


Polity IV Country Report 2007: Finland

<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 15%;">Score:</td> <td style="width: 15%;">2006</td> <td style="width: 15%;">2007</td> <td style="width: 15%;">Change</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Polity:</td> <td>10</td> <td>10</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Democ:</td> <td>10</td> <td>10</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Autoc:</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Durable:</td> <td colspan="3">63</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tentative:</td> <td colspan="3">No</td> </tr> </table>	Score:	2006	2007	Change	Polity:	10	10	0	Democ:	10	10	0	Autoc:	0	0	0	Durable:	63			Tentative:	No			
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SCODE	FIN	CCODE	375	Date of Report	1 November 2008																				
Polity IV Component Variables																									
XRREG	XRCOMP	XROPEN	XCONST	PARREG	PARCOMP																				
3	3	4	7	5	5																				
Date of Most Recent Polity Transition (3 or more point change)																									
End Date		2 September 1944		Begin Date		3 September 1944																			
Polity Fragmentation: No																									
Constitution	2000																								
Executive(s)	President Tarja Halonen (SDP); initially directly elected February 2000; reelected 15 and 29 January 2006, 46.3% and 51.8%																								
Legislature	Unicameral: Diet (200 seats; proportionally elected; most recent elections, 18 March 2007) Finnish Centre Party (KESK): 51 National Coalition Party (KOK): 50 Social Democratic Party of Finland (SDP): 45 Left-Wing League (VAS): 17 Green League (VIHR): 15 Other parties: 22																								
Judiciary	Supreme Court																								

Narrative Description:¹

Executive Recruitment: Competitive Elections (8)

Executive power in Finland is shared between its president and prime minister. Representatives of both offices are selected in competitive elections which are both transparent and open. The President can serve no more than two consecutive six-year terms, which guarantees due rotation in the presidential office. In 2000, Tarja Halonen was elected Finland's first woman president, competing against six other candidates who represented the country's most influential political parties and groups. The electoral competition was free from repression or back-stage power-sharing arrangements. Halonen was re-elected in January 2006,

¹ The research described in this report was sponsored by the Political Instability Task Force (PITF). The PITF is funded by the Central Intelligence Agency. The views expressed herein are the authors' alone and do not represent the views of the US Government.

winning 46.3% of the vote in the first round of elections and 51.8% in the second round. Matti Vanhanen took over as prime minister in June 2003 as head of a center-right coalition. Prime Minister Vanhanen was returned to office in March 2007 after winning a razor-thin majority led by his Center Party.

Executive Constraints: Executive Parity or Subordination (7)

The new constitution of 2000 codified Finland's separation of powers with the supreme role of the legislature. The legislature has the authority to amend the Constitution, override presidential vetoes, and force the resignation of the Cabinet. The president's responsibilities are curtailed in the new constitution and mostly concern foreign policy which the president is obliged to direct "in cooperation with the parliament." The Government has to enjoy the confidence of the Parliament. Therefore, after parliamentary elections the parliamentary groups negotiate and agree on the formation of a new government. The prime-minister is elected by parliament and is appointed by the president. The present government is formed by a coalition led by the center-right Center Party. The judiciary is independent, both in theory and in practice.

Political Participation: Institutionalized Open Electoral Competition (10)

Finland's political parties and groups compete for political influence in a free and open manner, without coercion or restrictions on political liberties. The parties are durable and have mass-based national constituencies. The multi-party system provides access to political process for all significant groups and platforms (social-democratic, conservative, liberal, ethnic Swedish and ethnic-nationalist Finnish, agrarian, Christian, Green communist etc.). Under the proportional representation system, the largest party in the legislature is seldom able to gain more than about 25% of the seats, and so a parliamentary majority generally depends upon the formation of party coalitions. In the recent decades, either the Social Democrats or the Center Party have anchored most of the administrations. However, the swing to the political right in Finnish politics has become increasingly noticeable. In the March 2007 legislative elections the Social Democrats could only muster a third place finish behind both the Center Party and the conservative National Coalition.