

Populism in Action: Finland

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Populism in Action

- Empirically:
 - History of Finnish populist parties 1959–2017
- Theoretically:
 - Instead of looking at populism as sth that ‘is’, studying it as sth that *is done*
- Outline:
 - Veikko Vennamo and The Finnish Rural Party, 1959–1995
 - Agrarian, anti-modernization populism
 - Timo Soini and the True Finns, 1995–2017
 - Moving towards contemporary right-wing populism
 - Jussi Halla-aho, 2017–
 - Full-on anti-immigration, anti-Islam agenda
 - A Sociological Perspective to Populism
 - Populism and the Radical Right
 - My empirical studies:
 - Populism and Crisis
 - Populism and Gender
 - Populism and Collective Emotions
 - Populism and Knowledge

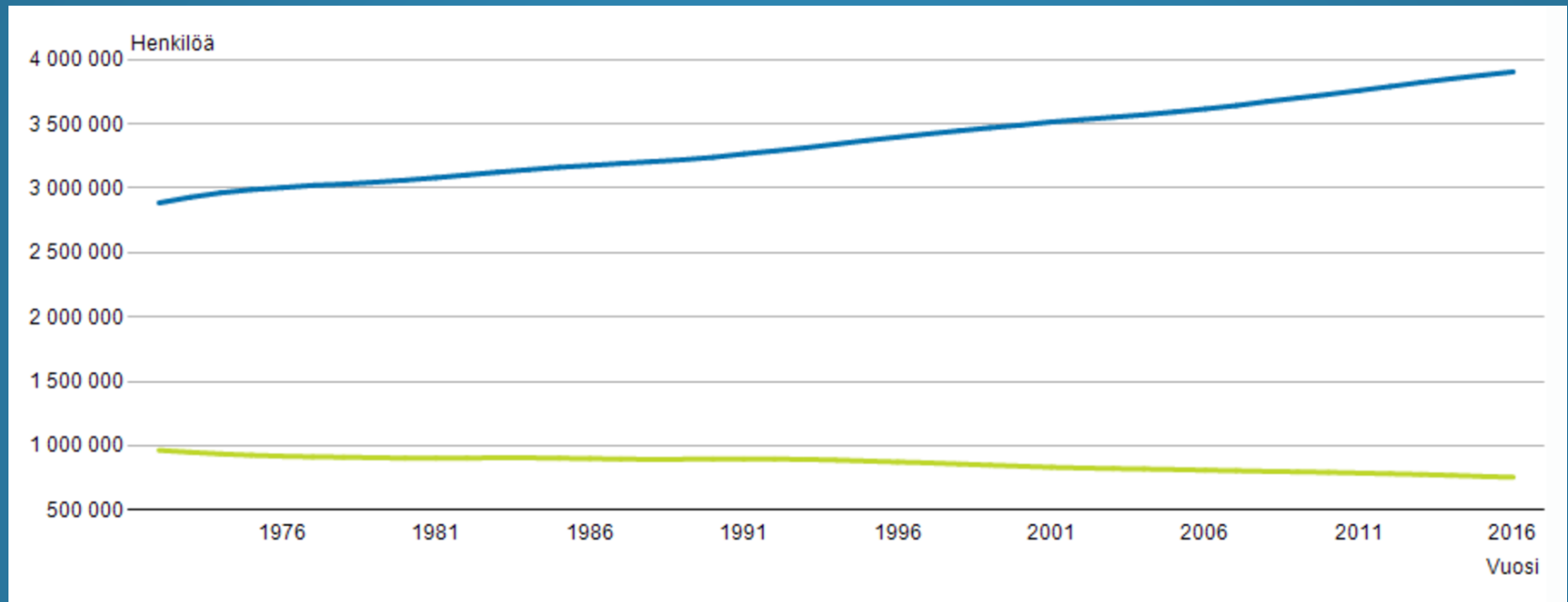
Populism in Finland, 1959–



Veikko Vennamo

- Founder of the Finnish Rural Party (*Suomen maaseudun puolue*, SMP) in 1959
- Internal disagreements in the Agrarian League (*Maalaisliitto*, from 1965 onwards the Centre Party) led to his defection
- Personified his party; was chair until 1979 when passed torch to his son Pekka, remained parliamentary group leader until 1986
- Classical agrarian populist: the 1960s–1980s were times of modernization and structural change in Finland, Vennamo opposed these
- “The forgotten people” (victims of urbanization, small farmers) vs. “the money power”, the “crime lords” (*rötösherrat*)
- The first populist upheaval, general election 1970: SMP 10.5% (18 MP's)
 - “After the civil war (1918) Finland adopted the norms of an agrarian farmers’ society, since the victorious Whites were an army of peasants whereas the Reds represented urban population ... TV was the first medium to spread urban norms” (Sänkiahö 1971)
 - “The more liberal norms (including sexual norms) of the urban society evoked great disapproval and alienation in the countryside ... also the knowledge of better standards of living in Southern Finland, communicated by television” (Sänkiahö 1971)

SMP as an Anti-Modernization Movement



Finland's population, cities (blue) and countryside (green) 1972–2016

“The areas on which SMP was most successful in 1970 had a large percentage of family-run farms (90–100% of all farms) compared to 30–50% in Southern Finland” (Sänkiahö 1971: 31)

The SMP in Government: 1983–1987

- The second populist upheaval: SMP 9.7% in 1983 (17 MP's out of 200), after a political corruption scandal (Salora)
 - Corruption of government officials, colluding with industrialists to build a state-financed factory (Kantola & Vesa 2011, 47–48)
- Entered gov't in coalition with Social Democrats, Centre Party and Swedish People's Party
- Pekka Vennamo (Veikko's son) was now chair but Veikko still chaired the parliamentary group
 - Father and son disagreed strongly on policy issues such as nuclear power (Räisänen 1989)
 - Veikko had made his polemic style and going after the 'crime lords' a trademark, and continued his opposition style and criticism of gov't even though his party was in it!
 - Internal strife led to numerous defections, eventually Veikko's retirement and finally bankruptcy of the party in 1995

Populism in Finland, 1979–



Timo Soini

- Grew up in Espoo in a suburb built in the late 1960s, son of a small-businessman and a nanny/housewife
- Joins the SMP in 1979, at 16 years old, after seeing Veikko Vennamo speak
- Graduates from high school in 1981, Uni Helsinki 1988 (pol. sc.) with a Master's thesis on SMP and populism
- Runs for parliament 1983, 1987, 1991, 1995
- After bankruptcy of SMP, founds The True Finns (*Perussuomalaiset*) with other SMP veterans, becomes chair in 1997
- Interview in 2000: “I want to build The True Finns into the same kind of right-wing populist party that already exist in Norway and Austria”, referring to Progress and Freedom parties, respectively. “We have to talk about home, religion and the Fatherland ... If we found the right chairman, we could get 10% of the vote ... we need a prophet to channel the pain of the people ... a successful businessman, for example.”

*Huhtikainen
Väänänen*

POPULISMI - POLITIIKAA JA POLTINMERKKI:

SMP:N ROOLINMUUTOS



Timo Juhani Soini

Valtio-opin koulutusohjelman
yleisen suuntautumisvaihto-
ehdon pro gradu -tutkielma
Huhtikuu 1988



Timo Soini 1990, 1992, 2012

Timo Soini's True Finns, 2003–

- Soini soon started a transformation of the party towards the right
- First sign: candidacy of Tony Halme in 2003
 - Boxer, show wrestler, media personality
 - Anti-immigration campaign
- Successful protest candidate
 - 5th most popular nationally!
 - Ran in Helsinki
 - Helped Soini get a seat for the first time



Tony Halme ('Ludvig Borga', 'The Viking') ca. 1993



Tony Halme ('Ludvig Borga', 'The Viking') ca. 1994



Tony Halme as 'Roman' in 'Die Hard – With a Vengeance' (1995)



Tony Halme, newly elected MP, 2003

Tony Halme

- Tough on crime, anti-communist, anti-feminist, anti-immigration, for law and order
- Shortly after entering parliament in March 2003, Halme shot himself (accidentally?) in his home, spent 3 weeks in a coma and sustained permanent brain damage
- Police found amphetamines, steroids and unlicensed firearms in his home and it was revealed he had struggled with substance abuse for a while
- In 2006, he was admitted into a mental hospital and also suffered liver failure, but later returned into parliament, only to be convicted of DUI and quit as MP in November
- In 2009, convicted of drug offences (cocaine, amphetamines) and illegal firearms
- Committed suicide using an illegal firearm in 2010

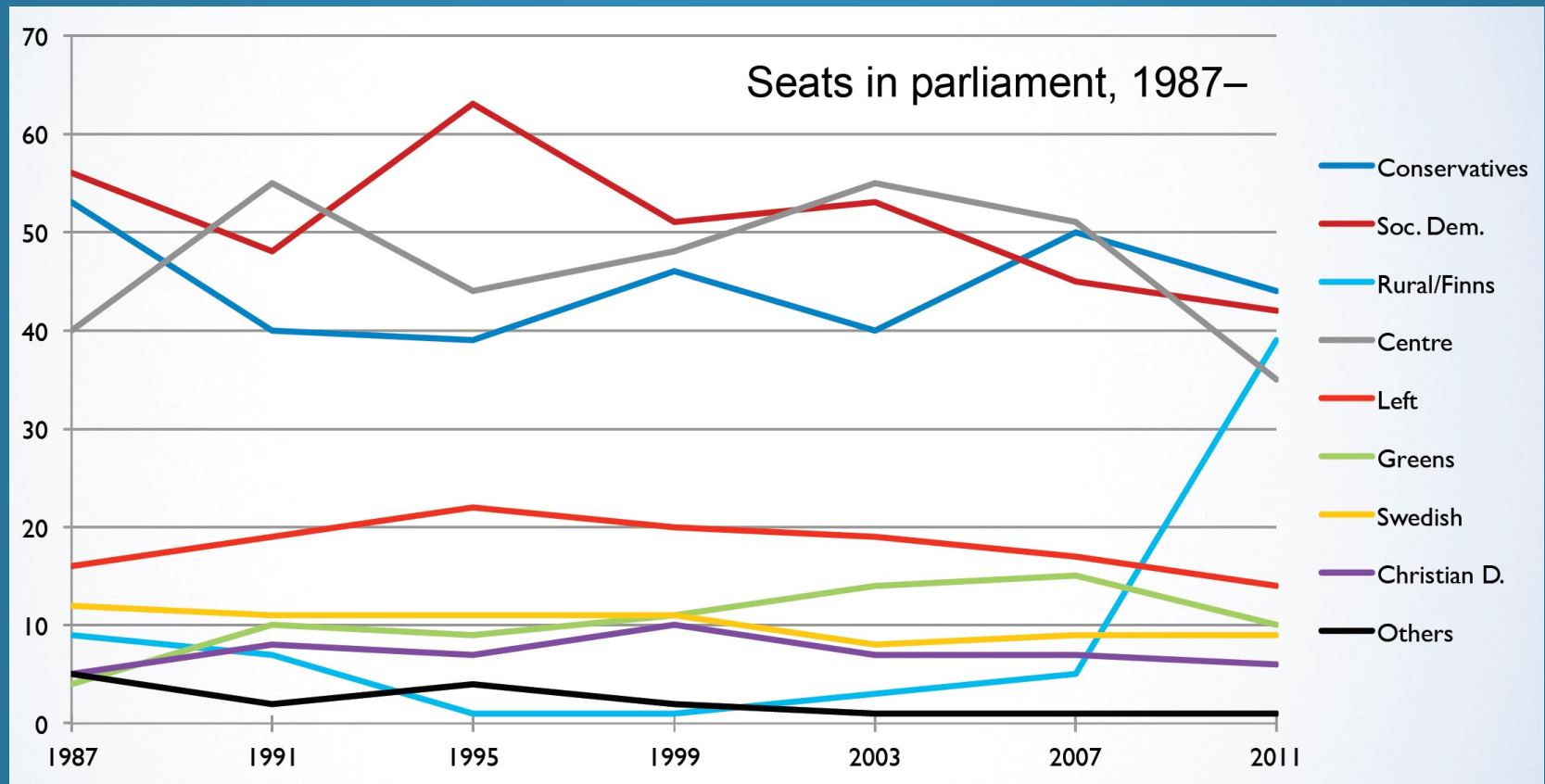
The New Anti-Immigration Movement, 2003–

- Jussi Halla-aho (PhD Uni Helsinki 2006, Slavonic and Baltic Languages)
- *Scripta: Writings from the Sinking West* (blog, 2003–)
 - Part of the global *counterjihadist* movement, incl. *Gates of Vienna*
- Fierce critic of Islam, “the paedophile religion”
- Convicted of hate speech 2009, in a trial which to right-wingers is about freedom of speech
- *Hommaforum* founded 2008
- Whether and how to enter parliamentary politics?
 - Halla-aho True Finns elected city councilman 2008 but denied candidacy in European elections 2009
 - Eventually, several Hommaforum activists candidates in 2011

Jussi Halla-aho



The 2011 Elections: 'The Big Bang'



The 2011 Elections: 'The Big Bang'



The Big Bang: 19.1%, 39 MPs (out of 200)

- Not just the growing anti-immigration movement: Timo Soini is the national vote-puller
- Exit polls: reasons for voting True Finns
 - 1. “To see some change in a stagnant party system”
 - 2. “To curb immigration”
 - 3. “To curb Finland’s commitments to the EU”
- Dominant media stories: the Euro bailouts and a political corruption scandal (Pernaa 2012)
- The party unconditionally rejected the Euro bailouts, resulting in exclusion from gov’t

The True Finns in Government

- Opposition (2011–2015) tends to suit populist parties
- 2015: 17.7%, 38 MPs (out of 200)
 - Into gov't with moderate right-wing and Centre Party
- Gov't responsibility, OTOH, suits populists badly...
 - RW gov't initiated huge, unpopular cuts and bailouts
 - At the same time, the migrant crisis intensified
 - Poll, early 2017: 9.4% (HS)
 - “How successful in gov't?”
Excellent/good 11%, (very) poor 55%
 - Party convention June 2017 to select chair for 2-year term

Soini Quits

- In March 2017, Soini announces he will not continue
 - After 20 years, Soini is proud for building a party from ashes, but regrets “some of the things that have been built up with it” (MTV News 5 Mar 2017)
- Sampo Terho announced as semi-official heir to Soini
 - Potential to unite the party
 - Party leaders back him
 - ‘Centrist’
- Halla-aho announces he will run





Kirjoittaja

Aihe: Kampanja PS:n pj:n vaihtamiseksi 2017 - Soini ulos! (Luettu 224208 kertaa)

Lalli IsoTalo

"Hallituksenkaataja"

Jäsen^^^



Viestejä: 24 211

Liked: 19944

Nuiva VHM-sillanrakentaja &
sananvapauttaja**Kampanja PS:n pj:n vaihtamiseksi 2017 - Soini ulos!**

« : 26.09.2016, 10:57:15 »

Tausta

Soini on ollut katastrofaalisen huono puoluejohtaja millä tahansa mittareilla mitattuna. Hänet pitää vaihtaa vuoden 2017 puoluekokouksessa. Se ei ratkaise läheskään kaikkia persujen, nuivien tai Suomen ongelmia, mutta on kuitenkin se ensimmäinen, tärkeä askel pitkällä matkalla.

On mahdollista, että pj:n vaihto ei ratkaise mitään ongelmia. Se on kuitenkin ehdottomasti yksinkertaisin, helpoin ja tehokkain keino edes yrittää tehdä jotain konkreettista Suomen tulevaisuuden pelastamiseksi. Vaihtoon vaaditaan suhteellisen vähän resursseja, mutta lopputulos saattaa hyvinkin olla ratkaiseva.

Kuka tilalle?

En tiedä, mutta hän ei saa olla Soinin valitsema puudeli. Lisäksi äänet eivät saa hajaantua usean ehdokkaan kesken, vaan ne on keskitettävä yhdelle ehdokkaalle. Mikään ei *esimerkiksi* estä meitä täällä Hommalla järjestelmästä esikilpailua ja esiäänestystä, jonka voittajalle koko potti voisi mennä. Tämä on siis vain yksi alustava ajatushahmotelma.

Miten?

Muutama sata uutta jäsentä riittää äänestystuloksen kääntämiseksi. ~~Äänestys oikeus edellyttää, että olet persujen jäsen sekä 2016 että 2017. Se maksaa 2 x 25€, eli 50 €. Sinun siis täytyy maksaa tämän vuoden jäsenmaksu ennen vuoden vaihdetta. Äänestys oikeus puoluekokouksessa on myös niillä jäsenillä jotka ovat liittyneet ja maksaneet jäsenmaksunsa sinä samana vuonna milloin puoluekokous pidetään.~~

Jos 500 uutta jäsentä rekisteröityy tämän vuoden loppuun loppuun mennessä, se tietenkin tarkoittaa lisää rahaa persuille. Mutta tuo summa (500 x 50€ = 25 000€) vastaa suunnilleen vain kahden persun kuukausittaista puoluetukea. Se on siis aivan mitättömän pieni persujen varallisuudessa.

Vertaa: 500 rekisteröintyä jäsentä, tai 5000 kannatuskorttia uuden puoleen perustamiseksi. Vain 10% osallistumismäärällä tuosta voidaan saada valmis puolue, tai ainakin mahdollisia muutoksia sellaiseen.

Lopuksi

Tässä on nyt historiallisen hyvä mahdollisuus ainakin keikuttaa venettä, tai jopa vaihtaa sen kurssia.

Panokset ovat pienet. Mahdolliset voitot ovat maata järjestyttävän suuret.

Ymmärtääkseni Soinin diktatuuri on mädättänyt koko puolueen hyvin heikkoon happeen. Johtajan vaihto ei välttämättä ratkaise mitään, jos seuraaja on Soinin suosikki. Meidän täytyy nyt pitää huolta siitä, että näin EI tule käymään. Persut tarvitsevat nyt palatsivallankumousta. Heistä itsestään ei siihen ole ollut, eikä tule olemaan, ilman meidän apuamme.

Mitä sanot?

(Joku muu saa kertoa miten liittyminen käytännössä onnistuu).

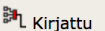
EDIT: Ohjeet jäseneksi liittymiseen sivulla:

<https://www.perussuomalaiset.fi/tule-mukaan/jasenyyys/>

Eli tulostetaan siellä oleva ylempi PDF-lomake, täytetään se ja lähetetään se etanapostissa sivulla olevaan osoitteeseen.

Lalli IsoTalo

« Viimeksi muokattu: 13.12.2016, 12:47:18 kirjoittanut kgb »



Kirjattu

Läpeensä Nuiva, Bona, Delaz and 33 others like this

Sat 10 Jun 2017: Jussi Halla-aho Wins



Mon 12 Jun 2017: True Finns Kicked Out of Gov't



What he Didn't Know: 'Black Ops'



'New Alternative' (later renamed 'Blue Future')



The Government is Dead, Long Live the Government

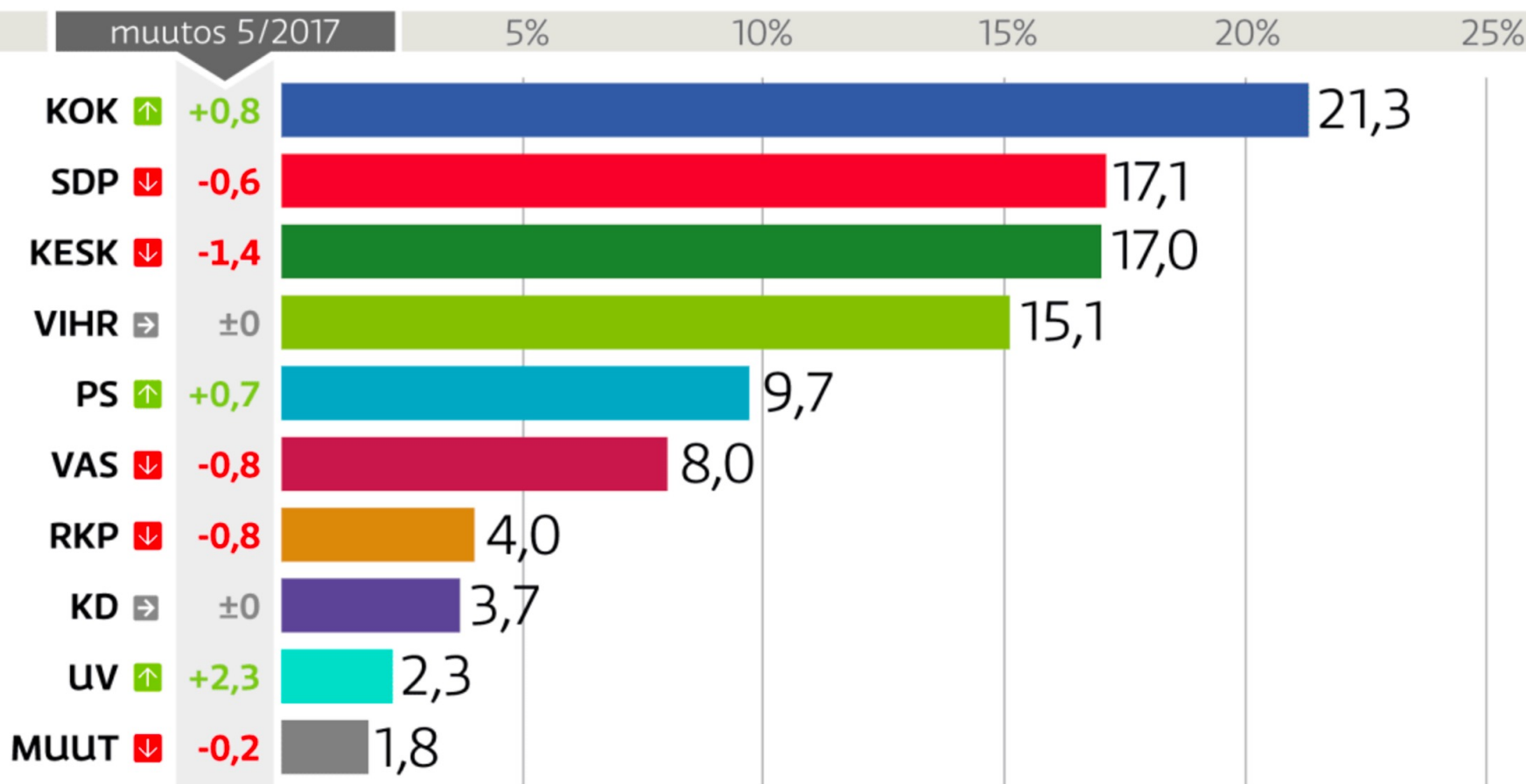


“Traitors usually end up with the short end of the stick”



“Traitors usually end up with the short end of the stick”

Puoluekannatusarviot



Yle Uutiset/Taloustutkimus, 13-20.6.2017, otos 1213, virhemarg. +\ -2,8% -yks.

Finnish Populism, 1959–2017

- Strong populist tradition compared to other Nordics
- A gradual move from ‘classic’ agrarian populism towards the contemporary populist radical right (also see Jungar & Jupskås 2014)
 - Nordic right-wing populist parties started out from different roots but ended up converging in the middle
- But is ‘populism’ sth contained in *populist parties*?

A Sociological Perspective to Populism

- *Instead of taking populism as a research object that exists, how is populism practiced?*
- 1: Populism as a political practice in a political culture
 - Swidler (1986): “Culture in Action”
 - Understanding culture as a way of life, like in previous anthropology, is too deterministic; viewing culture as a collection of tools gives more weight to the free will and creativity of the actors
 - Prmatist sociology (Boltanski & Thévenot, Joas, Latour...)
- 2: Politics, broadly understood
 - Not just institutions but all social moral action
 - Activism, NGOs, unions, public debates...

Populism as a Political Practice

- Culture: “the publicly available symbolic forms through which people experience and express meaning” ... “symbolic vehicles of meaning, including beliefs, ritual practices, art forms, and ceremonies, as well as informal cultural practices such as language, gossip, stories, and rituals of daily life”
- Collections of these political practices, or ‘tools’, form ‘toolkits’, which are recognizable orientations to politics – such as populism – and collections of toolkits form political cultures (Lichterhan & Cefai 2006)
- Understanding populism as a ‘cultural toolkit’ helps us explain its sustained re-emergence across history and the globe (Jansen 2011; Moffitt 2016)
- Actors use these tools to do politics and to make sense of the world (e.g. Goffman 1974)
- Pragmatism as a middle ground between language-focused constructivist epistemologies and realism/positivism; it takes into account linguistic constitution of reality but also the material world

What are Populist Practices?

- Ways of positing a positively connoted “people” against a negatively connoted “elite”
- In the Finnish case, I study four instances:
 - 1. Othering of Southern Europeans during the Eurocrisis and accusing political elites of coddling them
 - 2. ‘Common-sense’ views of ‘caring’ womanhood against ‘elite’ feminists
 - 3. Invoking emotional national belonging via nostalgic familiarity
 - 4. Valorizing ‘folk wisdom’ and criticizing expertise
- All of these have been recognized elsewhere as well
(Aslanidis & Ylä-Anttila 2014, Keskinen 2013, Oushakine 2011, Demertzis 2006, Saurette & Gunster 2011)

Why Populism – What About ‘the Radical Right’?

- Populism seems endemic to our time, not just right, but left too
 - Syriza (Greece), Podemos (Spain), M5S (Italy), Bernie Sanders (US)
- The populist component in most right-wing populist movements is strong
 - “Populists may also target particular Others – such as asylum seekers, immigrant workers or particular minority groups – as enemies of ‘the people’, but these Others will be linked to ‘the elite’. For example, it might be argued that ‘liberal elites’ have allowed increased immigration, which has led to an influx of migrants, which has threatened ‘the people’s’ livelihood.” (Moffitt 2016: 43–44)
- Radical right-wing movements without strong populism are rare
- Relationship between populism and the radical right is often posited but unclear
 - Loss of status of uneducated (male) workers makes them susceptible to “frames that scapegoat immigrant groups” (Rydgren 2013: 6), but why immigrants?
 - “The core concept is undoubtedly the ‘nation’” (Mudde 2007: 16), while populism comes second, for radical right-wing populist parties (also Rydgren 2007: 244, Stavrakakis et al. 2017) – but this is circular reasoning if you define your research object as ‘right-wing parties’!
- Finnish populist right has been analysed thoroughly from the perspective of racism
 - Arter 2010, Hatakka 2016, Keskinen 2013, Pyrhönen 2015, Mäkinen 2016...
- **Populism and right-wing nationalism are interconnected but separate phenomena!**

Empirical Studies, 1/4: The Eurocrisis

- Tuomas Ylä-Anttila & Tuukka Ylä-Anttila (2015): “Exploiting the Discursive Opportunity of the Euro Crisis: The Rise of The Finns Party.” In: Kriesi & Pappas (eds.): *European Populism in the Shadow of the Great Recession*. ECPR Press.
- Does crisis cause populism?
- 2007: A ‘business as usual’ election, Finns Party struggling
- 2011: A populist ‘Big Bang’ – because of the Eurocrisis?
 - The crisis didn’t affect Finland that strongly
 - However, it made it possible for The Finns Party to blame Southern Europeans for ‘taking our money’
 - The rise of the anti-immigration movement
 - A political corruption scandal
- Conclusions: populism feeds off *conceptions of crisis*, not just empirically identifiable ‘crises’

Empirical Studies, 2/4: Gender

- Tuukka Ylä-Anttila & Eeva Luhtakallio (2017): “Contesting Gender Equality Politics in Finland: The Finns Party Effect” In: Köttig, Bitzan & Petö (eds.): *Gender and Far Right Politics in Europe*. Palgrave.
- We know that men are overrepresented in voters and politicians of populist parties, so let's look at this closer
 - In the Finns Party, the hard-line anti-immigration right wing is even more strongly male-dominated than the party in general
 - The Finns Party and even its women employ anti-feminist rhetoric'
 - Challenging hegemonic conceptions of gender equality can be employed as a populist strategy

Empirical Studies, 3/4: Collective Emotions

- Tuukka Ylä-Anttila (2017): “Familiarity as a tool of populism: Political appropriation of shared experiences and the case of *Suvivirsi*.” *Acta Sociologica*.
- *Suvivirsi* is a traditional spring hymn sung in schools, which has become a site of battle over multiculturalism
- Some schools now omit the hymn because of its religious content, and anti-Islam activists claim it is because of Muslims
- In these arguments, the power of the song is used in a way that cannot be grasped by its symbolic contents
- Discussants refer to the *feelings* caused by the *sounds* and even *smells* in the school spring ceremony, which elicit *physical* responses in them, causing ‘shivers’, making them ‘weep’ and their ‘heart pound’: *you have to share the experience to understand*
- **Familiarity** can be a powerful tool of populism, in constructing the commonness of *the people*

Empirical Studies, 4/4: Knowledge and Populism

- Tuukka Ylä-Anttila (forthcoming): “Knowledge in Contemporary Populism.” [Working title] *European Journal of Cultural and Political Sociology*.
- *Post-truth politics* is claimed to be endemic to populism: politicians don’t care about the truth and valorize ‘common sense’ over expertise
 - But populists also employ counterknowledge: alternative knowledge authorities
 - There’s a difference between denouncing *particular experts* and denouncing *expertise* altogether
 - Looking at *Hommaforum* and *MV-lehti*, I discern these two knowledge strategies
 - ‘Common sense’ goes nicely together with ‘classical populism’, while counterknowledge is a more typical ‘radical populist right’ strategy
 - Populism has particular epistemological positions which are often absolutist, like its positions towards power

Take-home points

- Finland has a strong populist tradition, now taking the form of anti-immigration radical right populism
- A sociological perspective on populism:
 - Studies populism *in action*, not as a thing, and
 - Studies populism not just in institutional but *everyday politics*
- *Tools of populism* in Finland and elsewhere include:
 - Perceptions of crisis
 - Challenging hegemonic ideas, like gender equality
 - Appropriating collective emotional experiences
 - Denouncing *experts* or *expertise*

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