Kati Katajisto & Matti La Mela

VERTAISARVIOITU
KOLLEGIALT GRANSKAD
PEER-REVIEWED
www.tsv.fi/tunnus

EU Membership Debates in the Finnish Parliament: The Mobilisation of Emotions, Shifting Emotional Regimes, and Historical Experiences

Abstract

This study utilises William Reddy's concept of 'emotional regimes' to analyse emotional mobilisation in Finland's 1994 parliamentary debates on EU membership. It argues that the debates reflected a struggle to transition from an emotional regime shaped by historical ties to the Soviet Union (Russia), characterised by secrecy and emotional control, towards a foreign policy emphasising transparency and pluralism. The analysis identifies four themes associated with negative emotions: independence, economy, welfare state, and democracy. The findings indicate that political emotions were closely connected to the nation's historical experiences, influencing perceptions of the EU. Ultimately, the study shows that emotions, when intertwined with historical experiences, can serve as rational guides in navigating uncertain futures, challenging traditional Western views that prioritise rationality over emotions.

Finland's decision to join the European Union in 1995 has been one of the most controversial issues discussed in Finland's parliament. The decision was considered crucial for the country's future. This common viewpoint was based on the belief that joining the EU marked a significant shift from the nation's challenging circumstances during the Cold War to becoming a full member of the Western community.[1] In light of EU research concerning Finland, the emotionally charged and deeply contentious parliamentary debates regarding the membership decision appears to have been a peculiar exception. This phase of the process was navigated swiftly. Following the decision on EU membership, the nation's elites fully and almost unanimous-

LÄHIHISTORIA vol. 4 (2025, issue 3), 115-147. https://doi.org/10.61559/lh.157592

ly embraced their new role within the European community, leading to the disappearance of most EU-critical voices from public discourse.[2] It was not until the economic and financial crisis of 2008–2009 that the EU issue once again significantly polarised Finnish public opinion, albeit temporarily. Following the polarisation of opinions on EU membership during the 2011 general election, which saw the rise of the anti-EU 'Finns Party' as Finland's third-largest political party, a more unified sentiment has gradually reemerged, accompanied by growing public support for EU membership.[3]

It can even be argued that the existence of value and emotional disagreements was denied by higher state authorities after the EU decision in 1994. According to the first EU policy guidelines passed by the Finnish government in 1995, membership did not alter the traditional foundations of Finland's policy, which include such values as parliamentary democracy, the rule of law, equality, and respect for human rights.[4] The article demonstrates that Members of Parliament (MPs) regarded these values, as well as certain other key themes, as highly controversial in the EU membership debates and associated them with strong emotional charges; the failure to fully address those topics also left underlying tensions to smoulder.[5]

Finland's EU policy has been studied from various perspectives, including the economy, Europeanisation, change and continuity, and future outlooks.[6] It has been typical for research approaches to emphasise a pragmatic-rational perspective.[7] For instance, the value perspective has been largely absent from research, as Hanna Tuominen – who has studied the values of the EU and Finland – has observed, attributing this absence to the common portrayal of Finland's EU policy as pragmatic, reactive, and cautious.[8] The observation also elucidates why EU-related issues have scarcely been examined from the perspective of emotions and why the views of EU opponents have remained rather invisible.

This article explores the reasons and mechanisms through which emotions were mobilised during the parliamentary debates concerning the EU membership decision in 1994. In what ways were emotions constructed and expressed in the parliamentary discourse surrounding Finland's EU membership decision? How did parliamentary speakers use emotional language to position the EU as an object of fear or loss, or, on the contrary, hope or pride during the 1994 membership debates? While it is challenging, if not impossible, to access deep-seated emotions of parliamentarians solely based on parliamentary debates, emotions can be analysed as a discursive phenome-

non through the lens of intentionality. As Sara Ahmed has pointed out, emotions are intentional because they are directed toward an object, embodying a stance or a way of apprehending the world.[9]

The EU membership dispute was an intentional political struggle on a linguistic level[10], where the key concern at the parliamentary level was not the authenticity of emotions – although the power of a genuine or perceived-as-genuine emotion confers political legitimacy.[11] Rather, the general assumption was that parliamentarians consciously attempted to use emotions strategically to ensure that their stance on the EU would prevail. Members of parliament were well aware of the strategic mobilisation and calculated (mis)use of emotions.[12]

For the purposes of this study, distinguishing between parliamentarians' authentic (genuine) emotions and their strategic use of emotions is not central to the point of inquiry. Rather, we focus on the contexts in which they employed such emotions in parliamentary debates, as those contexts reveal the types of emotions and the social, historical, and geographical experiences presumed to influence listeners – including other parliamentarians, the media, and the broader public.[13] Studying the types of emotions associated with the EU membership decision is both important and essential for understanding both past and contemporary developments. While we do not claim to offer direct explanations for the developments, examining historical emotions enables a deeper understanding of the present world and the processes that have shaped it. As Eva Illouz has emphasised, the current global rise of populism and the erosion of democracy cannot be understood without accounting for emotional mechanisms – such as fear, disgust, resentment, and love.[14] In the Finnish context, the emergence of the nationalist-populist Finns Party has likewise been directly linked to the country's EU membership.[15]

The article begins by presenting William Reddy's concept of emotional regimes, which serves as the theoretical framework, and by reviewing crucial research related to the study's topic. Then, the study's methodological foundations are presented, followed by an overview of the parliamentary debates by numbers. In the article, we conduct a qualitative analysis of the EU membership debates by focusing on the rhetoric of fear of loss. The analysis is structured according to four central themes that emerged from the readings of the debates: independence, economy, welfare state, and democracy. In the conclusion, we summarise the main findings and briefly discuss their significance and broader implications.

Emotional regimes and the EU membership decision

Building on William Reddy's concept of emotional regimes, this study examines how emotions manifested and were mobilised in the 1994 parliamentary debates on EU membership. Crises and periods of transition have the potential to expose social norms and the pressure for conformity that was previously considered natural.[16] Transformation of an emotional regime may occur when it is exposed as a political construct, calling into question its authority. If enough people consciously reject the regime's emotional norms, the regime collapses, potentially easing societal suffering. A new emotional regime emerges, and those who felt happy during the time of the old regime suddenly realise that the situation has changed. What once felt like happiness under the old regime is now perceived as hidden suffering – unless individuals succeed in adjusting to the new emotional order.[17]

Using Reddy's concept of emotional regime, the study explores how a path to change emerged for the emotional regime in Finland at this turning point. The EU membership dispute can be seen as a struggle for a change in emotional regime (EU membership or staying on the previous path), meaning the consensus over an emotional regime constrained by neutrality and the Agreement of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance (FCMA Treaty) between Finland and the former Soviet Union was called into question.[18] The old emotional regime was characterised, in simple terms, by the unyielding nature of Cold War-era politics, a mentality of secrecy, strong presidential leadership, and stringent control over emotions in foreign policy matters. This regime also encompassed emotional elements perceived as artificial in relation to the Soviet Union – such as friendship, which, rather than being based on genuine emotional connection, was imbued with undertones of pressure and obligation as well as artificiality and flattery.

Sami Moisio has highlighted how the struggle for EU membership between 1992 and 1994 was characterised by the emotional politics of geography. This struggle involved a contest to define national identity at a pivotal moment in the aftermath of the Cold War, marked by the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the end of the 1948 FCMA Treaty, which had constrained Finnish sovereignty. The EU discussions involved a struggle related to experiential history – though they were also about power and the redistribution of power shares – since the long shadow of the Soviet Union's pressure on Finland, according to the proponents of Western alignment (supporters of the EU), necessitated

EU membership as a geographical correction, a form of recognition of Finland's Western identity[19]. Traditionalists (opponents of the EU) labelled the geopolitical rhetoric of the Westernizers as overly emotional, particularly during the application phase. As the dispute progressed, however, those involved reversed their tactics: the Westernizers sought to demonstrate that the independence-emphasising argument of the opponents was itself an emotional act.[20]

According to Moisio, the EU debate initially split Finns into three groups based on geopolitical and ideological perspectives: traditionalists (those opposed to membership), Westernizers (those in favour of it) and those supporting a cautious approach with a pro-Western stance. After the 1992 membership application decision, this division narrowed to just the traditionalists and Westernizers.[21] President Koivisto was a key figure in the Western-friendly cautious line (and later as a Westernizer), as he led the country's foreign policy. Koivisto and Finland's political leadership had been shocked by Sweden's sudden application for EU membership in October 1990, with many feeling that Sweden had betrayed them – although Sweden's intention to seek membership had been observed for a long time.[22] However, this shift did not lead to an immediate change of the emotional regime. The most decisive disputes over the transformation of the emotional regime took place in parliament in 1994. Thus, the article deepens and complements Moisio's geography-based perspective by focusing specifically on the final EU debates in parliament.

Previous historical research has identified and highlighted that the question of EU membership in Finland was highly emotional, and the contemporary actors themselves have particularly emphasised the strong emotional charge associated with the EU decision.[23] However, the role of emotions has not been placed at the centre of analysis in prior studies. Historians, like other social scientists, have traditionally focused on reason, often dismissing strong emotions as irrational.[24] Moreover, the events of the early 1990s are still considered relatively recent, and detailed scholarly historical research on this period has only started to emerge in recent years. Nevertheless, many foundational studies remain absent, including comprehensive histories of the major political parties.

Following the 'affective turn' in research, both political scientists and historians have deemed the distinction between reason and emotions to be flawed.[25] Sami Moisio has insightfully remarked that rationality and irrationality are subjective constructs that cannot be defined 'objectively' by a researcher.[26]

Scholars can, and indeed ought to, inquire into how people in different historical periods have theorised and experienced what is considered rational and irrational.[27] We further deepen the analysis of the interaction between emotions and rationality by demonstrating how emotions – such as fears – can be framed within political power struggles as either rational or irrational (i.e. unfounded), thereby illustrating the profound entanglement of emotions and reason in practice.

Method: examining the emotional language of the EU debates

We approach the emotional politics surrounding the EU membership decision through a qualitative analysis of the parliamentary debates, examining the debates through the themes of loss and fear, which were increasingly mobilised in the discussions leading up to the final vote in autumn 1994. Based on this qualitative analysis, a four-part typology of fear and loss emerged, with the focus being on independence, the economy, the welfare state, and democracy. This typology also provides the structure for how the results are presented. Additionally, we present descriptive statistics about the parliamentary speeches that contextualise the EU membership debates within the parliamentary year and substantiate the findings about their intensity and the mobilisation of fear and loss as themes. Situating the qualitative findings within a broader context through quantitative approaches is commonplace in digital history.[28]

In this study, we do not aim to explain the positions of MPs or parties towards EU membership. Rather, we are interested in the ongoing shift in the emotional regime, as theorised above. In other words, our examination of the EU debate fundamentally concerns the decision that members of parliament sought to make in a situation where a shift in the emotional regime had become possible. The primary dividing line was between those opposing (traditionalists) and those supporting (Westernizers) EU membership. From an emotion-historical perspective, this division between supporters and opponents of the EU was the most significant – not the party-political lines, although they introduced additional dimensions within each camp. Party-political divisions, nevertheless, are well documented in previous research.[29]

For the analysis, we have used the minutes of the parliament, which have been digitised by the Parliament of Finland and are available as pdf files through Eduskunta's open database.[30] Moreover, for the background section, where we

describe the debates quantitatively and discuss the specificity of the EU debates in terms of their breadth during the parliamentary year 1994, we use datasets published as part of the ParliamentSampo project.[31] The datasets are accessible through the Linked Data Finland service.[32]

Background: parliamentary debates on the EU membership negotiations

The parliamentary debates about EU membership played a significant role in the 1994 parliamentary season. The membership discussions unfolded in four phases, culminating in the decision debate in the fall of 1994: in March, discussion on the outcome of the EU negotiations began[33]; in May, debate on the advisory EU referendum commenced[34]; in June, the Left Alliance raised an interpellation concerning the Economic and Monetary Union and the initiation of discussions on foreign and security policy[35]; and in autumn, the actual EU membership decision debate took place[36].

	EU membership		**Other debates**	
	Speeches (n)	**Average length (words)**	**Speeches (n)**	**Average Length (words)**
February-94			341	217
March-94	53	187	524	192
April-94			698	258
May-94	86	311	848	218
June-94	519	359	1180	234
September-94	144	422	875	364
October-94			828	213
November-94	1229	648	934	241
December-94			1469	206
January-95			1693	183
February-95			1062	265

Table 1. *Number and average length of plenary session speeches by month. Note: the speeches have been categorised as either part of the EU membership debates or other plenary sessions, according to the session topic; average length is measured in words.*

During the 1994 session, a total of 12,483 speeches were given by MPs in the Finnish Parliament, excluding those by the Speaker. Table 1 highlights the importance of the EU debates during that year: in short, nearly one in six of all speeches (2,031 speeches) related to the EU membership debate.[37] The speeches in parliament vary significantly in length. Additionally, it is well known that the final phase of the EU membership debates involved a filibuster, during which time opponents of membership sought to delay the vote until after Sweden's (assumed negative) decision. Table 1 presents the number of EU membership speeches and other speeches, as well as their average length, measured in words (no data is available on the speeches' duration for this period). The table illustrates how the membership debates played a significant role during the parliamentary season, as indicated also by the number of speeches and their length in June.

Interruptions during speeches provide another indication of the relevance of the EU debates throughout the parliamentary year. The interruptions, or interjections, constitute unauthorised speaking turns.[38] In the Finnish Parliament, the minutes record interruptions by MPs[39], which we have extracted from the ParliamentSampo dataset. As Isosävi and others have noted, interruptions should be understood not only as disturbances but also as micro-interactions between the speaking MP and the interrupting MP.[40] In addition, Diener has found that the interruptions often take place between MPs who are the experts on the topic under discussion.[41]

Figure 1 shows how many times MPs interrupted the speeches being given during the EU membership debates, as well as other speeches, relative to their length. The figure shows that the discussions held in the spring of 1994 particularly prompted MPs to comment on each other's speeches. A higher share of interruptions is also evident in the decisive November debate. The speech with the most interruptions occurred during the filibuster, when MP Vesa Laukkanen's (Alternative for Finland, previously Christian League) speech was interrupted 39 times. The interjections were largely criticisms of the filibuster itself: for example, MPs in the chamber shouted remarks like "the best remedy is to go to sleep" and "you're keeping yourself busy by reading the same speech three times".[42] However, the interruptions were not merely expressions of irritation at the filibuster, but, more broadly, they served to intensify the discussions and challenge the speaker. For instance, Laukkanen himself interjected during Minister of Foreign Trade Pertti Salolainen's (National Coalition Party) remarks concerning independence. When Salolainen

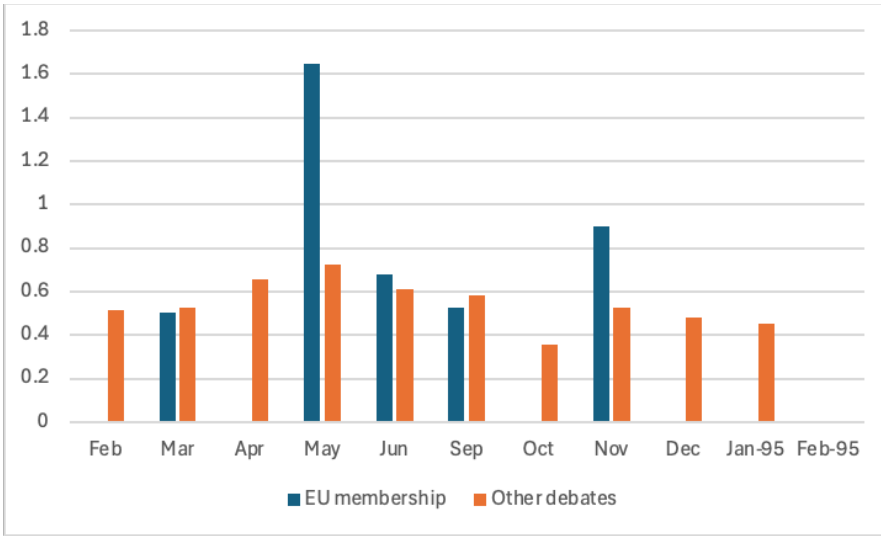

Figure 1. *Interruptions by speech, relative to the speech's length by month. Note: the interruptions made during speeches have been normalised by speech length, calculated per thousand words; the interruptions have been categorised based on whether they occurred during EU membership debates or other plenary discussions, according to the session topic.*

stated "Finland has been, is, and will remain an independent state; our independence is not questioned by anyone or in any context", Laukkanen interrupted by shouting "I do question it!"[43]

As will be discussed in more detail with respect to the qualitative reading of the speeches, a key area in the parliamentary debates was the fear of losses and, conversely, the rejection of such fears regarding the consequences of the EU membership decision. MP Tuulikki Ukkola (Liberal People's Party) aptly summarised this concern as follows: "The EU debate has mainly focused on what we gain and what we lose."[44] Similarly, MP Jarmo Laivoranta (Centre Party) remarked: "At least for me, it has been difficult to understand where the kind of information comes from that allows people to categorically predict catastrophe, whether we join or not. [...] Such extreme polarisation, where the only common denominator seems to be fearmongering, is not, in my opinion, fortunate for this nation."[45]

This emphasis is also visible quantitatively, as MPs mobilised such emotions in the EU discussions. Figure 2 shows the relative occurrence of words explicitly about fear and loss, but also about threat and danger.[46] The relative

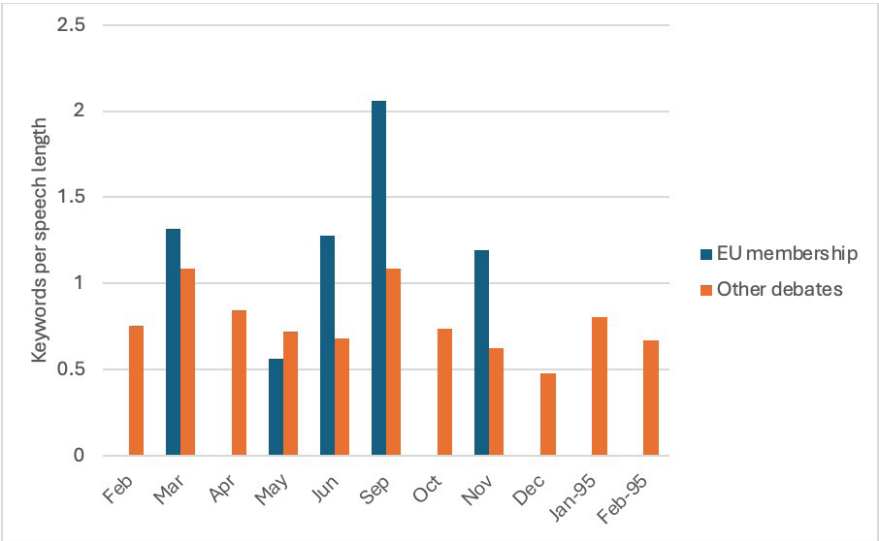

Figure 2. *The share of fear and loss vocabulary in speeches, relative to speech length, by month. Note: the vocabulary has been compiled using non-case-sensitive, truncated search terms: fear (pelot*, pelko*, pelkää*), loss (menetä*, menety*, and menettä*), danger (vaaral*, varoit*) and threat (uhka*). The number of identified keywords has been normalised based on speech length (per thousand words).*

share of those words was higher in EU membership discussions than in other full-session speeches, particularly in the spring and in September, when the membership discussions began. It may be that filibuster discussions reduce the use of that type of vocabulary, as the main focus in filibuster speeches was on length and slowing down the decision-making process rather than on directly debating membership per se.

Analysis of the shift in the emotional regime: the fear of loss through references to independence, the welfare state, the economy and democracy

We studied the emotional regime employed in the EU membership debates through the fear of loss motif, which emerged as a central discursive element in the qualitative reading of the speeches. Fear is a complex concept, challenging to analyse and define. At the core of our analysis is the view that emotions are

formed within cultural structures and through interactions and social exchanges. Both individuals and groups must process and regulate their emotions according to the prevailing circumstances, shaping how they are expressed in a manner appropriate to the specific context – in this case, the EU debates in parliament. Language and cultural norms construct emotions while also influencing how they are experienced in practice. Furthermore, whether an emotion, such as fear or anger, is defined in a particular way depends on the situational context, and there is no guarantee of consensus on such definitions.[47] Gold and Revill have delineated eight primary components associated with fear: anxiety, awe, phobia, insecurity and uncertainty, threat, hate, loathing, and trauma. These elements vary in their relevance to personal fears versus the socio-political constructs that individuals internalise or embody.[48]

According to our reading of the EU membership debates, the fear of loss can be divided into the following overarching themes: 1) independence (sovereignty as well as foreign and security policy) and national identity, 2) the welfare state, 3) the economy, and 4) democracy. We review here aspects of the fear-loss nexus in relation to these four central themes. Concerns about the potential loss of values and the practical applications associated with the themes surfaced in discussions from multiple viewpoints, revealing their interconnections. We will now delve deeper into how MPs engaged with the emotional components of EU membership in relation to the four overarching themes.

Independence: limited impact of negative emotions due to historical experiences

The arguments of EU opponents typically appeal to negative emotions.[49] This strategy was evident in Finland as well. In the following analysis, we discuss how negative emotions were linked to the issue of independence and explain why this approach was not particularly successful in the Finnish context. According to the opponents, Finland would lose its independence by joining the EU. Opponents thus mobilised negative emotions related to the loss of independence, above all shame and humiliation (subjugation). Independence had been won at an extremely high cost in previous wars, and now, in the opponents' view, it was being sold for presumed financial gains. The claim was further reinforced by portraying the EU decision – and thus the loss of independence – as a final and irreversible solution. In doing so, the opponents

sought to evoke a sense of shame over the perceived disrespect for the blood sacrifice made by previous generations.[50]

The evocation of shame was very direct and could, for example, be linked to biblical teachings. The chairman of the Christian League reminded other MPs of the Fourth Commandment, to honour our fathers and mothers so that we may prosper and live long upon earth. He continued by saying that our fathers and mothers, weeping and praying, had fought half a century ago for the independence and freedom of the Finnish nation and land: "We must deeply honour the heavy sacrifices of the veterans of our wars, gratefully cultivate and protect this land, and safeguard the independence that was so dearly earned and redeemed."[51]

In addition to evoking a sense of shame, the opponents also sought to stir feelings of humiliation. They demanded government representatives to explain what threats had compelled the government to request – and even beg for – EU membership, despite the fact that it meant the loss of independence.[52] According to the opponents, EU membership meant not only the subjugation of the nation-state to the authority of the EU but also the loss of individual citizens' independence and freedom.[53]

Opponents accused the country's power elite and mainstream media of displaying an uncritical and condescending attitude towards the EU and Brussels. The sense of subjugation was compounded by the country's past. Opponents interpreted this attitude as being rooted in a historical tradition of submission – whether dating back to Swedish rule, the Tsarist era or later patterns of subservience. They argued that, given the opportunity, political elites endowed with sufficient Finnish self-esteem and national pride could now choose a genuinely democratic alternative for Finland and remain outside the EU.[54]

However, the negative sentiments expressed by the opponents lacked a strong emotional foundation when viewed in the context of the country's historical experience.[55] For EU supporters, it was easy to counter the accusation of dishonouring the sacrifices of previous generations by pointing out that the wars had, in fact, been fought to defend Western culture and the freedom of an independent nation.[56] They argued that the veterans had fought not only for national independence but also to preserve Finland's centuries-old ties to the West and to ensure the nation's ability to chart its own course according to its own values.[57] In the lived experience of contemporaries, humiliation was closely associated with Finland's post-World War II context. Speci-

fically, they perceived Finland's political manoeuvrability in relation to the Soviet Union as humiliatingly narrow.

Proponents of joining the EU argued that Finland no longer needed to grovel to either the East or the West.[58] MP Kirsi Piha of the National Coalition Party highlighted this shift, noting that Finland had only recently begun to openly discuss NATO membership and other security and defense policy options. She asserted that this in itself was an example of independent decision-making and spoke volumes about the growth of independence and the transparency of autonomous decision-making – rather than the opposite, as opponents had claimed.[59] In light of the country's post-war history, the opportunity to join the EU and the decision to consider national security policy options without the constraints of the YYA Treaty represented something new.[60]

The chains of the old emotional regime had been broken, which MPs clearly recognized. The opponents' attempt to portray the EU as a burden on the country's independence comparable to that of the Soviet Union or Russia was not credible in that regard, since Finland had specifically had to struggle to belong to the Western community – and the EU membership decision did not involve a military threat. According to the opponents, however, the supporters had specifically been seeking to exploit the old fear of Russia. They claimed people had been scared into supporting the EU via the threat of Russia. Paavo Väyrynen (Centre Party), a staunch EU opponent, noted that the speeches of Russian politician Zhirinovsky had frightened the Finns, and subsequently, "on an emotional level, the old fear of Russia was instilled in the Finns, and from then on, this issue was perceived as some sort of emotional security concern".[61] According to this view, Finns were unable to escape the old emotional regime. Rather, historical pressures from Russia/the Soviet Union compelled EU supporters to pursue a different solution than during the Cold War; the fear of Russia drove the decision to join the EU. In this manner, Väyrynen sought to deny the existence of the supporters' free choice, which they themselves did not accept.

Harle and Moisio have posited that opponents did not perceive the EU itself as evil or an enemy but instead considered Finland's membership detrimental in relation to Finland's adversary, Russia. Opponents adhered to the Cold War-era mindset of "we cannot change geography", even though their arguments also suggested that Finland genuinely belonged to the West and the Germanic peoples and that Russia was the defining adversary of the Finnish state's existence.[62] However, when examined at the level of parliamentary speeches, this interpretation presents an overly simplistic view. Although none of the

opponents imagined that the EU would launch a military attack on Finland, they did view the EU as a genuinely malevolent force capable of destroying Finland's economy, democracy, freedoms, and legislative and judicial power – just as effectively as an armed assault.[63] In the opponents' discourse, the events of the past[64], the current situation and future expectations regarding the economic and administrative power of EU countries were presented in parallel as a stark interpretation of reality.

Similarly, supporters navigated parallel temporal realities and interpreted them in accordance with their own perspectives. They, for example, positively connected the independence argument in the current context by saying that EU membership was a way to reclaim decision-making power that had already been constrained by market forces and the EU's regulatory influence.[65] Thus, Finnish independence would only become stronger, not weaker. Along those lines, MP Sauli Niinistö (National Coalition Party) criticised the opponents' main argument of losing national independence (and national identity) for being based on the belief that Finnishness was somehow weaker than, for example, Danishness or Spanishness: "Opponents of Finland's EU membership seem to suffer from a low self-esteem. They do not seem to believe in Finnishness. We believe in the Finns."[66] Niinistö thus based his appeals on a positive, courage- and strength-emphasising emotional element. Both sides did indeed mobilise both negative and positive emotional elements – though negative elements associated with a fear of loss dominated the discussion.[67]

The negative emotions employed by opponents, however, lacked a strong emotional and rational appeal due to the country's historical experiences. As a point of comparison, Norway's situation was a mirror image of Finland's, attributable to the nation's historical context. Proponents of EU membership struggled to dismiss comparisons between EU integration and Norway's past under Danish and Swedish rule.[68]

Economy: an emotional battleground spanning past, present, and future

Applying for EU membership coincided with the most severe recession in Finnish history, which explains the emotionally strong black-and-white attitudes of contemporaries. Supporters believed that membership would help Finland recover from the recession, while opponents thought that the adjustment re-

quirements for EU accession would place an additional burden on the economy.[69] The question of the economy showcases in an exemplary manner how emotions became entangled in ways that are difficult to distinguish with respect to the past, the present and future expectations.

Regarding economic issues, especially the status of agriculture, these were mobilized to evoke strong emotions and a fear of loss. Finland did not achieve as favourable an outcome regarding agricultural policies in the EU membership negotiations as had been expected, which prompted criticism and necessitated the creation of a national support package.[70] After the referendum, EU-opposing MP Lea Mäkipää (Finnish Rural Party) observed that the voting results had sharply divided the country over EU membership, particularly between wealthy southern Finland and other regions. She predicted that EU membership would widen this gap due to its economic impact on agriculture and industry, leading to a division between the "haves and have-nots" in economic policy.[71] From the standpoint of historical experiences, this division resonated with the prior division during the Finnish Civil War of 1918, where the fault lines were also fundamentally based on economic factors between the owning and non-owning classes.

Another member of the Finnish Rural Party, MP Raimo Vistbacka, drew explicit parallels between the current political climate and the historical context of the civil war. He observed that Finland was experiencing a concerning division into two opposing factions, reminiscent of the conditions preceding the civil war.[72] Furthermore, economic issues, particularly the topical national support package for agriculture upon joining the EU, also elicited strong emotions among EU supporters. The Social Democratic Party (SDP), as the main opposition party, notably criticised the high cost of the national support package. In contrast, those supporting the EU and domestic agriculture emphasised that the incomes of agricultural producers would decrease significantly and unjustly. In this context, EU proponent MP Markku Rossi (Centre Party) also referenced the experiential legacy of the civil war, stating "I have always wondered why, in Finland, we continue to engage in a civil war at the expense of agriculture". He further noted that, for instance, farmers, workers, and industry leaders in Norway had a significantly better understanding of one another.[73] The past thus did not serve as a warning of threat, but as a national self-critical gaze and a lesson for the future.[74]

Additionally, regarding agriculture, reference was made not only to past internal threats but also to external ones. Self-sufficiency in food and other

essential products was interconnected to wartime experiences and security issues.[75] Opponents believed that the EU posed a threat to the country's agricultural and food production. They also linked the potential collapse of production to more contemporary risks, suggesting that Central European intensive agricultural practices would replace clean and high-quality domestic food products.[76] Furthermore, the experiential historical horizon even extended beyond the threats and crises of the 20th century. Member of Parliament Kyösti Virrankoski (Centre Party) noted that agriculture would be "at the mercy of Brussels' actions", before further adding that, "historically, the position of the peasant in Central Europe has always been subordinate, which is a frightening prospect"[77].

The past could therefore be (re-)interpreted and utilised in a pluralistic manner, as a predictor of the future. Both supporters and opponents of EU membership added their own interpretations, and even within those dividing lines, varying interpretations emerged. This diversity of opinion rendered the spectrum for evoking fear and other emotions virtually limitless, which had the potential of leading to negative effects associated with emotional overload, similar to those observed with information overload.[78]

The economy was also closely linked to the broader issue of national independence, which may have benefited proponents, as the debate was not limited to economic concerns alone.[79] Opponents argued that Finland would lose its economic independence, its own currency, its central bank, and the ability to regulate its own economic policy.[80] In contrast, according to supporters, the strengthening of the economy enabled by EU membership would specifically enhance the country's actual independence. Furthermore, they argued that the EU could act as a counterbalance to market dynamics: the Economic and Monetary Union would serve as a regulatory mechanism for speculators and market forces, restoring the control lost by national parliaments.[81] The fears associated with the economy and agriculture, as perceived by the opponents, involved similar elements of shame and subjugation as those related to independence.

The EU, as a large economic entity, threatened to subjugate Finland. For them, the EU consisted of cold, capitalist states with a colonial past.[82] MP Esko-Juhani Tennilä (Left Alliance) reminded parliamentarians that Germany, France, the Netherlands, Spain, Italy, and Portugal were old colonial powers. None of them could achieve "world power status alone, but by combining their forces, they intended to do so, and the Maastricht Treaty delineated the process by which this federation, this world power, would gradually emerge"[83]. In the darkest speeches, opponents portrayed the EU as an attempt to recreate Nazi

Germany's rule.[84] Supporters, once again, resorted to positive emotions, advocating for the cultivation of courage, self-esteem, and national confidence among Finns.[85] The absence of precise information regarding the economic impacts of EU membership, however, posed a challenge for EU supporters, as they were unable to present definitive or clear economic calculations concerning the potential benefits and drawbacks for Finland's economy.[86] Moreover, the fact that big business was at the forefront of EU lobbying – claiming membership to be an economic necessity – did little to persuade opponents; rather, it produced the opposite effect.[87] Consequently, this information gap led to the proliferation of emotionally charged arguments, as it allowed room for emotion-driven reasoning.

From the standpoint of a shift in the emotional regime, it is interesting to note that in the speeches of proponents addressing economic issues, Russia was mentioned more readily than in those directly concerning independence and security – indicating the sensitivity of the theme. Conversely, the security issue, primarily related to Russia, was not addressed in a particularly detailed manner in any of the discussions – at least not publicly in Finland.[88] MP Ukkola (Liberal People's Party) noted that foreign and security policy was a much more important issue than the economy. She found it incomprehensible that the issue had not been properly discussed and claimed that in fact the discussion had been almost prohibited by the highest authorities.[89] Supporters of the EU emphasised that Russia was also interested in economic cooperation specifically with EU countries and that there was a desire to include Russia in matters of economic development. As an EU member, Finland could pursue those objectives more effectively.[90]

MP Jarmo Laivoranta (Centre Party) articulated, with exceptional clarity, the connection between the economy and security in relation to Russia. In his opinion, the European Union's strategy of eliminating military tension by irrevocably binding the vital economic interests of former adversaries to one another served as a commendable foundation for enhancing security.[91] Through EU membership, a potential security threat would be transformed into a positive element.[92] Opponents countered that, rather than showing genuine support, people were being pressured into backing EU membership due to the stoking of fears about Russia. According to them, EU advocates were deliberately leveraging this fear to facilitate the process of joining the EU.[93] The exploitation of emotions was indeed a prevalent theme in the discussions, manifesting it-

self not only in accusations of fearmongering directed at the opposing side but also in claims of exaggeration.[94]

On the other hand, and somewhat paradoxically, in addition to wittingly exploiting emotions, both sides accused the other of being carried away by emotions – either EU enthusiasm or a doomsday atmosphere.[95] Whether it involved being overwhelmed by emotions or consciously exploiting them, both expressed the view that emotions were inferior to reason. This perspective reflects a prevalent dichotomy in Western societies, despite the fact that an individual's personal experiences may reveal more complex dynamics and compromises between these two elements.[96]

Welfare State: less controversial theme with respect to the emotional regime

The welfare state emerged as another central overarching theme. However, the discussions surrounding it were less emotionally charged than those concerning independence and the economy. Considering the current situation, the relative lack of emotion is surprising since the fear of losing the welfare state due to the recession was a recurring theme in parliamentary discussions even without the EU's influence. The government faced accusations of dismantling the welfare state due to budget cuts.[97] In terms of the change in emotional regime, however, the welfare state was a less sensitive theme because it was not associated with humiliating experiences of wars and post-WWII politics. Instead, the welfare state had been a central factor in strengthening societal cohesion, unity, and social peace, as Finland strived to maintain its society based on liberal democracy and a market economy under the shadow of the Soviet Union, constrained by the Agreement of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance.[98] The welfare state enabled concrete and positive identification with, and comparison to, other Nordic countries – free from the shameful or humiliating elements of the neighbouring superpower's oppressive grip.

Additionally, EU proponents perceived the Nordic welfare state as a model that could be introduced to the EU. Finland and the other Nordic countries had positive contributions to offer through their membership, which did not merely entail adapting to the EU's structures and which implied new dimensions of the emotional regime by emphasising a sense of agency and power to influence. Furthermore, opponents' claims that the EU would inevitably dest-

roy the welfare state were easily refuted by pointing out that social policy fell under the jurisdiction of member states within the EU, and that the EU level could only complement it. Therefore, there was no need for concern that the EU would possess the authority to dismantle Finnish social policy. The economic argument also supported membership, according to its proponents, since the possibilities for funding social security depended primarily on the health of the national and state economy.[99] MP Sauli Niinistö (National Coalition Party) appealed in this regard directly to historical experiences: "Our case for EU membership is also supported by our historical experience. Throughout the post-war period, Finnish welfare and employment have been built on an economy open to international trade and participating in European integration." Therefore, rejecting EU membership and its associated opportunities would mean cutting off a respected economic and trade policy approach.[100]

Opponents, in contrast, characterised EU membership as a significant rupture.[101] MP Sulo Aittoniemi (Centre Party) asserted that, with EU membership, Finland's economy would need to conform to the economic frameworks of Central Europe, which would inevitably result in the dismantling of the Nordic welfare state model. He further added, rather provocatively: "Many consider this to be a positive development."[102] In addition to the threat of losing the welfare state, the desired mobilisation of emotions was further strengthened by the assertion that many actually hoped for the destruction of the welfare state, although in practice both opponents and proponents of membership spoke strongly in favour of preserving the Nordic welfare state.

Regarding the EU's perceived power to subjugate, some female opponents specifically emphasised that the threat of losing the welfare state was linked to the weakening of women's status.[103] MP Tuija Pykäläinen (Green League) criticised that, in the older EU member states, social security had traditionally been family-centric: "This system has been based on the male breadwinner model and female domestic servitude." She also dismissed the idea that Nordic countries could influence EU member states' conceptions of equality so that they would align with Nordic preferences as nothing more than wishful thinking.[104] EU supporter Riitta Myller (SDP) argued, in contrast, that the welfare state depended mainly on Finland's economic capacity and political will, with its political will shaped by national elections and its economic capacity influenced by the market performance of Finnish products and services. She also added: "What has characterised this EU debate is that opponents paint hellish horrors for us. Proponents see better the different sides of the decision."[105]

Opponents thus tried to mobilise fears to prevent membership – unlike proponents, who, according to Myller, approached the matter more analytically.

As previously mentioned, accusations regarding the other side's excessive emotionality, and consequently less rational thinking, were typical of both sides in the discussion, whether the controversy was about independence, the economy, the welfare state or the status of women. Both supporters and opponents advanced arguments that underscored an analytical approach.[106] Intuition or gut feelings did not feature in the argumentative repertoire of the members of parliament.[107] In practice, however, rationality and emotions became entangled even in analyses that sought rationality. For example, the views of the intellectual opposition were interpreted and turned into baseless and factually unfounded fear.[108] Thus, emotions such as fear could also be classified as either rational or irrational – reflecting the inevitable intertwining of rationality and emotion.

Democracy: free emotional regime among other democracies

Fear of losing democracy was also a central theme. Opponents of joining the EU argued that it was not a genuine democracy and that its bureaucratic administration did not adhere to the transparency criteria inherent in Nordic governance. MP Aittoniemi stated that the EU was not democratic at all, but rather it operated as a "dictatorship of inward-warming secret societies, where the motivating force are the thousands of bribers, known as lobbyists, who each strive to advance their own views according to the instructions given by their own interest circles"[109]. The black-and-white claims portraying the EU – and thus stable Western European states – as undemocratic were not very credible in light of historical experiences in Finland.

However, opponents attempted to fit the old undemocratic mantle of Russia onto the EU, which represented a kind of repositioning and reinterpretation of historical phenomena that has generally been recognised as a means employed by those in power.[110] MP Riihijärvi (Finnish Rural Party) emphasised Finland's historical experience of autonomy within the Russian Empire (1809–1917), viewing EU membership as a return to an authoritarian governance model akin to Imperial Russia, characterized by centralised, top-down policy directives. He claimed: "Now in Brussels, the Commission and the Council of Ministers say how things are and then no more discussions. That is not de-

mocracy." Additionally, his speech contained a reference that extended even further into the experiential history of the past. Riihijärvi argued that the EU is structurally modeled after the authority of the Pope. He urged all citizens to reflect on the fact that joining the EU would mean relinquishing the country's ability to make democratic decisions on its own affairs.[111]

Supporters, in contrast, viewed the EU specifically as a community of democratic states. MP Jukka Gustafsson (SDP), referring explicitly to a freer emotional regime in relation to Finland's past and future experiences as a neighbour of Russia, offered the following observation:

> My understanding of Finland's history, present and future indicates that Finland now has, in my opinion, an almost unique opportunity to join a type of alliance of democratic independent states, which also raises the security threshold in relation to the prevailing uncertainty in Russia, which extends as far as the eye can see.[112]

Similarly, in the discourse of MP Ben Zyskowicz (National Coalition Party), it was evident that he saw an opportunity for a freer emotional regime.[113] Zyskowicz noted that Finland had experienced extremely difficult periods when the country's freedom, democracy, and Western way of life had to be defended at great sacrifice. Thanks to this effort, Finland now had the opportunity to make an EU membership decision freely according to its own national interests. In his words: "As a member of the Union, Finland is integrally part of that group of Western European democracies to which we have always belonged, both spiritually and culturally."[114] The emotional regime no longer necessitated the subduing of Finland's Western affiliations.

However, the change in the emotional regime was not radical but instead restrained. Many supporters also highlighted that the EU would play a beneficial role in advancing democratic processes in Russia and Eastern Europe, employing a similar rationale to the notion that the EU would aid in bolstering Russia's economy and thereby enhance regional stability. MP Leila Lehtinen (National Coalition Party) stated: "The European Union has a significant opportunity to act as a stabilizer for the conditions in the former Eastern Europe and Russia. The situation in Central Eastern European countries, Russia, and the Baltic states directly affects Finland as well." She believed it was in Finland's own interest to promote democracy and economic development.[115] Thus, membership would enhance the country's sense of security in two ways: through

Finland's EU ties to stable democracies and through the EU's support for the development of democracy in the former Eastern Bloc countries.

EU supporters also emphasised that Finland and the Nordic countries could specifically bring more democracy to the EU.[116] The principle of public access to documents was recognised as weaker in the EU than in the Nordic countries, and in this respect the Nordic countries would have a positive impact, similar to how the positive characteristics of the Nordic welfare state could be introduced to the EU. EU proponent MP Ukkola identified public access as the cornerstone of Finnish and Nordic democracy, noting that EU decision-making lacked the transparency familiar in Finland. She acknowledged that addressing this challenge would require years and also critiqued the disparity between the principle and practice of public access in Finland.[117] MP Pekka Haavisto (Green League) similarly demanded Nordic-style transparency and openness in EU administration, supporting Justice Minister Anneli Jäätteenmäki's (Centre Party) policy lines favouring broader openness in the preparation of EU matters so that the secrecy mentality characteristic of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs would not transfer to EU affairs.[118] This stance regarding secrecy clearly implied a change in the emotional regime, which EU membership was seen to substantiate.

Opponents, in contrast, claimed it was naive to believe that Finland and the other Nordic countries could help eliminate the EU's democratic deficit.[119] Opponents typically not only highlighted negative factors and emotions but also sought to deny that Finland or even the Nordic countries had agency and influence within the EU, whether in matters of the economy, the welfare state, or democracy. Such a perspective reflected the mindset of the old emotional regime, which held that Finland had to adapt to the conditions set by great powers and remain detached from their conflicts of interest. Conversely, the supporters' belief and positive confidence in the potential for influence in the EU reflected a change in the emotional regime in this regard as well.

Conclusion: past, present and future converged in emotional interpretations of the EU

This study has explored how emotions were mobilised and strategically employed during Finland's 1994 parliamentary debates on EU membership. In the analysis of debates, we developed a four-part typology of themes asso-

ciated with the negative emotions of loss and fear: independence (including Finland's sovereignty, foreign and security policy, and national identity), the economy, the welfare state, and democracy. Although the four themes are not novel findings as such, the analysis revealed how they were tied to Finland's historical experiences, the shift in the emotional regime, and the strategic use of emotions by MPs. As Gellwitzki and Houde have urged, this study took a closer empirical look at the political dimensions of emotions by examining what determines "feeling rules" (or emotional regimes), specifically what emotions can or cannot be expressed by actors in terms of their social desirability and how emotions are shaped by political actors.[120]

The theme of EU membership was central in the parliamentary season of 1994, with one of the culminations being the autumn filibuster discussions. A comparison with other debates of that year shows how the MPs interrupted their colleagues more often and how the rhetoric of fear, loss, threat, and danger was more prominent in the EU membership debates. From a comparative perspective, it is not surprising that the EU membership debate was particularly intense in Finland. Particularly after Brexit, researchers have drawn attention to the emotionally charged nature of EU membership disputes and how opponents of the EU, specifically, have been able to leverage negative emotions to their advantage. The Finnish case, on the other hand, allowed us to examine a situation where appealing to negative emotions proved to be less effective particularly in the parliament, which has been the focus of this study. In the parliament, the EU treaty was approved on 18 November 1994, with a vote count of 152 to 45.[121]

The research questions addressed in the study included how emotions were constructed and expressed in the parliamentary debates and how the MPs used emotional language to position the EU as an object of fear, loss, or hope. The questions highlighted that the EU membership dispute was a struggle over the emotional regime. In other words, the struggle had to do with whether to continue along the same lines (as favoured by EU opponents) or to move towards a new, and according to proponents of EU membership, freer emotional regime. This distinction was particularly evident in the debate surrounding independence and the economy, where the past, present and future relationship with Russia/the Soviet Union was central, albeit not always explicitly articulated. Opponents contended that Finland would lose its independence and economic freedom by joining the EU, mobilising negative emotions like shame and humiliation (subjugation), which were traditionally associated with Russia/the Soviet

Union. Opponents further claimed that independence, hard-won at great cost during the wars, was being sacrificed for perceived financial benefits. However, in light of the country's historical experiences, this scenario was not credible, as Finland had specifically fought in the wars and in relation to Russia/the Soviet Union to maintain its connection to the West, as highlighted by supporters.

The themes of the welfare state and democracy were not as emotionally charged, which can be attributed to the fact that they were not as closely tied to the country's relationship with the Soviet Union/Russia. Rather, they were more associated with a connection to the West, particularly the Nordic countries. However, even in this context, a shift toward a freer emotional regime was evident. According to supporters, Finland could now freely choose to join the ranks of other democracies, which reflected a change in the emotional regime that Finland must adapt to the conditions set by great powers and remain detached from their conflicts of interest. Furthermore, the supporters believed that Finland could potentially have a positive influence on the EU in terms of welfare and democracy, advocating for agency in relation to integration rather than mere adaptation.

In summary, the old emotional regime encompassed a lack of alternatives during the Cold War, characterised by a mentality of secrecy, strong presidential leadership, and stringent control over emotions in foreign policy matters. This regime also included the perception of artificial emotional elements related to the Soviet Union – such as friendship, which was associated with undertones of pressure and obligation as well as artificiality and flattery – and the feelings of shame and humiliation stemming from this lack of freedom. In contrast, the transformation of the emotional regime indicated a genuine choice in foreign policy decisions, fostering transparency and pluralistic perspectives, where foreign policy did not solely dictate outcomes, and promoting a belief in the nation's own influence, exemplified by the commitment to the principles of public accountability and the welfare state within the EU.

Nevertheless, while the parliament's decision to join the EU can be considered a watershed moment for the new emotional regime, our analysis of the discussions revealed that this change was not a radical departure from the previous regime. The caution with respect to Finland's eastern neighbour, inherent in the preceding emotional regime, persisted in the new context, even as references were made to the Soviet Union's unpleasant level of pressure and influence during the debates. All participants shared the view that Russia

should be treated with civility and kindness, supporting its transition towards democracy and a market economy.

The key contribution of our examination of Finland as a case study is the finding that the political dimensions of emotions were strongly linked to the country's historical experiences, which could be interpreted and utilised in a pluralistic manner as predictions of the future. In the speeches of both opponents and proponents of EU membership, the past, present, and future could be presented as intertwined, shaping perceptions of the EU. It is also noteworthy that the parliamentarians referred not only to the country's more recent historical experiences but also to its older historical experiences, which cannot be directly associated with the emotional regime of the Cold War but rather with an earlier emotional regime, as evidenced by references to the Civil War, accentuating the pluralistic utilisation of historical experiences. The other central finding of this study is that it is precisely in relation to those historical experiences that the intertwining of emotions and reason became most evident, despite the speeches of members of parliament tapping into, at least on a surface level, a traditional Western binary distinction between less valued emotions and more esteemed analytical reason. Historical experiences involved strong emotions, and those intense emotions served as rational guideposts on a path towards an open-ended future not yet subject to certain, rational knowledge. However, different interpretations of the past possessed varying emotional and rational appeal. In light of Finland's recent historical experiences, depicting the EU as humiliating and oppressive, akin to Russia or the Soviet Union, was neither emotionally nor rationally compelling.

Although the country's historical experiences proved central to the political use of emotions, this study also shows that emotions are entangled in ways that are difficult to unravel in relation to the past, the present, and future expectations. Therefore, we suggest that the political-cultural context determines whether the mobilisation of emotions emphasises the past, the present, or the future. For instance, in the case of Sweden, the present – specifically economic conditions – appeared to exert the most significant influence.[122] In this regard, we concur with the view that emotions have a prioritising function, allowing individuals to navigate manifold opinions, preferences, values, and conflicting interests.[123]

We additionally contend that the expressing of strong emotions warrants serious consideration in research, as political emotions can reveal latent phenomena that might be neglected in analyses centred on more rational po-

litical trends. The ascent of the Finns Party (formerly known as True Finns), and its capacity to leverage the welfare nationalist narrative[124], can be distinctly associated with emotionally charged EU debates, where the issues of the welfare state and the economy were prominent. Therefore, strong expressions of political emotions should not be regarded as trivial or irrational; instead, the inquiries associated with them should be approached with seriousness, as they can provide valuable insights into prevailing and future political dynamics.

***Kati Katajisto**, PhD, is Adjunct Professor at the University of Helsinki. Her recent research has focused on the political and administrative history of Finland in the 20th century. Her research has dealt with 19th and 20th century political history, political elites, municipal politics, biographies, and political party history. She is currently serving as a researcher in the project "State Committees Institution in Finland and Sweden: A Case for Inclusive Democracy and Good Quality Policy Preparation?" led by Professor Johanna Rainio-Niemi.*

***Matti La Mela**, PhD, is Associate Professor (docent) in Digital Humanities at the Department of ALM, Uppsala University. His background is in social science history, and his recent work has focused on computational methods in digital humanities, patent history, and digital research infrastructures e.g. in the area of parliamentary data.*

References

1 Tiilikainen 2020; Elo 2021, 5; Arter 1995, 362.
2 Vogt 2023, 47; Vuorelma 2016.
3 Tiilikainen 2020; Vogt 2023.
4 Tuominen 2024, 233.
5 See Karimäki 2021.
6 See, e.g. Tuominen 2024, 235; Elo 2021; Kiander & Romppanen 2005; Aunesluoma 2021; Arter 1995.
7 This perspective applies to both Finnish and international literature. See Verbalyte & von Scheve 2018, 163.
8 Tuominen 2024, 235.
9 Ahmed 2014, 7; see also Reddy 2001, 119.
10 Cf. Moisio 2003, 285; Scott 1991, 797; Kivimäki & Toivo 2022, 60.
11 Moss, Robinson & Watts 2020, 843.
12 Minutes of the Plenary Sessions (Valtiopäiväasiakirjat) 1994/5, 4711.
13 Cf. Illouz 2024, 183; Gellwitski & Houde 2022, 1483–1484.

14 Illouz 2024; cf. Verbalyte & von Scheve 2018, 165. The ideal of a well-informed, rational citizen has largely failed, as it overestimates people's capacity and motivation to understand and act on political information.
15 Jokisipilä 2021, 82.
16 Reddy 2001, 129.
17 Boddice 2022, 250–251.
18 The FCMA Treaty was terminated in 1992, but continuity was evident in the fact that a cautious attitude towards Russia persisted. See Ovaska 2023, 510.
19 Cf. Mälksoo 2009, 65–66.
20 Moisio 2003, 285–297.
21 Moisio 2003, 167.
22 Lintonen 2003, 150–152, 161; Ritvanen 2021, 121; Ovaska 2023, 477; *Helsingin Sanomat* Kuukausiliite, "Syksyllä 1990 Ruotsi petti katalasti Suomen", 7 November 2015.
23 For example, Aunesluoma 2011, 489–501; Tepora & Yliaska 2024, 412–413; Haavisto 2022, 255–279; Katajisto 2017, 583–585.
24 Boddice 2022, 15; cf. Tepora 2018, 79–80; Moisio 2003, 293.
25 Moss, Robinson & Watts 2020, 838; Boddice 2022, 15; Clough, Halley & Hardt 2007; Tepora 2018, 41.
26 Moisio 2003, 289.
27 Boddice 2022, 15; cf. Tepora 2018, 79–80; Moisio 2003, 293.
28 Guldi 2018; La Mela & Oiva 2022.
29 Tiilikainen 1996, 119; Karimäki 2021. Among the major parties, the National Coalition Party (Kokoomus), the Social Democratic Party (SDP), and the prime minister's party, the Centre Party (Keskusta), supported EU membership, although there was strong opposition within the Centre Party. Among the smaller parties, the Swedish People's Party (RKP) was in favour of it, while the Greens were divided and the Left Alliance, the Finnish Rural Party (SMP) and the Christian League (SKL) opposed membership.
30 Eduskunta, Avoin data, Digitoidut valtiopäiväasiakirjat 1907–2000.
31 Hyvönen 2024.
32 Linked Data Finland, www.ldf.fi. The speeches are available as CSV and XML files, which include information on all parliamentary speeches along with metadata, such as the speaker, party affiliation, parliamentary role and session theme. We extracted the interruptions from the XML files and compiled the descriptive statistics using basic scripting in Python.
33 Minutes 1994/1, 215.
34 Minutes 1994/2, 1279.
35 Minutes 1994/2, 1646.
36 This debate was the most extensive, with more than fifteen hundred pages of discussion recorded: Minutes 1994/3, 2347–2442, 2445–2554; Minutes 1994/4, 3550–3598, 3601–4495, 4499–4582; Minutes 1994/5, 4690–5014, 5021–5145, 5158–5161.
37 The EU speeches include speeches from the plenary sessions, where the topic was about the EU membership process or else a related issue (e.g. about the monetary union). Individual speeches on other legislative topics possibly impacted by EU membership have not been included. Parliament determines the topic, which is then recorded in the data. We compared EU membership speeches with other

parliamentary speeches on a monthly basis. While this form of categorisation presents some challenges – since the non-EU speeches also include routine decision-making discussions, making the comparison somewhat unequal – it still offers an understanding of how the discursive tone of parliamentary discussions fluctuated when shifting from other plenary themes to EU membership debates.

38 Isosävi 2025.
39 Voutilainen 2023.
40 Isosävi 2025.
41 Diener 2025.
42 Plenary Session of 2 November 1994.
43 Minutes 1994/3, 2353.
44 Minutes 1994/3, 2394.
45 Minutes 1994/3, 2475.
46 Cf. Bayley et al. 2004, who use similar vocabulary in their study on British, German and Italian parliamentary debates.
47 Bourke 2005, 75.
48 Koutrolikou 2016, 271; Gold & Revill 2003, 29–31.
49 Gellwitski & Houde 2022, 1480; Moss, Robinson & Watts 2020, 840.
50 Minutes 1994/1, 227; cf. Illouz 2024, 146.
51 Minutes 1994/3, 2387.
52 Minutes 1994/1, 231.
53 Minutes 1994/3, 2384.
54 Minutes 1994/3, 2432.
55 See Gellwitski & Houde 2022, 1479.
56 Minutes 1994/4, 3976.
57 Minutes 1994/5, 4898.
58 Minutes 1994/2, 1292.
59 Minutes 1994/5, 4809.
60 Tepora & Yliaska 2024, 412.
61 Minutes 1994/4, 3898, 3921
62 Harle & Moisio 2000, 204, 209.
63 Minutes 1994/1, 227; Minutes 1994/3, 2387; Minutes 1994/5, 4727–4730.
64 For example, the colonialism of EU countries, which will be discussed in more detail later.
65 Minutes 1994/2, 1660; Minutes 1994/3, 2349.
66 Minutes 1994/3, 2369.
67 See Tepora & Yliaska 2024, 411–412.
68 Neumann 2003, 113–115; Iingebritsen & Larson 1997, 215.
69 Kiander & Romppanen 2005, 4.
70 On Finland's challenging agricultural subsidy negotiations, see Arter 1995, 373–377.
71 Minutes 1994/4, 3792.
72 Minutes 1994/4, 3637.
73 Minutes 1994/3, 2501.
74 See Tepora & Yliaska 2024, 417–418.
75 Arter 1995, 374.
76 Minutes 1994/5, 4729.

77 Minutes 1994/4, 3984.
78 Minutes 1994/3, 2532; cf. Arnold, Goldschmitt & Rigotti 2023.
79 De Vreese & Semetko 2004, 715.
80 Minutes 1994/5, 4730, 4736, 4963.
81 Minutes 1994/3, 2460.
82 Minutes 1994/3, 2384; 1994/4, 4007–4008.
83 Minutes 1994/4, 3936.
84 Minutes 1994/5, 4711–4712.
85 For example, Minutes 1994/3, 2471.
86 Minutes 1994/1, 219, 222.
87 Arter 1995, 377.
88 Arter 1995, 372; Aunesluoma 2021, 45; Tuominen 2024, 237; Blom 2018, 304.
89 Minutes 1994/3, 2391.
90 Minutes 1994/3, 2455; Minutes 1994/4, 3603, 3975; Minutes 1994/5, 4691.
91 Minutes 1994/5, 5126.
92 Arter 1995, 372.
93 Minutes 1994/3, 2475.
94 Minutes 1994/3, 2475.
95 Minutes 1994/3, 2389–2390; Minutes 1994/4, 3750, 4197; Minutes 1994/5, 4958.
96 Moss, Robinson & Watts 2020, 852.
97 For example, Minutes 1994/1, 101, 105; Minutes 1994/2, 1731.
98 Rainio-Niemi 2008; Katajisto 2017.
99 Minutes 1994/2, 1659; Minutes 1994/3, 2363.
100 Minutes 1994/3, 2366–2367.
101 Harle & Moisio 2000, 180.
102 Minutes 1994/4, 4179.
103 Minutes 1994/2, 1855; cf. Arter 1995, 385.
104 Minutes 1994/3, 2520.
105 Minutes 1994/2, 1771.
106 Minutes 1994/4, 3702, 3799, 4233; Minutes 1994/5, 5029, 5129.
107 Moss, Robinson & Watts 2020.
108 Minutes 1994/5, 4711–4712.
109 Minutes 1994/3, 2423.
110 Illouz 2024, 21.
111 Minutes 1994/4, 4089.
112 Minutes 1994/3, 2523.
113 Reddy 2001, 124–127.
114 Minutes 1994/5, 4701.
115 Minutes 1994/5, 5138.
116 For example, Minutes 1994/1, 227; Minutes 1994/3, 2349.
117 Minutes 1994/4, 3718.
118 Minutes 1994/5, 4716–4717.
119 For example, Minutes 1994/2, 1862; Minutes 1994/4, 3697.
120 Gellwitski & Houde 2022, 1483.
121 In the advisory referendum held on 16 October 1994, 56.9 per cent of voters supported EU membership, while 43.1 per cent opposed it.

122 Möller 2023, 255; cf. De Vreese & Semetko 2004, 714–715.
123 Gellwitski & Houde 2022, 1482.
124 Vogt 2023; Pyrhönen 2015.

Bibliography

Primary sources

The minutes of the plenary sessions: minutes 1994/1, minutes 1994/2, minutes 1994/3, minutes 1994/4, minutes 1994/5 (From Eduskunta open data, https://avoindata.eduskunta.fi/#/fi/digitoidut
Linked Data Finland.

Press

Helsingin Sanomat, Kuukausiliite

Literature

Ahmed, Sara. *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*. Second edition. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014.
Arnold, Miriam, Mascha Goldschmitt, and Thomas Rigotti. "Dealing with Information Overload: A Comprehensive Review." *Frontiers in Psychology* 14 (2023): 1–28.
Arter, David. "The EU Referendum in Finland on 16 October 1994: A Vote for the West, Not for Maastricht." *Journal of Common Market Studies* 33, no. 3 (1995): 361–387.
Aunesluoma, Juhana. "Odotuksia ja pelkoja: Keskustelu Suomen EU-jäsenyydestä 1989–1994." In *Suomi 25 vuotta Euroopan Unionissa*, toimittanut Kimmo Elo. Turku: Sigillum, 2021.
Aunesluoma, Juhana. *Vapaakaupan tiellä. Suomen kauppa- ja integraatiopolitiikka maailmansodista EU-aikaan*. Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 2011.
Bayley, Paul, Cinzia Bevitori, and Elisabetta Zoni. "Threat and Fear in Parliamentary Debates in Britain, Germany and Italy." In *Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Parliamentary Discourse*, edited by Paul Bayley, 185–236. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2004.
Blom, Anders. *Taloudelliset eturyhmät politiikan sisäpiirissä. Tutkimus liike-elämän poliittisesta vaikuttamisesta kolmikantaisessa Suomessa 1968–2011*. Turku: Turun yliopisto, 2018.
Boddice, Rob. *Tunteiden historia*. Tampere: Vastapaino, 2022.
Bourke, Joanna. *Fear: A Cultural History*. London: Virago, 2005.
Clough, Patricia Ticineto, Jean O'Malley Halley, and Michael Hardt. *The Affective Turn: Theorizing the Social*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2007.

De Vreese, Claes H., and Holli A. Semetko. "News Matters: Influences on the Vote in the Danish 2000 Euro Referendum Campaign." *European Journal of Political Research* 43, no. 5 (2004): 699–722. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0304-4130.2004.00171.x

Diener, Julius. "Explaining Interruption Behavior in Parliament: The Role of Topic Expertise, Career Status, and Government-Opposition Dynamics." *Politische Vierteljahresschr* 66 (2025): 303–324.

Elo, Kimmo. "Neljännesvuosisata muuttuvassa toimintaympäristössä." In *Suomi 25 vuotta Euroopan Unionissa*, edited by Kimmo Elo. Turku: Sigillum, 2021.

Gellwitzki, Nicolai C, and Anne-Marie Houde. "Feeling the Heat: Emotions, Politicization, and the European Union." *Journal of Common Market Studies* 60, no. 5 (2022): 1470–1487. https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.13328

Gold, John R., and George Revill. "Exploring landscapes of fear: marginality, spectacle and surveillance." *Capital & Class* 27, no. 2 (2003), 27–50. https://doi.org/10.1177/030981680308000104

Guldi, Jo. "Critical Search: A Procedure for Guided Reading in Large-Scale Textual Corpora." *Journal of Cultural Analytics* 3, no. 1 (2018).

Haavisto, Heikki. *Talonpojan muistelmat*. Helsinki: Otava, 2022.

Harle, Vilho, and Sami Moisio. *Missä on Suomi? Kansallisen identiteettipolitiikan historia ja geopolitiikka*. Tampere: Vastapaino, 2000.

Hyvönen, Eero, Laura Sinikallio, Petri Leskinen, Senka Drobac, Rafael Leal, Matti La Mela, Jouni Tuominen, Henna Poikkimäki, and Heikki Rantala. "Publishing and Using Parliamentary Linked Data on the Semantic Web: ParliamentSampo System for Parliament of Finland." *Semantic Web*, November, 2024, 1–23. https://doi.org/10.3233/sw-243683

Illouz, Eva. *Känslor och populism: Hur rädsla, äckel, förbittring och kärlek undergräver demokratin*. Falun: Daidalon, 2024.

Ingebritsen, Christine, and Susan Larson. "Interest and Identity: Finland, Norway and European Union." *Cooperation and Conflict* 32, no. 2 (1997): 207–222.

Isosävi, Johanna, Heike Baldauf-Quilliatre, Christophe Gagne, and Eero Voutilainen. "Reactions to Interruptions in Finnish, French and German Parliamentary Debates." *Journal of Language and Politics* 24, no. 2 (2025): 301–327.

Jokisipilä, Markku. *Perussuomalaiset Halla-ahon ja Purran linjalla*. Helsinki: Otava, 2021.

Karimäki, Jenni. "Periaatteet, pragmatismi ja poliittinen kulttuuri – Keskustan, vasemmistoliiton ja vihreiden sopeutuminen Euroopan unionin jäsenyyteen." In *Suomi 25 vuotta Euroopan unionissa*, edited by Kimmo Elo, 147–175. Turku: Sigillum, 2021.

Katajisto, Kati. *Verraton Virolainen. Johannes Virolainen 1914–2000*. Helsinki: Otava, 2017.

Kiander, Jaakko, and Antti Romppanen. "Johdanto." In *Suomi 10 vuotta Euroopan unionissa: taloudelliset vaikutukset*, edited by Jaakko Kiander and Antti Romppanen. Helsinki: Valtion taloudellinen tutkimuskeskus, 2005.

Kivimäki, Ville, and Raisa Maria Toivo. "Kokemuksen historia." In *Avaimia menneisyyteen. Opas historiantutkimuksen menetelmiin*, edited by Mirkka Danielsbacka, Matti O. Hannikainen, and Tuomas Tepora, 39–58. Helsinki: Gaudeamus, 2022.

Koutrolikou, Penny Panagiota. "Manufacturing the Avaton and the Ghetto: Places of Fear in the Centre of Athens." In *Manufacturing Phobias: The Political Production of*

Fear in Theory and Practice, edited by Hisham Ramadan and Jeff Shantz. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016.

La Mela, Matti, and Mila Oiva. "Digitaalinen historiantutkimus." In *Avaimia menneisyyteen. Opas historiantutkimuksen menetelmiin*, edited by Mirkka Danielsbacka, Matti O. Hannikainen, and Tuomas Tepora, 211–228. Helsinki: Gaudeamus, 2022.

Lintonen, Raimo. "Suomen EU-jäsenyyshanke kriisinä." In *Suomi ja kriisit. Vaaran vuosista terrori-iskuihin*, edited by Tuomas Forsberg, 149–188. Helsinki: Gaudeamus, 2003.

Moisio, Sami. *Geopoliittinen kamppailu Suomen EU-jäsenyydestä*. Turku: Turun yliopisto, 2003.

Moss, Jonathan, Emily Robinson, and Jake Watts. "Brexit and the Everyday Politics of Emotion: Methodological Lessons from History." *Political Studies* 68, no. 4 (2020): 837–856. https://doi.org/10.1177/0032321720911915

Mälksoo, Maria. "Liminality and Contested Europeanness: Conflicting Memory Politics in the Baltic Space." In *Identity and Foreign Policy: Baltic-Russian Relations and European Integration*, edited by Eiki Berg and Piret Ehin, 65–83. Farnham: Ashgate, 2009.

Möller, Tommy. *Svensk Politisk Historia: Strid Och Samverkan Under Tvåhundra år*. Femte upplagan. Lund: Studentlitteratur, 2023.

Neumann, Iver B. "This Little Piggy Stayed at Home: Why Norway is not a Member of the EU." In *European Integration and National Identity: The Challenge of the Nordic States*, edited by Lene Hansen and Ole Wæver, 88–129. London: Taylor & Francis, 2003.

Ovaska, Juho. *Hiljainen käänne. Suomen ulkopolitiikan ja ulkopoliittisen päätöksenteon murrokset vuosina 1982–1992*. Turku: Turun yliopisto, 2023.

Pyrhönen, Niko. T*he True Colors of Finnish Welfare Nationalism: Consolidation of Neo-populist Advocacy as a Resonant Collective Identity Through Mobilization of Exclusionary Narratives of Blue-and-white Solidarity*. Helsinki: Department of Social Research, University of Helsinki, 2015.

Rainio-Niemi, Johanna. *Small State Cultures of Consensus: State Traditions and Consensus-seeking in the Neo-corporalist and Neutrality Policies in Post-1945 Austria and Finland*. Helsinki: Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Helsinki, 2008.

Reddy, William M. T*he Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Ritvanen, Juha-Matti. *Mureneva kulmakivi. Suomi, Neuvostoliiton hajoaminen ja YYA-sopimuksen loppuvaiheet 1989–1992*. Helsinki: Siltala, 2021.

Scott, Joan Wallach. "The Evidence of Experience." *Critical Inquiry* 17 no. 4 (1991): 773–797. https://doi.org/10.1086/448612

Tepora, Tuomas. "Kiihkeä historia – tunteet historiantutkimuksessa". In *Menneisyyden rakentajat. Teoriat historiantutkimuksessa*, edited by Matti O. Hannikainen, Mirkka Danielsbacka, and Tuomas Tepora. Helsinki: Gaudeamus, 2018.

Tepora, Tuomas, and Ville Yliaska. "Haaleaa nationalismia. Kylmän sodan päättyminen, älymystö ja 'Suomen henkinen tila'." *Historiallinen Aikakauskirja* 122, no. 4 (2024): 408–424.

Tiilikainen, Teija. "Finland and the European Union." *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*. 30 April 2020. Accessed 1 July 2025.

Tiilikainen, Teija. "Finland and the European Union". In *The European Union and the Nordic Countries*, edited by Lee Miles, 117–132. London: Routledge, 1996.

Tuominen, Hanna. “Euroopan unionin arvot ja Suomi”. In *Arvojen yhteisö. Näkökulmia Euroopan unionin perusarvoihin*, edited by Hanna Tuominen, 233–261. Helsinki: Gaudeamus, 2024.

Verbalyte, Monika, and Christian von Scheve. “Feeling Europe: Political Emotion, Knowledge, and Support for the European Union.” *Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research* 31, no. 2 (2018): 162–188. https://doi.org/10.1080/13511610.2017.1398074

Vogt, Henri. “Finnish Orientation(s) towards Europe and the West.” *Nordic Review of International Studies*, no. 2, (2023): 44–54.

Voutilainen, Eero. “Written Representation of Spoken Interaction in the Official Parliamentary Transcripts of the Finnish Parliament.” *Frontiers in Communication* 8 (2023): 1047799.

Vuorelma, Johanna T. “A Narrative Battle: Debating Finland’s EU Policy during the Economic Crisis.” *National Identities* 19, no. 1 (2016): 11–31. https://doi.org/10.1080/14608944.2016.1146879