

Table of contents

Acknowledgements 10

List of abbreviations 12

1. Introduction 13

- 1.1 The reform debates of the revolutionary era 1917–19 in inter- and transnational comparisons 13
- 1.2 Towards a comparative and transnational history of political discourse 23
- 1.3 Discourse-oriented political history based on parliamentary sources 37
- 1.4 The structure of the analysis 41

2. National backgrounds of constitutional disputes from spring 1917 to summer 1919 44

- 2.1 The standstill in the British constitutional reform before and during the war 44
- 2.2 Universal male suffrage in Germany. Prussian executive power and scepticism about parliamentarism 50
- 2.3 Prolonged disputes on suffrage and parliamentary government in Sweden 57
- 2.4 Finland – a grand duchy of the Russian Empire with exceptionally broad suffrage but no parliamentary government 62

3. The spring of democracy in 1917: The new constitutional scene created by the prolonged war, the Russian Revolution and the American intervention 72

- 3.1 Britain: The wartime situation used to force through a postponed reform 72
 - 3.1.1 A continuing constitutional crisis 72
 - 3.1.2 Creating ‘a new Britain’ consensually in a time of war and revolution 75
 - 3.1.3 Cautious Labour and Liberal democrats versus patently democratic Conservatives 85

- 3.1.4 Creating a 'Parliament of the people' while avoiding a 'constitutional revolution' 92
- 3.1.5 A new Parliament – 'a mirror of the nation' engaging the citizens and placing its trust in the masses 97
- 3.1.6 The committee stage during a campaign for amendments 104
- 3.2 Wartime demands for the democratisation and parliamentarisation of Imperial Germany 108
 - 3.2.1 The German polity in a profoundly transformed world 108
 - 3.2.2 Implications of the war, the Russian Revolution and the British reform for the German constitution 113
 - 3.2.3 The Western democracies and a new democratic order in Germany 124
 - 3.2.4 The role of a 'free' German people and the masses in a new era 131
 - 3.2.5 What would the co-sovereignty of parliaments mean? 134
- 3.3 Sweden: Renewed reform demands under the threat of revolution 139
 - 3.3.1 The situation created by a repeatedly postponed suffrage reform 139
 - 3.3.2 Building 'dams of ice' or welcoming the spring in the midst of transnational change 143
 - 3.3.3 A global breaking-up of the ice for the forces of democracy? 154
 - 3.3.4 The role of the Swedish people in the reformed polity 162
 - 3.3.5 Should parliamentarism be seen as the established system, an instrument for creating a better society through debate, or a system to be taken over by the people? 166
- 3.4 Finland: The legitimacy of the parliament deteriorates at the moment of democratisation and parliamentarisation 173
 - 3.4.1 Sovereignty in the former grand duchy: in the parliament, the government or a Russian-style 'democracy'? 173
 - 3.4.2 The international, imperial and national political order changed by the war and revolution 185
 - 3.4.3 International democracy or the vernacular 'rule by the people'? 197
 - 3.4.4 Defining the position of the people within the Finnish polity 205
 - 3.4.5 Prospects for a parliamentary Finland: opposing Social Democratic and bourgeois views 207

4. The autumn of 1917: A completed, a suspended and a partial reform – and a failed reform leading to a civil war 214

- 4.1 Britain: The rising politisation of democracy 214
 - 4.1.1 A final confrontation on extended suffrage between the two chambers 214
 - 4.1.2 'This Bill is a revolution': The reform in relation to British constitutional history and foreign examples 219

- 4.1.3 The increasingly contested definition of ‘democracy’ 225
- 4.1.4 ‘Women in Parliament, in Governments’: The widening involvement of the people in politics 232
- 4.1.5 The future of a democratic parliamentary polity after the war 236
- 4.2 Germany: Democratisation and parliamentarisation come to a halt 240
- 4.3 Sweden: The introduction of parliamentary government as a safeguard against domestic upheaval 251
- 4.4 Finland: Discursive struggles over democracy and parliamentarism turn into an attempted revolution 256
 - 4.4.1 The Bolshevik Revolution and the questioned legitimacy of Finland’s disputatious new parliament 256
 - 4.4.2 Reforms to be implemented by a national parliament or by an international revolution? 259
 - 4.4.3 The Finnish ‘rule by the people’ in the shadow of Bolshevism 273
 - 4.4.4 A people divided by class and parliamentary discourse 281
 - 4.4.5 Diminishing trust in parliamentary government escalates the crisis 282

5. The Spring of 1918: Western and Prussian versions of ‘parliamentarism’ clash in the Swedish and Finnish parliaments 292

- 5.1 Britain after of the Representation of the People Act 292
- 5.2 Germany: All quiet on the reform front 297
- 5.3 Sweden: A parliamentarised ministry introduces its first reform proposal 298
 - 5.3.1 Anti-reformism bolstered by a civil war next door 298
 - 5.3.2 Surrounding wars and revolutions as transnational agents of political change 302
 - 5.3.3 An attempted democratic breakthrough 306
 - 5.3.4 Bypassing the political rights of the Swedish people 310
 - 5.3.5 All parties on the side of parliamentarism – but different kinds of parliamentarism 312
- 5.4 Finland reconstructed to resemble a little Prussia 315
 - 5.4.1 The attempt to restrict reform by restoring the monarchy 315
 - 5.4.2 A counter-revolution built on an assumed German victory 321
 - 5.4.3 Redescribed rightist or principled centrist democracy – or no democracy at all? 326
 - 5.4.4 Disappointment with the Finnish people or continuing confidence in it 331
 - 5.4.5 Limited debates on parliamentarism in the Rump Parliament 337

6. The autumn of 1918: German, Swedish and Finnish constitutional debates in the face of a democratic turn 340

- 6.1 Democratic suffrage applied in Britain for the first time 340
- 6.2 Germany loses the war, introduces parliamentary government and experiences a revolution 349
 - 6.2.1 The course of the German Revolution up to the fall of the Kaiser 349
 - 6.2.2 Comparing the German Revolution with the Bismarckian system and the Finnish counterrevolution 351
 - 6.2.3 Divergent understandings of German democracy 355
 - 6.2.4 The German people as a political agent 357
 - 6.2.5 Crypto-parliamentarism comes into the open 359
 - 6.2.6 The radical phase of the revolution in November and December 1918 363
- 6.3 Sweden introduces an electoral reform: No revolution like those in Russia, Finland or Germany 367
 - 6.3.1 A reluctant rightist opposition gives in after the fall of the German monarchy 367
 - 6.3.2 The war and revolution as agents of domestic reform 373
 - 6.3.3 Optimistic and pessimistic visions of a democratic Sweden 381
 - 6.3.4 The relationship between the will of 'the people' and the interests of 'the realm' is problematised 392
 - 6.3.5 Parliamentarism under democratised suffrage 399
- 6.4 The monarchist majority of the Finnish Rump Parliament in search of a stable polity 401
 - 6.4.1 The strange logic of Finnish constitutional politics in late summer and autumn 1918 401
 - 6.4.2 A controversy over the excessive transnational influence of Germany 403
 - 6.4.3 Monarchical vs. republican democracy 407
 - 6.4.4 'The will of the people' interpreted for and against a republic 411
 - 6.4.5 Parliamentarism redefined or endangered by the monarchists? 417

7. The spring of 1919: The beginning of an era of democracy and parliamentarism? 422

- 7.1 Britain: Parliamentary democracy established or a bureaucratic state reinforced? 422
- 7.2 The construction of a democratic and parliamentary Germany in the Weimar National Assembly 428
 - 7.2.1 Expert planning for a new constitution 428
 - 7.2.2 A revolution against dictatorship 432
 - 7.2.3 Defining 'the most democratic democracy in the world' 435
 - 7.2.4 'Power in the state belongs to the people' 445
 - 7.2.5 Extolling, limiting and ignoring parliamentarism 450

- 7.3 Sweden: Adjusting the principles of a future democracy 455
 - 7.3.1 Swedish parties after the suffrage reform 455
 - 7.3.2 Internationalism after war and revolution 457
 - 7.3.3 Further prospects for democracy and parliamentarism 458
 - 7.3.4 Politics of the people in a democratic Sweden 461
 - 7.3.5 A glance across the Gulf of Bothnia 463
- 7.4 Finland: Moving towards a compromise on a presidential parliamentary republic 465
 - 7.4.1 Re-orienting the polity after the war 465
 - 7.4.2 Rethought international comparisons and transnational connections after the war and the revolutions 475
 - 7.4.3 Searching for a compromise between Socialist, centrist and rightist democracy 481
 - 7.4.4 Popular sovereignty recognised by all but one parliamentary party 488
 - 7.4.5 The remaining limits on parliamentarism 495

8. The entangled parliamentary revolutions of 1917–19: Comparison, discussion and conclusion 504

Appendix: Selected key events in national politics 534

Bibliography 536

Primary sources 536

Newspapers 537

Literature 537

Abstract 555

Subject and Place Index 556

Index of Names 577