Introduction to the Special Issue: Patriotism, Public Opinion, and National Defense in Estonia, Finland, and Sweden

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How do political communities stick together as polities in times of crisis? What is needed to motivate their citizens work together to deter threats, maintain state monopolies of violence, and sustain different forms of military alliances and cooperation? The answer, in large part, is patriotism. Patriotic thinking—both as a sentiment and as an element of political ideology—is a central tenet in building states and conducting state affairs. From the perspective of political philosophy, patriotism is often characterized as love for one's country and as an affective relationship imbued with such emotions as pride, honor, and appreciation for the collective that it represents. Scholars from the tradition of republican patriotism argue that such love may be directed toward political institutions and that it helps form a way of life that sustains the liberty of a state's population. This stands in contrast to nationalism, which regards the same object of veneration, the homeland, with less tolerance of heterogeneity and political disunion. Both patriotism and nationalism are conceptualized in a variety of ways and can take on meanings as varied as benign civic unity and exclusionary chauvinism. Patriotism is often conceptualized as a form of civic virtue, stressing the way it prioritizes the community ahead of the individual.

In this special issue, we investigate manifestations of patriotism in Northern Europe, how they are formed by currents of political thought and historical pathways, and how they uphold and inform political

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narratives, public opinion, defense policies, and security politics. In the twenty-first century, European states have been readjusting themselves to the uncomfortable reality of the possibility of military conflict and hybrid forms of disruption. This also includes the roles and duties of their citizens in facing risk and insecurity. Despite differences in their historical, social, and political contexts, states in Northern Europe share many external security concerns due to their geographical locations. Throughout the first two decades of the twenty-first century, especially after the annexation of Crimea by Russia in 2014, there has been an increased emphasis on military preparedness and other forms of deterrence, such as civil defense and security of supply of such essential material goods as food, medicine, and fuel.

How citizens relate to their nations and polities is in many ways an affective relation on both an individual and a collective level. The fostering of patriotic attitudes and sentiments takes place in many different social contexts and spheres of communication, such as organizations focusing on memory politics (see Kończal and Moses 2021), civilian preparedness (Hart 2022a), and "paramilitary civil society" (Grzebalska 2020, 2021). It may also happen in the planning of public-opinion surveys (Davoliūtė 2021), in military academies (Libel 2016), and in the day-to-day life of military service. Depending on the context, the concept of patriotic education carries different political connotations for different actors, especially when it is directed at young people in schools and cultural or civil society organizations. There are many variations of this phenomenon. Baltic states have unique forms of patriotic education in school settings: in Estonia, for example, an elective course on national defense is available in secondary schools (Estonian Ministry of Defense 2019), and in Latvia, "national defense training" will become compulsory in secondary schools in 2024 (Urych and Matysiak 2022). In Russia, military-patriotic education takes place in a revived and institutionalized form in organizations such as Yunarmiya and serves clear chauvinist-nationalist ends. Yunarmiya is a youth organization founded in 2015 in Russia for the purposes of military-patriotic education (Alava 2021).

Following the idea of "citizen persuasion" that stems from participation theory (see Lee, Tsohou, and Choi 2017), states and institutions actively engage in building social and political cohesion perceived to be necessary for political support among the electorate and for decision making among elites in times of emergency. This may happen through various institutions, such as the military, especially if relying on conscripted soldiers, but also through public-opinion polls and political debates.

Sometimes educational activities are directed at specific strata of society, such as elites or young people. Finland, Sweden, and Estonia provide empirical examples in the form of surveying public opinion and communicating the results for political debate (see Kaarkoski and Häkkinen 2022; Berglund, Kasearu, and Kivirähk 2022) and more specific cohesion-building exercises (see Hart 2022b).

This special issue analyzes processes that have emerged in Northern European countries when aiming to (re)organize defense and civic duties linked to national security. The significance of these issues was apparent in 2020 but further intensified in early 2022 due to Russia's military invasion of Ukraine. Therefore, we ask:

1. What kinds of narratives of belonging and patriotism have been (and are being) circulated in the public sphere to forge and maintain electorates and elites willing to contribute to defense and security?
2. What kind of knowledge dissemination and public debate have taken place in trying to foster citizens' willingness to maintain, support, and defend their homelands and public institutions?
3. How are current issues that link citizens, state, and national defense related to historical trajectories?

These questions are considered from the perspectives of such different actors as the state, cultural and religious institutions, political parties, politicians, and citizens as both actors and objects of persuasion in nation building, defense, and security. This special issue offers analyses of different arenas, conceptualizations, and histories of patriotism, public opinion, and the links between politics and religion. The articles draw together such themes as the interrelationship between religion and patriotic politics as well as how the public institutions foster the legitimacy of defense and the commitment of citizens to national defense. It is obvious that these questions relate more to, and are products of, a long period of peace in most European countries. The building of patriotism may intensify in contexts of war or the threat of war when propaganda circulates and information about warfare intensifies.

In Search of a Sociology of Patriotism

Viewing patriotism as a form of "love of country" (Viroli 1995) and as an affective relationship with one's country (Nussbaum 2012) leads one to consider its relationship with nationalism both in theory and in social

and political reality. Simplified to the extreme, *patriotism* is often seen as a benign manifestation of attachment to, and pride in, a territory and a population that may (or may not) be linguistically and ethnically homogeneous. By contrast, *nationalism* is usually seen as a less benign and more chauvinist attachment to one's country, focusing on the perceived superiority of a population sharing a common language and political identity (Viroli 1995). According to Nussbaum, patriotism is "Janus-faced." When facing out, it is imbued with notions of duty toward other people and acts of sacrifice for the good of the collective. When facing in, it invites those seeing themselves as "good patriots" to differentiate themselves from outsiders and the less patriotic. This can lead to a kind of malevolent patriotism and can generate hostile, bellicose attitudes toward foreign states and nations (Nussbaum 2012, 215).

A "sociology of patriotism" as a distinct field of study is somewhat difficult to identify as such. However, it merits attention on its own, not just in comparison to nationalism. Among classical sociologists, Émile Durkheim defines patriotism as "precisely the ideas and feelings as a whole which bind the individual to a certain State" (1992, 79). For Durkheim, patriotism acts as a concept from which to reflect on "world patriotism," or cosmopolitanism, and he redefines patriotism as an outlook focusing on allegiance and loyalty to a global community. His critique of anomie-inducing capitalism and his suggestion of promoting a form of cosmopolitan patriotism are precursors to later notions of global citizenship and the individual as the subject of international human rights protection as they developed in the post–World War II era (Turner 2006; Durkheim 1992). However, Durkheim's critique falls short of engaging with the complex set of both rights accrued from nation-states by citizens and the concrete (and at times life-threatening) duties that membership in a political community may entail (see Hodgson 2016).

A significant early precursor in the "sociology of patriotism" is Robert Michels, a German-Italian political sociologist writing in the first decades of the twentieth century, who became a key classical theorist of patriotism (see Kelly 2003). Michels defines patriotism as "attachment to country and kin" (1949, 156). For him, patriotism is not fully benign, as abuses can be committed under the banner of a patriotism that borders on nationalism. He argues that, as a concept, patriotism is of highest value when one's country is "conceived as transcendent" (156), as an eternal entity that may call for individual sacrifice. According to Michels, communities of "race," language, culture, religion, destiny, and the "community of state" are vital components of the concept of the

"Fatherland" (157). Community of language is of particular importance, as it facilitates direct communication and a shared legacy of literature and the arts.

Michels goes on to argue two points central to the discussion of patriotism in the context of this special issue. First, he writes that "in the history of all patriotisms the educated, especially the professional classes, always formed the vanguard and supplied the national martyrs" (1949, 158). Such vanguards can be found in the social and political elite and are expected to justify and legitimize defense policies to the population (see Hart 2022b; Kaarkoski and Häkkinen 2022). As a mode of thought, patriotism supports the existence of a larger entity surpassing the life of individuals (Olenius 2022), as well as the constraints of a common destiny in both peacetime and wartime. Second, Michels claims that through the expansion of education from the elite to the masses, patriotism proliferates if the society enjoys a common language (1949, 158). Joint language, education, and a canon of national history glue divergent regional populations together. In his conception, patriotism is first and foremost a form of attachment to one's home country. As an ideal, the "Fatherland" (in some languages, "Motherland" or "Homeland") calls for a different, higher form of loyalty and the willingness to sacrifice oneself if worse comes to worst. This is often legally mandated in the form of conscription or other forms of national service (Berglund, Kasearu, and Kivirähk 2022).

Formal citizenship may entail certain legal duties, such as mandatory military conscription. In some European contexts, such as Finland, Estonia, Lithuania, Austria, Greece, and Switzerland, military service for all male citizens is mandatory, meaning that, if one does not serve in the military, one needs to either be eligible for an exemption, complete an alternative form of service, or face a sanction. In contrast, Sweden and Norway have legislation conscripting both men and women, but completing military service has not been applied in a coercive form, and only those willing to serve are taken into military service.

Sigal Ben-Porath, a philosopher of education, has analyzed wartime citizenship and the notion of "shared fate" in the context of patriotism. She investigates how citizenship and nationality are formulated for the purposes of collective survival, living through wartime, and maintaining democratic decision making. In contrast to the idea of citizenship as an aspect of personal identity (see Brubaker 1996), she offers a view of citizenship as "a form of shared fate" (2011, 314). To Ben-Porath, identity citizenship is insufficient, as it places national identity as a marker

that should help people overcome other differences. Identity citizenship emphasizes unity more than diversity, but shared-fate citizenship takes diversity as the foundation of the common polity.

Shared fate, in turn, is probably illustrated in the most concrete manner by conscription and comparable legal obligations to work or assist in states of emergency. Those who do not or cannot take part in combat or military support functions are left to maintain society through business and industry, health care, and informal care work. For Ben-Porath, citizenship as shared fate is built on historical and political community and is one aspect of civic life (2011). Elsewhere, she has noted that "in countries that do not mandate universal conscription, the measures of good citizenship are not derived from active participation (or demonstrated willingness to participate) in the war effort. The expectations of good citizenship are hence related more to compliance and support of the basic needs of society as those are constructed through the lens of security threats" (2006, 13). Thus, conforming to shared fate in the context of large-scale crisis or war is not just about self-sacrifice on a conceptual or material level; it is also about following and supporting modes of thought that aim to preserve the political and territorial integrity of a state and its population. As discussed in the following section, public opinion underpins how security and defense policies are shaped and driven forward. However, decision makers may use the results of public-opinion surveys that, for example, indicate public support for conscription to legitimize policy choices.

Patriotism as Context-Bound Defense Attitudes

Measuring and communicating patriotic attachment through opinion polls allows us to consider if the electorate of a state supports its policies concerning foreign relations, defense, and security. In addition, public opinion is something that a state or societal actors try to influence in order to strengthen citizens' patriotic sentiments. Patriotism, public opinion, and national defense intersect in the willingness, often expressed in opinion polls (see Inglehart, Puranen, and Welzel 2015), to defend or fight for one's country. Patriotic ideologies have been used and promoted to harness subjects and citizens to war for centuries. The willingness to personally take up arms and die for one's country (cf. Nathanson 1989), resist military occupiers, support troops (Krebs, Ralston and Rapport 2021; Hines et al. 2015), invest in defense, or "contingently

consent" to military obligations (Levi 2002) have in different combinations been surveyed to assess the status of patriotism as defense attitudes.

The attachment of citizens to their state is often, though somewhat rudimentarily, measured through opinion-poll items such as the "willingness to fight" for one's country. Even if such willingness (as well as patriotism) is often connected to conservatism, the will to defend is a product of intersecting historical, social, cultural, and political forces, not merely an expression of values. For example, unlike in other countries emphasizing emancipatory and liberal values, the Nordic states tend to have high rates of willingness to defend. Based on an extensive analysis of World Values data, Inglehart, Puranen, and Welzel (2015) note that the high rates of the will to defend in the postmaterialist Nordic states may exist due to their proximity to Russia and the resulting heightened sense of threat.

In the Finnish context, scholars have recently questioned the measurement of citizens' willingness to defend with only one or two questions, since the questions offer only a very narrow view of the relationship between citizens and national defense (Häkkinen, Kaarkoski, and Tilli 2020; Kaarkoski, Tallberg, and Villman 2020). They argue that we need more in-depth analytical approaches to study the complexity of how citizens relate to national defense. A model of citizens' relationship to national defense has been developed as an attempt to respond to this critique with attitudes, trust, agency, and abilities related to national defense as its four interacting dimensions (Kosonen, Puustinen, and Tallberg 2019a, 2019b). This model has been used in quantitative and qualitative studies on citizens' attitudes and opinions (Jalkanen, Pulkka, and Norri-Sederholm 2020; Hart 2022a). In this issue, the first article offers another type of quantitative analysis of how citizens in Estonia perceive national defense and patriotic ideas.

Two central observations in military studies raise questions about the relationship between patriotism as a sentiment of devotion toward the nation, on the one hand, and national defense and its social organization, on the other. First, changes in warfare, security threats, and tasks of militaries have led discussions about patriotism and the armed forces far away from their conventional linkages. In the Nordic context of the 1970s, the experiences of World War II were still strongly felt when concepts were developed to analyze the will to defend, resist, or fight within clearly separate groups (soldiers v. civilians) in different, clearly

defined states of emergency: peace, threat of war, war, or military occupation (cf. Törnqvist 1975).

The world wars were fought between nation-states. Since then, international cooperation, multinational operations, and military alliances have become key forums of military operation and interaction. The different rationales for international peacekeeping, peacebuilding, and crisis management—as well as for national participation in those operations—are important fields to analyze the role that patriotism plays in social and military transformations. In countries focusing primarily on defending their territory and organizing defense around conscription, questions of loyalty and allegiance are likely to have quite different meanings than in countries involved heavily in multinational operations abroad with professional troops.

Second, a long line of research since World War II has investigated the motivations and attitudes of soldiers in war and other military endeavors. They have questioned the role of nationalism and ideology as primary motivations of soldiers in battle, emphasizing instead individual and unit loyalties (Shils and Janowitz 1948; Little 1964; Gibson and Abell 2004). Compared to fighting forces, patriotic discourse may be a better fit for elites' roles and motivations in national defense and security building on the institutional level. On this level, however, patriotism is still likely subordinate to the bureaucratic and technocratic discourses inherent in large organizations (Hart 2022b).

Conscription also contributes to the socialization of individuals into societal values (Cohen 1985), producing a sense of belonging to the state as a whole. The mechanisms of how patriotic sentiments are produced through conscription can differ between different models of conscription. In Finland, mandatory conscription for male citizens and voluntary military service for female citizens ends up affecting almost every family in the country directly or indirectly. This means that almost all citizens have a personal relationship with national defense (see Kosonen 2019; Salasuo 2020; Tallberg 2017). If military service is based on some selective criteria or on volunteerism, the effects are likely to be quite different. Thus, when considering the organization of military service, legislators have to acknowledge that different types of service requirements are likely to produce different outcomes for defense and for a sense of national belonging (see Lindberg 2019). Fostering patriotic attachment can of course happen through many different avenues, of which conscription is one, and a very concrete form of national duty.

Contributions

The articles in this special issue consist of historical and empirical studies of various contexts in which policies promoting patriotic adherence and social cohesion play out on different levels of political decision making, defense, and military-oriented civic engagement. For example, Finland is a society where these areas have been subject to perennial investment, offering a point of reference on issues of public opinion concerning the organization of defense and the navigation of ever-changing security environments.

The first article, by Christofer Berglund, Kairi Kasearu, and Juhan Kivirähk, analyzes the political attitudes and opinions of young men bound by conscription in Estonia, comparing Estonian-speakers and Russian-speakers. Estonia, like the other Baltic states, has a sizable Russian-speaking minority. The authors are particularly interested in what makes minorities ready to defend their homeland (or not). Analyzing recent survey data on defense and security policy attitudes in Estonia, they test demographic and attitudinal predictors of the willingness to defend among the first generation of men raised in the Republic of Estonia since independence in 1991. The results shed light on important differences between Estonian-speakers and Russian-speakers as well as on the state of social cohesion in Estonian society.

In the next article, Linda Hart considers the institution of joint courses for the societal and military elite in Finland through an analysis of textbooks produced from 1967 to 2018. These textbooks provide a wealth of technocratic and administrative information to those taking the courses, but they also show how the goal of defending Finland, the willingness to fight, and the communication of defense information has been articulated and justified over time. The article argues that there has been a shift from a "pluralist patriotism" that tries to tie different political factions of Finnish society together for the common cause of national defense to "resilience" as a catch phrase that stresses preparedness for a multitude of risks where war is merely one of many "security situations."

In the third article, Miina Kaarkoski and Teemu Häkkinen focus on conscription politics and its connection with the attitudes of citizens in two democratic Nordic countries: Sweden and Finland. Their purpose is to study connections between conscription politics and public opinion in parliamentary debates when conscription and its future were debated in the 2010s. In these debates, public opinion played an

important role as an instrument of legitimacy building, as parliamentarians as members of the political elite aimed to connect people with defense. Conscription provides an institutional context that obligates citizens to participate in national defense. In parliamentary debates, instead of paying direct attention to patriotism, people's sentiments and attachment to the state were articulated through notions of their willingness to defend their country.

The fourth article, by Ida Olenius, analyzes a historical event in Sweden in 1941, during the World War II, when the Church of Sweden and Swedish parliamentarians took a public stance tying patriotism and Christian faith together, declaring that "the Swedish principle is the Christian principle." Olenius argues that nationalism and patriotism in Swedish society during World War II were difficult to distinguish from each other. Patriotism—as encapsulating veneration for the rule of law, democracy, and freedom, and characterizing the Swedish nation and the Swedish people themselves—played an important role. Christianity was portrayed as a useful and essential tool in creating the kind of national unity that people could rally behind, regardless of whether they emphasized a patriotic or nationalist understanding of the people and the nation.

Why pay attention to patriotism in the 2020s? When designing this special issue, we did not know what kind of a political and media landscape it would appear in. With a global pandemic, Russia's full-scale military attack on Ukraine, war and destruction in the heart of Europe, and public opinion responding to these and other developments on the eastern flank of Europe, neither patriotism nor nationalism nor the defense of political communities through crisis preparedness is obsolete. Patriotism can perhaps offer one key concept in reflecting and explaining how political communities are held together as well as what publics in democracies think and how they are motivated to defend through cultural, diplomatic, and military means.

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