



Finland's Alcohol Policy: Recent Changes, their Impacts and Future Directions

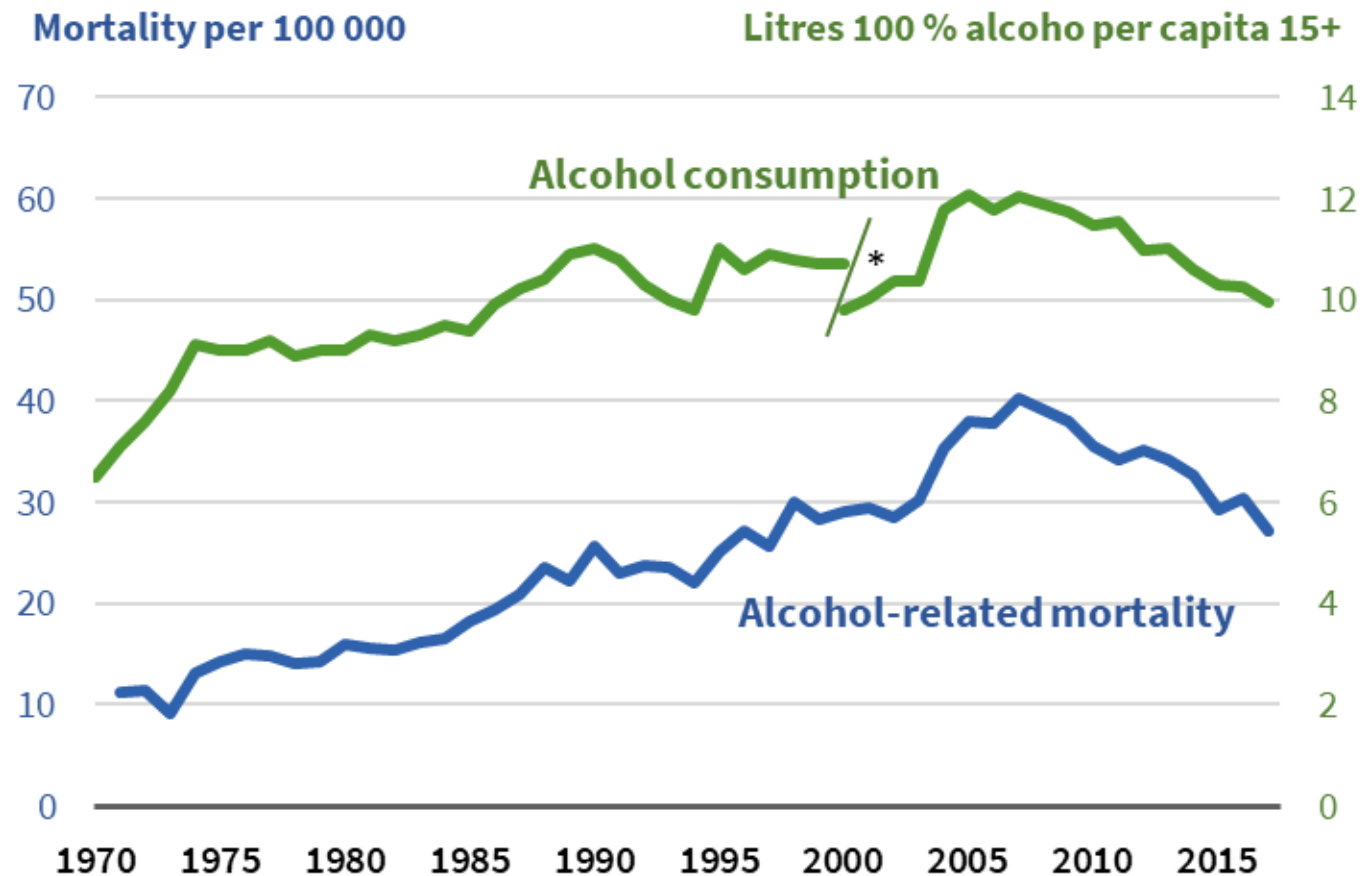
Pia Mäkelä & Thomas Karlsson

Finnish Institute for
Health and Welfare

06/10/2026

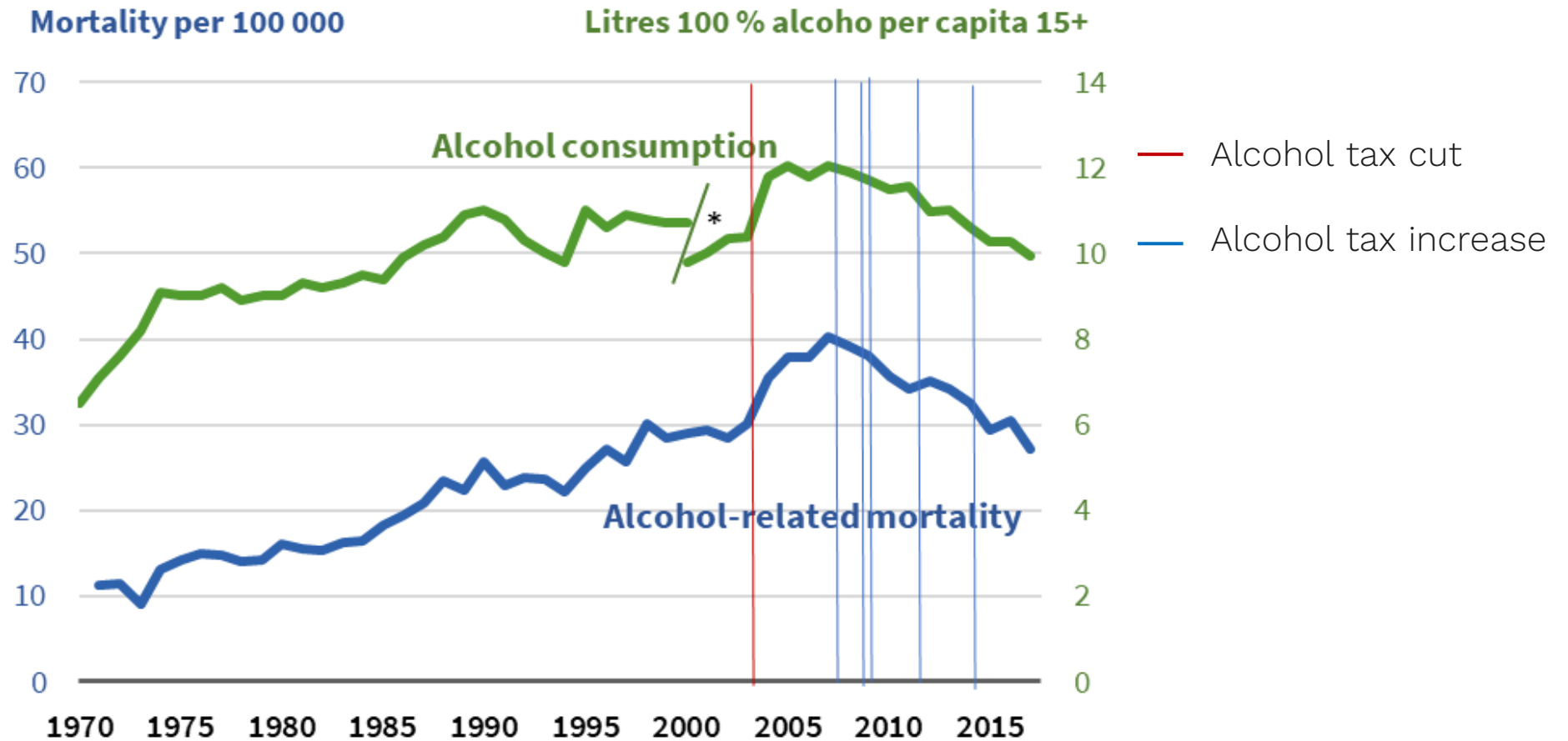


Development of per capita consumption and alcohol-attributable mortality until 2017 (before the changes)



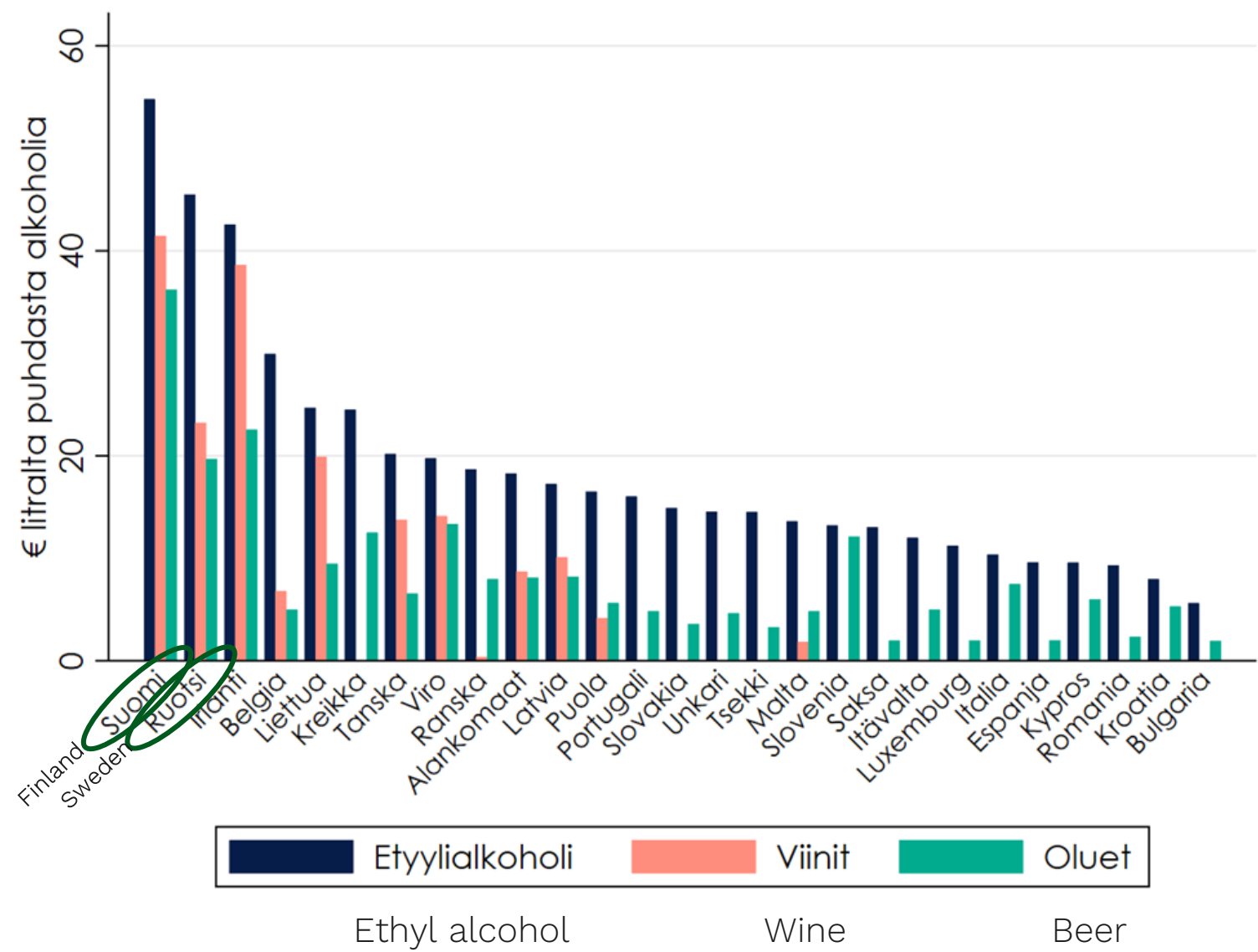
* A change in the formation of the series in 2000

Development of per capita consumption and alcohol-attributable mortality until 2017



* A change in the formation of the series in 2000

How long can we continue down this path – there is not much room left to raise taxes further



The 2018 change in the Alcohol Act

- Upper limit for grocery store alcohol sales increased from 4.7 to 5.5%
- Grocery store sales were allowed for alco-pops made from spirits
- Minor changes for on-premise sales regulations, Alko stores to stay open 1 hour more (until 9pm)

What followed? Research reports!

THL 2022
(Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare)



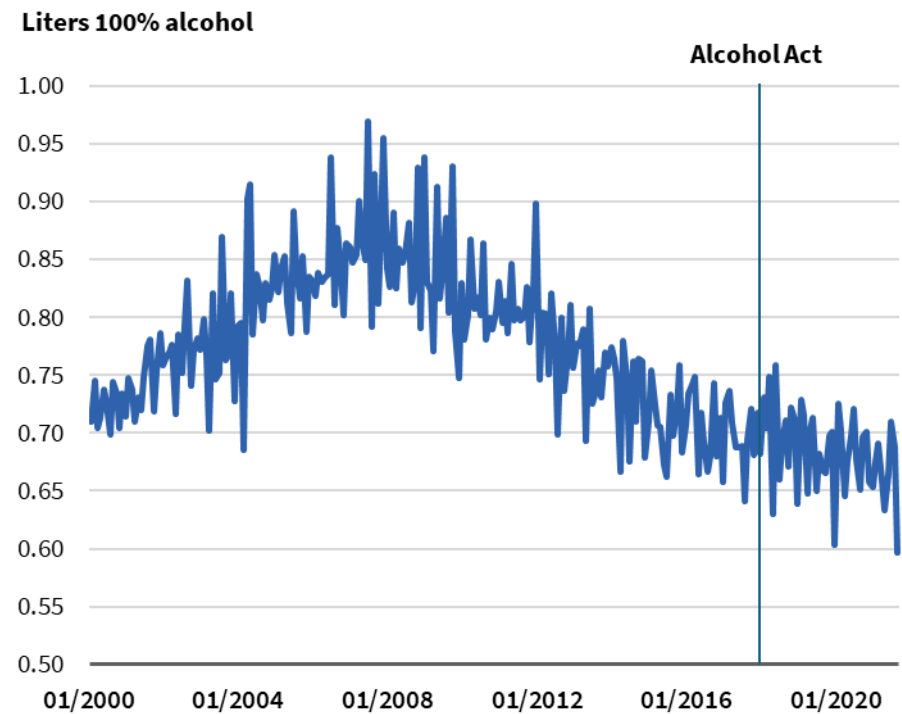
KKV 2024
(Finnish Competition and Consumer
Authority)



VATT & Labore 2024
Institute for Economic Research &
The Labour Institute for Economic Research



- Graphical illustration:
monthly recorded alcohol consumption
- Longer-term favourable trend has continued, but at a slightly higher level.
- Time series model: ca +3% increase, but statistical significance depended on model specification (Mäkelä & Norström 2022)



Source: Mäkelä & Norström

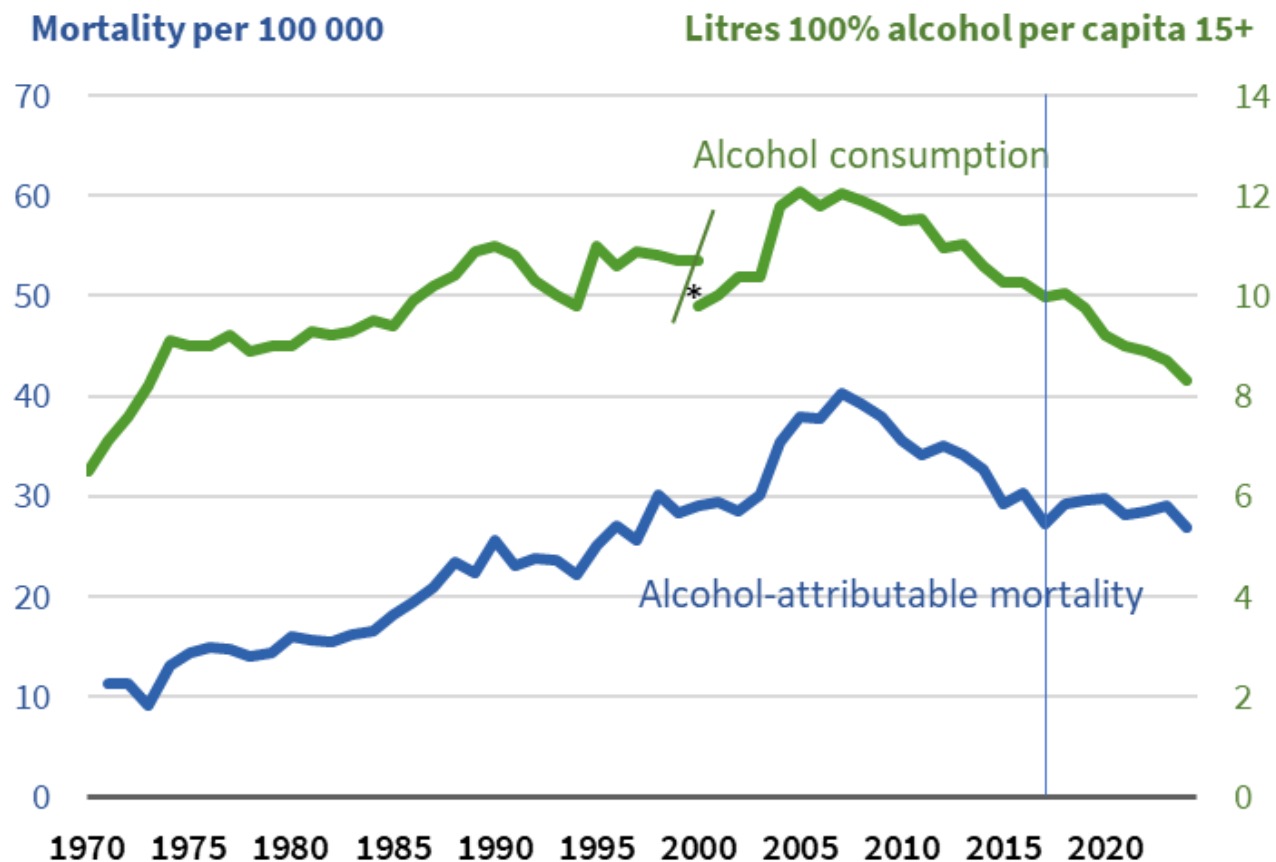
- KKV: "[The change in alcohol law] may have slightly increased alcohol consumption in Finland. On the other hand, the results indicate that the **tax increases made in connection with the reform may have reduced alcohol consumption and offset the consumption-increasing effect of other legislative changes**". KKV has a good analysis of prices, changes between distribution channels etc.



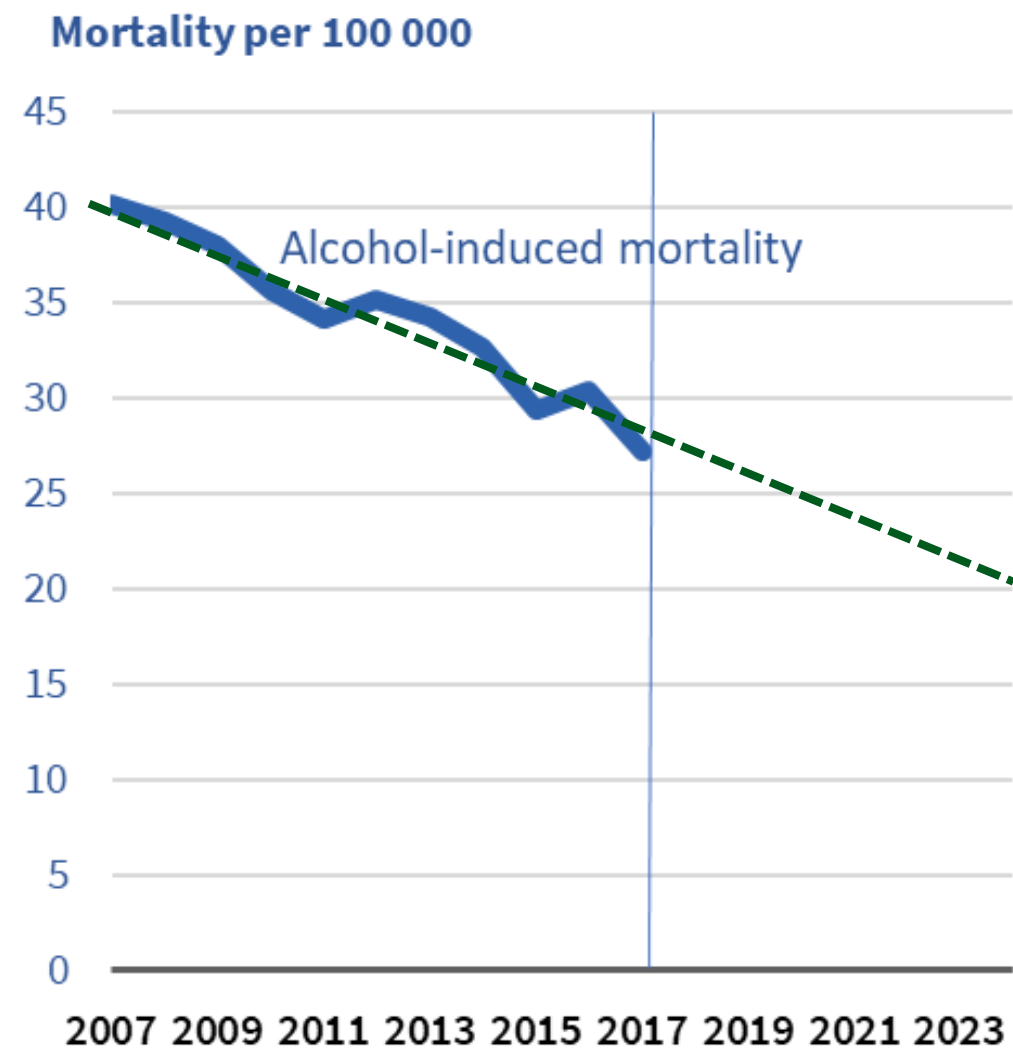
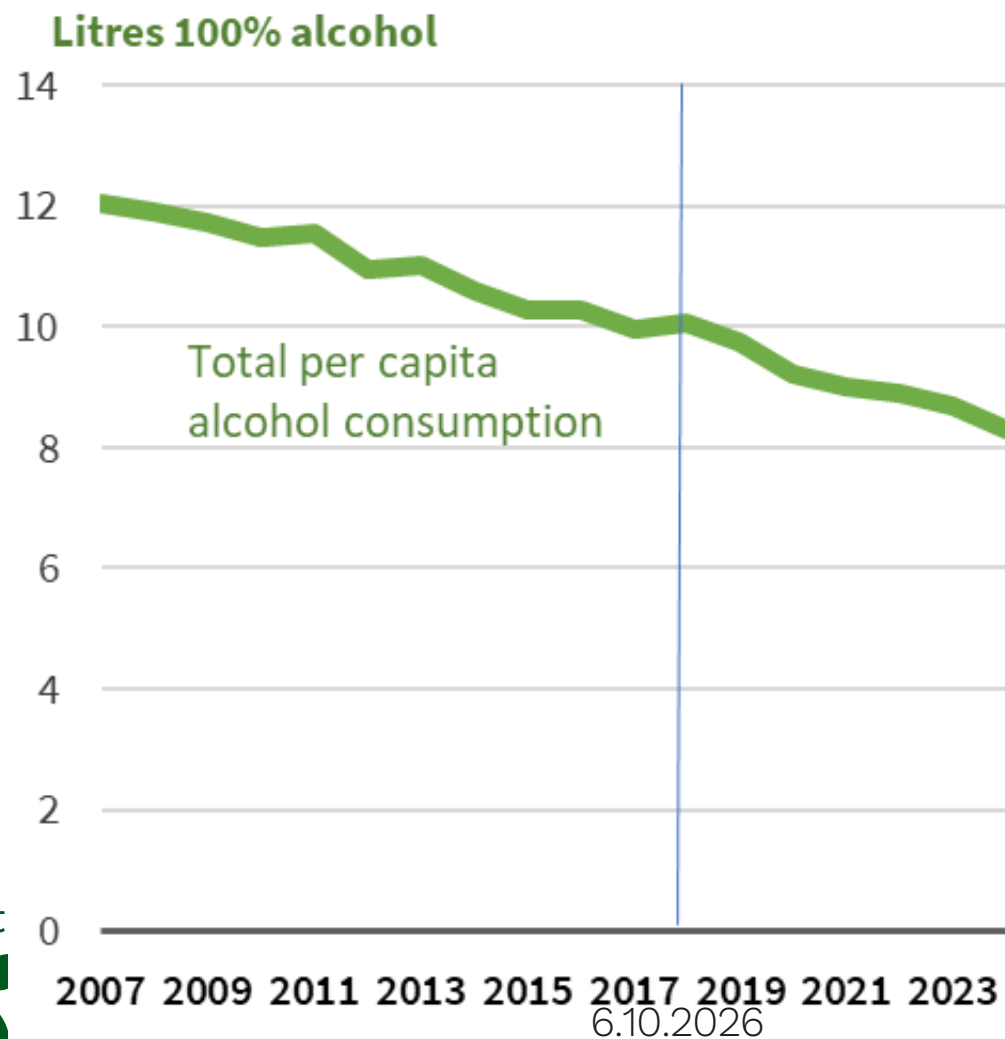
VATT: good analysis of prices, changes between distribution channels etc. (The analysis on change in per capita consumption assumed no impact of the simultaneous tax increase)

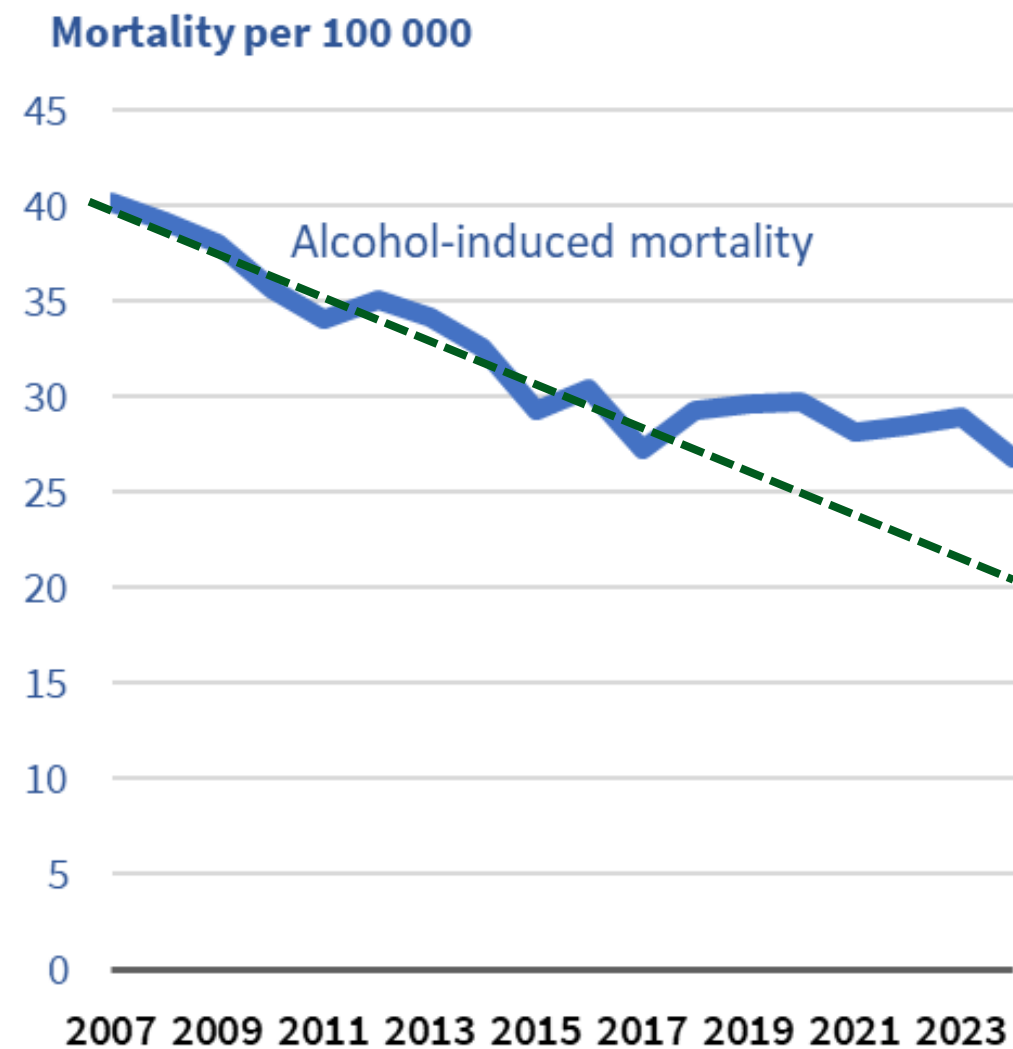
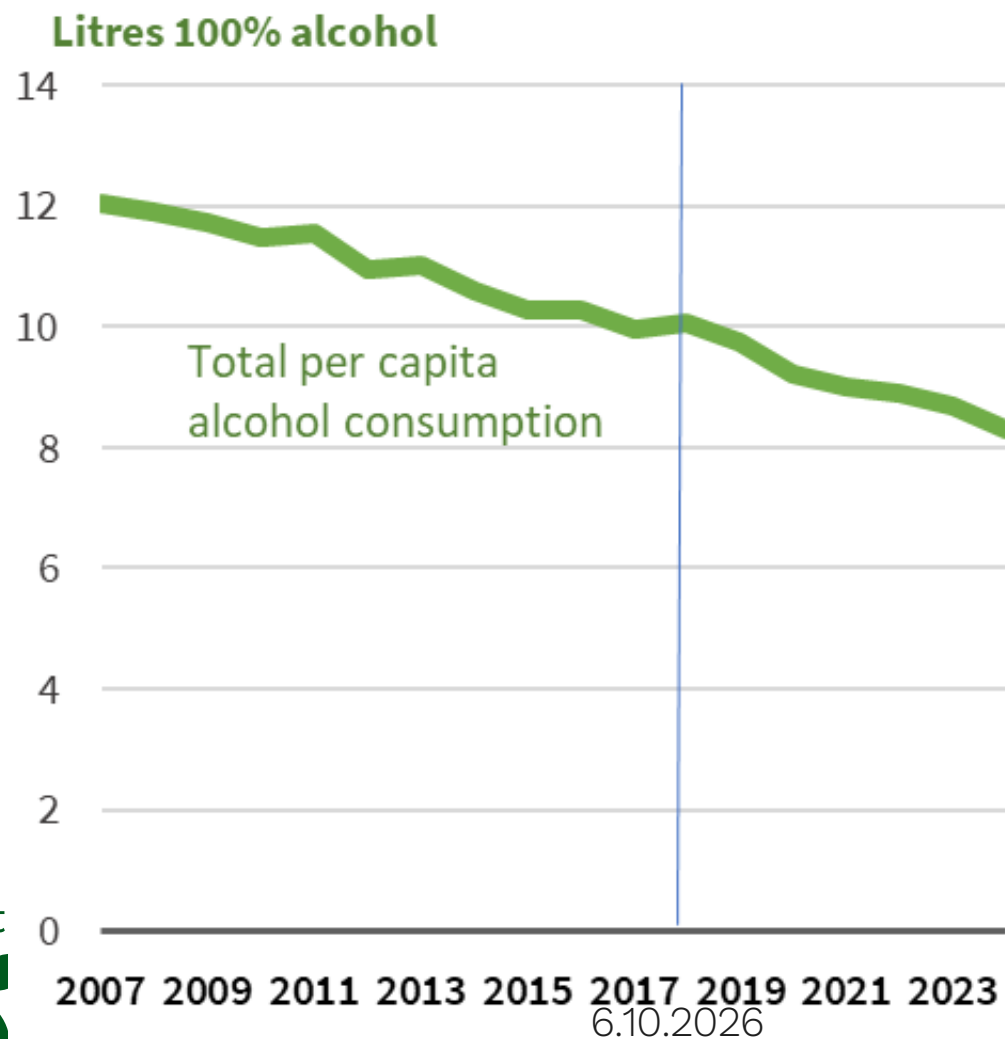
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Development of alcohol-related mortality since 2017?



Per capita alcohol consumption has continued to decrease in 2018-2024, but mortality has not followed





KKV* / Liver cirrhosis mortality: Finland vs. synthetic Finland

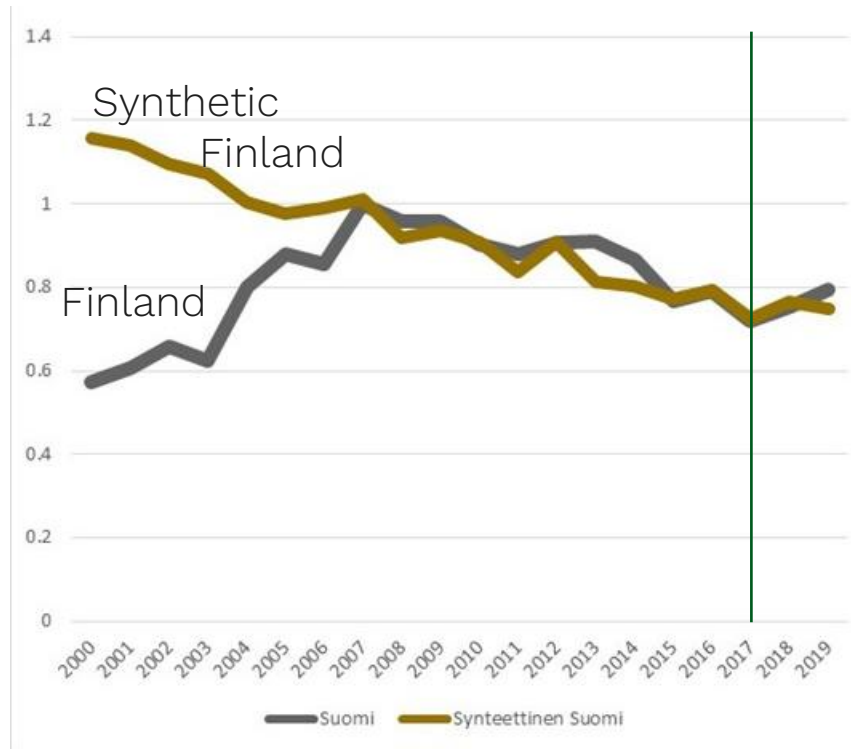


Synthetic Finland: 44% Austria, 18% Slovakia, 14% Luxemburg, 8% Slovenia, 7% Sweden, 5% Romania, 5% Latvia

* Finnish Competition and Consumer Authority

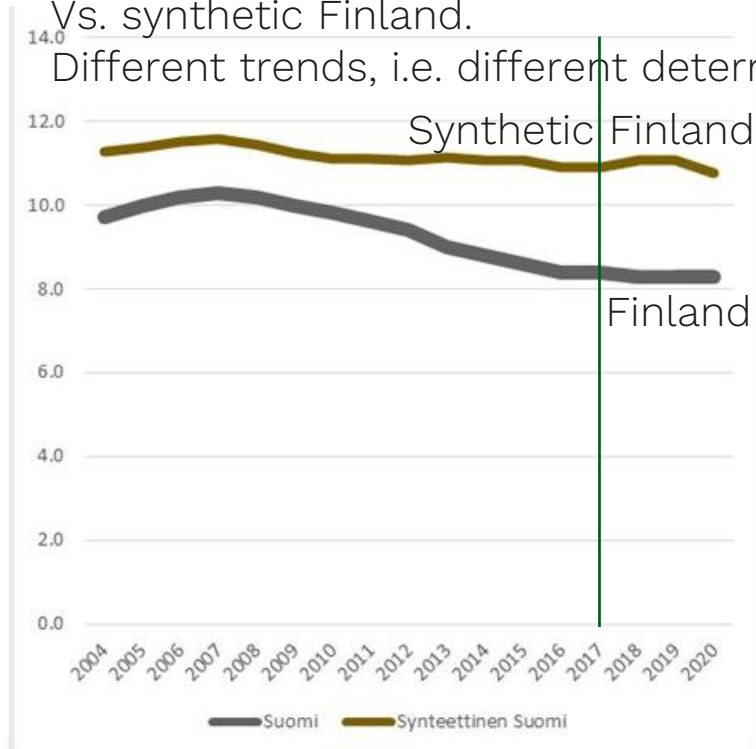
KKV / Liver cirrhosis mortality: Finland vs. synthetic Finland

Liver cirrhosis



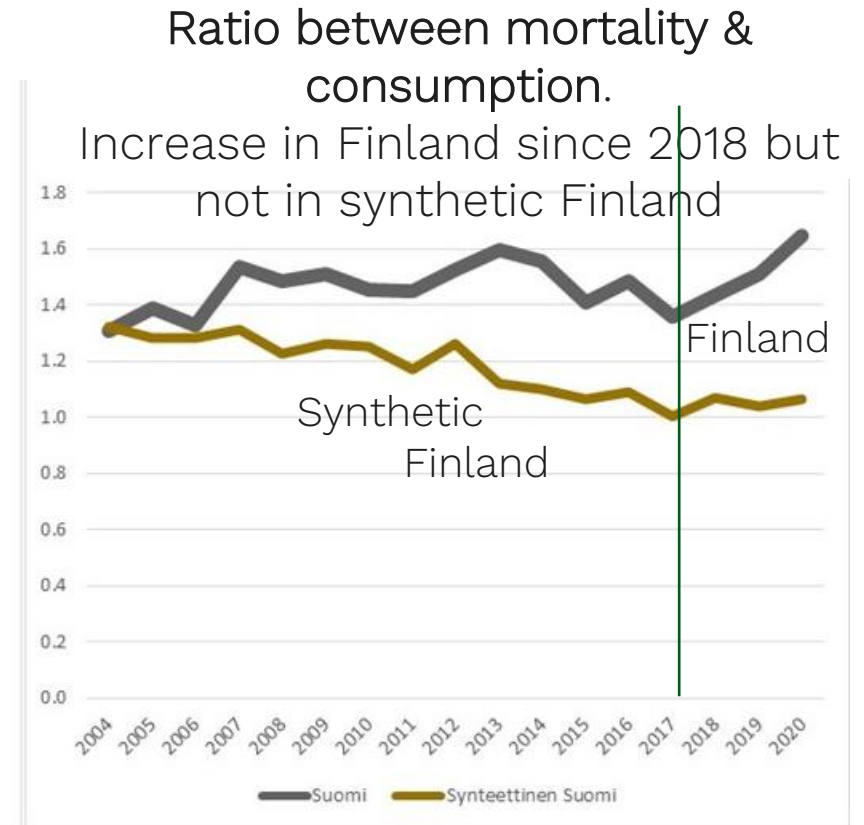
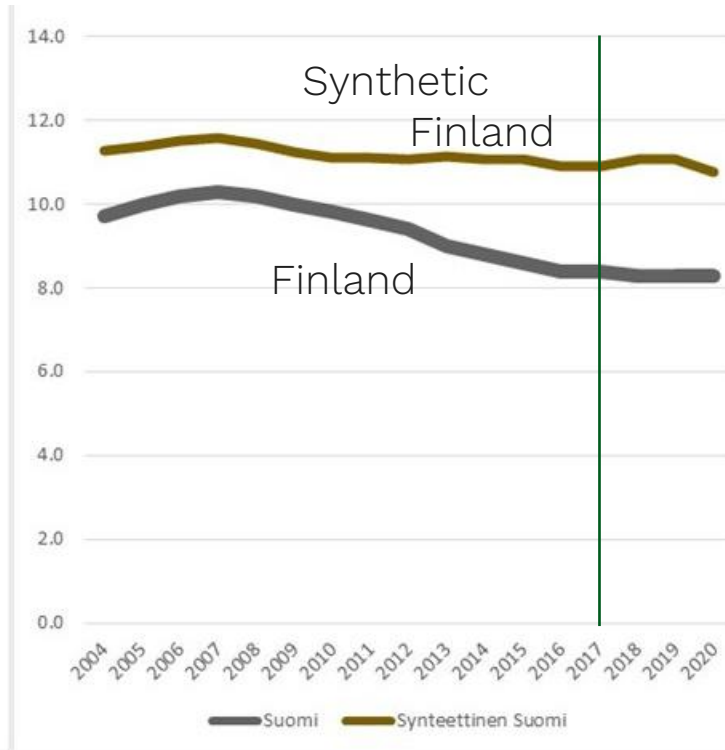
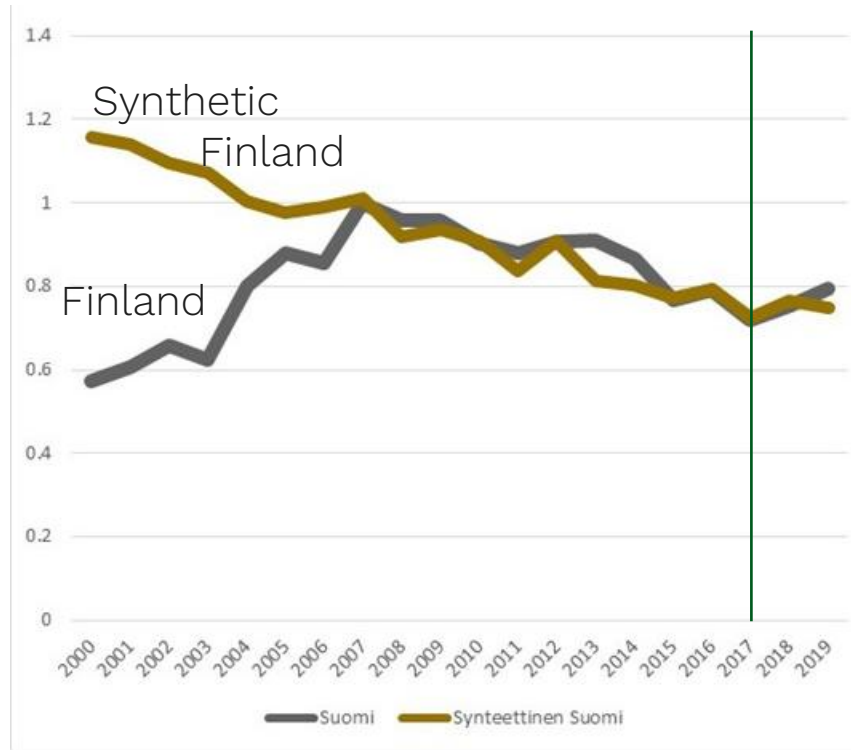
Alcohol consumption in Finland
Vs. synthetic Finland.

Different trends, i.e. different determinants



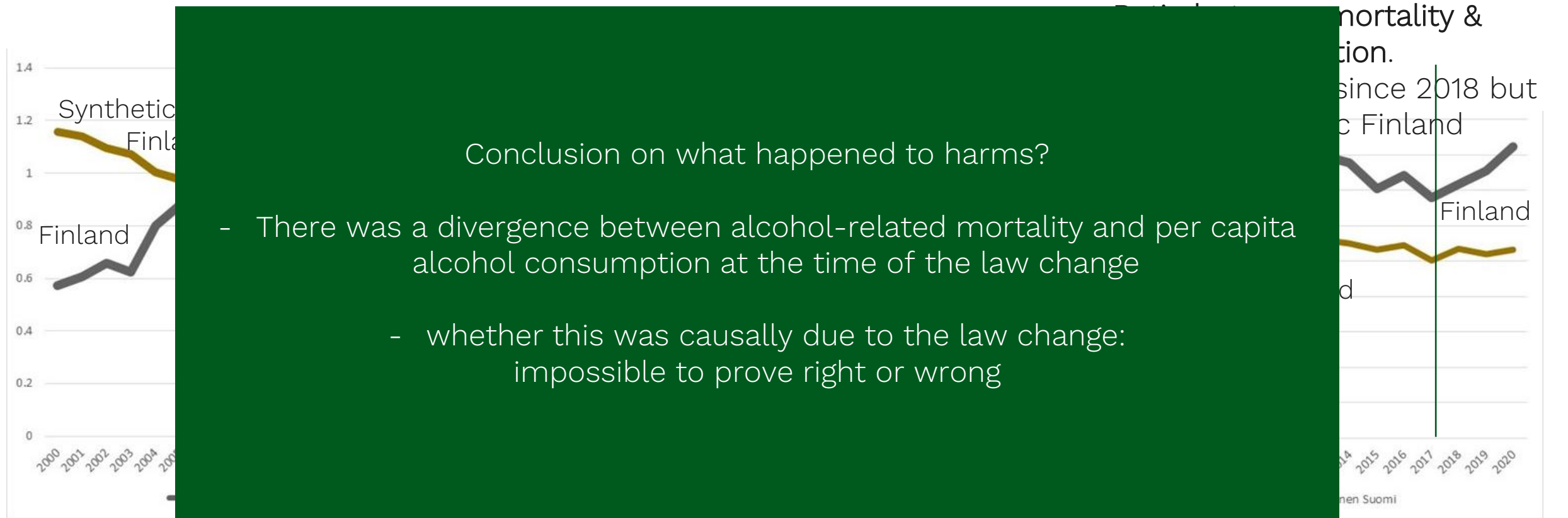
Synteettinen Suomi koostuu Itävallasta (44%), Slovakiasta (18%), Luxemburgista (14%), Sloveniasta (8%), Ruotsista (7%), Romaniasta (5%) ja Latviasta (5%)

KKV / Liver cirrhosis mortality: Finland vs. synthetic Finland



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KKV / Liver cirrhosis mortality: Finland vs. synthetic Finland



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KKV: estimated impacts from the 8% limit

- **Price:** little difference between Alko & grocery stores (-3%) for the prices of same products, but cheapest prices (of different products) as much as 15-20% cheaper in grocery stores.
- The **decreasing trend in retail alcohol sales has continued**
- Sales of 5,6-8% products has not decreased in Alko, but **Alko's share of these sales has shrunk from 100% to <20%.**
- Sales of these products have **increased ca. 5-fold**, but this has **replaced sales of other beverages** – milder beverages in grocery stores and ordinary wine and spirits in Alko stores.



Thank you!



10/6/2025

Pia Makela

