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FROM LEFTIST TO POPULIST EUROSCEPTICISM? A CASE STUDY OF FINLAND AND SWEDEN

Bachelor Thesis

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I declare I have written the bachelor thesis independently.
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ABSTRACT

The European Union has in the last years witnessed a rapid increase of political Euroscepticism. When in the past critique towards the EU prevailed primarily among the left-wing parties, Euroscepticism is nowadays increasingly becoming associated with populism. This research set out to examine the development of Euroscepticism and answer the research question "do Finland and Sweden witness a similar path of development from leftist to populist Euroscepticism and are there similar reasons behind this phenomenon" through two very similar cases: Finland and Sweden. These relatively understudied cases provided the opportunity to examine whether similar paths of development and underlying reasons have prevailed in both cases. Through a comparative analysis this research discovered that Finland and Sweden have indeed experienced similar paths of development from leftist Euroscepticism to populist Euroscepticism. The findings also indicate that the reasons behind this shift are also very much alike: the left has disengaged from, or at least greatly decreased its Eurosceptic position for the same reasons in both countries, the common currency has not had a significant effect on the course of Eurosceptic developments, and similar reasons lie behind the populist nature of the main Eurosceptic parties.

Keywords: Euroscepticism, left-wing, populism, Finns Party, Sweden Democrats, European Union, European integration.

INTRODUCTION

Euroscepticism has in the last decade begun to raise its head and have an increasing influence in the politics of both the European Union (EU) and the EU member states. Euroscepticism as a phenomenon is as old as the Union itself. The establishment of the European Coal and Steel Community in 1951, by mainly Christian Democratic forces, saw political opposition in nearly all six founding members. Resistance in the 1950's consisted of left-wing opposition; in Italy the opposing voice was the Communist Party, in France the Far Left and in West Germany it was the Social Democrats (Quaglia 2008, 60; Grunberg 2008, 42; Lees 2008a, 25). However, in the twenty first Century Euroscepticism has diversified. No longer does the opposition constitute merely of left wing parties, but moreover both left wing and right wing populist parties have risen to represent the Eurosceptic voice within the European Union. In the 2014 EU Parliamentary elections, Eurosceptic parties amassed an unexpectedly large share of votes, with many of them right wing and populist parties (A look at the European … 2014). Left-wing parties in this research refer to parties that pursue solidarity and equality as well as maintaining social welfare provisions through progressive taxation. Populist parties on the other hand aim at returning power back to the people from the political elite. These parties are able to mass support through charismatic leaders and clear and understandable rhetoric, which is used to address issues that are close to the people.

The increase of an anti-EU atmosphere in the EU member states has sparked an increase in the research on the phenomenon. However, this research often focuses on larger European countries with high levels of Euroscepticism and consequently omits the Nordic countries that are small in size and display moderate, but still increasing, amounts of anti-EU sentiment. The research that has been conducted on the Nordic cases is dated and thus has missed the rapid rise of Euroscepticism within the political field in these countries. In addition, current research has focused on describing specific cases of Euroscepticism without analyzing the phenomenon in-depth. Examining current Nordic Euroscepticism could shed new light on the development of the phenomenon due to a similar cultural and social background in these countries. An examination of Finland and Sweden in particular provides

an opportunity to compare two historically Eurosceptic countries that joined the European Union at the same time. This provides an excellent basis for a comparative analysis on the development of Euroscepticism. Additionally, one being a part of the Eurozone and the other not could provide insight to the role of the common currency on the development and manifestation of Euroscepticism.

The aim of this research is to evaluate Euroscepticism in Finland and in Sweden and to examine its development through the research question "do Finland and Sweden witness a similar path of development from leftist to populist Euroscepticism and are there similar reasons behind this phenomenon". The objective is to improve our understanding of how Euroscepticism has evolved over the years in these countries and to shed light on the apparent transition from left-wing Euroscepticism to populist Euroscepticism. This will be achieved through a comparative analysis of the cases of Finland and Sweden. Attention will be drawn to the development of Euroscepticism in these two countries in order to discover whether similar causes have driven this phenomenon.

The paper is divided into three segments. The first section lays down the theoretical basis of Euroscepticism. The known and widely used theories by Taggart and Szczerbiak, and by Kopecký and Mudde are explored in more detail here in order to provide the foundations for the further study of this phenomenon in the cases of Finland and Sweden. Taggart and Szczerbiak are among the pioneers of the study of Euroscepticism. Their division of Euroscepticism into two separate categories Hard and Soft is among the most used and accepted definitions. The theoretical work by Kopecký and Mudde on the other hand highlights the complex nature of the phenomenon in further detail and brings forth another approach to the study of Euroscepticism. The final part of the first section explores some of the causes behind Euroscepticism. Due to the extent of the phenomenon and the effect of national variation there are no universal causes. Strategy and ideology are identified to contribute to the expression of Euroscepticism by political parties along with opportunity structures and the political parties themselves that contribute to the rise of the phenomenon. This thesis thus places more emphasis on agency rather that structure.

The second section of this thesis explores the cases of Finland and Sweden in more detail. The first half investigates Euroscepticism in these countries in the 1980's and 1990's before the countries joined the European Union in 1995. The second part of the section discusses the present day situation of Euroscepticism by looking at the Sweden Democrats

and the Finns Party: two populist parties that represent the main anti-EU voices in their countries. This gives insight to the development of Euroscepticism from leftist to populist and allows for a comparison between these two cases. An overview of the political scenes of both countries can be found in Appendix 1. and Appendix 2.

The final section focuses on three analytical questions that will provide further insight into the development of Euroscepticism. The first analytical question examines why the political left in Finland and Sweden is no longer engaging in Euroscepticism. This sheds light as to why the traditionally Eurosceptic parties have given up this stance, and potentially can help explain the reasons behind the recent rise of the phenomenon. The second question deals with why Sweden has seen an increase in Euroscepticism even though it is not a part of the common currency. An examination of this question can help explain the role of the common currency on the anti-EU stance. The final analytical question deals with why both the Finns Party and Sweden Democrats are populist. This provides insight to the role of populism in the increase in Euroscepticism.

1 EUROSCEPTICISM AS A CONCEPT

The public's opinion of the European Union has fluctuated throughout the history of the European project. Eurosceptic tendencies among the population have varied across the decades but remained present. Since 1974, information on the public opinion concerning the European project has been gathered in the form of the Standard Eurobarometer surveys. The findings of the barometer indicate that across the years around half the respondents have given their support to the project. A high was reached in 1991 when 72% stated that they saw the European Community as a "good" thing (Standard Eurobarometer 41 1994, i). The citizens' opinions across the European Union have since then been on the decline. Following the Eurocrisis of 2010, Euroscepticism began lifting its head once again as the image of the EU ran an all time low at 30% (Standard Eurobarometer 82 2014, 6).

The following chapters outline the theoretical background of Euroscepticism by examining various known definitions of Euroscepticism and discussing the main causes behind the phenomenon that in recent years has significantly increased its presence in the European Union. Current research has missed the recent transition to populist Euroscepticism, which is transforming the Union, and therefore no theories currently exist on this particular matter. However, this transition will be examined later in this research.

1.1 Defining Euroscepticism

Euroscepticism as a term is rather new, but as a concept it can be seen to have existed since the beginning of the European Union. The establishment of the European Coal and Steel Community in 1951 encountered domestic opposition from all six founding members, although from a small minority of mainly leftist parties (Opposing Europe? 2008a). Similarly, nearly all EU member states have exhibited some degree of opposition to the European Union whether before joining or after. (Taggart and Szczerbiak 2002, 10 – 11) Political parties have also witnessed internal divisions over the question of the European Union, up to the point that

party chairmen have forfeit as in the case of Margaret Thatcher in the United Kingdom (Saukkonen 2004). Domestic opposition even culminated to the extent that it led Norway to withdraw its membership applications in 1972 and again in 1994, after popular referenda.

The increase in the expression of Euroscepticism has contributed to an increase in the study of the phenomenon. The earliest references to the term Eurosceptic can be traced to Great Britain in the mid 1980's. The Oxford English Dictionary that defines a Eurosceptic as " a person who is not enthusiastic about increasing the powers of the European Union" goes on to cite the a June 1986 article in The Times magazine as the first use of the term. (Harmsen and Spiering 2004, 15) However, the term had been used a number of months earlier by the very same magazine in November 1985, then interchangeably with the term "anti-marketeer" (Harmsen and Spiering 2004, 16). From there on, according to Harmsen and Spiering, the term Eurosceptic has been associated with opposition towards participation in the European integration project (ibid).

Although several definitions of Euroscepticism have been put forward since its appearance, a few of them have been widely used among scholars. Among the most used early definitions is that of Paul Taggart. In late 1990's Taggart proposed that Euroscepticism should be regarded as a comprehensive term that "expresses the idea of contingent, or qualified opposition, as well as incorporating outright and unqualified opposition to the process of European integration" (1998: 366). Together with Aleks Szczerbiak the definition was later narrowed down and refined to include two separate categories of Euroscepticism: Hard and Soft (Taggart and Szczerbiak 2001). Hard Euroscepticism is defined to occur:

"where there is a principled opposition to the EU and European integration and therefore can be seen in parties who think that their counties should withdraw from membership, or whose policies towards the EU are tantamount to being opposed to the whole project of European integration as it is currently conceived" (Taggart and Szczerbiak 2001, 5)

A political party is seen to be a Hard Eurosceptic on the basis of two assessment methods. Firstly, a party that is a single-issue anti-EU party is considered a Hard Eurosceptic. This is because a party mobilizing only against the European Union is regarded to be opposed to it in principle. Secondly, if the political party uses language stressing the EU to be "too capitalist/socialist/neo-liberal/bureaucratic" according to the respective ideological view and

pursues a radical revision of the terms of EU membership it is regarded as a Hard Eurosceptic party as it sets conditions to membership that are unattainable, thus representing de facto opposition to the European Union. (Taggart and Szczerbiak 2008a, 7 – 8)

Soft Euroscepticism on the other hand is exhibited as a more moderate approach to anti-EU thought. It is defined to exist:

"where there is NOT a principled objection to European integration or EU membership but where concerns on one (or a number) of policy areas lead to the expression of qualified opposition to the EU, or where there is a sense that 'national interest' is currently at odds with the EU's trajectory." (Taggart and Szczerbiak 2001, 6)

According to Taggart and Szczerbiak, only political parties that use Euroscepticism as a part of their political repertoire can be "meaningfully" classified under this category (2008a, 8). The concern of Soft Eurosceptics is not the whole European Union, but the current development of European Integration that is being pushed forward. This implies that political parties that are in favor of the European Union, but oppose for example further integration are classified as Soft Eurosceptics. (ibid)

Another insightful categorization was put forward shortly after the definition by Taggart and Szczerbiak in the year 2002 by Kopecký and Mudde. They discovered several flaws in the definition of Taggart and Szczerbiak and sought to come up with an alternative that would provide a more precise definition of the term. Kopecký and Mudde regarded the previous definition to draw an interpretation that was so inclusive that "every disagreement with any policy decision of the EU can be included" (2002, 300). In addition, they criticize that the categorization of Hard and Soft is not "subtle" enough to catch the whole variety of nuances of Euroscepticism (ibid). Indeed, the definition set by Taggart and Szczerbiak does present an almost too pessimistic view about the state of Euroscepticism in EU member states, while missing the variety of different expressions of Euroscepticism.

In contrast to Taggart and Szczerbiak, Kopecký and Mudde distinguish between the ideas of European integration and the European Union as the current embodiment of these ideas. This leads to the categorization of "diffuse" and "specific" support for European integration (Kopecký and Mudde 2002, 300). Diffuse support refers to the "support for the general ideas of European integration that underlie the EU (ibid). Specific support on the other hand is the "support for the general practice of European integration; that is, the EU as it

is and as it is developing (ibid).

A division into Europhiles and Europhobes is created by he first dimension, the "support for the ideas of European integration". Europhiles are the people who believe in the idea of European integration regardless how it is realized. Europhobes on the other hand do not provide support for European integration. One reason behind the opposition is an ideological basis that is at odds with the European project. However Kopecký and Mudde (2002, 301) emphasize that most Europhobes do show support to some elements of European cooperation, but that it is the fact that they oppose one or more of the ideas underlying European integration that makes them Europhobes.

The second dimension "support for the European Union" creates a division between EU-optimists and EU-pessimists. EU-optimists are those who support the EU and the way it is progressing. They are either content with the set up and operation of the Union, or they are supportive of the direction and development of the EU. (Kopecký and Mudde 2002, 302). Opposition to a single policy of the EU does not exclude parties from being a EU-optimist, as long as the EU overall at its present state is accepted. Vice versa, EU-pessimists consist of those who do not support the EU in its present state or are pessimistic over its development (ibid). However, EU-pessimists are not necessarily opposed to EU membership per se, but view that that the European Union no longer stands for the founding principles and aims to change it back.

These categorizations put forward by Kopecký and Mudde produce a two by two matrix according to which four different party positions can be identified. (See Figure 1.) The first party position is named Euroenthusiasts. This position that combines both Europhile and EU-enthusiast positions supports the general ideas of the European integration and think that the EU demonstrates or will become to demonstrate these ideas. The second position captured by Kopecký and Mudde is that of Europragmatists. This position combines Europhobe and EU-optimist perspectives and therefore does not support European integration, but however shows support to the EU itself that they regard as positive to their own country. Third are the Eurosceptics. This group by combining Europhile and EU-pessimist positions support European integration, but are concerned over the current or future development of the European Union. The last political position captured by Kopecký and Mudde is that of Eurorejects. This position captures both Europhobe and EU-pessimist views and is thus opposed to European integration and the EU itself. (Kopecký and Mudde 2002, 302-303)

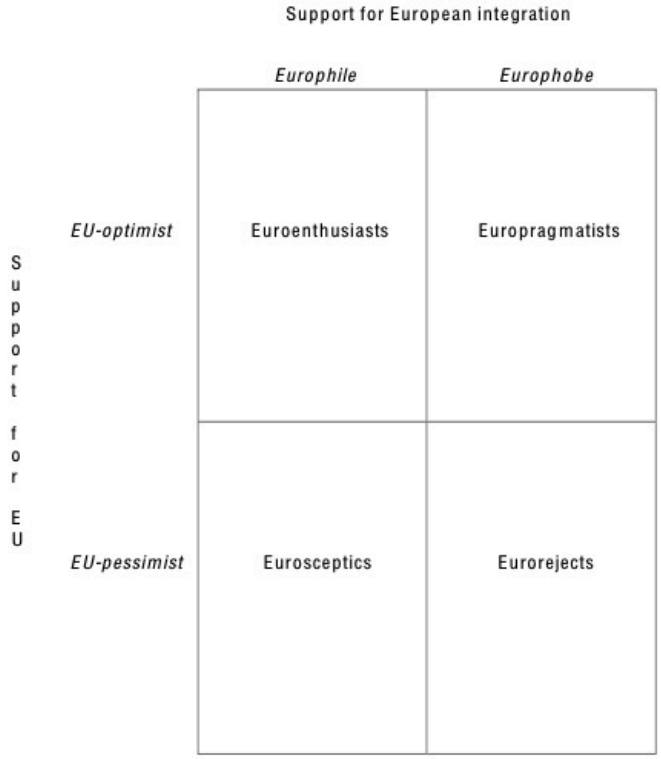

Figure 1. Party position matrix
Source: Kopecký and Mudde 2002, 303

When examining the definitions of Euroscepticism of both Taggart and Szczerbiak and Kopecký and Mudde, an apparent difference arises. As demonstrated in the last paragraph Kopecký and Mudde view Euroscepticism to encompass a critique over the European Union, but simultaneously to be in support of the ideas of European integration. This definition fits in with the category of Soft Euroscepticism by Taggart and Szczerbiak, that represents a critique of a single or many policies of the European Union because they are seen to be at odds with national interests. However, the definition set by Taggart and Szczerbiak also enables Euroscepticism to include a criticism of both the EU and European integration. The definition of Hard Euroscepticism represents principled opposition against both the EU and European integration, and therefore it is synonymous with the definition of Eurorejects by Kopecký and Mudde. Euroscepticism as defined by Taggart and Szczerbiak provides great versatility to the definition through the division into two categories. However, simultaneously it clusters together several different positions that can vary from one another significantly. The definition by Kopecký and Mudde on the other hand provides a very precise interpretation of the term that makes it more comprehensible. On the other hand, the narrow perception of the

term inevitably leads to an inability to fully encompass the extent and variety of the phenomenon.

1.2 Causes of Euroscepticism

Due to the extensity of the phenomenon and the variety of its manifestations, there are several potential causes of Euroscepticism. One potential cause lies in the integration process of the European Union. Euroscepticism began to increase rapidly during and after the debates over the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty. This treaty along with the Single European Act transferred many policy areas from the national governments to the European Union. Between the years 1991 and 1994 the percentage of people thinking that EU membership is a "good thing" dropped by 18 % (Taggart 1997, 5). This indicates a link between further integration and increased public Euroscepticism. One explanation to this is provided by Harmsen and Spiering who claim that European integration brings out "strong, identity-based reactions" in people (2004, 18). Integration that undermines national sovereignty and brings nations closer to one another is regarded as a threat to the very foundation of peoples' identity. The discontent that rose among the people with the Maastricht Treaty in particular provided an opportunity for political parties to gain support using this issue, therefore contributing to Euroscepticism not only among the people, but also within the political institutions.

In addition to the increased integration that caused discontent among the electorate, a cause proposed by Taggart and Szczerbiak is the impact of the institutional environment that provides "opportunity structures" for the emergence of Euroscepticism in party politics. (Taggart and Szczerbiak 2008b, 7) According to them, previous case studies on Euroscepticism seem to indicate that the institutional environment of a country "may play a role in either the exaggeration or the minimization of the European issue" (ibid). Lees (2008b) counters this in his research on the relationship between Institutional setting and Euroscepticism, where he is unable to come up with a causal relationship between the governmental structures and party-based Euroscepticism. Lees states that the political opportunity structures do hold some explanatory power, but it is the political parties themselves that ultimately determine the pattern of Euroscepticism in each country (Lees 2008b, 49).

If it is the political parties that determine the development of Euroscepticism, a potential explanation of the rise of this phenomenon can be induced from the inability or unwillingness of conventional political parties to encompass Eurosceptic tendencies that have arisen among the population. European integration is viewed to have contributed to the increasing uniformity of political parties (Saukkonen 2004). The European Union being an elite project from the beginning has seen little opposition from conventional political parties that have been nurtured within its "protected sphere" (Mair 2013, 154). This has often meant that a EU-critical stance has been underrepresented in politics, and that the electorate has not therefore received representation to their discontent over the EU. This derives from the freezing hypothesis by Lipset and Rokkan (1967) that suggests that political parties form around the existing cleavages in society. However, once the party system is formed, these divides remain frozen into it. As a result new cleavages are not readily addressed since they may cut into the existing party divide and new parties will sooner or later emerge to address this new cleavage. This has been the case in EU member states where new political parties, most often established after joining the EU, have been able to make use of this niche and have adopted Eurosceptic positions. The success of such parties has lately been increasing rapidly, which translates to the rise of Euroscepticism being represented in both domestic and European politics.

Another potential driver of Euroscepticism presented by Taggart and Szczerbiak is the ideological or strategic basis of political parties. Taggart and Szczerbiak (2008b, 9 – 14) present an analysis on whether some types of parties use Euroscepticism more readily in a strategic sense, or if ideology of a party is what predisposes it to Euroscepticism. According to Katz (2008) Euroscepticism more often is displayed on the extremes of politics. This is supported by the findings of Taggart and Szczerbiak in volume 1 (2008a) that Hard Eurosceptic parties generally represented peripheral protest parties, indicating a strong connection to the ideological basis. Sitter and Batory (2008) examined the very same question from the perspective of agrarian parties and what they discovered was that the determining factor for Euroscepticism was not in fact ideology, but strategy. Although ideological factors could predispose parties to Euroscepticism, the political strategy for gathering voters was of greater importance.

When examining the manifestations of Euroscepticism, both strategic and ideological factors emerge. Many of the current Eurosceptic parties represent new, emerging political

parties that may be seen to use Euroscepticism as a strategy to gather voters from among the Eurosceptic electorate that have not received any echo to their anti-EU notions from the already existing conventional parties. On the other hand, ideology can also be seen to contribute to the manifestation of Euroscepticism in political parties. An example of this is for example populist parties that oppose bureaucracy and the dilution of the power of the people. These parties are critical of the European Union already due to its construct as a bureaucratic and technocratic establishment, thus highlighting the influence of ideology on the presence of Euroscepticism.

Despite, or perhaps due to, an increase in academic research on the topic, the theoretical framework of Euroscepticism remains dispersed with various definitions and explanations of the phenomenon. The diversity of causes behind Euroscepticism comes to show the extent of the phenomenon and the effect of national variation on its manifestations. The following chapters will go on to explore the manifestation of Euroscepticism in Finland and Sweden.

2 EUROSCEPTICISM IN FINLAND AND SWEDEN

Finland and Sweden are often perceived as model member states of the European Union. However, the EU membership of both countries was not as straightforward as it may have seemed, but instead was a result of massive transformations in political positions. The following chapters will address the developments of Euroscepticism in Finland and Sweden. The first half will attempt to shed light on the reasons behind the political transformations of previously uniform Eurosceptic countries in the later half of the 20th century into countries applying for membership. The second half of this section will explore the present situation of Euroscepticism in these countries and examine the drivers behind the phenomenon.

2.1 Origins of Euroscepticism in Finland and Sweden

Euroscepticism has deep roots in both Finland and Sweden. Most of the second half of the 20th century both countries stood internally united against further integration. However, the collapse of the Soviet Union at the beginning of the 1990's radically altered the situation of these countries and as a consequence sparked a change in both public and party opinions. In 1995, just a few years after a united front against membership, both Finland and Sweden became members of the European Union.

2.1.1 Finland

In Finland, early Euroscepticism was a result of mainly geopolitical reasons. From 1948 to 1992 the Agreement of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance (YYA treaty) between Finland and the Soviet Union formed the cornerstone of Finnish Foreign Policy. During the Cold War, the USSR wanted to ensure Finland's sympathies and to secure Finland as a part of its defense policy (Helminen *s.a.*). The YYA treaty that underscored Finnish neutrality tied Finland closely both politically and economically to the Soviet Union. For

decades Finland held a Eurosceptic position "due to its proximity to the USSR and the pressure in this regard" (Jensen and Nedergaard 2015, 145).

Throughout the second half of the 20th century, Finland balanced between belonging to the west and avoiding upsetting the Soviet Union. According to Jensen and Nedergaard Finland "had to strike a balance in order to avoid offending the USSR" (2015, 146). In 1961 Finland was able to become an associate member of the European Free Trade Association that allowed it to enjoy the benefits of the economic area without actually being a member (Suomen tie … *s.a.*). However, this was among the very few steps Finland took towards furthering integration during this time period.

The events of the early 1990's induced a change in the Finnish position. The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 "released the diplomatic shackles on neutral Finland" (Miles 2015, 26) and within a few years time, in 1994, Finland applied for EU membership. The political field in particular saw a massive transformation. Prior to the collapse of the USSR, the European Union was of little significance to the Finnish political parties with all parties standing against further integration (Saukkonen 2004). However, already in 1991 several parties changed their stance and began to advocate for applying for EU membership. Among the first parties to switch camps was the National Coalition Party (*Kokoomus*). Although the party places high value on conservative ideology, such as national sovereignty, the elite and supporters of the party ranked connections to the west and economic benefits higher, and nearly uniformly voted in favor of membership (Raunio 2008, 175).

In addition to the National Coalition, in 1991 two other parties also switched from an anti-EU to pro-EU stance. The change was largely driven not only by the shifts in geopolitics but also by the deteriorating economic situation. Finland had been reliant on trade with the Soviet Union, and its collapse contributed to the beginning of a major recession. This became a "'push' factor" for popular and consequently political support for EU membership (Miles 2015, 26). The smaller Swedish People's Party (*Suomen ruotsalainen kansanpuolue*) in Finland switched opinions following the decision of the National Coalition, but voters of the party remained divided along the urban-rural split up to the referendum in 1994 (Raunio 2008, 175). Another party following the example of the National Coalition and switching sides and adopting a pro-membership position was the Social Democratic Party (*Sosialidemokraattinen puolue*). A small faction of the party maintained a Eurosceptic

position but remained unorganized, and in the end the party and a clear majority of its voters voted in favor of membership. (Wikman 2014, 3; Raunio 2008, 174)

The case of the Center Party (*Keskusta*) is an interesting one, and differs from those of other parties. At the end of the 1980's and even at the beginning of the 90's, the party was a strong opponent of further integration due to questions over agriculture. In the party program of 1989 the party stated that:

"Finland must solve its relation with integration from a national basis. The membership of a neutral Finland in the EC will not in any case come into question."[1] (Suomen Keskustan … 1989, point 160)

However, in 1992 the Finnish government headed by the Center Party applied for EU membership. According to Raunio the party "was a key player in making the decision to apply for membership" (2008, 173). Despite leading Finland towards EU membership, the party was nowhere united over the matter. In fact, only in June 1994, after the party chairman and Finnish Prime Minister Esko Aho threatened to resign, did the party congress decide to support the membership (ibid.). Nevertheless, despite the change in the official position party supporters maintained a sceptical position towards integration with only 36% voting in favor of membership (ibid; Saukkonen 2004).

In the final decisive vote on November 18th, 1994, the Finnish political field was divided into two camps. After the collapse of the USSR in 1991 many parties had changed their anti-EU stance from opposing further integration to advocating for becoming a European Union member state. However, four out of nine political parties maintained a Eurosceptic stance even up to the final voting on November 1994 (see Table 1.).

[1] "Suomen on ratkaistava suhteensa yhdentymiseen kansalliselta pohjalta. Puolueettoman Suomen jäsenyys EY:ssä ei tule missään tapauksessa kysymykseen."

Table 1. Finnish party positions according to the 1994 vote on EU membership

Parties for EU membership	Parties against EU membership
National Coalition Party	Left Alliance
Center Party	Green Party
Social Democratic Party	Christian Democratic Party
Swedish People's Party of Finland	Countryside Party
Liberal Party	

Source: Wikman 2014, 3

The reasons behind opposition to membership came down to mainly issues of sovereignty and nature. The largest opposing party, the Left Alliance (*Vasemmistoliitto*), held concerns over national sovereignty. Although the party never adopted an official position on the matter (Saukkonen 2004) their party program from year 1990 claimed that:

"Finns must solve their position on European integration. Essential conditions of integration are securing Finnish parliamentary decision-making, sovereign foreign and security politics and protecting national property. Especially important is maintaining and protecting the development of the social security system, labor legislation and national culture." [2] (Vasemmistoliiton ohjelma 1990)

The concerns of the Leftist Party remained unresolved in the membership negotiations, which translated in the party becoming the largest opposing party in the final voting with 17 out of 19 representatives voting against membership (Wikman 2014, 4). In addition, the opposition among the supporters of the party remained high as merely 24% voted in favor of membership in the advisory referendum (Saukkonen 2004).

Similarly, concerns over sovereignty were also expressed by the smallest, but perhaps the most combative of the opposing parties. In the summer of 1994, the Finnish Countryside Party (*Maaseudun puolue*) resigned from government due to the government's pro-membership position (Saukkonen 2004). The party did not "accept any other state interfering in our country's [Finland's] internal matters (Suomen Maaseutupuolueen … 1992). Similarly, also the Christian Democratic Party adopted an official "No" stance to EU membership and spoke against membership even on the day of the final vote on the 18th of November 1994.

[2] "Suomalaisten on selvitettävä kantansa Euroopan integraatioon. Yhdentymisen olennaisia reunaehtoja ovat suomalaisen parlamentaarisen päätösvallan turvaaminen, suvereeni ulko- ja turvallisuuspolitiikka ja kansallisomaisuuden suojaaminen. Erityisen tärkeätä on sosiaaliturvajärjestelmän, työlainsäädännön ja muiden hyvinvointivaltion rakenteiden sekä kansallisen kulttuurin säilyttäminen ja näiden kehityksen turvaaminen."

The party's parliamentary group stated that "giving up independent trade, regional, agricultural, foreign, security and financial politics is in our opinion such a great loss, that the benefits of membership mentioned earlier no where near replace them" (Kallis 1994). The party viewed that Finland already enjoyed all the benefits as a member of the EEA agreement and in the voting seven out of eight members voted against the membership (Wikman 2014, 5).

For the Green Party (*Vihreä liitto*) that became the second largest opposing party, scepticism stemmed from a concern over the environment. The Greens highlighted that EU membership should not be bought like a "pig in a poke" (Vihreän Liiton … 1990). The party viewed that the development patterns of the European Union contradicted their green ideology and Finnish membership would "not come into question in any circumstance" (ibid.). Like the Leftist Alliance, the Green Party did not have an official party position (Raunio 2008, 170). Nevertheless, in the final vote of November 1994 all ten representatives voted against membership (Wikman 2014, 4).

Despite its long and united Eurosceptic position, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the beginning of an economic recession marked a change in Finland's position. However, four parties and 43.1% of the population maintained an anti-EU stance. Reasons behind the scepticism were concerns over the supranational nature of the Union and its effects on national sovereignty as well as apprehension towards the environmental effects of the Union.

2.1.2 Sweden

Similar to the Finnish case, early Euroscepticism in Sweden was driven mainly because of geopolitical reasons. Sweden had maintained a position of neutrality throughout both World Wars and sought to maintain it. In the 1960's Sweden requested for associate membership of the EC with neutrality reservations. However, negotiations broke off due to Sweden's concerns over surrendering national sovereignty to the supranational EEC that was seen vital in maintaining the "predictability and credibility of Sweden's 'active neutrality' security policy (Miles 2015, 23).

In the following decades advancements towards the EC hit a wall due to very same reasons. In 1987, the Swedish government headed by the Social Democratic party (*Socialdemokraterna*) issued a bill in which it maintained that obstacles to the membership of the European Community were still valid, but that "it had become necessary to take an

initiative to participate in the process." (Gustavsson 1998, 59) The Communist Party, nowadays known as the Left Party (*Vänsterpartiet*), rejected the bill claiming that it "would take Sweden too close to the Western military bloc". The Center Party (*Centerpartiet*) supported the government bill and also opposed membership on the basis of Sweden's neutrality policy. The Moderate Party and the Liberal Party (*Moderaterna* and *Folkpartiet*) on the other hand took a more open stance towards integration. Both parties called for a future option to join the EC. The Conservative Party rejected the bill as it did not want to rule out the accession in advance, while the Liberal Party, although supporting the bill, added that in the long perspective it could be possible to combine both neutrality and EC membership. (ibid)

Much like in the case of Finland, the fall of the Soviet Union generated a change in the Swedish position and its political field. Gustavsson states that "[a]lthough it was never officially admitted, the Soviet Union and its satellite states within the Warsaw Pact were viewed as the sole threat to the country's territorial integrity" (1998, 74). Thus, when the Soviet Union fell, the neutrality position that had been regarded vital for Sweden was no longer a priority. In addition, the decline of trade with the former Soviet Union contributed to the onset of an economic recession, which in turn became a an "important 'push' factor in the popular support for EU membership" (Miles 2015, 26). And on October 26th, 1990 the Swedish government made a complete reorientation in its policy and announced that it would pursue EC membership.

The statement that ended the unanimous Eurosceptic position of the Swedish government after more than three decades marked a significant change in party positions over the matter. The transformation in party positions had already begun in the 1980's when the Conservative Party and the Liberal Party had adopted more pro-EU stances. However, it was only in the 1990's after the Soviet Union began to disintegrate that the majority of the political elite, such as the Center Party, as well as the electorate began to express their support to the Union.

The most radical perhaps of the position swaps was that of the governing party's, the Social Democrats. At the end of the 1980's the party had abstained from any advancements towards the EC on the grounds of maintaining neutrality. Even in May 1990, a few months prior to the decision to apply for membership, the Social Democratic Party Chairman and Prime Minister Carlsson published an article in the Swedish newspaper *Dagens Nyheter* that

was largely interpreted as an opposing statement to future membership (Gustavsson 1998, 64). By September the Social Democrats had adopted a more open attitude towards EC membership stating that "[a]n EEA Treaty does not exclude a future Swedish membership, if this should prove possible and desirable. This will be determined. . . by the development of the security situation in the world around us and how the EC's present members choose to develop their cooperation on foreign and security policy" (Protokoll från Socialdemokraternas congress 1990 cited in Gustavsson 1998, 65). But, even then, the party did not see membership to be a question of the imminent future (ibid.). However, the deteriorating economic situation of Sweden that had led to cuts in several social security benefits and led to an all time low in support figures for the Social Democrats led the government on the 26th of October 1990 to state that it was pursuing EC membership (Gustavsson 1998, 63).

Despite that the Swedish government with the Social Democrats in the lead began pursuing membership, the political field as well as the citizens remained divided. In the advisory referendum 53.2% were in favor whilst 46.8% opposed, resulting in a margin of merely 5.5% (Aylott 2008, 184). Similarly the political field was also divided into parties in support of membership and against membership (see Table 2.).

Table 2. Official Swedish party positions on EU membership in 1994

Parties For EU Membership	**Parties Against EU Membership**
Center Party	Left Party
Liberal Party	Green Party
Social Democratic Party	
Christian Democrats	
Moderate Party	

However, the membership question gave rise to cleavages within parties as well. In the Social Democrats an organized Eurosceptic faction, Social Democrats Against the EC emerged in 1993 prior to the referendum. The faction views that "Social democracy that was the main force for the establishment of democracy in our country [Sweden], should work to bring back power from the EU. This is the policy that best benefits the country's employees"[3] (Om oss *s.a.*). Similarly, Eurosceptic factions emerged within the Center Party and the Christian Democrats. The Center No to the EU and the Christian Democrats for an

[3] "Socialdemokratin som var huvudkraften för införandet av demokrati i vårt land, bör arbeta för att rulla tillbaka makten från EU. Detta är den politik som bäst gynnar landets löntagare."

Alternative EU Policy represented party members with sceptical positions that went beyond the parties' official stances (Aylott 2008, 185).

The opposing parties and the emergence of opposing factions within supporting parties, were not enough to counter the geopolitical changes that took effect in Europe. Must like in the case of Finland, the change in the neutrality policy and the onset of an economic recession swept over concerns regarding security and sovereignty, and significantly contributed to a shift in the political and popular position on EU membership. In effect, in January 1995, Sweden joined the EU together with Finland and Austria.

2.2 Euroscepticism in Finland and Sweden in the year 2015

After a long history of Euroscepticism, Finland and Sweden performed a U-turn in the eyes of most regarding their position on the EU. According to Miles both Finland and Sweden are often perceived in Europe as the "good Europeans" (2015, 20). But this perception is somewhat misleading. The countries did experience a reduction in political Euroscepticism following membership, but the last few years have marked a rise of a new populist Eurosceptic party to the parliaments of both countries. This has significantly contributed to the reemergence of a strong Eurosceptic voice in Finland and Sweden.

2.2.1 Finland

In the year 2008 an expert on the Finnish case wrote that "[t]he 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." (Raunio 2008, 171) However, only three years later in the parliamentary elections of 2011, the existing parties suffered major vote losses to a rapidly rising Eurosceptic party, the Finns Party (Perussuomalaiset in Finnish). Overnight the Finns Party became the third largest party in Finland and the only Eurosceptic political party in the Finnish parliament.

For a long time, Euroscepticism seemed to have disappeared from the political scene in Finland. The number of Eurosceptic MPs was on the decline, Eurosceptic parties and movements remained marginal, and Finland spoke "with one voice" in the EU (Raunio 2008, 169, 171 and 179). Parties that at the beginning of the 1990's had taken an anti-EU stance had during the years of membership either changed their position, such as the Green Party, or

come to accept the EU, as in the case of the Left Alliance. (Saukkonen 2004) According to Raunio the consensus seeking style of politics performed in Finland enhances "inter-party cooperation" and "produces an ideological convergence about Europe and defuses competition between parties over European integration" (Raunio 2008, 198-169). For years this mechanism facilitated a united pro-European front that was a model example of Taggart's hypothesis that "there is very little relationship between levels of Euroscepticism and electoral support for Eurosceptical parties" (Taggart 1998, 373). However, in 2011 this hypothesis, for the Finnish case at least, ceased to hold true as the high levels of Euroscepticism among the population transformed into massive support for a Eurosceptic political party.

The Finns Party was founded in 1995 following the dissolving of the populist/rural Countryside Party. Up until 2011, the party remained a marginal party. In its first parliamentary elections the party gained 1% of the votes, and in the following two parliamentary elections support remained under 5%. Even though the party gained seats in parliament, the success was meager. However, the situation changed massively in the 2011 Finnish parliamentary elections when the party increased its support nearly five fold. Since then the party has been able to maintain its position as a major political contender as in the parliamentary elections of 2015 the party became the second largest party in Finland after the Center Party with 38 seats. (see Table 3.)

Table 3. Finns Party parliamentary election results

Election Year	% of votes	Number of seats out of 200
1999	1.0	2
2003	1.6	3
2007	4.1	7
2011	19.1	39
2015	17.7	38

Source: Wikman 2015, 11; Nykyiset kansanedustajat *s.a.*

With the elections of 2011, Euroscepticism reemerged on the Finnish political scene. Despite remaining in the opposition, the Finns Party has to some extent altered the highly united pro-EU front of Finland. The party has not hesitated to question decisions made by the EU, such as the bailout policy and the integration process (The EU Parliament … 2014). Since the 2011 elections other parliamentary parties have also begun to express concerns over measures taken by the EU. The Social Democratic former Minister of Finance Jutta

Urpilainen took a carefully critical stance over the bailout packages to Greece by demanding guarantees for the Finnish installments and later making statements that financial discipline in the EU should be maintained and that no loans should be forgiven (Niemeläinen 2013; Rajamäki 2014). In addition, concerns over the EU sanctions against Russia have also sparked criticism from parties other than the Finns Party. The Social Democratic Minister of Foreign Affairs Erkki Tuomioja openly opposed the sanctions by registering his opposing position in the council meeting towards the second round of sanctions in 2014 due to their effect on the Finnish economy. This caused the Prime Minister to intervene and overrule Tuomioja's position signaling a deterioration of a united front (Milne and Spiegel 2014).

The Economic situation is currently one of the major reasons behind Finnish Euroscepticism. In the 1990's, economic benefits played a major role in Finland becoming a member state. However, twenty years later the very same reason that helped Finland become a member state has turned into a Eurosceptic force. In the Standard Eurobarometer of Fall 2014, the Finnish view of the Finnish and European economy was rather pessimistic. Up to 57% of respondents states that the "worst was still to come" regarding the economic crisis. In addition, 77% viewed the situation of the Finnish economy to be "bad" (Standard Eurobarometer… 2014, 18 and 21).

Public concerns regarding the effects of the European Union on the economy have been echoed by the Finns Party. The party has taken a strong opposing position towards any type of 'common fiscal responsibility', and has been the "only party that has been – from the first Greek bailout package onwards – consistently against such policies (The EU Parliament … 2014, 4). The Eurocrisis that begun in 2010 has had a significant effect on the Finnish economy. The Finnish PPP per Capita GDP relative to Germany fell 9.1% between the years 2007 and 2013, which gives an indication of the effect of the economic crisis on the Finnish economy. (The Conference Board … 2014) The stagnating economy combined with providing financial assistance to member states with "loose and sloppy economic management" (The EU Parliament … 2014, 4) has led to a sense of discontent among the electorate and consequently fueled the success of the Eurosceptic Finns Party.

Another driver of Euroscepticism in Finland in 2015 is the set up of the European Union and the developments on this front. The EU is regarded as an overly bureaucratic organization that has reduced the sovereignty of Finland. In the Standard Eurobarometer of Fall 2014, 47% of Finnish respondents regarded the EU as too bureaucratic when the EU 28

average was at only 36% (Standard Eurobarometri… 2014, 7). The bureaucratic nature of the EU has also been criticized by the Finns Party. The party views that the "present EU suffers definite deficiency of democracy and its interminable bureaucracy often creates more problems than it solves." (The EU parliament … 2014, 5) The party also raises concerns over the integration developments that it sees to have taken decision-making power away from Finland consequently diminishing national sovereignty. The Finns Party aims at taking back power from the EU and transferring it back to the member states on the basis that "[i]t's foolish to think that far-away Brussels or other member states will know and/or understand better than Finland's own parliament, what is the best legislation for Finland." (The EU Parliament … 2014, 4)

The Finns Party has within the last years come to represent the largest Eurosceptic voice in Finnish politics. The party can be regarded to represent many of the concerns held by the Finnish population towards the European Union in a highly critical manner. However, when examined through the categorization set by Taggart and Szczerbiak in 2001, the Finns Party classifies as a 'Soft' Eurosceptic with 'Hard' tendencies. The party is "not opposed to the EU but for its development and reform" (The EU Parliament … 2014, 2). It seeks to scrutinize its policies and support reform processes, but does not pursue the immediate withdrawal of Finland from the EU or the Eurozone (ibid.). Nevertheless, the Finns Party wants to maintain the option of withdrawal if Finland "feels that it is accruing more damages than benefits" (ibid.). This pushes the party towards the 'Hard' Eurosceptics in a spectrum between the two poles of Euroscepticism.

When examined through the categorizations by Kopecký and Mudde (2002) the Finns Party falls under the categorization of Eurosceptics. The party supports European integration as they see that it brings economic benefits to Finland, but it is concerned over current and future developments of the EU that the party views are transforming the Union towards a federal state. The categorization provides perhaps a more accurate description of the Finns Party's position as a Eurosceptic party. It is not outright opposed to cooperation on a European level, but instead holds reservations and concerns over the development of the European Union. Nevertheless, regardless of the categorization the Finns Party have in the last years come to represent the most prominent Eurosceptics in Finnish politics.

2.2.2 Sweden

Since Sweden became a member of the European Union in 1995, for many years Euroscepticism was on the decline. After years of membership "Swedes had simply got used to being in the EU, and saw departure as increasingly unrealistic." (Aylott 2008, 191) Electoral opposition figures towards the EU were on the decline and parties changed their positions on the EU. (Aylott 2008, 192) The Green Party for example changed its stance before the 2009 EU Parliament elections in a more pro-EU direction in support of membership (Jensen 2015, 89). Throughout the years the impact and influence of Euroscepticism decreased, and Sweden appeared more united in its position towards the European Union.

It must be noted however, that some of the conventional parties have maintained their Eurosceptic positions. The Left Party continues to be an "opponent to the EU" (EU *s.a.*) by openly opposing joining the Eurozone and criticizing the EU for a lack of democracy. The party can and has been categorized by the definition of Taggart and Szczerbiak (2002) as a 'Hard' Eurosceptic party as it has a "long term goal that Sweden should leave the EU" (ibid.). In contrast, based on the categorization of Kopecký and Mudde (2002), the party sits in the position of the Eurorejects: it opposes both European Integration as well as the EU itself. Despite its categorization as a hard liner, the party states that it "respects the result of the referendum" indicating an acceptance to a degree of Sweden's EU membership (ibid.). In addition, the party support has remained relatively modest at around five percent of the votes, after a high of 12% in 1998, meaning that the party does not represent a loud Eurosceptic voice in Swedish politics (Historical statistics of elections 1910 – 2014 *s.a.*).

Another party that is often, mistakenly even, regarded a Eurosceptic is the Center Party. Although the party supported EU membership back in 1994, the party adopted a more skeptical position towards the European Monetary Union (EMU) in 2002 (Aylott 2008, 184). The party in its own words thinks that the "EU and cooperation there is good" but that "we continue to say no to that Sweden will adopt the Euro" (Europa *s.a.*). According to the categorizations of Taggart and Szczerbiak (2001) the Center Party can be seen as a 'Soft' Eurosceptic: it criticizes an aspect of the EU, but still supports it. However, based on this categorization in the case of Sweden that made the decision to stay out of the EMU, most parties could be regarded as Eurosceptics. The categorization by Kopecký and Mudde therefore provides perhaps a more accurate description of the party by placing it among

Europragmatists. The Center party opposes further integration in the form of the EMU, but is not opposed to the Union itself.

A reason behind the prevalence of a relative degree of Euroscepticism in Swedish politics during the period after 1994 can be traced to the functioning of the Swedish political system. In the case of Finland the decrease of Eurosceptisicm until the year 2011 was attributed to the consensus type of politics performed in Finland. However, in Sweden the bloc politics that categorizes parties into two separate groups of allied parties have been regarded to have decreased the incentives to change party positions as eagerly and therefore maintained a level of Euroscepticism in Swedish politics. According to Aylott "[t]his [bloc politics] blunted the incentives for congenitally Eurosceptical parties to tone down their views in order to promote their suitability for governing coalitions." (2008, 197)

However, even though Euroscepticism remained in Swedish politics, its importance and manifestation had begun to decrease. That was until the Swedish parliamentary elections of 2014. In September 2014, the Sweden Democrats (*Sverigedemokraterna*), a Eurosceptic populist party, emerged as a major political player. Much similar to the Finns Party in the year 2011, the Sweden Democrats rose overnight to become the third largest political party in its country. The party had roots going back to 1988 when it was founded as an "interest party for Swedes" with connections to nationalist and racist movements such as "Bevara Sverige Svenskt" (Stiernstedt 2011). Despite a clean up in the party's image in the mid 1990's, the party remained marginal for years. It was only in the 2010 parliamentary elections that the party was able to gain its first seats in the Swedish parliament, the Riksdag, by breaking the four percent line required for representation. The success continued in the following election four years later when the party took the political field by surprise by becoming the third largest party in Riksdag with 12.9% of the votes. (see Table 4.)

Table 4. Sweden Democrats parliamentary election success

Election Year	% of votes	No. of seats (out of 349)
1998	0.4	0
2002	1.4	0
2006	2.9	0
2010	5.7	20
2014	12.9	49

Source: Historical statistics of elections 1910 – 2014 *s.a.*

The Sweden Democrats is currently the loudest Eurosceptic voice in Swedish politics. It can be categorized to lean towards the 'Hard' Eurosceptics as the party aims at renegotiating Sweden's position in the EU to that of the EEA. In the European Parliamentary elections of 2014, the party claimed to be the "only real EU-critical party in this election" (Mindre EU mer Sverige! 2014, 3). The roots of Sweden Democrats' Euroscepticism can be traced to its nationalistic roots as well as to its populist nature. Primarily, the party safeguards Swedish national sovereignty and opposes the centralization of power away from Sweden. It has criticized other parties from transferring powers to Brussels: "[d]espite promises to the contrary voters of other parties in Riksdag, including the Left Party and the Green Party, nearly every month pass through proposals that further transfer power to Brussels"[4] (Mindre EU mer Sverige! 2014, 3). The Sweden Democrats have raised concerns over the integration developments of the EU that especially through the Lisbon Treaty of 2009 "gave up self-determination in 68 different areas" (Minder EU mer Sverige! 2014, 4). In the party's eyes this decision was not approved by the Swedish population, and thus it seeks to hold a new referendum on EU membership "about whether Sweden should return to national self-determination or remain as a member in the supranational union"[5] (ibid.).

Much like in the case of Finland, economic concerns are partly driving Euroscepticism in Sweden. The Sweden Democrats, like most other Swedish parties see that the decision to stay away form the monetary union was a wise decision economically. The party states that the reason behind Sweden's sound financial situation is due to its ability to pursue an independent monetary policy (Vår politik A till Ö *s.a.*). The Sweden Democrats also calls for a decrease in the EU-budget and in Swedish contributions stating that they are too high. The party claims that between the years 1995 and 2014, Swedish contributions to the EU have increased by 26 billion kronor, corresponding to approximately 3.1 billion euros (Mindre EU mer Sverige! 2014, 4). The party sees that the money paid to the EU are partly lost in the EU and the rest often used in inefficient ways. In the eyes of the Sweden Democrats, the mosey

[4] "Trots utfästelser om motsatsen röstar de övriga partierna i riksdagen, inclusive Vänsterpartiet och Miljöpartiet, nästan varje månad igenom förslag som innebär ytterligare maktöverföring till Bryssel."

[5] "Sverigedemokraterna vill omförhandla EU-medlemskapet följt av en folkomröstning där det svenska folket får säga sin mening kring huruvida Sverige skall återgå till nationellt självbestämmande eller kvarstå som medlem i den överstatliga unionen."

would be wiser spent on the Swedish welfare (ibid.)

In addition, EU critique has been driven by threats to national security. Several aspects of the European Union have been seen by the Sweden Democrats to threaten Sweden and its population. Especially the loose border control and free movement of people within the EU have been a source of criticism. The party claims that the free movement of people has generated trans border criminality, weapons and drug smuggling, terrorism, human trafficking and organized begging (Mindre EU mer Sverige! 2014, 5). The party has thus aimed for stricter border control and the possibility to implement the use of visas for citizens of countries that "do not take responsibility for their people and countries where citizens have the tendency of abusing the basic idea of the freedom of movement" (ibid.).

Overall, when compared with one another the cases of Finland and Sweden resemble closely one another. Both countries witnessed a close run referendum with shifts in party positions ahead of EU membership in 1994. In addition both Finland and Sweden have over the last few years seen the emerge of a new Eurosceptic party into parliament as the third largest political party in the country. As demonstrated by the previous chapters, although the Finns Party and the Sweden Democrats slightly differ in terms of their categorization of Euroscepticism, with the former seen as a 'Soft' and the latter a 'Hard' Eurosceptic, the parties share common goals, a similar ideological basis and pursues similar interests in both countries.

3 A TRANSITION FROM LEFTIST TO POPULIST EUROSCEPTICISM

Since entering the European Union both Finland and Sweden have witnessed a change in the nature of Eurosceptic parties. When in the past Euroscepticism in these countries was associated strongly with the political left, today Euroscepticism is increasingly becoming connected with populism. The following chapters will focus on three analytical questions that will provide insight to the developments of Euroscepticism in Finland and Sweden. The first chapter will focus on the question why the political left has to a large extent withdrawn from Euroscepticism. The second chapter will shed light to why Euroscepticism has been on the rise in Sweden even though it is not a part of the Eurozone. And the final chapter will examine the reasons behind populist Euroscepticism in the cases of the Finns Party and the Sweden Democrats.

3.1 Why has the influence of left-wing Euroscepticism decreased in both Finland and Sweden

Traditionally it has been the left-wing parties that have represented Euroscepticism in both Finland and Sweden. However, within the last years a transition has occurred and the political left has increasingly disengaged from representing the anti-EU position in their countries. For decades it was the parties such as the Social Democrats as well as the Left Alliance and Left Party that drove Euroscepticism in Finland and Sweden. The EU criticism by these parties has significantly diminished over the years, and new parties from the political center have taken their place as the Eurosceptic voices in their countries.

Several potential reasons for this transition prevail. One of them is the notion that the Nordic welfare models were no longer seen as superior to the EU. For a long time these countries were concerned that closer relations with Europe "may impinge on and undermine particular forms of welfare capitalism, generous Nordic welfare state provision and even varieties of so-called Nordic models" (Miles 2015, 16). Especially in Sweden debates in the

later half of the 20th century until the 1990's focused on the negative impacts that integration would create on the welfare state. In a speech given by the Social Democratic Swedish Prime Minister in 1961, attention was drawn to the implications of submitting to supranational decision making. The Prime Minister argued that pursuing more radical policies as Sweden had done "would not have been possible if Sweden at that point had been bound by the kind of restrictions of sovereignty that the Treaty of Rome entailed" (Gustavsson 1998, 42). The Social Democratic Swedish government feared that in the EEC, the country would not have been able to continue its social reforms that were at the foundation of the welfare system (ibid.).

However, coming into the 1990's perceptions began to shift. Sweden had for several years witnessed high inflation and an overheated labor market indicating the beginning of a massive economic recession (Gustavsson 1998, 63). In an "attempt to come to terms with the economic developments" the Social Democratic government was forced to make cutbacks to the welfare system and postpone several promised social reforms (ibid.). Through the cuts it became harder to argue that the EU would pose a significant threat to the Swedish social model. In effect the importance of the Swedish welfare state decreased in the eyes of the political left as more important and immediate factors received priority.

At the onset of a major recession, economic benefits of EU membership took a major role in both Finland and Sweden. For Finland, concerns over the social welfare model were never as important as they were for Sweden since Finland caught up to the other Nordic states in terms of social welfare only in the 1970's and 80's (Kuisma and Nygård 2015, 160). Instead economic factors can be seen to have contributed to the transformation of the formerly Eurosceptic position of left-wing parties. According to Jensen and Nedergaard "economic interests are a very important factor, often determining their [Nordic countries'] relationship to the EU's Single Market, especially if other factors have been eliminated" (2015, 150). The collapse of the Soviet Union caused a major decline in trade between Finland and former USSR and contributed to the beginning of the economic recession (Miles 2015, 26). In the midst of a poor economic situation EU membership was seen to provide economic benefits, and thus the Social Democrats adopted a pro-EU stance after decades of scepticism.

Similarly, economic factors have contributed to the decline of Euroscepticism also among the Swedish political left. After signing the EFTA agreement in 1972 the European question nearly vanished from Swedish politics. However, the pursuit of a Single Market that

would remove all barriers of trade reopened the question over membership. The EC had become Sweden's largest trading partner and fears arose that the Single Market would "reintroduce an element of discrimination against Sweden" (Gustavsson 1998, 55 and 58). Sweden was eager to gain influence over the economic policies that it would consequently have to follow as a part of the EEA agreement (Jensen and Nedergaard 2015, 150). In addition, as in the case of Finland, Sweden was faced with a difficult economic recession. This according to Miles "became a push factor in the popular support for EU membership" (2015, 26) and the consequent political shift among the leftist parties of Sweden.

The geopolitical transition that took place in 1991 with the collapse of the Soviet Union provides another, perhaps even greater, reason for the decline of leftist opposition towards the EU. Until the beginning of the 1990's both Finland and Sweden remained outside of the integration process mainly on the grounds of geopolitical reasons. Since signing the Agreement of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance (YYA treaty) with the USSR in 1948, Finland entered a period of Finlandization during which all decisions were carefully assessed in terms of maintaining good relations with the Soviet Union (Miles 2015, 24; Jensen and Nedergaard 2015, 146). Excessive cooperation with the West was seen detrimental for Finland, and thus Finland retained neutrality. The Social Democrats for example saw relations with the Soviet Union as the "cornerstone" of Finnish security and stable international position (Ulkopoliittinen asiakirja 1987). However, in the 1990's as the Soviet Union began disintegrating, this position changed and the party began pursuing EU membership thus decreasing the influence of the Eurosceptic political left.

The situation for Sweden was similar. Sweden had for decades pursued a policy of neutrality, "which made it shy away from the Community" (Jensen and Nedergaard 2015, 145). Sweden had multiple times attempted to balance its active neutrality policy and attaining economic benefits (Gustavsson 1998, 59). With the collapse of the USSR the Swedish economic situation began deteriorating rapidly and the country entered recession. The Swedish Social Democratic government adhered to their Eurosceptic position despite the ongoing heated public discussion on the matter, until in October 1990 only months after their last statement against membership, the government decided to apply for membership (Gustavsson 1998, 66).

A final reason for the decline of left-wing Euroscepticism in Finland and Sweden can be found from the work of Mair (2013). According to Mair the European Union should be

seen “as a political system that has been constructed by national political leaders as a protected sphere in which policy-making can evade the constraints imposed by representative democracy” (2013, 154). This implies that the EU serves as a safe haven for political parties offering protection from domestic voters. Parties that have in the past been Eurosceptic, such as the left-wing parties may have taken refuge in the EU and cast aside their critical positions. Mair states that “parties that contest elections, particularly at national level, have seemed to want to leave this [European issue] in the shadows” (2013, 168). With the protection of the Union, left-wing parties have therefore been able to withdraw from representing the Eurosceptic voice in their countries without major losses.

3.2 Why is there a rise in Euroscepticism in Sweden even though it is not a member of the Eurozone

The ongoing difficulties within the Eurozone have naturally resulted in critique towards the handling of the crisis and the consequent rise of Euroscepticism, especially among members of the common currency. Eurozone membership and the subsequent effects of the Eurocrisis are among the most prominent drivers of Euroscepticism in Finland. “Finnish citizens might complain, with some justification, that the EMU was described in 1994 as an open issue and uncertain prospect, whereas in 1997 it was depicted as a *fait accompli*, a commitment already made.” (Korkman 2015, 179) The Finns Party, and its supporters, criticize the Euro to be a “non-functional currency” with “unclear benefits” (The EU Parliament … 2014, 5). Since the outbreak of the Eurocrisis in 2010, Finland has witnessed a deterioration in its economic situation. Korkman points out that “Finland has indeed been hit by a significant asymmetric shock in recent years” resulting in decreases in exports, investment and output (2015, 182). Whether or not this is a direct consequence of EMU membership is unclear, but the constraints of a European wide monetary policy have hindered the ability respond rapidly to the situation (Korkman 2015, 183). The Finns Party is therefore “ready to consider taking initiatives for disengagement from the Euro if for example bailout packages become a permanent part of the scene or if the Eurozone moves into a federal state type of environment with common debt or if centralized budgetary management becomes excessive.” (ibid.) The fact that the success of the Finns Party coincided with the outbreak of the Eurocrisis indicates a link between the manifestation of Euroscepticism and

the Eurocrisis.

In the case of non-EMU members, such as Sweden, a direct link between the rise of Euroscepticism and the effects of the common currency is naturally absent. Sweden has not had to deal with the managing of the crisis and has avoided contributing to the ever so unpopular bailout packages. However, although Sweden has remained out of the Euro, the ongoing Eurocrisis has still had an effect on Sweden and thus contributed to the rise of Euroscepticism in the country. One of these effects is the intensifying integration process. The neofunctionalist integration theory by Jensen (2013) suggests that "each step towards further integration creates new tensions, thereby paving the way for subsequent steps to 'build Europe'" (Korkman 2015, 175). The establishment of the Euro has gradually transferred new policy areas to the European Union, simultaneously diminishing the sovereignty of all EU member states in and out of the Eurozone. This increasing integration has stirred up concerns among the Swedish Eurosceptic parties. The Left Party opposes the creation of a "new superstate with common foreign and security policy" (EU *s.a.*). The Sweden Democrats have also strongly addressed this issue in its party programs. As mentioned in the previous sections, the party has criticized the transfer of numerous policy areas to the EU through several treaties (Mindre EU mer Sverige! 2014, 4). Despite Sweden remaining outside the Euro, the much-opposed intensifying integration process within the EU can be attributed to the new tensions created through the introduction of the common currency.

Another driver behind current Euroscepticism amplified by the Eurocrisis is the increasing costs of membership. The Sweden Democrats especially have criticized the increase in membership contributions that after a slump in 2009 began rising rapidly (see Figure 2.). According to the party, Sweden has over its membership paid the Union around 433 billion kronor, and this money has been spent "as assistance to the relatively well-off industrialized nations and support to an ineffective European agricultural sector" (Mindre EU mer Sverige! 2014, 4). In addition, the Eurocrisis has demonstrated the ineffectiveness of the structural funds to which Sweden also contributes as a waste of money. The party views that this money could have been used better to improve the Swedish welfare, which indeed has been on the decline due to a lack in finances.

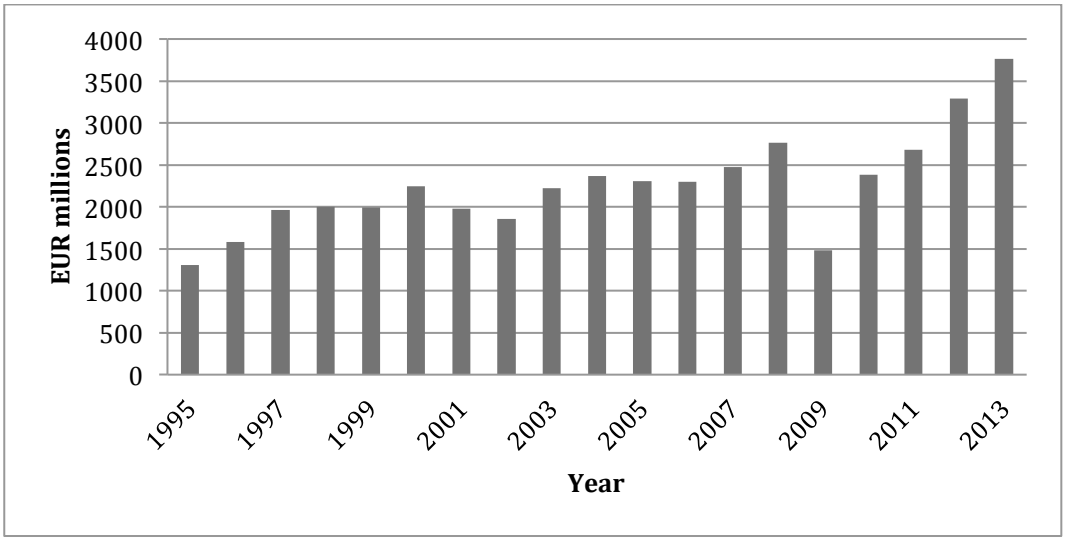

Figure 2. Swedish EU membership contributions
Source: EU Expenditure and Revenue *s.a.*; EU Budget 2008: Financial Report 2009

Another key reason why Sweden has witnessed a recent rise in Euroscepticism, even though it is not a member of the Eurozone, is that the common currency is not the only cause of Euroscepticism. During the second half of the 20th century, the main driver of Euroscepticism was geopolitical reasons connected with the neutrality policy exercised by Sweden (see chapter 2.1.2). When in the past a Eurosceptic approach was linked to the question over the Soviet Union, nowadays Euroscepticism is closely tied to the question over immigration. The Sweden Democrats criticize the current immigration situation of Sweden to have a socially and economically negative net effect (Sverigedemokraternas Principprogram 2011, 23). According to the party, immigration must happen in a way that it does not create a threat to the Swedish national identity or the welfare and safety of the country (ibid). The Sweden Democrats suggest that for example refugee immigration "should be limited to a smaller number of refugees that fulfill the United Nations Refugee Convention" (ibid.).

Although the Swedish government has for decades pursued a liberal immigration policy, the European Union and its policies has contributed to the problem. The free movement of people within the EU has primarily brought an influx of migrants from the poorer east-European member states to Sweden that did not apply for a transition period for the movement of people in the East Enlargement. This, according to the Sweden Democrats has led to several negative consequences such as increased criminality, drug trafficking and organized begging (Sverigedemokraternas valmanifest i EU valet 2014, 5). In addition, the free movement of people within the European Union has decreased border control between

the member states. This has made it easier for refugees arriving to the Southern borders of the Union to travel to the Northern Parts of the continent, thus contributing to the rise of Euroscepticism in Sweden. The ongoing Eurocrisis has also contributed to the increased immigration in Northern Europe by greatly stimulating immigration from Southern European member states in which employment rates have soared.

Overall, as highlighted in the previous paragraphs, being a member of the Eurozone is not the sole driver of Euroscepticism. Although Eurozone membership has been among the most prominent drivers of Euroscepticism in countries using the common currency, non-EMU member states have also witnessed a rise in Euroscepticism. In Sweden this has been due to various reasons. Some of these, such as concerns over national sovereignty and the economic situation are in fact connected with the ongoing Eurocrisis and its impacts on the whole Union, while others such as immigration are related to the overall policies of the European Union.

3.3 Why are both the Finns Party and the Sweden Democrats populist

Over the years Euroscepticism has increasingly become associated with populism. Already in 1997, Taggart predicted the growth of populist Euroscepticism by stating that "a strong populist Eurosceptic backlash is a very real future possibility for the EU" (Taggart 1997, 3). With the development of recent years, such as the rise of populist Eurosceptic parties in the 2014 European wide elections, it is becoming apparent that the prediction was spot on. Finland and Sweden are no exception; the main Eurosceptic parties of both countries are classifiable as populist parties. The Finns Party openly states that the party "supports a populist or people based concept of democracy instead of a bureaucratic notion of democracy" (Arvomaailmamme *s.a.*). The Sweden Democrats on the other hand are not as open of its populist nature, but nevertheless this comes through from their party positions and policies.

Populism, which derives from the Latin word *populus* meaning "people", has existed since the beginning of democracy. The Populares of the Roman Senate that relied on the people for support were among the first populists. In a more modern context populism emerged as a marginal social-political movement addressing the rural or working class perceptions of being disregarded by the urban and capitalist elites (Alomes and Mascitelli

2012, 35). Since then populism has evolved to amass and address the concerns of larger masses. Populism is even viewed to have contributed to the success of fascist movements that gathered enormous masses behind them, such as the Nazi movement in Germany and the Fascist movement headed by Mussolini in Italy (Fritzsche 1991; Milza 1997). Today populism, which continues to address cleavages between the common people and the elite, is increasingly gathering people behind Eurosceptic parties.

There are several reasons why Eurosceptic parties such as the Finns Party and the Sweden Democrats are nowadays often populist. One of the reasons is that populism allows parties to attract a large base of support. This is achieved through multiple ways. First of all, populism aims at speaking directly to the people, in the language of the people. Populist rhetoric is often "simplistic and straightforward" so that it appeals to the common people (Deiwiks 2009, 5). In a survey conducted on supporters of the Finns Party, one of the respondents raised language as one of the aspects that positively separates the party from other political parties by stating that "[Finns Party] speak human language and not this political jargon" (Rahkonen 2009, 6). Similarly, a supporter of the Swedish Democrats stated that "they [people] don't give a crap about what politicians say" (Hauksson and Johansson 2011, 17). The people no longer feel that the conventional parties talk about the problems that they see important. By addressing issues that people see important in a language that they can easily comprehend, these parties are able to gather large numbers of supporters from among the 'ordinary' citizens.

Another factor that enables populist parties to gain a large base of support is that populist parties are often led by a strong leader that is capable to drumming up support through the use of charisma (Deiwiks 2009, 5). Since 1997, the Finns Party has been led by a single man, Timo Soini, who has become the face and voice of the party. Soini characterizes himself as a populist chairman as sees that "a populist leader's basic qualities include a good gift of speech, quick situational awareness, a skill to simplify things and an ability to undertake tough public pressure and criticism." (Soini 2010) Also, the Sweden Democrats is led by a strong, charismatic leader, Jimmie Åkesson. Åkesson became the party chairman in 2005 and since then has led the party successfully. Jimmie Åkesson is seen as a skillful politician that has been able to clean up the appearance of the party through means such as having zero tolerance for racist comments (Duxbury 2014). With front figures that people can identify with and who are able to communicate appealingly to the people, the Finns Party and

the Sweden Democrats among other populist parties have been able to attract supporters.

However, charismatic leaders or understandable and attractive rhetoric do not completely explain the recent increase in these parties' voter pools. The Finns Party and the Sweden Democrats have in a short time span been able to transition from a marginal party to a mainstream party that attracts voters from a wide array of backgrounds. When in the past the voters of these parties have generally been poorly educated young men from rural areas, in recent years the voter pools have diversified to include women, highly educated persons and older people also from cities. (Cwejman and Santesson 2014; Rahkonen 2009)

A partial explanation to this transition can be found in the fact that both parties are not easily placed on the traditional left-right political spectrum. Instead, as populist parties the Finns Party and the Sweden Democrats are able to draw their ideologies from both the political left and right. Because of the parties' strong anti-immigration policies they are often mistakenly referred to as even extreme-right parties (Van Gilder Cooke 2011a; Van Gilder Cooke 2011b; Brussels' Fear… 2011). However, both parties themselves emphasize the diversity of their policies. The Finns Party states that it has "support from all sectors of the political spectrum so it defies being put into any traditional left-right pigeon hole." (Finns Party *s.a.*). Similarly the Sweden Democrats states that "in the left or right question we have a pragmatic approach where each situation must be evaluated individually. …The party cannot for these reasons be placed into the left/right scale" (Vårt parti *s.a.*). By drawing their policies from all over the political spectrum, the parties are able to appeal to a large variety of voters and thus contributing to their current success.

Another reason for Eurosceptic populism is that critique towards the European Union can be used as a tool to differentiate themselves from other parties. According to Taggart "many [Eurosceptic parties] use the EU issue to embody a form of populist politics" (1997, 15). Since populism opposes bureaucracy and transferring power away from the people the EU can be seen as a somewhat natural target of critique. However, as mentioned previously, European integration is seen to have contributed to the increasing uniformity of political parties (Saukkonen 2004). In many member states, as in Finland and Sweden, political opposition towards the EU diminished in the years after becoming members even to the point where it was none existent (see sections 2.2.1 and 2.2.2). Euroscepticism, nonetheless, remained present among the population, but lacked true representation. New, emerging parties, such as the Finns Party and the Sweden Democrats, in particular have used the

European Union issue to their benefit. By encompassing a Eurosceptic position they have been able to stand out from the conventional political parties via their unique position and create an identity for themselves with which many voters could identify with.

The final reason as to why Eurosceptic parties such as the Finns Party and Sweden Democrats are populist to be discussed here is that EU membership has emphasized the separation between the elite and voters. Politics requires an element of representation, which according to Taggart links the "mass of people and the few that are directly involved in government" (1997, 16). This very representation, however, can be "described as a way of separating the mass and the elite" (*ibid*). From a European perspective, participation in the European Union has led to the diminished role of representation in the political institutions. As mentioned previously, the European Union is an "elite project" that can be regarded as the safe haven for political parties from the "constraints imposed by representative democracy" (Mair 2013, 154).

Both the Finns Party and the Sweden Democrats have echoed this notion. The Finns Party criticizes the "over-centralisation of power to unelected technocrats and commissioners who are too distant from the citizens in the EU countries" (Finns Party – In English *s.a.*). The Sweden Democrats have also criticized the EU for being too distant from the citizens. They state that the European Union that is far from the EU that Swedes said 'yes' to in 1995 "lacks both legitimacy and democratic transparency" (Sverigedemokraternas Valmanifest i EU-valet 2014, 3). The same concerns over the separation of the people and the political elite have been addressed by the voters of these parties. A supporter of the Finns Party criticized Finnish politics for being infested with "Yuppie action", while others stated that they supported the Finns Party as a protest against conventional parties that have become too distant (Rahkonen 2009, 4). Similarly, supporters of the Sweden Democrats have expressed their dissatisfaction towards the conventional parties. Supporters have stated that "people don't trust politicians any more": problems have been "swept under the rug" by the political elite that "lie and drive over the electorate" (Hauksson and Johansson 2011, 16-17). The above indicates the sense of separation between the electorate and the political elite to which the European Union has to some degree contributed. Populism and hence populist Eurosceptic parties greatly emphasize this cleavage, which can be seen in the attitudes of the party and its supporters.

CONCLUSIONS

This bachelor thesis set out to examine the development of Euroscepticism and discover the reasons behind the phenomenon through a case study of Finland and Sweden. The European issue has from the very beginning faced opposition in many European countries and Finland and Sweden are no exception. In the second half of the 20th century mainly geopolitical factors drove Euroscepticism. With Sweden pursuing an active neutrality policy and Finland balancing its role as a European neighbor of the Soviet Union, the political front stood united against further integration with the European project. However, the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990's brought a shift in the public and political opinions and within a few years time both countries entered the European Union. Since then the political scenes of Finland and Sweden have yet again encountered a transition with the emerge of new Eurosceptic political parties.

The comparative analysis of this research reveals that the development of Euroscepticism in Finland and Sweden has followed a similar path. In both cases left-wing EU critique has in recent years been substituted by populist Euroscepticism. Until the 1990's leftist opposition towards European integration was strong. The Social Democratic parties stood against membership for a long time after other parties namely the right-wing parties had adopted pro-EU stances. However, following the dissolution of the Soviet Union positions changed and these formerly anti-EU forces began advocating for membership. For many years, political opposition died down until in 2011 the populist moderately Eurosceptic party the Finns Party emerged over night as the third largest party in Finland. Three years later Sweden followed suit as the Sweden Democrats, also a populist Eurosceptic party but this time more of a hardliner, rose to Riksdag as the third largest party in Sweden.

The findings indicate that in both the Finnish and Swedish cases similar reasons for these developments prevail. The political left largely abandoned Euroscepticism in both countries following the dissolution of the Soviet Union mainly due to geopolitical and economic reasons. Neutrality was no longer necessary after the end of the Cold War and the onset of an economic recession made economic benefits receive the highest priority. Also, an

analysis of the influence of EMU membership revealed that its impact has been limited. The Eurosceptic parties in both countries raise similar concern regardless of whether the country is in the Eurozone or not. In both cases the growing contributions, increasing integration and a rising immigration flow have been addressed, supporting the notion that Euroscepticism is a highly diverse phenomenon with various causes influencing it.

The findings also insinuate that in both Finland and Sweden the Eurosceptic parties are populist mainly for the same reasons. Populism allows parties to amass a wide voter pool through a charismatic leader applying a rhetoric that uses the language understood by the people. In addition, populist Euroscepticism provides a tool of differentiation for parties especially in countries such as Finland and Sweden where political Euroscepticism has been underrepresented while public critique has prevailed. By addressing the cleavage between the electorate and the political elite created and emphasized by the European Union, populist Eurosceptic parties are able to stir up the discontent of the people which translates into rapid growth of these parties and their support.

Overall, the research comes to the conclusion that Euroscepticism in Finland and Sweden shares a similar path of development and that in both cases similar reasons prevail behind these developments. As implied by this research, populist Euroscepticism has been increasing within member states of the EU and taken a stronger foothold in both domestic and consequently also EU level politics. And this development has been driven by the decisions and course of action of the European Union itself. It seems that the time of the "protected sphere" as Mair puts it has come to its end. It is possible that these developments of increased populist Euroscepticism will force the established parties to address and adopt the Eurosceptic issue in order to maintain their position in politics, and so perform the healthy functioning of the political system that Taggart identifies. In any case the people have expressed their will by giving their votes to these emerging populist Eurosceptic parties such as the Sweden Democrats and the Finns Party demanding for a change in the European Union. However, it remains to be seen what the future holds for the European continent and for the set up of the European Union.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Overview of Finnish political parties

National Coalition Party (*Kokoomus*)
A center-right party founded in 1918. It has been one of the largest parties in Finland throughout its existence with support ranging between 10% and 23% in parliamentary elections. In 1994 the party voted in favor EU membership and has continued to pursue an open and international Finland.

Swedish People's Party (*Suomen ruotsalainen kansanpuolue*)
A liberal right-wing party founded in 1906. The party represents the Swedish speaking minority in Finland and pursues a open and global Finland. Despite being a smaller party with a support of around five percent in the last decades, the party has been in government nearly each time it has been formed. In 1994 the party voted in favor of EU membership.

Social Democratic Party (*Sosialidemokraattinen puolue*)
A left wing, workers party founded in 1899. The party pursues a society based on freedom, equality and solidarity, and promotes the role of the government in the economy. It has been among the largest parties in Finland with support in parliamentary elections ranging from a high of 47% in 1916 to a low of 16% in 2015. In 1994 the party voted in favor of EU membership.

Center Party (*Keskusta*)
Founded in 1906. The party stems from the social liberalist thought heritage and has gained its support largely from the rural areas of Finland. It has been among the largest parties in Finland since the 1920's with support ranging from 15% to 27%. In 1994 the party voted in favor of EU membership after making a complete U-turn on their position.

Left Alliance (*Vasemmistoliitto*)
Founded in 1990 as a result of a merge of two parties, the Communist Party and the Finnish People's Democratic Alliance. The party belongs to the Finnish political left and pursues freedom, equality and solidarity under the socialist ideology. It has remained a small political party with support ranging from 7% to 11%. In 1994 the party voted against EU membership.

Finnish Countryside Party (*Maaseudun puolue*)
A center populist party that existed between 1959 and 1995. The party was run by a single family and gained its support largely from the rural areas of Finland. The party was disbanded in 1995 when it went bankrupt. Through its existence the party remained small with support ranging between 1% and 10%. In 1994 the party voted against EU membership.

Green Party (*Vihreä Liitto/ Vihreät*)
A left wing party founded in 1987. The party pursues the green ideology and global equality. It has remained a small party with support being under 10%. In 1994 the party voted against EU membership.

Liberal Party (*Liberaalinen Kansanpuolue*)
Existed between 1965 – 2011. Received its last parliamentary seat in 1991 elections and voted for EU membership in the 1994 EU membership vote. The party pursued to promote people's individual rights and the freedom of choice. Through out its existence the party's support remained relatively small with a high of 6,5 % in the parliamentary elections of 1966.

Christian Democratic Party (*Kristillisdemokraatit*)
A center-right party founded in 1958. The party promotes Christian democratic values of family, fatherland and equality. The party has remained a small party with support ranging from 2% to 5%, but has been in government several times. The party voted for EU membership in 1994.

Finns Party (*Perussuomalaiset*)
A populist and nationalistic political party founded in 1995. It was founded on the ruins of the populist Eurosceptic Finnish Countryside Party that went bankrupt in the same year. The party is nowadays among the largest parties in Finland as the party's support jumped in 2011from 4% to 19% in 4 years time and has remained high. The party lies on the political center with both left wing and right wing ideology. The party has been the strongest Eurosceptic voice in Finnish politics since its rise to the Finnish Parliament.

Appendix 2. Overview of Swedish political parties

Social Democratic Party (*Socialdemokraterna*)
A left-wing party founded in 1889. The party pursues freedom, equality and solidarity and supports maintaining the welfare state and progressive taxation. The party is among the largest parties in Sweden with support ranging from 30% to 53%. It belongs to the left-greens political block in Sweden. The party initially opposed EU membership but later changed its position and advocated for the membership.

Green Party (*Miljöpartiet*)
A center-left party founded in 1981. The party pursues the green ideology and solidarity and belongs to the left-green block. It has remained a small party with support remaining under 10%. The party was against EU membership, but changed its opinion to pro-EU in 2009.

Left Party (*Vänsterpartiet*)
A left wing political party founded in 1917. The party that was formerly known as the Communist Party advocates for socialism and increased public expenditure. The party has remained small with support reaching a high of 12% in 1998 and since then declining. This Eurosceptic party was against EU membership in the 1990's and still continues to oppose it.

Center Party (*Centerpartiet*)
A social-liberal party founded in 1913. The party lies at the political center and pursues liberal policies. The party's support has ranged between 25% in 1973 and 6% in 2014. It belongs to the center-right political block. The party has been in favor of EU membership.

Liberal Party (*Folkpartiet*)
A right wing conservative liberal party founded in 1934. The party advocates for free market economy and has pursued NATO and Eurozone membership. The party has been among the largest parties with support figures as high as 24%, but in the 21st century the party's support has remained under 10%. It belongs to the center-right political block, and has been in favor of EU membership.

Moderate Party (*Moderaterna*)
A right-wing liberal conservative party founded in 1904. The party advocates free markets and personal freedom and has pursued the privatization of companies and deregulation. The party is the largest party in the center-right block with support figures around 20%. The party was in favor of EU membership in the 1990's.

Christian Democrats (*Kristdemokraterna*)
A center-right party founded in 1964. The party pursues Christian values in the Swedish society. It has remained relatively small with support ranging from just over ten percent to four percent. The party belongs to the center-right political block and supported EU membership.

Sweden Democrats (*Sverigedemokraterna*)
An anti-immigration populist Eurosceptic party founded in 1988. The party has neo-Nazi and racist roots, but at present pursues nationalism and social conservatism. The party rapidly rose as the third largest political party in 2014 by gaining nearly 13% of votes. It is the loudest and largest Eurosceptic party in Sweden. The party is difficult to place on the left-right spectrum and does not belong to either of the Swedish political blocks.