

Traditions of Equity and Equality in the Nordic Context

Jussi Välimaa



Main question

- **Why Nordic countries have one of the most equal systems of higher education in the world?**
- Reflections with the help of the Finnish case



Equality and Equity

- ❖ **Equity:** associated with **fairness** or **justice** and it takes individual circumstances into consideration
- ❖ **Equality:** assumes sameness, fundamental & natural equality of all persons (Espinoza 2007)
- ❖ **Equality** rooted in Western thinking: Plato, Aristotle, ...Rousseau -natural and social inequalities => a kind of moral equality of all human beings. French Revolution: “**Liberty, Equality and Fraternity**” ... different interpretations

Equity & equality

- ❏ **Equality** in relation to: **access** / SEB; **survival** / SEB; **output** / learning & labour market
- ❏ **Equity: fairness to whom? justice in relation to what? =>** 1) **equity for equal needs** (same resources for students with equal needs); 2) **for equal potential** (how to define potential?); 3) **for equal achievement** (meritocratic)
- ❏ Historically in education: **conservative, liberal, radical perspectives** (Husen 1978) \Leftrightarrow **welfare regimes**; different relationships with families, state & market

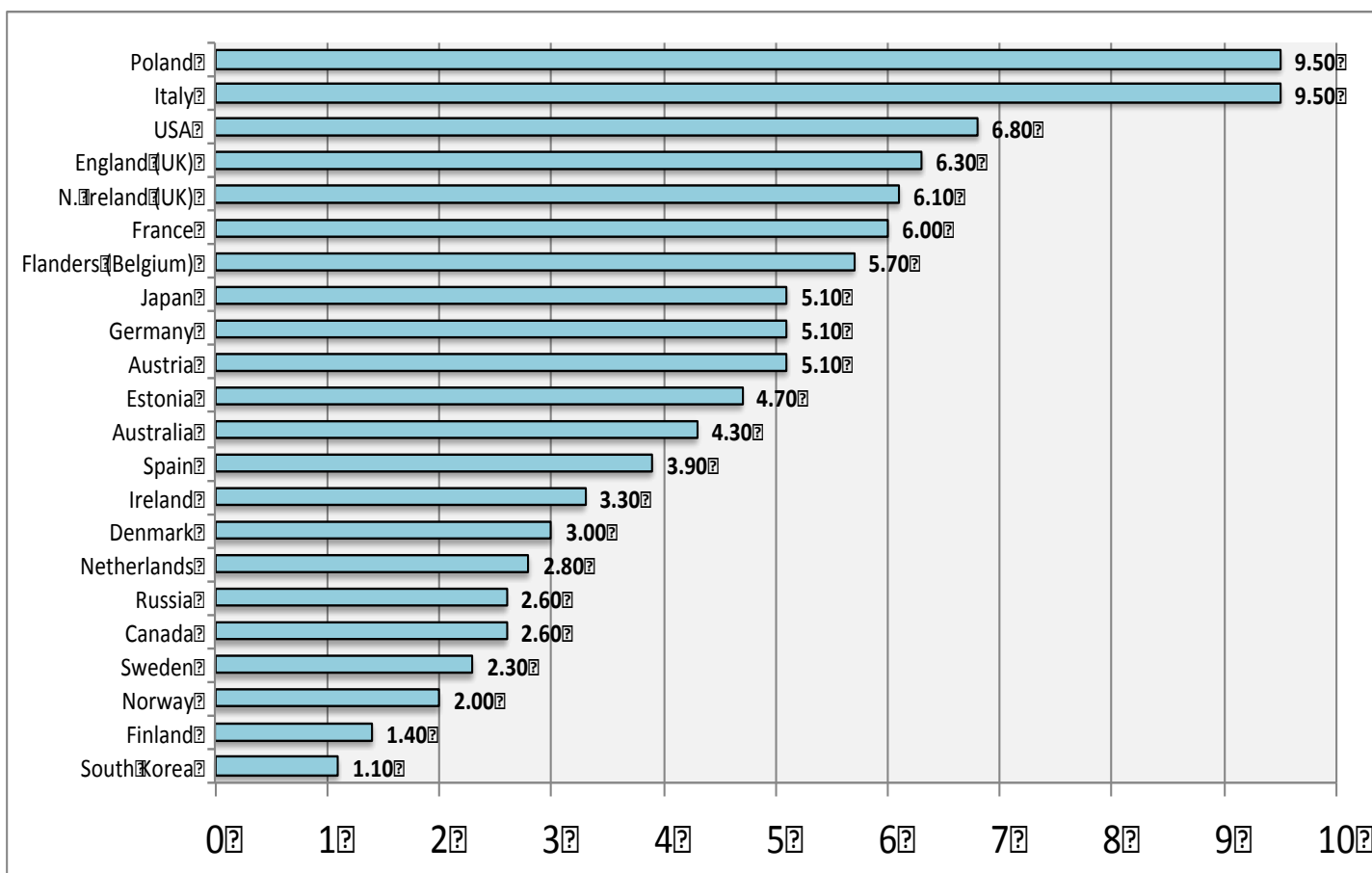
Equity & equality in HE research

📦 Main research foci:

- 1) access to higher education (\Leftrightarrow socio-economic background);
- 2) transition to labour market (matching stratification of HEIs \Leftrightarrow networks, reputation)
- 3) access to degree (succes in HE, retention, drop-outs)

Social mobility in OECD-countries

Odds ratio = 20–34-year old Finns with one of the parents having a HE degree has (only) **1,4** greater probability to get access to HE as compared with those whose parents do not hold a HE degree. (OECD, Education at Glance 2014, 93)



The Development of Finnish higher education

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Inauguration of the Royal Academy in Åbo (Turku) in 1640 by Albert Edelfelt (1902) (wikipedia)



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Autonomous Grand Duchy 19th century

- Imperial Alexander University rooted in the **Humboldtian ideals**: 1) **Institutional autonomy**; 2) **Freedom of study & teaching**; 3) **Academic freedom for professors**
- Nationalism** developed & implemented by professors & students (***fennomans***): “education of the nation & nationalisation of the educated”
- => University understood as a **national cultural institution, cradle of nationalism**



Russian emperor Alexander the First, Grand Duchy of Finland; source: wikipedia



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Professionalism

Debates on the need of practical & useful fields
(forestry, agriculture, technical & commercial education) **1840/50s =>**



- **Agriculture & forestry => faculty in university**
- **Professionalisation of university degrees**
(medicine, law) => humanities as national disciplines \Leftrightarrow **Finnish language & culture**
- **Teacher training seminars (1860s) / Switzerland**

Photo: Female students in sports suits, the 1890s, wikipedia

”White Finland” (1920s-1930s): elite higher education



- Independence through a bloody **Civil War (1918)** => **Republic** of Finland , “White Finland” (1917->)
- Education as a tool for **national integration**: compulsory education (1921), gymnasiums expanded, 6% (cohort)
- Elite system of higher education**: University of Helsinki connected with political elite
- Private HEIs**: University of Åbo & University of Turku in Turku; Technical university & two business schools in Helsinki, one in Turku

r Educational Research (FIER)

Photo: stamp to commemorate 300 years of the university



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Higher education in the making of welfare society

- 'Defensive Victory' in WW II (1940-45) => *social change*
- Rapid industrialization 1950s => 1980s, *massification & regionalisation of HE*
- Nordic Welfare state from 1960: => **equal educational opportunities** (the main goal), **regional development** (policy mechanism), **manpower planning** (rationale)

Expansion of HE

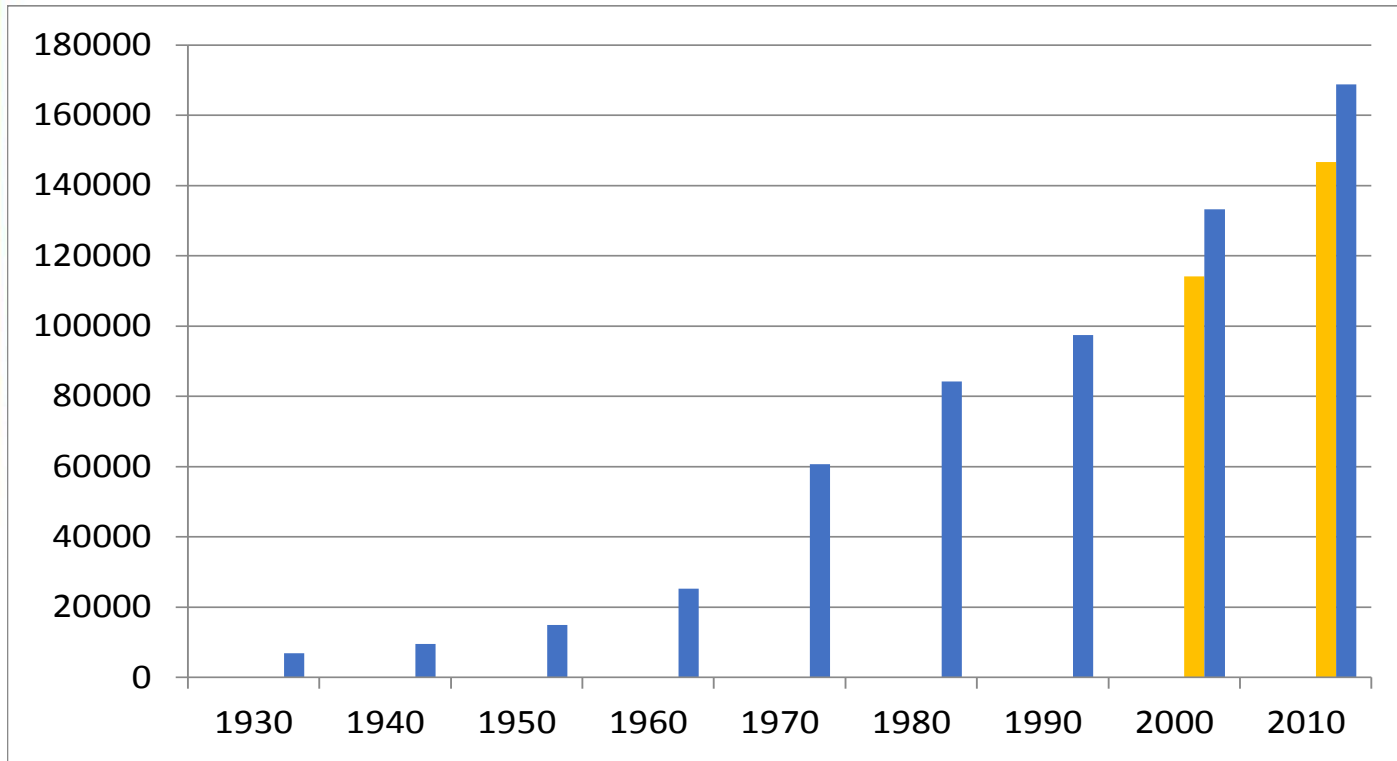
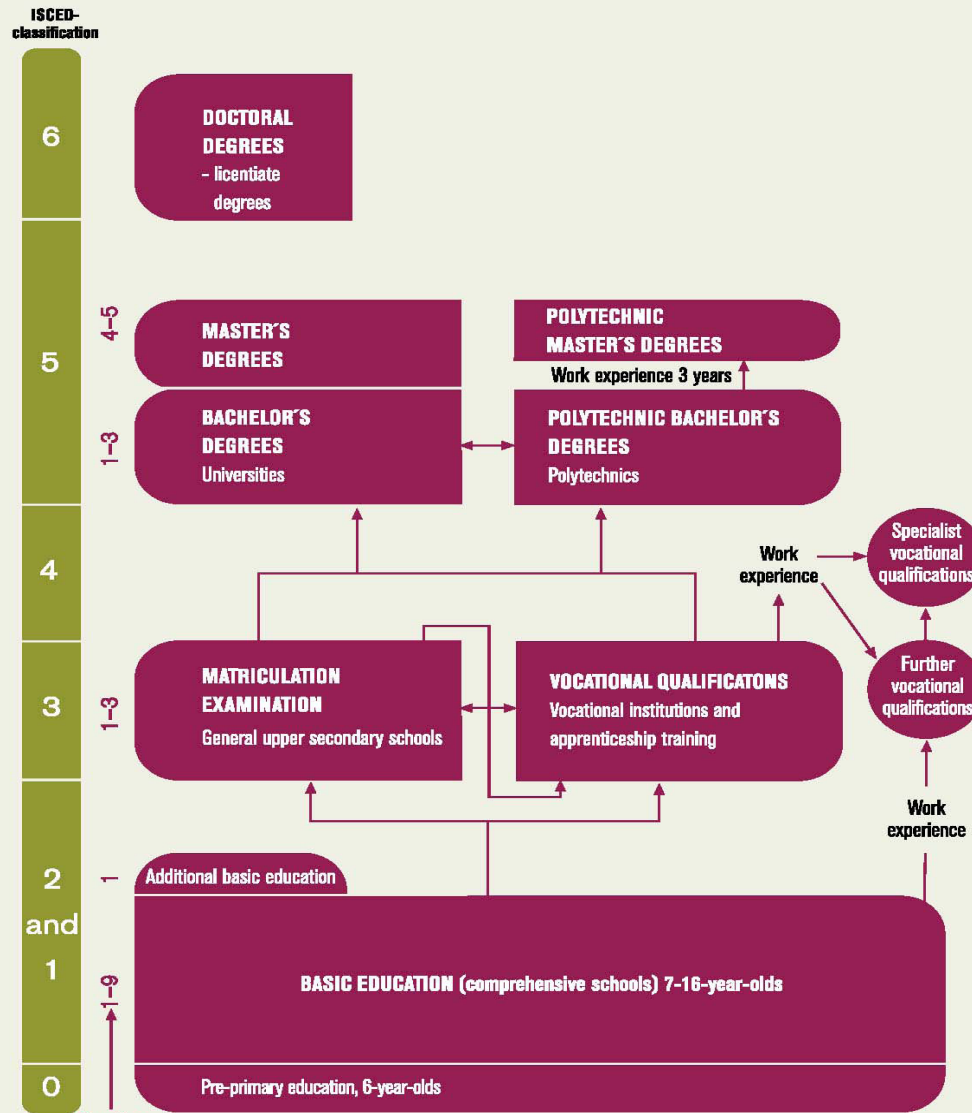


Table 1. Number of students in in Finnish higher education institutions (blue = university, marron = UAS) 1930-2010. Source: Välimaa 2017.

Equality in policy documents

- “**Equal opportunity in education** is the underpinning of Finnish welfare. For educational equality to be realised, it is imperative that everyone gains a **solid basis for learning already in early childhood and in basic education** and that pupils and students with special needs and **at risk of exclusion have access to a diverse range of supportive action**. Measures must also be taken to alleviate differences and heredity in post-compulsory education.” (MEC 2012, 7)



- ISCED-classification**
- 0 Preprimary education
 - 1 Primary education or first stage of basic education
 - 2 Lower secondary or second stage of basic education
 - 3 (Upper) secondary education
 - 4 Post secondary nontertiary education
 - 5 First cycle of tertiary education
 - 6 Second cycle of tertiary education

Students (BA – PhD) in UAS & Universities (2013)

	New students	All students	All Degrees
UAS <i>(female)</i>	32 000 <i>(56%)</i>	144 000 <i>(54%)</i>	25 000 <i>(60%)</i>
University <i>(female)</i>	20 000 <i>(15k BA; 5k MA)</i> <i>(57%)</i>	166 000 <i>(54%)</i>	21 000 <i>(59%)</i>
All <i>(female)</i>	52 000 <i>(56%)</i>	310 000 <i>(54%)</i>	46 000 <i>(60%)</i>



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Current Situation (2017)

14 Public Universities, '*independent public personalities*'
12 universities (public law) 2 foundations (private law)

23 Publicly funded Universities of Applied Sciences, UAS (Polytechnics) + Ålands Yrkehögskola, Police College, National Defence College

6 university centres (*hybrid organisations*)

Starting places to over 80% of the age cohort (41% HEI degree/25-34 years old; mass higher education system (1970s->))

Funding: 64% (MEC); 36% (external to MEC)

No tuition fees & state support of studies

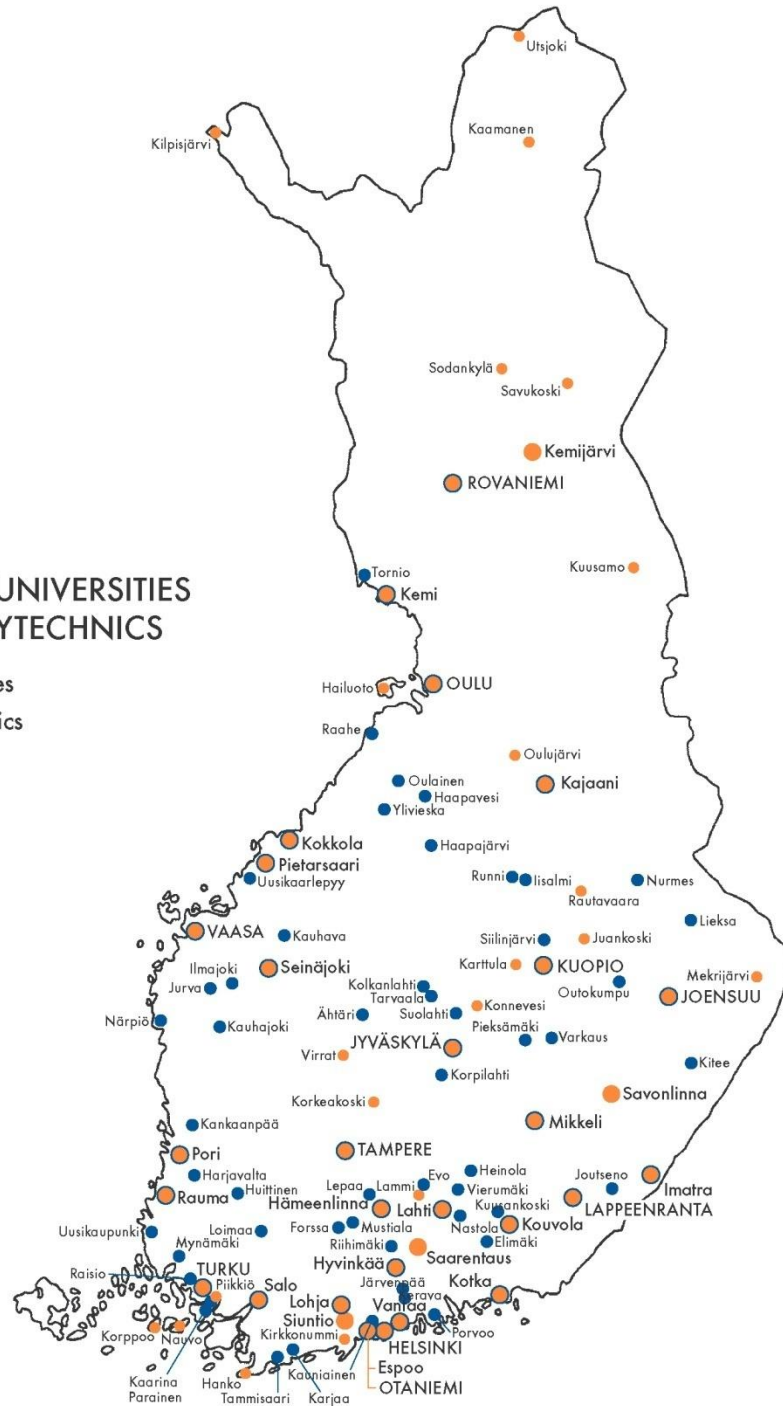
National steering of the system: management by results; performance agreements & funding model



- Number of HEIs:**
- 1) a regional policy principle &
 - 2) value statement for equality & equity

FINNISH UNIVERSITIES AND POLYTECHNICS

● Universities
■ Polytechnics



- *Big dot = main campus*
- *Small dot = unit or research station*



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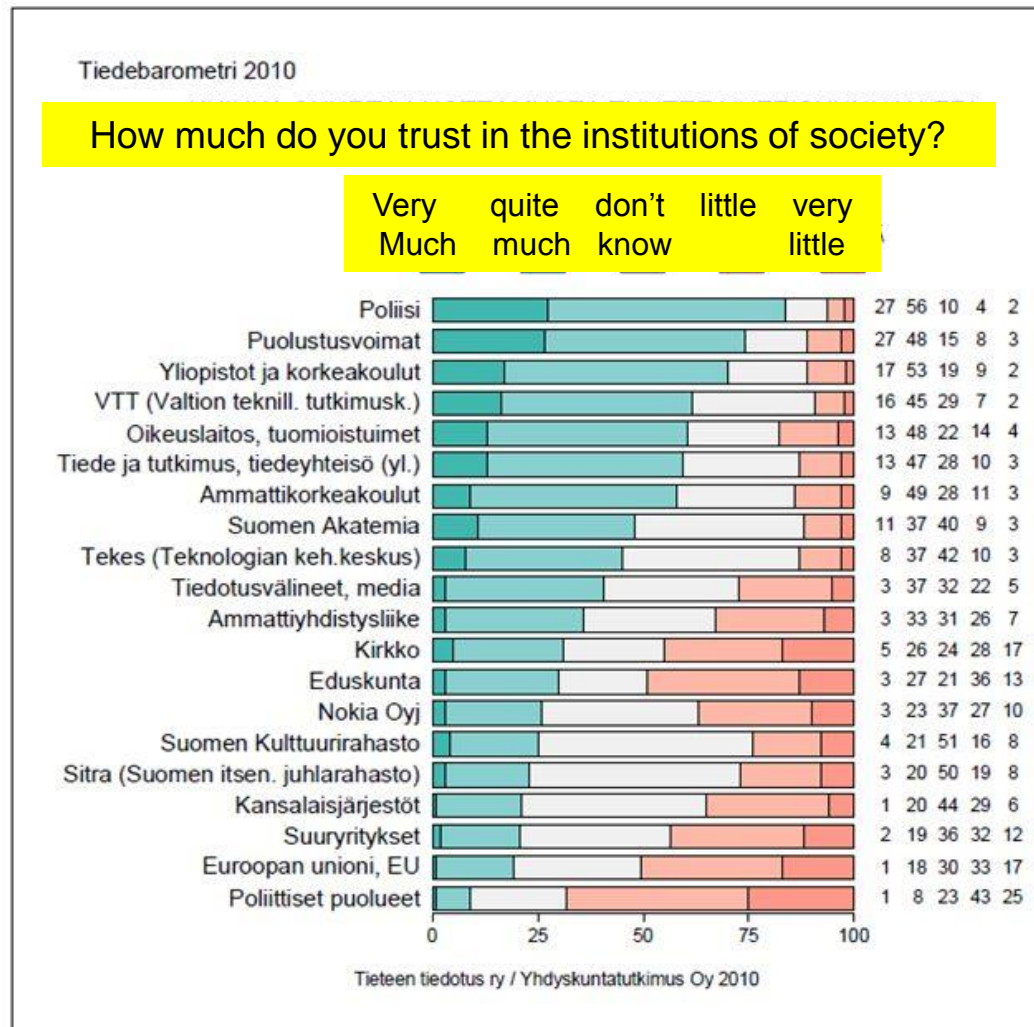
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Nordic idea of university

- ❏ **Trust:** universities should be autonomous institutions which are publicly funded
- ❏ All have both **universities** and **vocationally oriented** and more regional HEIs: **University Colleges** (Denmark, Norway & Sweden); **Universities of Applied Sciences** (UAS, Finland)
- ❏ A number of private educational establishments focusing on first or second cycles of qualifications or having limited focus in their curriculum (theology, business) in Norway, Denmark and Sweden => **independent institutions**

How much do you trust in the institutions of society? (Finnish Science Barometer 2010)



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Social Trust

- Trust is an important **social basis** for all Nordic welfare societies, meaning the resources of society are less used to control citizens but more to treat citizens equally; saves transaction costs in social and economic life.
- Two hypotheses** on trust: 1) **institution-centred** hypothesis (the role of the institutions of society in supporting trust; 2) **society-centred** hypothesis (the importance of civic engagement in associations and social interactions at the grassroots level of society).
- => the first hypothesis explains better the nature of trust and just and well-functioning public institutions.

Trends & Traditions

- Expansion of universities 1950s => all parts of the country (mass HE); **equality** as the main value & goal
- Establishment of polytechnics as "**equal but different**" in the 1990s, starting with 22 temporary HEIs => 29 polytechnics => 23 UAS governed by the MEC
- Decentralization of management authority ⇔ New Public Management / **procedural autonomy**
- International trends ⇔ **The Bologna Process** & homogenization of degree structures by 2005/6
- Changes in University UAS sectors 2011-2014: mergers & reducing student intakes (UAS), new legislation



Socio-cultural context of Finnish HE

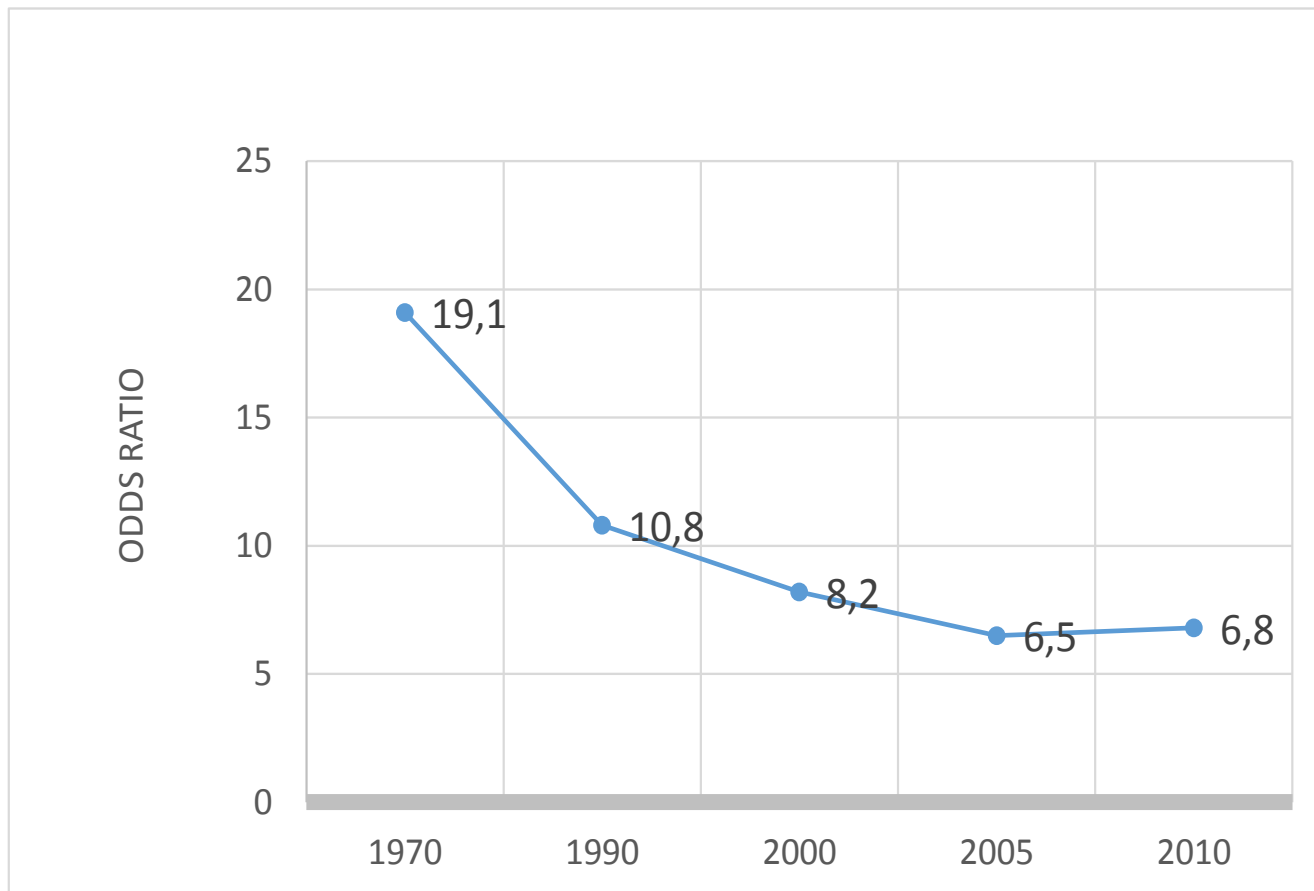
Equality in the traditions & ideals of Finnish society:

- ***socially*** (no manifested class differences)
- ***politically*** ('socialdemocratization' after WWII)
- ***economically*** (social support policies)
- ***educationally*** (comprehensive schools & mass HE)
- **Homogenous population genetically & culturally;
*Welfare society ideals widely accepted***
- **Social trust** –also in higher education: 1) continuity in HE policies; 2) national monitoring system; 3) FINEEC: evaluation & audit aiming for enhancement
- **nation state as the regulator & the source of resources**

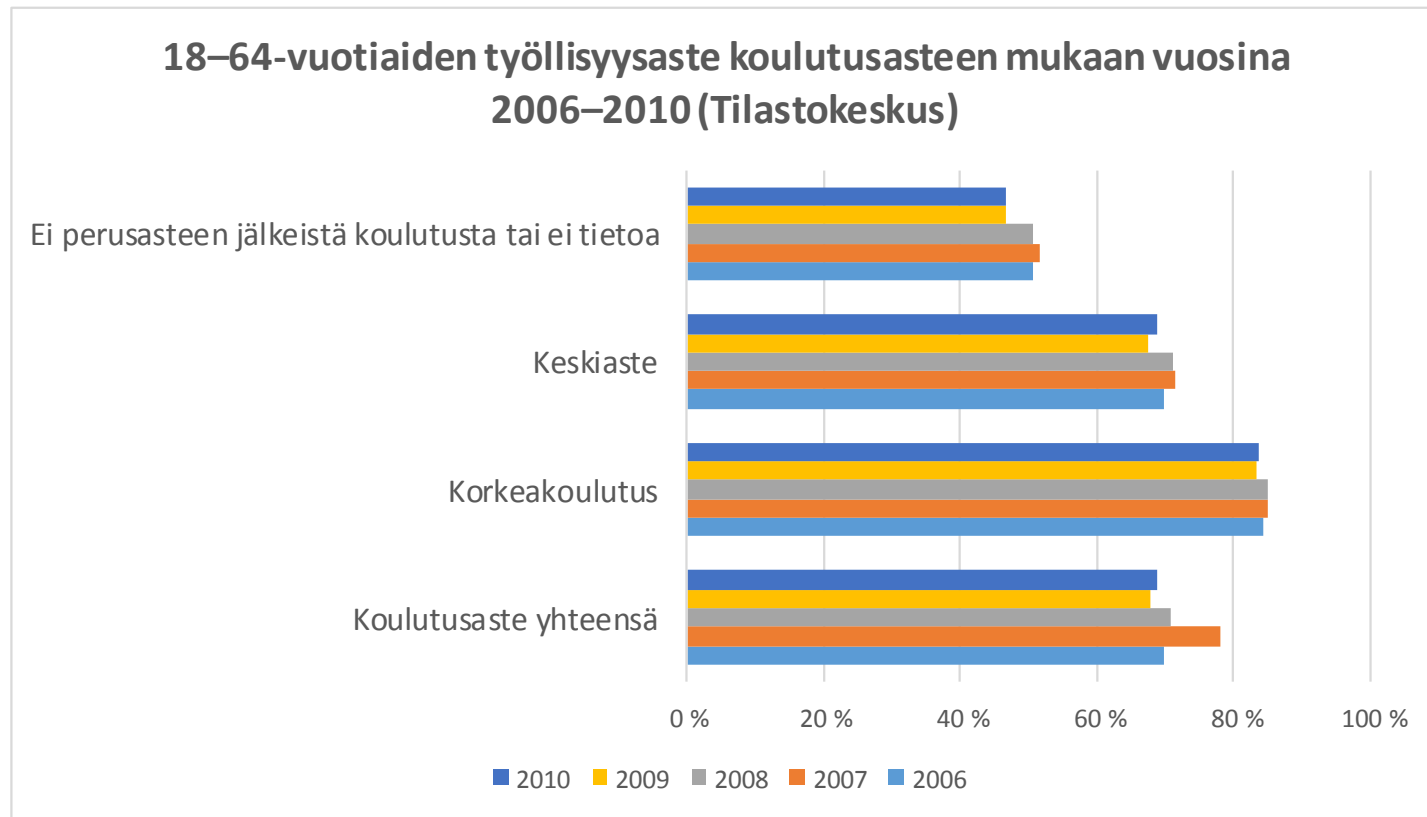


Social mobility – differences in opportunities to access to HE / by 24 years

Finns with one of the parents having a HE degree have **6,8 greater probability** to get access to HE as compared with those whose parents do not hold a HE degree. (Kivinen Osmo & Hedman, Juha 2016)



Employment – HE degree is the best quarantine against unemployment



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Conclusions

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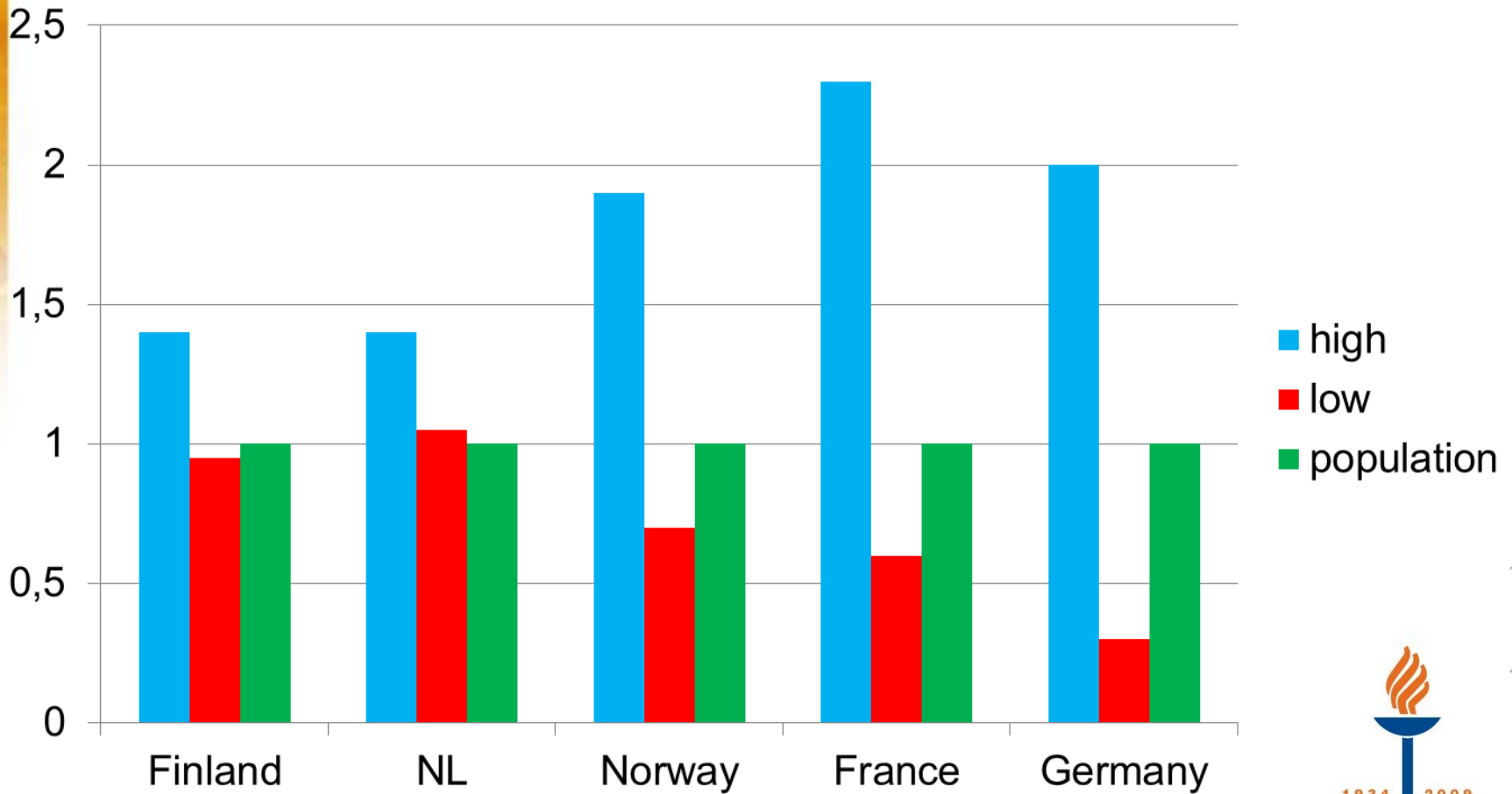
Historical routes to Nordic welfare states

- ❏ **Reformation, in the 16th century:** centralized state around Lutheran church => nation states
- ❏ **19th century processes of modernization:** 1) the structures of pre-industrial **rural communities** (division of labor between men and women); 2) **educated elite** in peripheral countries (learning from developed countries) & the rise of **nationalism** (national unity over estates); 3) the rise of **socialism** (social democracy)
- ❏ **1930s:** coalitions & interests of farmer-producers + worker-consumers + employers ↔ Fascism & Great Depression

Layers of equality

- According to Kettunen, Kuhnle and Ren (2014, 16) “instead of making a choice between these different proposals, it is reasonable to re-interpret the divergent ‘origins’ **as temporal layers in the Nordic welfare state. Mediated through mentalities, traditions, values, epistemic practices and social movements**, these layers are present in the formal and informal rules and norms of the Nordic model.”
- Equity & equality** as core values & policy objectives in all Nordic countries

Outcomes of educational policies: socio-economic background of HE students (low and high) in relation to whole population (eurostudent 2011)



Nordic principles

- Equal educational opportunities & free public education for all: **education as a right** –not a consumer good
- nation state** plays a strong role in **funding, legislation** & in the **steering** of higher education
- OECD average **public funding** (69 %), in Finland, Norway and Denmark (95-97%), Sweden bigger proportion of private funding (10,5%, foundations)
- education and research are seen important for the national identities & national economies & well-being of societies

Denmark

- “The universities are **government-financed independent institutions** under public sector administration overseen by the Minister for Higher Education and Science.” (1§,2)
- “The university enjoys **freedom of research**. The university must defend and uphold both scientific ethics and the freedom of research of the individual researcher as well as of the university as a whole.” (2§,2)
- “The university **must collaborate with the society** ... and contribute to the development of international collaboration. ... research and education must contribute **to promoting growth, welfare and development in society**. As society’s central repository of culture and knowledge, the university must exchange knowledge and competences with the society it belongs to and encourage its staff to take part in public debate.” (2§, 33)



Finland

- ❖ “The objectives of the universities are **to advance free research and scientific and artistic *bildung*** (education and culture); to provide **highest teaching based on research, and to educate students to serve their fatherland and humanity**. When taking care of these duties universities must **promote life-long learning, interact with the rest of the society and promote the impact of research outcomes and artistic activities on society.**” (2§)
- ❖ “The **universities have autonomy** which secures the freedom of science, arts and highest teaching. Autonomy includes the right to make decisions on matters concerning internal administration. Universities also shall have the right to be heard when drafting of legislation concerning universities.” (3§)

Nordic idea of university as a part of welfare regime

- 'Nordic model' is one model with five exceptions ...
- Some common principles: Scandinavian countries belong **universal version of welfare regimes**: all welfare benefits are provided to all citizens.
- Nordic way of seeing the role of the state in relation to market and family is related to strong tradition of equality defined both in relation to gender, socio-economic status, ethnicity and geographical location (Esping-Andersen 1990).

Thank you!

