The Finnish Model of Prevention: An On-Coming Crisis

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In A Nutshell

- In Finland we have had a specific administrative and/or political model trying to prevent segregation from emerging, both socio-economic and ethnic. It worked well under conditions of full employment, small income differentiation and small shares of ethnic minorities. With the fall of these preconditions we are, at present, entering a new period of crisis in which new political practices are needed, and – in this – we appear as late-comers both in the European and in the Nordic arena.

The traditional preventive policies

- A two tier –system of governance (the state on the one hand, the municipalities on the other) with a two-tier system of policies: strong incomes redistribution and universal services (the state), policies of social mixing (the municipalities).
- The latter distinguishes us from the rest of the Nordic countries and from the rest of Europe

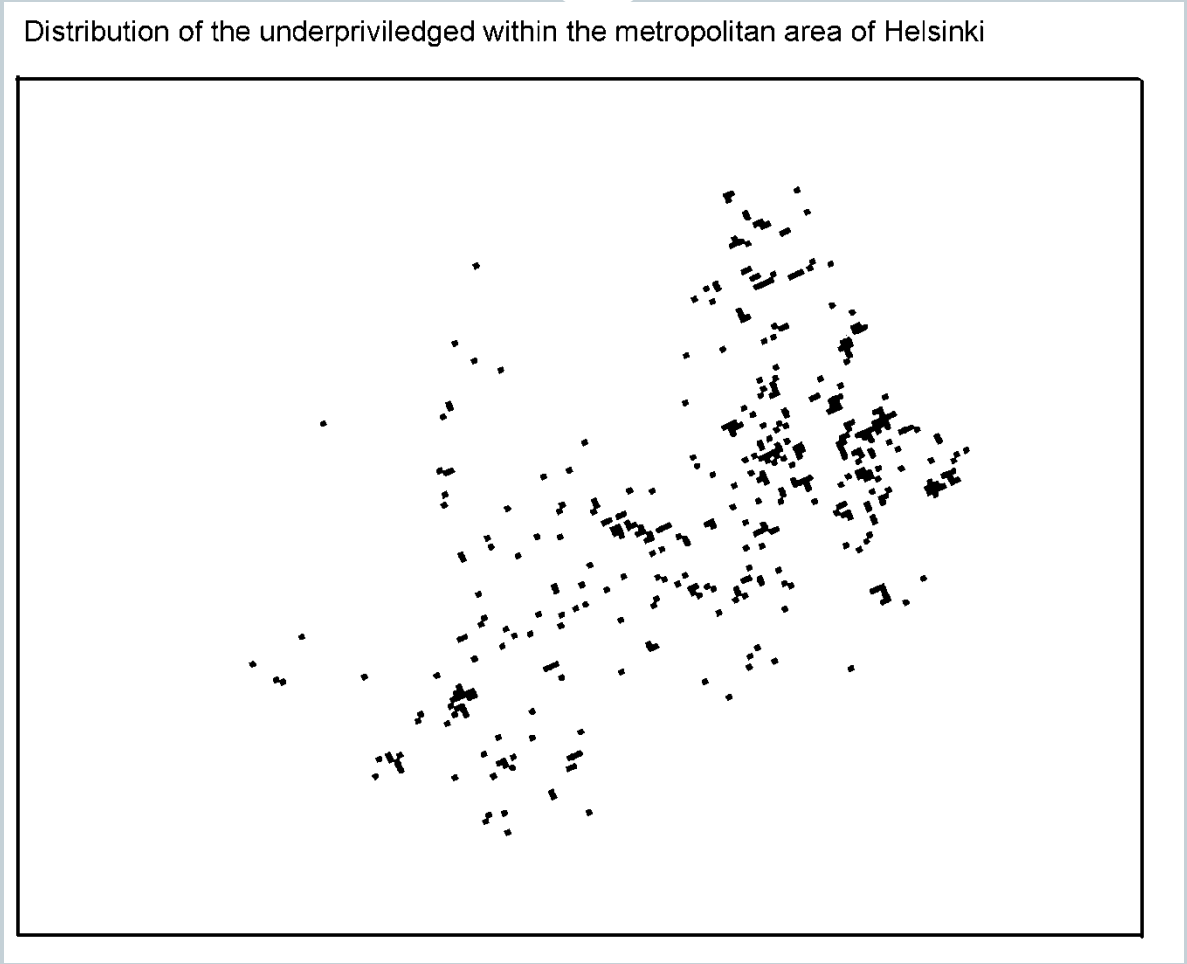
- The historical point of departure for the mixing policies: problems of social order in predominantly rental housing areas in Helsinki in the early 60's
- The aim: to produce national (socio-political) integration over social (and ethnic) boundaries
- The means: using the planning monopoly of the municipality to inhabit different strata and groups of society to the same housing areas
- The basis: a specific structure of the housing markets, divided into different tenure types

- The tenure types (the owner-occupied, the state-subsidized owner-occupied, the rental, and the municipal rental) involve a selection process of the inhabitants according to their socio-economic position.
- By controlling the share, size and location of the tenure types in new housing areas (about 50/50, owner vs.rental) it is possible to control the composition of the population

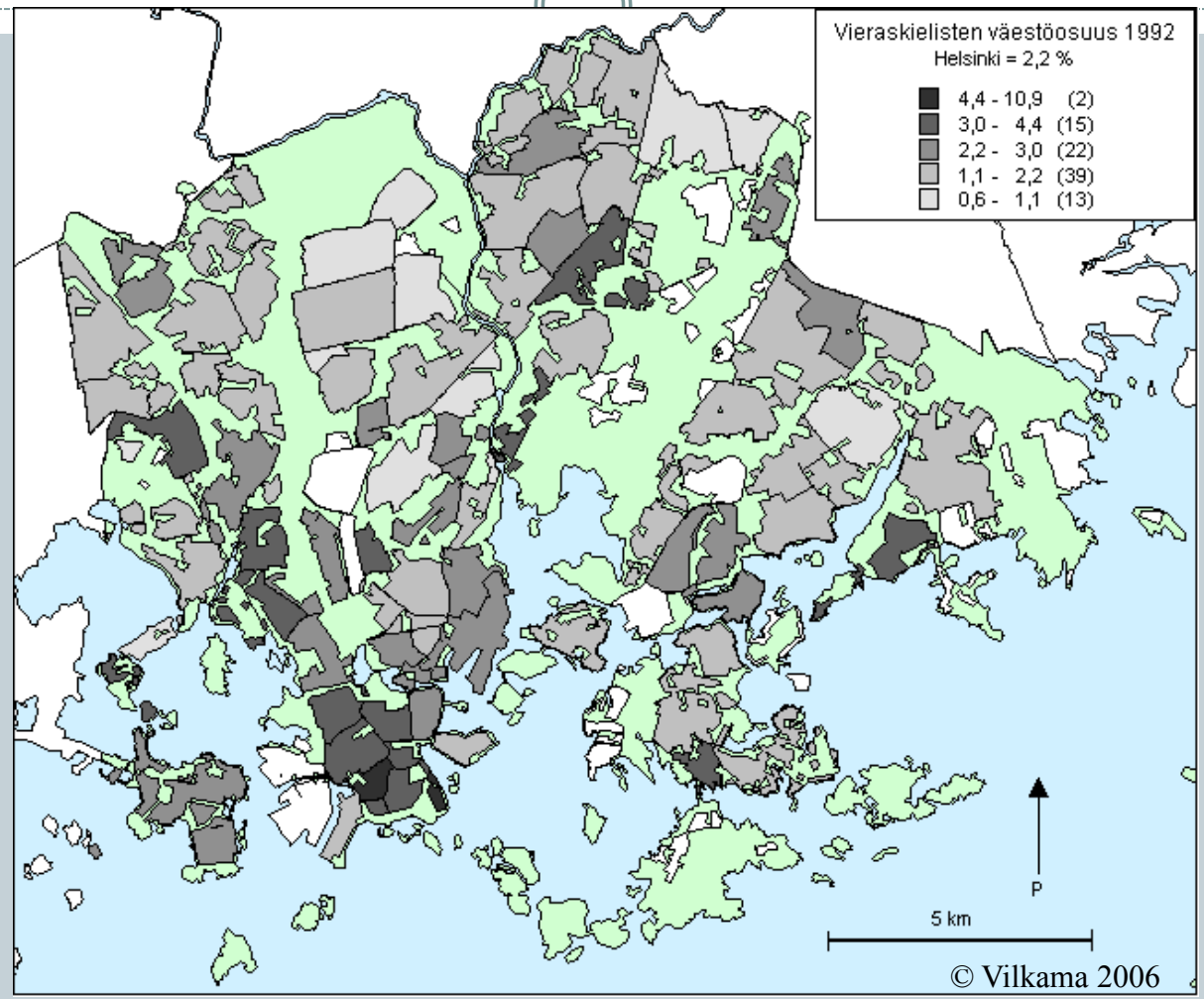
- Before 1975 blocks of houses with different tenure types were mixed within a housing area
- After 1975 blocks of houses included the different tenure types with no differences in architecture.
- The policy was consciously applied to ethnic minorities as well: ethnic house-holds were scattered into the urban structure (mainly: municipal rental).

- A peculiarly mixed urban structure was created, a structure that stands out in European comparisons in the early 90's (Flatley et al 1999a and 1999b; Vaattovaara 1998).
- Newly built sub-areas were quite similar in their socio-economic and ethnic levels, all with similar internal heterogenity
- The variance of unemployment between sub-areas in Helsinki in 1989 was between 0.1% and 1.9%.

Distmetropolitan area of Helsinki in 1994 (Vaattovaara 1998) distribution of the underpriviliged



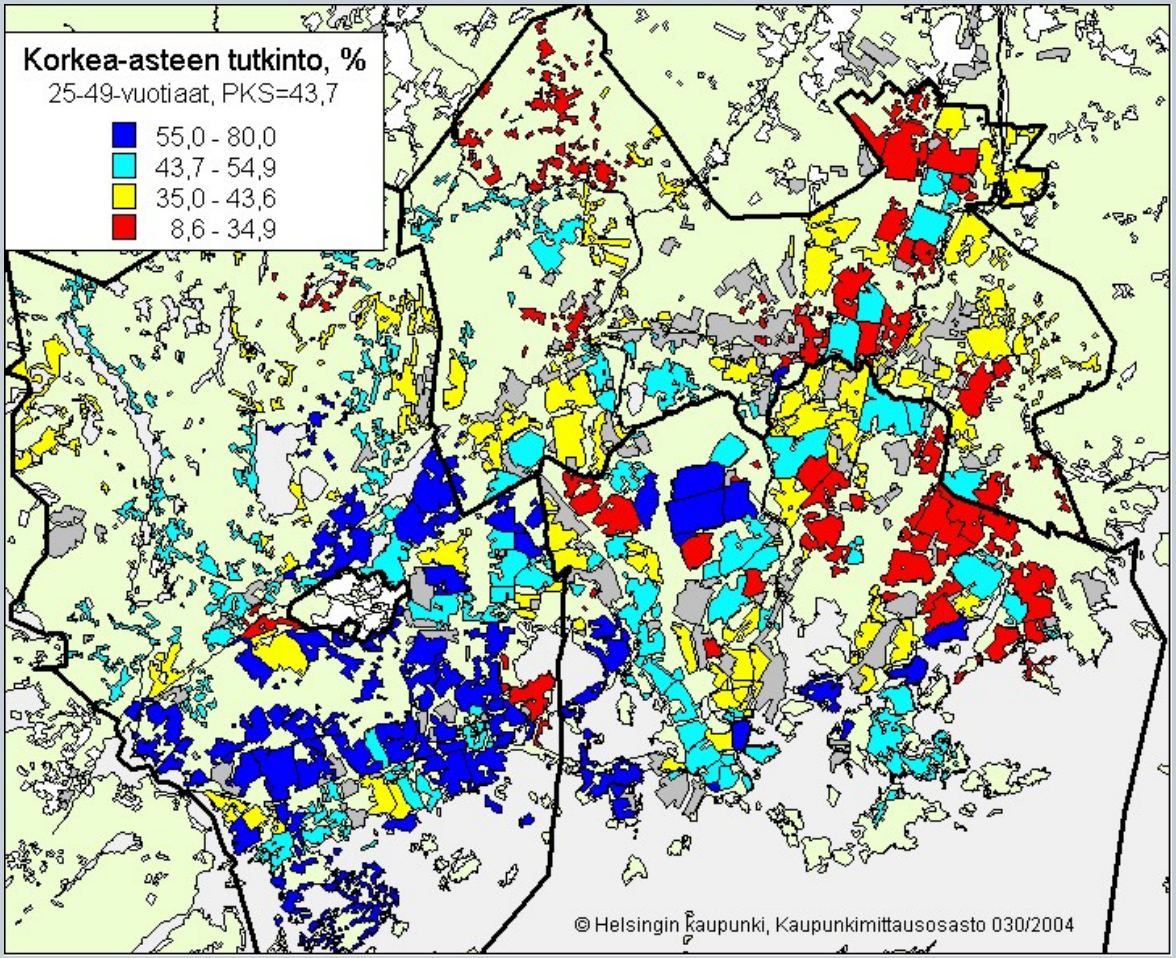
Foreign-speaking population in Helsinki 1992 (Vilkama 2006)



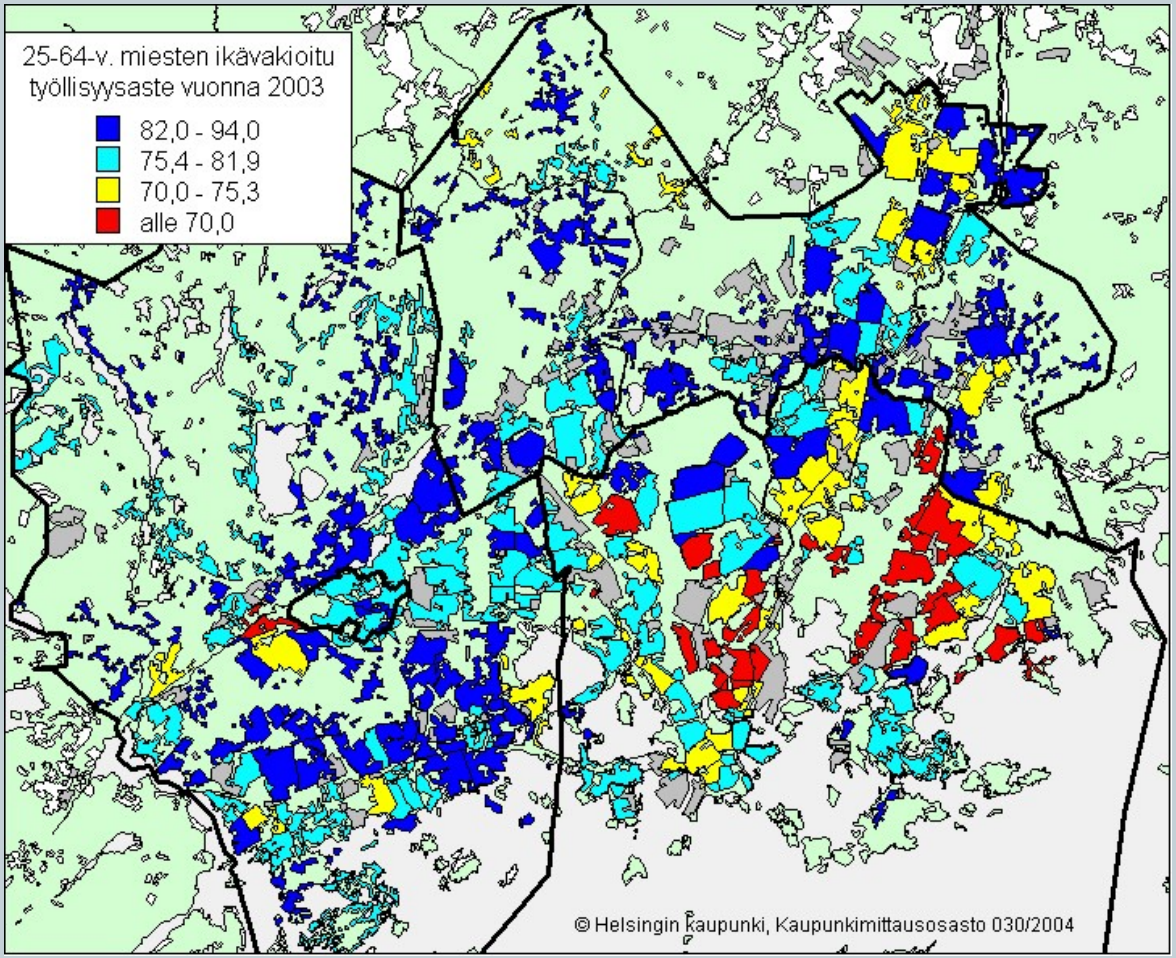
The Structural Change

- The depression of the early 90's, EU –membership, new ICT –based growth since 1994: a structural shift in the demand for labour, simultaneous structural unemployment and over-demand (Vaattovaara & Kortteinen 2003).
- The collapse of the SU, the flight of the Somali population from Russia to Finland
- No essential changes in the policies, but drastic changes in the results.

Graph 2: People with university degree (%) between 25-49 in the Helsinki Capital Region in 2004



Graph 1: Age-standardized male employment rate in the Helsinki Capital Region in 2003



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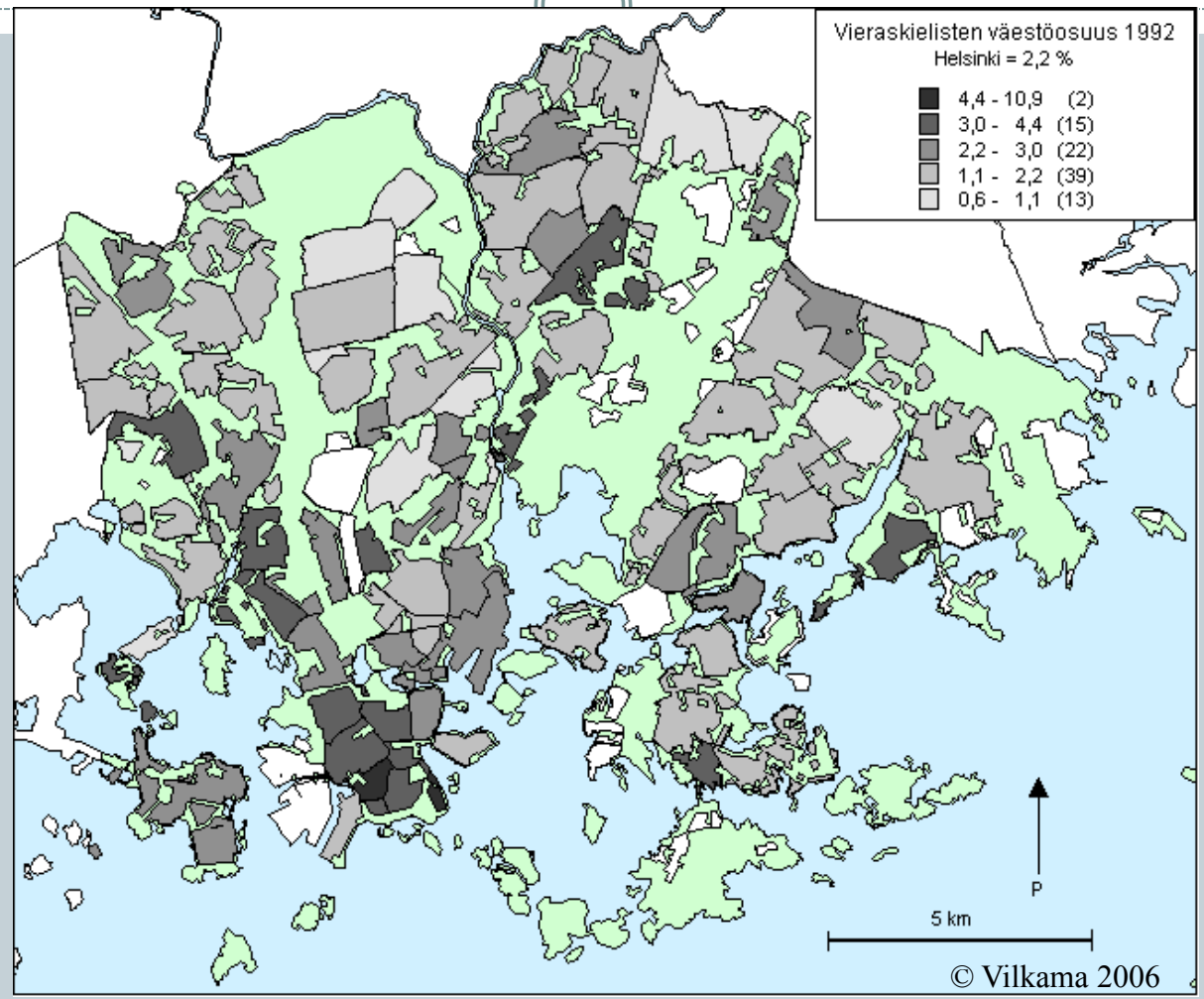

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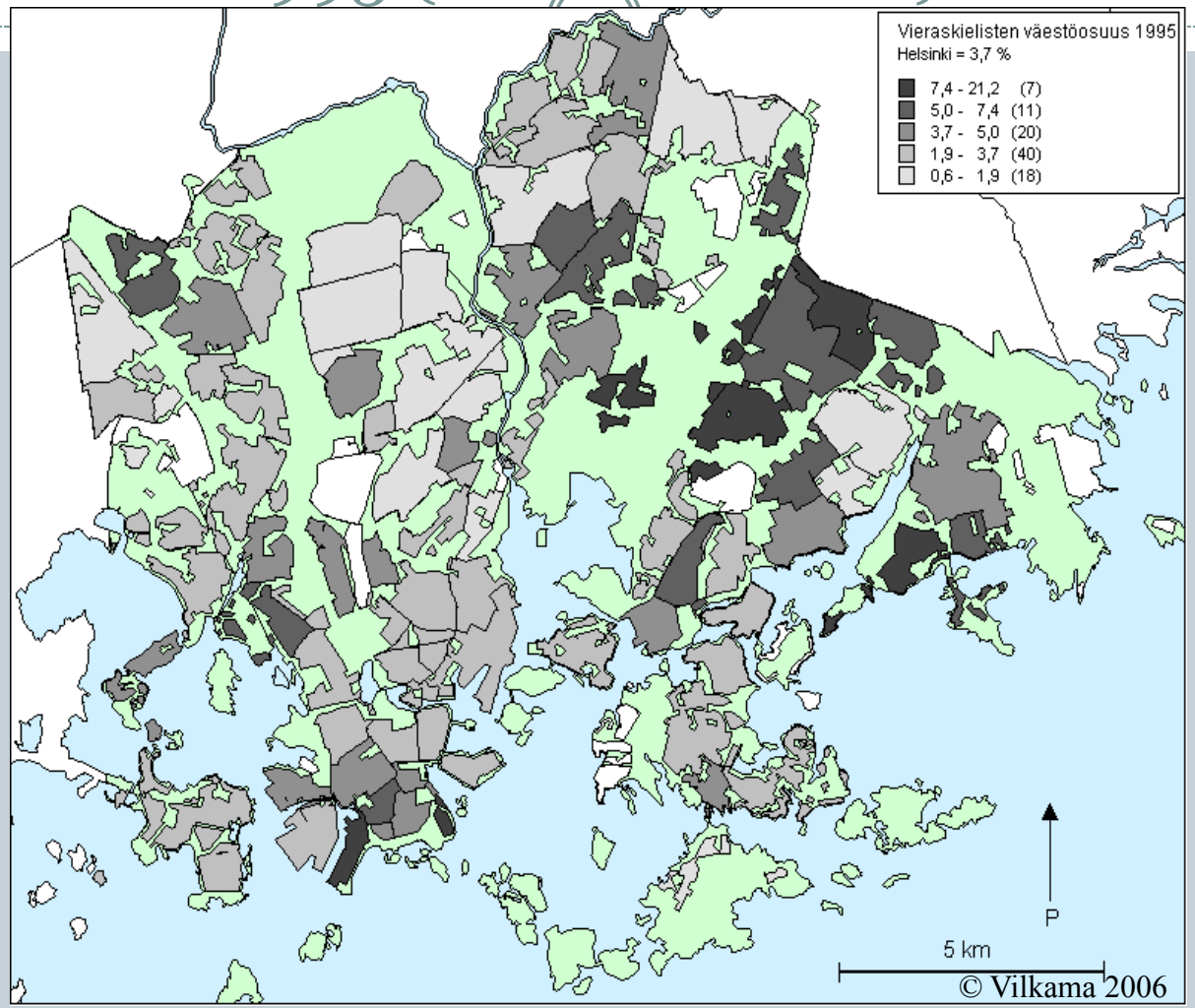
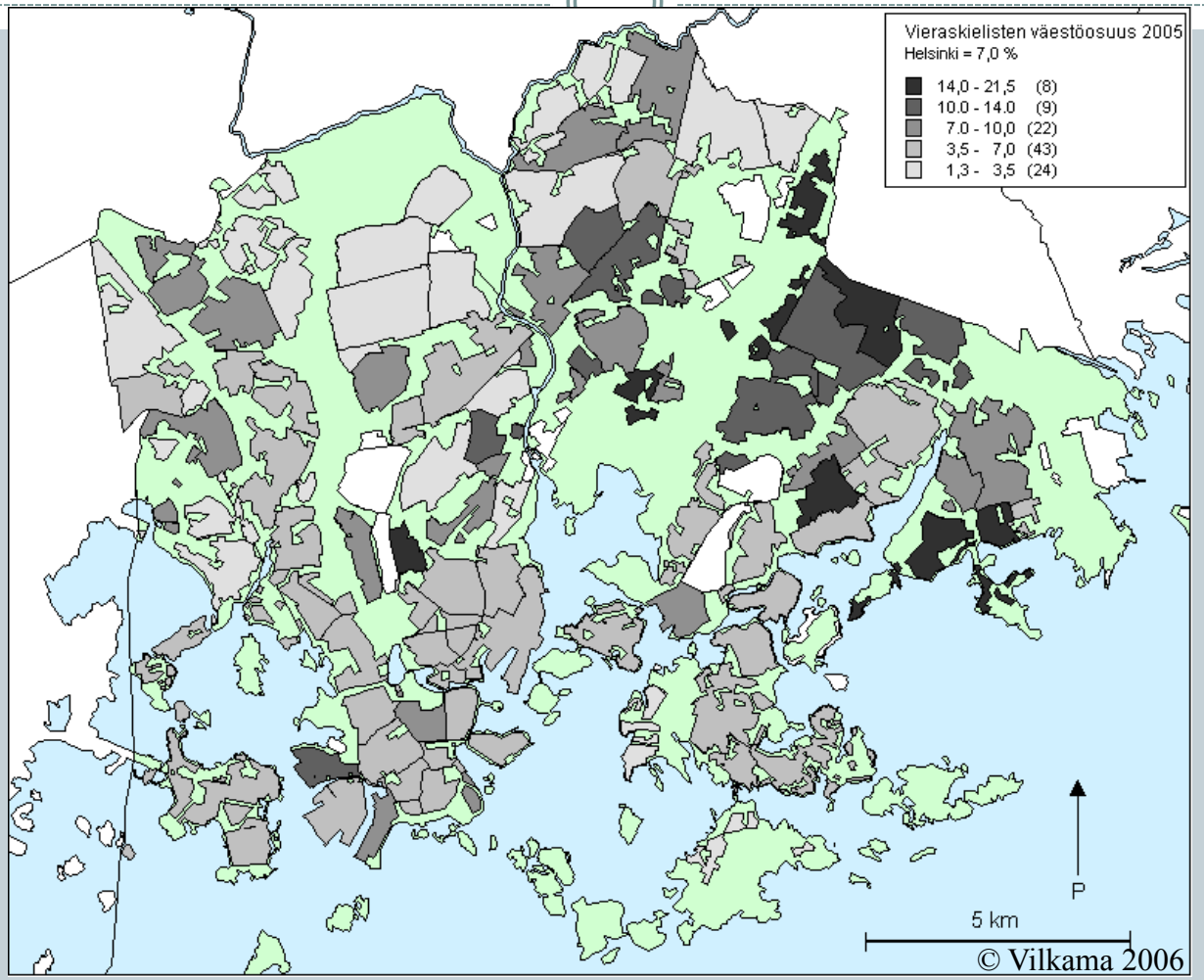
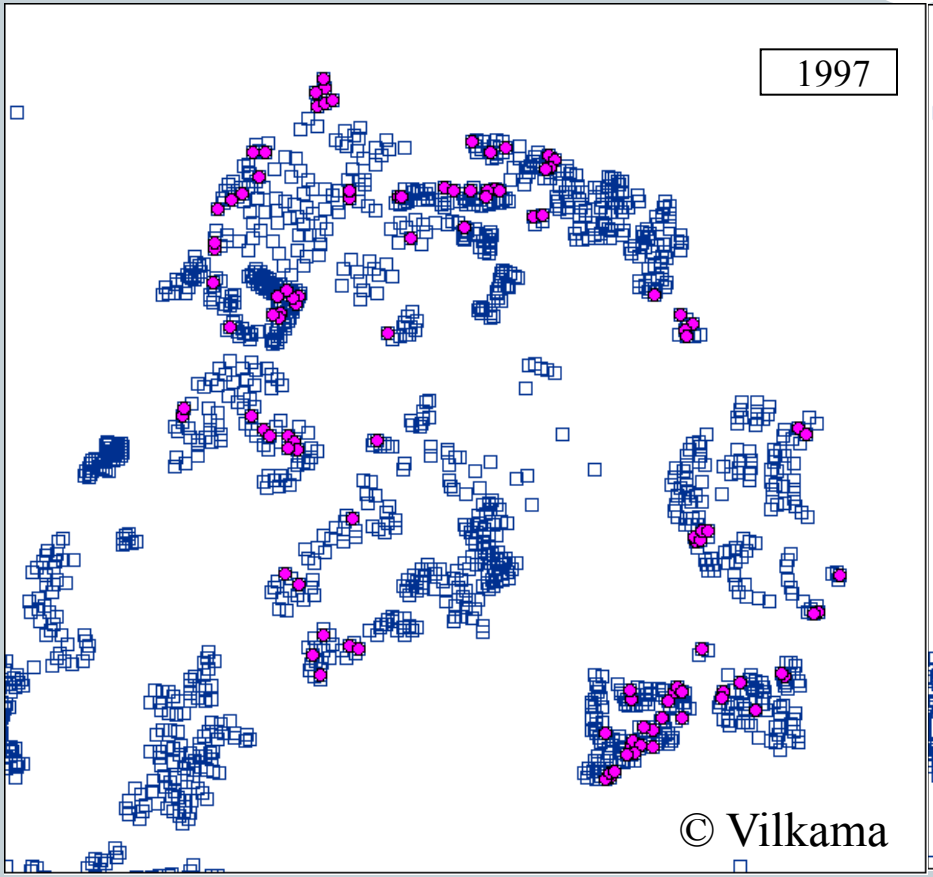


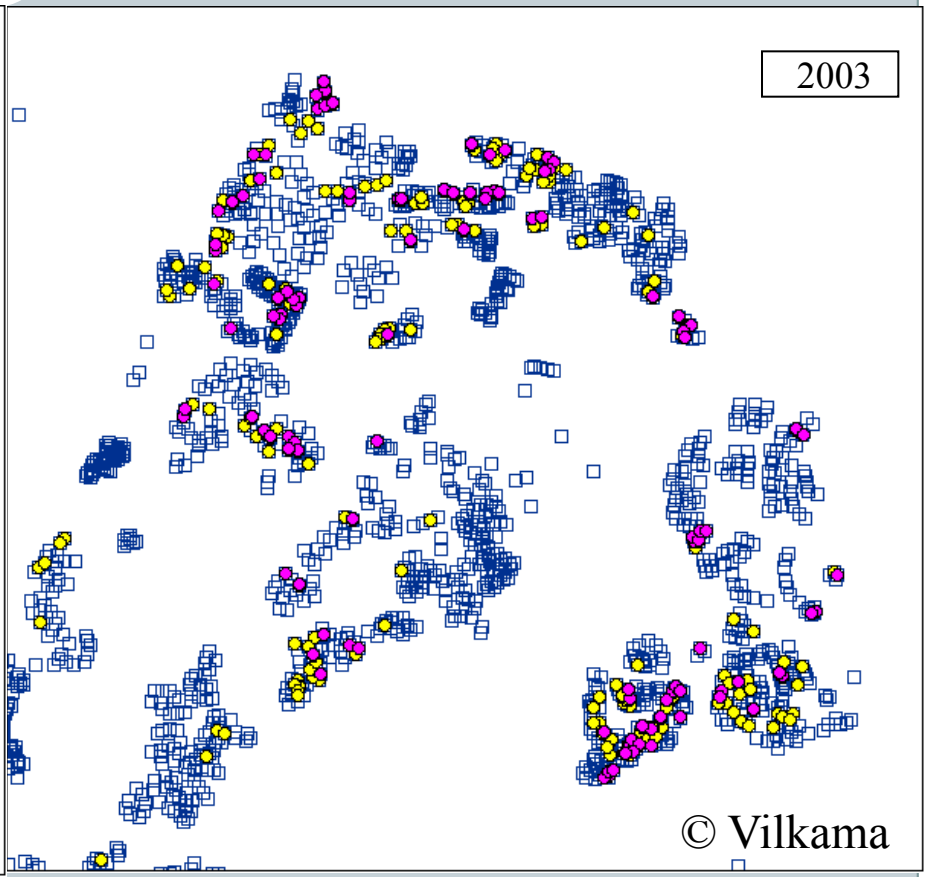
Foreign-speaking population in Helsinki 2005 (Vilkama 2006)



- How did this happen within the scattered, mosaic-like urban structure created in Helsinki through policies of social mixing?
- A selective, spatially located clustering of both the pockets of poverty and of ethnic minorities
- An on-going PhD on the workings of the structural determinants and of the local housing markets (Vilkama, forthcoming).

The change in ethnic enclaves in Helsinki building by building





High-rise buildings somewhere in Helsinki (7 x 7 km):
The red dots: houses with over 20% foreign born in 1997
The yellow dots: houses with over 20% foreign born in 2003

- The interpretation: after the beginning of the 90's the old preconditions (full employment, small income divides and small shares of ethnic minorities) failed.
- This produced differentiated difficulties for the different municipalities, and as the traditional policies in the Helsinki Region does not suffice in the new macro-situation, a metropolitan structure with segregational tendencies has emerged (Kortteinen&Vaattovaara 2010, forthcoming)

The On-Coming Crisis

- There are four features in the new constellation that can be described as a crisis:
- (1) The traditional policies aimed at egalitarian development and social integration that used to function well do not, in present day social conditions, deliver their goals.
- (2) The future growth of the Capital Region (Helsinki, Espoo and Vantaa, the nucleus of the Helsinki Region): out of the 130.000 new inhabitants 100.000 will be foreign born (-2025).

- (3) A land-slide victory of a right-wing party with a critical attitude to foreign immigration is to be expected in spring 2011 (”Perussuomalaiset”, at present 14,6%).
- (4) Undeveloped political discourse on the new policies needed: new attempts to develop metropolitan policies (looking for a best practice in Oslo); some attempts at developing neighbourhood specific initiatives.

- An emeritus in Finnish sociology, professor Erik Allardt: Finland is a north-eastern periphery of Europe in which many central changes in social structure seem to take place rather late but then suddenly.
- This pattern seems to repeat itself in questions related to ethnic segregation.

- We are the ones that should be looking for ”best practices” elsewhere, especially in the Nordic countries.
- **“Nordic welfare states and the dynamics and effects of ethnic residential segregation” – NODES.** A research project funded by the EU to campare the Nordic countries on their policies and results in ethnic segregation (Vaattovaara et al 2010-2014).