The topic of the research of the project *Agrarian Change and Ideological Formation – Farmers’ Cooperatives and Citizenship in the Baltic Sea Area 1880-1939* is the political formation of the peasantry in the Baltic Sea area during the period of democratization up to the Second World War. We study the impacts of cooperation, agrarianism and corporatism on the ideas and practices of citizenship as peasants began to gain political rights in the 19th and early 20th centuries. These forms of organizations and ideologies seem to have been shared generally by peasants in Europe. The peasants’ struggle for political rights was at the root of democratization in Europe, where the majority of the population was occupied with agriculture. What they wanted and how they intended to build a society and democracy has, however, long been forgotten in favour of the visions of other social groups, in particular the bourgeoisie and the urban workers.

The Baltic Sea area includes countries on both sides of the current east-west divide in Europe, and this divide has been particularly sharp after the Second World War. With the demise of the Soviet Union and the process of European unification gaining momentum in the last years of the 20th century, the east-west divide of Europe has been reopened for attention and study. Most of these studies concern the present period, but the construction of the divide in its historical context is also part of the debate. How deep and wide this divide was before the war is a question that we intend to treat empirically, in order to avoid simple extrapolations of current views. Were the differences perceived as more or less important in the past? What about the differences in the Baltic Sea area, a periphery which in some respects was lagging behind in the 19th century? We intend to contribute to a reconsideration of the east-west divide through a study of the political formation of the peasantry in the Baltic Sea area.

In this text, the preconditions of this process are examined. It begins with a sketch of the emancipation and political participation of the peasantry in the four cases of our project: Sweden, Finland, Estonia and Galicia. The political rights of the peasantry varied dramatically over this area. In the course of the 19th century, a number of ideas and political influences spread...
throughout Europe; Enlightenment ideals and romanticism, nationalism, liberalism, cooperative ideas and agrarianism all contributed to form the picture peasants created of themselves and their role in a modern and more democratic society. How these ideas and influences were received and interpreted within different national and regional contexts will be the focus of this text.

During the last few decades, the concept of citizenship has been extended from a formal category to a broader exploration of the mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion on a national level, with liberal and urban citizenship as a point of departure. Citizenship as a concept also implies a national dimension, a relationship to the nation-state. In a period when freedom often was understood as national self-determination, the relations between state and nation were constantly discussed. In particular, nation-states were contrasted to nations without statehood. The latter were frequent in East-Central Europe and present in all the states of the Baltic Sea area except Sweden. The demands for autonomy and freedom for national groups were frequently voiced in the process of emancipation.

The Enlightenment movement and the romanticism of the late 18th century, directly preceding our period of study, advocated two ways of approaching the relationship between the state, the people, and the individual. Thus, the concept of citizenship was caught between individual and group interests, and was used to further both. The difference between Enlightenment ideals and romanticism has, moreover, been part of the construction of the east-west divide of Europe in the 20th century. It will be the aim of the second part of the paper to discuss the implications of this heritage and its impact on the political formation of the peasantry in the 19th century.

“Free” peasants north of the Baltic Sea

In the northern part of the Baltic Sea area, the Swedish realm included Finland until 1809. Throughout history, the peasantry had been able to participate in the political process of the kingdom, due to the fact that there was no period of genuine feudalism. The estate system of the riksdag (the diet) included peasant representation.¹ The riksdag has a continuity throughout early modern history in Sweden, in spite of periods of absolute monarchy, when it was periodically inactive. In terms of peasant political influence, the tendency of kings to rely on the peasantry for support in conflicts with the landed nobility was at least as important as their formal representation in the representative body.²

The right to participate in representative bodies was conditioned by the status of the peasant. The formal freedom of the peasantry included land ownership for freeholders, which was contested at times but prevailed throughout the medieval and early modern period. The freeholder category and a real position in the power game were assets that were not common in other parts of Europe under feudalism. Through a reform in the late 17th century, peasant-owned land was extended to roughly one-third of arable land; a second third of the land was owned by the nobility, and the final third was owned by the state and the church. Freeholders (skattebönder) had political and economical rights; peasants renting crown lands had political rights in the 18th century, but owed labour duties or rent to state officials holding crown estates. These duties were increasingly commuted into money, and crown lands were sold to peasants already at the beginning of the 18th century. Peasant land ownership was further strengthened through the formal right to buy noble land in the 1790s, which led to the further extension of peasant ownership in the 19th century. Still, peasants living on estate lands had labour duties, just like the robot in the Habsburg monarchy, well into the 19th century. These labour duties were not officially abolished, but were instead gradually commuted into monetary rent payments towards the second half of the 19th century.

In addition to a position at the central level of government, there was local self-determination. This was strengthened in the late 18th and early 19th centuries through tax committees, land consolidation committees, and general secularization. The estate diet (the riksdag) was reformed in 1866, and estate representation was replaced by a system of male suffrage based on property, where land ownership or certain levels of income were required in order to have the right to vote. In spite of the formal conditions, the position of the Swedish peasantry actually was strengthened through this reform, as compared to the estate system.

The formal rights of the peasants also concerned the Finnish part of the monarchy. When Finland in 1809 became a Grand Duchy inside the Russian Empire, these privileges were largely maintained. The structure of Finland was egalitarian, in comparison to other parts of the Russian empire, in the sense that there were few large manors and there had never been any serfdom. The peasants could own land and participate in local government. Their political representation, however, disappeared with the Swedish riks-

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3 Gadd, *Den agrara*, p. 81.
7 Melin et al. *Sveriges historia*, p. 187-188.
In 1863, a parliament of four estates, after the model of the former riksdag was introduced, yet still only held advisory power. Nor was the ruling body changed into a government of a modern kind. The concessions of the late 19th century thus did not introduce liberal forms of government, but instead restored older forms of representation to the Grand Duchy. Still, local autonomy was retained, both in Finland as an entity inside the Tsarist Empire and in local matters within the Grand Duchy. Finland had its own laws, civil service, currency, and even military. This autonomy was challenged by the conservative rule of Nicholas II at the turn of the century, 1900. Formal general suffrage was introduced in connection with the revolution of 1905, and at the end of 1917, during the Russian revolution, Finland declared full independence. At that point, general and equal suffrage, which included females, was introduced in Finland, as was the rule in all of the new countries of Europe.

On the northern shores of the Baltic Sea, the peasantry had participated in politics throughout history, and had further strengthened their position in the 19th century in Sweden. In Finland, the process did not develop under Russian rule, but on the other hand, the changes were unexpectedly small, and Finland was quick to catch up in the early 20th century. The formal right to own land was an important part of the rights and duties of the peasantry. The peasants of the Swedish kingdom considered themselves free in comparison to the enserfed peasants on the southern shore of the Baltic Sea, and were also used as examples in the process of emancipation of the latter. Up until the early 20th century, political rights were closely tied to the ownership or disposal of land, both qualitatively and quantitatively, with gradual distinctions between freeholders, leaseholders, and the landless groups.

Land ownership and citizenship south of the Baltic Sea

In contrast, on the southern shores of the Baltic Sea, the peasantry had endured a period of serfdom stretching some four centuries beyond the feudalism of Western Europe, and emancipation took place only in the 19th century. The Baltic provinces had been conquered and Christianized by German crusaders in the 13th century, and German knights had since then been both landlords and rulers in a persistent form of feudal rule that changed little over time. The provinces were included in the Swedish realm in the 17th century, but the condition of the peasantry changed only in the last decades.

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10 Gustafsson, Nordens historia, p. 23-25.
of the Swedish rule, and had only a marginal effect.\textsuperscript{11} When the provinces were included in Imperial Russia at the beginning of the 18\textsuperscript{th} century, the subordination of the peasantry was reinforced again, and was preserved throughout the century. The German \textit{Ritterschaft} continued its local rule, including its legislative, executive, and judiciary power under the Russian authorities, despite the attempts of reform under Catherine II.\textsuperscript{12}

Still, the peasant condition in Germany seems to have inspired the local Baltic-German nobility. After the Napoleonic wars in the beginning of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century, large-scale reforms took place in Prussia, in 1807 and 1811. Serfdom was abolished, and the intention was to transform former serfs into mature citizens – mostly for military purposes. The liberal reforms in Prussia between 1807-1842 also concerned the constitution, the freedom of trade in urban areas, and education.\textsuperscript{13}

As a result of mediation by the German nobility, the influence from these neighbouring parts of Prussia also reached Estonian and Latvian peasants.\textsuperscript{14} Peasant reforms started in 1804 in Livland. Peasant judicial institutions were introduced and the sales of serfs were forbidden, as was the interference of the landlord in marriages.\textsuperscript{15} The peasants were formally liberated from serfdom in 1816-19, and did not have to wait until the mid-19\textsuperscript{th} century, as was generally the case in Russia. Since there were no provisions to give peasants credits to buy land, this reform was considered a half-measure. Labour duties continued, day-to-day changes were small, and in the process, the nobility retained ownership of all of the land. Not until the conditions for the buying of land by ordinary peasants improved in the 1860s did political rights increase significantly.\textsuperscript{16} Still, the diets were under exclusive noble German control, while the municipal authorities were elected with differentiated suffrage, first according to the amount of taxes paid, later to property in the last decades of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century.\textsuperscript{17} In 1919, after breaking away from Russia, the first national elections were held and included general suffrage for everyone.

The Habsburg monarchy had acquired Galicia in connection with the first partition of Poland in 1772. As a consequence of this transfer, the administrative system improved, and there was a limited representation of the popu-

\textsuperscript{12} Kahk, Juhan; Tarvel, Enn, \textit{An Economic History of the Baltic Countries} (Stockholm 1997), p. 74-75.
\textsuperscript{17} Raun, \textit{Estonia}, p. 60-61.
lation in a local diet, introduced in 1817. Taxes were increased and an education system was built. In the Austrian part of the empire, serfdom had been abolished by Joseph II in the 1780s, but in Galicia special paragraphs still gave a very strong position to the dominant Polish landlords. The peasantry was not free to move, as it faced restrictions that had been abolished in other parts of the empire. Joseph II had apparently also planned to abolish the obligatory labour duties, the robot of the peasantry, in order to introduce a contractual relationship between landowners and tenants, but this reform was never carried through.\textsuperscript{18} The administrative language was German, but in the 19th century, more space was made for the inclusion of local languages. Polish predominated, while Ukrainian was the language of the large Ruthenian minority – 40 per cent by 1910, and concentrated in the eastern part of Galicia.\textsuperscript{19}

In spite of reforms, the Polish aristocracy of Galicia maintained its power hold of the province. According to one estimation, Galician nobles usurped 6 per cent of the peasant land and increased peasant obligations by 40 per cent between 1781 and 1848, thus increasing the burdens without introducing corresponding improvements.\textsuperscript{20} Consequently, the relationship between the peasantry and the nobility was increasingly stormy, with recurring revolts. The robot remained a bone of contention and conflict up to 1848 within the entire Habsburg Empire. Conflicts were strong in Galicia; for instance, there was a jacquerie against landowners in Galicia in 1846, and repeated Ruthenian peasant uprisings. In 1848, the revolt spread to all parts of the empire, including Galicia. By abolishing the labour duties, the court and the central authorities apparently won the confidence of the peasantry. They did not continue their support of the revolt, and left urban and liberal contenders to continue demanding political reform on their own.\textsuperscript{21} In many constituencies, the Ruthenian peasants refused to vote.\textsuperscript{22} A counterrevolution set in, inspired by Schlegel and directed by a Catholic conservative party. This Austrian romantic conservatism sought to free the population from the yoke of rationalism.\textsuperscript{23}

Suffrage in the local diets was extended to larger groups in the second half of the 19th century in Galicia, and finally general male suffrage was introduced in 1907. This liberalization was, however, outweighed by the increasing autonomy of the Galician province. Internal autonomy was introduced in 1868, and allowed the Polish landed and professional elite to con-

\textsuperscript{20} According to John Paul Himka, quoted in Okey, \textit{The Habsburg Monarchy}, p. 91.
\textsuperscript{21} Bérenger, \textit{The Habsburg Empire}, p. 165.
\textsuperscript{22} Okey, \textit{The Habsburg Monarchy}, p. 140.
\textsuperscript{23} Bérenger, \textit{The Habsburg Empire}, p. 165, p. 74.
tinue to dominate politics. National contradictions were increasing, and Ruthenian peasants were hit by both developments. The strong grip on the Galician diet of Polish landowners, and later also Polish urban middle-class interests, long blocked the political advance of the Ruthenian nationalist interests.

A previous period of serfdom characterized the peasant condition in the Baltic provinces of Russia and Galicia as part of the Habsburg Empire. The peasantry of both the Baltic provinces and Galicia were liberated from formal serfdom at an early stage, the 1810s and 1780s respectively, compared to the rest of the Russian Empire, or to the Hungarian part of the Double Monarchy. However, in both cases the formal abolition was only a half-measure, as concessions to the local Baltic German and Polish elites severely limited the reforms. Labour duties continued and the possibilities of owning land were restricted. Whereas Galicia had a local diet with increasingly extended male suffrage, the Baltic provinces did not introduce peasant representation until the revolution of 1905.

In both cases, the contradictions between the peasantry and an ethnically defined elite provided for a national definition of emancipation and citizenship rather than an individual understanding of concepts like freedom or autonomy.

The Baltic Sea area – two kinds of exceptions

The Baltic Sea area thus represents two different kinds of exceptions to the Western European pattern when it comes to the emancipation of the peasantry. The first difference is the strong position of the peasantry in the northern part of the area, in Sweden and Finland, untouched by feudalism. The freedoms retained were in a sense a continuation of barbarian customs. They were closely linked to the ownership or disposition of land, which was widespread and consisted of family holdings as a balancing force to manors and large estates.

In contrast to the northern part of the Baltic Sea area, peasants were not able to participate politically before the 19th century in the southern part, in the Baltic provinces and Galicia. A late form of serfdom prevailed there, until 1780 in Galicia, and until 1816-20 in the Baltic provinces of Russia. Participation in local government and judicial matters occurred than participation in the legislative body. Still, local participation was nevertheless much later and less profound than in Sweden and Finland. This legacy, of course, had an impact on the formation of citizenship in the Baltic provinces and Galicia. The contrast between these cases and those of Sweden and

Finland is particularly apparent when it comes to political participation. The link between ownership of land and being “a full citizen” seems strong, actually, in all cases.

In view of these contrasts, it is rather surprising that other aspects of emancipation occurred almost simultaneously. Labour rent, which affected only part of the peasantry in the north, was not abolished until the late 19th century throughout the Baltic Sea area. General and in particular female suffrage also occurred almost simultaneously, even a trifle later in Sweden than in Finland and Estonia.

The entire coastal area was practically untouched by the revolution of 1848, at a time when the rest of Europe was drawn into a common political process. The revolution gained its strength from peasants and urban bourgeoisie, who joined forces against the autocracy. In Sweden the peasantry traditionally had held a stronger position both with regard to land ownership and political representation, and so peasant discontent was not a force in furthering liberal reform. The Nordic realm followed Europe in its transformation from monarchy to constitutionalism between 1815 and 1870, but this occurred as a result of peaceful and consecutive reforms. Still, the end result was not radical liberalism, but a moderate form of liberal regime. Sweden did not replace the estate riksdag with a representative parliament with two chambers until 1866. Suffrage was linked to property disposal and ownership, and was restricted.

The peasantry in East-Central Europe too, was, ambivalent about some of the reforms advocated by the urban professional elite, in particular to liberal rule. But they made up part of the revolting forces, and were released from labour duties and other restrictions of their freedom to move about in the process. As soon as these demands had been met, however, they switched positions and to some extent became supporters of the conservative reaction, Catholic or lay, and also often monarchist.

Finland, Estland, and northern Livland were at that moment part of the Tsarist Empire, albeit under very different circumstances. The tsar, Nicholas I, was strongly against the revolution of 184. Indeed, he lent troops to the monarchist forces who crushed the revolt in Hungary in 1849. The liberal ideas coming from Europe could probably be spread undercover in Russia, but no explicit action was allowed. In the Baltic provinces of Tsarist Russia, there were no changes on the surface because of the revolution in Europe. The Baltic German nobility was affected by the crop failures of the 1840s, and large-scale reforms were probably planned in secret, but they did not materialize until Alexander II took power in 1855. At that time, the reforms concerned ownership of land, making it possible for parts of the peasantry to realize their formal freedom from the beginning of the century. Those who had the means to buy their land were also able to withdraw from labour du-

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26 Gustafsson, Nordens historia, p. 167.
ties. But there was no clear-cut reform of labour duties for the rest of the peasants, even if labour duties were gradually replaced by monetary rent payments in this relatively developed western part of the empire. 27 Along with the ownership of land and the formation of an owner-occupier peasantry, a peasant political organization also began. Some concessions were made to participation in local government, but the Estonian peasantry did not gain any representational reforms. The *Ritterschaften*, the Baltic German corporate bodies, held power until the revolution of 1905.

The Habsburg Empire, in contrast, participated in the 1848 revolution with uprisings both in Vienna and Budapest. 28 It was a liberal movement, one in favour of political and social reform, but was also inseparable from the national question. When demands were made for a transfer of sovereignty from monarch to people, the people were linked, explicitly or implicitly, to their language group. 29 Galicia seems to have been in the forefront of the revolution. In 1848, they obtained freedom from labour services, *robot*. The understanding of the people as ethnic groups was obvious in the demands of the Supreme Ruthenian Council, dominated by clergymen of the Greek Catholic Church, which demanded language equality and a division of Galicia which would leave the Ruthenians in the majority in the eastern half. However, in this movement there were still no contacts between Galician Ruthenians and the Ruthenians in the Ukrainian provinces of the Russian Empire. 30

As in Galicia, the peasants of Estland and northern Livland were no liberals. They turned to the Tsar instead, writing petitions. Between 1845-48 in northern Livland, there was a mass conversion of peasants from Lutheranism, the faith of the Baltic German nobility, to Russian Orthodoxy, the faith of the Tsar, by peasants hoping for social benefits. 31

The revolution of 1848 thus did not have the same significance in the Baltic Sea coastal area as in the rest of Europe, even if it occurred for very different reasons: peaceful reform in Sweden, powerful repression in the Russian Empire, and, in Finland, an interesting combination of both. The influence of liberal ideas seems to have been less important in this area. The strong position of peasants in Sweden, and the lack of economic differentiation in the weakly industrialized area as a whole, combined to leave more room for specificities of agrarian citizenship.

29 Okey, *The Habsburg Monarchy*, p. 130.
31 Raun, *Estonia*, p. 44.
Enlightenment ideals, romantic nationalism, and the people

The emancipation of the serfs in East-Central Europe was closely related to the issue of nations and languages in multinational empires. One of the central demands of the revolution of 1848 was that power should be taken from the absolute monarch and given to the people, but what did the “people” signify? One interpretation was that “people” meant ethno-linguistic groups, and freedom according to this interpretation meant national self-determination, in a federal context, or even secessionism. This understanding of the meaning of emancipation can analytically be distinguished from a liberal understanding of the concept of people and of emancipation as principally certain kinds of freedom for the individual. People in the second sense would be individuals who chose political preferences, departing from their own interests on one hand, and universal values on the other, without any strong intervention of homogenizing group interests.

This distinction works analytically along an axis defined by concepts such as collective versus individual, particularistic versus universal, and local power versus central power. As this distinction has been widely used in constructions of the East-West divide in Europe, a short digression on the different traditions is necessary. Enlightenment ideals, and the romantic reaction to the Enlightenment, have often been treated as separate and opposing traditions, from the late 18th century onwards. However, among contemporaries, the concepts were often used together, or alternately in the same discourse, reflecting the fact that most people conceive of themselves both as individuals and as members of various groups. Moreover, recent history of ideas research tends to avoid these dichotomies and instead speaks about specific contradictions in a more encompassing and shapeless modernity.

The Enlightenment of the late 18th century is normally understood to include ideas about rationalism, modern science, and secularization. In a more general way, its project was to unite scientific-technological development and the freedom and happiness of mankind. Several different types of late 18th century Enlightenment thought have been discerned, for instance, the French, the Scottish, the German, and so on. For the Baltic Sea area, influence from the German enlightenment was the most direct, even if connections to France also existed. Its main emphasis was on values such as human dignity and the notion of grown-ups coming of age or being treated as minors, as used by Immanuel Kant for instance. This special emphasis can be seen as a reference to the still existing serfdom in the area. In the beginning

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of the 19th century, Napoleon in France was a very real threat to the relatively small autonomous states in Germany. This historical circumstance also contributed to a rather speedy conversion from universal values towards more nationalistic theories of superior German values, and towards arguments for the unification of many minorities to one German state.\textsuperscript{34}

The impact of the Enlightenment in the Baltic Sea area has been debated for a long time. In a Swedish context the Enlightenment, narrowly defined, has been considered rather insignificant, whereas broader definitions, as expected, have yielded more evidence of the influence of the Enlightenment.\textsuperscript{35} In the southern part of the Baltic Sea area, and in East-Central Europe in general, the occurrence of Enlightenment thought has been asserted rather emphatically after the independence in the 1990s. Historian Indrek Jürjo has traced its history in the Estonian-speaking areas in a number of articles, and the grand old lady of Estonian social history, Ea Jansen, has devoted great attention to Enlightenment ideas in her later works.\textsuperscript{36}

Citizenship in the texts of enlightened authors was not necessarily related to the equal value of humans, or to ideas about political rights. The citizen emerges rather as a person of responsibilities. In the work of Moses Mendelssohn, a citizen was a person who belonged to an estate and worked in a profession with fixed rights and duties.\textsuperscript{37} Several leading thinkers, such as Locke, equated citizenship with property. Equal suffrage in the form of one man one vote, on the other hand, has been considered to occur due to political developments after the French revolution, rather than to the Enlightenment proper.\textsuperscript{38} As such political developments gained momentum, the ideas of equality provoked new theories about differences. Since Enlightenment ideals had superseded former traditional hierarchies, new differences and new arguments for differences were promptly invented. For instance, gender equality was a threatening idea – to avoid it, new theories emphasizing biological differences between males and females emerged. Biological differences were also used to develop national and racist theories.\textsuperscript{39} So, if Enlightenment thought tended towards individualism, universalism, and responsibility, this was not an unambiguous tendency.

As a reaction to universalism, new particularistic ideas, which departed from differences and advocated the virtues of variety, were also formulated. The most powerful expression of such ideas has been called national romanticism. These ideas developed more as an antithesis to Enlightenment thought in the same context, and the dividing lines are far from clear. Still, in

\textsuperscript{34} Liedman, \textit{I skuggan}, p. 166-168.
\textsuperscript{35} Liedman, \textit{I skuggan}, p. 45.
\textsuperscript{37} Heidegren, “Den förvirring”, p. 15.
\textsuperscript{38} Liedman, \textit{I skuggan}, p. 156-157.
\textsuperscript{39} Liedman, \textit{I skuggan}, p. 166-168.
the large empires consisting of many language and ethnic groups, the particularistic ideas became of great importance, not only because they celebrated diversity, but also because they accorded value to ordinary people, to oppressed “primitive peoples”, and to their languages, conceptions, and folk culture. This romantic nationalism was radically anti-elitist in contrast to many proponents of Enlightenment thought.

The romantic elevation of the people was most obvious in the work of the philosopher Johann Gottfried Herder, whose ideas gained great importance south of the Baltic Sea and in Finland, apparently less so in the old national state of Sweden. For him, primitive peoples were almost holy, and their holiness derived from being unspoilt by civilization or by high culture. Their languages were also different from the languages of educated people, who had borrowed elements from many different cultures. The borrowing and mixing of cultures was considered harmful. Primitive peoples, in contrast, were exponents of genuine cultures. They had a soul, which found an expression in their language and folklore and was mystical in character. The mysticism of Herder was religious, as was his critique of Enlightenment thought. He considered the belief in reason and rationalism arrogant, and as a threat to make man equal to God. Real reason was that of God, and man in his fallibility could only partially understand it. Mysticism survived above all as the belief in the soul of each group of people, but the idea of the soul took secular form only later on in historicism.

The stateless peoples found support in Herder for the thought that every specific culture had the right to live and had an unquestionable value. They were also supported by Herder’s belief that they were capable of development. These components of his rather unsystematic works are obviously in the interest of oppressed peoples with an ethnically distinct ruling elite. Nationalism has sometimes taken on an aggressive form, but not much of that can be found in Herder. His disciple and friend Hamann, in contrast, spoke up aggressively against Enlightenment thought and intellectualism. He accepted pure empiricism, on the one hand, and religious belief on the other, but attacked all abstractions and formal education, which to him were both barren and domineering, a view that he shared with contemporary religious movements such as pietism. To them, it was impossible and ridiculous to divide man into parts such as human rights or citizen’s rights – one could just as well cut him to pieces. God decided and had a purpose for civiliza-

41 Merlio, „Herder und Spengler”, p. 67.
tions. In Hamann’s work, one can also find the idea of undivided authority, built on trust rather than scepticism and reason.

During the Napoleonic wars in the beginning of the 19th century, the romantic view of the people and its soul was put to other uses than giving some human value to the enserfed peoples of East-Central Europe. After these wars, German nationalism and peasant liberation went hand in hand. The ruling elite felt a need for a loyal and capable peasantry, able to defend the rulers when Prussia was threatened. Partly enserfed, oppressed subalterns were not efficient fighters for the state. They needed citizenship and education in order to be fully responsible and withstand an aggressor. So there was a liberation of the peasantry, tightly linked to the wish to make them into good soldiers. This modification of the concept of the people in the German tradition has been ascribed to Ernst Moritz Arndt. He advocated the peasants as reliable people, close to nature, and simultaneously as good material for making into soldiers. The emancipation of the German peasantry, in this historical context, later inspired new peasant laws in the Baltic provinces. The ideas about the people, “der Volk”, were thus linked to those of the strong state, in a specific German context of Napoleonic wars, due to a political rather than philosophical context.

Two concepts of citizenship

With Enlightenment thought versus romanticism, or universalism versus particularism, two different concepts of citizenship emerged. One was individualistic with roots in the Enlightenment, where the belonging to a nation depends on an individual decision, with the idea of a contract made by the individual in a daily “choice” of citizenship. The liberal citizen is someone who chooses his citizenship and has a contract with his state. The individual is not subordinated to a group, but is instead free to act in his own interest. The state and the leadership both mirrored the sum of such interests.

The other concept of citizenship is the romantic, where the nation is considered a natural or at least historically grown community, one that the individual does not choose but instead belongs to by birth. In the romantic form of citizenship, the individual is subordinated to the community; he/she is a part of it and cannot choose to leave. The duty of the citizen is to understand the common good of the people. There is a historically shaped and specific national community of values that is not universal but specific. The only

46 Merlio, „Herder und Spengler”, p. 81.
possibility of individual freedom occurs inside this community. Thus, even if Enlightenment thought and romanticism should not be unduly dichotomized, they seem nevertheless to lead to quite different abstractions about citizenship, ideas which will be present in different forms in the formation of an agrarian political understanding. Not only geographical proximity, but also direct influences made for a strong impact of German ideas in the whole Baltic Sea area. The original thoughts of Herder were more adapted to the problems of the many peoples of the large empires than to later forms of German state-oriented nationalism.

In early romanticism, the people were ascribed a soul that expressed the common good. A leader should be an exponent of such a common good, an embodiment of the soul of the people, and there were also ideas about an absolute leadership. In the late 19th century, the German social economist group, the *Kathedersozialisten* modified this type of organic view of the soul of the people and the leader as an exponent of the soul of the people. Max Weber discussed the common good as something different from the sum of different group or individual interests.47 Werner Sombart analyzed the cohesive forces of a people not in organic terms but in terms of common values, conditioned by common heritage, historical destiny, and culture.48 The components of the religious mysticism contained in romantic thought thus were significantly modified over time, while the notion of citizenship remained distinct from the liberal understanding.

### The East-West Divide in the Cold War

The East-West divide contains an implicit causal relationship between national romanticism and the emergence of Nazism and fascism in East Central Europe. Isaiah Berlin, for instance, counts Herder’s friend and disciple Hamann as part of a tradition that led up to fascism.49 Still, recent analysts often maintain that no such direct link exists, and Herder has rather been considered as an advocate of diversity and as a voice against state centralization.50 This relationship will be examined in earnest in the last part of our project, but in this text will only be briefly introduced.

During the Cold War, the American historian Hans Kohn wrote a number of works where he constructed a dichotomy between romantic nationalism inspired by Herder as a philosophy of less developed and immature peoples of Eastern Europe, and Enlightenment thought, as embraced by the more

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developed and mature peoples of Western Europe. Nationalism, according to Kohn, was part of Enlightenment thought in the developed Western countries, beginning with Jean Jacques Rousseau. It was territorially defined, and was supported by the democratic aspirations of the liberal middle class. In the less-developed eastern part of Europe, nationalism in contrast was ethno-linguistic and inspired by Herder. The latter form was underpinned by invented traditions, irrational as its romanticist origins, messianistic, hysterical, and an important precondition for totalitarianism in the interwar period. The difference was because the peoples of Eastern Europe were not mature enough for nationalism, as well as lacking realism regarding their national projects. Kohn was specifically discussing Germany and the Balkan countries, allowing for some variation in the northern parts of Europe. These texts contained some derogatory epithets and built a hierarchy of nations according to an unspecified conception of political development. Finally, Kohn constructed a causality, with Enlightenment thought leading to democratic and open societies, whereas romantic nationalism led to aggressive, expansionist, and totalitarian societies.

In the West, Kohn has seldom been referred to since the 1960s, while more sophisticated analyses of totalitarianism like that of Hannah Arendt have survived and are regularly part of historiographies on Nazism and communism. Still, the connection between ethno-linguistic thought and aggressive nationalism has survived in more popularized contexts. Kohn has provoked discussion in the post-communist countries, where nationalist ideas have experienced a revival. The causal inferences made by Kohn have in particular challenged the numerous nationalist political forces in East Central Europe, but professional historians have also made the effort to reconsider and discuss his theories.

While the critics of Kohn do not deny the analytical difference between territorial nationalism and ethno-linguistic nationalism, they point out that territorial nationalism hardly has been less belligerent and aggressive than ethno-linguistic or culturally defined national movements. Furthermore, cultural nationalism is seen as an exponent of popular politics, a bottom-up process intended to emancipate and democratize oppressed peoples under authoritarian regimes. In a recent edition of Herder’s work, the philosopher Michael Forster writes that Herder was “a liberal, a republican and democrat, and an egalitarian”. He was speaking in favour of freedom of thought and expression, and Forster emphasizes that Herder advocated a broader suffrage than his teacher and contemporary Immanuel Kant. He has even detected

52 E.g. Laar, Aratajad, p. 76.
some “proto-feminist” tendencies in Herder, a desire to realize the potentials that women possessed.\footnote{Forster, “Introduction”, p. xxxiii.}

The influence of ethno-linguistic nationalism and J.G. Herder has been documented in all of our cases. In the Baltic countries, the link is quite clear. J.G. Herder lived in Riga, the province of Livland, between 1764-69. His short stay there resulted in the inclusion of Latvian folk songs in his collection of folklore Stimmen der Völker, on one hand, and in his influence over radical Baltic German intellectuals on the other. One of these intellectuals wrote a critique of the German conquest of the Baltic realm at the turn of the century, 1800.\footnote{Merkel, Garlieb, Die Letten (Berlin 1998).} The prehistory of the Baltic peoples was described in an idealistic and romantic mode, and their oppressed status under Baltic German local rule was deplored. The first enthusiasts of Baltic folklore and Baltic emancipation then were paradoxically of German origin, but the ethno-logical movement soon spread to educated native speakers.\footnote{Laar, Äratajad, p. 114, p. 121.}

The Estonian historian Mart Laar in, his book on early nationalism in Estonia, divides Baltic German political orientations into three groups. Conservatives thought that the Baltic peoples should remain in a subordinated social position, and should be able to use their own language. Liberals challenged the inequalities of the feudal society, and advocated German as a common language for all. The culture of native speakers was too weak, and would have difficulties in catching up with more advanced cultures like the German, they maintained. They would therefore gain from the adoption of a “higher” form of language and culture. National romantics were against the social inequalities in the Baltic realm, like the liberals, but advocated a preservation of the local languages and cultures.\footnote{Laar, Äratajad, p. 124, p. 263.} The last position thus is represented as both socially conscious and multiculturally tolerant.

The philosophy of Herder reached Finland in the late 18th century, as it still was under Swedish rule. But the Finnish national movement gained strength in the 19th century, when Finland was an autonomous part of the Russian empire. In the same paradoxical manner as the Baltic Germans had been the first advocates of Estonian nationalism, the leading society included Swedish-speaking authors and publicists. When this group finally started to publish a Finnish journal, Maamiehen Ystävä, this was clearly directed towards the peasantry. Snellman and Yrjö-Koskinen contributed to the cleavage of the national movement between Swedish-speaking and Finnish-speaking groups, and eventually it was connected to socio-economic demands particularly favouring the Finnish poor peasantry.\footnote{Klinge, Matti, Let us be Finns. Essays on history (Helsinki 1990) p. 82-83; Jussila, Osmo, Hentilä, Seppo, Nevakivi, Jukka, From Grand Duchy to a Modern State: A political history of Finland since 1809, (London 1995), p 57.}
Moreover, recent works have also maintained that ethno-linguistic nationalism has been a driving force of diversity, pluralism, and local power, as opposed to centralism and cultural homogenization.\(^{59}\) Herder, in opposition to universalist thinkers, has maintained that human concepts, representations, and attitudes were vary over time and space, and thus demand interpretation, a position which today would be relatively uncontroversial.\(^{60}\) Simple East-West dichotomies have also been challenged from another angle. It is not true that Enlightenment thought appeared quiet late in Central Europe, Hungarian historian László Kontler maintains in a short essay. The representation of Central European Enlightenment thought as a later copy of the original French version is misleading. The instrumentalization of reason, and the challenging of tradition and prejudice by critical reason, were at least present in the late 18\(^{th}\) century in the Habsburg monarchy and Poland, even if mostly among the royalties and aristocracy.\(^{61}\) It was, moreover, perceived as patriotism and thus did not preclude nationalism in a project of improvement or social reform, e.g. through the means of the statistical and geographical description of the state of different parts of the empire. The issues of social solidarity and emancipatory patriotism were simultaneously present in this discourse.\(^{62}\) Kontler, however, expresses some doubts as to the existence of Enlightenment thought in Russia.

This early Enlightenment movement in Central Europe was socially but not ethnically exclusive. The language issue was raised with new force in the early 19\(^{th}\) century, and was reinforced by the “sensibilities of Romanticism”. The language question could sometimes be seen as supplementing, instead of precluding, the emancipatory and social issues of the early Enlightenment, just as on other occasions it was opposed to liberal advocates arguing for a more unitary cultural development. According to these texts, the dichotomy of Kohn could just as well be replaced with another generalization: that both Enlightenment thought and romantic nationalism existed in Central Europe without being mutually exclusive.\(^{63}\)

Within the present project, we have numerous, if late-occurring, instances of agrarian reformers using the language of the Enlightenment. The derision of tradition, the faith in science, the picture of a dark past and a light future; all are parts of this imagery.\(^{64}\) In the late 19\(^{th}\) century, the very same persons advocated these views when speaking about economic and agricultural matters, and simultaneously they constituted the backbone of the national

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\(^{59}\) Berlin, Isaiah, *Two Conceptions of Liberty* (Oxford 1966); Laar, Áratajad, p. 77.

\(^{60}\) Forster, “Introduction”, p. xiv-xvii.


\(^{63}\) Kontler, “The Enlightenment”, p. 41-42.

\(^{64}\) See texts by Johan Eellend, Piotr Wawrzeniuk and Fredrik L Eriksson in this volume.
movements. Considering the empirical evidence from our cases, it seems just as impossible to uphold the dichotomy.

Recent research has thus heavily criticized the dichotomy of East and West in Europe, here represented by Kohn, and its allegations of inherently undemocratic tendencies. Mart Laar has emphasized the bottom-up and socially concerned character of romantic nationalism, Michael Forster has underlined the democratic creed of Herder and his followers, and maintains that they spoke for diversity, not for exclusion of some cultures. Finally, László Kontler has demonstrated the mutually supplementary potentials of Enlightenment thought and romantic ideas on citizenship, which co-existed with contradictory versions in the late 18th and early 19th century.

The notion of citizenship in the emancipation of Estonian and Galician peasants seems to have been informed both of Enlightenment ideas of reason and science, and ideas about ethno-linguistic nations and the people as a political subject, rather than the individual. Could this be a case of rationality in practical and economic matters, romanticism in political matters? And how did these beliefs materialize in their inclusion and exclusion within the definition of citizenship?

The socio-economic dimension of citizenship

The question has also been raised as to whether national issues have been overrated in the history of the late Habsburg Empire, and whether socio-economic conflicts have been overlooked. The Habsburg Empire had actually favoured the coexistence of different languages and national cultures, aside from some shorter periods. The rise of nationalism there is often described as triggered by German nationalism, as demanding a favoured position, and as a response from the Czech elite, who felt discriminated relative to the Germans in Bohemia in the beginning of the 19th century. Demands for less centralization and more federative types of rule were taken up by other elites such as the Hungarian and the Polish. The Czech elite, consisting of urban industrialists and tradesmen, seems to have supported liberal values including individual political rights, whereas landowning national elites did not. A class, or at least an urban-rural dimension, seems to be just as important for the character of the elite demands as the Enlightenment-romanticism divide. Urban and rural elites alike asked for more local power in relation to the central government.

The peasantry had their own agenda, where the possibility of owning land and the abolition of labour duties, robot, were principal demands, but they were not insensitive to calls for more local and ethnically defined power.

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66 Bérenger, The Habsburg Empire, p. 158.
Their demands were often at odds with the landlords of the territory, whether these belonged to the same ethno-linguistic group or not. Peasant demands were not contradictory to those of urban elites in the same way, but it seems that peasants had difficulties in adopting the liberal agenda. In Galicia, they refused to vote, and in other places they expressed deference to the monachy through petitions and letters expressing loyalty and faith in the good will of the monarch. This would point to a socio-economic dimension, which would again beg the question about the character of peasant citizenship.

Gary B. Cohen emphasizes the existence of a civil society in the Austrian part of the Habsburg monarchy, one which left room for nationalist politicians and their aspirations in the late 19th century. This was therefore not the main cause of unrest, as nationalistic historiography would maintain. Instead, the crisis of provincial diets around the turn of the century, 1900, could be seen from a class perspective, as an expression of the new strength of popular politics. Secular agrarianism was one of these popular movements, revolting against elitism. Radical nationalism was just one expression of popular and anti-elitist sentiment. The class basis depended on the people: Slovenes, Slovaks, Ukrainians, and Rumanians (and Estonians, Latvians, and Lithuanians, we might add) had more lower middle-class and peasant farmer constituencies than Germans, the Czechs, and the Italians. The former were often led by clergy and schoolteachers, the latter were more liberal and more urban. So, the problem was not that national interests did not find room within the Habsburg Empire. Unrest was instead due to class-based revolts inside the national movements against local elites, including both local landowners with economic interests that collided with peasant demands and urban liberal elites.

The characterization of local elites in national movements corresponds exactly with Miroslav Hroch’s analysis of national revival among nations without a history of statehood in East Central Europe. Hroch speaks about a typically “truncated” class system, where the development of urban and higher professional elites had been blocked by ruling groups of a different ethnicity. In these cases, the core of the national movement consisted of a rural elite with some education but without any opportunities for social advancement. These groups instead turned to the newly emancipated parts of the peasantry for support, and mobilized them using a mixture of economic and national demands.

68 Cohen, “Nationalist”, p.11.
69 Cohen, “Nationalist”, p. 4.
71 See the accounts of the beginnings of the co-operative movement in Estonia and eastern Galicia written by Johan Eellend and Piotr Wawrzeniuk.
If this is the case, we might ask what the interests were of this lower middle-class rural elite and the peasantry, as well as what their grievances were against liberalism. Was the urban middle class not addressing their problems? Did they press national issues and a position of their own in the national elite without solving the existing and harsh class contradictions in the form of landlessness, poverty, land reforms, and social issues such as education and health care? Could advocating individual freedom as opposed to group interests be one of the perceived problems?

For our investigation of the Swedish-speaking peasants of Finland, constituting a minority ethnically related to the former elite, of the Ruthenian (Ukrainian) peasants of Galicia constituting an oppressed minority, and of the Estonian peasants in the Baltic provinces of Russia, constituting an oppressed majority, the intersection of class and ethnicity might be more important for the formation of citizenship than national issues alone. Still, when social and political stratifications coincided with ethnic differences, ethno-linguistic appeals could provide for mobilization. In the practices of peasant movements, another aspect of socio-economic conflict seems obvious as well. Even if the peasantry was unanimously demanding land ownership and abolition of labour duties during the period of emancipation, their movements typically split at a later stage between more conservative parties representing well-off farmers and more left-wing parties also representing the landless or poor peasantry.

In a multicultural area, language and culture are important for the possibilities of political participation, including both exclusion and inclusion. Simultaneously, collective rights concerning ethno-linguistic groups could limit the freedom of the individual. If rights were to be negotiated on a group level, it might be in the interest of the group to demand cultural purity and group solidarity from its members. This would obviously be detrimental to individual freedom of choice, and the group would then constitute a level between the individual and state power, which is a problem for a liberal democracy. But how else could minorities be protected from majority rule in economic and political matters? This problem was the subject of a constant debate throughout the democratization processes of the 19th and early 20th century, and was raised already by J. S. Mill. Since 1989, this discussion has re-emerged in East-Central Europe. To what extent are group identities compatible with a liberal citizenship? Would they not differentiate between the citizens? At the same time, it is easy to show that attempts to eradicate group identities have backfired. A position of liberal nationalism has emerged, maintaining that national identities are necessary to create trust and solidarity in society. According to this view, cultural and political elements are closely related and impossible to distinguish, forming a common cultural

identity that integrates citizens and promotes mutual understanding. Opponents to this view retort that this is a reification of national identities, that identities are fluid and negotiated, and that nothing precludes common political values in spite of different or non-existing national identities.73

Mart Laar has formulated the same question raised by the Baltic German and Estonian elite in Livland and Estland in the 19th century as a conflict between Hegel and Herder. According to Hegel, small cultures had only a small potential for development and for catching up with the most advanced cultures of their time. Instead of supporting them, they would gain from an assimilation with the great cultures, which in the Estonian case, was the German culture.74 Whereas the Baltic Germans turned towards a Hegelian position after 1848, for liberal reforms with statehood as a prerequisite, Estonians held on to a Herderian view of the importance of their own culture. Here, Laar again points to the leading position of the lower middle class rural elite of native speakers, a product of the education system, increased local government, and finally the Herrnhut religious movement, all producing an elite from the ranks of the peasantry. In the 1850s, this elite was instrumental in re-defining the peasantry, from a socio-economic group (maarahvas, rural people) to an ethno-linguistic group.75 The issue of promoting their own culture would then have turned them away from liberal solutions.

The resistance towards liberal citizenship might not arise from cultural essentialism or loyalty towards national ideas. Another interpretation might be to see it as a conflict between an emerging, subordinated elite of native speakers and a democratically oriented but socio-economically dominating elite of Baltic German reformers. Individual freedom in a subordinated position might not have seemed to be a realistic solution to the concrete problems of the peasantry, whereas collective action seemed more promising. Citizenship was formed not by suffrage but by associations, cooperatives, and only at a late stage, by parties.

Concluding remarks: nationalism, liberalism and agrarian citizenship

Some ideas pertaining to the specificity of the formation of citizenship and in particular agrarian citizenship in the Baltic Sea area have been presented above. One problem has been the attention paid exclusively to the issue of

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73 This very sketchy summary I owe to doctoral student Victor Makarov.
74 Laar, Äratajad, p. 124-25; Kymlicka, Multicultural, p. 52.
nationalism in humanities and social sciences in the past twenty years, which to some extent overshadows other common regional concerns that we are trying to address. But a few things seem possible to maintain.

In the Baltic Sea area, the preconditions for emancipation of the peasantry were widely differing. The almost simultaneous process of liberation from labour duties and political reforms is therefore quite remarkable. The process started from very different positions, and was certainly later in the area that long had been part of the Russian Empire, but the parallels are still striking. A certain convergence took place in this period. In the interwar period and in the Second World War, the area again diverged. Sweden and the Scandinavian countries belonged to the most stable democracies of Europe, whereas the southern part of the Baltic Sea area followed central and southern Europe in a shift towards authoritarianism. In view of such differences, an East-West divide was constructed during the Cold War between territorial nationalism and ethno-linguistic nationalism. This analysis is scrutinized and criticized by current historians and social scientists dealing with East-Central Europe.

To the extent that the agrarian political emancipation also embraced ethno-linguistic nationalism, and that these phenomena seem inextricably linked in all of our cases except Sweden, judgements on its undemocratic character have been vividly challenged in the period after the Cold War. This critique has been based on the understanding that it was a popular movement. First, the democratizing function of ethno-linguistic nationalism, particularly its character of lower-class movement working for emancipation, has been argued. Secondly, the distinction between Enlightenment ideals on one hand and romantic nationalism on the other has been questioned. Romantic nationalism and Enlightenment ideals seem to have been advocated at the same time by the same people, the same rural elite. Moreover, the link that exists to more aggressive forms of nationalism seems to be of a later date, related to the wars between France and the German lands.

Finally it has been argued that the rural and ethno-linguistic minority movements did not work for individualistic liberal reforms. A division took place between liberal and urban elites on the one hand and minority, rural and ethno-linguistic groups on the other. The distinction between liberal urban elites and new lower middle-class rural elites consisting of school-teachers, well-off peasants, lower clergy, agronomists, and civil servants thus seems to mirror the important divisions. These divisions include that between the individual and the collective solutions, the universal versus the particular, and that of central power versus local power. What emerges is an expression of the national identities of oppressed minority groups which also holds subordinate positions, manifesting itself as a bottom-up movement, and using national identity as its mobilization.