

Needs-Based Resourcing as a Tool for Alleviating the Effects of Social and Urban Segregation: Case Finland

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Budgeting and Financing Mechanisms for Increased Equity in Education



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- Peripheries of education in the "PISA Wonderland": rural and urban peripheries and the "urban paradox"
- Growing gaps in education
- Socio-spatial and ethnic/language segregation in Finnish cities and urban schools
 - Helsinki region as an urban laboratory – similar dynamic across Finnish cities
- Needs-based resourcing: weighted funding for equal opportunities in schools
- New models of collaboration in cities – vertical, horizontal and "matrix" models of education governance

Martin Thrupp
Piia Seppänen
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Sonja Kosunen *Editors*

Finland's Famous Education System

Unvarnished Insights into Finnish
Schooling

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Budgeting and Financing Mechanisms for Increased Equity in Education



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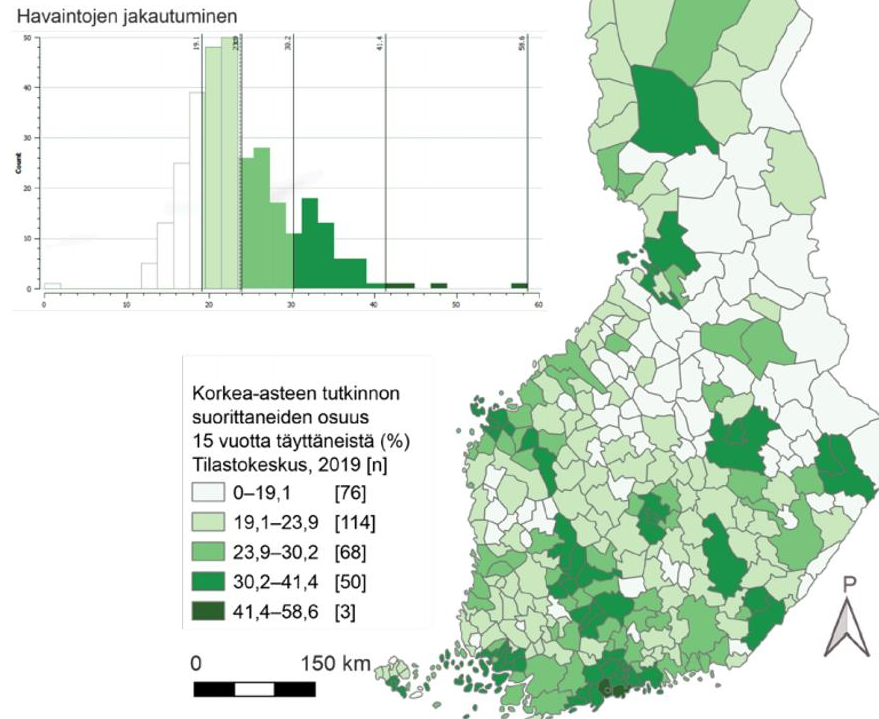
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Key characteristics of the Finnish education system (ECEC and basic education)

- Strong public provision of education (only a handful of private schools in larger cities)
- Geographical allocation of school places, with a degree of freedom for school choices
 - Municipalities can allow school choices, but majority of pupils participate their own neighbourhood school
- High degree of institutional equality
 - Shared curriculum in all schools (including private schools)
 - No school fees
 - Tertiary education for teachers
 - School funding stable throughout the country
 - Differences in learning outcomes between schools among the smallest in OECD-countries
- High-quality public ECEC available for all children at a very low cost
 - Personnel with tertiary degrees
 - Low or no cost for low-income families

Adults with tertiary education in Finnish municipalities



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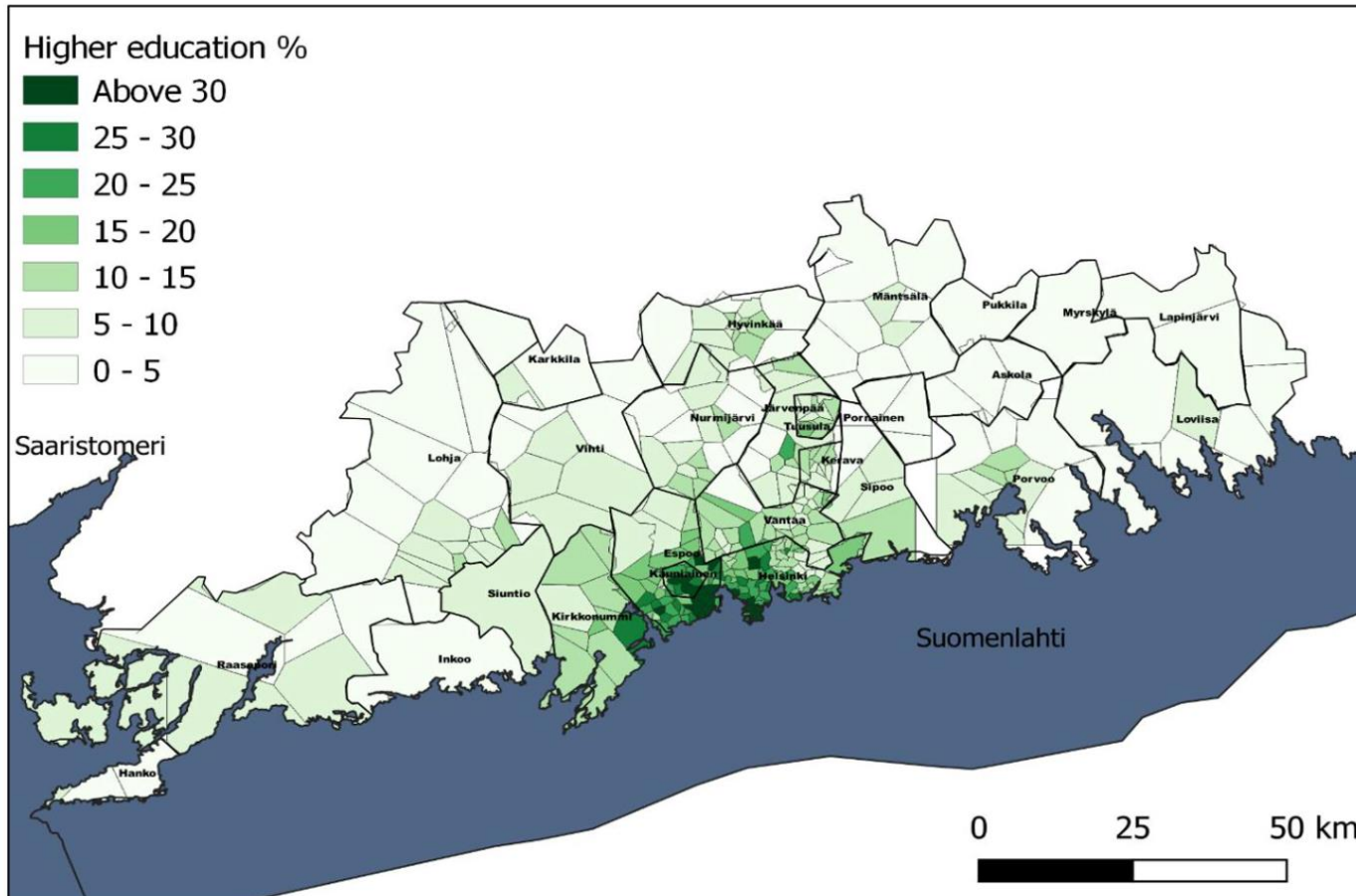
However... Growing levels of social and spatial disadvantage and lack of equal opportunities

- PISA 2018: The gap in the educational outcomes between the highest and lowest school deciles is equivalent to 2,5-year learning gap
 - growing inequalities: the *importance of socio-economic background for learning has grown* and particularly the outcomes of pupils from poorest backgrounds have gotten weaker
- Pupils from immigrant backgrounds score on average 80 points lower than Finnish-speaking pupils – equivalent of a 2-year learning gap
 - The learning gap in literacy is largest among OECD countries, even when accounting for socio-economic status of families
- Intersectional disadvantage: most important predictors of educational outcomes are socio-economic background, immigrant background / language and gender
- Non-Finnish or Swedish speaking children are more likely to grow in families with low socio-economic resources and in disadvantaged neighbourhoods
- The gaps between schools have been growing particularly in the larger cities: "urban peripheries of education"



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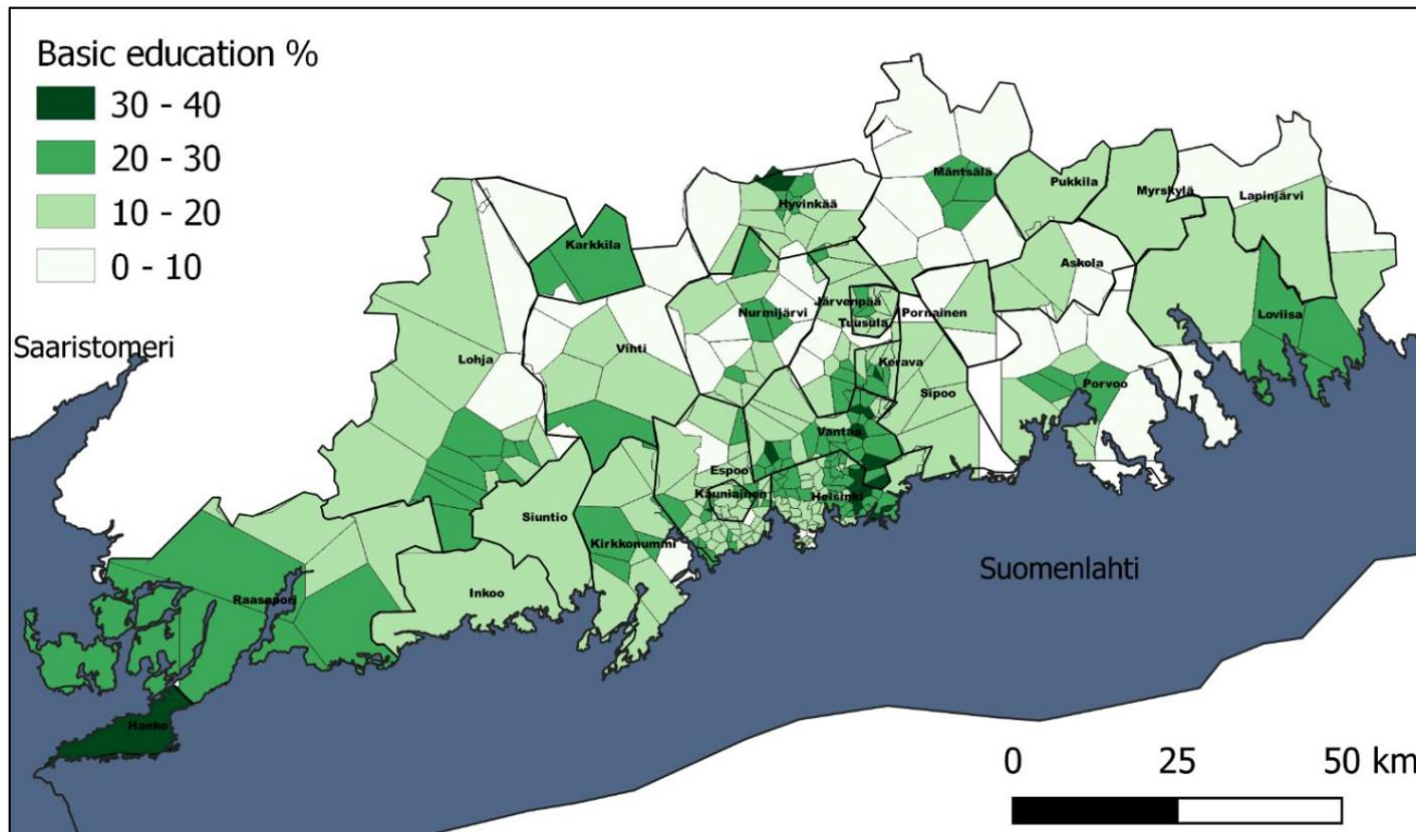


Figure 4. Percentage of people with only a basic level education in Uusimaa. Pontus Edvinsson 2020

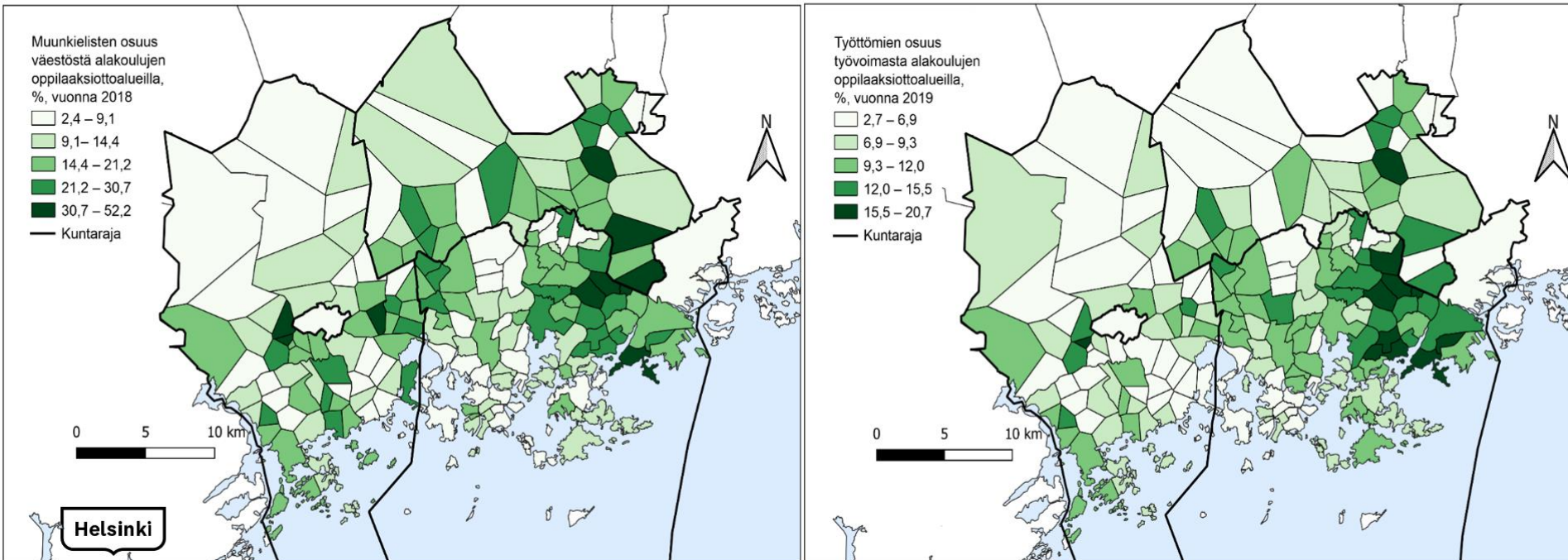


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Segregation

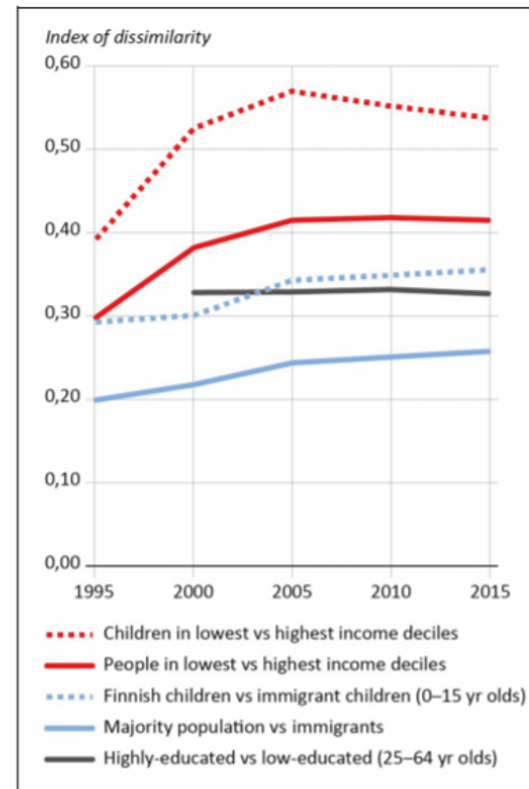
1. accumulation of different aspects of (dis)advantage,
2. growing gaps between neighbourhoods
3. larger spatial units
4. path dependency
5. "urban paradox"



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Segregation in figures

- In the larger Finnish cities, the dissimilarity index (measure of segregation) is close to many other European cities
- Helsinki:
 - the share of adults with academic degree ranges from around two percent to over 55 percent (Vilkama et al. 2014)
 - The share of non-Finnish or Swedish speakers varies from around 2 percent to around 40, and in the child population the difference is even larger, from around 2 to 60 percent (City of Helsinki Facts 2021)
- **Children are even more spatially segregated than adults → children live in more polarized everyday environments than adults**
- Pupil segregation in schools is stronger than neighbourhood segregation due to school choices in the city
 - Well-educated parents are more likely to choose a school outside their own neighbourhood, and schools with a “better-off” socio-economic pupil composition are favoured in choices → school choices are a flood of pupils from higher SES background to schools with a higher SES profile



Dissimilarity index in the school catchment areas in Helsinki 1995-2015, Bernelius & Vilkama 2019

The relationship between socio-economic background, educational outcomes and segregation translates into spatial disparities in *educational outcomes*

- “Geography of education” allows us to predict the risk for low educational outcomes in schools by using catchment area indicators: share of adults with only basic education, share of unemployed adults, share of pupils with other than Finnish or Swedish mother tongue & pupil flows between schools

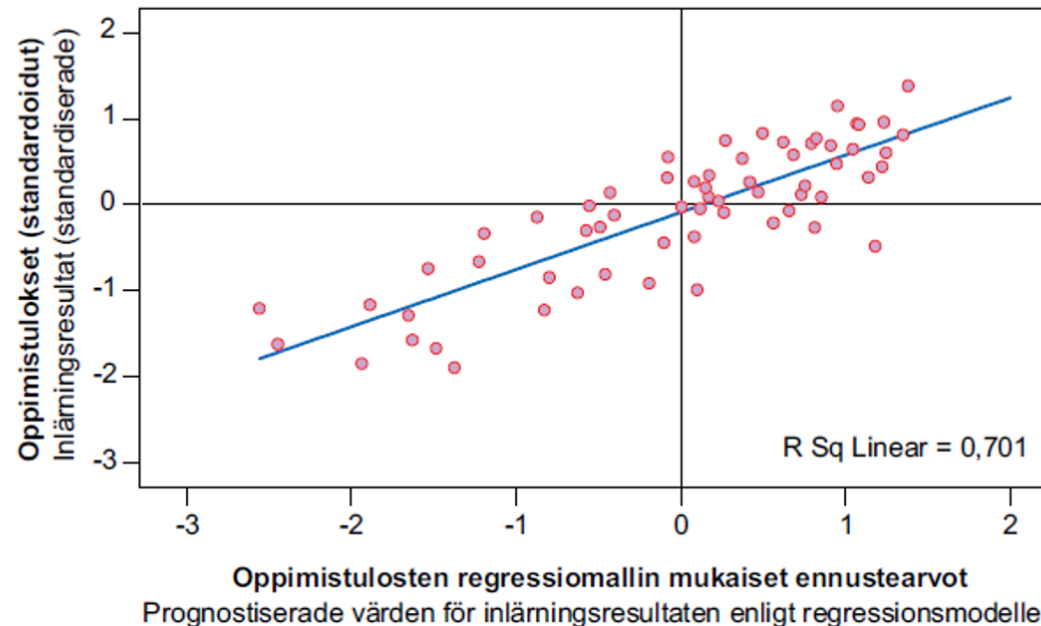


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Social and spatial processes in the local level and schools reflect European findings on mechanisms of urban and educational change: self-perpetuating circles of segregation (Bernelius 2013), where segregation results in growing inequalities

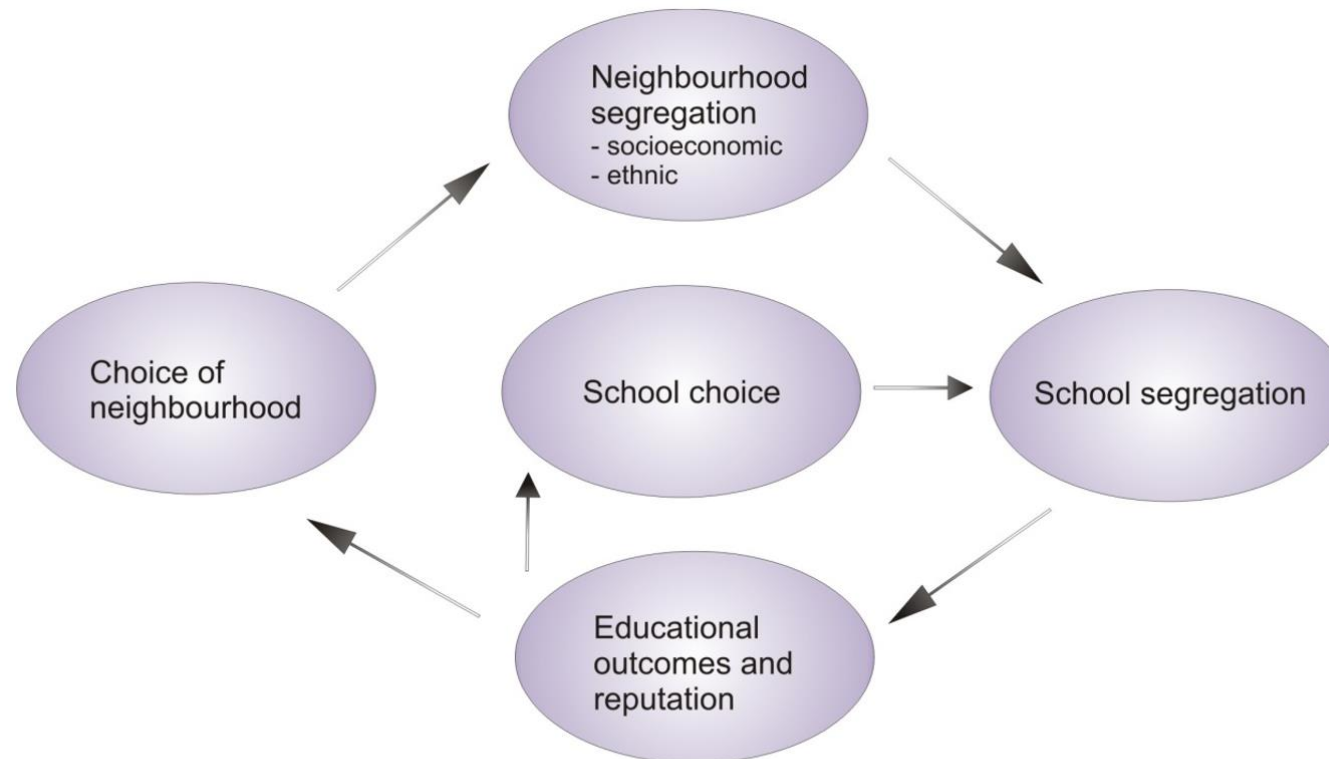


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New models of needs-based resourcing and evidence-based policies

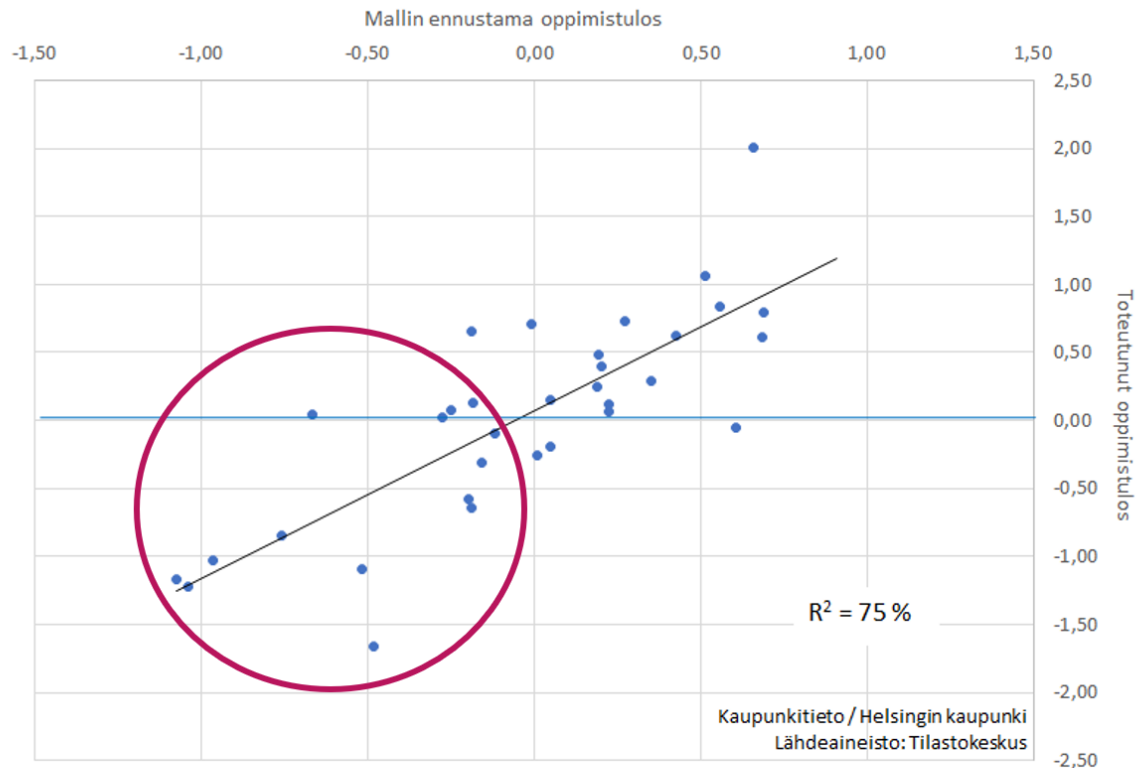
- Stronger models of following spatial & school patterns using research findings and register data
 - Monitor the developments in pupil segregation in catchment areas (in the future also schools and ECEC units?)
 - Recognise the schools/ECEC facilities at risk
 - Assess the need for extra resources
 - Provide additional needs-based funding for disadvantaged schools and ECEC facilities
- New model of needs-based resourcing by school data
 - Parental educational level
 - Income of families
 - Pupils with immigrant background
- Helsinki model as the basis of a larger national model development (Ministry of Education)



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Helsinki Model of Needs-Based Resource Allocation



- The funding allocation is based on a regression model predicting educational outcomes in schools, using
 - share of parents with tertiary degree
 - share of unemployed parents
 - share of pupils living in high-poverty households (lowest quintile)
 - share of pupils with non-native home language
 in the school and allocating extra funding for schools with highest risk for low outcomes (low predicted outcomes)
- Y-axis: educational outcomes in the school
- X-axis: predicted outcomes
- Model has a high "prediction power" → funding is efficiently allocated to schools in highest need through this model



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New models of vertical, horizontal and “matrix” collaboration

- Collaboration (information exchange and action) between ministries, other national actors and municipalities
 - E.g. “Right to learn” – platform
- Collaboration between different sectors of the city governance & practitioners
 - Common project and stable arena for combating school segregation and supporting students and schools: “Kaikkien koulu” – “School for everyone”
 - Education, urban planning, social work, culture & free time
 - Systematic model, development utilizing research and experiences on international best practices, such as the Icelandic model
- Informal & formal networks of researchers & practitioners in governance, universities and other organizations



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Policy basis in a nutshell

- "Equal institutions" with consistent quality are not shielded from circles of segregation and stigmatization
- The structural factors differentiating the life and learning context of children particularly in vulnerable urban areas need to be understood in both educational and urban policies
- New solutions across policy sectors: e.g. importance of housing policies in desegregating neighbourhoods and schools and increasing social mix
- Need for targeted support: e.g. weighted funding (needs-based resource allocation) both in early childhood education and basic education: school resources and prevention of "teacher segregation" → the aim of needs-based resourcing is not only to support disadvantaged pupils and schools, but to also make the schools more attractive in school choices (reduce stigmatization and support parental trust in school resources)
- Strong emphasis on creating trust in the local school - school reputation as an individual factor in supporting schools: to prevent (middle-class) flight from school catchment areas and schools
- Teacher education and professional support
- Strong community approach: school as the heart of neighbourhood; platform for different activities and cooperation with families



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Divided Cities—Divided Schools? School Segregation and the Role of Needs-Based Resource Allocation in Finland

Isabel Ramos Lobato  & Venla Bernelius
Chapter | Open Access | First Online: 24 February 2023
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Abstract
For a long time, Finland stood out in international pupil assessments with a rare combination of excellent overall performance and a high level of equality. However, recent PISA studies point to both deteriorating learning outcomes and increasing importance of pupils' social background for their learning outcomes in Finland. In addition, strongly increasing socio-economic and ethnic residential segregation in many Finnish cities has had a marked effect on schools since residential patterns are a central factor in school segregation and over one third of Finnish school children live in larger cities. The growing differences between the student intakes of schools have led to strongly diverging learning outcomes and learning conditions between schools in Finland. Urban segregation has therefore become a key question for educational equality and Finnish educational policies. In this chapter, we scrutinise the ways in which school segregation is related to societal and spatial differentiation in the Finnish urban context and how this relationship is further reflected in the differentiation of the schools' educational outcomes. Moreover, we analyse the existing needs-based resourcing responses and their effectiveness. Our empirical material is focused on the city of Helsinki, as it is currently the only city with a systematic needs-based resource allocation policy. Our chapter illustrates that the traditional egalitarian and universal "same level for all" approach of the education system in Finland seems increasingly unable to overcome the growing differences in a segregating Finnish society. To compensate for children's unequal starting positions and the increasingly divergent learning and social conditions between schools, the Finnish education system needs stronger support mechanisms that systematically allocate resources towards the individual needs of schools.

Pupils on the move: School catchment area segregation and residential mobility of urban families

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Abstract
Socio-spatial segregation has been recognised as an important factor affecting school segregation and educational attainment in urban schools. As urban populations grow and socio-spatial segregation has become a pressing issue in many contexts, a more sophisticated understanding of the interconnections between spatial and school segregation is needed, including the role of school catchment areas as a possible mediating factor. In our article, we focus on the two-way relationship between urban residential mobility and catchment area segregation in Helsinki, Finland. Using fine-grain statistical data we analyse how the long-term changes in spatial segregation have changed catchment area populations and how residential mobility of families with children is, in turn, related to catchment area composition. The analysis focuses on the majority population whose residential choices typically have the strongest impact on segregation patterns in cities. Our main finding is that there is a systematic relationship between socio-spatial segregation and catchment area differentiation, where the disadvantaged areas are consistently left behind in the general socio-economic development. Even though the institutional school quality is high throughout the city, the residential choices of families with children feed into the self-perpetuating cycles of segregation, as the most disadvantaged areas are rejected and privileged areas favoured in mobility patterns. The results highlight the need for urban educational policies with a high sensitivity to the persistent socio-spatial inequalities shaping educational opportunities.

Thank you!

Koulutuksellinen tasa-arvo,
alueellinen ja sosiaalinen
eriytyminen ja myönteisen
erityiskohtelun mahdollisuudet

Venla Bernelius, Heidi Huilla

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Article

Choice and segregation in the ‘most egalitarian’ schools: Cumulative decline in urban schools and neighbourhoods of Helsinki, Finland

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Abstract

Finland has been known for its excellent PISA results in educational outcomes throughout the last decade. The country has boasted a rare combination of high overall level, as well as uniquely good outcomes of the bottom performers. However, the latest PISA results and the recent socio-spatial developments within the Finnish cities challenge this nationally celebrated balance in schools and urban social structure. Until now, research evidence has demonstrated that in the Finnish context with a powerful, universalist welfare state and a highly educated, homogenous population, differentiation increases mainly by the growth of an elite. Our analysis of large data-sets from schools and neighbourhoods in Helsinki suggests that this development has been over-turned in the local level: segregation has begun to increase and appears to operate through the trends of middle-class avoidance and the decline of the underprivileged groups in urban schools and neighbourhoods.

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Article

‘Notorious Schools’ in ‘Notorious Places’? Exploring the Connectedness of Urban and Educational Segregation

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Abstract

While the statistical link between residential and school segregation is well-demonstrated, in-depth knowledge of the processes or mediating mechanisms which affect the interconnectedness of the two phenomena is still limited. By focusing on well-functioning schools in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, our article seeks to scrutinise whether reputation can be one of the key mediators of the connection between residential and school segregation. Our study combines qualitative ethnographic interviews from four (pre-)primary schools with quantitative segregation measures in four urban neighbourhoods in the Finnish capital city of Helsinki to understand the connections between lived experiences and socio-spatial segregation. The results show that there appears to be a clear link between neighbourhood and school reputation, as schools in disadvantaged neighbourhoods are strongly viewed through the perceptions attached to the place. Despite the case schools' excellent institutional quality and high overall performance in educational outcomes, there is a consistent pattern of the schools struggling with negative views about the neighbourhoods, which seep into the schools' reputation. Since school reputation is one of the central drivers of school choices and is also linked to residential choices, the close connection between neighbourhood and school reputation may feed into vicious circles of segregation operating through schools. The results highlight the need for integrated urban policies that are sensitive to issues concerning school reputation and support the confidence and identity of pupils, reaching beyond simply ensuring the institutional quality of schools.

Keywords

educational inequality; Helsinki; image; reputation; residential segregation; school segregation; stigmatisation