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History and future lines of urbanization process in Finland

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Introduction

Finnish society has undergone vast structural changes since the Second World War, the impact of which has been reflected in the nature of the regional development that has taken place. In this sense migration has occupied an important position in shaping the areal patterns of settlement. The rapid change in occupational structure and the associated process of urbanization led to an orientation of migration away from the countryside into the cities and towns and from the rural districts into the built-up areas. The trend has also manifested itself in a retraction of population towards Southern and South-Western Finland (Karjalainen 1989: 11).

The purpose of this paper is to discuss the process of urbanization over a long time span and light up the different scenarios of future population distribution. This article is based on the international project of “International textbook of urban systems: studies of urbanization and migration in advanced and developing countries” and the project in Finland has been financed by the Academy of Finland.

Regional population development from the 1950's to present day

The number of cities and towns in Finland increased by 57 % between 1950 and 1998 (Table 1). One notable feature of these cities and towns is their small population size, 86 % of them having less than 50 000 inhabitants in 1998 and only 6 of them exceeding 100 000 inhabitants. On the other hand, the long-term trend showed a decrease in the number of very small towns with less than 5 000 inhabitants and an increase in the larger ones. There will be no big changes in the size structure of cities and towns in Finland according to a forecast to the year 2010 (SVT Population 1998:6). In small towns, with populations between 5 000 and 9 999 inhabitants, there will be a slight increase in their number and small decrease in the number of towns with 10 000 - 19 999 inhabitants.

Table 1. The amount of cities and towns by number of inhabitants in Finland 1950-2010.

Inhabitants	Cities and towns							
	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	1998	2010	
- 4 999	20	13	6	1	1	1	1	
5 000 - 9 999	16	16	21	21	27	31	35	
10 000 - 19 999	16	16	23	25	28	30	26	
20 000 - 49 999	10	16	18	24	25	26	26	
50 000 - 99 999	-	3	7	8	7	8	8	
100 000 -	3	3	3	5	6	6	6	
Total	65	67	78	84	94	102	102	

Internal migration grew steadily in the 1950s but the majority status of the countryside was maintained until the 1960s, when 62 % of the population lived in rural districts. The greatest migration waves were between rural areas in the early 1950s (Table 2). In the late 1960s and early 1970s the nature of migration was welfare orientated and were directed principally to the cities (Karjalainen 1986; Laakso 1998). Net in-migration into the towns reverted to net out-migration in 1977, when the urban areas as a whole began to lose population to the rural communes. Especially peripheral parish villages and village settlements close to large centres increased rapidly in population.

Table 2. Directions of migration within Finland in 1951-2000 (%). (Karjalainen 1989; SVT 1993; SVT 1996; SVT 2001).

Migration flows	1951	1960	1970	1980	1991	1995	2000
From rural to urban	25	32	31	25	24	26	24
From urban to rural	18	20	24	25	26	22	20
From rural to rural	45	31	18	14	12	10	12
From urban to urban	12	17	27	36	38	42	44
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
N	138 000	221 000	268 000	198 000	183 000	216 000	260 000

The migration flows of the 1980s decreased fairly steadily until 1985. The mass migration revived by the improvement of employment and growth of income was

referred to as the new migration wave. In Finland people sought their way from the North to the South and within provinces into their main centres (e.g. Rannikko 1987: 16). In accordance the migration losses of the countryside areas and small towns began to grow again and differences in areal development grew greater. Internal migration within the municipalities increased slightly in the late 1980s when two thirds of the migration occurred as commune-internal migration, principally from areas of scattered settlement into main built-up areas (Karjalainen 1989: 11).

By the turn of the century and beginning of depression the liveliness of migration decreased and migration gains of the urban regions concentrated in the bordering municipalities (Miettinen et al. 1998: 38). In 1991, the first of the true depression years, liveliness of migration lowered extremely pointedly. As production decreased and unemployment grew the migration gain of the Helsinki region began to increase again. At first the growth was based on immigrants from abroad, whose number was drastically increased following the dissolution of the Soviet Union. There were approximately 106 000 inhabited grid cells in Finland in 1994 of which one third faced migration. One fifth of the total inhabited area had a negative migration balance in 1994, although the area covered almost a half of the total population of Finland. This means that migration losses are not characteristic of sparsely populated areas only, but are encountered in the most densely populated ones (see Kauppinen et al. 1998).

At the turn of the millennium the moderately large central regions of know-how and administration still receive slight migration gain while the principal migration flow is directed to the southern parts of the country (Figure 1). A new characteristic is that several of the smallish town areas have plunged into a vicious circle of migration loss. Net migration loss particularly includes industrial cities characterised by a one-sided production structure, but also many of the provincial centres (Laakso 1998: 13-14, 68). According to Vartiainen (1997) a new characteristic is expressly the proportional regression of service-oriented middle-sized centres and the weakening of their competitive status compared to the growth centres. Whereas earlier people escaped from the countryside, now there is also a threat of desolation of the cities.

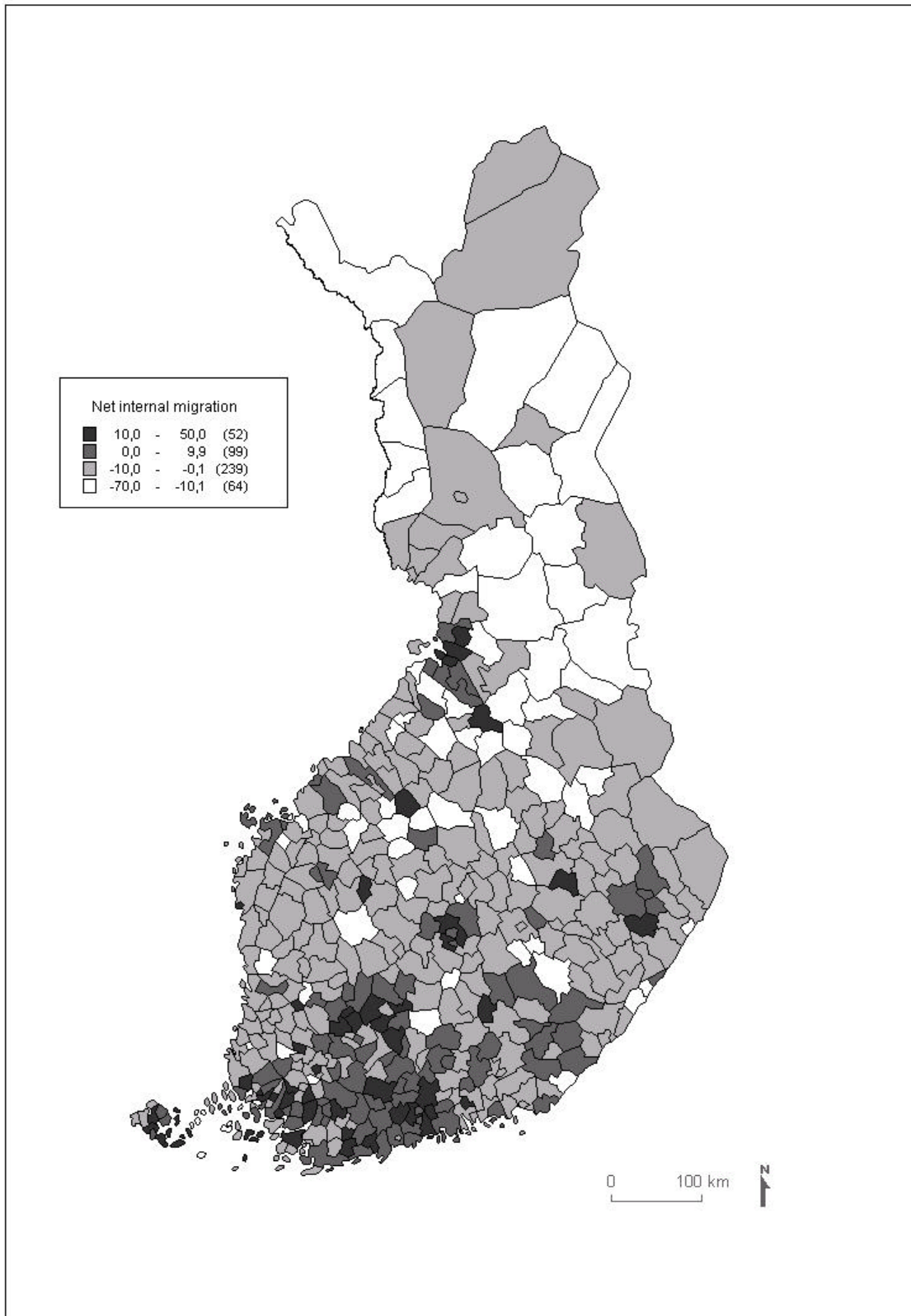


Figure 1. Net migration by municipality in 2000 in Finland (Data: Statistics Finland).

Population distribution in Finland

The land area where a half of the population in Finland is living has diminished in the long run. Hustich (1972) has calculated the concentration of population since 1880 to 1970 (Figure 2). The connection of the Finnish economy to the world market has strengthened the historical nuclear area of the population. Nowadays the population settlement concentrates to the coast, river valleys and the nodal centres of the foreign trade. The coastal municipalities adjacent to the large cities have sustained or even increased their population by becoming part of bigger labour markets (see Westerholm 1999: 91).

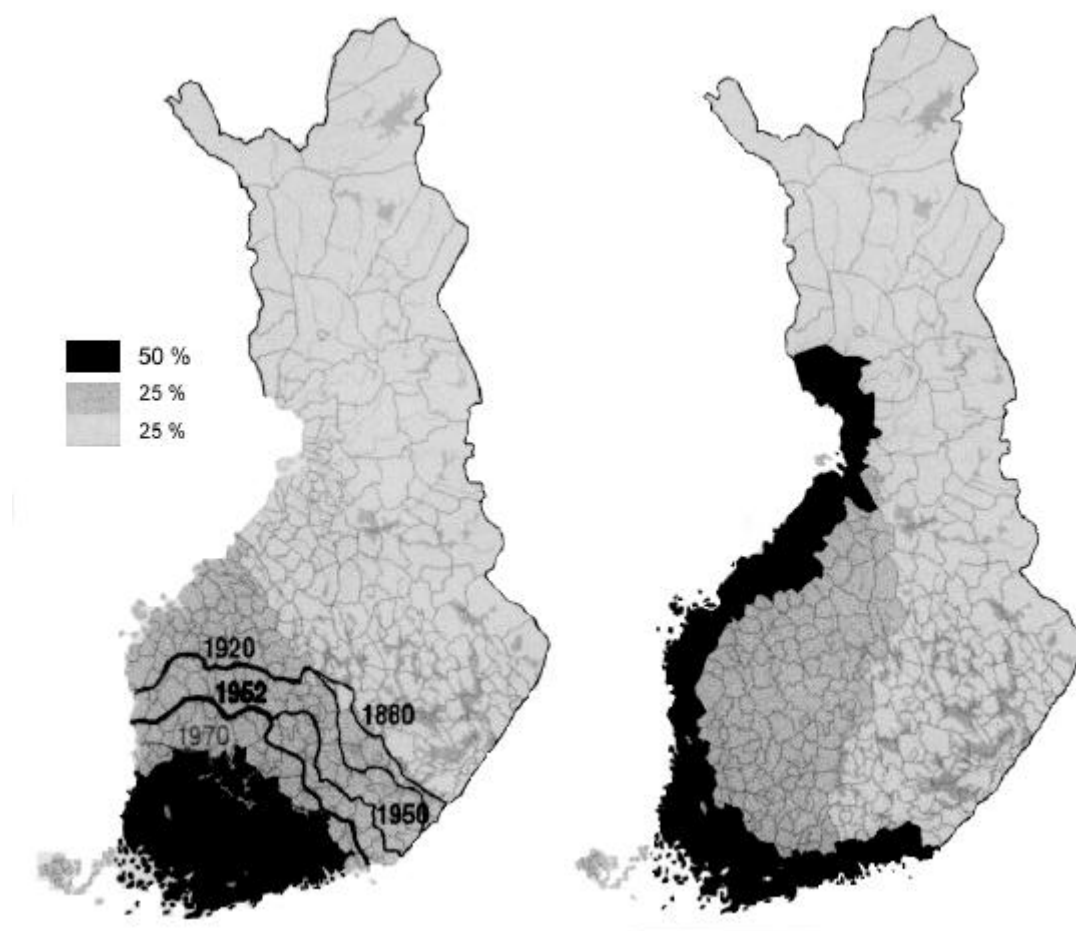


Figure 2. The development of the land area where the 50 % of population is living in Finland from 1880 to 1995 (see Hustich 1972; Westerholm 1999).

The countryside types differ from each other clearly by their population development. In the municipalities of the three countryside types (excluding cities) were living around 44 % out of the population of 5.2 million people in the end of 1999. Sparsely populated rural areas, that covers 59 % of the land surface, have had accelerating population loss during the 1990s. Only in 1999 there has been signs of balancing development but still the population is diminishing by over 1.5 % per year which means over 8 700 inhabitants. Also the nuclear rural areas have faced the population loss but it is only a half of the volume of the sparsely populated rural areas. In the absolute terms the population loss is around 5 900 per year. Up to the mid of the 1990s the rural areas near to the cities the population growth slowed down but it continued to grow after that (Figure 3; Keränen, Malinen & Aulaskari 2000: 48, 51).

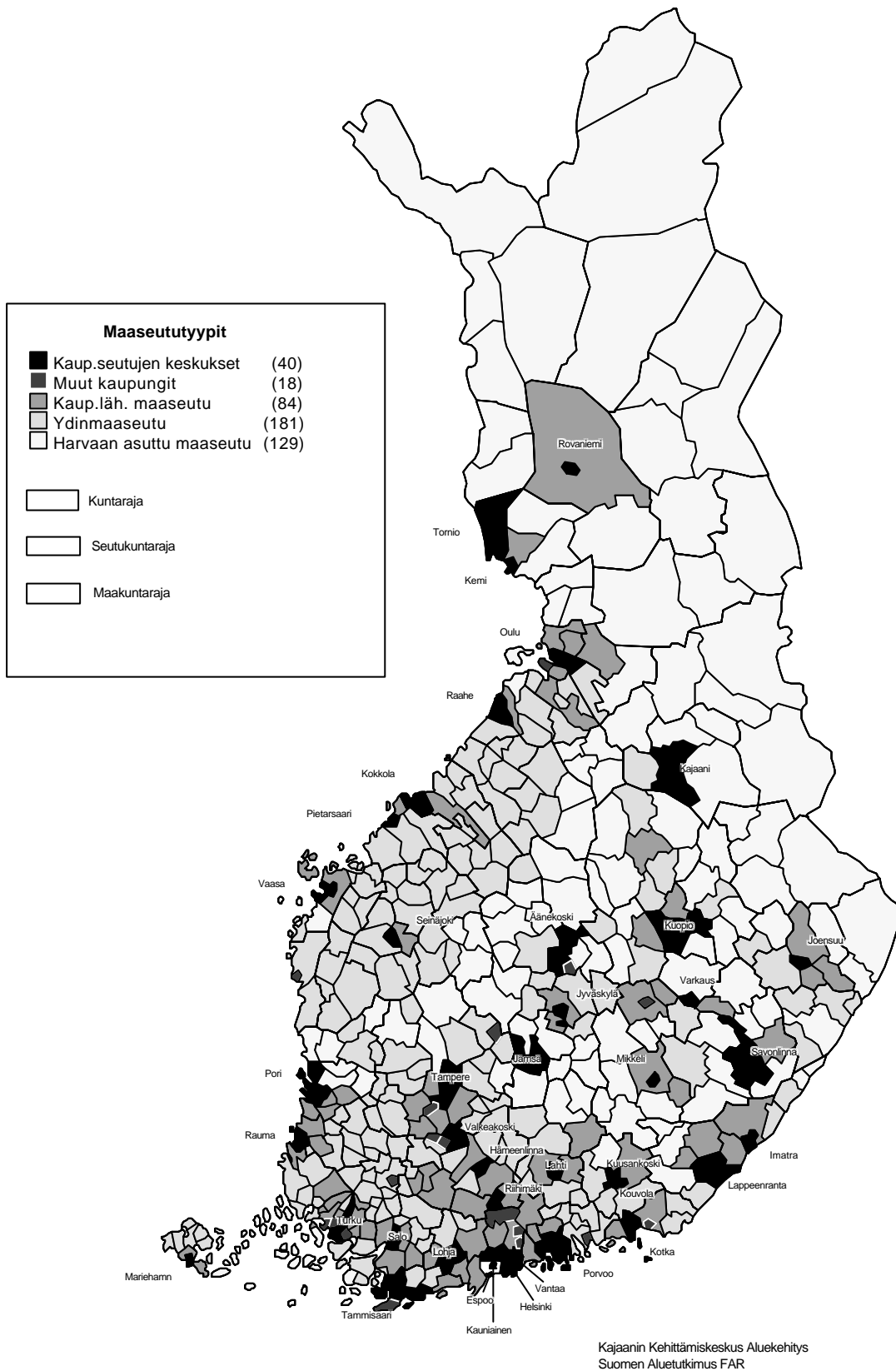


Figure 3. Countryside types by municipality 2001 (Keränen & Malinen 2001: 9).

The population of Helsinki has been growing in the long run but its share of the total population in Finland has remained in the same level (nearly 11 %). The population of the neighbouring municipalities of Helsinki (Espoo, Vantaa and Kauniainen) has over doubled during 1970-2001. Population of Helsinki will grow up to 2020 by almost 68 000 persons. The population level will be then 611 361 inhabitants (see Helsingin kaupungin tietokeskus 2002: 8).

The total in-migration between the municipalities of Finland has been 260 047 moves in 2000. Helsinki has got around 11 % of that flow and the capital conurbation, Helsinki, Espoo, Vantaa and Kauniainen, as a whole 21 %. The highest out-migration flow from Helsinki has directed to Espoo (6 017 persons) and the second highest has been to Vantaa (5 255 persons) in Finland (Figure 4). Two third of out-migration from Helsinki has occurred within Uusimaa and Eastern Uusimaa counties.

The main in-migration flows came to Helsinki from Espoo (5 004 persons) and Vantaa (4 474 persons). Half of the in-migration to Helsinki has occurred from Uusimaa and Eastern Uusimaa counties. Helsinki's migration balance has been positive (2 694 persons) and it has lost the most population to Espoo (-1 013 persons). There has been migration between Helsinki and centres located lower in the hierarchy and a great distance away, including the peripheral areas of Uusimaa and Eastern Uusimaa counties.

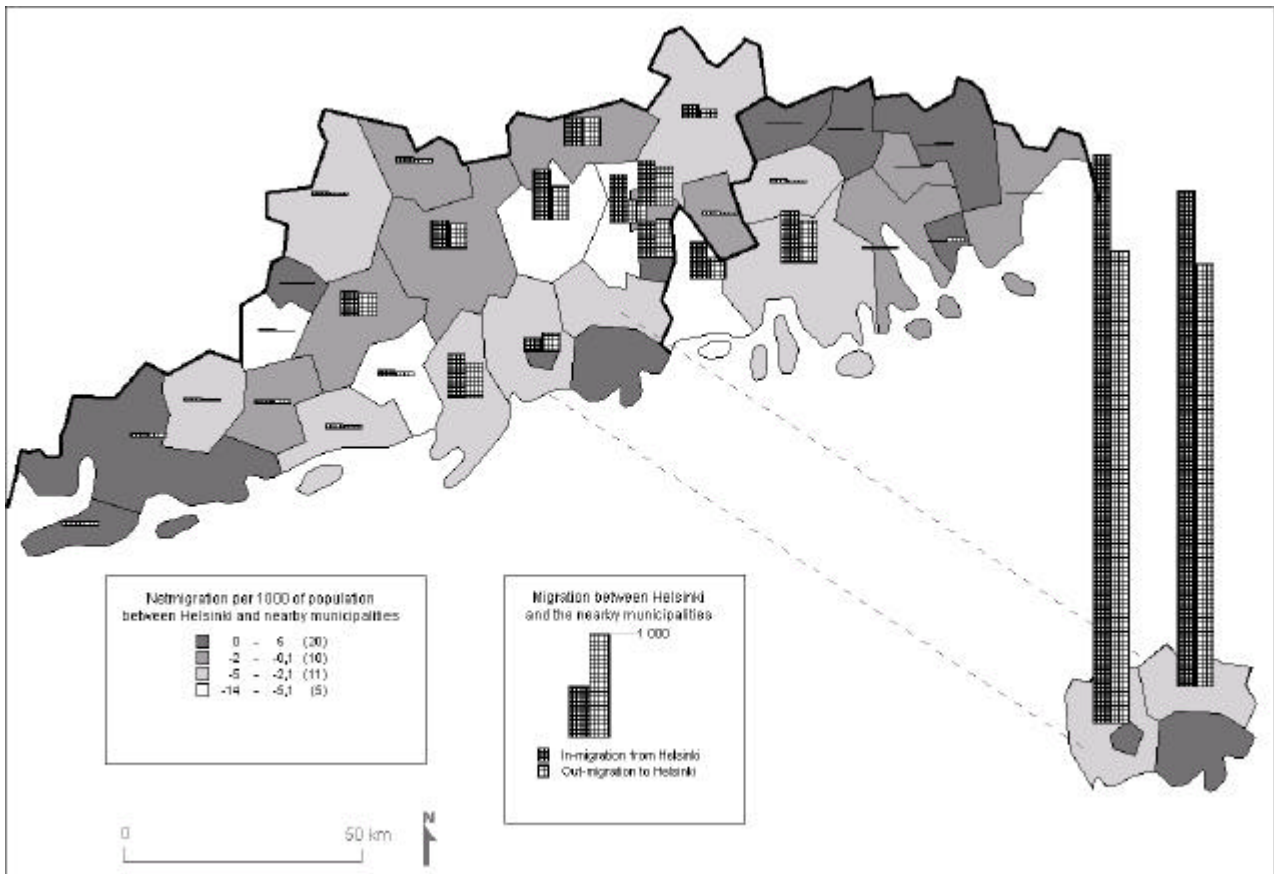


Figure 4. Migration between Helsinki and the municipalities of Uusimaa and Eastern Uusimaa counties in 2000 (Data: Statistics of Finland).

Every third Finnish wage earner commutes nowadays outside of the own municipality. The change has been rapid because in 1960 every tenth were commuting and in 1970 the amount was every fifth. The labour markets have concentrated to the growth centres while the employees have spread to the vast surrounding areas. The local labour market area of Helsinki includes 19 municipalities. The employment self-sufficient rate (the proportion of work places in relation to the amount of the employed) of Helsinki is 132.8 % which is the fifth highest rate in Finland (Siukonen 2002).

The challenges for the regional development

The urbanization rate of Finland is behind the share of European Union (Figure 5). The population will concentrate still in future in Finland. The proportion of people who are living in the built-up areas will be 84 % in 2005. Finland's development is 15 years behind Sweden: Sweden reached this figure already in 1990. The population of the rural areas will continue to decrease in future. According to Vartiainen (1995: 57) the prognosis for small town regions in urban development is not promising because the future development is assumed to favour large cities. The smaller built-up areas are assumed to develop primarily as satellites of the larger ones or as parts of their growth zones. The dismantling of the welfare state has meant growing difficulties in many administrative centres of rural areas, which have traditionally expanded largely on the strength of the welfare services (Andersson 1993: 42). According to Nieminen (2001) the annual number of mass migrations would stay near 250 000 in the future. Migration between urban areas and within them would remain as the main form of migration flow.

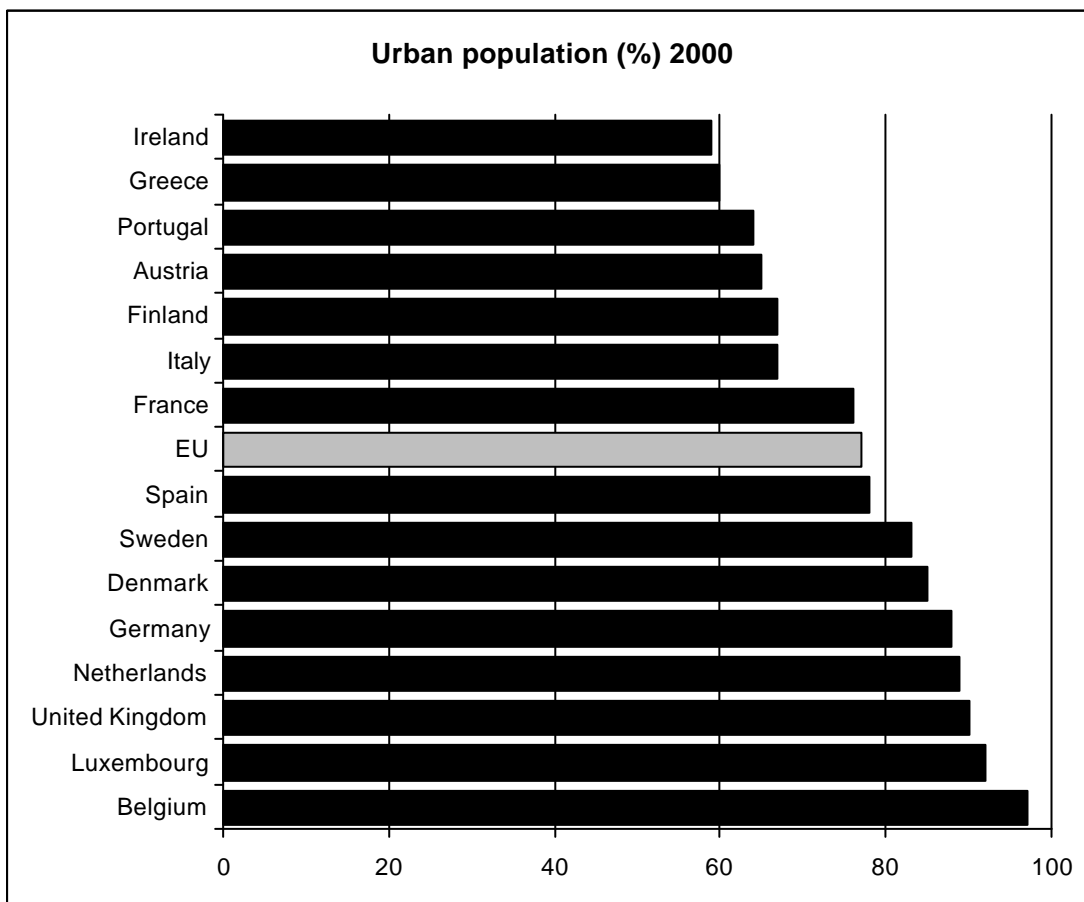


Figure 5. Urban population in European Union 2000 (%) (SVT 2001).

The most urbanized EU-countries are Benelux-countries, Belgium and United Kingdom. Urbanization rate has reached its peak in many countries and in the countries, which have started to urbanize later like Portugal and Finland, the population concentration is estimated to continue still during the next decades. The growth rate of population will be in the capital cities, Lisbon and Helsinki, around 25 % in 1995-2015 (Figure 6).

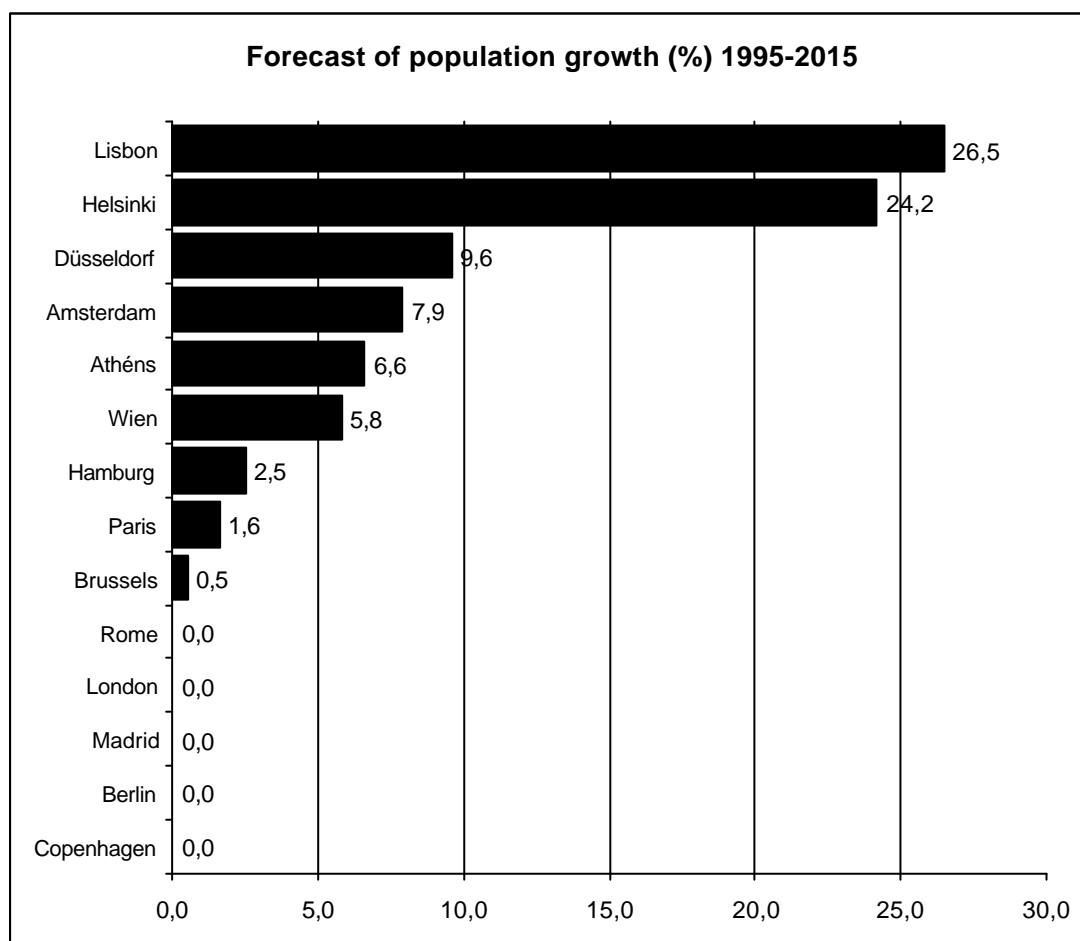


Figure 6. Forecast of population growth (%) in selected European cities 1995-2015 (see Seppänen 1996: 55).

Return migration campaigns have been launched for example in Eastern Finland and Lapland, which are migration loss areas, to attract the people who have migrated to the growth centres to return back to their roots. The nature and countryside culture and a desire to give the children safer growing environment have been regarded as pulling factors. The precondition for return migration is generally that the people get work from their own occupational field (EVA 1999: 12-16, 57;

Korhonen 1994: 46-50). If the migration campaigns are successful and become more common, they will have long-term influences to regional development.

The ministry of the interior matters endeavours to equalise the strengthening migration by establishing a national growth centre network of 34 regional centres and their spheres of influences. The purpose is to promote the interaction between the countryside and the cities. The goal is to get at least one regional centre to every province; the centre would have a versatile labour market and a stimulating social environment. An actively working regional centre is hoped to hinder the migration of young families into growth centres (Mainio 2000). The regions partaking in the programme 2001-2003 construct a plan they believe would develop the area. When good projects emerge the ministry will provide a so-called seed money for them. As a whole, the state will give half of the funding for the regional development in this programme.

The eastern Finland is missing the actual growth centre. To develop that area it has been proposed a new idea to combine three cities, Lappeenranta, Imatra and Joutseno, to a larger urban area of 100 000 population. The name of the new city would be Saimaa according to the Lake Saimaa in that area. In the rank size order the city would be the seventh largest one in Finland. The Association of Finnish Local Authorities is promoting this action (Turun Sanomat 2001). In general, there is a trend in Finland to combine the municipalities with small population into larger units.

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