

# The Urban Population in Finland 1815—1865

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## Introduction

I have previously discussed the development of the Finnish urban population in 1727—1810 (Turpeinen 1977). It was natural for this study, which was based on register material and church population records, to extend to the beginning of the 1800s. It was at this time that towns were separated into a group of their own in the statistical system used in Finland: beginning in 1802 in the population change tables and in 1805 in the population tables.

Thus it could be assumed a relatively easy task to obtain population figures for the towns starting in 1805 from the population tables kept in the archives of the Finnish Central Statistical Office. In reality, however, this is a rather complicated matter. The problems that arise already appeared in a book published in 1899 titled »The main features of the Finnish population statistics in 1750—1890 I. The state of the population» (*»Pääpiirteet Suomen väestötilastosta vuosina 1750—1890 I. Väestön tila»*. Suomenmaan virallinen tilasto VI, Väkiluvun tilastoa 29, Helsinki 1899). Thus, for example, the following figures concerning the population of Viipuri are presented in the book mentioned (p. 4): 8,618 in 1850, 5,421 in 1860 and 8,742 in 1865. Later these figures keep popping up in town histories (see e.g. Hautala 1975, p. 119). Just from a glance at these figures, however, the question arises how it can be possible for swings such as these to have occurred in the population without the town having experienced a violent crisis between 1850 and 1860 or an annexation of land in 1860—65.

How can population variations like these be explained? A closer examination in this case shows that the variation in Viipuri was mainly due to Russian troops stationed in the town. Similar problems were caused for this same reason in other towns also. Partially for this reason Orthodox urban parishes, in which Russian troops were at times included, have systematically been excluded from this study. Another reason for their exclusion is that the population change tables of the Orthodox parishes are incomplete. However, Finnish military units, special institutions etc. have been included, because information on changes in their population has usually remained intact.

## Sources, method and previous research

This study will attempt to answer the following questions: (1) How did the population in different Finnish towns develop in 1815—1865, (2) How did fertility, mortality and migration affect the development of the population, (3) What was the urban population structure like and (4) What factors — economic, political etc. — were in the background affecting population factors and thus the development of the urban population?

The main sources used in the study are population and population change tables. The former were kept every five years and the latter annually. With this data we can compare not only population development in different towns but also differences in fertility and mortality. The focal point of this study is thus on the comparison of population and factors which affect it.

Although no basic study of the development of the Finnish urban population and the reasons for its development has been made for the years 1815—65, some studies have touched on the subject (Jutikkala 1977 and Nikula 1981). Similarly, some province histories have included an examination of the development of the area's urban population (Wirilander 1960 and Rosenberg 1976). The most thorough examination of the subject can be found in town histories, although it must be said here that there are quite large qualitative differences in the way this question has been handled (see the bibliography and source list at the end of this article).

## Population development

In 1815 there were a total of 29 towns in Finland and in 1865 there were 33, for during this period the following towns were founded: Jyväskylä (1837), Mikkelä (1838), Joensuu (1848) and Mariehamn (1861).

In examining the size of these towns and changes which had occurred, we arrive at the following:

Size	Number of towns		
	1815	1840	1865
20 000—	—	—	1
10 000—19 999	1	2	1
5 000— 9 999	—	2	1
2 500— 4 999	4	6	8
1 000— 2 499	11	10	8
500— 999	7	6	9
— 499	6	5	1
Total	29	31	33

A general developmental feature was the growth of the towns. While there were only five towns in 1815 with more than 2,500 inhabitants, in 1840 there were already 10 and in 1865 15. This phenomenon was a result of the fact that the entire urban population of Finland grew in half a century from 51,100 to 120,900, by almost 2.4 times. The new towns which were founded during the period covered by the study had little effect on this development, for even without them the figure for 1865 would be 118,000.

The towns of Finland — appendix table 1 — can also be divided into three main groups, namely towns situated on the Gulf of Finland, those on the Gulf of Bothnia and those in the interior (see below).

	1815		1840		1865	
	population	%	population	%	population	%
Gulf of Finland	13,418	26.2	30,051	36.6	43,102	35.6
Gulf of Bothnia	32,195	63.0	41,496	50.5	56,218	46.5
Interior	5,519	10.8	10,625	12.9	21,608	17.9

The towns on the Gulf of Finland, whose number remained at six throughout the period under study, included Helsinki, Loviisa, Porvoo, Tammisaari, Hamina and Viipuri. The largest number of towns was on the Gulf of Bothnia. In this area their number rose by one to 15, because Mariehamn has been included in this group. Among the new towns founded in 1815—65 three were in the interior, so this group rose from 9 towns to 12.

The following conclusion can be made from the numbers cited above: the proportion of towns on the Gulf of Bothnia dropped sharply during this fifty-year period. Correspondingly the percentage of towns on the Gulf of Finland and in the interior rose markedly.

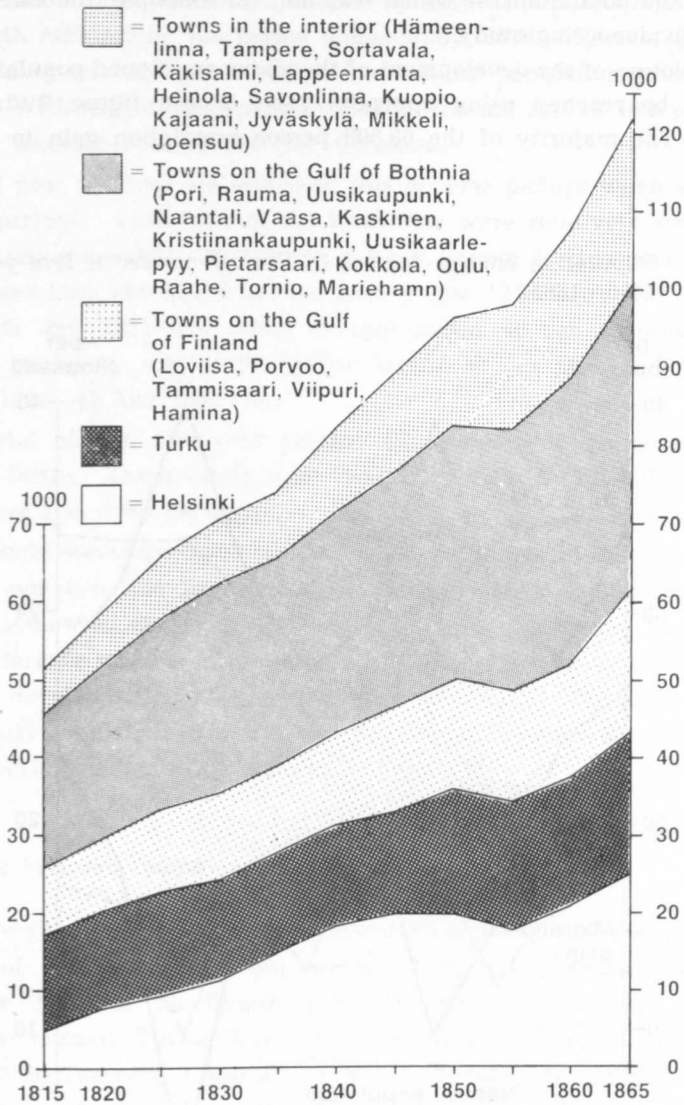
In regard to population size Helsinki and Turku were in a class of their own. For this reason these towns were made into a subgroup of their own in the adjacent figure (Figure 1). Figure 1, which was drawn on the basis of appendix table 1, shows how the population of Helsinki grew rapidly until the beginning of the 1840s and how in the same period the population of Turku stood almost at a standstill.

## Fertility, mortality and migration

### *Development in five-year periods*

Among population factors affecting the development of the size of the Finnish urban population, almost complete information on births and deaths is available for the years 1816—65. By comparing these data with the average population size, we can then calculate fertility and mortality.

Figure 1. The population of Finnish towns 1815—1865.

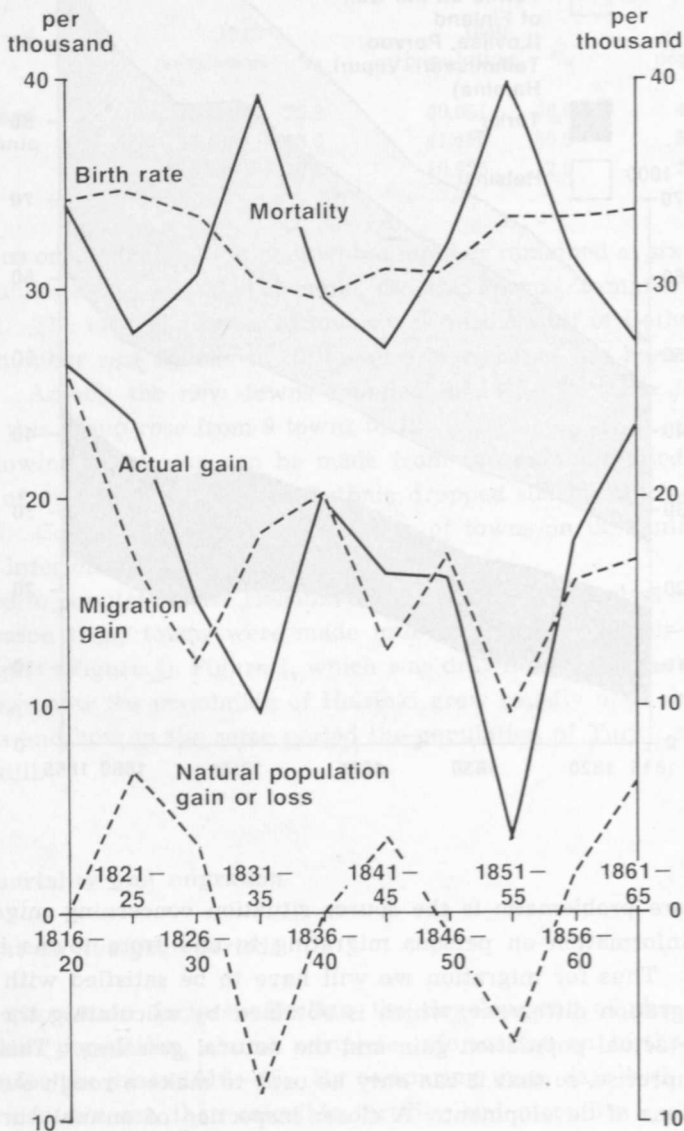


Much more problematic is the source situation concerning migration. No systematic information on persons migrating to and from towns is available before 1878. Thus for migration we will have to be satisfied with estimating only the migration difference, which is obtained by calculating the difference between the actual population gain and the natural gain/loss. This method is naturally imprecise, so that it can only be used to make a rough outline of the main directions of development. A closer inspection of annual variations, for

example, is not possible, however. It also does not give information on the mobility of the population — which was not, for example, the case in Rosenberg's (1966) pioneering study.

A total picture of the development of the above mentioned population change factors can be reached using appendix table 2 and figure 2 drawn from this table. The majority of the 69,800 person population gain in the towns,

Figure 2. Population change factors in Finnish towns in five-year periods 1816—1865.



that is 67,000 inhabitants or about 96 ‰, was caused by migration gain, while only 4 ‰ (2,880 inhabitants) was caused by natural population increase. The annual birth rate during the period under study, 1816—65, was 32.4 per thousand, mortality was 31.7 per thousand and natural population gain was 0.7 per thousand. With migration gain at an average annual rate of 16.2 per thousand, the actual increase rose to 16.9 per thousand.

Several new features are added to this general picture when examined by five-year periods. Variations in the birth rate were relatively small, between 30 and 35 per thousand. On the other hand, strong fluctuations were felt in mortality and thus also in the natural gain or loss. Mortality was at its highest in 1831—35 and 1851—55, when it approached 40 per thousand. Correspondingly, mortality was at its lowest, below 30 per thousand, in 1821—25, 1836—40, 1841—45 and 1861—65.

In a total of four five-year periods the number of deaths exceeded the number of births. The greatest losses were definitely in 1831—35 and 1851—55, at both times over 3,000 persons.

No definite developmental trend is thus apparent in the development of mortality, nor can one be seen for migration gain. Both were, however, relatively somewhat larger in 1816—40 than in the following 25-year period, but the difference was not large and in addition, examining by five-year periods makes the developmental trend zigzag back and forth. The same can also be said of actual population gain, for here the largest figures were in the first two five-year periods under study and also in 1861—65.

#### *Differences between towns*

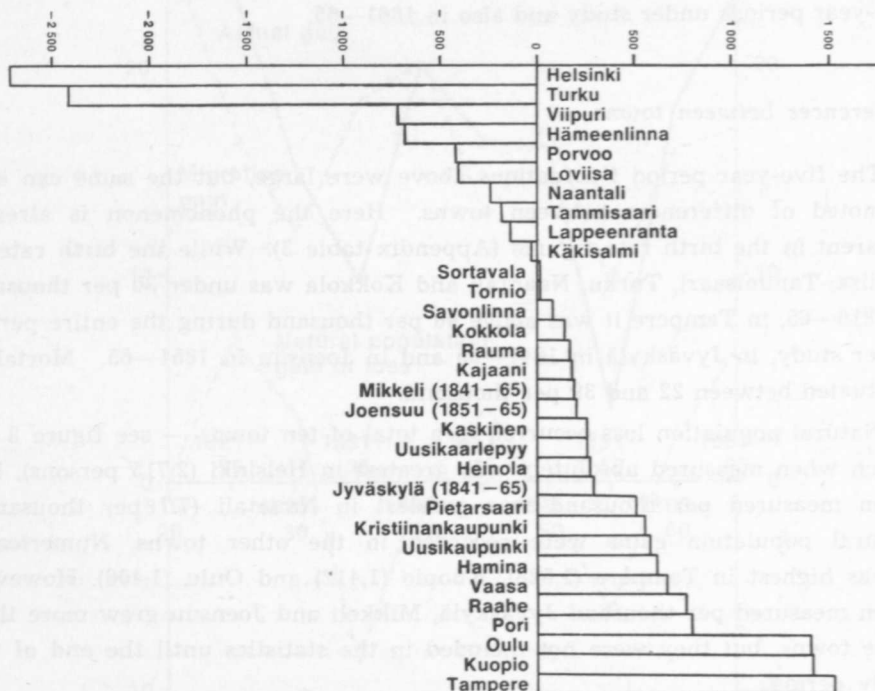
The five-year period fluctuations above were large, but the same can also be noted of differences between towns. Here the phenomenon is already apparent in the birth rate figures (Appendix table 3). While the birth rate in Loviisa, Tammissaari, Turku, Naantali and Kokkola was under 30 per thousand in 1816—65, in Tampere it was above 40 per thousand during the entire period under study, in Jyväskylä in 1841—65 and in Joensuu in 1851—65. Mortality fluctuated between 22 and 39 per thousand.

Natural population loss occurred in a total of ten towns — see figure 3 —, which when measured absolutely was greatest in Helsinki (2,715 persons), but when measured per thousand was greatest in Naantali (7.7 per thousand). Natural population gains were recorded in the other towns. Numerically it was highest in Tampere (1,528), Kuopio (1,412) and Oulu (1,406). However, when measured per thousand Jyväskylä, Mikkeli and Joensuu grew more than these towns, but they were not included in the statistics until the end of the study period.

All the towns experienced migration gain in 1816—65. Excluding Naantali, the migration gain was also sufficient to cover the natural population loss felt by the above-mentioned ten towns, so that actual population gain occurred. In dividing the towns into different groups according to the relative size of their migration gain, the following is arrived at:

Annual migration gain per thousand 1816—1865	Towns
30.0—	Helsinki, Viipuri, Jyväskylä (1841—65), Joensuu (1851—65)
25.0—29.9	Tampere, Sortavala
20.0—24.9	Lappeenranta
15.0—19.9	Hämeenlinna, Savonlinna, Kuopio and Mikkeli (1851—1865)
10.0—14.9	Porvoo, Turku, Pori, Rauma, Uusikaupunki, Oulu
5.0— 9.9	Tammisaari, Käkisalmi, Hamina, Vaasa, Kristiinankaupunki, Raahe, Kajaani
2.5— 4.9	Loviisa, Naantali, Heinola, Kaskinen, Pietarsaari
— 2.4	Uusikaarlepyy, Kokkola, Tornio

Figure 3. The absolute amount of natural population gain or loss in Finnish towns in 1816—1865.



The largest annual migration gains were recorded in Helsinki, Viipuri, Jyväskylä and Joensuu. On the other hand, the migration gain of Uusikaarlepyy, Kokkola and Tornio was very slight.

Helsinki's proportion (23,074 persons) of the total absolute migration gain was truly great, for it formed about one-third (34.5 %). The following table shows that Turku and Viipuri were just as clearly in second and third place.

Town	Absolute migration gain	Town	Absolute migration gain
Helsinki	23 074	Porvoo	1 605
Turku	8 513	Uusikaupunki	1 382
Viipuri	6 255	Vaasa	1 209
Pori	3 704	Rauma	1 130
Tampere	3 222		
Oulu	2 694	Other towns	
Kuopio	2 446	(migration gain	
Hämeenlinna	2 167	in each under	
		1 000 persons)	9 570
		Total migra-	
		tion gain	66 971

A migration gain of over 3,000 persons was also recorded in Pori and in Tampere, while Oulu, Kuopio and Hämeenlinna exceeded 2,000. A quite large migration gain was also found in Porvoo, Uusikaupunki, Vaasa and Rauma. In the other towns — a total of 20 — the migration gain totaled 9,570 persons or only 14.3 % of the entire migration gain (66,971 persons).

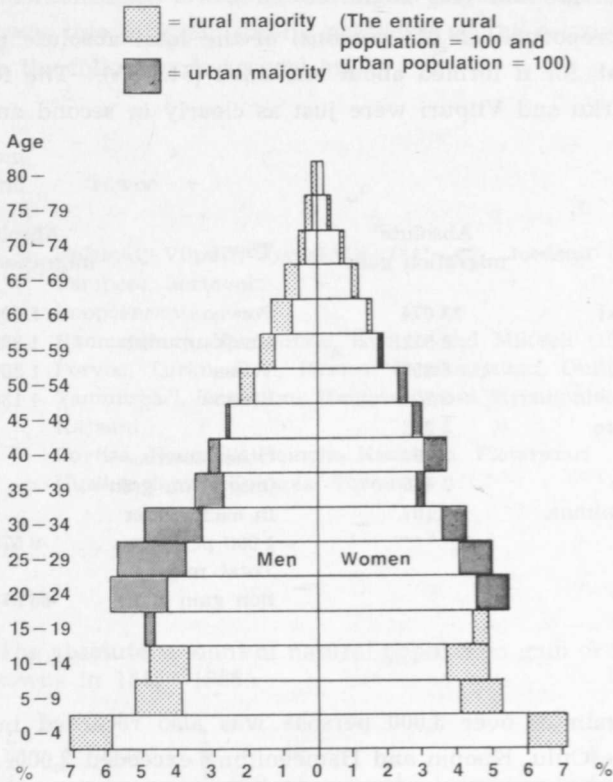
The migration gain in the towns also, of course, affected the age structure. This is demonstrated in figure 4, which describes the situation in 1845. Compared to the rural areas, the urban age structure differed in many respects. There were relatively less young, under 15-year-olds in the towns than in the rural areas. On the other hand, the situation among the 15—50-year-olds was the opposite; the difference was especially great in the 20—34-year-old group.

#### *General background factors*

What were the basic reasons causing the population in the towns of Finland to more than double in 1815—65? And why was the population growth in the various towns so very different? Before we attempt to answer these questions, we should first compare the growth of the urban population with the development of the entire population of Finland. From the figures shown here we



Figure 4. The age structure of the urban and rural population in Finland in 1845.



can see that in 1815 the proportion of the population living in towns was 4.7 and in 1865 it was 6.7. By 1840, the percentage had risen by 1.1 percentage points. Then the figure remained stationary for quite a long time, at slightly under six percent. Not until the end of the 1850s did the percentage begin to climb quite rapidly.

Year December 31st	Urban population as % of Finnish population	Year December 31st	Urban population as % of Finnish population
1815	4.7	1845	5.8
1820	5.0	1850	5.9
1825	5.2	1855	5.8
1830	5.2	1860	6.2
1835	5.3	1865	6.7
1840	5.8		

This examination should also include a mention of development in the 1700s, even though Finland at that time was geographically different. Namely, in 1727 the population of the towns formed 4.5 % of the entire population, but the proportion rose by 1785 to 5.3 %, but dropped again to 4.5 % by 1810 (Turpeinen 1977, p. 116). Thus over a longer span of time the percentage had not been constantly on the rise. In fact, a small decline is apparent also between 1850 and 1855, when the percentage dropped slightly.

In discussing the background factors affecting the development of the population in the towns we can begin with Finland's altered political situation. How did the annexation of Finland to Russia as an autonomous region in 1809 and the designation of Helsinki as the capital of the Grand Duchy in 1812 affect the development of the urban population? If we examine the proportions of Turku and Helsinki in the entire urban population of Finland in 1749—1865, we arrive at the following:

	1749	Percentage of the Finnish urban population				1865
		1805	1810	1815	1840	
Helsinki	7.3	7.7	9.0	9.4	22.0	20.8
Turku	27.4	25.9	25.8	26.2	16.0	15.0

The change in government was not apparent immediately in the percentages of Turku and Helsinki, which is quite understandable, because even many of the central organs of the state were located in Turku for many years at the beginning of the autonomous period. The actual profound change was not felt until 1815—40, when Helsinki's percentage rose from 9.4 to 22 and correspondingly Turku's dropped from 26.2 to 16 percent. Then the situation stabilized and the percentage figures remained almost unchanged; there was even a very slight decline, about one percent, apparent in 1865 in both towns.

This change in the proportions of Helsinki and Turku also had a decisive effect on the percentages of the towns on the Gulf of Bothnia and the Gulf of Finland. Without Turku and Helsinki the development of these two groups would namely have been the following.

	Percentage of the Finnish urban population		
	1815	1840	1865
Towns on the Gulf of Finland (excluding Helsinki)	16.9	14.6	14.9
Towns on the Gulf of Bothnia (excluding Turku)	38.4	34.5	31.5

As can be seen, the proportion of the towns on the Gulf of Bothnia shrank somewhat even without Turku, but not very sharply. On the other hand, the towns on the Gulf of Finland, excluding Helsinki, did not increase their share,

instead they lost two percent in 1815—65. Thus when the towns of Finland turned their »faces» from Stockholm to St. Petersburg, this was mainly caused by the rise of Helsinki and the relative decline of Turku. Also the fact that the urban population's percentage of the entire country's population rose in 1815—40 by about one percentage point is largely due to Helsinki's position and to the autonomous position of the country in general. Namely, when Finland became an autonomous region the size of the administration increased somewhat, which also had indirect effects: the administration and government officials needed servants, which together caused demand on the areas of commerce and handicrafts.

And how can the rise of the proportion of the urban population in relation to the entire population at the end of the period under study be explained? Quite obviously, it was connected mainly with the beginning of industrialization, which included the growth of lumbering. This is shown by the fact that, in addition to Helsinki, Turku, Viipuri and Kuopio, the populations of Oulu and Pori, among others, also grew rapidly in 1855—65. These last two towns were situated notably on two important river waterways — and thus also at the mouths of rivers on which logs were floated.

The factors mentioned above can be used to understand the changes which took place in the percentages of the towns. On the other hand, the growth of the urban population cannot be separated from the general growth of the population. Thus the question of why Finnish towns grew in the preindustrial era — this had continued at least from the 1720s — is connected to a broader question: why did Europe's rapid population growth begin in the 1700s. We will not go into this broader question here, however.

	1815	1820	1825	1830	1835	1840	1845	1850	1855	1860	1865
Helsinki—Helsingfors	4 801	7 719	9 282	11 110	14 568	18 072	19 708	19 818	17 681	21 032	25 134
Lovisa—Lovisa	2 396	2 186	2 483	2 647	2 556	2 603	2 776	2 703	2 398	2 571	2 605
Porvoo—Borgå	2 223	2 259	2 664	2 618	2 749	2 767	2 936	2 950	2 707	3 118	3 420
Tammisaari—Ekenäs	990	1 213	1 178	1 216	1 225	1 305	1 338	1 445	1 323	1 353	1 333
Turku—Åbo	12 550	12 672	13 609	13 274	13 185	13 145	13 518	16 210	16 768	16 841	18 080
Pori—Björneborg	2 750	3 174	3 829	4 567	4 716	5 353	5 739	6 243	6 320	7 130	7 270
Rauma—Raumo	1 701	1 783	1 712	1 803	1 743	1 847	2 042	2 344	2 472	2 825	3 033
Uusikaupunki—Nystad	1 291	1 600	1 793	1 938	1 843	2 097	2 513	2 890	2 905	3 079	3 258
Naantali—Nådendal	669	664	708	724	694	606	561	562	616	531	541
Hämeenlinna—Tavastehus	1 668	2 024	2 290	2 275	2 311	2 697	2 474	2 531	2 569	2 915	3 150
Tampere—Tammerfors	793	956	1 302	1 585	1 577	1 819	2 513	3 207	3 820	5 232	5 538
Viipuri—Viborg	2 148	2 176	2 558	2 850	2 914	3 430	4 233	4 761	5 459	4 925	8 246
Sortavala	172	217	241	217	241	350	395	431	573	589	674
Käkisalmi	464	553	537	549	497	671	629	602	638	619	704
Lappeenranta—Villmanstrand	235	418	472	546	500	794	854	863	918	915	906
Hamina—Fredrikshamn	860	1 385	1 711	1 700	1 682	1 874	1 969	2 237	2 229	2 454	2 364
Heinola	586	663	815	895	965	1 029	870	963	1 006	973	1 008
Savonlinna—Nyslott	197	227	301	325	349	444	637	708	769	971	1 005
Kuopio	1 087	1 330	1 749	2 001	1 968	2 071	2 654	2 810	3 479	4 015	5 138
Vaasa—Vasa	2 681	3 021	3 307	3 323	3 135	3 047	3 270	3 665	3 424	3 966	4 551
Kaskinen—Kaskö	412	604	593	646	605	699	716	729	767	851	788
Kristiinank.—Kristinestad	1 165	1 203	1 517	1 702	1 787	2 102	2 281	2 404	2 367	2 495	2 562
Uusikaarlepyy—Nykarleby	712	779	797	815	885	963	1 134	1 154	1 217	1 101	1 026
Pietarsaari—Jakobstad	1 103	1 241	1 416	1 398	1 315	1 439	1 526	1 542	1 820	1 884	1 861
Kokkola—Gamlakarleby	1 799	1 867	2 037	2 389	2 530	2 560	2 384	2 379	2 329	2 231	2 163
Oulu—Uleåborg	3 543	4 105	4 330	5 035	4 998	5 096	5 407	5 761	6 261	7 018	7 602
Raahе—Brahestad	1 127	1 306	1 471	1 658	1 828	1 984	2 145	2 301	2 429	2 512	2 620
Tornio—Torneå	692	591	649	677	613	558	551	606	668	693	741
Kajaani—Kajana	317	367	372	404	356	423	482	518	562	563	659
Jyväskylä (1837)	—	—	—	—	—	177	390	582	704	858	1 163
Mikkeli—S:t Michel (1838)	—	—	—	—	—	150	494	564	636	692	830
Joensuu (1848)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	129	545	598	833
Maarianh.—Mariehamn (1861)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	122
Total	51 132	58 303	65 723	70 887	74 335	82 172	89 139	96 662	98 379	107 550	120 928

Appendix table 2. Mean population, birth rate, mortality, natural population gain or loss, migration gain and actual population gain in five-year periods in Finnish towns 1816—1865.

Time period	Mean population		Birth rate		Mortality		Natural gain or loss		Migration gain		Actual population gain	
	Number	Per thousand	Number	Per thousand	Number	Per thousand	Number	Per thousand	Number	Per thousand	Number	Per thousand
1816—20	54 717	34.2	9 240	33.8	111	0.4	7 060	25.8	7 171	26.2	7 420	23.9
1821—25	62 013	34.5	8 627	27.8	2 061	6.7	5 359	17.3	4 059	11.9	3 448	9.5
1826—30	68 305	33.5	10 349	30.3	—3 141	—8.7	7 899	20.2	6 967	16.3	7 523	16.2
1831—35	72 611	30.4	14 187	39.1	1 586	3.7	8 006	17.2	1 717	3.5	9 171	17.8
1836—40	78 253	29.5	11 589	29.7	—483	—1.0	4 730	9.7	8 174	15.9	13 378	23.4
1841—45	85 655	30.8	11 595	27.1	997	1.9	3 664	6.4	30 966	18.4	31 040	18.5
1846—50	92 900	30.9	14 818	31.9	2 751	1.1	36 005	14.6	38 756	15.7	69 796	16.9
1851—55	97 520	33.4	19 281	39.6	2 825	0.7	66 971	16.2				
1856—60	102 964	33.4	16 203	31.5								
1861—65	114 239	33.6	15 519	27.2								
1816—40	67 180	32.2	53 992	32.1	74	0.1	30 966	18.4	31 040	18.5	38 756	15.7
1941—65	98 656	32.5	77 416	31.4	2 751	1.1	36 005	14.6	38 756	15.7	69 796	16.9
1816—65	82 918	32.4	131 408	31.7	2 825	0.7	66 971	16.2				

Source: Population and population change tables. The archives of the Finnish Central Statistical Office.

Appendix table 3. Births, deaths, natural population gain or loss, migration gain and actual gain per 1 000 persons of the mean population annually in Finnish towns in 1816—1865.

Town	Births	Deaths	Natural population gain or loss	Migration gain	Actual gain
Helsinki	35.1	38.6	—3.5	30.0	26.5
Loviisa	27.4	30.6	—3.2	4.6	1.4
Porvoo	30.3	33.3	—3.0	11.7	8.7
Tammisaari	26.0	28.9	—2.9	9.6	6.7
Turku	29.1	32.5	—3.4	11.9	8.5
Pori	34.0	30.9	3.1	14.2	17.3
Rauma	33.8	32.2	1.6	10.8	12.4
Uusikaupunki	33.3	28.2	5.1	12.1	17.2
Naantali	26.6	34.3	—7.7	3.6	—4.1
Hämeenlinna	31.8	37.2	—5.4	17.3	11.7
Tampere	40.2	28.1	12.1	25.6	37.7
Viipuri	33.9	37.7	—3.8	32.8	29.0
Sortavala	32.9	32.0	0.9	28.7	29.6
Käkisalmi	30.3	31.5	—1.2	7.3	6.1
Lappeenranta	31.6	36.1	—4.5	20.9	16.4
Hamina	33.8	27.3	6.5	9.2	15.7
Heinola	31.3	25.2	6.1	3.3	9.4
Savonlinna	30.2	26.9	3.3	19.3	22.6
Kuopio	37.2	26.0	11.2	19.3	30.5
Vaasa	32.3	28.4	3.9	7.2	11.1
Kaskinen	34.8	27.5	7.3	3.2	10.5
Kristiinankaupunki	32.9	27.3	5.6	8.6	14.2
Uusikaarlepyy	30.6	25.5	5.1	1.3	6.4
Pietarsaari	32.1	25.4	6.7	3.3	10.0
Kokkola	28.8	27.5	1.3	1.8	3.1
Oulu	30.5	25.3	5.2	10.1	15.3
Raahe	30.9	22.9	8.0	7.3	15.3
Tornio	31.5	31.0	0.5	1.3	1.8
Kajaani	39.5	31.6	7.9	7.2	15.1
Jyväskylä (1841—65)	41.4	23.5	17.9	41.3	59.2
Mikkeli (1841—65)	36.5	24.2	12.3	15.5	27.8
Joensuu (1851—65)	46.8	22.0	24.8	66.3	91.1

Source: Population and population change tables. The archives of the Finnish Central Statistical Office.

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