

'Wrong Persons Are Making Right Decisions without Hearing Us': Political Trust, Responsiveness of Politicians and Satisfaction with Governmental Policies in Finland*

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That low trust in politicians in general endangers the political stability of a democratic political system is conventional wisdom even within the political science community. It is the purpose of the article to challenge this notion. It is claimed that, on the contrary, distrust of politicians in general may just be evidence of healthy scepticism. It should, on the other hand, be clear that high trust in politicians in general may also endanger the stability of a political system, even the whole existence of the democratic order. Total faith is blind faith. The main argument of the paper is supported with empirical evidence from Gallup polls in Finland (1974-1984), which show, among other things, that the overall satisfaction with governmental policies has been exceptionally high in our country.

Introduction

For many years it has been conventional wisdom even within the political science community that mistrust in politicians in general endangers the political stability of democracies. This conventional wisdom is usually stated only implicitly. But Miller (1974, 951), for instance, states that a democratic political system cannot survive for long without the support of a majority of its citizens. And Aberbach & Walker (1970, 1199) conclude that the existence of distrustful citizens is a barrier to the realization of the democratic ideal. Gamson (1968, 43, 45) points out that the loss of trust is the loss of system power, the loss of generalized capacity for authorities to commit resources to attain collective goals. When trust is low and declining, authorities may find it difficult to meet existing commitments and to govern effectively. And it is indeed true that citizens have become more suspicious, more critical, more cynical about politics. Many scholars argue that we face a crisis of confidence and even a crisis of legitimacy. A political system, they

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argue, must enjoy a deep reservoir of basic support. This reservoir assures the backing of citizens, their willingness to go along with government policies, whether or not they have had the chance to approve them in advance, indeed whether or not they believe them to be a good way to deal with the problems facing the country. Alienation, according to this view, cripples the effectiveness and thereby the stability of the political order (see Coleman 1963, Sniderman 1981, 8).

Also Finland has in recent years experienced a negative change in the public's opinion of politics and politicians, giving rise to pessimism regarding the present state of health and future prospects of democracy. It is the purpose of this article to challenge this pessimistic point of view and the conventional wisdom on which it rests.

Before presenting some recent findings, let me suggest a simple typology of the evaluation of government and its political performance. Let us take some liberties with reality and assume that it makes sense to evaluate a government and its political performance along the following three dichotomous dimensions: A) the quality of the persons in government (cabinet) (good/bad), B) the quality of the governmental decisions (right/wrong), C) the responsiveness of politicians (responsive/non-responsive). There are eight different combinations of these alternatives, as shown in Table 1:

Table 1. The Evaluation of Government (Cabinet) and Its Policies

	A	B	C
1	+	+	+
2	+	+	-
3	+	-	+
4	+	-	-
5	-	-	+
6	-	+	-
7	-	-	+
8	-	-	-

(key: + = good (for column A), right (for column B), responsive (for column C);
 - = bad (for column A), wrong (for column B), non-responsive (for column C))

Which alternative represents the democratic ideal? Which alternative is actually realized in a given democratic society? Unfortunately, these two questions do not necessarily have the same answer. The common claim is that in democratic societies alternative 1 is the ideal one, that is: good people making right, responsive decisions. Consequently, the worst alternative is the converse: bad people making wrong, non-responsive decisions (alternative 8). But what about the other alternatives? Here opinions differ. Some of us concentrate upon the procedural dimensions of our government, whereas others feel that what really counts is the quality of the decisions. The point to be made in this article is that alternative 6 is the alternative that best describes the present situation in Finland and

that this situation hardly gives us cause to conclude that a real crisis is present with regard to political confidence, legitimacy or stability.

Distrust of Politicians in Finland

In the summer of 1975 the Finnish scholars Pertti Pesonen and Risto Sankiaho studied the opinions of Finns (N = 1676) about politicians and political activities. To the question 'How much do you trust the government to do what is right?' they received (Pesonen & Sankiaho 1979, 32) the following response (in per cent):

Always	Most of the Time	Only some of the Time	Almost Never
3	45	41	7
(No Answer: 7)			

This indicates that almost half of the respondents thought that the government was doing the right thing most of the time. Relative to many other western democracies this is not at all a low trust score. However, many commentators seem to think that the figure is too low for a normal situation. In May 1984 the Finnish newspaper *Kaleva* interviewed 930 persons aged over 18 about a number of current political issues. One of these concerned the honesty, trustworthiness and irreproachability of some of the main groups of influence in Finnish society. As suggested by Table 2, the results of the interview were hardly flattering to politicians. The question was as follows: 'What is your general opinion about the honesty, trustworthiness and irreproachability, in general, of the following groups in Finnish society as compared to ordinary citizens?' (The groups mentioned are presented in the Table):

Table 2. Trustworthiness of Groups (%)

N = 930	Ministers, M.P.s	Top-level officials of the state and the municipalities	Reporters of newspapers, TV, radio
Much more correct	2	2	2
A little more correct	8	10	11
Equally correct	49	45	53
A little bit less correct	23	24	19
Much less correct	9	10	6
Don't know (no answer)	9	9	10

Source: *Kaleva*, Rehellisyystutkimus 1984.

(Key: Table 2 gives the percentage of respondents who think that these three groups are 'much more correct', 'a little more correct', and so on, than average citizens).

In October 1984 the largest Finnish newspaper *Helsingin Sanomat* published a poll (N = 1606, all over 18 years old) on, among other things, trust towards Finnish politicians. The question was as follows: 'What is your opinion of the activities of politicians in our country lately; have they generally acted in such a manner that your trust in them has increased, decreased or has it remained the same as before?' The general results are presented in Table 3, which shows a fairly dramatic tendency toward a drop in trust towards politicians.

Table 3. Change in Trust towards Politicians (%)

The trust has increased	3
The trust has remained the same as before	38
The trust has decreased	56
Don't know (no answer)	3

Source: *Helsingin Sanomat* 14.10.1984, 29.

As indicated by Table 4, the decrease was, surprisingly perhaps, greater amongst the elderly sections of the population. Furthermore, as indicated by Table 5, the decrease was far from restricted to supporters of the opposition parties.

Table 4. The Decrease of Trust in Politicians by Age (%)

Under 25 years	52
25 to 34 years	52
35 to 49 years	55
50 to 64 years	60
Over 65 years	62

Source: *Helsingin Sanomat* 14.10.1984, 29.

Table 5. The Decrease of Trust in Politicians by Party Supporters (%)

Finnish Peoples Democratic League (SKDL), o	67		Left
Social Democratic Party (SDP), g	45		
Finnish Rural Party (SMP), g	70		
Centre Party (KESK), g	49		
Swedish Peoples Party (RKP), g	38		
National Coalition (KOK), o	62		
Christian League (SKL), o	81		
Other (among others the Greens), o	67		Right

(Key: g = governmental party; o = opposition party)

Source: *Helsingin Sanomat* 14.10.1984, 29.

(See Appendix 1 on the parliamentary support of the parties.)

One must of course make the distinction between the level of trust and the change of the level. The level of trust may still be quite high even when the change has been remarkable. The amount of change does not, then, necessarily indicate anything about the level of trust.

According to another poll (N = 2320) conducted in the early summer of 1984 and reported by Sipponen (1985), 78 per cent of the respondents thought that the distance between the political parties and the problems of ordinary citizens had increased. Almost half of the respondents (44 per cent) claimed that there was no political party concerned about just those questions which the respondents felt to be the most urgent or most important ones. Only 11 per cent of the respondents agreed at least to some degree with the statement 'the information presented by politicians to citizens is trustworthy'. 66 per cent disagreed with this claim (Sipponen 1985, 2). Summing up this evidence we may conclude that the respondents did not feel that our politicians are exceptionally honourable persons. Hence the 'Wrong Persons' in the title of this article.

The evidence of these polls, and other polls as well, received much attention in the political debate in Finland. The reaction by the Speaker of the Parliament, Erkki Pystynen (KOK), is not atypical. In a speech delivered on January 31, 1985, he suggested that the decrease of trust in politicians may to a decisive extent be a result of the impact of the mass media:

It is mainly the mass media that have effected the emergence of distrust in politicians. Citizens no longer get their information about politicians, about their speeches and their activities directly from the politicians themselves, but via the mass media. (Quoted in *Turun Sanomat* 1.2.1985, p. 11).

Mr. Pystynen clearly presupposes in many parts of his speech that the trust could easily be (re)established if only the mass media would come to their senses and alter their activities. Another presupposition in Mr. Pystynen's speech is that political trust is something a democratic society really needs in order to maintain its stability. He, like so many other political authorities, stresses the need to (re)establish the trust in our political order for the purpose of safeguarding the political stability of our political system.

Perhaps the most striking statement concerning a crisis of legitimacy in Finland today is presented by Dag Anckar (1983). He makes his point by using a typology inspired by David Easton and presenting it in the form of a table reproduced below.

Table 6. Support and Legitimacy: Four Configurations

		DIFFUSE SUPPORT	
		High	Low
SPECIFIC SUPPORT	High	Legitimacy of: 1.	Legitimacy of: 3.
		R: high A: high	R: low A: high
	Low	Legitimacy of: 2.	Legitimacy of: 4.
		R: high A: low	R: low A: low
		A →	

Here R (regime) stands for the values, norms and structure of authority, and the term A (authorities) stands for specific occupants of authority roles. Anckar claims (ibid. 14) that a transformation from configuration 2 to configuration 4 'is foreseeable' (as illustrated by arrow A) in Finland today. However, in my opinion, Speaker Pystynen has no real need to be afraid, nor is Professor Anckar's analysis adequate. As I have suggested above, it is the central thesis of this article that it is unwarranted to conclude that Finland is facing a crisis of confidence in its political system.

Two Types of Allegiance

It seems that the bulk of the commentators who ponder the decreasing trust in politicians misinterpret the empirical evidence; their interpretation is not balanced. From the single fact that trust in politicians has decreased, the commentators make the inference that the stability of our political system is threatened. Consider, however, the following table (Table 7), borrowed from Nielsen (1983, 3):

Table 7. Evaluation of Politicians: Four Configurations

		ACTORS EVALUATED	
		politicians in general	specific politicians
ASPECTS EVALUATED	overall assessment	1	2
	specific properties	3	4

The figures on distrust in Finland presented above all focus on cell 3, as measurements of political distrust normally do. The point is that before drawing the conclusion that political distrust is symptomatic of a crisis, we must consider different types of distrust.

I find Paul Sniderman's (1981) concise study quite illuminating. Sniderman points out that there are two quite distinct types of allegiance. The difference between the two types centres on a readiness to recognize that politicians (Sniderman talks about governments) need not be good in all respects, even if they are good in most. He reminds us (p. 12) that allegiance may pose at least as serious a threat to democratic politics as alienation. Sniderman's typology of loyal citizens is a very simple one: there are the 'supportive' and the 'committed' citizens. By a person with a supportive outlook, he means one whose orientation toward the national government is positive, but whose approval of it is not without qualifications or reservations. This notion of a supportive citizen seems to be quite on par with the ideal democratic citizen: not blind loyalty but balanced judgement, an awareness that a democratic political order, whatever its virtues, will have shortcomings. The committed citizen, on the other hand, is more than merely, or even markedly, favourable towards the government. His view of the government is less than balanced, it is exaggerated. It is signified by a willingness to praise government and an unwillingness to find fault with it. The committed citizen is an instance of blind faith: 'my country (read: government), right or wrong'. In contrasting the two forms of allegiance, Sniderman (*ibid.* 16-19) notes that allegiance need not be blind. The supportive citizens know that the government is not good in all respects and, indeed, may be bad in some. Their attachment is strong, but their judgement is balanced. In contrast, the committed embrace the political order without reservation. Theirs is a totalistic faith. A supportive citizen is committed to democratic principles, but he is also aware of the inevitable infirmities of democratic institutions, however well conceived, and of those who hold public office, however well intentioned.

The 'crisis' interpretation of the situation in Finland rests, it seems to me, on the presupposition that ideally all, or at least the bulk, of the population should be committed citizens in Sniderman's sense. It is often implicitly claimed that distrust

is criticism of modern democratic politics by disloyal citizens. Such criticism must be ill founded, it is suggested, because of the inherent limitations of these citizens, and, especially, because the political elite is both superior in ability and highly aware of the need to be responsive to the electorate. Criticism is anti-democratic, because democracy depends, so the argument goes, upon respect for the wisdom of elected officials and because the stability and thus the survival of democracy requires a passive public, allowing substantial latitude to these officials. Distrust and alienation stir the minds of the general public. It follows that they may also be stirred to action, and because that action is likely to be irrational and the system has a limited capacity to absorb such action, it can only be destructive (cf. Hart 1978, 6).

In my view, the problem is not so much with the supportive citizens who voice criticism but with the committed ones. Those who refuse to acknowledge the inevitable imperfections of government, whose allegiance is without qualification or reservation, may pose a serious threat to democratic political order. A democratic political culture should be characterized by a vigilant scepticism or realistic cynicism, rather than an unquestioning faith in the motives and abilities of political authority. The interpretation of the change in public attitudes toward politicians offered by many Finnish commentators thus exaggerates the problem. The relatively low scores of trust in politicians are not, standing alone, sufficient evidence of a threat to our political system, or to the democratic order in general. Before declaring a state of emergency, it is necessary to also consider people's satisfaction with the output of the political system and with governmental policies; and perhaps also see whether a credible alternative to the existing order is articulated by political organization or movement.

Responsiveness of Politicians in Finland

But what about the responsiveness of politicians in Finland? This has been measured in the Gallup polls by the following claim: 'Generally those elected to Parliament soon lose touch with the people.' The reactions to this claim are summed up in Table 8.

To the extent these results are an indication of public perception of the responsiveness of the M.P.s, it is clear that the vast majority (at least a majority of 3/4) of the population consider Members of Parliament to be unresponsive. I find reason to believe, however, that the figures exaggerate the negative evaluation of politicians. The wording of the claim may encourage the 'yea-sayers' to an intolerable degree. Many respondents will answer in the affirmative just because those elected to Parliament usually have to move away to the capital. For the present purposes, however, I accept the figures at their present face value and note that the bulk of respondents find M.P.s unresponsive. Hence, the 'Without Hearing Us' in the title of this article.

Table 8. The Responsiveness of Politicians (M.P.s) (%)

Year	Agree Strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree Strongly	No Answer
1974	39	35	13	4	10
1975	46	29	12	5	8
1976	38	38	13	6	5
1977	39	36	14	6	5
1978	30	37	16	12	5
1979	42	37	13	5	4
1981	35	43	15	5	3
1982	29	52	15	1	3
1984	28	49	18	2	2

Source: Suomen Gallup, Puoluetutkimus 1974-1984.

Healthy Scepticism as a Democratic Ideal

I find it tempting to take the change in public attitudes as evidence of healthy scepticism only. This is also the standpoint of Vivien Hart (1978). She begins her book on political distrust in Britain and America with an aphorism of Demosthenes: 'There is one safeguard known generally to the wise, which is an advantage and security to all, but especially to democracies as against despots. What is it? Distrust' (Hart 1978, xi). Distrust, of course, may be a threat to the political order, but as a rule it helps to assure the stability and quality of democratic politics. The issue is not whether the consequences of distrust may be good or bad, for they can be either or both; and disillusion is a normal part of the political process, however much we would prefer to regard it as an aberration, as Sniderman (1981, 12) puts it. Or as Rose (1984, 3) points out: Given that turning the rascals out is part of the definition of democracy, losing confidence in the rascals is a necessary step in the exercise of electoral choice.

Distrust of politicians in general belongs to any healthy democracy. However, we cannot afford distrust to the extent of open aggression. Here we face a dilemma: democratic government, like any other government, depends for its success on compliance. The effectiveness and life chances of any political system hinge on the willingness of citizens to support, or at a minimum to comply with, its decisions, laws, regulations and the like. And presumably the greater the commitment of citizens to the system of government, the more automatic their compliance. On the other hand, the more committed citizens are to the system of government, the less willing they may be to speak against authority, even when warranted. Trust in government, if excessive, may incline people to go too far in support of the government. Total faith is blind faith. Support for our system of government in this sense can place our form of government itself in jeopardy (Sniderman 1981, 27). One might say that, in terms of Anckar's typology (Table 6), configuration 2 is the ideal.

Here Parry's (1976) distinction between two different approaches to political trust is fruitful. He chooses to call them the political culture approach and the constitutional approach to political trust. The crucial question is: what are the appropriate circumstances in which a person may be entrusted with political office? Is such political trust grounded on a more pervasive trust in society at large? Or should one seek the basis of political trust in the operation of political and constitutional arrangements? The political culture approach suggests that government may be entrusted with power because its members, drawn from society at large, can be trusted. They in turn are to be trusted because most citizens in that society can be trusted. Political trust is an epiphenomenon of social trust (Parry 1976, 133-134). The constitutional approach to trust suggests that power can be entrusted to government as long as there are sanctions to ensure that this power is used for the purposes specified (*ibid.* 136). Parry traces the latter approach to Hume, Locke, Madison and J. Mill and notes that it has been neglected in favour of the political culture approach. As a result, an alternative interpretation of data on trust in modern societies has been overlooked. In the constitutionalist theory the grounds for trusting rulers are to be found in the sanctions that punish breaches of trust. Men in power may only be trusted when they are placed in such a position that their pursuit of self-interest is channelled into the promotion of public interests. This theory has it that 'to rely on a man's honour for one's political security is to have no security at all' (*ibid.* 137). According to the constitutionalist approach it is only to be expected that men will distrust one another in politics. This says nothing about the stability or instability of a political system (*ibid.* 138). Parry admits (p. 140) that the sharp distinction between the two approaches is somewhat overdrawn. The reason is simply that even the constitutionalist must trust that those engaged to uphold the rule of law against violations by the government will in fact perform their function; he must have trust in his fellow citizens that they will act in some way to force these custodians to keep their trust. It is permissible to trust one's rulers, but only as a consequence of one's confidence in political mechanisms. One does not trust them because of some confidence in their benevolence. In that sense one may not trust Prime Minister X further than one can throw him, Parry writes (*ibid.* 139), and concludes that we should not ask about a politician whether we would buy a second-hand car from him, but whether we would be adequately protected by a Sale of Goods Act if he sold us a bad one (*ibid.* 142).

It is not the politicians who corrupt the people, but for the most part the other way around. The speakers speak as they do because the listeners are what they are, Orwin (1984, 314) notes. He continues:

The people give a hearing only to opinions of speakers they trust; their trust then does not issue from any sort of careful hearing. It follows that they are often mistaken. Participation educates, no doubt about it, but one of the things that it teaches the people is to distrust politicians, and so to doubt their own judgement, and so to distrust politicians yet more. Distrust is therefore an inevitable inconvenience of democracy (*ibid.* 324).

High Satisfaction with the Cabinet's Policies

My central claim is that we have little reason to worry about in the decrease of trust in politicians in general. The decrease would be a warning sign only if it were accompanied by overall dissatisfaction with the content of the actual policies of the politicians. That the latter is not the case in Finland today, can easily be demonstrated. In this section I use evidence from the Gallup poll concerning the satisfaction with Finnish governmental policies sponsored by the four largest parties (SDP, KESK, KOK, SKDL) almost every year since 1973. One question in this series of polls has dealt with the satisfaction with the performance of the cabinet (see Appendix 2 for a list of the Finnish cabinets since 1975), measured by the following question: 'Let me ask your opinion about the Cabinet. When you think about the Cabinet, are you mostly satisfied or mostly dissatisfied with its activities?' The responses are summarized in Table 9:

Table 9. Satisfaction with the Cabinet's Policies (%)

	N =	1213	1332	1199	1267	1171	1340	1198	1236	1303	1198
	year	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1984
Mostly satisfied		47	38	36	31	37	62	59	66	59	50
Mostly dissatisfied		33	42	45	52	42	18	26	18	26	35
No Answer		19	20	19	15	20	21	15	16	15	15

Source: Compiled from Suomen Gallup, Puoluetutkimus 1974-1984.

As one can see, there is a jump in the amount of satisfied respondents from the 1970's to the 1980's. The most striking single fact to be drawn from this evidence is that during the 1980's at least half of the respondents were mostly satisfied with governmental policies. This is a surprisingly high figure, especially when we also take notice of the fact that during the 1980's no more than a quarter of the respondents claim that they were mostly dissatisfied with the governmental policies. As much as 1/5 or 1/6 of the respondents were indifferent. Hence 'satisfied' together with 'indifferents' comprise more than 2/3 of the respondents and often 4/5 of them.

One could suppose that the proportion of 'satisfied' varies with the party preferences. If the party supported by the respondent is in the cabinet, the respondent will be favourable towards the cabinet; and if the party supported by the respondent is in the opposition, the respondent will be dissatisfied with the cabinet's policies. Let us have a closer look at this hypothesis.

Table 10. Satisfaction with Cabinet, by Party (%)
'Mostly satisfied'

Year	SKDL	SDP	KESK	KOK	OTHER	GREENS
1975	23	56	51	27	32	-
1976	39	41	60	17	29	-
1977	26	44	41	21	27	-
1978	44	58	47	17	24	-
1979	49	77	66	57	64	-
1980	44	70	67	58	56	-
1981	46	77	76	68	68	-
1982	58	75	62	43	62	-
1984	29	72	58	42	56	43

Source: Compiled from Suomen Gallup, Puoluetutkimus 1975-1984.

Table 11. Satisfaction with Cabinet, by Party (%)
'Mostly dissatisfied'

Year	SKDL	SDP	KESK	KOK	OTHER	GREENS
1975	64	29	32	59	39	-
1976	47	40	27	69	44	-
1977	57	41	42	64	49	-
1978	43	24	37	70	37	-
1979	30	7	15	21	17	-
1980	37	19	17	31	27	-
1981	39	11	12	23	18	-
1982	32	15	22	42	19	-
1984	62	19	28	45	30	42

Source: Compiled from Suomen Gallup, Puoluetutkimus 1975-1984.

Table 12. Satisfaction with Cabinet, by Party (%)
'Can't Say'

Year	SKDL	SDP	KESK	KOK	OTHER
1975	13	15	17	14	14
1976	14	19	13	14	20
1977	17	15	17	15	12
1978	13	18	16	13	22
1979	21	15	18	23	18
1980	21	10	17	11	15
1981	16	12	12	9	22
1982	10	9	16	14	19
1984	9	8	13	13	14

Source: Compiled from Suomen Gallup, Puoluetutkimus 1975-1984.

As indicated by Tables 10, 11 and 12, dissatisfaction with the cabinet's policies does not seem to vary to any remarkable degree with the respondents' party preferences. Consider the figures for the 1980's. Among the parties included, only the Conservatives (KOK) were in opposition. More of the supporters of the Communists and Socialists (SKDL) were dissatisfied with the cabinet's policies than supporters of the opposition Conservative party. Consider also the fact that supporters of the SKDL have a high proportion of 'Can't Say' answers. Participation in the cabinet was a problematic question for the SKDL for the whole of the time when it was in the cabinet during 1977-1982. Many members of the party were opposed to participation in the governing coalition. The hypothesis suggested above is not supported by the evidence.

When almost half of the supporters of the main opposition party (KOK) consider themselves to be mostly satisfied with the cabinet's political performance, there certainly is little sense in talking about large scale dissatisfaction and a crisis of confidence in our political system! Hence the 'Are Making Right Decisions' in the title of this article. Whether the decisions indeed have been right is, naturally, another issue altogether. The figures presented above reflect beliefs or attitudes and therefore might be quite misleading as a description of the objective performance of the political system. However, this does not have any implications for my basic argument.

Turnout in General Elections

As a final fragment of evidence that supports the main thesis of this article, we present data on the election turnouts in Finland for approximately the last 15 years (Table 13, 14, 15). It would be absurd to speak of low trust in the political system when at least three out of four use their right to vote and when almost all of the votes go to parties and candidates that do not by any means question the basic characteristics of the political system; the proportion of anti-system votes is only marginal.

Table 13. Persons Entitled to Vote and Voting Percentage in Parliamentary Elections 1970-1983

Year	Persons entitled to vote	Persons voting (%)
1970	3,094,359	82.2
1972	3,178,011	81.4
1975	3,435,533	79.7
1979	3,552,378	81.2
1983	3,670,241	81.0

Source: *Statistical Yearbook of Finland 1983*, Table 374, 400.

Table 14. Persons Entitled to Vote and Voting Percentage in Presidential Elections 1968-1983

Year	Persons entitled to vote (in domicile register in Finland)	Persons voting (%)
1968	2,920,635	70.2
1978	3,527,974	69.9
1982	3,627,201	86.8
1979	3,552,378	81.2
1983	3,670,241	81.0

(In January 1973 Parliament nominated Mr. Urho Kekkonen for a period of four years from 1974 to 1978. The law was passed by a vote of 170 to 29.)

Source: *Statistical Yearbook of Finland 1983*, Table 374, 400.

Table 15. Persons Entitled to Vote and Voting Percentage in Municipal Elections 1968-1980

Year	Persons entitled to vote (in domicile register in Finland)	Persons voting (%)
1968	2,964,967	76.8
1972	3,320,339	75.6
1976	3,429,664	78.5
1980	3,530,447	78.1

Source: *Statistical Yearbook of Finland 1983*, Table 374, 400.

Concluding Remarks

In this paper I have questioned the view that distrust in politicians generally endangers the political stability of a given political system. This question has been investigated with special reference to the case of Finland. The evidence presented supports the view that although recent years have seen an increase in political scepticism also in Finland, there is no crisis of confidence, no crisis of legitimacy, and no crisis of political stability.

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Year	Persons entitled to vote (in domicile register in Finland)	Persons voting (%)
1968	2,920,635	70.2
1978	3,527,974	69.9
1982	3,627,201	86.8
1979	3,552,378	81.2
1983	3,670,241	81.0

(In January 1973 Parliament nominated Mr. Urho Kekkonen for a period of four years from 1974 to 1978. The law was passed by a vote of 170 to 29.)

Source: *Statistical Yearbook of Finland 1983*, Table 374, 400.

Table 15. Persons Entitled to Vote and Voting Percentage in Municipal Elections 1968-1980

Year	Persons entitled to vote (in domicile register in Finland)	Persons voting (%)
1968	2,964,967	76.8
1972	3,320,339	75.6
1976	3,429,664	78.5
1980	3,530,447	78.1

Source: *Statistical Yearbook of Finland 1983*, Table 374, 400.

Concluding Remarks

In this paper I have questioned the view that distrust in politicians generally endangers the political stability of a given political system. This question has been investigated with special reference to the case of Finland. The evidence presented supports the view that although recent years have seen an increase in political scepticism also in Finland, there is no crisis of confidence, no crisis of legitimacy, and no crisis of political stability.

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APPENDIX 1

Table 16. The Percentage of Electoral Support in Elections to Parliament, by Party (%)

Year Election	Party SKDL	SDP	KESK	KOK	OTHER
1972	17.0	25.8	16.4	17.6	23.2
1975	18.9	24.9	17.6	18.4	20.2
1979	17.9	23.9	17.3	21.7	19.2
1983	13.4	26.7	17.6	22.1	20.2

Source: *Statistical Yearbook of Finland*, various years.

APPENDIX 2

Table 17. Governments in Finland 1975-1983

Date of nomination	13.06.1975	30.11.1975	29.09.1976	15.05.1977	02.03.1978	25.05.1979	17.02.1982	30.12.1982	07.05.1983
Period in office, years	0.46	0.83	0.62	0.80	1.23	2.61	0.87	0.35	
Name of Prime Minister	Keijo Liinamaa	Martti E. Miettunen (II)	Martti E. Miettunen (III)	Kalevi Sorsa (II)	Kalevi Sorsa (IIb)	Mauno Koivisto (II)	Kalevi Sorsa (IIIa)	Kalevi Sorsa (IIIb)	Kalevi Sorsa (IV)
Party of Prime Minister	SDP	KESK	KESK	SDP	SDP	SDP	SDP	SDP	SDP
Party membership	SDP 5 KESK 3 LKP 1 KOK 1 RKP 1	SDP 5 RKP 2 KESK 4 LKP 1 SKDL 4	KESK 5 LKP 2 RKP 4 n.s. 1	SKDL 9 SDP 3 KESK 3 LKP 1 RKP 1	SDP 3 SKDL 4 SDP 4 KESK 4 LKP 1	SDP 3 SKDL 4 SDP 5 KESK 5 RKP 2	SDP 3 SKDL 3 SDP 5 KESK 6 RKP 2	SDP 3 SKDL 3 SDP 5 KESK 6 RKP 2	SDP 8 SDP 2 RKP 2 KESK 5 SMP 2
of ministers									
Parliamentary support	00.0% (1975)	76.0% (1975)	29.0% (1975)	76.0% (1975)	71.0% (1975)	66.5% (1979)	66.5% (1979)	49.0% (1979)	61.5% (1983)
		(caretaker)							

Source: Paloheimo 1984, 66-67