

The Difficult Task of Opposing Europe: The Finnish Party Politics of Euroscepticism

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Introduction

Considering the divisive nature of the EU membership referendum held in 1994, the traditionally state-centric political culture, and low public support for European integration, Finland would seem to have all the key preconditions for Eurosceptical parties. Yet the situation is very much the opposite. Finnish parties have been remarkably solid in their support for integration. The main parties are in broad agreement about how to develop integration and no party represented in the parliament has since the start of membership demanded that Finland should leave the Union. New specifically anti-EU movements have remained marginal, and opposition to European integration manifests itself primarily through individual MPs and MEPs. The Finnish case is therefore in line with other European countries, where according to Taggart (1998: 373) 'there is very little relationship between levels of Euroscepticism and electoral support for Eurosceptical parties.' In fact, Finland appears to be the only EU member state with high levels of public Euroscepticism and low levels of party-based Euroscepticism (Taggart and Szczerbiak 2002).

True Finns, with 3 MPs (1,5 per cent), is the only Eurosceptical party represented in the Eduskunta, the unicameral national parliament. Formed on the ruins of its populist predecessor, the Rural Party, True Finns has adopted its Eurosceptical stance primarily in order to distance itself from the mainstream parties. The other Eurosceptical parties, the Communist Party of Finland and Forces for Change in Finland, have no representation in the parliament. However, all of the established pro-integrationist parties, particularly the Centre Party, include minority sections that are against further integration.

What explains this weak presence of Eurosceptical parties? The argument put forward in this chapter emphasises the importance of two structural properties of the Finnish political system. First, the consensual style of politics and bargaining involved in forming coalition governments facilitate inter-party cooperation both among cabinet parties and in the parliament, with the corporatist nature of the political system further reducing the likelihood of ideological conflicts. Second, the system of formulating national integration policy, especially the goal of ‘speaking with one voice’ in Brussels, is specifically designed to manufacture national consensus over integration, with the parliamentary opposition accorded a strong role in the process. This mechanism produces ideological convergence about Europe and defuses competition between parties over European integration. Considering the distribution of preferences – with the main parties and interest groups in favour of membership before the referendum and supportive of further integration since then – these systemic factors reduce the likelihood of parties adopting Eurosceptical positions. And with the partial exception of True Finns, there are no ideologically extremist or populist parties that adopt anti-integrationist positions as part of their strategy of distancing themselves from the mainstream parties.

This chapter is structured as follows. The following section introduces the Eurosceptical parties in Finland and their electoral performance. The third section analyses the levels of

dissent over integration among the parties represented in the Eduskunta. Section four examines the reasons behind the pro-EU partisan consensus. The concluding discussion looks ahead at the prospects of Eurosceptical parties in Finland.

Eurosceptical parties

Measured by the effective number of parliamentary parties, Finland's party system is relatively highly fragmented.¹ Table 1 shows the distribution of votes between parties in national parliamentary elections held since the early 1990s. No party has since the declaration of independence (1917) alone controlled the majority of seats in Eduskunta. The core of the Finnish party system consists of the Social Democratic Party, the agrarian Centre Party, and the conservative National Coalition. Governments are as a rule formed around two of these main parties. However, no Eduskunta party is non-coalitionable. A five party, oversized coalition government, bringing together the Social Democrats, National Coalition, Left Alliance, Swedish People's Party, and the Green League, took office after the 1995 elections, and this so-called 'rainbow government' renewed its mandate in the March 1999 elections. Following the latest election held in March 2003, the Centre Party, the Social Democrats, and the Swedish People's Party form the government.

While electoral volatility has increased and the party system has become more fragmented, the three core parties have consolidated their positions during recent decades, especially as the vote share of the radical left or former communist parties has declined since the 1970s. (Sundberg 1999) The left-right dimension has constituted the main axis structuring party competition, but since the early 1990s the rural-urban or centre-periphery divide has become the second main cleavage, partly because integration and foreign policy issues have

entered internal party debates, having previously been the almost exclusive domain of the president.

TABLE 1

Table 2 shows party positions on membership before the referendum held in October 1994 and the share of party supporters voting in favour of Finland joining the Union.² In the Centre Party the voting behaviour of its supporters contradicted the official party line, with just above one-third (36 per cent) of party supporters favouring membership. Two parties, Left Alliance and Green League, were so divided internally that they deliberately left their position open in order not to antagonize their supporters. The only Eduskunta parties that resisted membership were the Christian Democrats and the Rural Party. In both parties the leadership and the voters were almost unanimously against membership.

TABLE 2

Examining the impact of European integration on national party systems, Mair (2000: 30) concluded that out of over 120 parties established in EU member states (excluding Greece, Portugal and Spain) to contest national parliamentary elections after the first direct EP elections held in each country, only three were formed 'with the explicit and primary intention of mobilising support for or against the EU'. Party members, at least on the elite level, have therefore decided not to defect to other parties despite the differences of opinion over Europe. The same applies to Finland. The existing national parties have successfully absorbed the new EU dimension into their policy profiles without suffering any major vote losses or defections to other parties. To be sure, integration matters have produced heated

debates within most parties, but the basic shape of the Finnish party system has not been altered as a result of European integration.

Eurosceptical parties and movements have remained marginalized in Finnish politics (Table 3). The only Eurosceptical party that has won seats in the Eduskunta since Finland joined the Union is the True Finns (*Perussuomalaiset*), which can be categorised as a soft Eurosceptical party. The True Finns are for all purposes a successor to the centre-right Rural Party, albeit with somewhat less populist tendencies. Rural Party was effectively a family enterprise, founded by Veikko Vennamo in 1959 as the Smallholders' Party. Vennamo senior passed the party leadership on to his son Pekka, and the party was disbanded following its meagre showing in the 1995 elections. The ideology of True Finns is rather nationalistic, and the party was against EU membership in 1994, then as the Rural Party. True Finns wants the EU to be an association of independent nations and is against the deepening of integration. In the 2003 elections the party won 1.6 per cent of the votes and three seats (1.5 per cent) in the national parliament. In the first round of the presidential elections held in January 2000, the True Finns' candidate, Ilkka Hakalehto, won one per cent of the votes. Hakalehto was the only anti-EU candidate. In its programme for the 2003 Eduskunta elections, the True Finns stated that they are against making Finland a part of a European federal state. All Treaty amendments leading to transfer of sovereignty to the EU should be subject to a national referendum. True Finns are also against the EU's constitution, as this would be a step towards a federation.

TABLE 3

The two anti-EU membership movements established prior to the 1994 referendum, League for Free Finland (*Vapaa Suomen Liitto*) and Alternative to the EU (*Vaihtoehto*

EU:lle), won between them 2.7 per cent of the votes in the 1996 elections to the European Parliament, but neither participated in the 1999 EP elections nor have they fielded any candidates in Eduskunta elections.³ The League for Free Finland established in October 2002 together with another registered party, *Vaihtoehtoväki*, and three civic organisations a new party, Forces for Change in Finland (*Muutosvoimat Suomi*), as a party that aims at offering a home to all that are against the EU. However, the leadership and the supporters are primarily left-wing people who are disappointed with the market-friendly and pro-EU policies of the Eduskunta parties. The EU is seen as a neo-liberalist project that erodes the sovereignty of its member states and the freedom of its peoples. Forces for Change in Finland won 0.4 per cent of the votes in the 2003 elections. The party demands that Finland should leave the Union, and thus Forces for Change in Finland is a hard Eurosceptical party.

The third Eurosceptical party is the minor Communist Party of Finland that has no representation in Eduskunta. In the 2003 elections the party captured 0.8 per cent of the votes. The Communist Party was originally formed in 1918, and the communists and their successors enjoyed a strong presence in the Finnish party system after the Second World War. The Communist Party was re-entered into the party register in February 1997, and in 2002 the party had according to its own estimates (www.skp.fi) approximately 4 000 members and nearly 200 local branches. The party is an old-fashioned communist party and argues that EU defends the interests of supranational capital at the expense of workers, democracy and the environment. In its programme for the 2003 parliamentary elections, the party demanded that the future constitution of the EU should be subjected to a referendum, in which Finnish citizens would have the opportunity to vote in favour of withdrawing from the Union. Instead of developing towards a neo-liberal federal state, Europe must be based on democracy and solidarity that respects the sovereignty and rights of its citizens. The Communist Party is therefore categorized as a hard Eurosceptical party.

Eurosceptical parties are marginal actors in the Finnish party system. With only three MPs in the parliament, and a combined share of under three per cent of votes in national elections, Eurosceptical parties are not able to influence government policy. However, more important in this respect are the Eurosceptical MPs and groups within the traditional mainstream parties, a topic we shall turn to in the next section.

Potential for Euroscepticism within the main parties

While Eurosceptic parties have remained marginalized in Finland, European integration has nevertheless had an impact on the cohesion and ideology of parties. This section outlines briefly the European policies of parties represented in Eduskunta after the 2003 elections and examines the level of party unity in EU matters, focusing on the potential for Euroscepticism within the parties represented in the Eduskunta.⁴

Potential for Euroscepticism is highest in the Centre Party. The Centre draws most of its support from the countryside, and support in the urban areas remains modest. As the leading governing party in 1991-95, the Centre Party was a key player in making the decision to apply for membership. The party itself, both the elite and the supporters, was far from united. The actual membership application met resistance within the parliamentary group, with 22 out of 55 Centre MPs voting against the application in Eduskunta in 1992. The party congress decided (by 1607 votes to 834) in June 1994 to support membership only after the prime minister and party chairman Esko Aho had threatened to resign were the Centre to oppose membership. Nevertheless, only 36 per cent of the supporters followed the party line in the referendum. The party leadership has faced a tough challenge in balancing the often outright opposition to membership that prevails among large sections of the party electorate and the need to maintain the Centre's credibility as a potential governing party. The Eurocritics have

not formed their own organization, and the opposition has mainly centred on Paavo Väyrynen, an MEP and former party chairman and foreign minister. The main agricultural interest group closely attached to the party, The Central Union of Agricultural Producers and Forest Owners, was against membership and remains critical of integration. This is not surprising considering the destructive impact of the Common Agricultural Policy on the farming sector. Like fellow European agrarian parties, the Centre Party emphasizes the intergovernmental nature of the EU. Even though the party is a member of the strongly pro-integrationist European Liberal, Democrat and Reform Party, the Centre has very little in common with the Euroliberals' vision of Europe. It explicitly rejects a federal Europe and argues that the EU should be developed as an association of independent member states. An additional party congress held in September 1997 decided against Finland's EMU membership. However, the party indicated in spring 1998 that it respects the outcome of the Eduskunta vote, and will not seek exit from EMU in the future.

Another party with a significant Eurosceptic minority is the Christian Democratic Party. The party draws most of its support from rural areas. It changed its name from Christian Union to Christian Democrats in the party congress held in May 2001. The Christian Democrats favour a Europe where independent nation-states practice wide-ranging cooperation. The party does not want to increase EU's powers, and the June 1997 party congress decided against EMU membership despite the proposal by the party chairman Bjarne Kallis to postpone the issue.

Integration matters have stimulated fierce debates within the Left Alliance. The contrasting opinions of the leading party figures have attracted much media attention. This rivalry has centred between successive party chairs Claes Andersson (1990-98) and Suvi-Anne Siimes (1998-) and MEP Esko Seppänen, with the latter very critical of integration. The Eurosceptics have not organized themselves. The party supporters and interest groups close to

the party are internally divided over integration. This ambivalence is mainly explained by ideology: the market-driven logic of integration is rather distant from the world-view of the average Left Alliance voter. As a result, only 24 per cent of the party's voters were in favour of joining the Union in the 1994 referendum. In government from the 1995 elections to 2003, the party was forced to balance the Euroscepticism of its electorate with the responsibility of being a junior partner in a government committed to further integration. The party did an ideological U-turn on EMU. Against EMU in the Euroelection manifesto adopted in April 1996, the party leadership organized in November-December 1997 an internal party vote on whether Finland should join EMU. The wording of the question aroused much controversy, as the party executive linked the issue to whether the party should continue in the government. The turnout was 67.1 per cent, with 9,253 out of 13,790 enfranchised party members casting votes. 52.4 per cent were in favour, 41.5 per cent against, and 5.9 per cent left the decision to the party leadership.

The Green League did not take a decision on membership before the referendum, and 55 per cent of party supporters voted in favour of membership in the referendum. While the Greens have remained divided over integration, the party has avoided factionalization and open leadership disputes. In comparison with most European green parties, the Finnish Greens are ideologically moderate and definitely belong to the pragmatic wing of the green movement.⁵ Its European policy has within a short time become strongly pro-integrationist, a change which arguably owes much to former party chairperson MEP Heidi Hautala and to active transnational cooperation in the context of the European Federation of Green Parties. Of the Finnish parties, the Greens have probably been most influenced by such transnational party activities. The Greens argue that the priorities of the Union do not reflect the needs of the citizens and the environment. But, the cure is increasing EU's powers and making its decision-making structures more democratic. On EMU the Green League was in the same

position as the Left Alliance. Supporters and the party elite were divided over the issue, but the party was a junior member in a government committed to entering the third stage from the start of 1999. The party first favoured the postponement of EMU, but a joint meeting of the party council and the Green MPs held in January 1998 decided in favour of Finland's participation. The voting result was 31 in favour and 13 against, with the party chairperson Satu Hassi on the losing side. In its party congress held in May 2001, the Green League adopted as the first party in Finland a statement in favour of a federal Europe. The Greens' vision was one of decentralized federalism, i.e. 'a strong Europe of regions', with the Charter of Fundamental Rights incorporated as the first section of the EU's new constitution.

The Social Democratic Party, the National Coalition, and the Swedish People's Party have been relatively united over integration. The Social Democratic Party adopted a pro-membership line in 1991. In the referendum 75 per cent of its voters were in favour of joining the Union. A section of the party supporters campaigned against membership under their own organisation. The prime minister (1995-2003) and party chairman Paavo Lipponen has from the beginning of his premiership been determined to lead Finland into the inner circle of the Union. While a section of the party elite has been much more reserved, the party leader has not met any strong resistance as the Eurosceptics have not organized themselves.

The National Coalition decided in June 1991 that Finland should apply for EU membership. While the party ideology emphasises traditional conservative values, including national sovereignty, the party elite and the overwhelming majority of the party supporters are in favour of EU/EMU membership and of developing closer links the west. 89 per cent of the party supporters voted in favour of joining the Union in the membership referendum. In line with other conservative parties in the European People's Party, the National Coalition does not support a federal Europe. The party argues that, on the whole, the EU should do 'less but better'.

The Swedish People's Party came out in favour of membership in 1991, and in the referendum 85 per cent of RKP voters were in favour of membership. However, there was a geographical and urban-rural split within the party: farmers, in particular those from the Ostrobothnia region, opposed membership, while those residing in southern Finland were in favour. The clear majority of the leadership and voters continue to be supportive of further integration.

With the exception of the True Finns, all Eduskunta parties are thus either in favour of status quo or of deepening integration. Referring to the principle of subsidiarity, parties and individual politicians often demand that decisions are taken closer to the citizens. However, apart from Common Agricultural Policy and regional policy, parties have not really put forward any concrete proposals for reducing EU's powers. While the 1994 referendum revealed significant differences within parties, EU issues have not led to any notable factionalism in Finnish parties.⁶ The parties have prevented defections or factionalism by tactical manoeuvres ranging from allowing internal dissent to linking EU questions to domestic political issues. In general, EU issues have remained in the background in national politics, particularly during election campaigns. While parties have adopted European programmes and individual politicians have tried to stimulate debate on integration, parties have chosen to keep a low profile on EU matters. European integration did not feature prominently in the 1995, 1999 or 2003 elections. National EU debate has primarily focused on security issues and on agricultural policy, two policy areas that are highly salient in Finnish politics even without integration.

A key factor explaining the lack of organised factions is arguably the strongly candidate-centred electoral system, with elite-level Euroscepticism so far based on prominent individual MPs or MEPs. The candidate selection process is decentralized and voters choose between individual candidates in both national and EP elections. This mechanism facilitates

intra-party protest based around individual persons and reduces the probability of establishing organized factions. Survey data show that the electoral system is reflected in citizens' voting behaviour in EP elections. The personal qualities of candidates weigh heavily in people's minds when making their voting decisions. The electoral system leads to more competition within than between parties. Individual candidates from the same party list pursue personal campaigns, with party programmes almost completely in the background. (Pesonen ed. 2000; Martikainen and Pesonen eds. 1999; Raunio 2001) Considering the potentially divisive impact of European integration on party unity, party leaders have good cause to support the existing rules of the electoral game. Protest or dissenting opinions get channelled through individual candidates, whereas in member states with closed lists organized factions often appear to contest the official party line.

Parties have also co-opted opposition by a strategy of accommodation. The Left Alliance and Green League left their position open on membership prior to the referendum in order not to alienate the anti-EU voters, with individual senior party figures campaigning both for and against membership. Immediately after the referendum the Centre Party and the Left Alliance made it clear that opponents of the EU would be welcome to their ranks. With the exception of some behind-the-scenes moves, party leaders have refrained from applying any direct sanctions against the Eurosceptics. In fact, the situation is largely the opposite. In the hope of maximizing their vote share, parties have in EP elections deliberately included in their pool of candidates people with diverging views on integration, notably in the Centre Party, the Left Alliance and the Green League. Parties have left individual candidates to run their own campaigns, with little if any interference from the party leadership. Perhaps the only proper example of sanctions or threats was the case of the Centre Party adopting its pro-EU position in 1994 only after prime minister and party chair Aho had threatened to resign were his party to oppose membership.

But what explains the broad pro-EU consensus among Finnish parties? Why are there hardly any Eurosceptical parties?

Explaining the pro-EU consensus

The argument presented in this section for explaining the moderate presence of Eurosceptical parties focuses on two attributes of the domestic political system: the consensual style of politics and bargaining involved in forming coalition governments and the system of formulating national integration policy. As long as the influential actors in the domestic policy process – the main parties and interest groups – are convinced about the desirability of membership and further integration, it is difficult for Eurosceptical parties to gain support. Because the argument rests on systemic factors of the political system maintaining or facilitating the broad pro-EU consensus, it is important to first map the initial preferences of the key actors.

Very soon after the collapse of the Soviet Union a broad majority of the national decision-making elite – interest groups, political parties, media, state bureaucracy – emerged in favour of EU membership. Finland is heavily dependent on trade, and beginning from the 1980s, the industry (particularly the influential wood-processing sector) had expressed its preferences by increasing its investments in Western Europe. As barter trade with the Soviet regime had accounted for about one-fifth of national trade, the demise of the communist bloc increased trade dependence on the then EC countries. The heavy recession of the early 1990s further convinced the industry and the trade unions about the importance of joining the Union. The only significant interest group campaigning against membership was The Central Union of Agricultural Producers and Forest Owners. Economic factors were of course not the only motive behind the pro-EU stances. The rather uncertain political situation in Russia brought

security concerns to the fore, and in general there was a broader cultural argument about (re-)joining the West. (Arter 1995; Archer 2000) Of the parties, Social Democrats, National Coalition and the Swedish People's Party adopted a pro-membership line in 1991, with the Centre Party delaying its formal decision until 1994. By the time of the referendum held in October 1994, a broad majority of the political elite was thus in favour of membership. With the referendum result clear (56.9 per cent in favour, 43.1 per cent against), the support for membership changed to support for deeper integration. This broad elite-level pro-EU consensus is sustained primarily by two factors, the consensual style of politics and the system of forming national integration policy.⁷

Consensual style of politics. The Finnish political system is often characterised as both consensual and elitist (Ruostetsaari 2003). This applies particularly to foreign policy matters in which maintaining amicable relations with the Soviet Union was of overriding importance during the Cold War. Even though the range of actors involved in making foreign and security policy has broadened, largely the same logic continues guide decision-making, with emphasis placed on achieving national unity and avoiding public cleavages. Decision-making in other policy domains is likewise broadly inclusive and based on extensive consultation with key interest groups.

The shape of the Finnish party system, with no party as a rule winning more than around 25 per cent of votes in parliamentary elections, together with the rather corporatist nature of the polity, also facilitates ideological convergence between all parties aspiring to enter the government. The fragmented nature of the party system forces parties to make concessions. Parties and their leaders are engaged in an almost constant process of negotiation and the art of building compromises and package deals is an essential feature of party politics. The dividing line between government and opposition has increased in significance as a result of a series of constitutional reforms that have brought Finland closer to a standard

parliamentary democracy, but the pragmatic and consensual style of politics still prevails, particularly so in European and foreign policy matters.

The programmatic adaptation and ideological moderation implied by government formation, short- and long-term interests in maintaining government status, and mutual commitments agreed between the parties in the cabinet explain largely why Finnish parties supported EMU and are in broad agreement over national integration policy. The elite-level bargaining also sustains the gap between public Euroscepticism and party Euroscepticism. The broad partisan consensus on EU is not replicated among voters, with citizens remaining far less supportive of integration than their elected representatives. In order to be considered as realistic and trustworthy coalition partners, parties have adopted positions that have been at least partially contradictory with the mood among their voters. When faced with hard choices, parties have after the referendum held in 1994 almost invariably ended up supporting deeper integration. The Left Alliance and the Green League, both internally badly divided over European integration, came out in favour of EMU in 1997/98 after initial rejections or doubts, and both parties took part in the five-party government headed by Lipponen appointed in 1995 that was committed to taking Finland into the inner core of the Union. The Centre Party, in opposition from 1995 to 2003, has carefully formulated its strategies and policies that have maintained it as a credible future party of the government.⁸

In the Left Alliance, Green League and to a certain extent also in Social Democrats the policy moderation and ideological compromises, definitely not least in integration matters, implied by multi-party coalition governments have gradually reduced the influence of more radical left-wing sections that also were against EU membership and remain more sceptical about the benefits of integration. Within the Centre Party this has resulted in the marginalization of the EU-critical section of the party, a section that arguably represents the views of the majority of the party's voters. With the partial exception of the right-wing True

Finns, the pragmatic style of politics is also reflected in the lack of ideologically extremist or populist parties that normally adopt anti-integrationist positions as a part of their strategy of distancing themselves from the mainstream parties.

National EU coordination system. The inter-party bargaining characteristic of domestic politics is further enhanced by the system established for formulating and coordinating national integration policies. While the overall aim 'is to speak with one voice on all levels of decision shaping in Brussels' (Stubb *et al.* 2001: 306), the importance attached to achieving such consistency varies between policy areas and individual legislative initiatives. When a proposal is perceived as having significant national repercussions the matter is debated at the highest political level in the Cabinet EU Committee, a ministerial committee for European matters where all the government parties are represented. The coordination system is based on wide consultation among both public and private actors. The goal is to manufacture broad (elite-level) societal backing for national positions, including the parliament, relevant interest groups and government representatives. In important matters the permanent representative in Brussels also often informs all Finnish MEPs of the national position.

Particularly noteworthy has been the lack of conflict, or of even tension, between the government and the Eduskunta on the one hand, and between the government and the opposition on the other hand. The government is usually criticized by individual MPs from both opposition and government parties rather than by a united opposition or even by unitary party groups. The lack of conflict and the pro-European consensus is again explained by the institutional rules of the coordination system. In the Eduskunta the emphasis is on pragmatic examination of EU's legislative initiatives in the committees, with relatively few partisan ideological debates about national integration policy or the overall development of integration. Committee scrutiny of European matters differs in one important respect from domestic legislation: the government-opposition dimension does not play the only significant

role in either the Grand Committee (the equivalent of an EU committee) or in specialized committees. Granting the opposition a larger role in European matters, especially on more important issues such as Treaty amendments, increases the legitimacy of the decisions as all or nearly all parties are involved in policy-making. The multi-party coalition governments, together with the role accorded to the opposition in the Grand Committee, facilitate broad backing for governmental action at the European level. As the opposition parties are involved in forming national policies, they also simultaneously share the responsibility for the outcome. This reduces the likelihood of the main features of Finnish integration policy being altered after each parliamentary election. (See Raunio and Tiilikainen 2003: chs. 4 and 5; Raunio and Wiberg 2000.)

Conclusion

Looking forward into the future, it is unlikely that the overall direction of Finnish integration policy and the European policies of the Eduskunta parties will undergo major changes. The factors that led Finland to apply for EU membership – trade dependence, security concerns, and consolidating Finland’s place in the west – remain by and large unaltered. The Finnish parties are solidly pro-EU without, however, explicitly embracing the concept of a federal Europe.

All parties are divided over the future of integration, but the share of Eurosceptical MPs has decreased since the early days of EU membership. Euroscepticism will most probably continue to be channeled through individual candidates in (EP) elections and through marginal parties or movements that fail to make much impact on national politics. Nevertheless, the issue is in reality far less settled than it appears, and European integration will also in the future cause problems for parties represented in the national parliament. Of the

main parties, the potential for Euroscepticism is highest within the Centre Party.⁹ The negative attitude of Centre supporters towards integration is both instrumental, with CAP and the single market having a negative impact on primary producers, and more ideological due to the value placed on national community typical of agrarian parties. In the Left Alliance and the Green League, internal divisions are likely to continue to trouble the party leadership as sections of party voters view the EU as too exclusive and market-friendly. Overall, institutional questions have so far proven more controversial than the division of powers between the EU and member states. This is understandable, for strengthening the powers of supranational institutions at the expense of intergovernmental decision-making will at least numerically further limit national independence and sovereignty, two strongly emphasized values in Finnish society.

Nevertheless, European integration has added a new significant cleavage to the Finnish political system. The integration/independence –dimension is entwined with the centre-periphery or rural-urban cleavage, and considering the ideological convergence on the dominant left-right dimension, EU matters may become more important in structuring voting behaviour in national parliamentary elections. So far national parties have adapted to integration with relatively little difficulty, but the low level of public support for the EU is a reminder of the Eurosceptic potential among the voters.

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Table 1.

Distribution of Votes in National Parliamentary and European Elections since the early 1990s
(per cent).

PARTY	PARTY	1991	1995	1996	1999	1999	2003
	FAMILY			EP		EP	
Centre Party	Agrarian / centre	24.8	19.8	24.4	22.4	21.3	24.7
Social Democratic Party	Social democrat	22.1	28.3	21.5	22.9	17.8	24.5
National Coalition	Conservative	19.3	17.9	20.2	21.0	25.3	18.6
Left Alliance	Radical left	10.1	11.2	10.5	10.9	9.1	9.9
Green League	Greens	6.8	6.5	7.6	7.3	13.4	8.0
Swedish People's Party	Ethno-regionalist / liberal	5.5	5.1	5.8	5.1	6.8	4.6
Christian Democrats	Christian	3.1	3.0	2.8	4.2	2.4	5.3
Rural Party	Agrarian / Populist	4.8	1.3				
Young Finns	Conservative / liberal		2.8	3.0	1.0		
True Finns	Agrarian / Populist			0.7	1.0	0.8	1.6
Others		3.5	4.1	3.5	4.2	3.1	2.8
TOTAL		100	100	100	100	100	100

Note: The right-wing Young Finns were formed in 1994 and the party won two seats in the 1995 elections. Four years later, the Young Finns failed to win any seats and the party was subsequently disbanded.

Source: Statistics Finland (www.tilastokeskus.fi).

Table 2.

Party Positions in the 1994 Membership Referendum.

PARTIES	OFFICIAL PARTY LINE	VOTERS SUPPORTING MEMBERSHIP (per cent)
Social Democratic Party	Yes	75
Centre Party	Yes	36
National Coalition	Yes	89
Left Alliance	No position	24
Green League	No position	55
Swedish People's Party	Yes	85
Christian Democrats	No	10
Rural Party / True Finns	No	20

Sources: Party documents, voters' figures from Paloheimo (2000: 58).

Table 3.

Euroceptical parties in Finland.

PARTY	SOFT / HARD EUROSCEPTICISM	SUPPORT IN THE LAST ELECTION (per cent, 2003)	MPs (per cent)
True Finns	Soft	1.6	1.5
Communist Party	Hard	0.8	-
Forces for Change in Finland	Hard	0.4	-

¹ For information on the Finnish party system, see Arter (1999: 50-142, 224-44), Sundberg (1996), and Borg and Sänkiaho eds. (1995).

² For analyses of party positions in the referendum, see Paloheimo (1994, 1995), Sänkiaho (1994), Listhaug *et al.* (1998), and Jahn (1999).

³ For more information, see the websites of Alternative to the EU (www.kaapeli.fi/~veu/) and League for Free Finland (www.vapaansuomenliitto.fi).

⁴ For analyses of party positions on integration, see Johansson and Raunio (2001), Raunio (1997, 1999, 2000), and Raunio and Tiilikainen (2003: ch. 3). The European programmes of the parties are available at their web sites: Social Democrats (www.sdp.fi), Centre Party (www.keskusta.fi), National Coalition (www.kokoomus.fi), Left Alliance (www.vasemmistoliitto.fi), Green League (www.vihrealliitto.fi), Swedish People's Party (www.rkp.fi), Christian Democrats (www.kristillisdemokraatit.fi), and True Finns (www.perussuomalaiset.fi). Most programmes are available also in English.

⁵ On the policy profiles of the Greens and the Left Alliance, see Zilliacus (2001).

⁶ Interestingly, the retrospective expert survey of parties' EU positions carried out by Ray (1999: 293) showed that 'record levels of internal dissent are found primarily in nations which have had referenda, and occur in parties across the political spectrum.'

⁷ The lack of resources is another effective factor against the rise of anti-EU parties. Political parties, both their extra-parliamentary organizations and parliamentary groups, receive public funding based on the share of seats won in the most recent parliamentary election. Parties not represented in the Eduskunta are not entitled to public funding.

⁸ A nice illustration of the impact of government formation was in December 2001 when the party council of the Centre Party adopted the new European programme. Vice-chair Anneli Jätteenmäki explicitly stated that the party "must have such a EU policy that it can be either in the opposition or in the government". Marjo Ollikainen, "Keskusta: Suomi vahvasti mukaan EU:n kehittämiseen", *Helsingin Sanomat* 26.11.2001.

⁹ According to the expert survey conducted by Ray (1999: 293), the Centre Party was in 1996 one of the most conflict-ridden parties in the EU in integration matters, with only the Social Democrats and Socialist People's Party in Denmark, Social Democrats and the Centre Party in Sweden, and the Conservative Party in Great Britain also evenly split on the issue of integration.