stressed the obligation of taking action for the principles of the movement. As constitutional activist professor Edvard Westermarck said in 1913: "It is often said as a consolation that justice will win in the end, but this is only a small consolation, since it is not true. There are no hidden powers taking justice to its victory. […] There is only one way; that we ourselves will help justice to the victory" (quoted in Paasikivi 1986a, 37). Compliance with Constitutionalist principles meant exercising passive resistance. The popular definition of this concept was stated by legal scholar Rabbe Axel Wrede[74] who argued

> Moreover, there exist certain means, which we have not only the right, but also the duty to use. It has often been said that we must set ourselves on the sturdy foundation of legality, never on any conditions departing from it. Thus, we must always, when need be, defend our fundamental laws [grundlagar] in word and deed; we must always obey the law ourselves, even in apparently insignificant matters. We must never cooperate with the violation of our constitution [författning] and never recognise illegal measures as legal or justified (cited in Huxley 1990, 139).

The practical principles of passive resistance were stated by activist Viktor Theodoer Homén:

"1. Consistent refusal to cooperate with any illegal or violent act committed by a stronger party; 2. That these violent commands not be obeyed, followed or advanced in any degree; on the contrary, the realization of the schemes against which passive resistance is aimed must be hindered through all legitimate means; 3. That the enforced system of violence never be recognized. Thus in short: non-cooperation, disobedience, nonrecognition" (Huxley 1990, 167).

The way to comply with Constitutionalist principles for political groups and institutions carrying the constitutional identity was passive resistance: public servants who practiced it did not follow laws given by the governor-general as these were perceived as unconstitutional, and constitutional Senate members resigned from the Senate when they felt that they were forced to work on laws or issues that they deemed unconstitutional (Jussila 1999, 77). In 1901, some radical Constitutionalists formed an organisation called Kagal, with the aim to mobilise different parts of society to practice passive resistance. Kagal formed

[74] Wrede's statement became popular as in 1900, it was reprinted in constitutional underground press and circulated in thousands copies (Huxley 1990, 137).

special branches which worked with clergy, women, students, workers etc. For example, in order to hinder the implementation of the new Conscription Act, which was deemed unconstitutional, "priests could refuse to fulfil their duty to promulgate the imperial decree from the pulpits of the local parishes […]; doctors could refuse to carry out the mandatory examination of conscripts" (Huxley 1990, 149). In 1900, the constitutionalist press took up a "boycott of all things Russian", such as peddlers, stamps, language and products. The constitutionalist battle was also fought on an international level, further increasing the awareness of Finland and its special status. The constitutionalist activists wrote articles for publications throughout Europe and many prominent European figures were asked to join in the protest. As a result, twelve "Pro Finlandia" addresses to the tsar were produced, signed by nearly 1,050 members of the European intelligentsia, such as Max Weber, Herbert Spencer, Henrik Ibsen, Anatole France, Émile Zola, Florence Nightingale and Thomas Hardy (Huxley 1990, 148). In 1903 many leaders of the Constitutional movement were banished from the country (Luukanen 1994, 33).

Conciliation thinkers, most prominently the later president Paasikivi, have called the constitutional principles politically naïve as they reject the realpolitical power distribution (Paasikivi 1986a, 1986c). However, as was shown in the examples before, the constitutional discourse in its ideas and practices was wider than simply repeating the common slogan of Constitutionalism that "justice will win in the end". Furthermore, one could argue that the passive resistance as the means to comply with the constitutionalist framework was designed explicitly to address this power disparity. Huxley discusses Homén's framework on passive resistance, where the latter argued that "passive resistance provides a weapon by which a weaker people can defend itself against a stronger oppressor. It is, as he defined it, a method which requires just as much perseverance, manliness and love as armed struggle and which cannot be equated with either mild or radical protests which end in compliance with the oppressor's demands" (discussed in Huxley 1990, 166–167).

Huxley has also argued that Paasikivi, in his criticism, neglects how multifaceted the constitutionalist literature was, and therefore also the practical side of it. For Huxley, the focus of Constitutionalists was not merely to "preach right and justice but to put resistance into action" as "Finnish Constitutionalism was above all a movement and not merely a philosophy. […] For its part, the duty to resist was not derived merely from abstract principles, but from practical considerations; in fact, in Finnish resistance principle and practice were interlinked and they could not be properly understood in isolation from one another. 'The Great Question'[75] for the resisters was that of survival or defeat and of resistance or submission; the question of rightness and justice was therefore highly pragmatic" (Huxley 1990, 187).

[75] Huxley points out that "the works of the resistance writers are abudantly entitled with rhetorical existential questions; "The Great Question" is from Toppola 1903 (Huxley 1990, 187).

An important contribution of the Constitutional movement was that it took the concept of existence of the Finnish state, governed by the Constitutional laws, to the masses in Finland. During the nineteenth century, political awareness and understanding of the implications of the Diet of Porvoo was shared only by a limited group of political elites, such as Swedish speaking civil servants and intelligentsia. Although awareness did increase during the reforms of Alexander II in the 1860s, it was the Constitutional movement during the Russification periods that rapidly increased the public awareness of Finland's political status in a broad cross-section of the Finnish society. The movement initiated several mass actions such as the "Great Petition", where half a million signatures (nearly half of the adult population of the time) were collected and taken to St Petersburg by a delegation of 500 citizens all over Finland to deliver the "Great National Address" in protest against the Manifesto (Jussila 1999, 76). One of the most significant and popular symbols of that period is a painting by Edvard Isto called "The Attack" (see Figure 1. Hyökkäys) from 1899. The painting portrays a Finnish maiden on a stormy beach, attacked by a Russian two-headed eagle that is tearing the book of laws ("LEX") away from her. Jussila has referred to the book of laws in the maiden's hands as the "shield" (Jussila 1999, 76), as the law was the protection or weapon she had against the eagle. Thousands of copies of this painting were printed and spread fast to many Finnish homes.

Therefore, the February Manifesto and the subsequent Russification policies gave an impetus to the further development of Finnish political identity. As said by contemporary Johan Jacob Ahrenberg, "[i]t was the railways and Bobrikov[76] that created an integrated Finland: the railways economically and Bobrikov politically" (quoted in Jussila 1999, 76). A contribution of the constitutionalist movement to Finnish political thought was the idea that during a period of crisis, things will be sorted out in the end, as long as one complies with the law and keeps the 'papers clean'. For the constitutionalist movement, the Finnish independence from Russia in 1918 proved this idea. It gave rise to the idea that in the time of crisis one absolutely must not compromise on one's principles, since these are the basis for one's existence. Constitutionalist thinking on the supremacy of the law over everything else was strongest among the urban intelligentsia and the political elites.

[76] N.I. Bobrikov who became the new Governor-General, Emperor's representative in Finland, became the 'face' of the Russification period.

Figure 1. Hyökkäys[77]

6.2.3. Conciliation side

Conciliation discourse (*myöntyväisyyslinja)* stood in sharp contrast with the Constitutional approach. It was advocated by the Old Finns, a conservative part of the Finnish party, as the Fennoman movement had been known since the 1860s. The Conciliation side argued that in Finno-Russian relations Finns had to acknowledge realpolitik and Finland's dependence on Russia. The central figure in developing Fennoman's, and hereby Old Finns' political ideology was J.V. Snellman. By the 1860s, when the Fennoman movement had gradually transformed itself to a pressure group called the "Finnish party", it adopted

[77] See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Suomineito.jpg accessed on 14 September, 2012.

Snellman's view of a state and society based Hegel's theory (Soikkanen 1984b, 58). As for Snellman, the obstacles for the Finnish national movement were associated with extensive Swedish influence. He therefore associated the advancement of Finnish culture with loyalty to the Russian tsar (Soikkanen 1984b, 59)[78]. A state, according to Snellman, "[i]s the development of nation with the help of patriotism; a state is not a few sheets of paper which are called the constitutional law or regulation" (cited in Jussila 1994, 44). A central theme in Snellman's writings was the notion of national survival, which must be secured through the cultural development of a nation. For Snellman "in international conflicts national survival, the capacity of national defence, is proportional to cultural advancement"[79] (Huxley 1990, 102). Therefore, for Snellman a Finnish nation could not protect itself from the Russian threat with violence, but only by cultural development (Huxley 1990, 103).

Hence, during the Russification period the Conciliation side argued that flexibility towards new Russian policies and partial concessions was necessary (Klinge 1993, 166; Soikkanen 1984b, 65). The discourse was based on the understanding that a state's foreign policy options are determined by its capabilities and therefore *realpolitik* must be prioritized over legal and patriotic questions. Juho Kusti Paasikivi, a prominent Old Finn, a Conciliation activist, politician and diplomat in independent Finland and the head of the Finnish delegation during the negotiations with the Soviet Union in autumn 1939, explained the conciliation/Old Finnish principles in the following way: "We Old Finns saw the Russian-Finnish conflict less from the legal state-law perspective, but mainly from the political and international perspective" (Paasikivi 1986a, 39).[80]

The Conciliation line followed the *realpolitik* understanding of the international world: the relationship between Finland and Russia was determined by their extensive power disparity (See Paasikivi 1986a, 1986b, 1958). Therefore, as argued by Paasikivi: "if the difference between the powers is monumental, one has to avoid conflict altogether" (Paasikivi 1958, 184). The constitutionalist line argued that as it was a geopolitical reality that Russia is Finland's neigh-

[78] Subsequently, Russian authorities who had considered the Fennomans radicals in the 1840s realised by the late 1850s and the early 1860s "that the Finnish nationalists could serve to counter Scandinavism and liberalism in Finland and the threat they posed to Finland's relations with Russia" (Soikkanen 1984b, 59). Hence in the early 1860s several positive developments took place for the Finnish National movement. The Diet was convened in 1863 for the first time in more than fifty years and after that started meeting regularly. The same year, Alexander II issued a language decree by which Finnish would gradually become an official language (Soikkanen 1984b, 60).

[79] Huxley points out that Snellman's understanding on culture is a very broad one here, "signifying a society's whole sociopolitical and economic way of life" (Huxley 1990, 102).

[80] It is important to note that Paaskivi wrote these memoirs in a post- World War II environment, in a context of justifying his own political thought, the Paasikivi line. Huxley has argued that the memoirs "can be seen as a political act in which the master diplomat carves out his own line in distinct contrast to what he persuasively, with the deadly empathy of Realpolitik paternalism, depicts as the ruins of idealistic and unpragmatic Constitutionalist resistance politics" (Huxley 1990, 8).

bour and as the power disparity between the two countries was extensive, Finland could not afford a conflict with Russia. Paasikivi argued that the aim of Old Finns/conciliation side was "avoidance of disagreement with Russia. Our argument was simple. Finland was the neighbour of the Russian power. […] Russian supremacy was monumental" (Paasikivi 1958, 175). Therefore, the conciliation line advocated for tactical co-operation with Russia, since for them in order to ensure the continuation of the cultural and national development of Finland, Russia's new policies had to be accommodated. As explained by Paasikivi, "[w]e had to find a modus vivendi and have good relations, so that Russia would not only accept/tolerate Finland's special status, but also consider it the best choice for itself" (Paasikivi 1958, 175).

The Conciliation side, to whom in the international world the material capacities (power politics) mattered most, regarded the constitutionalist arguments as unrealistic, naïve and not the foremost priority. Paasikivi stated: "As long as there is no success with enforcing the implementation of the international law, the physical and material power and size will unfortunately mean more within the relations of states than one often wants to think" (Paasikivi 1986a, 45). The understanding that "clean papers" and following the law would not help against a brutal external force was developed by J.R. Danielson in his 1901 publication titled "In which direction?" (*Mihin suuntaan?*). He wrote:

> We Finns have a beloved proverb: 'Justice will inherit the land' (Oikeus maan perii). That's where we seek protection, on that we have used to build our future, individually and as a nation. […] For long we have been too tolerant towards the approach that as long as our papers are right and we have festive affirmations of the monarch on our side[81], then final victory of our cause is certain. One forgets that history with its unmerciful hand will cast aside all these formal rights, if they are not any longer suitable for the present circumstances. Therefore, in the end our relations with Russia will not depend on the content of old declarations, but on to which extent our special position within the empire advances the essential interests of our own country, but also of the whole empire (quoted in Paasikivi 1986a, 46).

When the Conciliation side criticised the Constitutionals for ignoring the political reality, the Constitutionalist side responded that the Conciliation side served Russian rather than Finnish interests and one of their reasons to co-operate with the Russian authorities was that many of them were in high positions in the administration. Since many civil servants and political activists representing the Constitutional side resigned from their positions or (in the case of civil servants) were dismissed, they were replaced by the Conciliation side (Soikkanen 1984b, 65). During the second Russification period (1909–1917) the division between the Constitutional and Conciliation lines were reduced. This was partly because of the successful co-operation experience during the general strike of 1905, the main aim of which was "to restore the lawful conditions" (Jussila 1999, 79) and

[81] Reference to the Porvoo Diet in 1809 and the declaration by Alexander II.

because the revolutionary sentiments brought the bourgeois groups closer together. Also, Russia's Russification policies in 1909–1917 were considered to undermine Finland's special status so severely that even the Conciliation/Old Finn side could not agree to them.

6.2.4. Conclusion

The Constitutional-Conciliation debate created and developed two narratives to the political-societal thought in Finland: one where the decision-making was associated with the domestic norms and values and one where it was determined by the capabilities. The Constitutional discourse was based on the idea that the starting point for the state's behaviour is within the state's domestic legal system as this is what carries the national principles and determines the relationship with external actors. In contrast, for the Conciliation line the state's behaviour was determined by its material capabilities and geopolitical realities. Through this debate "the 'Russian question'" became the most important political dichotomy in Finland (Jussila 1999, 78). The debate brought the understanding that Finland was given a special status in 1809 and was a state, albeit not a sovereign one, governed by Finnish constitutional laws, to the masses. Also, since the dominant perception was that the constitutional laws and thereby the status of the Finnish state, were threatened by the Russification policies, Finnish nationalism increased. As Jutikkala has argued, during the interwar period the Russification times were dominantly seen through the lenses of the Constitutional discourse (Jutikkala 1984, 208, cited in Huxley 1990, 7). As will be shown in the following sections, the narratives created by the Constitutional-Conciliation debate strongly influenced the perceptions on what was considered 'legitimate' and therefore socially possible in Finnish politics between the two World Wars. Apunen and Rytövuori point out, "Since the legal defence of Finland's autonomy, Finns had a tendency to judge political problems in the framework of legal principles and norms" (Apunen and Rytövuori 1982, 71).

6.3. White and Red Finland

6.3.1. Introduction

During the Russification period the Russian question formed the main division in Finnish political life. This divided the conservative Old Finns, carrying the conciliation discourse and the Constitutionalists: the Young Finns, the Agrarian Union, the Swedish Party and the Social Democrats. However, the general strike of 1905 and the revolutionary sentiments that spread from Russia to Finland started creating a gap between the Social Democrats and the bourgeois sides of society and in turn brought the bourgeois forces together (Jussila

1999).[82] The overwhelming victory of the Social Democrats during the elections of 1907, where they received 80 seats out of 200 and in 1917 when they received 103 out of 200, further increased tensions between the bourgeois and non-bourgeois side of Finland. This was because in the context of the developments in Russia, their electoral victories were perceived as a threat by the bourgeois side. The gap between the bourgeois and socialist sides widened rapidly after the overthrow of the Russian provisional government on 7 November 1917. The aim of the bourgeois side was to become independent as soon as possible and their policy was German oriented. The aim of socialists was also to become independent but to do it by a manifesto for the new Russian government (Hentilä 1999, 101).

In early December 1917 the Finnish Senate, dominated by the bourgeois parties, declared Finland an independent country and the Russian Bolshevik government recognised Finnish independence in late December 1917. However, a central concern for the Finnish government was the presence of Russian soldiers in Finland (Hentilä 1999).[83] The rapidly increasing tensions between bourgeois and non-bourgeois groups were complemented by an uncertain situation in Russia. Combined with both sides having been forming paramilitary groups, the White and Red Guards, this led to the Finnish civil war. The civil war took place from January to May 1918 and was fought between the 'White' bourgeois army assisted by Germany and the 'Red' army assisted by Russia. Although it was short, with actual fighting lasting only two to three months, it resulted in more than 30,000 deaths, more than 25,000 of these being on the Red side (Hentilä, 1999, 110). The civil war left Finland deeply divided between the "White" bourgeois as winners and the "Red" working class as the defeated. The beliefs and understandings that developed during the war and in the aftermath of it had a very strong influence both on political and societal life in the interwar period. The next section will explore the emergence of two sides, the development of the Red and White discourses and how they interacted in the interwar period.

6.3.2. White Finland

White Finland united the bourgeois *(porvari)* side of society. For the White side of Finland the meaning of the 1918 war was a liberation war, a struggle to get Russian troops out or war against a Red rebellion and coup (Klinge 1993; Hentilä 1999). The main unifying characteristics of White Finland were the

[82] For example, although the Finnish political parties started their campaign for a general strike with the aim to change the existing political system together, in the end of the strike there was disagreement on the process of change between the Constitutionalists, who wanted the legal option and the Diet to enact a new Parliament act, and the Social Democrats who argued for a revolutionary constituent assembly (Jussila 1999, 80).

[83] Although the number was on the decrease, there were still around 42,000 Russian soldiers present in Finland in January 1918 and the Russian side did not show great interest in solving the question (Hentilä 1999, 106).

strong anti-Russian and anti-communist sentiments and the acute awareness of the Soviet threat. Finland became seen as the border between East and West, "as the outpost of western civilization" (Paasi 1997, 47). Within this discourse the Reds were traitors as they fought with Russian army and White Finland believed that if the Reds would have won Finland would have not achieved its independence from Russia (Hentilä 1999, 113). The non-bourgeois part of the society, which had fought with the Finnish enemy were seen as untrustworthy and subsequently as an extension of the Soviet threat. Mannerheim, the head of the White Army in 1918 stated that "socialists are incapable of defending democracy" (quoted in Rintala 1961, 85). Consequently, the values of the non-bourgeois side of society, the ones of the labour movement, were seen as of criminal nature in White Finland (Hentilä 1999, 120). Therefore, it was acceptable within this discourse for the bourgeoisie to work against the strengthening of trade unions and to set up organisations such as *Vientirauha* OY, which was an employer-financed strike-breaking organisation[84] (Alapuro and Allardt 1978).

The key symbols of White Finland were centred on the victory of the liberation war. For example, the memorial day of the war of liberation in May was at first considered a more important celebration than the Independence Day in December (Hentilä 1999, 119). Another important symbol of the civil war was seen in the Jäger battalion. This light infantry battalion of around 1,000 men[85] fought on the German side during World War I and later in the White army where they significantly enhanced the fighting strength of the army (Hentilä, 1999, 110). After the civil war, former members of the Jägers held many high places in the Finnish army and, as Ahto points out, "the spirit of the army was expressly the Jäger's spirit" (Ahto 1989, 17). The idea that the Jäger movement brought into the Finnish society, one that was strongly promoted by right-wing political forces during the interwar period, was that a small group, when extremely motivated, can achieve improbable goals. As the newspaper *Suomen Sotilas* explained in 1927: "Our archenemy is still in his external power relations superior to us. Nonetheless, we are looking towards the future bravely. The fact that the Jägers, who dared anything, are heading our armed forces is suited for creating a feeling of safety in us" (quoted in Ahto 1989, 18).

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[84] Vientirauha OY had up to 43,000 men on its list and it enabled companies to break many strikes and disputes (Alapuro and Allardt, 1978, 129). The working class called the strike breakers 'blacklegs' and they were seen as contributors to the proletariat's difficulties. However, strike breakers themselves saw their activities within a White Finland discourse, hence they were protecting their country and defending the rights of the "willing 'White Worker' against the Communist terror in the workplace" (Hentilä 1999, 152). Another organisation was the Civil Guard, founded in 1923 with the aim to safeguard White Finland, and it called on "all patriotic citizens to join its anti-Communist activities" (Hentilä 1999, 148–149).

[85] The size of the battalion was actually 1,400 men, but about 400 remained in Germany, "not wanting to fight the Reds because of their own working-class background or ideological convictions" (Hentilä, 1999, 110).

The most unifying aspect of the White bourgeois side of Finland was their attitude towards the Russian question and the Soviet Union. However, in other aspects it was not a monolithic block, but represented different political ideologies and understandings. These differences had been frozen during the time of acute external threat, but reappeared in the immediate aftermath of the civil war.[86] Although the whole bourgeois side condemned communism, the left wing of the National Progress Party (the former Young Finns) and a part of the Agrarian Party differentiated between the communists and the social democrats/labour movement. Although this wing of White Finland still saw the Soviet Union as the main external threat, it became gradually possible for them to co-operate with the Social Democrats and also to work on issues of social reform and national reconciliation. One of the important signs of the focus on the national reconciliation among some bourgeois circles was the decision by the Agrarian President Relander to install a Social Democrat minority government in late 1926. His justification for that was that the exclusion of the Social Democrats was unhealthy for the society and that the events of 1918 should not play a role in the handling of the politics of the day (Tanner 1966, 78–79).

The conservatives (Coalition party) and the radical right wings of White Finland (Lapua, Patriotic People's Movement) focused on the need for a strong government in order to protect the country against external and internal threats.[87] For this part of White Finland, the Reds were seen as a monolithic pro-communist bloc and considered an internal threat to Finnish values, which within this understanding were the values of 'White Finland'. It came as a shock to them when the social democratic government, led by Väinö Tanner came to power in December 1926. *Iltalehti* wrote: "It is rather telling about our situation that only nine years after the socialist coup the socialists can be the

[86] For the conservative side, consisting of Old Finns (who became a Coalition Party in 1919), the Swedish People Party and some of the Young Finns, one of the causes for the civil war was the universal suffrage of 1906. Therefore they argued that the focus of the new state should be on a strong government authority and aimed at introducing a monarchy in Finland. They claimed that according to the 1772 constitution Finland, by law, already was one. The more liberal centrist understanding, advocated by the Agrarians and some Young Finns (this part of Young Finns became a liberal National Progress Party in 1918), argued for a parliamentary democracy, for social reforms they had supported before and for national reconciliation (Soikkanen 1984b, 71–72). The Social Democrats were not part of the parliament at the time (as many elected members had fled, some had been executed and many were in prison camps) and had no opportunity to participate in political decision-making from May 1918 to February 1919 (Hentilä 1999, 121). The plan to introduce a monarchy failed because of consistent resistance from the Republican side (Agrarians and part of the Young Finns) and because of a change in the international arena after Germany collapsed militarily (Hentilä 1999, 124–125, Kallenautio 1985) This conservative/liberal-centrist division of the bourgeois kept growing in the interwar period.

[87] In the late 1920s, the Coalition party moved towards strong right wing nationalism as the party supported the right-wing Lapua movement and in 1933 contested the elections together with the Patriotic People's Movement (IKL), which was the successor of the Lapua movement. The conservative conciliation principles were carried on by the moderate wing of the party, led by Paasikivi (Soikkanen 1984b, 82).

supreme executor of state power, even though accidentally. This is no victory of popular sovereignty, but it is caused by temporary party groupings, based on short-term governments established by chance. When *people* [emphasis mine] can choose, then supremacy of power will be in other hands than Mister Tanner's; this society is still that much bourgeois" (Tanner 1966, 89–90). This article is a good example of the understanding of the 'winning' side of the society, stating that the only reason why the Social Democrats were in power was as a result of political games, as Finland's society could not possibly be behind it. The article claimed to argue in the name of the 'people', but ignored the fact that a large part of the Finnish people voted for the Social Democrats, as it was the largest party in parliament since 1907 and continued to be so most of the interwar period. However, for this part of the bourgeois, the Social Democrat's popularity and election victories were not an argument. As argued by the vice-chairman of the Coalition Party Edwin Linkomies in a speech in 1936: "It has been claimed that if people give their votes to socialists, then these are also good enough for governing. Logically, then also the communists should be eligible for inclusion in parliament and government. The actions of socialists are dangerous for the state and society. This is why their access to the government must be prevented" (quoted in Soikkanen 1983, 102). Following a similar logic, that socialists and their values are an internal threat, President Svinhufvud did not allow the Social Democrats to form a government with the Agrarians in 1936 despite the election victory of the Social Democrats. Svinhufvud argued that "Finland is in too dangerous position for Social Democrats to govern it" (Soikannen 1983, 102). Svinhufvud stressed that social democrats are against national defence and that their inclusion in the government would have a depressing effect on the bourgeois circles. He did not believe that social democrats had truly given up the revolutionary cause and if they "would secure the upper hand in society, they would focus all their programs towards the revolutionary aims" (Soikkanen 1983, 102). As White Finland had won the civil war with German military help and as Jägers had been fighting in Germany, the later was seen as a balancer of the Soviet Union by the conservative part of White Finland in the interwar period. President Svinhufvud stated in 1937 that "Russia's enemy must always be the friend of Finland" (quoted in Jakobson 1961, 20).

Another issue where opinions of the bourgeois parties differed was language. The Finnicization movement (*aitosuomalaisuus*) argued for further rights of the Finnish language and disputed the status of the Swedish language as a official state language. This issue enjoyed wide public support, and one of its main focus points was the demand, initiated by the Academic Karelian Society (AKS) in 1924 that language of the academy at the University of Helsinki should be unilingual instead of bilingual. The AKS's activities gained support in the Agrarian Party who had language reform as one of its priorities since 1925. Within the conservative Coalition party the more right-wing argued for Finnish to become the only state language in its programme in 1929. The language debate allowed for co-operation between the otherwise sidelined Social Democ-

ratic Party and the Swedish People's Party, as the Social Democrats were neutral in language issue (see Soikkanen 1984b, 74–76).

The increasingly volatile international climate in the mid-1930s made White Finland focus more on raising the defence will of the whole society and therefore on the need to increase the spirit of national unity in Finland. As historian Danielson-Kalmari writes in a Civil Guard publication in 1932, "We cannot close our eyes from that truth, that Russia, as one can see in advance, will try to reconquer Finland sooner or later. If we are then still fighting these petty fights […] then we are not able to combat the danger" (quoted in Ahto 1989, 21). In order to create this unity within White Finland, the bourgeois ideologues focused on changing the attitudes towards the Reds in the late 1930s. The Civil Guard ideologue Aarno Karimo wrote in 1937 that "the majority of the Red Guards were certainly people who in good faith, and fully misguided, participated in this sad rebellion" (quoted in Ahto 1989, 11). Ahto points out that that was a major change compared to the previous 'traitor' discourse towards the red side of the civil war (Ahto 1989, 11).

6.3.3. Red Finland

For the Red side of the society the civil war of 1918 was largely a class war where the bourgeoisie and the working class fought each other (Hentilä 1999, 114–115). As within the discourse of White Finland labour values were considered unpatriotic, the working class was politically powerless in the 1920s and early 1930s (Alapuro 1980, 87–88). The trade unions were weak and working class salaries were significantly lower in Finland compared to the Scandinavian countries. The Social Democratic Party (SDP) recovered fast after the civil war. This was possible since there had been a revisionist group, led by Väinö Tanner, who had not gone along with the revolution and therefore was able to restart the party, at a time when many socialist leaders either had fled, were killed or were in prison. Tanner was clear from the beginning that in his opinion the revolutionary attempt of the Reds was a mistake. In a speech at the 1919 party conference he stated "Only a few years ago the working class had the keys in their hands for state and societal reforms [...] This strong position was however destroyed by the hopeless coup based on wrong calculations" (Tanner 1956, 72). The SDP took a clear orientation towards the Scandinavian social democratic parties immediately after the civil war. The main division among Red Finland was thus between the moderate wing, which saw their role model in Scandinavian social democratic movements, and the Soviet orientated communist wing. The left wing of the social democrats split from the SDP in 1919 and established in 1920 the Finnish Socialist Labour Party, which had a communist programme (Tanner 1966, 21). This party was able to operate, albeit with some difficulties, in the 1920s, although their actions were effectively curbed by the bourgeois side. During the peak of the Lapua movement in 1930, the parliament passed anti-Communist laws, which excluded communists from the political sphere. However, the activities of communists helped to feed the fears within

some bourgeois circles that the entire non-bourgeois side of Finland should be seen as an internal threat.

The Social Democratic Party was the largest group in parliament for most of the interwar period. When in the aftermath of the civil war bourgeois Finland did not consider Red Finland trustworthy to govern, it was also out of question for socialists themselves to participate in the government of a bourgeois society, and even "speaking about a minister's socialism was labelled betrayal" (Tanner 1966, 77). Although it was impossible for the Social Democrats to enter the government in the early 1920s, they, being also the largest party in the parliament, had a pivotal 'balancer' role and mainly supported centre-based coalitions, obtaining concessions on important matters in return (Hentilä 1999, 135). This also further established the tradition of co-operation with centrist parties such as the Agrarian and the National Progress Party. One of the signs of this co-operation, and also that the sentiment for national reconciliation was on the increase within the liberal side of the bourgeois, was that following the proposal by Agrarian President Relander, the Social Democratic minority government came to power in December 1926 and governed for a year.[88] Despite some co-operation between the liberal wing of bourgeois parties and the Social Democrats, the latter still stood outside of the mainstream discourse of Finland's society in 1920 as that remained White Finland's.

The prevalence of the understanding that White Finland's discourse was the 'correct' and official societal discourse was showed by the decision of conservative president Svinhufvud in 1936 to prevent the Agrarian League from forming a coalition government with the Social Democrats. Therefore, in a speech before the presidential elections in 1937, Tanner stated that the Coalition party is the "number one enemy of the nation". Tanner argued that the right wing tried to carry out "some kind of home grown parliamentarism" within which "one does not have to give any significance to the results of the parliament elections while forming the government, but these can be coldly ignored. […] We, social democrats, have been labelled as second class citizens" (Soikkanen 1983, 113).

The situation gradually changed in the second half of the 1930s and particularly with the broad centre-left, so-called Red-Earth (*punamulta)* coalition government, formed in 1937.[89] One of the most divisive issues between the bourgeois and non-bourgeois Finland had been the different prioritization of the national

[88] In December 1926 President Relander proposed Tanner as the Chairman of the largest parliamentarian faction to establish a government. Tanner negotiated with the Agrarian Union, the Progress Party and the Swedish left to form a coalition, but all parties rejected the offer. President Relander urged Tanner to continue, arguing that the nation was divided and the events of 1918 still played a role in the handling of politics. Thus, "[i]f social democrats are willing to go to the government, ready to take the responsibility even alone, then, in my opinion, this is an act, that event solely must awaken society" (Tanner 1966, 78–79). In December 1926, President Relander installed the social democratic government.

[89] The Red Earth (*punamulta*) coalition government consisted of the Social Democrats, Agrarians and the National Progress Party.

defence question. National defence was one of the most important questions for White Finland, whereas for the Reds it was first of all a bourgeois question and secondly, through the civil war connotation, this issue was considered working class-hostile. The attitude of the Social Democrats on the question of defence policy started changing in the second half of the 1930s. One of the reasons was that the working class's living standards had improved, and as stated by the head of Social Democrats Väinö Tanner in 1937, that "the conditions of the working class have improved and it now has something to defend" (Tanner 1956, 156, 259). Another reason was the changing international climate, and Hitler's rise to power in particular. SDP politician J.W. Keto observed in 1937 that "this changed situation forces us to some extent to think differently than before about defence politics [...] The defence establishment is unavoidable in order to safeguard our borders and defend our neutrality in the power battles of the big states, which currently looks almost inevitable" (quoted in Ahto 1989, 17). Consequently, in May 1939 the Social Democrats adopted a national defence program.

6.3.4. Conclusion

The current section discussed the deepest cleavage within Finland's society in the interwar period, the one between White and Red Finland. The 1918 civil war left the country deeply divided between winners and losers, where White Finland's understanding of the civil war and subsequently of the societal values and priorities became the dominant state understanding. The extent of this division is shown by the aspect that although the gap was significantly reduced in the 1920s and 1930s and the external threat in the late 1930s made both sides move closer to each other and find some common ground, the dominant understanding of the meaning of the civil war remained the one of White Finland: it was a war of liberation against a Red coup.

6.4. Radical-nationalism and the lawfulness front

6.4.1. Radical-nationalism

Although the bourgeois side of the society had several important unifying characteristics, such as seeing the Soviet Union as the foremost threat to Finland's independence, it was not a homogenous group. While the centrists, liberals and some moderate conservatives saw themselves as nationalist, patriotic and anti-Russian, they also prioritised national reconciliation and social reforms and gradually started distinguishing between the Finnish labour movement and communism. However, a separate discourse existed within White Finland, whose perception of an acute Russian threat saw any kind of compromise with the left as unpatriotic and against national interests. This discourse

was carried by several activist organisations, created in the aftermath of the civil war, whose aim was to protect Finland from the perceived Soviet threat.[90]

The current section focuses on the two extreme-right wing movements in the interwar period, the Academic Karelian Society (*Akateeminen Karjala-Seura*, AKS) and the Lapua movement and their role in interwar identity formation. The Academic Karelia Society is significant as it was explicitly focused on shaping and promoting certain discourses on the type of patriotism that Finland needed in order to be prepared for war. The significance of the Lapua movement is on prioritising the patriotism and anti-Communism over the rule of law and how this idea interacted with other existing political discourses in Finland.

6.4.2. Academic Karelia Society

The Academic Karelia Society (AKS) was the most important student union in interwar Finland. The reason why the AKS is relevant to understand the radical-nationalist discourse is because it was explicitly focused on developing and promoting ideas about patriotism and anti-Russianism within the Finnish society and because of the historical importance of the academic organisations in the process of idea formation in Finland.[91] The AKS was founded in 1922 by

[90] The roots of the radical-nationalist discourse lie in the first Russification period when certain parts of the Finnish national movement decided that the conciliation advocated by the Old Finns and the passive resistance promoted by the constitutional movement was not enough to fight Russia's oppressive policies. As a result, a stream of Finnish nationalism with a strong focus on activism that gradually adopted a strong right-wing ideology was born. The movement, consisting of Swedish-speakers and some of the Young Finns, established the "Activist Party of Finland" in 1904. This party was a small underground movement, which believed that a "vigorous, active and unscrupulous front against tyranny was justified" (quoted in Soikkanen 1984b, 66). In 1906, *Voimaliitto* was founded. This was a nationally-based Civil Guard opposed both to Russian anarchism and to the 'oppressive measures' of the Russian government. […] However, this early right-wing activism died down in 1910" (Jussila 1999, 83). During the First World War, Russian pressure increased and the topic of active resistance was raised again. The Jäger movement, which had sent 1,000 Finnish young men, mainly university students, illegally to Germany to fight on the German side during World War I, "reflected the growing appeal among Finns for some form of active resistance to Russian violations of Finland's autonomous status" (Soikkanen 1984b, 68). After independence, the other right wing organisations followed, such as the Finnish Protection League, the anti-trade union organisation Vientirauha, the Academic Karelia Society, the Independence League, the Civil War Veterans' League, the Kinship Soldiers' League, Suomen Lukko, the Lapua Movement and the Patriotic People's Movement (IKL) (Hentilä 1999, 143).

[91] The academic circles had, since the times of the Fennoman movement, held an important role in Finland in terms of developing and spreading the political and societal ideas. Helsinki University students had traditionally considered themselves "the representatives for the Finnish people" (Alapuro 1973, 118). This was emphasized by AKS, with a slogan formed by one of their ideologists, Niilo Kärki, stating that "what the students are today, the nation is tomorrow" (*mitä ylioppilaat tänään, sitä kansa huomenna*) (Klinge 1982, 225). The AKS had held the majority at the Helsinki University student body since 1926 until World War II and was undoubtedly the most important institution in student politics (Alapuro 1973).

students who participated in the battles for the independence of Eastern-Karelia. As the idea to unify Eastern-Karelia with Finland failed, the AKS's program first centred on the idea that Eastern-Karelia and Inkeri are part of Finland and should be liberated (Kallenautio 1985, 79–80). One central idea of the AKS was that national unity can be built on focusing on the enemy figure, hence on spreading the *ryssänviha* (hatred of the Russian) within the Finnish society. In the aftermath of the civil war, Russophobia promoted by the AKS aimed at strengthening the feelings of national unity (Klinge 1972). As argued by Luostarinen, Russophobia directly served the purposes of national integration. The Civil War was explained as caused by a 'Bolshevist plague', which had spread from Russia" (Luostarinen 1989, 129). The AKS describes its mission in the following terms: "But we, who once drove the Russians out of the country, we, who know what marks they have stamped on this land, we must learn and teach others to hate the Russian so deeply and strongly that the roots of that hate will not wither even at the moment of death" (quoted in Klinge 1993, 239).

One of the approaches of the *Vihan veljet* (Brotherhood of Hate), secret organisation of AKS, was to stress historical roots of *ryssänviha* within the Finnish society. The AKS's discourse, expressed through articles and speeches, was creating a narrative that *ryssänviha* "was a spontaneous Finnish sentiment with strong popular roots" (Klinge 1993, 247).[92] Building and spreading this narrative was necessary for the AKS to build the defence will within the society. As one Vihan Veljet article stated: "People and country must wake up and realize what an infinite strength hatred is. The French won the World War through their fierce hatred of the Germans. The hatred multiplied their strength. How important hatred for us is, a small and weak country, is self-evident. If we hasten in rage to the eastern frontier, when the order sounds, the Russian will never be able to destroy our independence" (quoted in Klinge 1993, 246). Therefore, as argued by Klinge "Hatred of the Russians, as part of the 'psychological preparedness for war', was seen as one means of arming for the defence. At the same time, 'the provocation of anti-Russianism would serve to strengthen the national identity; a new patriotism was needed to replace the

[92] An extensive body of literature exists on the subject of Finno-Russian relations and its role on Finnish identity (for example: Harle 2000, Klinge 1972, 1982 and 1993, Tarkiainen 1986, Luostarinen 1989, Karemaa 1998, Immonen 1987, Paasi 1997, Paasi 1999, Moisio 1998, Browning and Lehti 2007, Browning 2002, Kangas 2011), which consists of debates, numerous conclusions and categorisations on the understanding of Russia, and the origins of these understandings. The primordialists see Russia as the Finnish eternal archenemy, in the line of the approach advocated by the Radical-Nationalist discourse in the interwar period (for example Tarkiainen 1986). The second school, labelled instrumentalists by Kangas (2011), argue that negative understandings of Russians were developed and promoted for advancing certain political agendas, such as the Academic Karelia Seura constructing the narrative of eternal Russian-hatred (Klinge 1972, Immonen 1987, Luostarinen 1989, Karemaa 1998). (For example Klinge analysed Finnish proverbs and claimed that "there was no deep-seated, 'natural' hatred of Russians before 1917" (Klinge 1993, 247)). The third understanding sees the Finno-Russian relationship as socially constructed (Harle 2000, Moisio 1998, Browning 2002, Kangas 2011).

traditional patriotism of the nineteenth century, which consisted essentially of trust in and love of the tsar […]. The new patriotism must be active and aggressive, even expansionist, in contrast to the old patriotism, which had been based, after the fashion of Saarijärven Paavo, on quiet perseverance and peaceable improvement of one's condition[93]" (Klinge 1993, 247).

In the second half of the 1930s, the AKS intensified its activities in building up the nation's defence will with the focus on improving the national unity and the willingness of the non-bourgeois part of the society to defend the country. Already in 1934, the AKS organized a fund-raising project titled "Planes to the army", where donations were collected to buy a training plane for the army. The large-scale defence propaganda planning started in the autumn of 1936, and the organisation for it was built and tested in 1937. A proper operation was carried out with the help of defence forces and civil guards in 1938 when 560 meetings were held, which tens of thousands people attended (Mertanen 2005, 466). In April 1939, the AKS established an organisation called *Rajan Turva* (*Border Security*), which, over the summer of 1939 organised fortification works in the Karelian isthmus. For the AKS, fortifying the Karelian isthmus was considered much more important than fortifying the Åland islands that were the government's priority. As one of the AKS newspapers wrote in 1938: "The borders have to be protected, independence guaranteed, the Karelian isthmus has to be fortified" (cited in Haataja 1997, 153). Over 1,000 volunteers took part in the activity, which lasted for twelve weeks and was implemented in cooperation with the defence ministry. Collecting funds for the fortification works became a national level event and around 260,000 Finns donated a one day salary for this cause. Haataja points out that this collection showed the divisions in the Finnish society, as the Agrarian president, Agrarian ministers and parliamentarians and oppositional right-wing Coalition and IKL parties' parliamentarians donated for the fund-raising, whereas the Social Democrats and National Progress Party ministers and parliamentarians did not (Haataja 1997, 153–154). Nevertheless, as the AKS became gradually more focused on strengthening national unity in the late 1930s, one of the aims of *Rajan Turva* was to reduce divisions between Reds and Whites. Mertanen points out that "because of the insecure situation, the AKS wanted partly to enhance the unity of the nation, which had been insulted by the AKS's own statements throughout the 1930s" (Mertanen 2005, 466).

This activist discourse, focused on preparedness and the will to defend one's country, was also promoted in the literature of the period. First of all, literature about the fight of a small group against the bigger power was included in history books. For Ahto, the basic example of that were the horrors from the Isoviha *(Greater Wrath)* period.[94] The first authors to write these historical patriotic

[93] Saarijärven Paavo was "a peasant figure created in 1831 by the poet J.L. Runeberg and embodying the strength, persistence and trust in God imagined as typical of the ideal Finn" (Klinge 1993, 246).

[94] Isonviha is a Finnish term for the Russian occupation in Finland from 1713–1721 during the Great Northern War (1700–1721).

books were the Fennomans in the nineteenth century. The newspaper *Finnish Soldier* demanded already in 1919 that historic books by Topelius should be available in the barracks, and the Civil Guard was promoting *The Tales of Ensign Stål (Vänrikki Stoolin tarinoita[95])* written by Runeberg. Youth literature discussed these topics as well. According to Ahto, a shared feature of these books was that they were all about fighting for one's freedom against the predominant power, with the enemy commonly being Russian (Ahto 1989, 19). Furthermore, the activist movement of the early twentieth century, which had been a marginal and short-lived development at the time "was now praised in popular historical movies as an example of national heroism and resistance" (Browning and Lehti 2007, 700).

6.4.3. Lapua movement

The Lapua movement, an extreme-right movement, was not a political party but did enjoy the support of the Coalition Party and, until the Mäntsälä Coup, also the majority of the Agrarian Union, and its leaders came from these two parties.[96] The main aim of Lapua was the destruction of communism, understood in rather broad terms, and it did not consider the existing rule of law or political system while pursuing its aims (Alapuro and Allardt 1978, 130). Ideologically, Lapua built directly on the ideas of activism, Jäger movement and Academic Karelia Society. Klinge points out that Lapua activists belonged to "the so called Jäger-generation".[97] This part of the Finnish society's identity formation was not formed at the times of "lawful reform politics of 1905–1907", but their "crucial experience" was within the context of "conspirational-violent patriotic action." Because of these social experiences, "the starting point of Lapua was the approach that within exceptional circumstances the normal law and state apparatus will be replaced by other actors. According to the founders of the movement, the communist 'provocations' had gone so far that for their perception these were not the normal circumstances anymore." Hence, "the legal government and parliamentarian powers was to be replaced by the nation's 'direct' action, sort of direct democracy. The law was replaced with 'Lapua law', according to which the virtue of actions was evaluated only based on whether they supported or opposed the anti-communist actions" (Klinge 1972,

[95] The Tales of Ensign Stål is a Finnish classical epic poem by Runeberg about Finland's war of 1808–09. Although the war ended in defeat, Runeberg transformed it into patriotic praise of its known and unknown figures. All of them are eager to die in the name of the fatherland. See http://www.kirjasto.sci.fi/runeberg.htm accessed on 14 September 2012.

[96] The beginning of the Lapua movement is usually placed at the end of 1929, when anti-Communist riots led by farmers broke out. Two main causes for the Lapua movement were the economic depression that had hit the farmers in 1928 and the increasing popularity of the Communists (Alapuro and Allardt 1978).

[97] The Jäger movement consisted of was based students who went to Germany illegally to fight on the German side, and who had been trained there from 1915–1917 and had gained front-line experience against the Russians on Germany's Eastern front (Hentilä, 1999, 110).

167–168). The radical wing of Lapua argued that "when a choice had to be made between 'fatherland' and legality, then legality had to give way: a 'patriotic revolt' was better than 'legality without fatherland'" (quoted in Hentilä 1999, 159). As expressed by one of Lapua leaders Vihtori Kosola: "We are told that we have disregarded the law. I say that the law has disregarded the nation. If our legislators have made such laws that in following them society, the nation and the fatherland would be harmed, and faith in God destroyed, then it is our duty to fight against them" (quoted in Kasekamp 1999, 592). The support for Lapua waned after the failed Mäntsälä coup in 1932 and the movement was subsequently banned. Its predecessor Patriotic People's Movement (IKL) never achieved a similar kind of mass support.[98]

6.4.4. Lawfulness front

The Lawfulness front emerged during the peak of Lapua in order to stand for the preservation of the rule of law in the country. It consisted of the National Progress Party[99] (successor of the Young Finns), the Social Democrats, the Swedish People's Party and part of the Agrarian Party. As the Lapua movement started as a reaction to communist activities, and strong nationalist and anti-Russian sentiments were essential elements within the White Finland discourse, many politicians from the bourgeois parties first shared the anti-communist feelings of the Lapua movement. However, when Lapua started attacking the existing Finnish legal system, the centrist and liberal political groups, whose political roots were in the Constitutional movement, gradually denounced their activities. Together with the Social Democrats, liberals and centrists formed the

[98] The peak time for Lapua was the summer of 1930. During that summer, hundreds of members of local government bodies, Social Democratic party branches, trade unions, newspaper editors, former members of parliament etcetera were abducted and driven to the border of Russia and dumped there. Lapua's most important demonstration of strength also took place in the summer of 1930 when they organised the 'peasant march', with twelve thousand members of the Lapua movement, mainly farmers, marching on the capital to present their demands to the government. General Mannerheim, Prime Minister Svinhufvud and President Relander were all present at the main demonstration, listening to Lapua's demands.

[99] The small liberal National Progress Party, successor of the Young Finn party that were followers of the Constitutional line played an influential role in the interwar period despite its gradually decreasing electoral support. The new Finnish constitution had been drafted by the liberal Constitutional/Young Finn Ståhlberg and therefore followed the National Progress Party's Programme (Soikkanen 1984b, 72) and Constitutional and Young Finns' discourse. Furthermore, Constitutional activist Ståhlberg became the first president of Finland. During the interwar period, the National Progress Party participated in the thirteen governments and often held the position of prime minister. This was because in the aftermath of the Finnish civil war, right wing and left wing parties could not govern together and therefore the Progress Party was often a frequent partner in the coalition government. Also in autumn 1939, the Progress Party held both the positions of Prime Minister (Aimo Kaarlo Cajander) and Foreign Minister (Eljas Erkko).

so-called Lawfulness front in order to maintain the political order. The Lawfulness front built on the constitutional ideas on the importance of complying with the rule of law. The former president of Finland, the constitutionalist Ståhlberg, wrote in 1932 that lawlessness cannot be defended in an organized society even if it helps to prevent other crimes. By doing that, "one lowers itself, through one's actions, to the level of the society's adversary, taking the nation's conditions, viability and the chances of success far back, from where one has to start from the beginning the arduous path towards the basis of legal order and rule of law" (quoted in Kulha 1989, 157). The second important aspect that contributed to the failure of the Lapua movement was the behaviour of the Social Democrats, who firmly opposed Lapua, but avoided clashes with the movement and worked towards maintaining and defending the rule of law and the state system (Alapuro and Allardt 1978, 131–132, 136).

The co-operation between the Social Democrats, Agrarians and the National Progress Party paved the way for the Red-Earth (*punamulta*) coalition government, which was formed in 1937.[100] By 1938, due to international developments, the focus of the political parties and the government had turned from domestic issues and disputes to foreign and defence policy. "Increasingly, domestic policy was viewed via the prism of external security, and in practice this meant the isolation of the radical Right and an emphasis on national reconciliation" (Soikkanen 1983, 528). Hence, in the late 1930s, the focus shifted from internal Othering between Reds/Whites towards the external Othering.

6.5. Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to explore the dominant political and societal discourses in Finland in 1939, their emergence, development and interactions. The chapter showed that the role of central Other was held, since the beginning of Finland as a state concept, by Russia. The chapter defined six dominant discourses: 1) Constitutional, 2) Conciliation, 3) White Finland, 4) Red Finland, 5) Radical-nationalist, 6) Lawfulness front. The discourses and debates varied in their scope, both time wise and in the extent of their direct influence on societal

[100] In the 1937 presidential elections, the centre and leftist parties campaigned against the incumbent, President Svinhufvud from the Coalition party, seeing the elections as a fight for "democracy and parliamentarism" against "the non-democratic" and "presidentialist" stream (Soikkanen 1983, 113). The government with the participation of Social Democrats became possible after the Agrarian Kyösti Kallio replaced the conservative Svinhufvud as the President in 1937. Although it was the first time for left and centre parties to govern together, the basis for this government had been established through a long-term co-operation between the Social Democrats and the centre parties, from the times of the centre-minority governments. The parties had also stood for maintaining the political order during the Lapua times within the so-called Lawfulness movement. In the July 1939 elections both main government parties gained seats, the Social Democrats now having 85 seats and the Agrarian Union 56 seats, which was considered a clear win for the government (Hokkanen 1986, 228–229).

life. For example, the constitutional-conciliation debate mainly took place within educated urban circles and was less known in rural areas, whereas the Red and White Finland discourses deeply influenced all spheres of Finland's social and political life in the interwar period. However, all these six discourses produced important societal ideas that influenced the domestic understandings of the situation in 1939, therefore are relevant for the how-possible question this study is interested in.

Within the Constitutional discourse it is the existing domestic system that determines a state's external behaviour. For this discourse, it was not a choice to follow the laws, but an obligation as national progress depended on it. This was demonstrated during the peak of the Lapua movement where many bourgeois politicians whose political roots were in the constitutionalist movement shared the anti-communism feelings of the Lapua movement, but denounced their activities when Lapua started attacking Finnish laws. In contrast, for the conciliation line the state's behaviour is dependent on the state's material capabilities and the interests of the power actor. An important contribution of the constitutional-conciliation debate was that it firstly took the understanding that Finland is a separate state, although not a sovereign one, governed by its own constitutional laws, to the masses. Secondly, as a result of this debate Finnish-Russian relations were seen through the lenses of mistrust, since within the Constitutional thinking Russia had one-sidedly broken the previous existing agreement. The White and Red Finland discourses emerged during and in the aftermath of Finland's civil war. White Finland's discourse was strongly anti-Russian and saw the external threat in the Soviet Union, and Finland's Reds as the internal threat that could not be trusted. As a result of the civil war, the Red side of the society was politically powerless in the 1920s and early 1930s. The extreme-right movements in the early 1930s stressed the continuous deep division between Red and White parts of the society, but also forced the progressive bourgeois groups and the Social Democrats to redefine its priorities and focus on national reconciliation. It also brought back into focus the old constitutionalist understanding that following the law is not a choice depending on the current political interests, but a prerequisite for the development of the nation.

An important similarity between the constitutionalist and radical-nationalist discourse was that although both recognized the power disparity between Finland and Russia, this was not an ending but a starting point for their respective frameworks on how to handle the conflict situation with Russia. In the constitutionalist discourse one had to operate within the existing domestic legal framework, whereas the radical-nationalist discourse, that could not envision a Finland that would co-operate with the Soviet Union, focused on shaping the national discourse in a way that every citizen would be prepared to protect the country. In the late 1930s, with the increasing instability on international level, it started prioritizing national unity. It should be noted that these six domestic discourses were overlapping. The contrasts were between different pairs (constitutional/conciliation), but within different debates it was much more fluid, such as politicians from the bourgeois side who were strongly anti-communist

and nationalist but turned against the Lapua movement when it started to attack the existing legal system.

'The Russian question' had a central role within all three debates. However, within these debates three different ways how to "handle Russia" emerged: 1) compliance with domestic norms and values of the Constitutionalist movement; 2) active resistance exercised by different Radical-nationalist movements, which argued that radical measures are justified in case of a threat to the nationalist values and 3) the Conciliation line, which focused on the need to negotiate and accommodate the power actor in case of conflict. The next chapter will focus on how these domestic discourses in interaction with the external pressures and with each other made it possible for the Finnish decision-makers to not agree to the Soviet demands in the autumn of 1939.

CHAPTER 7.
DECISION-MAKING PROCESS IN FINLAND IN AUTUMN 1939

The aim of this chapter is to explore how Finland's foreign policy decision not to accept the Soviet demands in 1939 became possible for Finland's government. How did the course of action, that Finland cannot accept demands that would mean allowing Soviet military bases on the Finnish mainland, become commonsensical for the decision-makers? The current study argues that focusing only on the existing domestic discourses does not give a full picture of the decision-making dynamics. This is because the decision-makers do not have a fixed set of domestic discourses at their disposal; there are always tensions between the domestic discourses and, besides, these discourses are not static: they change depending on external and internal events. As was shown in the case of Finland, with the increase of volatility of the international situation, Red and White Finland started to redefine their understanding of each other in terms of internal threat and focused on the external threat. Hence, the decision-maker must balance between external and internal pressures, while also processing the on-going tensions and dynamics between the domestic discourses. However, this process does not happen in some vacuum of objectiveness, but the decision-maker's own social construction regarding the domestic discourses also matters. This is why in order to explain how the decision became commonsensical for the decision-maker, his or her own social construction must be explored. Therefore, the first part of this chapter will focus on the primary decision-maker, his social construction and how his understanding of the situation translated into his policy line.

The second part of the chapter will focus on the societal constraints on the decision-making process and how they were processed by the decision-makers. When certain social ideas are out in the public sphere, they will introduce social constraints to the decision-makers, hence makes certain practices acceptable and therefore possible and other practices unacceptable. The chapter will look at the interaction between the state, hence the decision-makers, and the society. The aim of the chapter is to analyse how the decision-maker processed and negotiated between the external pressures and the different domestic understandings and how this understanding on the balance of domestic and external pressures translated into a foreign policy decision.

7.1. Social construction of the decision-maker

This section explores the social construction of Finland's primary foreign policy decision-maker in 1939, the Finnish foreign minister Eljas Erkko. First, the circle of decision-makers will be discussed and the choice for the primary decision-maker will be explained. Next, the section will explore how the decision-maker was positioned within the dominant domestic discourses, how this

influenced his understanding of the situation in autumn 1939 and how this understanding developed into his foreign policy line.

The main discussions and Finnish government's plans leading to the decisions on the Soviet demands in autumn 1939 were made at the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Cabinet that handled the foreign policy issues in the Government, and in the War Cabinet in consultation with President Kyösti Kallio[101]. The Foreign Affairs Committee at that time consisted of Prime Minister Aimo Kaarlo Cajander (National Progress Party), Foreign Minister Eljas Erkko (National Progress Party), Defence Minister Juho Niukkanen (Agrarian League), Minister of Finance Väinö Tanner (Social Democratic Party) and Minister of Education Uuno Hannula (Agrarian League). The War Cabinet consisted of Cajander, Erkko, Niukkanen, Tanner (Soikkanen 1983, 336), and its main aim was to work on the government's counterproposal to the Soviet demands and to discuss the different options Finland had in the current situation. General Gustav Mannerheim, some other representatives of the army and negotiator Juho Kusti Paasikivi often attended the meetings of the War Cabinet and the Foreign Affairs Committee. The circle of people aware of the content of the negotiations was kept so limited (until 30 October when Molotov made the demands public), as the aim was to keep it in secrecy, in order to not to disturb the course of the talks or to irritate the Soviet side. This study will focus on foreign minister Eljas Erkko as the primary decision-maker regarding the Soviet demands. However, the positions of other main political actors and interaction of different positions will be discussed in the second part of the chapter.

7.1.1. Foreign minister Erkko as the primary decision-maker

Eljas Erkko, foreign minister since 1938, had a central role in Finland's foreign policy decision-making in 1938–1939. Before accepting the foreign minister's post, Erkko had requested that he would be the only focal point in the government on foreign policy. With Erkko's predecessor to the foreign minister's post, Rudolf Holsti, foreign policy decision-making had been rather scattered within the government. Erkko replaced it with a centralised model (Soikkanen 1983, 241), for example Virkkunen called the way Erkko took over foreign policy 'a coup' (Virkkunen 1994, 156). Also, President Kallio left the initiation and implementation of foreign policy issues to the government and the minister of foreign affairs (Pakaslahti 1970, 49). One of the reasons behind Erkko's central role and the acceptance of it within the government was because Holsti's policy line had been criticised as vague and scattered and not concrete

[101] Foreign policy in Finland falls to the responsibility of the Finnish President. For important matters, such as questions of war and peace, changing Finnish borders, and state treaties that require legislative changes or entail economic responsibilities, Parliament's consent is needed. Important foreign policy questions are handled at the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Cabinet, which consists of the Prime Minister, the Foreign Minister and three other members of the government. The President makes the decisions based on presentations of the Foreign Affairs Committee (Suomi 1973, 356).

and strong enough considering the increasing volatility of the international climate. Therefore, Erkko's decisive, concrete policy line was seen as a positive development and Erkko's position as a foreign minister and member of government became "exceptionally strong during the critical phases that preceded the winter war" (Soikkanen 1983, 241). Erkko's leading role in the decision-making process regarding the Soviet demands is also shown by the blame that he received after the Soviet's military attack. Paasikivi, the negotiator with Moscow and a post-World War II Finnish president famously called the winter war "Erkko's war", meaning that he thought Erkko to be responsible for it (Pakaslahti 1970, Manninen and Salokangas 2009). Also, Mannerheim commented after the negotiations had failed that if Erkko would be man enough, he would go to the forest and shoot himself (Virkkunen 1994, 49). In the post-World War II literature Erkko's behaviour has been often explained through his personal characteristics, such as that he was naïve, reckless and above all, "an optimist by nature" (Jakobson 1961, 122, also see Rautkallio 1990, 30, Paasikivi 1986c, 1958, Tanner 1957 57–58). Yet regarding the decision-maker, the current study focuses not on his personal characteristics, but on his social construction: his political ideas and understandings determined how he understood the existing situation. Hence, the aim of this section is to discuss Erkko's social construction within the framework of Finland's dominant societal discourses, and his understandings on international system and foreign policy.

7.1.2. Introduction

Eljas Erkko was a prominent member of the National Progress Party.[102] He had served in parliament from 1933–1936 and in 1932, he was minister without portfolio for two months and vice-minister of interior affairs for 3 weeks. Nevertheless, until 1938 his first and foremost priority was running the biggest Finnish newspaper, *Helsingin Sanomat*, as the editor-in-chief and majority owner[103], which he successfully changed from a National Progress Party newspaper to a more broad nationwide newspaper. In 1938 Erkko became Minister of Foreign Affairs, 43 years old at the time. Prior taking up this post *Helsingin Sanomat*

[102] Erkko was a member of the party's Committee from 1928–1936 and also a treasurer from 1928–1930. He was a member of Parliament from 1933–1936.

[103] Eljas Erkko started working for *Helsingin Sanomat* as the second editor-in-chief in 1927, with foreign and economic issues as his main responsibilities. Gradually Erkko's family obtained a majority ownership of *Helsingin Sanomat* and took control over it. On 1931, he became the only editor-in-chief of the newspaper and in 1932, he established another newspaper, *Ilta-Sanomat*. *Helsingin Sanomat* had started as a newspaper of the National Progress Party, but after Erkko became the sole editor-in-chief, one of his strategies was to expand the range of readers by developing a journalistic product (Manninen and Salokangas 2009). Although since 1931 Erkko was in full control of the *Helsingin Sanomat*, as Manninen and Salokangas point out, this made the newspaper independent from the National Progress Party, but still committed to its views. However, since 1931 *Helsingin Sanomat* was clearly firstly standing for Eljas Erkko's views and only secondly for the Progress Party's opinions (Manninen and Salokangas 2009, 187).

had been critical to the foreign policy of Erkko's predecessor Minister Rudolf Holsti. In 1938–1939 *Helsingin Sanomat* consistently supported government's foreign policy and it was perceived both in Finland and by foreign services to reflect Finland's official foreign policy line (Kulha 1989, 339). Erkko held that post until the beginning of the Winter War on 1 December 1939. During the Winter War, Erkko worked as the Chargé d'affaires at the Finnish embassy in Stockholm. After the war, Erkko returned to his newspaper empire. He died in 1965.

7.1.3. The decision-maker's understanding of the dominant societal discourses

Born into one of the most prominent Constitutional families in Finland, Eljas Erkko's political ideas and societal understandings were strongly influenced by his family background. Erkko's father Eero Erkko was an influential political figure for the Young Finns' and Constitutional movements since the beginning of the 1880s and later a politician for the National Progress Party, the successor to the Young Finns. In 1889 he was one of the founders of *Päivälehti*, the then-newspaper of the Young Finns movement and in 1909 became editor-in-chief of the newspaper, which had then changed the name to *Helsingin Sanomat*. He was also a member of parliament and minister from 1918–1920 (Manninen and Salokangas 2009, 159; Kulha 1989)[104]. Also, Erkko's mother Maissi Erkko and his uncle poet J.H. Erkko were constitutionalist activists. As Eero Erkko followed the constitutionalist policy of passive resistance, he was banished from Finland by the Russian authorities in 1903. Erkko himself explained his principles through his childhood experiences. As Erkko wrote to President Kallio in December 1939: "Since I was a small child I have been living under circumstances, where one has been ready to sacrifice everything for the fatherland" (cited in Manninen and Salokangas 2009, 301).

Erkko was also strongly anti-Russian and anti-social democratic. The emergence of these strong anti-Russian sentiments can also be explained through his childhood and youth experiences. According to the Soviet NKVD agent Jelisei T. Sinytsyn, who visited Finland disguised as a diplomat and presented his accreditation to Erkko on 12 November 1939, Erkko emphasized his family experience with Russia during their conversation. When Sinytsyn had stated that the Soviet Union will treat Finland with propriety, similar to tsarist Russia, Erkko had replied that his father had fought against Russian imperialism, and subsequently had been imprisoned and banished from the country (Rautkallio 2002, 78). Furthermore, during the civil war, the Red side imprisoned Erkko's father, while Erkko himself was fighting in the White army (Manninen and Salokangas 2009). In 1926, when arguing that building a Finnish defence capacity must be a priority, Erkko drew on his personal family experience by stating that "Here certain persons, who themselves did not participate in the fighting and

[104] On Eero Erkko see Zetterberg 2001.

did not sit in prisons, still do not understand the nature of our new responsibilities" (cited in Manninen and Salokangas 2009, 53).

In the red/white division that characterised the Finnish society in the interwar period, Erkko clearly represented the side of White Finland. As he had been serving as an officer on the White side in the civil war and as his father had been banished by the Russians and imprisoned by the Reds, Erkko had a negative attitude towards socialism and the social democrats in Finland. After the nomination of Väinö Tanner's social democratic minority government of 1926–1927, Erkko wrote to his father that it reminded him of the events of 1917 and 1918 and stated that the smallest incautiousness on behalf of the government "can foster the agenda of these people and circles who would also gladly see Finland under a fascist-type command" (cited in Manninen and Salokangas 2009, 54). Erkko had the rather typical White Finland's perception of Social Democrats as being untrustworthy. In 1927 in a letter to his father he expressed a concern of the possibility that the left side would get a majority in the elections as then the social democrats would "show their claws". He stated that "if this is a fascism that one wants to prevent the 1917–18 events from happening again, then I am also a fascist. I don't trust socialists" (cited in Manninen and Salokangas 2009, 55).

A good example of how Erkko negotiated between his key principles, Constitutionalism and the anti-communist/socialist/Russian sentiments, can be seen in his behaviour and arguments during the Lapua movement. Initially, *Helsingin Sanomat* understood the actions of Lapua, as they were seen as a reaction to communist provocations. However, after Lapua departed from the lawful framework, Erkko through his newspaper *Helsingin Sanomat* denounced it (Kulha 1989, 206, 212). In March 1930 after Lapua destroyed the communist newspaper's printing press, *Helsingin Sanomat* expressed its deep concern for the "lawful and law-based social order" (cited in Kulha 1989, 154). When the newspaper was accused of being too left-friendly and unpatriotic, *Helsingin Sanomat* replied: "For forty years *Helsingin Sanomat* and its predecessor has fought for lawfulness, democracy and progress. These principles it has wanted to faithfully follow also in the current situation. We have always rigorously opposed communism and socialism and will do so in the future, but while remaining on the side of the rule of law" (cited in Kulha 1989, 162). The newspaper firmly kept to this principle, lecturing on the law in its editorials both to communists and the right-wing movements, such as Lapua and the IKL. Furthermore, within the circumstances during the times of Lapua where the centre/left political groups saw the rule of law threatened, Erkko actively co-operated with the social democrats through the Lawfulness front, despite denouncing them as untrustworthy only few years before that. Erkko served as a representative of the National Progress Party in the Lawfulness front, which was formed by the Progress Party, the Swedish Party, part of the Agrarian Party and the Social Democrats in order to preserve the rule of law (Kulha 1989, 157). In autumn 1931, the centre-bourgeois and social democratic newspapers warned about the danger of a coup. *Helsingin Sanomat* concentrated on the issue all season; their

main focus was on the protection of law and order (Manninen and Salokangas 2009, 174–175). During the Mäntsälä rebellion in 1932[105], the first edition of *Ilta-Sanomat* urged the people to comply with law and order and stated, "What is happening now is by our criminal law called a rebellion and the authorities are required to use the force of arms to solve it" (cited in Manninen and Salokangas 2009, 145). Hence, one could argue that it was Erkko's strong constitutional beliefs about the importance of the rule of law that made it possible for him to co-operate with the Social Democrats in 1930s.

7.1.4. Erkko's understandings on foreign policy

In the aftermath of the war Erkko was criticized for not understanding the geopolitical realities and for his unrealistic attitudes also regarding international help that led Finland to war. His statement to the negotiator Paasikivi before the third round of negotiations, "Forget that the Soviet Union is a big country", was cited by Paasikivi to show that Erkko underestimated the power distribution between Finland and the Soviet Union (Paasikivi 1986c, 58). The next section will discuss Erkko's understandings of international affairs and Finnish foreign policy. It will be argued that Erkko's foreign policy line was not based on idealism, but that he consistently stressed the untrustworthiness of international guarantees, such as the League of Nations, and that he was aware of the Finno-Russian power disparity.

Foreign policy was the central and consistent focus of Erkko's political interests. From 1922–1927, Eljas Erkko worked as a diplomat in Finnish embassies in Paris (1922–1923), Tallinn (1924) and London (1924–1927). While working in Paris, Erkko started writing on international affairs. Throughout his career as a diplomat Erkko used *Helsingin Sanomat* in order to discuss the foreign policy questions he found important and to avert "wrong" politics (Manninen and Salokangas 2009, 45). After returning to Finland and establishing his career in *Helsingin Sanomat*, foreign affairs and policy remained one of his main priorities. Foreign policy was also the central topic in his election programmes. For example, when running for parliament in late 1929, the article on candidate Erkko's views focused mainly on foreign policy. Erkko argued that "good foreign policy is cheap defence, which can save both money and the lives of ten thousands men" (paraphrased Manninen and Salokangas 2009, 172, 189).

In the 1920s Erkko argued for strengthening the army as, in order to get any external aid, the country had to show willingness to protect itself. In 1926 Erkko argued that "The only thing that will save us is that we are militarily prepared so that to attack us will be as expensive as possible. No one wants to help someone who does not try to help himself" (cited in Manninen and Salokangas 2009, 53). His argument was that only if the state takes strong initiative to protect itself, external help would come forward. Writing to his father in 1926 that Finland

[105] The Mäntsala rebellion was a failed coup attempt orchestrated by Lapua movement to overthrow the Finnish government.

should turn down the non-aggression treaty offered by the Soviet Union he argued: that the focus has to on the defence forces. If the defence forces are in order "then it is possible to get support for example from England. [...] For our foreign policy position; it is simply inevitable that Finland will take care of this issue [non-aggression treaty] alone and calmly. Our position will come to depend from this test in a significant way" (cited in Manninen and Salokangas 2009, 52).

Erkko emphasised the need to focus on *realpolitik* in foreign policy. In 1929, when he ran for parliament, Erkko in his elections presentation stated that in the opinion of *Helsingin Sanomat*, Finnish foreign policy for the last couple of years has been more a politics of emotions than a politics of reason; not Finnish politics, but a politics of individuals. He also emphasized the need to permanent alertness of the Soviet threat, by referring to an interview with Estonian general Johan Laidoner in the *Chicago Tribune* that one has to remember that Russia's border states "still live on the edge of the volcano, which can erupt at any moment either for internal or external circumstances and can bring ruin to its neighbours" (cited in Manninen and Salokangas 2009, 189). Erkko had a strong life-long orientation towards Western countries; he was considered an anglophile. This was partly attributed to his marriage with a British woman, partly to his childhood exile in the United States and his diplomatic career abroad, and also to his life-long interest in foreign policy (which probably was also linked to the former aspects). However, despite of being an anglophile and well-informed on British politics (and probably also because of that) he did not have many illusions about the priorities of British foreign policy. In 1927, he wrote to his father from London that "Finland will not get guarantees from England. Only by stabilising and further improving our economic well-being and by working on our defence issues, we can become an actor in Europe whose existence will be considered" (cited in Manninen and Salokangas 2009, 53). With the help of diplomacy, England could be made "to feel a certain responsibility towards us", but still "All England's politics are based on cynically and calculatedly working for its own material benefits, and therefore the existence of a small state like ours does not matter anything if there are bigger benefits at stake" (cited in Manninen and Salokangas 2009, 53). His opinion had not changed much in autumn 1939 when he stated that the Brits were behaving as usual: letting others "bleed for their interests" (cited in Manninen and Salokangas 2009, 232–233).

Erkko had always been tough on Russia and was against any course of action that could be seen as appeasement or conciliation. He strongly criticised Foreign Minister Holsti in the autumn of 1937 when Finland voted in the Council of the League of Nations in favour of Spain's membership. Rumour had it that Holsti had done that in order to respond to the wishes of the Soviet Union, which supported the Spanish legal republican government, and made a deal about it with Litvinov (Manninen and Salokangas 2009, 191; also Soikkanen 1983). In autumn 1934 Erkko visited London to search for a "foreign policy for Finland", because France was moving closer to the Soviet Union. One possibility he considered was for Finland to move closer to Germany, on the condition

that its foreign policy be kept separate from National Socialism, a possibility that he soon rejected. When Mannerheim in January 1935, in order to make arms procurement easier for Finland, asked Erkko to put out *[in Helsingin Sanomat]* "some friendly words out of necessity about Germany", Erkko said that it is difficult to differentiate between Germany and Nazism (cited in Manninen and Salokangas 2009, 190).

Erkko's orientation on *realpolitik* as opposed to the idealism of 1920s is well shown through his consistent criticism in *Helsingin Sanomat* on the foreign policy line of diplomat and long-term foreign minister Rudolf Holsti. Holsti's foreign policy was based on the belief into international norms and guarantees and he therefore argued that Finland had to focus on the League of Nations and on Baltic-Scandinavian co-operation. Erkko strongly disagreed with Holsti's Baltic orientation as he did not believe in the ability of the Baltic States to defend themselves in the case of a military intervention from the Soviet Union. In April 1934, *Helsingin Sanomat* demanded that Finland should "keep its hands free" from the Baltics and to get support from the West (Manninen and Salokangas 2009, 190). Erkko believed that in case of crisis Finland would not be saved by the League of Nations, and therefore argued that Finland should follow Sweden in rejecting the unconditional principle of League of Nations sanctions. In 1937–1938 *Helsingin Sanomat* systematically attacked foreign minister Holsti's policy for putting too much hope on the rapidly weakening League of Nations and not focusing enough on the Scandinavian orientation (Manninen and Salokangas 2009, 191–194).

In late October 1937 the newspaper of the left wing of the Agrarian party argued that *Helsingin Sanomat*'s line on rejecting the unconditionality of the League of Nation sanctions contradicts constitutional principles. The writer argued that it was in the interests of small states that international law should not be abandoned the moment when the dictatorships turn to the path of violence. The writer stated that Finland was committed to the principles of legal battles of the oppression times (the Russification period), and the policy line *Helsingin Sanomat* is supporting means turning one's back to these principles. *Helsingin Sanomat*'s reply illustrates Erkko's understanding of the constitutional principles in foreign policy. *Helsingin Sanomat* wrote: "The several decades old principles from the times of legal battles require one to do its part in order to be able to protect justice and freedom, not to hide one's inactivity behind some practically powerless offences" (quoted in Soikkanen 1983, 187–188). Therefore, for Erkko constitutional principles meant showing initiative and willingness to protect one's country, an idea that was present in his writings on foreign policy already in the 1920s.

The main line on Erkko's foreign policy that developed in early 1930s and to which he would remain fully committed throughout 1930s was the Scandinavian orientation and the neutrality policy that came with it. On 28 September 1938, at the time of the Czechoslovakian crisis, Erkko formulated in *Helsingin Sanomat* the Finnish Nordic neutrality course. In his letter to the prime minister (and his fellow party member) Cajander he clarified the meaning of this

editorial: when Finland gets involved in an international conflict, it should not show solidarity with Germany but should stay neutral. A Russian interference could also be avoided "if we would go with England and France [in terms of neutrality], which would be morally right and which law requires" (cited in Manninen and Salokangas 2009, 194). To Paasikivi Erkko said that Czechoslovakia was a good lesson to Finland in defence issues (Manninen and Salokangas 2009, 194).

To conclude, Erkko did not believe in the League of Nations coming to Finland's aid in time of crisis, but his foreign policy was based on a firm Scandinavian orientation and the strict neutrality policy that came with it. He stressed the Soviet threat and was unsentimental about Baltic co-operation, arguing that the Baltic states would not be able to protect themselves in case of conflict. He did not have high hopes for foreign aid, but at the same time that did not mean that one should not actively ask for it. Erkko believed that according to Constitutional principles one has to first show initiative and be able to defend oneself and that could bring about the possibility of external help. In International Relations theory terms, Erkko's foreign policy framework was realist: it operated within the realist self-help system where states, such as Britain, are selfish power-maximizers, and therefore international guarantees are powerless in case of international conflict. However, these systemic constraints were not a reason not to act, rather vice versa: taking initiative was the only option for a small state if it wanted to have any influence over its fate. Next, Erkko's foreign policy line in autumn 1939 will be explored.

7.1.5. Erkko's policy line in autumn 1939

Erkko summarised his policy line during the negotiations in the following terms:

> 1. The negotiations were initiated by the Soviet Union; 2. Finland cannot have a [foreign] garrison on its mainland without violating its neutrality policy; 3. The same goes for an island when rent is in question; 4. Russia will first aim at limited goals in order to get a better position to present new demands; 5. If we have this clearly in front of us, we only have to keep a strict course and prescribe these borders that we do not extend; 6. The Soviet Union does not want a military conflict, as it does not want the hassle that it would bring along; 7. The world is of the opinion that Finland will sell its position if it conciliates. Our future really is in our own hands; 8. Everything that our international situation is based on […] is now under threat (These points were drafted by Erkko on 26 October 1939; Manninen and Salokangas suggest that his aim was to outline the Finnish policy for foreign representatives (cited in Manninen and Salokangas 2009, 264–265)).

The central element of Erkko's policy line was his full commitment to the Scandinavian orientation and the neutrality policy, which was one of his main reasons for not ceding Hanko for a Soviet military base since this would have

ended Finland's neutrality policy. He wrote to Tanner on 31 October 1939, before the negotiators' third trip to Moscow: "We must not budge on Hanko or on any other locality in that neighbourhood, since if we do, our plight is plain, and Scandinavia is out (Tanner 1957, 57–58). The neutrality policy was based on the understanding that Finland had to stay within the limits of international law.

Erkko's other main point was that the Russians were bluffing and playing a war of nerves. He stated "If Finland takes a firm, rigid stand on Hanko, the Russians will give up. The Soviet Union will keep after it to the last, as it could be used to squeeze out other concessions, but the Soviet Union would not let matters to come to a break" (Tanner 1950, 55). He also stated in his letter to Tanner on 31 October 1939 that "It should be kept in mind that [their claim to] Hanko is the top trump in their hand, as they know how little we like it. By exploiting it they can squeeze out of us what they will, and they will give up only at the very end (Tanner 1950, 57–58). Also on 1 November, Erkko sent a wire to Paasikivi and Tanner to Moscow which said "Molotov's speech is regarded here as a tactical manoeuvre to frighten us. Similar tactics have been used successfully against Estonia. We are calm. The Russians must be shown a firm front" (Tanner 1957, 62).

Was Erkko's inflexibility based solely on his belief that the Soviets were bluffing? As was shown in the first part of this case study, Finland's policy did not change significantly when the external pressures increased, when it became clear that there were no immediate guarantees that Finland would get external military aid and when Molotov made the demands public on 30 October 1939. Since before that speech Erkko had stated that there was no danger as long as the content of the proposals was not made public, but the situation would be different if it would become a prestige question for Stalin, the question is, if Erkko acknowledged that the situation is different, why did he not alter his policy? Erkko argued that this was not because he failed to understand the seriousness of the situation. In his letter to President Kallio from December 1939 Erkko wrote: "I have not all these times let my feelings loose, but done what I could to maintain my calm under very difficult circumstances. I have also been all the time aware of the extraordinary responsibility" (quoted in Manninen and Salokangas 2009, 301).

Both Erkko himself and the main critic of his policy line, Paasikivi[106], have stated that Erkko's policy was based on his constitutional principles. As

[106] Paasikivi's criticism towards Erkko was written after World War II, within the framework of the Cold War Finnish identity. Browning argues that this narrative, developed and promoted extensively by Juho Paasikivi (president 1946–1956) and Urho Kekkonen (president 1956–1981) claimed that "it was the Finnish national identity of the inter-war period which was responsible for Finland's wars with the Soviet Union. This inter-war identity, it was claimed, had been characterized by widespread Russophobia in Finnish society and the depiction of the Soviet Union as the hereditary enemy" (Browning 2002, 51). The Cold War narrative saw Soviet security concerns as legitimate: "Indeed, the notion that Soviet interests in Finland were purely strategic, defensive and legitimate was inscribed into the national memory through historical texts that drew an historical continuity between the

Paasikivi stated: "Erkko was raised in a climate of 'passive resistance' where the meaning of formal, legal rights are considered greater than these unfortunately still are" (Paasikivi 1986c, 58). In 1942, in his letter to Cajander (from 12 May 1942), the Prime Minister in autumn 1939, Erkko justified his policy along the same lines. He argued that "law had to be kept indisputable", and no mistakes should have been made that would give Russia a weapon against Finland (Manninen and Salokangas 2009, 301). Erkko's focus on Constitutional ideas is also well demonstrated in his statement that "[t]he law is on our side and in the eyes of the whole world Russia is bound by them" (Paasikivi 1986, 58). He also wrote to his diary in autumn 1939 "I cannot give up my principles. What is given up, without a battle, to a violent threat or attack, can never be demanded back" (cited in Manninen and Salokangas 2009, 279). This thought, that political rights that one allows to be taken away without putting up a fight cannot be retrieved, is another Constitutional principle from the Russification period.

Since Erkko saw Finnish positions through a constitutional understanding, he also assessed the demands of the Soviet Union within the same framework. Therefore he and the Finnish government, when discussing the Soviet security demands, focused on legitimate, not political demands. The Finnish military had stated that Hanko was actually not absolutely necessary for the Soviet Union's legitimate security requirements, as the Gulf of Finland could also be closed in other ways, such as with a minefield or using another island. For Erkko this was another sign that Russia's claims on Hanko were not based on legitimate security claims, but rather used as a tactical weapon, a trump card to be traded against something else (Manninen and Salokangas 2009).

Within the constitutional discourse it was the obligation of Finland to protect its neutrality, and therefore it could not agree to demands that would weaken the Finnish defence line to the extent that the country would not be able to protect itself (Niukkanen 1951, Manninen and Salokangas 2009). On 1 November Erkko stated in a public speech: "It is impossible for Finland to agree to a solution that would deprive us of a possibility to protect our independence and neutrality. Every independent and free country has that right […] These two principles, neutrality and the right to self-defence, form the basis for the Finnish position. If Finland wants to keep its independence and freedom it has to follow these principles" (*Helsingin Sanomat*, 2 November 1939, 8). He argued that "The cornerstone of the Finnish state is that we adhere to the agreements we have signed. […] We also have this understanding that the trust that Finland has and the international position that it has achieved are based on this principal position that Finland will fulfil its contractual obligations. At the present mo-

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concerns of the Soviet leadership and those of Russia's tsars, all the way back to Peter the Great. Of particular importance in this new narrative was Paasikivi's appropriation of the scientific language of the Enlightenment as a description of his own policies. The appropriation of terms such as realism, rationalism and pragmatism as intrinsic elements of the language of the new narrative essentially delegitimized both inter-war foreign policy and current contending views as irrational and therefore as irresponsible and non-viable" (Browning 2002, 52).

ment when new agreements are demanded from us, it is our right to ask which guarantees will we get that these new agreements will be respected" (*Helsingin Sanomat,* 2 November 1939, 8). In the same speech Erkko also spoke about the lessons Finland has learned from history: "There are values that even the smallest state cannot sacrifice. When these fundamental values are in question, then Finland knows which road it has to choose, however difficult this road will be. While making its choice, Finland has to make sure that it is aware of its righteousness. From the lessons received from history Finland knows that justice will always prevail in the end" (*Helsingin Sanomat*, 2 November 1939, 8).

For Paasikivi, Erkko's inability to understand the power disparity and increasing external pressures was related to his constitutional thinking: "For [Erkko] it was difficult to adapt to the idea that a small state and a big state that can be legally on the same level, but hold a different status *in real life*" [emphasis mine]. For Paasikivi, his ignorance manifested itself in Erkko's letter to Paasikivi, which the former handed over before Paasikivi left for the third and last trip to Moscow. Erkko wrote, "forget that Russia is a big state" when for Paasikivi he should have written "don't forget that Russia is a big state" (Paasikivi, 1986c, 58). As was discussed before, Erkko believed that in foreign policy one had to show a strong willingness to protect one's country. This corresponds to the constitutional idea argued by constitutionalist activist Edvard Westermarck in 1913 that justice does not win by itself, but "we ourselves will help justice to the victory" (cited in Paasikivi 1986a, 37). Therefore, one could suggest that Erkko's idea was not about actually forgetting the size of Russia, but rather argued that if you want to negotiate within a situation where the asymmetry between two parties is so extensive you cannot take this disparity as the basis of your negotiations, because then you could also simply drop the negotiations.

7.1.6. Conclusion

The current section discussed the social construction of the primary decision-maker, foreign minister Eljas Erkko. It was shown that Erkko's understandings on Finland's society and external threats were based on constitutional and White Finland discourses. Erkko understood foreign policy according to constitutional principles that prioritised self-initiative and responsibility. The section on Erkko's policy line showed that his policy line on Nordic orientation and strict neutrality policy was based on his constitutional principles. Could this lead one to conclude that Finland's policy decision was made possible because of the beliefs of the person who happened to be the foreign minister of the time? What would have happened if for example Paasikivi would have been the foreign minister of Finland? Would that have meant a different decision-making process and a different result? As was mentioned in the previous chapters, although Erkko's central role in the decision-making process is commonly recognised, it is also recognised that Erkko's opinion was backed by the majority of the government and enjoyed strong societal support. In order to understand

what that meant and how the state and society relationship constructed the balance between the domestic and external pressures on the state, the next part of the chapter will focus on the interaction between the state and society in autumn 1939.

7.2. Domestic discourses and interactions between them regarding the decision-making in autumn 1939

This section will explore how the dominant discourses and their interaction influenced the decision-making process in Finland in 1939. It will focus on the societal constraints on the decision-making process in 1939 and how these constraints were processed by the decision-makers. The current study argues that in the decision-making it is not simply about the private beliefs of the decision-maker, whether one believes in power or that in the end justice wins. Social ideas in the public sphere do empower and constrain the decision-makers as these ideas make certain social practices acceptable and possible, and others unacceptable. It has been stated that the government's policy in 1939 had the support of the majority of the Finnish society and that the government knew that the majority of people would not agree to the Soviet demands (Soikkanen 1983; Paasikivi 1958, 1986c; Manninen and Salokangas 2009; Kirby 1979; Ahto 1989; Hentilä 1999). How did they know what people wanted? What were the societal domestic pressures and how did the interaction between the state and the society happen? The next section will focus on the societal pressures on the government and on the interaction between the government and the society. The section will first look at the different opinions within the circle of decision-makers. Next, it will look at the understandings of the situation within the society and on the interactions between the state and the society.

7.2.1. Understandings in the government

The discourses that were institutionally empowered and therefore present in the government were the Constitutional discourse (most prominently through the National Progress Party, but also through the Agrarian Union, the Social Democrats and the Swedish People's Party), White Finland (the Agrarian Union and the National Progress Party) and Red Finland (the Social Democrats). A majority of the government agreed that Finland had to stick to its foreign policy based on a Scandinavian orientation and neutrality and that ceding Hanko was out of question. The "hard-liners" of that approach were Erkko and defence minister Niukkanen. Also, Prime Minister Cajander, who at the first meetings mainly acted as facilitator, started expressing his support for this line, which was shown by his public speeches in November. President Kallio did not take an active role, but aligned himself with Erkko's line (Soikkanen 1983, 336). In addition, all factions in the parliament agreed with the government's position and when the chairmen of the factions were asked "how far the government

should go in making concessions", all factions stated that cession of Hanko is completely out of question (Tanner, 1950, 52–55). Furthermore, some of the parties found it difficult to accept even these limited concessions the government was ready to make. Both the Agrarian Party and the Coalition Party had been worried prior to the government reporting to the heads of party factions on the content of the demands and the counterproposal, that the government would be too prone to compromise. These two parties and the Patriotic People's Movement had difficulties agreeing to the limited concessions the government proposed (Soikkanen 1983, 341; Tanner 1950, 52–55).

The Constitutional understandings can be also observed in the positions of other government members. As was argued by the Finance Minister and member of the Finland's delegation to Moscow, Social Democrat Väinö Tanner, ceding the port of Hanko would have not been "in harmony with Finland's international position nor with the unconditional neutrality it had espoused and which the Soviet government itself had approved" (Tanner 1957, 65). The discourse also implied that complying with the law and justice is particularly important for a small state. As argued by President Kallio, the government could not accede to agreements that violated the constitutional laws such as the concession of mainland territory. When negotiator Paasikivi had pointed out that this was not an assessment or debate on legal aspects that the country was getting into, but adjusting to the great power's interests, Kallio replied that the justification for a small state's existence was based on the belief in law and justice (Hokkanen 1986, 272).

Since the government saw Finnish positions dominantly through a constitutional understanding, it also assessed the demands of the Soviet Union within the same framework. Therefore, when discussing the Soviet security demands, the government's focus was on the legitimate, not political demands. Furthermore, within the Constitutional understanding it was the obligation of Finland to protect its neutrality, and therefore it could not agree to the demands that would weaken the Finnish defence line to the extent that the country would not be able to protect itself (Niukkanen 1951). Also, the government argued that Hanko was actually not absolutely necessary for the Soviet Union's legitimate security requirements, as the Gulf of Finland could also be closed in other ways. As Prime Minister Cajander argued in a radio speech on 4 November 1939: "The security of St. Petersburg does not require dismantling the defence fortifications on the Isthmus as these are made only for defence, not attack, as are all other fortifications in our country. […] One has to consider Finnish security and defence possibilities. […] The Soviet base in Hanko is not necessary to increase St. Petersburg's security" (cited in Ahto 1989, 66). Therefore, the government maintained that it went as far as it could to satisfy Soviet Union's "legitimate aspirations" (Tanner 1956, 322).

7.2.2. Radical-nationalist discourse

The Radical-nationalist discourse was not explicitly represented in the government. Nevertheless, both right-wing political parties present in parliament such as the Coalition party and the Patriotic People's Movement (IKL, successor of Lapua), or the organisations, such as Academic Karelian Society (AKS), carrying the ideas of the discourse, supported government's policy line. Sampo Ahto points out that the steps that the government took in October 1939 were similar to the demands that the right-wing organisations had made for years. Ahto states that this was not because Finnish society had suddenly become extreme-right, but because as "IKL had throughout its existence been in a mental war situation with the Soviet Union and communism", this "mental mobilization" spread to the other groups in Finland's political sphere when in the autumn of 1939 the threat from the Soviet Union became real (Ahto 1989, 31). Although, IKL and the Coalition party had some difficulties accepting these limited concessions the government was ready to make, they did support government's policy. On 14 October 1939 the newspaper of the right-wing Coalition party wrote that "the Coalition party will give its support to a government's politics that is focused on protecting the country's neutrality and inviolability and Nordic cooperation" (cited in Soikkanen 1983, 361). One external factor that influenced Radical-nationalism's interactions and dynamics with other discourses was Germany's behaviour in autumn 1939, with the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact in particular. Germany's decision to sign the agreement led the radical-right to redefine their priorities (Soikkanen 1983, 345) and to stand behind the government and agree to limited concessions. The head of the AKS, Vilho Helanen, stated in a speech in early November: "Many of the external factors some of us had built their faith on for the future have collapsed in the last weeks and months, and we feel that they cannot be restored" (cited in Soikkanen 1983, 346).

For the Radical-nationalist discourse, the need to protect the country was a given, which for a small state meant that there had to be national unity and preparedness to defend the country. Therefore, the organisations carrying this discourse had started their activities for building up the nation's defence determination already in 1934. AKS had been building up their organization for wartime propaganda purposes since 1937 and in the summer of 1939 conducted a project where more than thousand volunteers performed fortification works in the Karelian Isthmus (Ahto 1989). In October 1939, AKS's delegation led with its head Vilho Helanen met with defence minister Niukkanen and foreign minister Erkko and offered its network and experience to establish an organisation called *Maan turva (Country's Protection),* that would strengthen the solidarity and unity and the overall defence motivation within the Finnish society. It was also a wartime propaganda tool and gathered information on the dominant moods in society, producing the mood reviews to the government (Mertanen 2005; Haataja 1997).[107] This co-operation between Helanen, the developer and

[107] The organisation covered the entire country and by mid-October they had 160 employees, which increased into the thousands very fast. One of the roles of *Maan Turva* was to

promoter of the radical right ideology, and liberal-constitutionalist Erkko has been seen as surprising by Manninen and Salokangas (2009). However, it is not that surprising if one considers Erkko's White Finland background and also the principles that Constitutionalist and Radical-nationalist discourses shared, such as their perception of Russia as the main threat to Finland. In addition, the solution for the Soviet threat was seen similarly by these societal understandings, as both argued for continuous and persistent resistance (although the nature of this resistance differed), where one has to take initiative, not remain in a reactive role.

7.2.3. Conciliation discourse

The Conciliation discourse, that focused on the power disparity between the Soviet Union and Finland and the limited material capabilities of Finland, was also present in government circles. Finnish negotiator Paasikivi had himself belonged to the Conciliation/Old Finns' movement during the Russification period and therefore his foreign policy understandings were based on the Conciliation principles. The leading principle stated that if there is a considerable power discrepancy between two states, the weaker state has to avoid conflict: "The old 'Old Finns' principle is that in international affairs one has to consider the power relations and when weighing them, one has to use the little sense that God has given to this person. This principle is still correct" (Paasikivi 1986c, 10). "If the difference between the powers was monumental, one had to avoid the conflict altogether" (Paasikivi 1958, 184). Therefore Paasikivi did argue within the government circles for greater concessions. Also, Mannerheim expressed his concern about the limited military capabilities of Finland and argued that as the army cannot fight, war must be avoided (Tanner 1957). Also, Tanner advocated for more flexibility. However, an important aspect here is that none of them argued publicly for more flexibility or greater concessions (Soikkanen 1983, 336). Soikkanen brings out that during the five days that were between the second and third round of the negotiations, the politicians who argued for greater concessions within governmental circles did not try to actively influence the opinions outside of the government. Tanner did not try to influence his own party faction, but on the contrary tried to prevent the left-wing of his faction to get information about the talks and the Soviet demands. Paasikivi did give a pessimistic view to the Coalition Party's (where he himself belonged to) parliamentary faction and argued that the Soviet Union would not drop its demand for Hanko. However, the Coalition Party had difficulties accepting even these limited concessions the government had proposed (Soikkanen 1983, 341), and therefore did not support Paasikivi's view. Paasikivi admits that government's

use the AKS's extensive network to survey opinions among the people. The effectiveness of the organisation that the AKS had prepared for a while was shown by the aspect that the first mood review report was received by the ministers already on 15 October (Manninen and Salokangas 2009, 240–241).

position enjoyed the support of the parliamentary factions: "I would have expected that the bourgeois members of parliament could have seen things with sensible reality. But actually this kind of thought barely existed in these circles" (Paasikivi 1986c, 75).

Mannerheim expressed his concerns to the Coalition Party's parliamentary faction and stated that in the worst case Hanko must be given up. Nevertheless, during the third round of negotiations, when Erkko stated that ceding Hanko can be discussed if Mannerheim would give his recommendation in writing, Mannerheim refused (Soikkanen 1983, 338–339; Pakaslahti 1970, 146). After the Winter War began, Tanner in his private letters stated that he should have fought more actively for greater flexibility and concessions. However, as Soikkanen points out, Tanner came to that opinion only after the "inflexibility policy" had failed (Soikkanen 1983, 341). Likewise, Paasikivi's strong public criticism towards Finland's behaviour in autumn 1939 was written after World War II in a very different political environment.

7.2.4. Unanimity

Politicians who argued for greater concessions did not have the option to publicly promote that idea, partly because of the narrative of unanimity, rooted in the constitutional/lawfulness understandings and through the understanding of Soviet threat in the White Finland/Radical-nationalism discourses. The understanding that societal unity was absolutely necessary during this period of international crisis was an idea shared by all main parliamentary factions in autumn 1939. The narrative of unanimity had been promoted by the Lawfulness front and the Red-Earth government in the 1930s in order to consolidate the society, in regard to the White/Red division, firstly in the aftermath of Lapua movement and secondly because of the increasing volatility of the international climate. The Radical-right had been calling for societal unanimity in response to the communist and Soviet threat throughout the interwar period. The external situation of 1939 allowed for these two understandings of unanimity to overlap. This idea of unanimity was promoted by all main political groups throughout the autumn of 1939 with the understanding that divisions between Red and White Finland still existed in the society. As Prime Minister Cajander stated in his speech after the military exercises on 12 August 1939: "In 1918 we were divided in two, a broken nation, whose resilience against a serious external threat would have been limited. Now we are more or less an integral nation, of which every member considers Finland his fatherland and is equally ready to defend it. […] It would be naive to claim that our national unanimity would be already on steadfast ground. It requires, like military armament, continuous strengthening" (cited in Kalela 1985, 459).

From the Red Finland part of the society, the leader of the Social Democrats Väinö Tanner had a speech at his party's 40th anniversary celebration on 8 October 1939, a few days after Finland had received the Soviet invitation for talks,

in which he focused on the necessity for full unanimity within the society. He argued that

> it is important now that our nation will remain unanimous. The disagreements, which until now have put their mark on our state, have to be put aside for now. These are after all small issues when the nation's independence and future are at stake. If danger threatens from outside, we cannot afford these disagreements. Outside pressure commonly ties different layers of a nation into a strong entity. […] The Finnish people have in this respect demonstrated admirable calmness and self-control (Tanner 1956, 295).

The Social Democrats kept a close eye on the more leftist stream within their ranks and expelled radical-left parliamentarians from its parliament faction (Soikkanen 1983). On the radical-right side, Helanen, the head of the AKS, was in the light of the Karelia fortifications and its fund-raising action, where the Red part of the society participated less than the White part, worried that there might be a similar kind of problems with mobilisation. Therefore, one of the main aims of *Maan Turva* was to promote and strengthen national unity (Haataja 1997, 160).

President Kallio in his speech in front of parliamentarians on 2 September stated: "It must be hoped that having forgotten the disagreements between different parts of society we can appear unanimous as a nation. This is a serious obligation of this moment" (Kallio 1942, 310). Prime Minister Cajander from the centrist National Progress Party stated in a radio speech on 4 November that "language, party, class and ideological differences have faded" (quoted in Soikkanen 1983, 366). Also, before the negotiators left for their third (and last) round of talks to Moscow on 31 October, the government advised the press to emphasize the "'total unanimity' of the government, parliament and the army leadership" (Soikkanen 1983, 344). The newspaper of the radical-right AKS, Suomen Heimo, in November 1939 argued: "The democratic state regime has decisively influenced the unanimity of the Finnish nation. This regime has committed the whole nation to be responsible for important political solutions. […] No outsider can alienate the nation and its government to take different opinions in important existential questions" (cited in Soikkanen 1983, 364). Nevertheless, while emphasizing this idea of unanimity and the necessity of standing behind the government, it was also clearly stressed which principles this unity represented. The Coalition party newspaper stated that the government will be supported if its policy is focused on protecting Finland's neutrality, inviolability and the Nordic cooperation (Soikkanen 1983, 361).

The Right-wing side was also clear on whose line it followed in the government. As the IKL newspaper *Savon Suunta* wrote: "In the government there at the moment sitting two men who have the support and trust of the Finnish nation: Erkko and Niukkanen" (cited in Soikkanen 1983, 345). The oppositional right was thus behind the government but only as long as the government did not opt for greater concessions. Since some politicians from right-wing parties and from the centrist Agrarian Union (defence minister Niukkanen's party)

considered the government's limited concessions already too extensive, there was a possibility that they would withdraw their support from the government's policy line if greater concessions were argued for in public, which would have undermined the unity (Soikkanen 1983, 342). For example, after the third round of negotiations the Coalition party was looking for votes to prevent a Finnish-Soviet pact to be handled in parliament as an extraordinary matter (in case there would have been an agreement it would have had to be ratified by the parliament) (Soikkanen 1983, 342). Soikkanen gave the example of the social democrat Tanner, who, as a representative of the moderate wing of Social Democrats, had a left-wing opposition within his own party and parliamentary group. If he had promoted bigger concessions among them, this could have undermined the unity and the position of the Social Democrats within the country (Soikkanen 1983, 341)[108]. Therefore, the narrative of unanimity can be seen as a social constraint on Finnish politicians in 1939. It also functions as an example of how social constraints on decision-makers can be of their own making, created through their own actions and statements. At the root of the unanimity narrative were the ideas promoted by the Lawfulness front and later the Red-Earth coalition throughout the 1930s, which were based on the need to focus on national reconciliation and on external Othering instead of internal Othering. As national unanimity was considered a safeguard for a small state in times of crisis and the government's position was based on the principles of Nordic cooperation and strict neutrality policy, this focus on unity constrained the government's possibilities to adjust its policy. Also, as argued by Mercer, the process does matter: "For example, how people experience a war can determine its outcome" (Mercer 2010, 21). In this case, the period between the invitation to the talks and the Red Army attacking took two months. During this period, the interactions between the decision-makers and the society focused on emphasizing the necessity of unity and demonstrating the unity between these principles. Hence, this process itself, consisting of interactions between decision-makers and society, created a kind of unanimity-trap for the decision-makers. The behaviour of the radical-right in autumn 1939 is an example of how external and internal current events can influence the dynamics between discourses and as a result also influence the decision-making process. In this case, it was not only that the oppositional radical-right (IKL) and right (Coalition Party) parties supported the government, but that their vocal support strengthened this unanimity discourse,

[108] As the possibilities of the radical-left to participate in the public sphere had been severely curbed in the early 1930s their views are not discussed in further detail here. However, the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact affected the radical-left in a similar way as it did the radical-right. As stated in a state police's situation review from August 1939: "For many communists this agreement was such a bitter ideological blow that they were not able to digest it, but publicly reviled Stalin with their peers and proclaimed giving up communism entirely" (cited in Nevakivi 1989, 16; also Hentilä 1989, 81). Another reason why Finnish communists did not take any visible actions in autumn 1939, and many of them ended up following the government's line, was that news of Stalinist purges, with many peasants under its victims, had spread in the country (Nevakivi 1989).

which in turn made it more difficult for the government to opt for more extensive concessions. The next section will explore how these principles of neutrality, territorial inviolability and the Nordic cooperation, that the unanimity narrative was based on, became not possible to compromise on for the decision-makers.

7.3. Societal understandings and pressures

The government's policy in 1939 had the support of the majority of the Finnish society and the government knew that the majority of people would not agree to the Soviet demands (Soikkanen 1983; Paasikivi 1958, 1986c; Jakobson 1961; Ahto 1989; Tanner 1957). The reluctance by the Conciliation side, to publicly talk about Finland's weak military capabilities, geopolitical realities and to argue for the need for greater flexibility and concessions, illustrates well the influence of dominant discourses. Finnish negotiator Paasikivi, although himself representing the Conciliation views, admits that Erkko's and government majority's view was based on the broader societal understandings. Paasikivi pointed out that the overall public opinion, the government and parliament believed in this supremacy of international law and that is applicable to all states. This was also why having 'clean papers' (full compliance with international law) was seen that important (Paasikivi 1958, 185). Therefore, the government knew that public opinion would support them only as long as they did not agree to the Soviet demands (Ahto 1989). As Defence Minister Niukkanen and negotiator Paasikivi himself had pointed out at the War Cabinet meeting on 16 October, the domestic political conditions did not allow for agreeing to all Soviet demands (Soikkanen 1983, 336). Also, foreign minister Erkko was worried how the public would react to these limited concessions the government was prepared to make. In his letter to negotiator Tanner, before the latter left for Moscow for the third time, Erkko wrote: "I should be grateful if you would ask the Russians whether they have anything against our reporting publicly to the Parliament, and thus to the people as a whole, what their original demands were in their entirety. Otherwise it will become very difficult to handle the matter" (Tanner 1957, 57–58). Soikkanen also points out that Erkko asked Mannerheim to give his recommendation on ceding Hanko in writing (which the latter refused), as he expected pressure and resistance from the parliament and public (Soikkanen 1983). How did the government know what the society wanted, especially considering that the content of the negotiations was not public during the large period of talks. What were the societal pressures that made Paasikivi and Mannerheim, both well-respected Finnish statesmen, to refrain from publicly expressing their concerns?

Maan Turva, the organisation that the Academic Karelian Society (AKS) created in co-operation with the government for propaganda and information purposes, reported that people had in general a feeling of unity throughout the negotiations period. This unity was promoted and spread by newspapers and by community leaders, such as pastors (Ahto 1989, 41). Public opinion was nevertheless clear about what are the limits of this unity were, and hence what is expected from the government. As one mood review stated: "only if not a centimetre would be given to the Russians, not even for rent, then the whole nation is behind the government". Another report brought out the concern of the citizens in Viipuri: "the only aspect that the people I have met are afraid of is that the government possibly, without a fight, will cede something to the Russians" (cited in Ahto 1989, 47–48). The full spectrum of the Finnish media supported the government's policy. As the newspaper of the Social Democratic party *Finnish Social Democrat* wrote on 9 October 1939: "If the question would be about giving up our sovereignty, the Finnish government nor the people, who are united behind the government in this matter, cannot be involved in that" (cited in Ahto 1989, 30–31). When the Social Democrat Tanner became a negotiator, some people were worried about it, but this was not a dominant feeling. The mood reviews were very positive about Erkko and called him "a firm man" (cited in Ahto 1989, 48). Although there was a lot of optimism among the people, less optimistic notes also existed as one review stated that "we hope that negotiations will bring good results. Here the majority feels that it is impossible to resist the Russians" (cited in Ahto 1989, 46). In mid-October the mood among the people were considered calm and people were apparently used to the 'war of nerves'. One mood report stated that "it is believed that the danger is over but still there is readiness for all options". Another report called the overall mood even too optimistic (cited in Ahto 1989, 57). *Uusi Suomi* wrote on 21 October after Paasikivi returned from Moscow that "the nature of the agreements between the Soviet Union and the Baltic States are such that their neutrality has been destroyed and their independence has become questionable. Finland cannot go for these political agreements" (cited in Ahto 1989, 57). After 24 October, when it was announced that the talks were interrupted again and Paasikivi had to return from Moscow, according to the mood reports it did not change the overall feeling much (Ahto 1989, 58). *Helsingin Sanomat* wrote on 25 October that "one cannot haggle in questions of sovereignty and independence" (cited in Ahto 1989, 58). That the situation should be considered a war of nerves (which was strongly stated by Erkko) was also stated in the newspaper, *Ilkka-lehti*, which wrote on 27 October that "[t]he situation requires nerves and composure. Now we can also feel how it is to live in times of a war of nerves" (cited in Ahto 1989, 59).

On 30 October, Molotov's speech made the content of the Russian demands known to the public. As was showed earlier this Soviet move did not change the Finnish government's policy. It also apparently did not create much panic in society. *Maan turvan's* mood review from 1 November states that "[f]irstly it

made us a bit pale, when we heard the news. But it is better that we are no longer in the dark. No talk about giving up, the defence idea was even more popular than before" (cited in Ahto 1989, 63). On some occasions Molotov's speech rather increased the anti-Russian sentiments as, for example, one known leftist activist in Hanko stated that "no damn way could one agree to these demands". People were more worried that "the negotiators would have papers in their pockets where they have promised too much" (cited in Ahto 1989, 63). The state police's report from early November also states that the overall opinion is strong "and the motivation to defend the country has increased" (cited in Ahto 1989, 63). On 1–2 November several newspapers (*Hufvudstadsbladet, Suomen Sosiaaldemokraati*) wrote that the demand regarding Hanko was utterly unacceptable. The first reaction of *Ilta-Sanomat* was that the fundamental values of the Finnish nation are the independence and neutrality of the country and that no compromises could be made regarding them. Also other newspapers wrote about the need not to compromise on these issues (Ahto 1989, 61–62). When it became known that Erkko had required the negotiators to return to Finland on 14 October the media wrote that "it is better to be without agreement than to have a bad one" (cited in Ahto 1989, 80). On 4 November Prime Minister Cajander made a speech that focused on the firm line of Finland and the impossibility to concede Kannas or Hanko: "[i]f we cannot achieve peace and good relations with honourable ways, we are not going to surrender dishonourably [...] the Finnish nation has decided to defend its freedom and independence. It will stick to this decision". This speech got very positive feed-back from the majority of the society (Ahto 1989, 67). In mid-November some people had gotten worried about the duration of the talks. The men at the extra reserve trainings (which in reality was a mobilisation) were still in a good mood, with one of them stating that "these Russians should finally come, so we can get back to work from here" (Ahto 1989, 82). After the negotiators returned and nothing seemed to happen, people started thinking that the threat of the war had passed and not many believed in a military conflict. In general, people were satisfied with the government's actions (Ahto 1989, 83, 85).

People also expressed their opinion by taking part in different societal initiatives. One of the first reactions from the society when it came out that Finland had received an invitation to Moscow, was that thousands of people showed up at the Helsinki railway station to send negotiator Paasikivi off. When Paasikivi left for his first trip to Moscow (9 October 1939), there were thousands of people present, singing patriotic songs. This was significant as there was nothing much known about his departure other than a few official sentences (Ahto 1989, 34). This gathering was a spontaneous one as no newspaper or organisation had called for it (Jakobson 1961, 113). A good example of the songs sung was the *Val laulu* (Oath Song), which said: "Listen to the sacred oath, dear Finland! A foreign power must not touch you. We will protect you, defend with our blood. Be carefree, your sons are on guard" (Paasikivi 1986c, 4). In addition to the people present at the station, hundreds of thousands listened to the occasion on their radios (Ahto 1989, 34). Thousands of people gathered at the railway

stations throughout Finland every time the negotiators left for Moscow in October and November 1939 (Paasikivi 1986c; Tanner 1950). Although the content of the talks was not made public, in the second half of October the delegations began to call on the government "expressing their intransigent opposition to the demands" (Tanner 1957, 33). A good example of that was a large delegation representing all parishes of the Karelian Isthmus (border area), who came to Helsinki already in mid-October, had meetings with the government members and "firmly demanded the rejection of even the least cession of Isthmus territory" (Tanner 1950, 33).[109] According to Defence Minister Niukkanen, the delegation stated that if "[e]ven the smallest area would be ceded voluntarily, Russians and the whole world would conclude that one can do with Finland as one likes. At the same time, the nation's defence will would be curbed, and the Soviet Union or any other big country could occupy the whole country without obstacles" (Niukkanen 1951, 87). This shows that the public knew that certain demands had been presented, and that they were about security guarantees including territorial concessions.

These societal initiatives were not 'ad hoc' events, but followed from a strong political tradition for societal actions that had started during the Russification policies in the 1880s and the subsequent mass political actions. In the evening of the war, the summer of 1939, thousands of Finns had spent their vacation doing unpaid work in the fortification of the Karelian isthmus, an effort initiated and organised by the AKS. When a month later the world war started, the societal mind-set on how any Russian demands would be understood was already 'set'. A range of societal initiatives, from building fortifications in Karelia, the other societal initiatives, such as gatherings at train stations to people travelling from border areas to Helsinki to demand that nothing should be given away were part of this political tradition.

According to the mood reviews and media reports, on many occasions people referred to the similarities between the current period and the Russification period. In terms of national unity, one *Maan Turva* review reported that "we have not felt that united since the February Manifesto forty years ago" (cited in Ahto 1989, 40). The *Uusi Suomi* newspaper reported that while sending the negotiators off to Moscow, older people said that there was the same feeling in this departure "as decades ago when during Finland's difficult moments wishing farewell to the men who left for the fatherland's affairs" (cited in Paasikivi 1986c, 4). This referred to the Great Petition of 1899 where half a million signatures were collected to protest against the February Manifesto and a large delegation took it to St Petersburg. There were also voices that argued that the biggest danger to Finland were the Conciliation-men,

[109] The Soviet Union had presented its demands regarding the Isthmus only on 14 October. As the content of the talks was not public, the people from the Isthmus might have heard something about it through the grapevine or just assumed that it is commonsensical that the border area will be one of the main negotiating points. Furthermore, as the regiments had moved to the border on 6 October 1939, this probably further encouraged locals to act.

referring to the Conciliation side of the Russification period and to Paasikivi as the negotiator (Manninen and Salokangas 2009, 281).

7.3.2. State and society relationship - who influenced whom?

The previous sections discussed the main understandings of the situation among the decision-makers and the society in autumn 1939. It was shown that one of the main ideas was the idea of the unanimity of the Finnish nation, which was emphasised by all main political parties, media and the members of society. It was also shown that this unity was based on the ideas of Finnish neutrality, territorial inviolability, Nordic co-operation and strong anti-Soviet sentiments. These sentiments were rooted in Finnish domestic discourses, such as the Constitutional discourse, White Finland and Radical-nationalist discourses, which enabled the co-operation between the centre-left government and right wing parties and organisations in autumn 1939. It was also shown that this narrative of unity also constrained the government's manoeuvring space as it set strict borders that had be followed for the unity to last. The government and political parties perceived the public opinion as being fully against any kind of territorial concessions to the Soviet Union. This was also demonstrated by the mood reviews gathered from the society.

Nevertheless, one could argue that the decision-makers themselves influenced the public opinion as well, through emphasising the necessity for unity and the need to back certain Finnish principles and values in their speeches. The government, and Erkko in particular, was directing the public opinion to a course favourable for the government, focusing on principles and societal values and not enough on the possibility of war and the need to avoid conflict (Soikkanen 1983; Wunsch 2006). Significantly, Erkko had a powerful tool to promote his understandings of the situation in his newspaper *Helsingin Sanomat.* For example Wunsch has claimed that Erkko used *Helsingin Sanomat* to influence the public opinion (Wunsch 2006). Though there was no direct censorship, the Foreign ministry gave its guidelines and directions to the media and Erkko's own newspaper was carefully followed by other newspapers and also by external actors as it was seen as representing Erkko's, hence the government's, foreign policy line (Wunsch 2006; Soikkanen 1983). This leads to the question that if we said that Erkko was manipulating the public opinion to increase support for his own policy line, then where did this policy line come from. Why did he prioritize domestic principles over the external constraints? The current dissertation argues that the decision-maker is a part of a societal fabric and his understandings represent certain societal discourses. Erkko's position, as discussed before, was a societal position, the origins of which were traced in the first part of this case study. Therefore, these interactions between the state and society worked two-ways, as they were based on societal positions. Erkko's, Cajander's and Tanner's speeches strengthened the societal sentiments against the territorial demands. At the same time, people waiting at train stations throughout Finland when the negotiators passed by train further

strengthened these sentiments within the society and among the decision-makers.

The societal ideas and narratives promoted by the decision-makers, such as Erkko, and by for example right-wing politicians and activists, had their roots in Finnish historical discourses. One could argue that the decision-makers that represented the Constitutional or Radical-nationalist discourse did not see the societal opinions as constraints because they shared the same understandings. At the same time, Paasikivi perceived these societal understandings as constraints, since the discourse he represented did not enjoy wider public support at the time. This enabled him to argue after the war (once again, under different circumstances) that the government should have known better. He referred to a Finnish soldier who wrote after the war that "the government had not a smallest chance to influence the course of events. It knew that it had the confidence of the people only as long as it did not agree to the demands, which would have meant giving up freedom and the independence of the country" (quoted in Paasikivi 1986c, 114). Paasikivi argued that the decision-makers should have been wiser than "the man in the street" He stated: "I don't know whether the authority and influence of the state's government, president, cabinet and the parliament had really sunk so low that those who had to have better knowledge about the issues than the common citizen […] could not consider what was the best way for saving the country" (Paasikivi 1986c, 114). Nevertheless, the institutions he mentioned did not know better, because the understanding of the meaning of these demands came from historically developed societal discourses. Hence, a decision-maker does not choose rationally between different options, but mediates between external factors and different domestic discourses, with the baggage of his own social construction. Ylikangas points out that there is no real value in discussing "if then" options on whether the war could have been avoided if the government would have focused publicly more on external constraints and the dangers of military conflict. Because "[i]f Finland would have agreed to the terms or if we could have, in general, sensibly expected the agreement from Finland of that time, our country's government, its leading circles, in fact, the whole nation would have had to be different than they were in reality" (Ylikangas 1986, 196).

7.3.3. Conclusion

The aim of this section was to show the interactions between different discourses and how the broader societal understandings played themselves out in autumn 1939. It was shown that there was a broad societal consensus on the Russian demands. This consensus that reached across the spectrum of all political parties and different societal groups was also recognised by Paasikivi in his post-World War II criticism of Finnish government policy in autumn 1939. Paasikivi states that government's opinion was shared by different sides of the society, and was not only prevalent among young people, but also in the centre of circles of responsibility (Paasikivi 1986c, 74–75). However, as was shown

before, Paasikivi himself was not prepared to publicly criticize the government in 1939, which itself is a good illustration of what were acceptable social practices and what were the unacceptable ones within Finnish societal understandings in 1939.

What was possible and acceptable within the social sphere in Finnish society was based on how the society understood and perceived the Soviet demands. These understandings, in turn, were based on the previous historical experiences of Finnish-Russian relationships and public perceptions on these experiences. The situation was understood as a question of certain principles, "All the political groupings, even those critical of the consensus, recognized that the Finnish nation was virtually united in defending certain issues of principle" (Soikkanen 1983, 530). Next, these principles were based on the Constitutionalist understanding of law and justice, complemented by strong anti-Soviet sentiments of White Finland and Radical-Nationalist discourses. As stated by Paasikivi, the Finnish nation at the time believed in "written laws, documents and agreements. Soviet Russia would not attack us because it had no legal right to do so and because both general opinion and the sympathy of the world were on our side. […] Faith in the victory of the justice was strong in Finland. According to the conviction of the Finnish people, justice, and written justice in particular, will at the end of the day always prevail due to an inexplicable and mysterious force that prevails in world history. Finnish history from the last decades, during which we had always been saved, provided evidence for this belief. So, we would also be saved now in one way or another; this was the general belief of the Finnish people" (Paasikivi 1986c, 75). This understanding for him was well-represented by the saying of Foreign Minister Erkko that "[t]he law is on our side and in the eyes of the whole world Russia is bound by them" (Paasikivi 1986c, 58).

The Conciliation discourse, which understood the situation through systemic pressures, material capabilities and power disparity, was present in the government discussions. However, this understanding did not have a broader societal or political support. The understanding of the situation was based on the nature of the historical Russian-Finnish relationship as understood in Finnish society, through which Russia had become perceived as the main external threat to Finnish state. This shared understanding on the acute Soviet threat also explains the support of the right-wing organisations carrying the Radical-nationalist discourse for the centre-left government's policies. The chapter showed that dominant societal understandings do introduce societal constraints to decision-makers, which was shown by the aspect that the decision-makers who argued for greater concessions and saw the situation through the prism of material capabilities, were not prepared to argue for it in public. This was because society at large did not understand the situation through the lenses of power disparity, but as a question of certain principles, which were strongly influenced by the Constitutionalist principles of law and justice. As these principles were complemented by the strong anti-Soviet sentiments, promoted by the Radical-nationalist discourse and also rooted in the historical confrontations of Finland

and Russia, it translated into strong societal pressures, which made it not possible for the decision-makers to accept the Soviet demands. The chapter also showed that societal constraints can be partly the decision-makers' own making, but once they are established in the public sphere, the decision-maker cannot escape them. This was shown through the narrative of unanimity, which had its roots in the conciliation policies of the Lawfulness front and the Red-Earth governments, in their focus on the necessity for the society to reconcile and redefine the concept of threat as an external one, instead of an internal one (Red Finland).

The international climate of autumn 1939 enabled also White Finland and Radical-Right discourses to join behind the unanimity narrative, as the government's policy opposed the Soviet demands. Nevertheless, the narrative also became a social constraint on the decision-makers, as it constrained the government's possibilities to adjust its foreign policy and respond to increasing external constraints.

7.4. Conclusion of the case study

The current case study focused on the how-possible question regarding the foreign policy decision of Finland toward the Soviet demands in autumn 1939. The case study comprised of three parts: the first part (Chapter 5) focused on the decision from the angle of the systemic pressures and showed that although external pressures were high and further increased during the negotiations, this did not have a significant influence on Finland's foreign policy. The second part (Chapter 6), explored the dominant domestic discourses, their emergence and interactions as the dissertation argues that these domestic discourses influenced how the situation in 1939 was understood by the society. It was shown that "the Russian question" had a central role within all three debates and as a consequence, Russia was seen as the main threat to the Finnish state. Within these debates three different ways how to "handle Russia" emerged. 1) Compliance with domestic norms and values of the Constitutionalist movement; 2) Active resistance exercised by different Radical-nationalist movements, which argued that radical measures are justified in case of a threat to the nationalist values and 3) the Conciliation line, which focused on the need to negotiate and accommodate the power actor in case of conflict. The important similarity between the Constitutional and activist Radical-nationalist discourse was that both saw the necessity to take initiative as a solution to the Soviet threat. However, the nature of action was seen differently by these two discourses, the Constitutionalists emphasising staying within the rule of law framework and Radical-nationalists focusing on military action. The Constitutional-Conciliation debate brought two approaches to political thought in Finland: one where the decision-making was associated with domestic norms and values, such as justice and law, and one where it was determined by the material capabilities and power disparity.

The third part (Chapter 7) focused on the actual decision-making process in autumn 1939. It first explored the social construction of the primary decision-maker, as it was argued that the decision-maker matters, since it is he who by processing the on-going tensions between the domestic discourses, must balance between external and internal pressures. It was shown that the primary decision-maker's, foreign minister Erkko's, political understandings were based on his strong constitutionalist background and anti-Russian sentiments. Next, it was argued that although the decision-maker does have an important role, the decision is not determined simply by the private beliefs of the statesman, but on the interaction of different domestic discourses and how these are processed by the decision-maker. It was argued that dominant social ideas do introduce societal constraints to decision-makers, which was shown by the aspect that the decision-makers who argued for greater concessions and saw the situation through the prism of material capabilities, were not prepared to argue for it in public. Also, the strong societal focus on unanimity constrained government's space for adjusting the foreign policy line according to the increasing external constraints. This was because the society at large did not understand the situation through the lenses of power disparity, but as a question of certain principles, which were strongly influenced by the Constitutionalist principles of law and justice. As these principles were complemented by the strong anti-Soviet sentiments, promoted by the Radical-nationalist discourse and also rooted in the historical confrontations of Finland and Russia, it translated into strong societal pressures, which made it not possible for the decision-makers to accept the Soviet demands.

CONCLUSIONS

This dissertation explored how a state's foreign policy practices become socially possible within the framework of the constructivist school of International Relations. Constructivism sees the world as socially constructed by shared social ideas, identities, norms and practices and constructivists explain a state's preferences by focusing on its identities and interests. The dissertation was concerned with the process of a state's foreign policy decision-making and the role the state and society relationship plays in this process. The particular interest of the dissertation was to study this state and society relationship under very crude power conditions and to find out whether and how the domestic understandings influence the state's foreign policy decision-making while its physical survival is at stake under the threat of a military invasion. The dissertation was interested in situations where rationalist theories would have clear predictions about the behaviour of the state, but these predictions could not fully explain the choices of the state. Therefore it focused on the constructivist approach as its aim was to show that even in a situation with acute international pressures, we still need to consider societal discourses and practices to fully explain how a certain decision can become commonsensical for the decision-makers. The dissertation tackled the *how-possible* research question within the framework of societal constructivism: how does the relationship between the state and society make a state's foreign policy practices either thinkable or unthinkable under high systemic constraints?

The dissertation followed and built on the theoretical framework developed by the constructivist scholar Ted Hopf. Hopf's approach proposes *societal* constructivism, which argues that domestic identity discourses influence states' foreign policy actions; therefore, the way a society perceives itself influences the way the decision-maker sees another state. The dissertation followed Hopf's approach that domestic discourses explain a state's foreign policy decisions. However, it disagreed with Hopf in how the state and society relationship is constructed and its effects on the decision-making process. It argued that political decisions are not near-automatic, as Hopf's approach suggests, but socially constructed. This is because at the moment of decision-making the decision-maker does not have coherent given practices at his disposal, but needs to mediate the tensions between the different formative discourses existing in the state and the external pressures. It was further argued that the decision-maker makes his decisions based on his interpretation of the domestic and external situation, which in turn is based on his understandings on the state and society relationship, hence on how the decision-maker is socialised within the societal debates. Next, the theoretical conclusions of this dissertation will be presented through the discussion on the findings of the comparative case study. In the end of this section the theoretical points this dissertation aimed to make will be summed up.

To explain how a particular foreign policy decision becomes commonsensical and therefore socially possible for the state, the dissertation followed a

three-step model: First, in the first parts of the case studies (Chapters 2 and 5) the extent of the external pressures the decision-maker had to process was established. The second parts of the case studies (Chapters 3 and 6) explored the emergence and development of the societal discourses through the interaction with each other and with specific Others. The third parts of the case study (Chapters 4 and 7) focused on the actual decision-making: how did the decision-maker come to understand the situation the way he did. Primarily, the social construction of the decision-maker was explored. Then, it was examined how the decision-maker negotiated between different discourses and subsequent pressures: external pressures as established in the first part of the case studies and domestic pressures as established within the second part of the studies. To answer the research question, the theoretical framework, built on Hopf's approach on the relation of domestic discourses and foreign policy decision-making with an emphasis on the interaction between discourses and the role of the decision-maker, was applied to two cases: the foreign policy decisions of Finland and of Estonia in autumn 1939 regarding the demands of the Soviet Union. The case selection was based on the idea that the study aimed to explore situations where resistance would be, within the understanding of rational calculations of material capabilities, particularly problematic.

Through these two case studies, the dissertation aimed to problematize two aspects that Ted Hopf largely brackets in his framework: the social construction of the state and society relationship and the way it influences the decision-making. For Hopf, the relationship between the state and society is uniform and nearly automatic: certain identities are embedded within the society, and the decision-maker, who is part of the society, will make a decision that is determined by the dominant state identity. Hence, at the moment of decision-making, the decision-maker is likely to have one option in mind, which is determined by the dominant discourse. This uniformity is possible for Hopf because he brackets the aspect of other discourses that exist in the society and the possible influence of the interactions and tensions between the discourses on the foreign policy making process. If the societal understandings are multiple and conflictual, as Hopf himself assumes, then the outcome will not be automatic, but the decision needs to be negotiated between these different understandings. Therefore, the dissertation argued that political decision is not given, but socially constructed, and it is possible to trace the domestic discourses and their interactions to better determine how a certain decision became possible for the decision-maker.

In addition to how the tensions between discourses influence the decision-making, the dissertation also problematized the role of the decision-maker in this process. In contrast with Hopf, who argued that the decision-maker, as the carrier of the dominant discourse, makes a decision solely based of the understandings embedded in this discourse, the current dissertation argued that the decision-maker needs to negotiate between different societal discourses and external factors, but his understanding on these factors is based on how the decision-maker is socialized within the societal debates.

However, this process does not happen in a vacuum of objectiveness, but the decision-maker's own social construction determines how he understands the external and domestic tensions, and subsequently the particular situation in which he needs to make a decision. So, this research argued that in order to better understand how a certain decision became commonsensical, hence possible, for the state, the relationship between the society, carrying these discourses, and the state, negotiating between these discourses, must be explored.

The analysis of the two cases showed that Finland and Estonia reacted differently to the Soviet demands because their decision-makers' understanding of these demands, subject to social construction, depended on the dominant domestic discourses and practices and on the construction of the state and society relationship that derived from these discourses. The first parts of the case studies (Chapter 2 for Estonia and Chapter 5 for Finland) explored the foreign policy situation in autumn 1939 and the decision-making process of the respective governments with the focus on external pressures. There were several differences in Estonian and Finnish behaviour in 1939, some of them tactical, such as the Finnish government slowing down the pace of talks while the Estonian side tried to reach a solution as fast as possible. However, the major difference the first parts of the case studies were interested in was whether systemic or domestic constraints dominated the decision-making and whether foreign policy decision-making was influenced by the increasing systemic constraints.

In the case of Estonia, it was shown that the systemic pressures were the central argument in the government's decision-making process. The decision-maker perceived the external constraints as dominant and focused on the power disparity between Estonia and the Soviet Union, the volatility of the international climate and the lack of possibilities for military aid. Therefore, the decision was based on the aim to avoid military conflict, and the government followed the logic of the international system. In the case of Finland, the study showed that Finnish foreign policy behaviour in the autumn 1939 did not change significantly during the period of talks, in spite of increasing systemic pressures and a growing external threat. The case study selection section mentioned one difference in systemic pressures for these two states, as the Soviets asked territorial concessions from Finland and not from Estonia, which may have made it more difficult for Finland to agree with the demands. The Soviets requested military bases in both countries manned by Soviet soldiers, which became a central issue for the Finnish government (Hanko), as this was perceived to undermine the neutrality policy and the Scandinavian orientation. In the end, they were willing to discuss certain territorial concessions, but would not agree to have a Soviet military basis in their territory. This again shows the constructivist point, as made through examples given by Wendt (1999) and Mercer (2010) in the theoretical section, that the state's understanding on external threat is not a 'given', but is socially constructed, depending on state's understandings on the situation.

The how-possible sections of both chapter focused on setting up the questions for the following parts of the case studies: how did their decisions become possible, hence commonsensical, for the decision-makers?

The second parts of the case studies (Chapter 3 for Estonia and Chapter 6 for Finland) explored the emergence and developments of dominant domestic discourses that were present in the respective states in 1939 and interactions between these discourses. Although Estonia and Finland both became independent in 1918, their experience with statehood differed significantly. Finland had become an autonomous, albeit not a sovereign, state in 1908, after which the societal understandings of Finnish statehood emerged and started to develop. Therefore, 'state' was an integral part of Finnish societal discourses. The most significant external Other for Finland was Russia: interactions and confrontations with Russia and different understandings on how to handle Russia ran through Finland's history since the emergence of the Finnish national identity in the nineteenth century. Through societal debates that were based on this understanding of the Finnish state, the understanding that Finland was a state of its own, though not a sovereign one, became a central part of the Finnish identity. Another characteristic of this identity was that Finland was governed by Finnish constitutional laws. Through the Constitutional-Conciliation debate and the confrontations with Russia, legal principles and norms became an important part of Finnish domestic understandings and within the Constitutionalist discourse it was not a choice to follow laws, but a precondition for national development. Furthermore, also the other major discourses – the White Finland and the Radical-nationalist discourses – saw the Soviet Union as the main enemy of Finland and focused on the acute Soviet threat to Finland.

In the aftermath of the civil war of 1918, Finland's societal sphere was strongly divided between Red and White Finland. When the economic crisis led to a rapid growth of the popularity of the radical right-wing movements in Estonia and Finland in the early 1930s, political stability in Finland was ensured by the dominance of the Constitutional discourse that led to the formation of the Lawfulness front between the centre-left parties. The commitment to legal norms became increasingly important within Finnish societal debates. In the mid-1930s the focus shifted from internal Othering between the Reds and Whites towards external Othering, resulting in a rationale for the need of national unity within an increasingly volatile climate. The Red-Earth coalition government, in place since 1937, supported national reconciliation and emphasised its importance. The increase in external threat also altered the position of White Finland and Radical-nationalism and made it focus more on the defence will of the nation, and therefore on strengthening the unity within the society.

Although Estonia became independent in the same year as Finland, until 1918 the state, governed by Baltic German elites, had had the role of the Other with regard to the Estonian society. Hence, the Estonian society, where Estonian cultural and social developments happened on the one hand, and the state as a decision-making and political sphere on the other, were seen as separate entities. As a result, to become an independent state, Estonia had to go through

a much more rapid development than Finland. In Estonia, the national movement had limited experiences with what statehood entailed, while Finland had been developing its societal understandings on statehood since the early nineteenth century. The separation of the societal and decision-making spheres helps to explain why the Estonian society at large found a solution in a strong executive leadership during the devastating economic crisis and the following political crisis in the early 1930s, while less emphasis was placed on norms and institutions, as the dominance of the Radical-national discourse during this period illustrates. The Collectivist-nationalist discourse, a state discourse after 1934, saw the state and society relationship in terms of the supremacy of national collectivist interests over individual interests as a necessary precondition for national development. The decision-making sphere and societal sphere were seen as separate, as this was considered to ensure more political stability and more effective decision-making. Furthermore, the state discourse saw for a centralised top-down political and societal organisation. Although an alternative discourse, the Liberal-individualist understanding that saw the development of the individual as a necessary precondition for the development of the state, existed, its reach was severely limited and its ideas did not reach the general public. Therefore, the dominant state understanding of the state and society relationship saw the decision-making sphere and the societal spheres separated.

The third parts of the case studies (Chapter 4 for Estonia and Chapter 7 for Finland) focused on how the societal discourses and the state and society relationship made different decisions possible for Finnish and Estonian decision-makers in autumn 1939. The dissertation argued that Hopf's assumption, that the action the decision-maker will take is determined by the "pre-cooked reality" of domestic discourses, is over-simplified. This is because a political decision is not a given, but socially constructed. At the moment of decision-making, the decision-maker needs to negotiate between competing societal discourses and external factors and the decision-maker's own social construction determines how he understands the external and domestic tensions and subsequently the particular situation that needs to be decided.

The Estonian case study showed how the dominant state discourse constructed the state and society relationship through the separation of the societal sphere and decision-making spheres. The resulting state practices created circumstances where alternative discourses were neither part of the decision-making nor of the nation-wide public spheres. This allowed for a situation where the government did not have to negotiate between competing domestic discourses and was able to concentrate only on the systemic constraints. This illustrated the point made in the theoretical chapter that if there are no tensions or interactions between discourses, or if there is only one discourse present, this is not because social construction is *a priori* uniform, but because of certain social conditions that made this situation possible. These conditions are the results of long term social processes that can be traced to explain how the dominance of a discourse that determined the course of action the state took became possible. The Estonian case study explored how the separation between

the societal and decision-making spheres came to be. The case study showed that during the emergence of Estonian societal understandings, Estonian society stood largely outside of the decision-making sphere. Therefore, the state represented by the Baltic Germans and/or Imperial Russia came to be seen as the Other with regard to Estonian society and the societal understandings developed in separation from the state and the decision-making sphere. So, when Estonia became a *Staatsnation* through independence, Estonians had limited experience with what this entailed. The understanding of the state as Other in regard to the society and the separate development of the societal sphere helps explain why the economic crisis in the early 1930s resulted in the popularity of the Radical-nationalist discourse that found political stability in a strong executive. This understanding, influenced by the separation of the societal and state spheres during the emergence and development of Estonian domestic discourses, paved the way for the development of the Collectivist-nationalist discourse into a state discourse. The Collectivist-nationalist discourse as a state discourse further enhanced the understanding of keeping the societal spheres and decision-making spheres separated. Political organisation and public discussions were organised and controlled by the state through censorship, emergency regulations and the abolition of political parties. The Liberal-individualist discourse argued that this system of "guided democracy", where individuals were always expected to wait for the government's directions and where political organisations were centrally organised, curbed the alertness of the society and could be dangerous in the case of an external threat. However, the public reach of this discourse was severely limited on the national level.

To understand how this separation between societal and decision-making spheres emerged and, hence, how these social conditions within which the decision-makers operated in autumn 1939 came to be, the dissertation focused on the social construction of the primary decision-maker. It was shown that in his understanding, the stability of the state was ensured by a strong executive, which represented the people directly, and that society itself was not capable of effective decision-making. These ideas led to institutional practices where the decision-making sphere and societal sphere were separated. In turn, these institutional arrangements determined how the political reality was constructed in Estonia. The state discourse prioritised national collective interests over individual interests. Therefore, the state system saw for a centralised, top-down political and societal organisation, where societal activities were coordinated by the state to ensure a focus on the nation's interests. The idea of ensuring a top-down political organisation, to ensure the stability and development of the state, was then enforced through institutional practices, such as banning political parties, maintaining the state of emergency, regulations that prohibited political meetings and censorship regulations. As the decision-making sphere and societal spheres were kept separate and because alternative discourses were isolated from effective decision-making, there were no interactions between the discourses within the public sphere. Therefore, the decision-maker was not constrained by societal understandings, such as wide anti-German sentiments, but

could choose to base his policy and decision-making on realpolitical needs. Subsequently, during the decision-making process in autumn 1939, the government was able to focus solely on systemic constraints, not on domestic aspects or domestic understandings of these systemic constraints. As the alternative discourses were neither part of the nation-wide public sphere, nor of the effective decision-making sphere, there was no need to negotiate between these understandings, allowing the government to focus solely on external constraints and to effectively implement the decision of avoiding military conflict.

The Finnish case study showed how societal discourses and their interactions, through societal debates, led to the dominant understandings of the situation in autumn 1939. Within these debates, Russia was seen as the Other to Finland and the concept of the Finnish state had been a central part of the societal understandings since the nineteenth century. As a result of these debates there were three main societal understandings on how to handle Russia in 1939. The Constitutionalist understanding focused on legal norms and values. The White Finland and Radical-nationalist understanding saw the Soviet Union as the ultimate threat to Finland, with the Radical-nationalists focussing on active resistance and permanent alertness to the Soviet threat. Finally, the Conciliation discourse focused on the power disparity between Finland and the Soviet Union. These three societal understandings, which had created several nation-wide debates on the meaning of the Finnish state and the relationship with Russia, influenced how the society perceived the Soviet demands in autumn 1939. It was seen through the prism of previous historical experiences of the Finnish-Russian relationship and public perceptions of what the survival of the Finnish state would mean in light of these confrontations. Therefore, the understanding of the situation was based on the Constitutionalist, White Finland and Radical-nationalist discourses. The situation was understood within the Constitutionalist understanding of laws and norms, complemented by strong anti-Soviet sentiments of White Finland and Radical-nationalist discourses, and a focus on permanent alertness for defending one's country of Radical-nationalism. The Conciliation discourse was present as a counter-discourse, as it was seen as an internal threat to the set of principles based on the dominant understandings. These dominant understandings made up a set of domestic principles, which made up the way the society understood the Soviet demands. These principles were strict neutrality policy, inviolability of Finnish territory and Scandinavian co-operation.

The dissertation further argued that external events can influence the interactions between discourses, which in turn can influence the societal understandings and the decision-making process. In Finland's case study, a good example of that was how the Radical-nationalist discourse, carried by parties and groups in opposition with the centre-left government, changed its focus after the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact. After this agreement, the Radical-right no longer perceived Germany as a balancer of the Soviet threat; hence, it started supporting the government's policy. This created a situation where all political forces, including the right-wing opposition, supported the government's policy.

As a result, what emerged from these interactions between different discourses was a narrative of unanimity. This narrative had its roots in the Constitutional/Lawfulness front understandings, and through the understanding of the Soviet threat also in the White Finland/Radical-nationalist discourses. Within the unanimity narrative the whole Finnish society unanimously supported the government's policy. Nevertheless, while emphasising unanimity and the absolute necessity of it during times of crisis, the narrative was considered as depending on the government's firm policy towards the demands. Therefore, the unanimity can also be seen as a social constraint on the decision-makers, as it was built on the understanding of unanimity as an absolute necessity considering the external threat and therefore it constrained the government's space for manoeuvring to adjust its foreign policy and respond to external constraints.

This leads us to the question of the decision-makers. How did this trap of unanimity or these societal understandings constrain the decision-makers' possibilities to respond to the external constraints? How did they know that society was behind them as long as they did not opt for greater concessions? And why did it even matter? One could have argued that the state's survival was at stake, there was a great power disparity, and therefore the external constraints had to take priority over domestic values and norms. That it did matter was shown through the near absence of the Conciliation discourse in the public sphere. Although there were politicians who argued for greater concessions within government circles, they refrained from publicly arguing for it. Therefore, the only presence the Conciliation discourse in the public sphere had was as a counter-discourse, with people stating that the principal threat to Finland would come from Conciliation-men and drawing comparisons between the current situation and the Constitutional/Conciliation division of the Russification period.

So, why were the decision-makers constrained by these societal understandings? This takes us to Hopf's argument that since the decision-maker is socialised within the same society, he is the carrier of the dominant understanding, which determines how he will perceive the situation and which action he will take. The current research agreed with Hopf on this aspect and showed through empirical analysis that the decision-maker is part of the societal fabric. Nevertheless, it argued that Hopf's approach is simplified as it does not take into account the interactions between competing discourses and external constraints the decision-maker needs to process. The previous paragraphs discussed how these interactions played themselves out and gave an example of how an external event can influence these interactions between different understandings. Nevertheless, how do the societal factors, such as norms and values, come to dominate over external constraints for the decision-maker? The current dissertation found the answer in the social construction of the decision-maker, as this will influence how he processes the tensions between different domestic understandings and external pressures. The dissertation explored the primary decision-maker's social construction, to exemplify how this influences how the decision-maker processes external and domestic constraints. It showed that the primary decision-maker's policy line on strict neutrality policy and his Scandi-

navian orientation was embedded within the Constitutional discourse, complemented with anti-Soviet sentiments of the White Finland discourse. Therefore, his motive to follow societal understandings should not be explained through instrumental constraints, such as risking his re-election. Instead, the decision-maker himself was embedded within these understandings. Nevertheless, as was shown in the decision-making chapter, the decision-making did not happen in a straightforward automatic manner, but was negotiated with the other discourses, such as the Radical-nationalist approach. How the decision-maker's social construction influenced the way he understood external constraints was shown by the government's counterproposal that focused on satisfying the 'legitimate' security needs of the Soviet Union. As the decision-maker assessed the situation through the Constitutional discourse, he concentrated on the legitimate security concerns of the Soviets and not on the political ones. Furthermore, it also showed, through the unanimity-narrative, how the decision-maker was part of creating the societal constraints that would later influence its space for manoeuvring. To conclude, the case study showed how the domestic discourses influenced the foreign policy decision-making, as at the time of decision-making the decision-maker negotiated between different competing discourses and the external events, with the baggage of his own social construction. To sum up the comparative case study part, the dissertation showed that in the case of Finland the decision was based on long-term societal debates and understandings, which created constraints for the decision-maker, whereas in the case of Estonia the societal and decision-making spheres were separated so that the government, as a result, could focus only on external constraints.

The focus of the current dissertation was on a small state in an asymmetrical conflict situation, as it was interested in showing the role societal discourses have in the foreign policy decision-making, and therefore chose case studies where the systemic constraints should have been overwhelming. Nevertheless, in terms of further empirical research, the insights generated in this dissertation could be applied to foreign policy making processes in more internationalised conflict cases, where one would be interested in problematizing the state and society relationship. One interesting case could be the foreign policy making in Serbia in relation to the Kosovo question. Clear external constraints, some tied to attractive incentives, exist for Serbia in this regard. Nevertheless, it is clear that there are certain 'given' domestic societal constraints for Serbia's decision-makers. Therefore, it may broaden our understanding to go beyond the existing domestic and international preconceptions on what Serbians, or Serbia's politicians, think and trace the development of the societal discourses and the interaction between them.

Another contribution that this study can offer for future empirical research is that it treats the decision-maker as a member of the society, coming with his or her own baggage of societal understandings. Therefore, it is suitable for exploring situations where there are several strong conflicting domestic understandings, as in such a situation the decision-maker's mediation between them, subject to her own social construction, becomes important. To give one example

here, in Israel's behaviour regarding Palestine, there are several moments where the domestic discourses and the decision-maker's own socialisation within these domestic understandings could be further problematized to better understand the foreign policy making. Also, the case of Israel would offer a possibility for a longitudinal study within this approach.

The aim of this dissertation in theoretical terms was not to develop a theory, but to contribute to the literature on societal constructivism by problematizing the aspects of the state and society relationship, or the way the decision-maker is socialised within the dominant discourses, and how this socialisation influences the foreign policy making. The main theoretical insights, as were shown through the discussion on the comparative case studies, were the following: societal domestic discourses and understandings do influence a state's foreign policy making process. As these societal understandings are not static, but change and develop as a result of external and domestic events and through interactions with each other, tracing the development and interactions of these discourses helps to better understand how the situation was understood by the state and society at the moment of making a particular decision. In addition, as the decision itself is not given but socially constructed, the decision-maker's socialisation with regard to the domestic discourses must be explored. The decision-maker's reading of the situation depends on how he has been socialised within the existing societal discourses and how he therefore mediates between the different understandings. The dissertation also showed that in case there are no conflicts between discourses or multiple discourses present in the public sphere, this is not because social construction is *a priori* uniform, but because of some long-term social processes, that are traceable, that made it possible. Therefore, to better understand how a foreign policy decision became possible, we need to see how these existing social conditions came to be and explore the decision-maker's socialisation within these discourses.

The next possible step in theoretical terms could be to expand on the theoretical framework. One theoretical aspect to be explored further would be a more detailed and thorough investigation of the relations between the state, society and the international system. In the current dissertation, which explored non-internationalised conflicts, the theoretical focus was on the state and society. The international system was discussed through the societal understandings of the international system and external pressures. Hence, the notion of the international system could be further conceptualised to develop a framework with an explicit three-fold construct (state, society, international system). The theoretical approach could be expanded on how the dominant international level understandings on a particular state influence the domestic societal understandings. This would be necessary in case of internationalised conflict, such as Kosovo, where there are multiple understandings on the Kosovo conflict on the international level, for example Russia's Kosovo conflict or the U.S.'s Kosovo conflict, and whether and how these international understandings influence the societal understandings could be explored, thereby building an additional dimension to the framework.

In terms of the state and society relationship, the theoretical concept to be developed further would be the question of societal constraints. It would be informative to explore further the role of societal constraints, hence what is socially possible within a particular society within particular moment, to see how these constraints develop and change through the interactions between the state, society and the international system.

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SUMMARY IN ESTONIAN

Riigi ja ühiskonna suhte roll välispoliitika kujundamise protsessis

Käesolev doktoritöö uurib riigi ja ühiskonna suhte rolli välispoliitiliste otsuste kujunemise protsessis rahvusvaheliste suhete konstruktivismi teooria raamistikus. Väitekiri uurib, kuidas riigis eksisteerivad ühiskondlikud diskursused *(societal discourses)* mõjutavad riigi välispoliitika protsessi tugeva välise surve tingimustes. Uurides riigi ja ühiskonna suhte rolli, kasutab väitekiri konstruktivisti Ted Hopfi välja töötatud ühiskondliku konstruktivismi *(societal constructivism)* raamistikku. See raamistik vaatleb, kuidas siseriiklikud diskursused mõjutavad riigi välispoliitilist käitumist ja poliitiliste otsuste kujunemist. Ajalooliselt on riigid asümmeetrilistes ja ebavõrdsetes konfliktisituatsioonides tihti järginud rahvusvahelise süsteemi ratsionaalset loogikat ning andnud suurriigi nõudmistele järele. Samas on ajaloolisi näited, kus riigid tugeva välise surve tingimustes ei ole käitunud vastavalt rahvusvaheliste suhete ratsionalistliku lähenemise eeldustele ning on otsustanud välispoliitika kasuks, mille esmaseks eesmärgiks ei ole olnud konflikti ärahoidmine või vähendamine. Samuti on näiteid, kus kaks sõjaliselt nõrka riiki, olles vastamisi agressoriga tugeva välise surve tingimustes, on teinud erinevaid välispoliitilisi otsuseid (Ungari ja Poola 1956, Tšehhoslovakia 1938, Holland 1940, Eesti, Läti, Leedu ja Soome 1939). Doktoritöös uuriti, miks riigid, kes olid sarnases kriisisituatsioonis, sarnaste võimalustega ja süsteemsete piirangutega, jõudsid niivõrd erinevate välispoliitiliste valikuteni. Rahvusvaheliste suhete teooria ratsionalismi suund vaatleb riike kui ratsionaalseid ühtseid tegutsejaid *(rational unitary actors)*, kelle välispoliitilised otsused on kindlaksmääratud riigi materiaalsete võimalustega ning kelle peamiseks eesmärgiks on riigi püsimajäämine. Seetõttu ei paku ratsionalismi teooria täielikku selgitust asjaolule, miks nõrgemas positsioonis riik peaks agressorile vastu astuma. Seetõttu järgis töö rahvusvaheliste suhete konstruktivismi raamistikku, mis keskendub riigi tegevuste selgitamisel riigi huvidele ja identiteetidele. Töö otsis vastust konstruktivistlikule „*kuidas see sai võimalikuks*“ *(how-possible)* küsimusele: kuidas riigi ja ühiskonna vaheline suhe muudab riigi välispoliitilisi praktikaid võimalikeks või mittevõimalikeks tugeva välise surve tingimustes. Töö keskendus kahele empiirilisele kaasusele: Eesti ja Soome 1939. aasta sügise välispoliitilisele otsusele Nõukogude Liidu nõudmiste küsimuses.

Konstruktivismi teooria käsitleb maailma sotsiaalselt konstrueerituna, kollektiivsete sotsiaalsete ideede, identiteetide, normide ja praktikate kaudu (Wendt 1999). Konstruktivistid selgitavad riigi eelistuste kujunemist keskendudes riigi identiteetidele ja huvidele (Wendt 1992, 1999). Konstruktivistliku lähenemise järgi ei saa tulemust seletada ainult keskendudes võimusuhetele, vaid rahvusvahelises maailmas toimuvat mõjutavad ka otsustajate ja ühiskondlike struktuuride kultuur, normid, protseduurid, reeglid ning sotsiaalsed praktikad (Hopf 1998). Konstruktivistide jaoks koosneb rahvusvaheline maailm nii materiaalsetest kui ideelistest faktoritest ning identiteedid ei ole mitte ainult

individuaalsed, vaid samuti kollektiivsed. Käesolev doktoritöö ei väida, et ideelised faktorid on *a priori* olulisemad kui materiaalsed faktorid, kuid väidab, et ideelised faktorid mõjutavad välispoliitika kujundamist ka väga tugeva välise surve tingimustes, kuna selle surve olemust interpreteeritakse välise ohu sotsiaalse konstruktsiooni kaudu. Konstruktivistlikus raamistikus ei tähenda riigi sõjaline võim *per se* ohtu tema naaberriikidele, vaid ainult sotsiaalne kontekst annab sõjalisele võimekusele tähenduse. Näiteks asjaolu, et nii Suurbritannia kui Põhja-Korea omavad tuumarelvi, ei tee neid Ameerika Ühendriikide jaoks võrdseks ohuks, kuna tuumarelvade omamise tähendus USA jaoks oleneb sellest suhtest, mis tal antud riikidega on (Wendt 1995).

Doktoritöö järgis Ted Hopfi ühiskondliku konstruktivismi raamistikku, mis keskendub sellele, kuidas siseriiklikud arusaamad mõjutavad riigi välispoliitilisi otsuseid. Ühiskonna enesetunnetus *(self-perception)* mõjutab otsustajate arusaamu teistest riikidest ning sellest tulenevalt ka välispoliitika kujunemist. Hopfi väitel muudavad siseriiklikud diskursused teatavad diskursused välismaailmast võimalikeks ja teised diskursused mittevõimalikeks (Hopf 2009). Doktoritöö järgib Hopfi lähenemist, et siseriiklikud diskursused ja identiteedid mõjutavad riigi välispoliitilisi otsuseid ning et riik ja ühiskond toimivad samas sotsiaalses kognitiivses struktuuris, see tähendab, et otsustaja diskursused on seotud ühiskondlike diskursustega (Hopf 2002). Samas, väitekiri lahkneb Hopfi lähenemisest osas, kuidas riigi ja ühiskonna suhe on konstrueeritud ning kuidas see omakorda mõjutab välispoliitika kujundamist. Hopfi jaoks tähendab eeldus, et riik ja ühiskond toimivad samas sotsiaalses kognitiivses struktuuris, ühtlasi ka ühtset *(uniform)* sotsiaalset konstruktsiooni. Seda väites välistab Hopf pinged erinevate ühiskondlike diskursuste ja arusaamade vahel, keskendudes domineerivale diskursusele. Sellest tulenevalt välistab ta ka konfliktid ja debatid, mis eksisteerivad otsuste tegemise hetkel, kuna Hopfi raamistiku järgi on enamikel juhtudel otsustajal vaid üks valik, mis põhineb domineerival diskursusel. Samas, nagu Hopf ka ise on välja toonud, enamikel juhtudel eksisteerivad riigis korraga mitu diskursust, mis võivad olla omavahel konfliktsed. Seetõttu ei ole otsustaja käsutuses ühtseid valmis 'praktikaid', vaid ta peab vahendama erinevate ühiskondlike diskursuste ning väliste piirangute vahel. Otsustaja ei ole valikutegemise hetkel aga objektiivsuse vaakumis, vaid arvestada tuleb ka otsustaja enda sotsialiseeritust erinevate ühiskondlike diskursustega. Seetõttu uuribki käesolev doktoritöö peamisi ühiskondlikke diskursusi ning samuti poliitiliste otsuste tegijate endi suhestumist ühiskonnas levinud diskursustega. Doktoritöös väidetakse, et riigijuhid teevad oma poliitilised valikud sõltuvalt enda sise- ja välispoliitilise situatsiooni tõlgendusest, mis omakorda sõltub aga nende endi sotsialiseeritusest riigis eksisteerivate ühiskondlike diskursustega.

Uurimisküsimusele vastamiseks rakendati doktoritöös Hopfi ühiskondlikku raamistikku kahele kaasusele: Eesti ja Soome välispoliitiliste otsuste kujunemisprotsessid Nõukogude Liidu 1939. aasta sügisel esitatud nõudmistele. Kaasuste valik tulenes sellest, et ratsionaalsetest ja sõjalistest kaalutlustest lähtuvalt oleks vastupanu mõlema riigi puhul olnud väga problemaatiline. Samuti sobivad mõlemad riigid ja konfliktsituatsioonid analüüsiks, sest mõlemal juhul oli

tegemist selgelt asümmeetrilise konfliktiga, milles osaleb ilma liitlasteta väikeriik sõjaliselt võimsa suurriigi vastu. Väitekiri koosneb seitsmest osast: esimene peatükk keskendub töö teoreetilisele raamistikule ja metodoloogiale. Töö empiiriline osa on võrdlev uurimus, mis koosneb mõlema kaasuse puhul kolmest erinevast osast. Esimeses osas (peatükid kaks ja viis) käsitletakse välise surve ulatust, mida otsustaja pidi arvestama. See on vajalik, kuna väitekiri keskendub välispoliitika kujundamisele tugeva välise surve tingimustes. Seetõttu empiiriliste peatükkide esimestes osades uuritakse, kas ja kuidas väliste piirangutega arvestati ning neid tasakaalustada püüti, kas väline surve tugevnes otsustusprotsessi kestel ning kas sellel oli mõju riigi välispoliitilisele käitumisele. Empiiriliste kaasuste teine osa (peatükid kolm ja kuus) keskendub ühiskondlike diskursuste tekkele ja arengule. Kaasuste kolmandad osad (peatükid neli ja seitse) keskenduvad otsuste tegemise protsessile: kuidas otsustaja selle konkreetse arusaamani jõudis. Seega, esmalt käsitletakse otsustaja enda sotsiaalset konstrueeritust ning seejärel protsessi, kuidas otsustaja kaalus erinevate ühiskondlike diskursuste vahel ning nendest tulenevalt interpreteeris antud välispoliitilist olukorda.

Doktoritöö kahe kaasuse analüüs tõi välja, et Soome ja Eesti reageerisid Nõukogude Liidu nõudmistele erinevalt, kuna otsustajate arusaam nendest nõudmistest ning üldisest välispoliitilisest olukorrast olenes ühiskondlikest diskursustest ja sellest, kuidas riigi ja ühiskonna suhe oli läbi nende diskursuste konstrueeritud. Kaasuste esimesed osad (teine peatükk: Eesti osa, viies peatükk: Soome osa) vaatlesid välispoliitilist olukorda 1939. aasta sügisel ning antud valitsuste välispoliitika kujundamise protsessi fookusega välisel survel. Eesti ja Soome käitumises olid 1939. aasta sügisel mitmed erinevused, mõned neist taktikalised, näiteks Soome valitsuse läbirääkimiste käigu aeglustamine, samas kui Eesti valitsus soovis jõuda lahenduseni nii kiiresti kui võimalik. Samas oli peamine erinevus, millele töö keskendus see, et Eesti kaasuse puhul olid välispoliitika kujundamise protsessis keskseks argumendiks välised piirangud *(constraints)*. Otsustajad tajusid väliseid piiranguid domineerivatena ja keskendusid Eesti ja Nõukogude Liidu sõjalise võimsuse erinevusele *(power disparity)*, rahvusvahelise olukorra keerulisusele ning sellele, et võimalused välisabiks puudusid, mille tulemusena põhines otsus eesmärgil vältida sõjalist konflikti ning valitsus järgis rahvusvahelise süsteemi loogikat. Soome puhul näitas uurimus, et riigi välispoliitiline käitumine läbirääkimiste perioodi jooksul oluliselt ei muutunud, kuigi väline surve samal ajal kasvas. *Kuidas-sai-võimalikuks* osad mõlemas peatükis keskendusid kaasuste järgmisteks osadeks küsimuste sõnastamisele: kuidas antud otsused said otsustajate jaoks loogiliseks ja võimalikuks.

Kaasuste teised osad (kolmas peatükk Eesti ja kuues peatükk Soome) vaatlesid 1939. aastal eksisteerinud ühiskondlike diskursuste teket ja arenguid ning omavahelisi interaktsioone. Kuigi Eesti ja Soome mõlemad saavutasid iseseisvuse 1918. aastal, erinesid nende omariikluse kogemused suuresti. Ühiskondlikud diskursused Soome omariiklusest tekkisid ja arenesid 19. sajandi algusest peale, kuna Soome oli 1908. aastast olnud autonoomne. Arusaam

Soome riiklusest sai kasvavalt keskseks osaks Soome identiteedis. Kõige olulisem väline tegur Soome kontekstis oli Venemaa. Vastuolud ja konfliktid Venemaaga ning arusaamad, kuidas Venemaaga käituda, olid läbivad Soome ühiskondlike diskursuste arengus. Peatükk tõi välja kuus peamist diskursust, mis esitati kolme debatina: 1–2) põhiseaduslik diskursus – lepitus-diskursus *(conciliation),* 3–4) valge Soome - punane Soome, 5–6) radikaal-rahvuslik – seaduslikkuse rinne *(Lawfulness front)*. Põhiseadus-diskursuse ning lepitus-diskursuse vaheliste ühiskondlike debattide abil said õiguslikud printsiibid ja normid olulise rolli Soome ühiskondlikus arengus ning neid nähti kui riikluse arengu eelduseid. "Vene küsimus" oli kesksel kohal kõigis kolmes debatis ning tekkis kolm erinevat arusaama, kuidas Venemaaga "toime tulla": 1) põhiseadusliku diskursuse siseriiklike seaduste ja normide järgimine; 2) radikaal-rahvusliku diskursuse aktiivne vastupanu, mis õigustas arusaama, et radikaalsed meetodid on õigustatud juhul, kui rahvuslikud väärtused on ohus, 3) lepitusediskursus, mis keskendus vajadusele läbi rääkida ja arvestada suurriigi vajadustega.

Eesti omariikluse kogemus erines tunduvalt Soome omast, sest kuni iseseisvuse saavutamiseni 1918. aastal oli baltisaksa eliidi poolt valitsetav riik (provints) olnud Eesti ühiskonna suhtes väline tegur. Eesti ühiskond, kus toimusid kultuurilised ja sotsiaalsed arengud, ning riik (provints), kus toimusid poliitilised otsustusprotsessid, olid eraldatud. Kolm peamist ühiskondlikku diskursust Eestis pärast iseseisvuse saavutamist olid: 1) radikaal-rahvuslus, 2) kollektiivne-rahvuslus ja 3) liberaalne-individualism. Iseseisvusele eelnev ühiskondliku ja riikliku sfääri eraldatus selgitab, miks osa Eesti ühiskonnast nägi majanduskriisi ajal lahendust tugevas täidesaatvas võimus, nagu näitab radikaal-rahvusliku diskursuse populaarsus sellel perioodil. Pärast 1934. aastat domineeriv kollektiivne-rahvuslik diskursus nägi riigi ja ühiskonna suhteid kollektiivsete huvide individuaalsetele eelistamise kaudu, mis pidanuks tagama riigi arengu. Otsuste tegemise sfääri ja ühiskondlikku sfääri käsitleti eraldi, kuna see pidi tagama poliitilise stabiilsuse ja efektiivsema otsuste tegemise protsessi. Kuigi alternatiivne diskursus, liberaalne-individualism nägi üksikisiku arengut vajaliku eeldusena riigi arengule, oli selle ulatus tugevalt piiratud ja ei jõudnud üleriiklikule tasandile. Seega, domineeriv diskursus nägi otsuste tegemise sfääri ja ühiskondlikku sfääri eraldatuna.

Kaasuste kolmandad osad (Eesti: peatükk neli ning Soome: peatükk seitse) keskendusid küsimusele, kuidas sotsiaalsete diskursuste ning riigi ja ühiskonna vahelise suhte raamistikus said võimalikuks erinevad otsused Soome ja Eesti otsustajate jaoks 1939. aasta sügisel. Eesti kaasus näitas, kuidas domineeriv diskursus konstrueeris riigi ja ühiskonna vahelise suhte ühiskondliku ja otsuste tegemise sfääri lahususe teel. Sellest tulenevad riigi institutsionaalsed praktikad tekitasid olukorra, kus alternatiivsed diskursused ei olnud osa otsuste tegemise sfäärist ega riigi tasandi avalikust sfäärist. Seega sai tekkida olukord, kus otsustaja ei pidanud valima erinevate võistlevate ühiskondlike diskursuste vahel, vaid sai keskenduda ainult välistele piirangutele. Et uurida, kuidas tekkisid sotsiaalsed tingimused *(social conditions)*, milles otsustajad 1939. aasta

sügisel tegutsesid, keskendus töö sellele, kuidas riigi peamine otsustaja, president Konstantin Päts oli ühiskondlike diskursuste suhtes sotsialiseeritud. Peatükk näitas, et otsustaja arusaam kollektivistlik-rahvusliku diskursuse raames oli, et riigi stabiilsuse jaoks on vajalik tugev täidesaatev võim, mis esindab rahvast otse. Need arusaamad viisid institutsionaalsete praktikateni, milledes ühiskondlik ja otsustus sfäär olid eraldatud. Domineeriv riigi diskursus eelistas rahvuslikke kollektiivseid huve individuaalsetele huvidele. Seega, riiklik süsteem nägi ette tsentraliseeritud ülalt-alla poliitilise ja ühiskondliku organiseerituse, kus ühiskondlikud tegevused olid riigi poolt koordineeritud, et tagada riigi huvide fookus. Kuna alternatiivsed diskursused olid riigi tasandi avalikust sfäärist ning otsuste tegemise protsessist isoleeritud, siis ei olnud avalikus sfääris riigi tasandil diskursuste vahelisi debatte. Seetõttu ei olnud otsustaja piiratud ka ühiskondlike arusaamade poolt, nagu näiteks Saksa-vastased meeleolud ühiskonnas, vaid võis rajada poliitika reaalpoliitilistele vajadustele. Seetõttu otsuste tegemise protsessi ajal 1939. aasta sügisel sai valitsus keskenduda ainult välistele piirangutele, mitte sisemistele faktoritele või ühiskondlikele arusaamadele nendest välistest piirangutest. Kuna alternatiivsed diskursused ei olnud osa riigi tasandi avalikust sfäärist, siis ei olnud vajadust nende diskursuste vahel vahendada, mis võimaldas valitsusel keskenduda ainult välistele piirangutele ja seetõttu viia ellu otsus sõjalise konflikti vältimiseks.

Soome kaasus näitas, kuidas ühiskondlikud diskursused ja nende omavaheline vastastikune mõju ühiskondlike debattide kaudu viis domineerivate arusaamadeni olukorrast 1939. aasta sügisel. Ühiskondlikud diskursused, mille raames olid tekkinud ja arenenud ühiskondlikud debatid Soome riigi tähendusest ja suhetest Venemaaga, mõjutasid ühiskonna arusaamu Nõukogude Liidu nõudmistest 1939. aastal. Situatsiooni tõlgendati eelnevate ajalooliste Vene-Soome suhete kogemuste ning ühiskondlike diskursuste kaudu, mida Soome riigi püsima jäämine nende eelnevate vastuolude valguses tähendaks. Olukorda mõisteti põhiseadusliku diskursuse seaduste ja normide raamistikus, mida täiendasid valge Soome ja radikaal-rahvuslike diskursuste tugevad Nõukogude Liidu vastased meeleolud. Need ühiskondlikud diskursused moodustasid printsiipide kogumi, mille alusel ühiskond Nõukogude Liidu nõudmisi mõistis. Need printsiibid olid range neutraliteedi poliitika, Skandinaavia koostöö ja Soome territooriumi puutumatus. Diskursuste vaheliste debattide tulemuseks oli üksmeelsuse narratiiv, mille raamistikus kogu Soome ühiskond üksmeelselt valitsuse poliitikat toetas. Samas, rõhutades absoluutset vajadust üksmeelsuseks kriisi aegadel, sõltus see narratiiv valitsuse rangest poliitikast nõudmiste vastu. Seetõttu võib üksmeelsust näha ka piiranguna otsustajate jaoks, kuna see vähendas valitsuse manööverdamisruumi välissurvele vastamisel. Miks aga üksmeelsuse narratiiv või ühiskondlikud diskursused vähendasid otsustajate võimalusi vastata välisele survele? Miks ühiskondlikud diskursused mõjutasid välispoliitikat tugeva välise surve tingimustes, kus välised piirangud oleksid võinud muutuda tähtsamaks siseriiklikest väärtustest ja normidest? Ühiskondlike diskursuste tähtsust võis

näha kasvõi sellest, et lepituse-diskursus mis eksisteeris valitsusringkondades ning soosis suuremate kompromissideni minemist Nõukogude Liiduga, puudus pea täielikult avalikust sfäärist, kuna riigitegelased ei olnud valmis neil teemadel avalikult sõna võtma.

Seega, kuidas ühiskondlikud diskursused said otsustaja jaoks domineerivamateks kui väline surve ja piirangud? Hopfi argumendile tuginedes võib väita, et kuna otsustaja ise on sotsialiseeritud samas ühiskonnas, on ta samuti teatud ühiskondlike väärtuste ja arusaamade kandja, mis määrab selle, kuidas ta olukorda mõistab. Doktoritöös väidetaksegi, et kuna otsustaja ise on sotsialiseeritud ühiskondlike diskursuste suhtes, mõjutab see seda, kuidas ta enda jaoks tõlgendab tasakaalu ühiskondlike arusaamade ja väliste piirangute vahel. Doktoritöö vaatles, kuidas Soome peamine välispoliitika otsustaja, välisminister Eljas Erkko oli sotsialiseeritud oluliste ühiskondlike diskursuste suhtes ning leidis, et välisministri range neutraliteedipoliitika ja Skandinaavia orientatsioon põhines põhiseadusliku diskursuse arusaamadel, mida täiendas valge Soome Nõukogude Liidu vastane meelsus. Ühiskondlike arusaamade mõju otsustaja arusaamale situatsioonist näitab kasvõi Soome valitsuse vastu-ettepanek Nõukogude Liidu ettepanekule. Kuna otsustaja arusaamad põhinesid põhiseaduslikul diskursusel, keskendus vastu-ettepanek Nõukogude Liidu legitiimsetele, mitte poliitilistele julgeolekuvajadustele. Samuti näitas peatükk läbi üksmeelsuse narratiivi, kuidas otsustaja osales sotsiaalsete piirangute loomisel, mis hiljem tema manööverdamisruumi vähendasid. Kokkuvõtvalt näitas kaasus, kuidas ühiskondlikud diskursused mõjutavad välispoliitika kujundamisprotsessi, kuna otsuse tegemise hetkel pidi otsustaja arvestama erinevaid võistlevaid diskursuseid ning välist survet, mida ta interpreteeris nende ühiskondlike diskursuste perspektiivi kaudu, milles ta ise sotsialiseeritud oli. Kokkuvõtvalt, empiiriliste kaasuste kaudu näitas doktoritöö, et Soome puhul põhines otsus pikaajalistel ühiskondlikel debattidel ning arusaamadel, mis piirasid otsustajat välise surve arvestamisel. Samas Eesti kaasuse puhul olid ühiskondlik ja otsustamise sfäär eraldatud, mis võimaldas valitsusel keskenduda ainult välisele survele.

Käesolev töö pakub alust järgnevateks uurimusteks, kuna kasutatud teoreetilist raamistikku on võimalik kasutada ja edasi arendada teiste kaasuste puhul, kus on eesmärk keskenduda riigi ja ühiskonna vaheliste suhete problematiseerimisele. On võimalik edasi arendada teoreetilist raamistikku, uurides riigi, ühiskonna ja rahvusvahelise süsteemi suhteid, mis võimaldaks uurida, kuidas rahvusvahelise tasandi diskursused teatud riigi või konflikti kohta mõjutavad selle riigi siseriiklikke diskursusi ning nende kaudu välispoliitikat. Ühiskonna ja riigi suhte aspektist oleks võimalik edasi arendada ühiskondlike piirangute teoreetilist kontseptsiooni. Võimalik oleks vaadelda, kuidas sellised piirangud riigi, ühiskonna ning rahvusvahelise süsteemi vaheliste suhete mõjutusel arenevad ning muutuvad.

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2012–	European Commission, DG Development and Cooperation – EuropeAid, International Cooperation Officer (Education)
2006–2008	European Commission, Delegation to Sri Lanka and the Maldives, Political Officer
2005–2006	AS Invicta, Head of Public Sector Development
2003–2004	Estonian National Youth Council, Chairman of the Board
2002–2003	Estonian Ministry of Education and Research, Assistant to the Minister
2001–2002	Federation of Estonian Student Unions, Project Manager on Youth Work

Research interests:
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2012–	Euroopa Komisjoni arengu- ja koostöö direktoraat, rahvusvahelise koostöö ekspert
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Õppetöö läbiviimise kogemus

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