

19. CONCENTRATION OF THE ELDERLY POPULATION IN REGIONS

In most OECD countries the population is ageing. Due to higher life expectancy and low fertility rates, the elderly population (those aged 65 years and over), accounts for 14% of OECD population in 2008. The proportion of elderly population is remarkably lower in the emerging economies (Brazil, China, India, and South Africa) and Mexico and Turkey (Figure 19.1).

The elderly population in OECD countries has increased more than 1.5 times faster than the total population between 1995 and 2008. The rate of ageing within a country can be quite different, as an increase in the geographic concentration of the elderly may arise from inward migration of the elderly or by ageing “in place” because the younger generations have moved out of the regions (Figure 19.2).

The ratio of the elderly to the working age population, the elderly dependency rate, is steadily growing in OECD countries. The elderly dependency rate gives an indication of the balance between the economically active and the retired population. In 2008 this ratio was around 22% in OECD countries, with substantial differences between countries (34% in Japan versus 9% in Mexico). Differences among regions within the same countries were also large. The higher the regional elderly dependency rate, the higher the challenges faced by regions in generating wealth and sufficient resources to provide for the needs of the population. Concerns may arise on the financial self-sufficiency of these regions to generate taxes to pay for these services (Figure 19.3).

In 2008, the elderly dependency rate across OECD regions was higher in intermediate and rural regions than in urban ones, with the only exceptions being Belgium, Chile, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary and Poland. This general pattern was more pronounced in certain countries, like Portugal, France, Japan, Spain and Korea (Figure 19.3). Besides the elderly dependency rate, the absolute number of elderly people in a certain region may allow economies of scale in the provision of certain services, in particular health care and personal services. Only 25% of the OECD elderly population lived in rural regions in 2008; with more of the elderly residing in urban regions (46%). As such, rural regions are more likely to face the challenge of ageing due to higher elderly dependency rates and lower elderly population.

Within countries, the elderly population seems to be more concentrated in “peripheral” regions in Korea, Portugal, France, New Zealand, Japan and Ireland. On the contrary, in Poland, Belgium, Slovak Republic and Hungary the share of the elderly population seems to be higher where the population is more concentrated, generally urban regions (Figures 19.5-19.7).

Definition

The regional elderly population is the regional population of 65 years of age and over.

The elderly dependency rate is defined as the ratio between the elderly population and the working age (15-64 years) population.

Source

OECD Regional Database: <http://dotstat/wbos/>.

See Annex B for data, source and country-related metadata.

Reference years and territorial level

1995-2008; TL3.

TL2 regions in Brazil, Chile, China, India, the Russian Federation and South Africa.

Further information

Territorial grids and regional typology (Annex A).

www.oecd.org/gov/regional/statisticsindicators

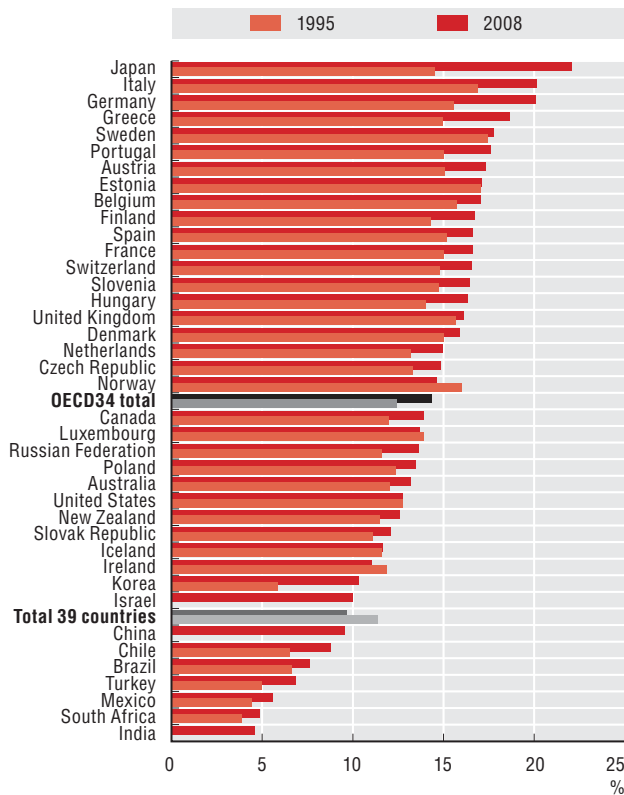
Figure notes

19.1-19.2: Latest available year: Germany 2007. First available year: Australia 1996, Denmark 2006, Iceland 1997, Poland 2000, Slovak Republic 1996.

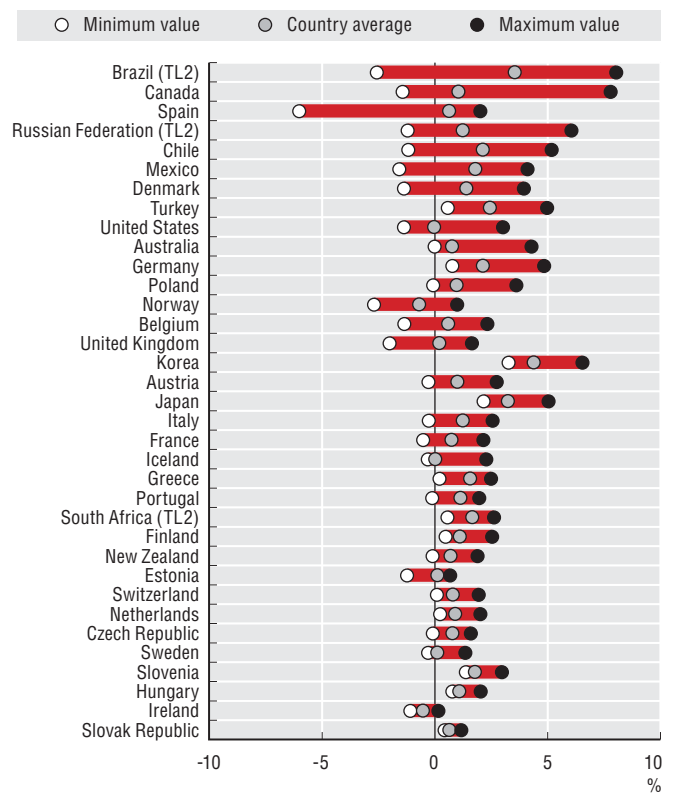
Information on data for Israel: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932315602>.

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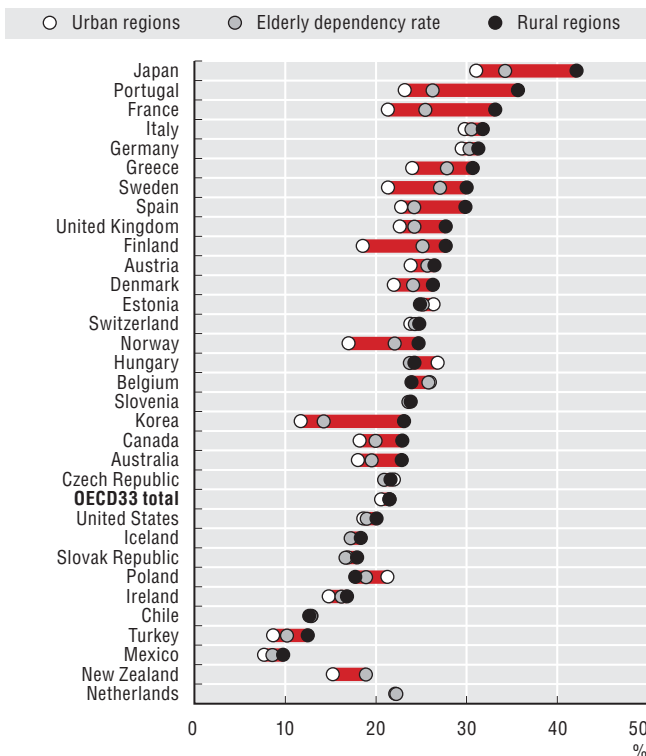
19.1. Elderly population as a % of the total population, 1995 and 2008



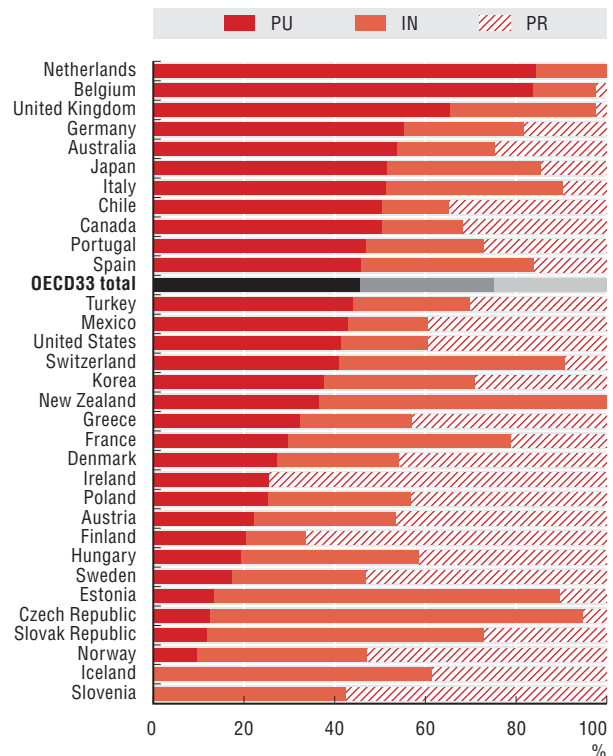
19.2. Yearly growth of regional elderly population, 1995-2008



19.3. Elderly dependency rate: Country average and in predominantly urban and predominantly rural regions, 2008



19.4. Distribution of the elderly population in predominantly urban (PU), intermediate (IN) and predominantly rural (PR) regions, 2008

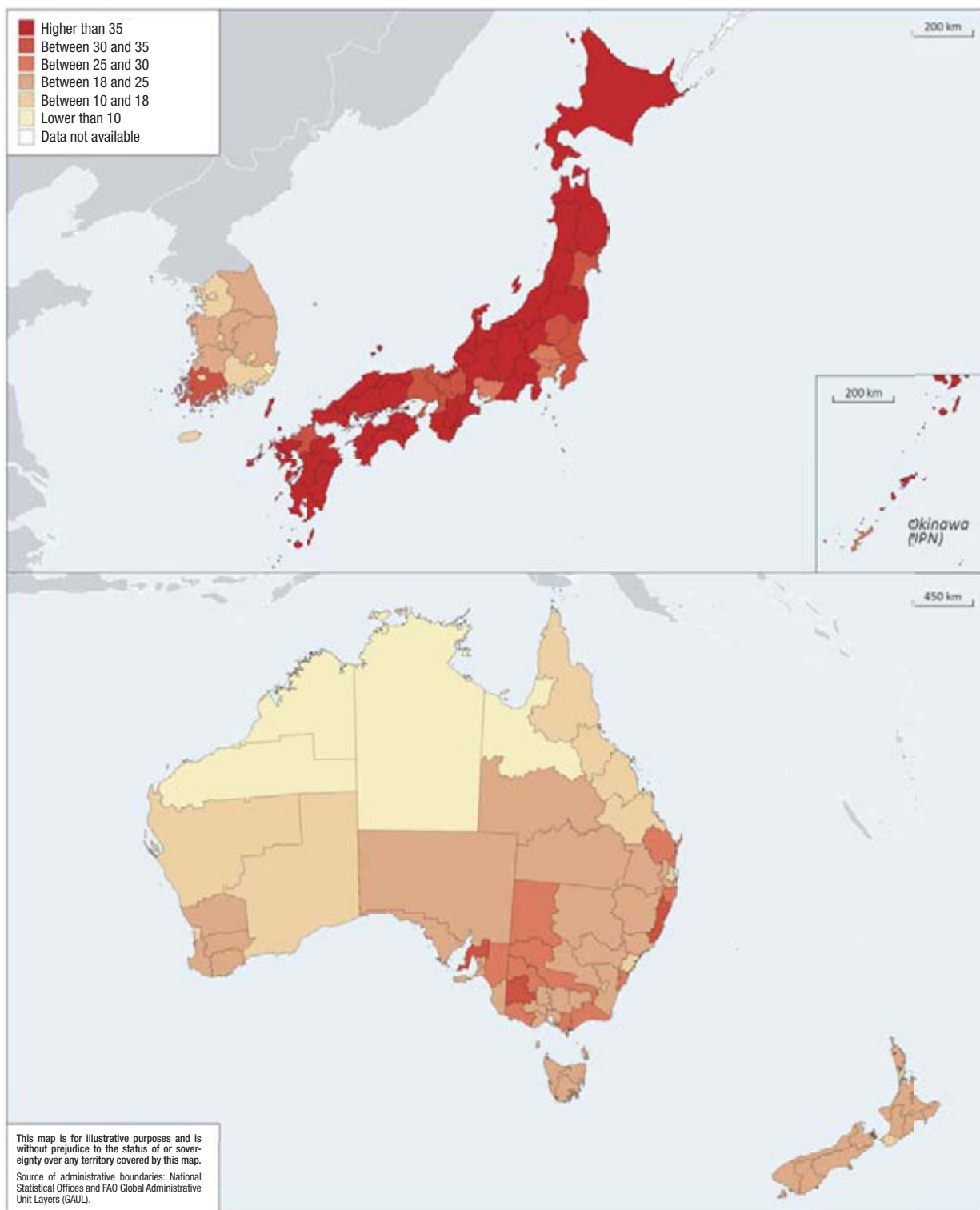



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19.5. Regional elderly dependency rate: Asia and Oceania, 2008

Ratio between elderly population and working age population, TL3 regions

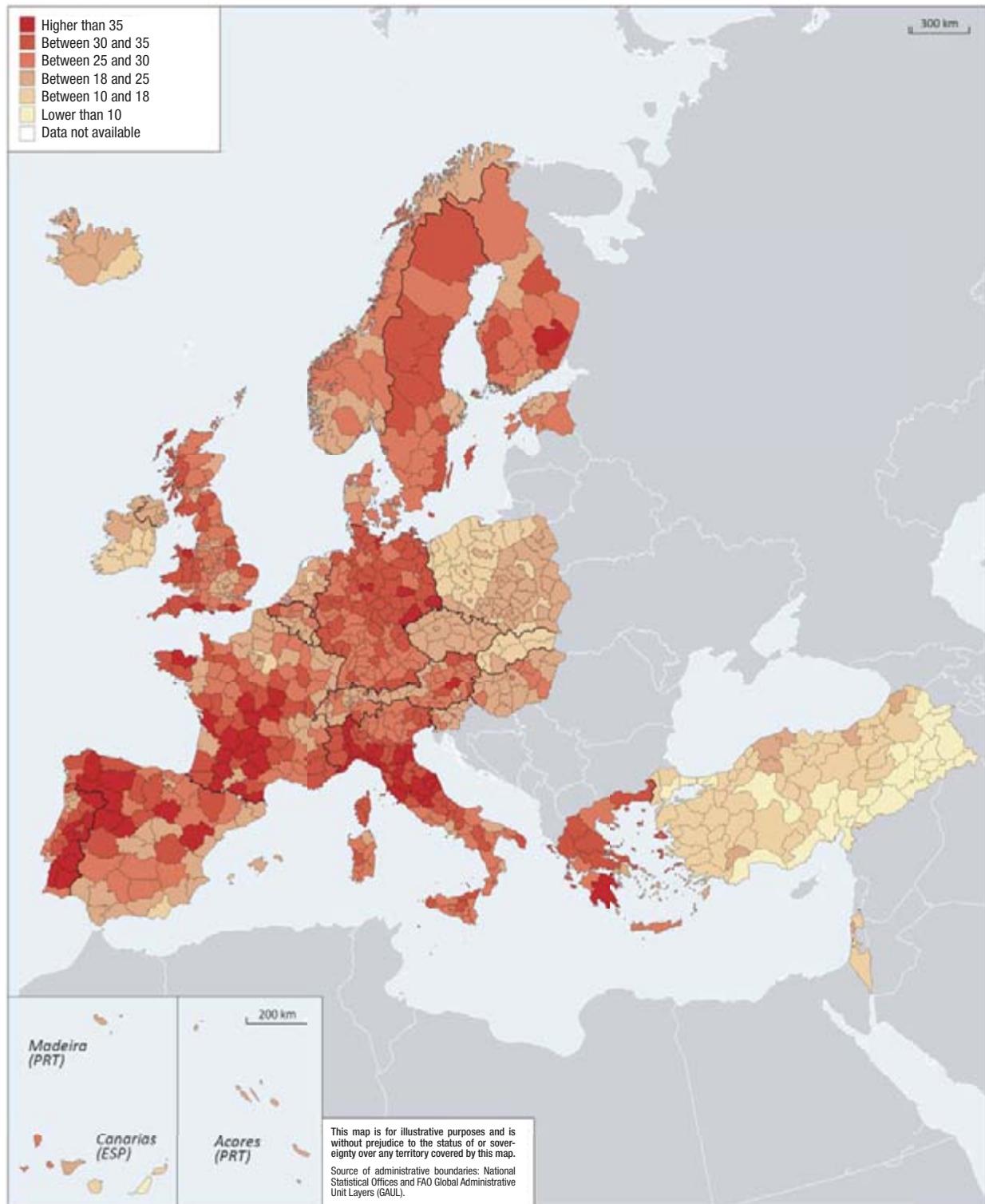


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19.6. Regional elderly dependency rate: Europe, 2008

Ratio between elderly population and working age population, TL3 regions

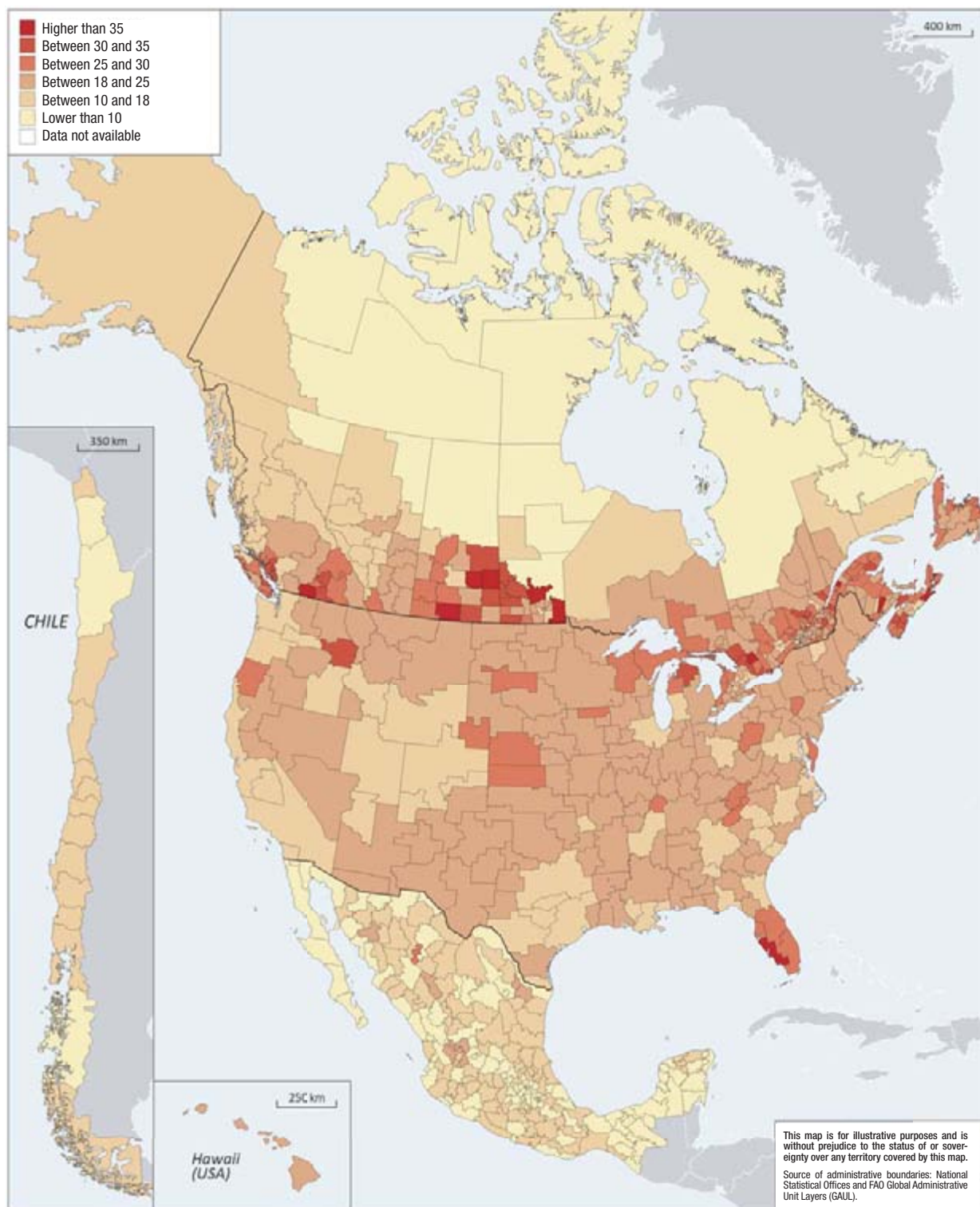



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19.7. Regional elderly dependency rate: Americas, 2008

Ratio between elderly population and working age population, TL3 regions

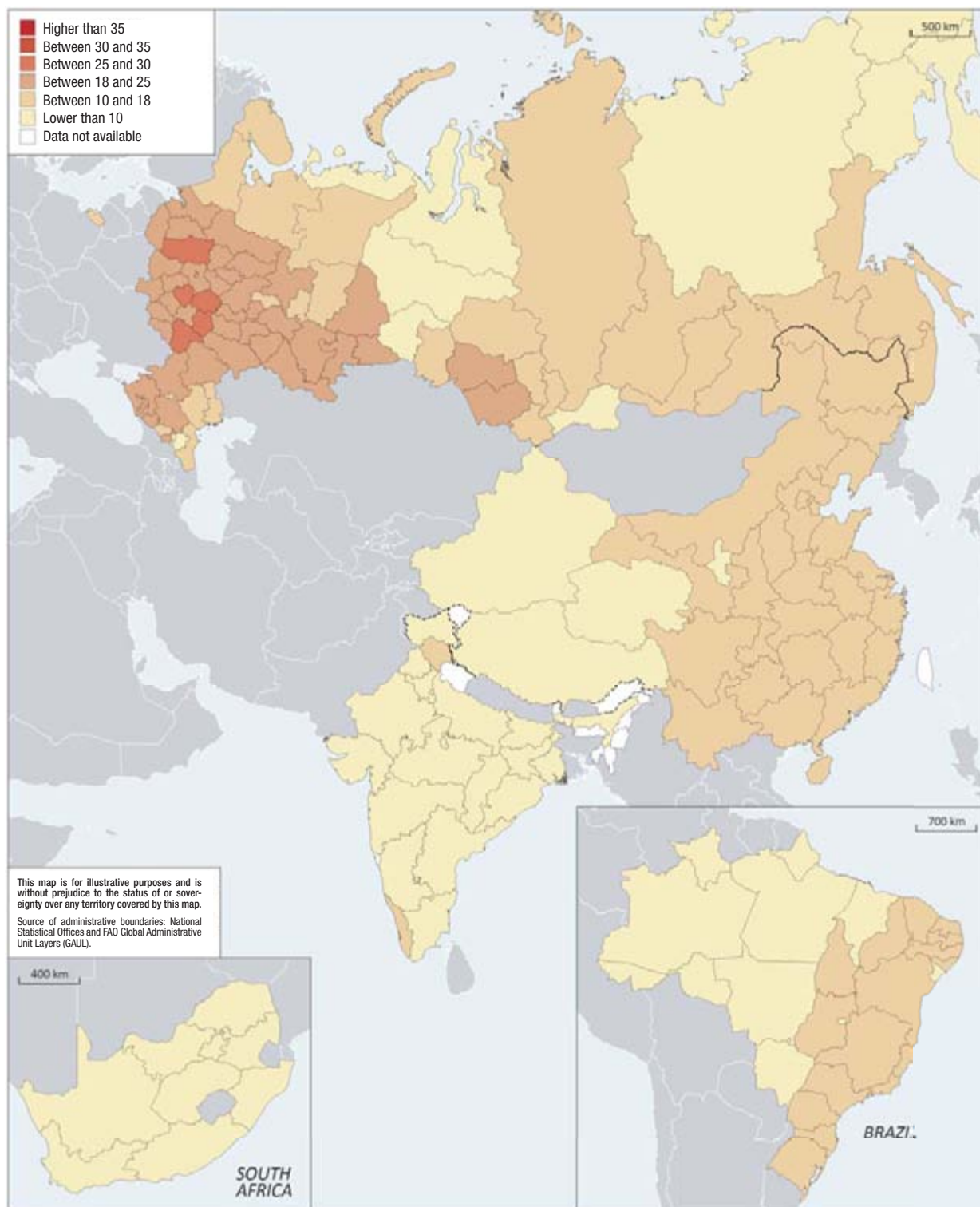


StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932440166>

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19.8. Regional elderly dependency rate: Emerging economies, 2008

Ratio between elderly population and working age population, TL2 regions



StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932440166>



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