

The multicultural police work in Helsinki

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Helsinki

- Capital of Finland since 1812
- 2013/14: population 615 000, foreigners 53 000 (8.6 %) (Finland's population 5.5 million)
- Finnish 81 %, Swedish 6 %, other languages 13 % (Russian, Estonian, Somali, English, Arabic, Chinese, Kurdish etc.)



Five waves of immigration to Finland



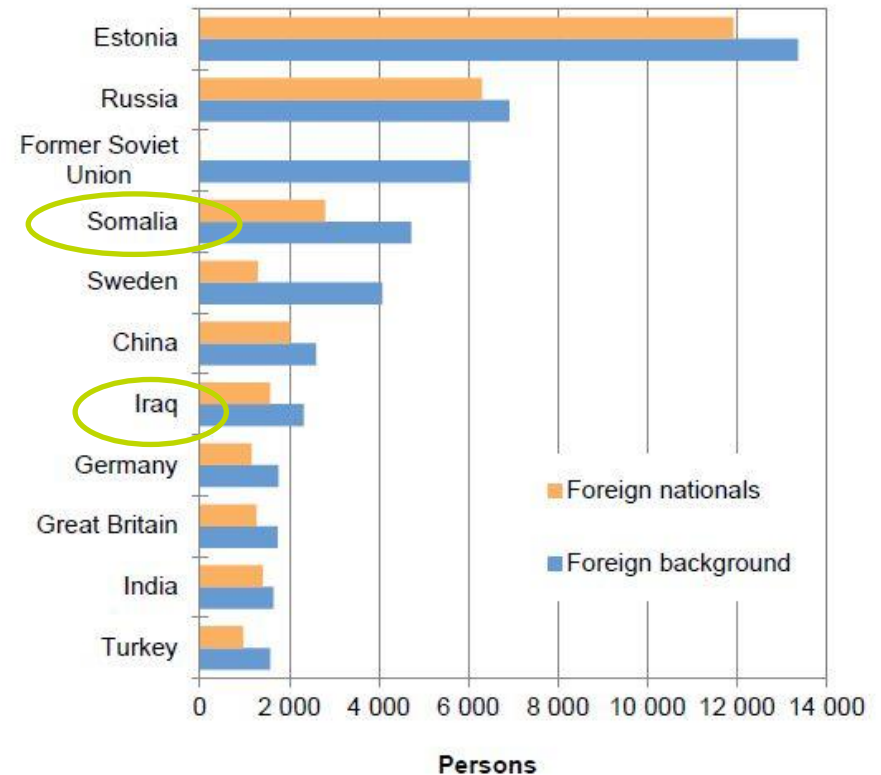
- 1) 1973 – Chileans
- 2) 1979 – Vietnamese boat people
- 3) 1990 – Somalis
- 4) 1992 – Kosovo Albanians
- 5) 2015 – Iraqis, Somalis, Afghans, Syrians,

Source: Helsingin Sanomat 25.10.2015

Operational environment in Helsinki

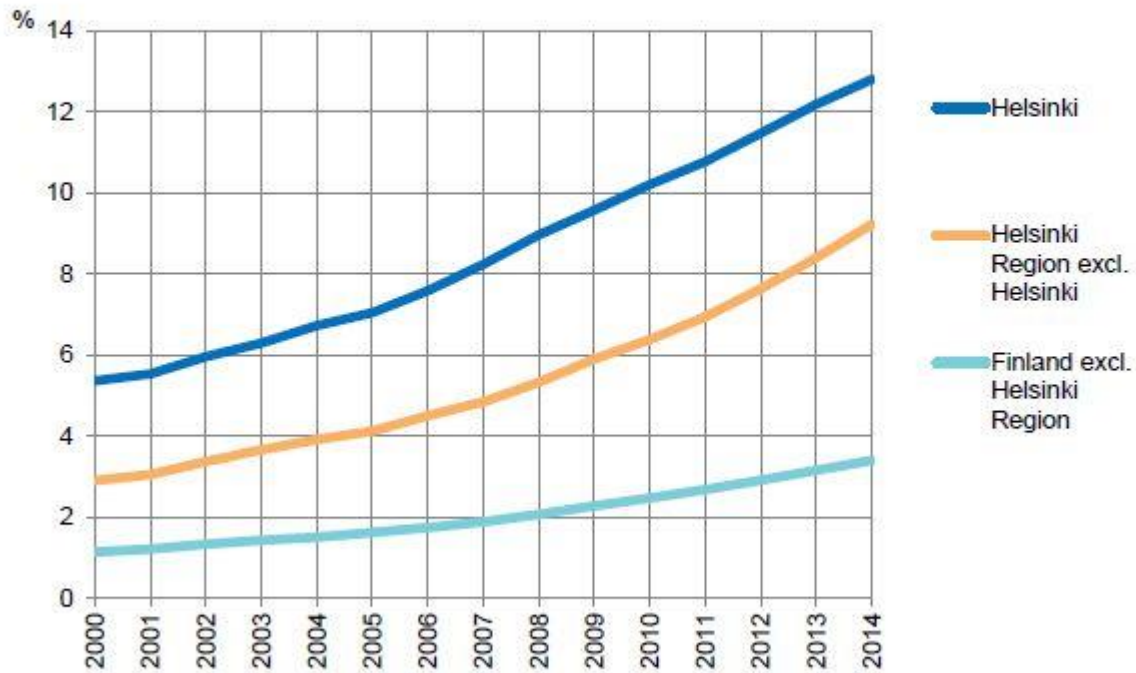
- The number of immigrants and young adults higher than elsewhere in the country
- Foreign-language residents approx 13 % (79 000 persons)

Figure 6. Largest foreigner groups in Helsinki on 1 Jan. 2014



Source: City of Helsinki, Urban Facts; Statistics Finland

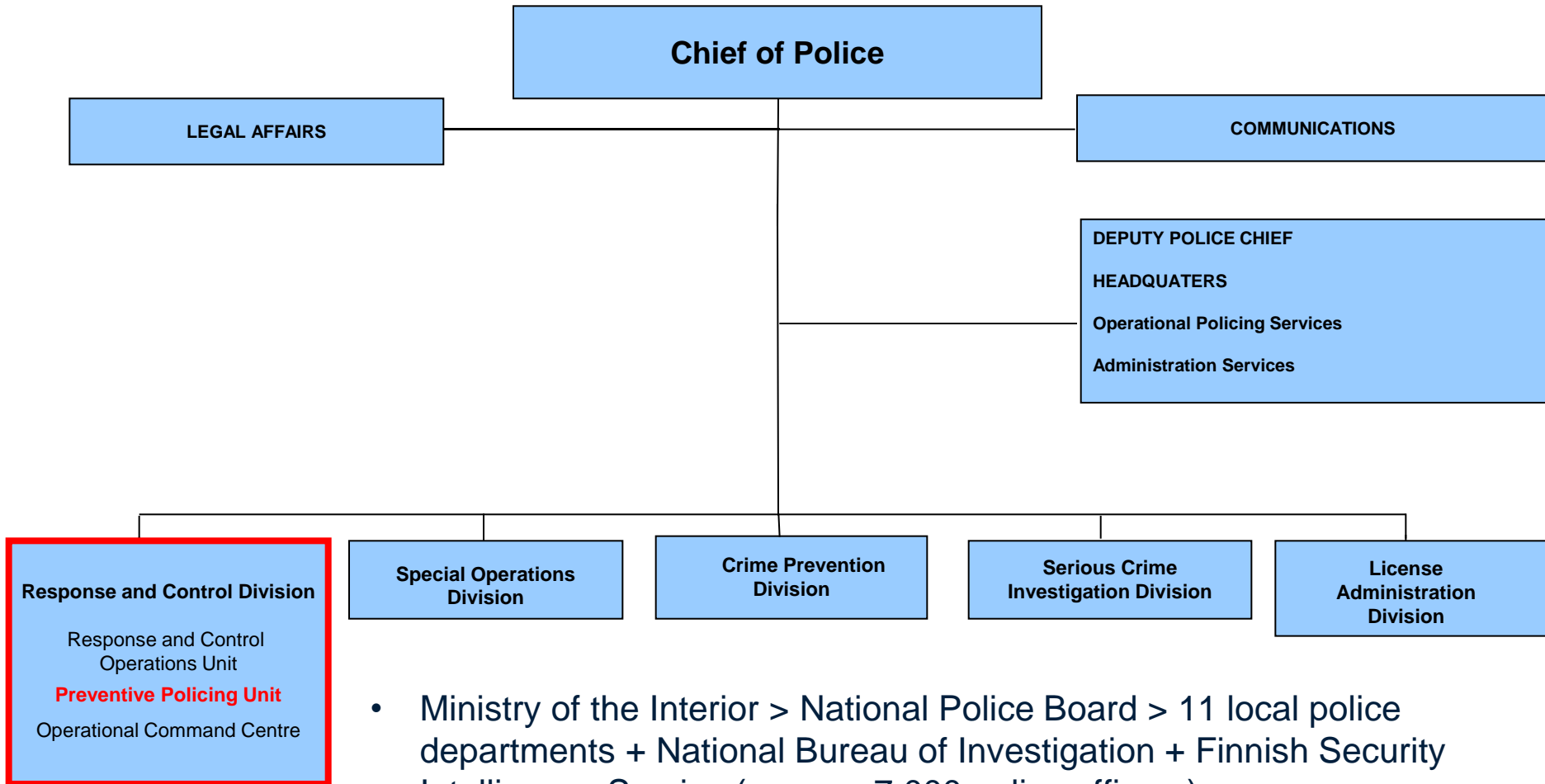
Figure 1. Proportion of foreign-language residents in the populations of Helsinki, Helsinki Region and the rest of Finland in 2000–2014



Source: Statistics Finland

Source: City of Helsinki, Urban Facts; Statistics Finland

HELSINKI POLICE DEPARTMENT 1.6.2016



- Ministry of the Interior > National Police Board > 11 local police departments + National Bureau of Investigation + Finnish Security Intelligence Service (approx. 7 000 police officers)
- Founded 1826, employees approx 1 600 (1 300 are police officers)
- Responsible for maintaining public order and security, preventing and investigating crimes and providing police licence services in Helsinki

Background

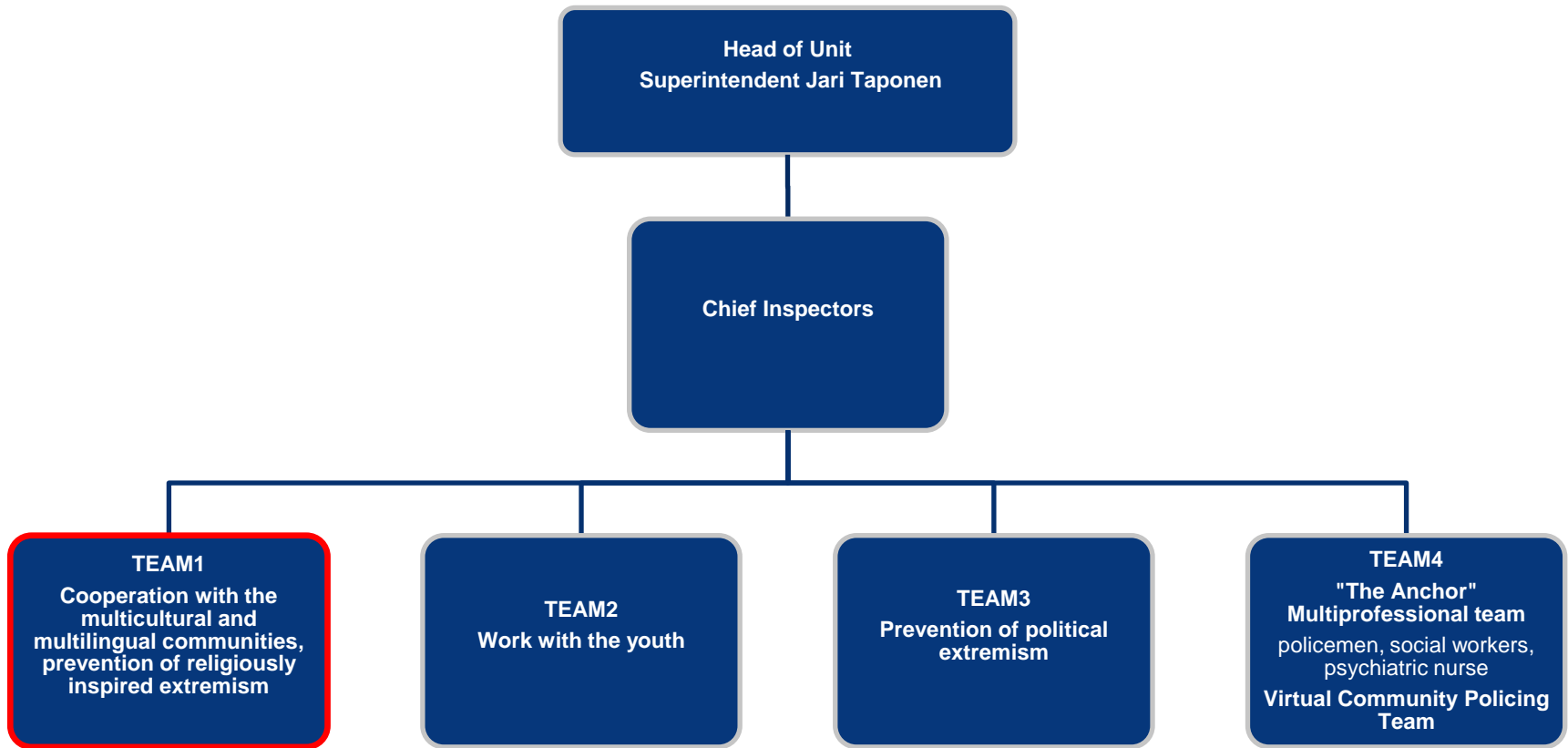
- In Helsinki cooperation with the immigrants since the late 1980s
 - 1990–1991 the first Somalis to Finland and Helsinki
 - visiting the immigrants
 - networking with the Swedish police
- Senior Constables Claus Hindrén and Pertti Kuusinen as the pioneers in Helsinki
- After the first part of 1990s, increasing contacts between the police and the immigrants > nowadays a special task of Preventive Policing Unit

Preventive Policing Unit in Helsinki

= To enhance the security of the city and the sense of security and to prevent phenomena that are endangering security (in cooperation with other police units, authorities, NGOs, societies, associations and the citizens of the city)

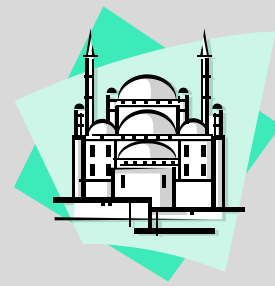
- 4 teams, including a multiprofessional team
- Virtual Community Policing team

Preventive Policing Unit





Team 1



Main tasks:

- Cooperation with the multicultural and multilingual communities in Helsinki
 - Building trust between the police and the communities
 - Solving security problems together
- Prevention of religiously inspired extremism

With whom we cooperate?

- Multilingual and multicultural (immigrant) communities / associations / societies
 - Somali
 - Kurdish
 - Multicultural NGOs
- Mosques (prayerhouses) / Muslim communities in Helsinki
- NGOs working with the immigrants, for instance:
 - The Finnish League for Human Rights (Ihmisoikeusliitto ry)
 - MONIKA – Multicultural Women's Association
- Reception centers in Helsinki


How?

- 'Negotiators' in demonstrations held by the immigrants
- Visits to the immigrant communities and mosques in Helsinki
- Q&A -session for the members of the community
- Info sessions for the asylum seekers in reception centers
- Visits (and help) to many events held by the communities
 - sport events
 - seminars
- Patrolling the streets of Helsinki together with the members of the community

The multicultural police work

- Very different and challenging work in a demanding environment
 - > as a policeman you need to forget the everyday routines
 - open-mindedness, self-direction, a strong motivation
 - a real interest in different languages, cultures, nations etc. > a need of good knowledge > **training, studying**
 - a familiarity with the culture > a culture sensitivity
- Building trust between the communities and the police > Hard to build, easy to lose
 - diplomacy
 - reciprocity
 - same faces
- The police needs to be the active party

Challenges...

- The police is not 'the almighty'
 - To be active versus to give space
 - Need of police officers with multicultural backgrounds
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- It remains to be seen whether the current developments like flows of asylum seekers, rise of extreme right voices in politics and in streets, and economical pressures for cutting public sector budgets will change the big picture of policing in Finland in the future? (Virta, Sirpa ja Taponen, Jari 2016; *Policing regime in transition in the Nordic countries*)
 - Hate speech influence feelings of safety (Ministry of Justice, Finland, Publications 7/2016)
 - Differences between 1930's and 2016's? (Silvennoinen, Oula 2016)



To sum up



At the moment / in future:

- Increasing number of immigrants / foreigners / asylum seekers > as well as demonstrations around this issue
- The police cannot act alone > needs good cooperation with everybody
- Global phenomena affect Finland as well
- Situation in Finland still rather calm, but it can change rapidly > excellent window of opportunity to fix the structures

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