

Nationalism and Industrial Development in Finland

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A quick scan of the historiography of business and economic history reveals that both bodies of scholarship have focused on large Western European countries and the United States. This comes as no surprise. Modern business institutions, entrepreneurs and ideologies were born, raised and cultivated in Western Europe and the United States. The emphasis on development in Germany, France, Great Britain and the United States, has overshadowed the evolution of modern business life in small and less advanced countries. As Sidney Pollard points out, scholars have often viewed peripheral Europe as a passive recipient of new industrial products from the center, and a more or less underdeveloped supplier of raw materials, surplus labor and food to advanced regions [19]. Recent studies of smaller European countries illustrate, however, that this broadly accepted view is somewhat, if not completely, misleading. For instance, countries such as Sweden, Norway, Czechoslovakia, Poland and the Netherlands had already developed large scale industries and advanced business institutions in the 19th century which were comparable--not in size but in structure and function--to those in more advanced countries [10, 22, 5, 8, 12].

One obvious reason for the distorted picture is that modern business enterprises and institutions in peripheral Europe are generally smaller and less significant than those in the United States, Germany, France and Great Britain. Smaller countries were not capable of providing the capital, raw materials, energy resources, skilled labor, technologies and expertise required to build a diversified industrial sector. Distinguishing the most promising industrial endeavors, and concentrating on them, has been an absolute necessity in small countries. In addition, private and public sectors have had to find ways to collaborate and thus secure the necessary supply of natural resources.

Although the evolution of modern large scale industries and enterprises differs in many ways in peripheral Europe, the center and periphery share similar origins. As Alfred D. Chandler has pointed out, salaried managers monitor and co-ordinate modern business enterprises. Also modern enterprises are seen as evolving from single unit companies to multifunctional,

multiregional and even multinational enterprises [4]. Public policy has shaped the evolution of modern multinational enterprises in the center as well as the periphery. Yet the principles of public policy in center countries often differ from those in the periphery. It is well known that anti-trust legislation protected free markets and controlled the growth and influence of multinational enterprises in the United States, Germany and Great Britain. At the same time, in the European periphery, public policy was structured so as to enhance collaboration between the public and private sectors, and to restrict competition in order to protect big business.¹

It is our intention to examine how and why the Finnish government created an environment favorable to the growth of big business. Finland provides an extremely interesting case. Although small in population, Finland rapidly developed into a modern European industrial state during the interwar period. This accomplishment was exceptional among the new nations that had gained sovereignty after World War I. Why did Finland succeed where others failed? Historians have pointed out that Finland had already created independent legal and bureaucratic institutions by the 19th century. Finland was also able to build relatively strong national identity under Russian rule. Therefore, Finland was politically, socially and culturally independent and ready to set herself free from the Russian empire.

It is the aim of this article to explain how the business sector reacted to public policy introduced following World War I. We will argue that the Finnish government integrated private and state owned enterprises, as well as multinational enterprises, into a process that unified the nation and transformed Finland from an agricultural into a modern industrial state. The core of this process was public policy deeply influenced by nationalism. Hence, we will argue that nationalism played a far greater role in the creation of modern Finland than previously thought. Nationalism encouraged the government to create large state owned enterprises, to allow foreign high technology multinational enterprises to selectively invade Finnish markets, and finally to find a new type of industrial entrepreneur, "a patriotic manager."

Divided Nation

On December 6, 1917 the Finnish Senate declared Finland independent from the Russian Empire. The declaration of independence ended a century-long relationship between the two nations. The decision to separate the Grand Duchy of Finland from Russia was made rapidly after Bolsheviks seized power in St. Petersburg. The quick declaration of independence alarmed Finnish Socialists and Communists, who declared their solidarity with fighting comrades in Russia. Conservative parties, however, were determined to secure independence. As a result, political polarization escalated and a bloody and bitter civil war was fought during the spring of 1918 [20].

¹State intervention in economic and industrial development is often misunderstood to represent socialism. As we show in this article, state intervention also could be used to prevent socialism and strengthen national institutions. See [19, pp. 159-63].

As usually happens after a civil war, a nation is socially, politically and culturally divided. Finland proved to be no exception. Victorious Whites controlled society. Communists and socialists were imprisoned or forced into exile in Soviet Russia. This situation could not last long. The White government was very much aware of the fact that a divided nation was unable to resist the political and ideological pressures coming from the East. In addition, England, France and the United States delayed their recognition of Finnish independence as long as the political situation in the country remained unsettled. The White government took the first steps to unify the nation in the fall of 1918. Red prisoners were pardoned, concentration camps dissolved and moderate left-wing parties were granted political rights. In addition, land reform was introduced which provided farming land to a politically unstable rural proletariat. Also, municipal governments were encouraged to start social housing projects and employers to improve working conditions in factories. These initiatives were successful. The ideological gap between socialists and conservatives slowly narrowed and political tensions lessened. As the standard of living rose, life returned to normal. Two decades later, in November 1939, when the Soviet Union attacked Finland, the nation stood solidly against the aggression [1].

The Collapse of Market Structure

Finland industrialized during the last three decades of the 19th century. Lumbering in previously untouched forests and incipient development of hydro power made large scale production of timber, pulp and paper possible. The domination of Finland's export market by forest industries is illustrated by the fact that wood, paper and pulp comprised more than 90% of Finnish exports in 1920 and over 80% as late as 1938.

Table 1. Main export goods in 1920 and 1938 (%)

	1920	1938
Timber and wood products	56.4	40.3
Pulp and paper	37.3	41.5
Forest products, total:	93.7	81.8
Other export goods, total:	6.3	18.2

Source: Suomen taloushistoria, osa 2. Helsinki 1982, p. 269.

The wealth created by forest industries was broadly dispersed in Finnish society. It is often argued that Finnish society and its cultural heritage have been built on forests. The dominance of forests in Finnish culture is derived from age-old traditions. Historically, forest land had not been owned by private companies, but rather by farmers, peasants and the state. Therefore, forest industries became dependent on farmers and land-owners who controlled the valuable raw material supply. This relationship prompted

the movement of capital from the industrial to the agricultural sector. The agricultural sector, in turn, supplied forest industries with raw material and skilled as well as unskilled labor [21].

Finnish sawmills and tar producers established business relations with European ship-building and construction industries by the 17th and 18th centuries. These associations proved valuable in the 19th century, when rapid urban development in England and Germany opened new markets for wood products. Finnish saw mills and lumber companies eagerly supplied these new markets. Just prior to World War I, Finland was estimated to be the third largest timber exporting country in Europe [2]. A sizable proportion of Finnish pulp and paper products were sold on the Russian markets. An estimated 80% of the total production of paper in Finland was "exported" to Russia before World War I. The word "export" is slightly misleading because the Russian markets were in fact domestic markets for Finnish paper makers. Finnish paper was very popular in the large printing houses of St. Petersburg, Moscow, Kiev, Odessa and Minsk. Just before the war the Finns controlled about 30% of the Russian paper market [17, 18].

World War I, the October revolution and the Civil War in Russia changed the structure of the paper market entirely. In short, the Russian paper market closed when the Bolsheviks seized power. At the same time, World War I closed the export route of timber from Finland to European markets. The dramatic change in market structure is illustrated by the following figures: in 1910 about 27% of Finnish exports went to Russia and approximately the same share went to Great Britain; two decades later the tide had turned, Germany and Great Britain were the most important trading partners while only 0.5% of Finnish exports went to the Soviet Union [16].

The collapse of the Russian market was, of course, a terrible shock to the Finnish paper industry. Paper makers had to find business partners in western European markets. The loss of Russian markets also caused a decrease in the food supply in Finland. Russia had started to "export" inexpensive grain to Finland in the 19th century. Because of this, dairy-farming gradually replaced grain production, especially in the eastern part of Finland. By the dawn of this century, Finland was not self-sufficient in grain. When Lenin's government cut off the grain supply in 1917, starvation and hunger plagued Finland for the first time since the years of the great famine of 1867-68.

New Economic Policy

Upheaval in the spring and summer of 1918 forced the government to take radical steps to improve the economic situation, but there was not much the government could do. Russian paper markets were permanently closed. The markets for timber exports remained closed as long as war in Europe continued. The domestic situation was even worse. Factories were partially demolished and a large number of workers suffered from diseases and malnutrition in concentration camps. Deserted farms and uncultivated fields predicted more starvation and famine for the coming winter. There was, however, some light in the darkness. The demand for timber was expected to

increase with the reconstruction of European cities following the war. The collapse of the Russian empire eliminated one of the largest producers of timber from the European market and Finnish sawmills were more than eager to take over the former Russian share. Also, the demand for paper was expected to increase after the war. Although Finnish paper was low in quality, there was a growing demand for brown wrapping paper and low quality newsprint in Europe.

As the war in Europe approached its conclusion, Finnish companies and the government hurried to make preparations for the coming economic boom. A committee set up by private business associations in 1913 provided comprehensive guidelines for future policies [9]. The committee recommended, first, that Finnish companies that exported goods should form cartels to minimize domestic competition, and second, that the government should take strict measures to protect domestic industries (iron and steel, textiles, food stuffs) from foreign competition. In the midst of the political chaos, the Finnish government quickly introduced a new economic policy based on these two recommendations. The government had signed commercial treaties with Germany and Austria-Hungary in 1918. In the early 1920s, similar agreements were made with France, Estonia, the British Commonwealth and the United States [10, pp. 52-63].

In addition, Parliament passed laws prohibiting foreign enterprises from purchasing or owning land, forests, hydro power resources or mineral ore deposits. New tariff regulations and tax reductions were introduced which gave domestic industries almost total protection against foreign competition. Forest industries followed the recommendations by forming export cartels in 1918. FINNPAP, FINNBOARD and FINNCELL agreed upon prices and regulated production of paper, pulp, board and timber. Cartels also promoted the increase of exports by establishing broad networks of sales branches in major European, North and South American, and Asian cities. In addition, Finnish export cartels collaborated with other Scandinavian paper and timber cartels, for instance with Scannevs and Scankraft [3].

The new economic policies were highly successful. The volume of Finnish industrial production increased at almost 8% annually during the interwar period. This was faster than the average growth of world trade. The Great Depression slowed growth, but only temporarily. The Finnish economy was back on track by 1932. The wealth created by the volume of exports and the very favorable trade balance was widely dispersed throughout society. The nation's standard of living improved, and the 1930s became known as "the golden decade." For the first time, people had money to spend on fashionable clothes, new technological appliances, automobiles and entertainment. The rapid and steady economic development in Finland was exceptional relative to small Eastern European states. If compared to countries like Poland, Rumania, the Baltic States or Yugoslavia, Finland successfully overcame underdevelopment and became a modern industrial state [6, pp. 45-46].

Nationalism as a Key to Success

Although the new economic policy effectively protected Finnish industries, Finland could not dictate the rules in world markets. Rapid increases in exports and the standard of living created pressures to open domestic markets to foreign goods. As Finland modernized, the country became an attractive new market area for foreign investors. Large foreign enterprises were eager to procure rights to Finland's largely untouched natural resources. Sizable German companies in particular viewed Finland as a potential buyer of high technology goods and supplier of wood products and minerals [6, pp. 286-98].

It is difficult to estimate how seriously foreign enterprises planned to invest in Finland. A number of variables mitigated against permitting foreign investment, among them the close and unsecured border with the Soviet Union, as well as Finland's small population and long transportation routes. Yet, it is certain that harnessing the Imatra Falls interested the British and French electric power companies. We also know that Metallgesellschaft tried to obtain rights to exploit the rich copper-ore deposits in Outokumpu. However, the protective barrier was strong. The only foreign companies that successfully penetrated the protective barriers were Zellstoffabrik Waldhof, which built a chemical pulp factory in Kexholm, near Lake Ladoga, and the International Nickel Corporation, which obtained rights to extract nickel ore in Petsamo [11].

For the Finnish government it did not matter how real or unreal foreign investment plans were. The government was determined to prevent the nation's resources from slipping into the hands of multinational enterprises. In 1918 the state accordingly purchased two foreign owned companies, W. Gutzeit & Co. and Tornator Ltd.. These transactions amounted to more than 150 million marks or little over 10% of public revenue in 1918. These two companies were chosen by the Finnish government on the basis of practical considerations. British and Norwegian families owned companies had acquired more than 500,000 hectares of forest before the Finnish Senate passed laws prohibiting lumber companies from buying forested land. The state fused W. Gutzeit & Co. and Tornator into a new company, Enso-Gutzeit Ltd., which inherited not only the forests, but also a number of sawmills, as well as pulp and paper factories. The giant state owned company became one of the largest paper, pulp and timber manufacturers in Finland and had buyers all over the world [7].

The state took its next step in 1921. Parliament turned down offers from foreign companies and asked Finnish electric, power and construction companies to harness the Imatra Falls. This effort was intended to demonstrate the strength and technological skill of the new nation. It was not an accident that the government chose Imatra Falls to display determination and nationalistic enthusiasm. Imatra Falls had always had cultural and social value in Finland similar to Niagara Falls in the United States. The gigantic task of building the Imatra power station took more than ten years to complete with the total cost exceeding 250 million marks. When the power station was finished the state founded Imatran Voima Corporation which

monopolized electric power distribution in Finland [15]. Finally, in the early 1920s, the state purchased the rights to develop the Outokumpu copper deposit from a Norwegian-Finnish company. This transaction destroyed Metallgesellschaft's plans to transport copper ore from the Outokumpu mine to the company's new smeltery in Hamburg. The government founded Outokumpu Mining Corporation in 1924. Soon after, the state built a production chain which linked the Outokumpu copper mines to electrolytic refineries, and iron and steel works in Imatra and Pori [11].

These initiatives taken by the Finnish government had several important consequences. First, state owned enterprises eliminated foreign competition and concentrated the production of paper, pulp, timber and minerals in the hands of Finnish companies. Second, state owned enterprises supported private companies by investing heavily in technological and industrial infrastructure. In addition, state owned enterprises produced raw materials and semifinished goods and sold them to other industrial sectors. This decreased the need to import expensive goods from abroad. Third, state owned enterprises escalated industrialization through the use of large amounts of natural resources. New enterprises were often built in distant locations, where private companies hesitated to invest. This was especially true in the case of Veitsiluoto sawmill. The new sawmill was located in the northern part of Finland close to the Arctic Circle where it used large state owned forest resources. Fourth, state owned enterprises strongly affected the unification of the nation. New factories increased the consumption of wood and other raw materials in the peripheral areas of the country. This provided extra income to farmers and land-owners. State owned enterprises increased employment opportunities, which in turn decreased the rate of unemployment and thus lessened social tension.

In spite of the rapid industrialization, the Finnish industrial sector was still extremely specialized. Paper, pulp, timber, and iron and steel industries produced only primary products such as timber, pulp, paper, plywood, iron and copper ore. Without high technology capability Finnish industry depended on foreign high technology companies for such goods as telephones, electric appliances, chemicals and machine-tools. Dependence on foreign high technology goods and knowledge was a concern to the Finnish government. Although necessary, multinational enterprises represented alien interests which threatened to undermine the development of a strong national state. Once foreign investment had begun, it became difficult to prevent the incursion of foreign capital into primary production sectors. From this delicate position the government attempted to find ways to satisfy both foreign high technology enterprises and domestic companies.

To construct a safety net that would tie Finnish companies and foreign high technology enterprises neatly together, the government issued a statute in 1919 which required a foreigner to obtain a permit before establishing a business in Finland. Additionally, foreign investors could not own shares in Finnish liability companies. New laws and regulations supported these measures by stipulating that the general manager of a firm as well as a majority of members of the board of directors had to be Finnish citizens. In order to operate in Finland, foreign high technology enterprises were thus

obliged to establish affiliate companies and recruit a large number of Finnish managers, directors and engineers to operate and manage factories in Finland. This gave Finnish managers and engineers unique opportunities to obtain training and education in highly developed foreign enterprises.

The history of Finnish Chemicals provides an excellent example of how the state successfully encouraged foreign high technology companies to support industrial development in Finland. Finnish Chemicals was founded in 1937 by three giant multinational enterprises: IG Farben, ICI and Solvay & Cie. The affiliate company, Finnish Chemicals, produced bleaching chemicals (chlorine and caustic soda) for the pulp and paper industries. These chemical substances were needed to produce the white news-print which had become the trade mark of the Finnish paper industry on the world market during the interwar period [13]. Instead of supporting domestic electrochemical industries, the government asked IG Farben, ICI and Solvay & Cie to build an electrochemical plant in Finland. To make the offer even more attractive, the government promised to partially finance the construction of the Aetsa plant. Because of the size and quality of the production in Aetsa, Finnish Chemicals soon gained control of rapidly growing bleaching chemical markets in Finland. As the government had expected, foreign owners equipped the Aetsa plant with the latest production technology and trained the management in England.

As this example illustrates, the government selectively allowed foreign high technology enterprises to operate in Finland. Simultaneously, legislation carefully protected the primary production sector. Formation and implementation of industrial and public policy therefore resembles the post-war Japanese policy making process. Thus, Finland followed a kind of intelligent follower's strategy by selectively allowing western influences while integrating business targets of foreign multinational enterprises with national development goals and projects.

Patriotic Managers

In order to function effectively the new economic policy required the support of the private business sector. In the late 19th century a relatively strong managerial culture already existed. The first generation of business managers, however, represented old Swedish families who had stayed in the country after Russia captured the province of Finland from Sweden during the Napoleonic wars. Legendary entrepreneurs such as G.A. Serlachius, Wilhelm Rosenlew, and William Ruth penetrated inhabited forest areas in order to establish modern paper, pulp and timber industries in the Russian Grand Duchy of Finland. Because of the wealth and cultural background of these men, they comprised a small Swedish elite that held political as well as economic power in Finland during the Russian regime [23].

The situation changed, however, after Finland became independent. The newly founded independent state, ruled by the Finnish-speaking middle class, regarded the Swedish-speaking business elite as disloyal and alien. Nationalistic slogans urged the government to take action against the Swedish-speaking minority and return Finland to the Finns. There was, however, very

little the government could do to limit the economic power of the Swedish elite. The young nation of Finland could not risk losing capital, knowledge and managerial skills during the period of transition. In order to create a balance between the Finns and Swedish-speaking business elite, the government hired top level managers for large state owned enterprises from middle-class Finnish families. This decision proved to be highly successful. Both blue and white collar workers relied on new managers who spoke the same language and shared the same ethnic heritage. These managers, in turn, spread the gospel of nationalism and national unity in isolated industrial towns and villages.

This article does not permit a full study of the characteristics of the new managerial group, the "patriotic managers." Yet, the example of V.A. Kotilainen, the managing director of Enso-Gutzeit, will illustrate how the patriotic managers operated and why they became such important figures in Finnish society during the interwar period. V.A. Kotilainen was born in February 1887 in Heinävesi, a small village located in the heart of Finland. His father worked as a forest engineer for Halla sawmills. Kotilainen studied law at the University of Helsinki, as did many sons of middle-class families at the beginning of the century. His legal career was short but brilliant. In 1911 he was elected as judicial trainee in the Viborg Justice Court of Appeals. When World War I interrupted the daily work of the Court, Kotilainen left Viborg to work as a private lawyer in the eastern part of Finland.

During the civil war, Kotilainen served in White headquarters. This period proved to be of great value to him. Kotilainen made personal friends with top level politicians and military leaders of the White army. Soon after the war, Kajana Wood Corporation hired Kotilainen to be its executive manager. At the time, Kajana Corporation was one of the largest pulp, paper and timber corporations in the country. What was more important, however, was that the devoted nationalistic Paloheimo family owned the corporation. As a recent study has shown, nationalism was a factor in shaping the foundation of the corporation by the late 19th century. V.A. Kotilainen continued the tradition and in many ways created an even stronger nationalistic image for the company [24].

General Rudolf Walden, a distinguished leader of the United Paper Mills and close friend of General Mannerheim, strongly encouraged the government to hire Kotilainen to be the new executive director for state owned Enso-Gutzeit company in 1924. Walden's trust in Kotilainen came from the time the two men spent together in the White headquarters. V.A. Kotilainen managed Enso-Gutzeit from 1924 to 1944. During his term, the image of the company became increasingly Finnish. In 1924 Kotilainen moved the company headquarters to a new location, Enso, which lies in the eastern part of the country. In addition, he introduced Finnish as the company's official language and strongly rejected Swedish which had been spoken in board meetings and business offices for more than two centuries. Finally Kotilainen changed the company's name by replacing an originally Norwegian name, W. Gutzeit & Co., with the Finnish Enso-Gutzeit, emphasizing the national character of the company. These changes illustrate how Kotilainen

favoured Finnish culture and ethnic heritage over the previously dominant Swedish culture [7, p. 345].

Nationalism also shaped the social policy of Enso-Gutzeit. It was a dream of V.A. Kotilainen to organize the work and life of the company's paper, pulp and timber factories so that blue and white collar workers and managers could live in proximity and harmony. The social policy of Enso-Gutzeit provided employees with modern medical care, primary education and vocational training free, or at minimal cost. Additionally, the company commissioned top Finnish architects (for instance Alvar Aalto) to design houses and buildings for workers and managers. V.A. Kotilainen hired Martti Jukola, a leading Finnish journalist and powerful national agitator, as the editor-in-chief for the company's weekly journal, Enso-Gutzeit [14].

Personally V.A. Kotilainen maintained a close relationship with government figures. Because Enso-Gutzeit was a state owned enterprise, the government appointed members to the board of directors. It was therefore hypothetically possible that politicians could exercise strong influence in the company, although this was not the case during Kotilainen's term. Step by step Kotilainen consolidated more power in his own hands. As a result, it was soon impossible to distinguish Enso-Gutzeit from privately owned paper, pulp and timber companies. Although V.A. Kotilainen successfully transformed a foreign owned enterprise into a strong national company, he never gained substantial personal wealth from Enso-Gutzeit. On the contrary, he served as a salaried manager and throughout of his life belonged to the middle-class.

V.A. Kotilainen was one of the managers who helped to shape the institution called "patriotic managers." It is appropriate to call this managerial group an institution in Finland because of its unique nature and history. Patriotic managers played a crucial role in Finnish business life after the World War II, when the country paid heavy war debts to the Soviet Union. During the last 50 years, it has been Uolevi Raade, the managing director of the state owned oil-company Neste, who developed the institution of patriotic managers to the greatest extent.

Conclusion

The interwar period was in many ways exceptional in Finnish history. In spite of proximity, Finland had almost no relationship with the Soviet Union. It was the civil war which demolished Finland and left the country socially and politically isolated in the northernmost corner of Europe. In order to survive, Finland had to unify and establish new business connections in Western Europe and the United States. This required a socially, politically, culturally and economically strong nation.

To understand the transition of Finland from a Russian province to a modern industrial nation it is imperative to observe the changes that took place in Finnish business life. We have tried to demonstrate that public policy, heavily influenced by nationalism, played a crucial role in the unification of the nation. Nationalism shaped the structure and management of large state owned enterprises. Nationalism also affected legislation that selectively allowed multinational enterprises to enter the country. Finally, nationalism shaped the

institution of "patriotic managers" that introduced values and goals of Finland's public policy to every strata of management and workers.

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