

II. REGIONS AS ACTORS OF NATIONAL GROWTH

8. Distribution of population and regional typology
9. Geographic concentration of population
10. Regional contribution to growth in national GDP
11. Regional contribution to change in employment
12. Geographic concentration of the elderly population
13. Geographic concentration of GDP
14. Geographic concentration of industries

Regions are actors of growth and have an impact on how their national economy performs. Natural and human resources tend to be concentrated and regions' abilities to exploit local factors, mobilise resources and create linkages varies, raising the issue of development capacity. The impact of concentration on national economic growth can be felt, with growth often driven by a few regions within a country. In 2005, 38% of the total output of the OECD member countries was generated by only 10% of their regions. Geography, economic opportunities and wider availability of services have reinforced the concentration of population and production, as has migration from rural to urban areas. Younger people tend to move from rural to urban areas, resulting in an increasing concentration of the elderly population in rural regions with implications on these regions capacity to provide adequate services. On the other hand, negative externalities such as congestion, quality of environment or inadequate supply of services, show that agglomerated economies are not necessarily the places for an efficient allocation of resources.

8. DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND REGIONAL TYPOLOGY

Population is unevenly distributed among regions within and across countries. Regional population density in OECD countries varies from close to zero in some regions in Canada and Iceland to over 20 000 persons per km² in Paris (France) (Maps 8.4-8.6).

France, Korea and the United Kingdom show the largest regional variation in population density: the difference between the most and the least populated regions in these countries is higher than 10 000 people per km².

Paris was the region with the highest population density in France recording more than 20 000 persons per km²; while the most populous region in Iceland, the Capital region, had only 179 persons per km² (Figure 8.1).

In 2005, almost half of the total OECD population (46%) lived in predominantly urban regions, which accounted for less than 6% of the total area. Concentration in urban regions was over 50%, in the Netherlands, Belgium, the United Kingdom, Australia, Japan, Italy, Canada and Portugal (Figure 8.3).

Predominantly rural regions accounted for one-fifth of total population (24%) and extended over 80% of the area. In Ireland, Finland, Sweden and Norway the share of national population in rural regions was more than two times (50% or more) higher than the OECD average (Figure 8.3).

In the past ten years, the population in urban regions has increased 8%. During the same period, the share of the national population living in urban regions increased in 17 countries, significantly in Turkey, New Zealand, Canada and Finland (more than two percentage points). The percentage of population living in intermediate regions increased in the past ten years mostly in Korea, Iceland, Hungary and Norway (more than one percentage point). An increase in the share of population living in rural regions, even if it occurred to a smaller scale than the one experienced in urban regions, occurred in Ireland, the United States, Belgium, Poland and the United Kingdom (Figure 8.2).

Definition

OECD has established a regional typology to take into account geographical differences and enable meaningful comparison between regions belonging to the same type. Regions have been classified as predominantly rural (PR), intermediate (IN) and predominantly urban (PU) on the basis of the per cent of population living in local rural units. First, a local unit is defined rural if its population density is below 150 inhabitants per square kilometre (the threshold is set at 500 inhabitants for Japan and Korea). Second, a TL3 region is classified as:

- Predominantly rural, if more than 50% of its population lives in rural local units.
- Intermediate, if less than 50% and more than 15% of its population lives in local units.
- Predominantly urban, if less than 15% of the population lives in rural local units.

Finally, if a predominantly rural region contains an urban centre larger than 200 000 inhabitants (500 000 for Japan and Korea) and contains at least 25% of the regional population, then the region is classified as intermediate. If an intermediate region contains an urban centre larger than 500 000 inhabitants (1 000 000 for Japan and Korea) and has at least 25% of the regional population, then the region is classified as predominantly urban.

Source

OECD Regional Database, <http://dotstat/wbos/>, theme: Regional Statistics.

See Annex A for Regional grids and typology.

See Annex B for data sources and country related metadata.

Reference years and territorial level

1995-2005; TL3

Further information

OECD (2007), *Regional Typology: Updated statistics*.

OECD (2006), *Competitive Cities in the Global Economy*.

OECD (2006), *The New Rural Paradigm: Policies and Governance*.

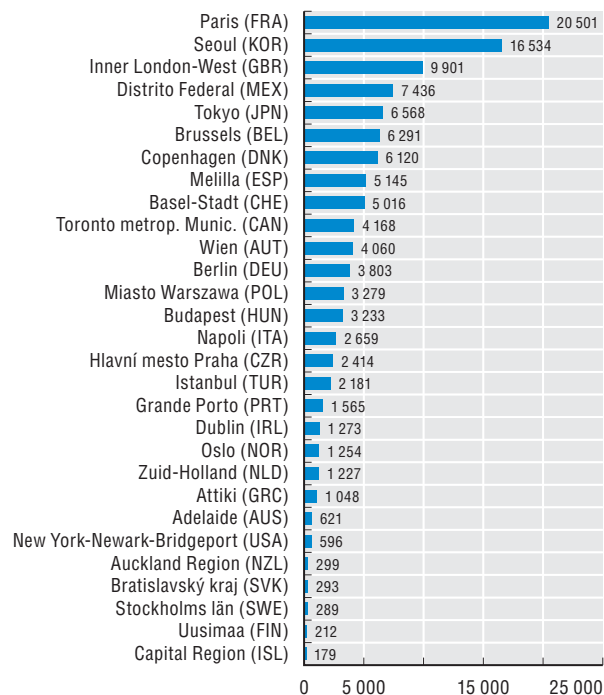
Figure notes

Figure 8.1: Distrito Federal (Mexico) includes the following delegations: Azcapotzalco, Coyoacan, Cuajimalpa de Morelos, Gustavo A. Madero, Iztacalco, Iztapalapa, Magdalena Contreras, Alvaro Obregon, Tlalpan, Xochimilco, Benito Juarez, Cuauhtemoc, Miguel Hidalgo, Venustiano Carranza (DF).

8. DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND REGIONAL TYPOLOGY

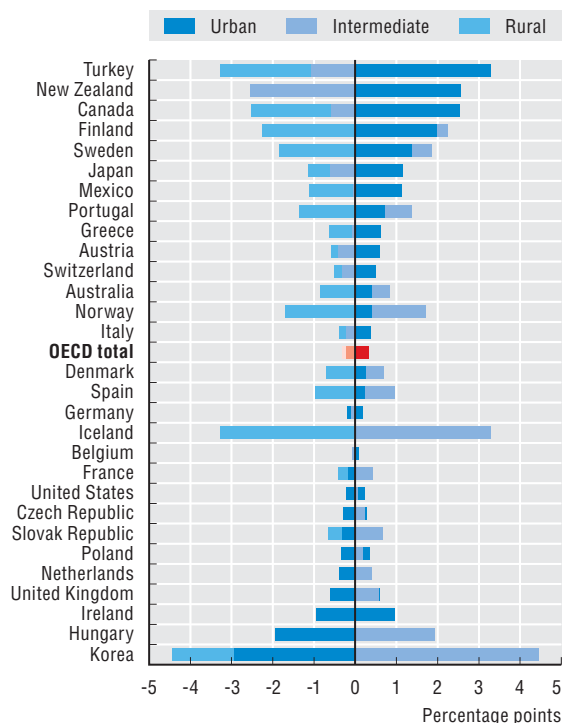
8.1 TL3 regions with the highest population density in each country (inhabitants per km²), 2005

In 2005, Paris was the TL3 region with the highest population density in France.



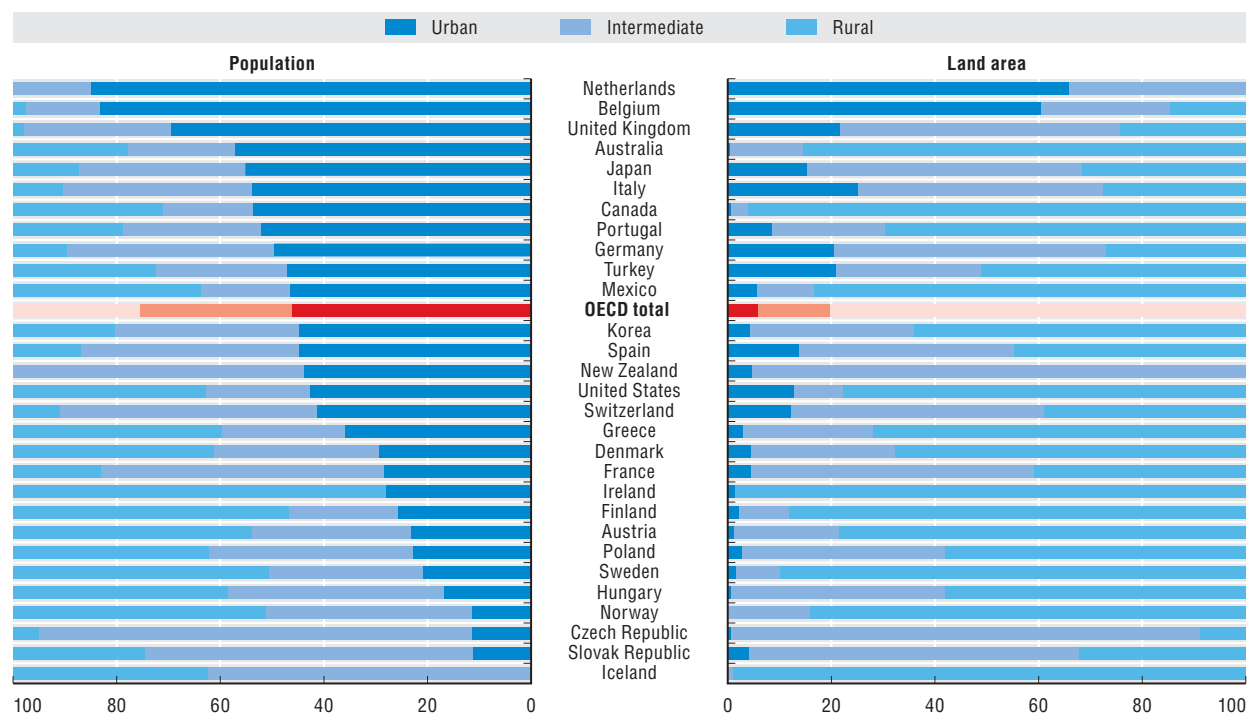
8.2 Countries ranked by percentage point change in the share living in PU TL3 regions, 1995 to 2005

Between 1995 and 2005, Turkey had the largest increase in the share of population living in urban regions.



8.3 Distribution of population and area across predominantly urban, intermediate and predominantly rural regions, 2005

In 2005, 46% of the OECD population lived in urban regions which accounted for less than 6% of the total area.



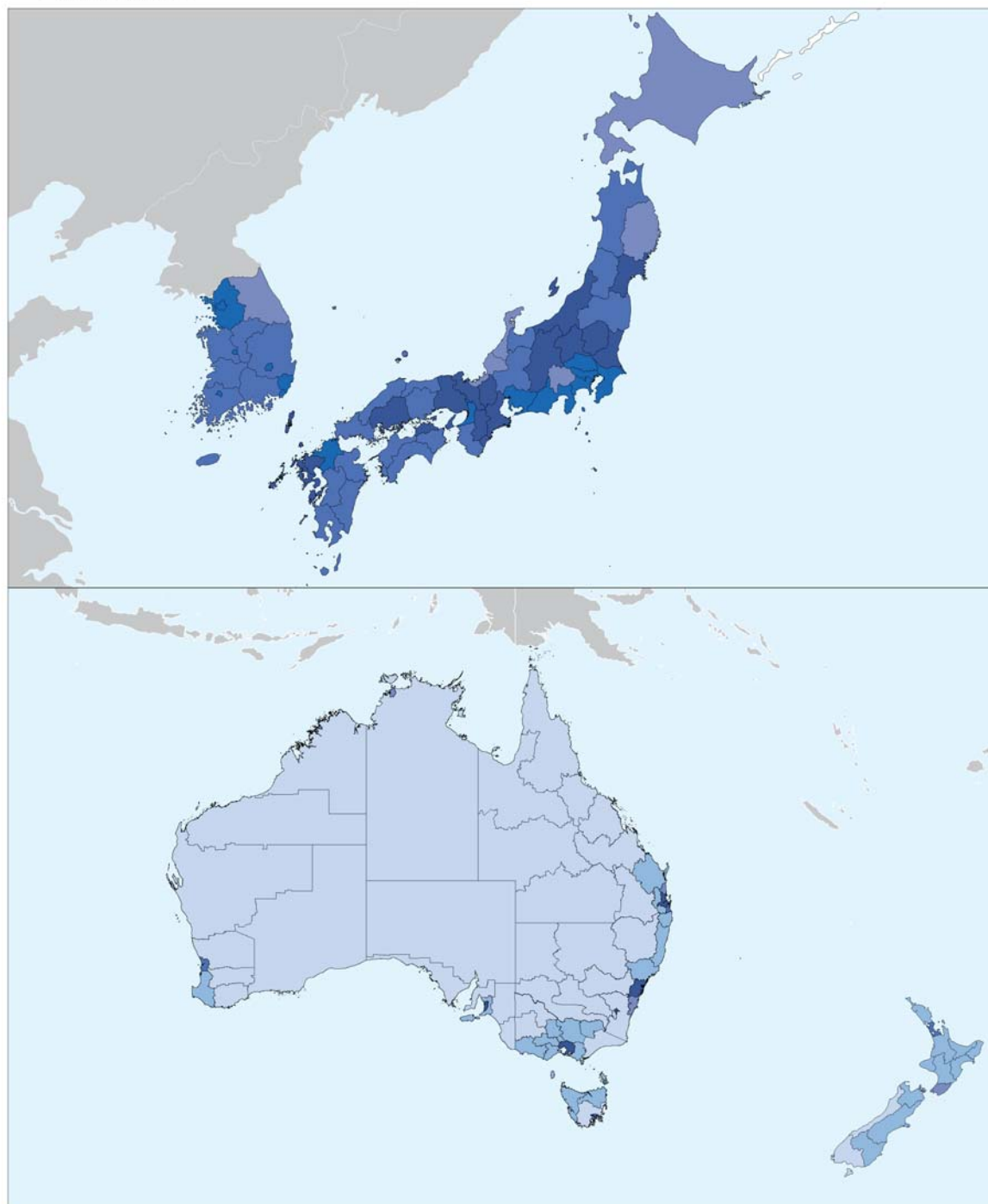
StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/523707103346>

8. DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND REGIONAL TYPOLOGY

8.4 Regional density population: Asia and Oceania

Inhabitants per km², TL3 regions, 2005

- Higher than 800
- Between 300 and 800
- Between 100 and 300
- Between 30 and 100
- Between 4 and 30
- Lower than 4
- Data not available



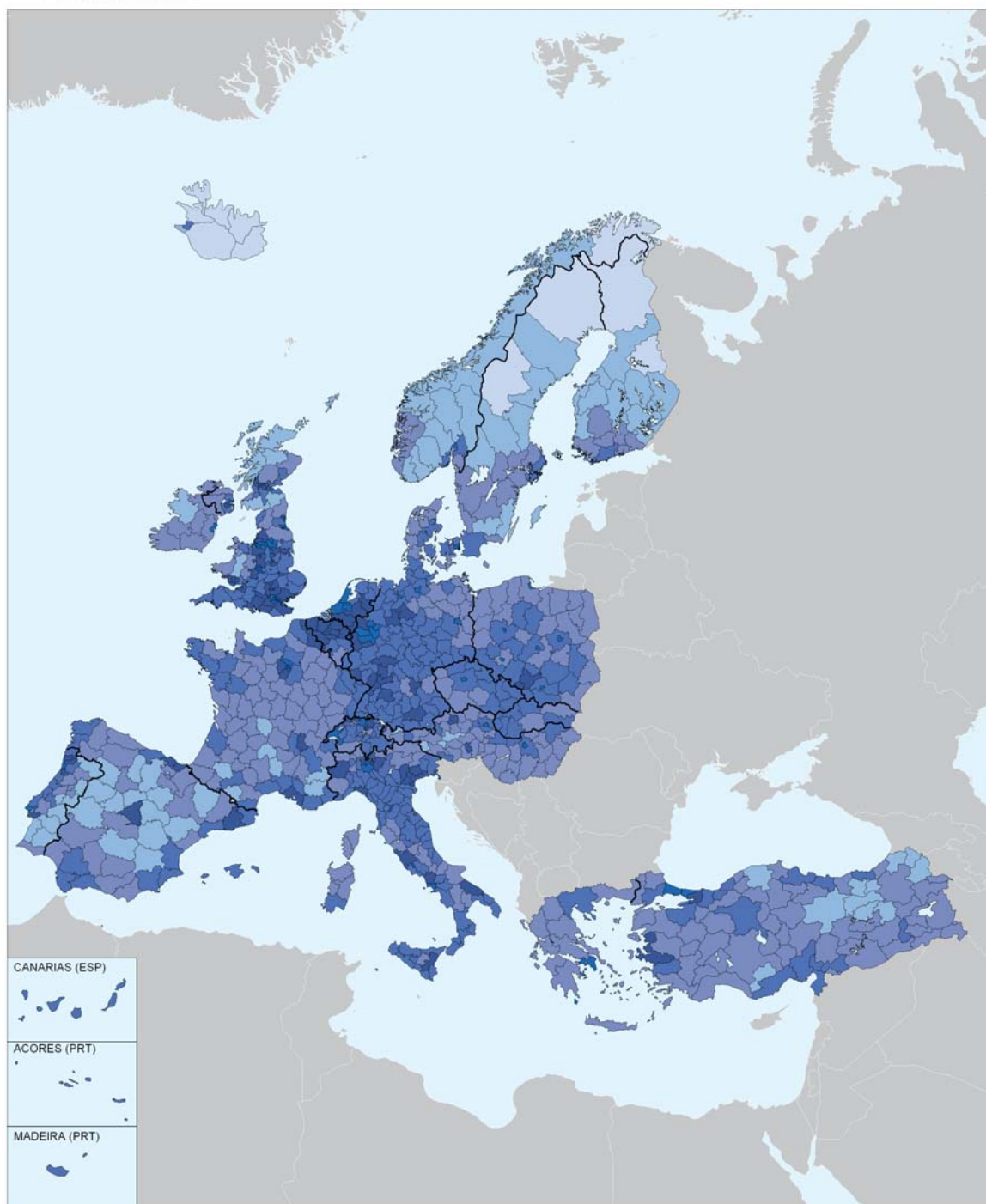
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8. DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND REGIONAL TYPOLOGY

8.5 Regional density population: Europe

Inhabitants per km², TL3 regions, 2005

- Higher than 800
- Between 300 and 800
- Between 100 and 300
- Between 30 and 100
- Between 4 and 30
- Lower than 4
- Data not available



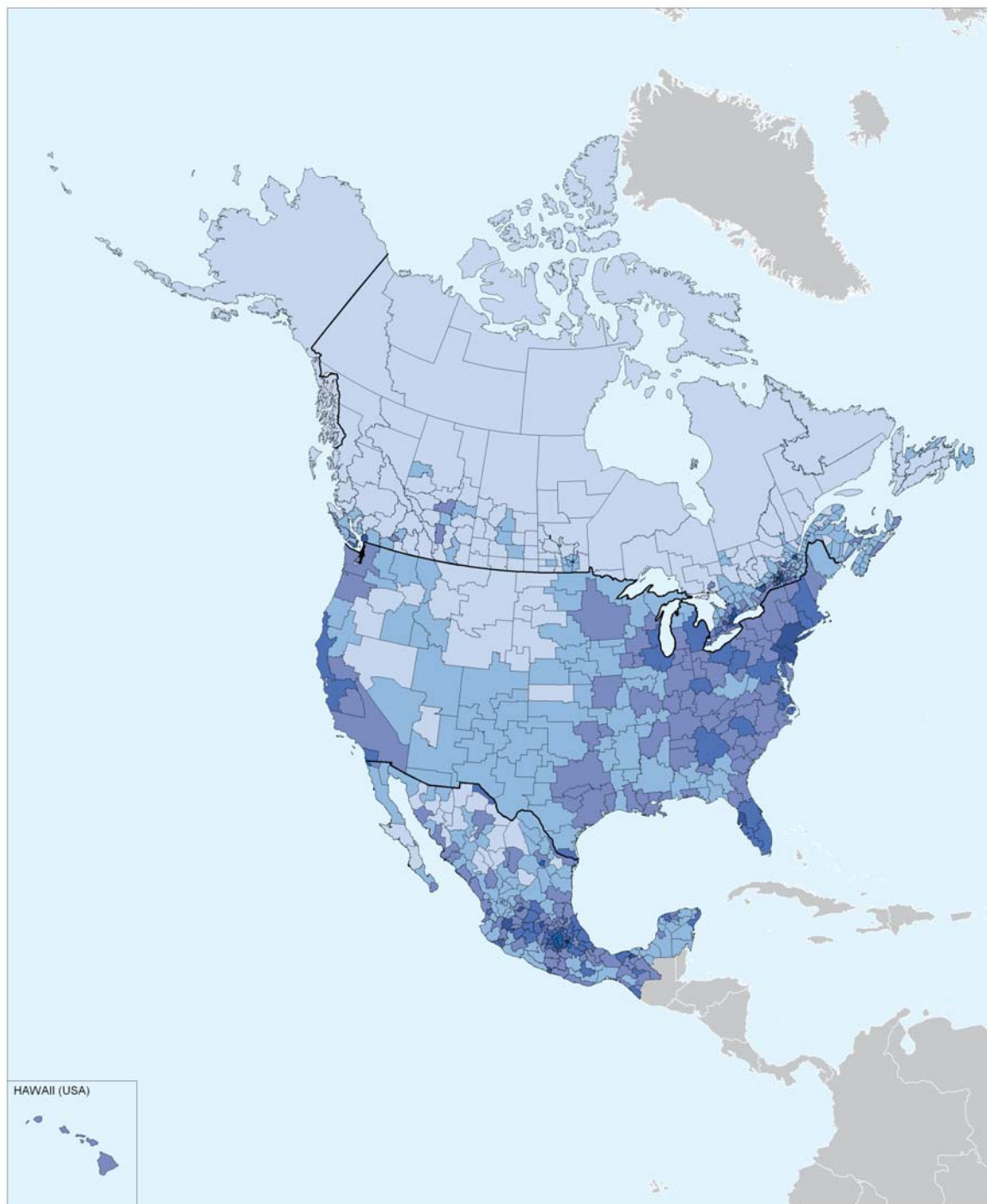
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8. DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND REGIONAL TYPOLOGY

8.6 Regional density population: North America

Inhabitants per km²; TL3 regions, 2005

- Higher than 800
- Between 300 and 800
- Between 100 and 300
- Between 30 and 100
- Between 4 and 30
- Lower than 4
- Data not available



StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/524545251713>

8. DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND REGIONAL TYPOLOGY

Population in large urban regions

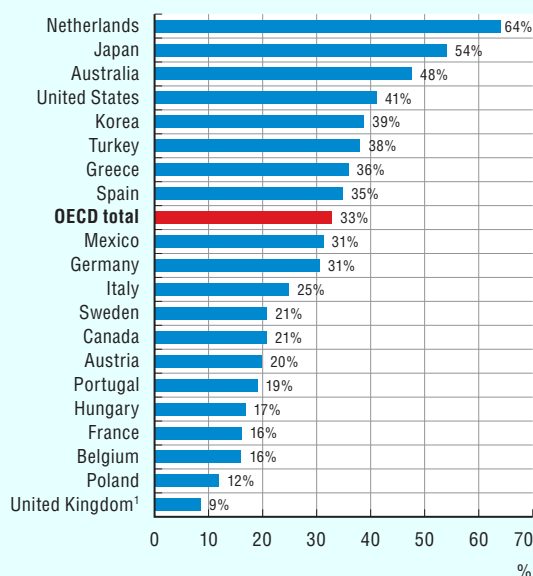
Population in OECD predominantly urban regions has registered an 8% increase over the past ten years. This change has also increased the weight of large urban regions, i.e. urban regions with at least 1.5 million inhabitants. The population in OECD countries living in large urban regions exceeded 383 million people in 2005, compared to just under 343 million ten years before.

In 2005, one-third of the OECD population lived in large urban regions. The importance of large urban regions varies among countries: more than 40% of national population lives in large urban regions in the Netherlands, Japan, Australia and the United States, while the figure is only 9% in the United Kingdom. Finally, ten OECD countries have no urban regions with more than 1.5 million inhabitants (Figure 8.7).

In large urban regions population growth has been faster than the growth of the total OECD population (1.5 times higher), suggesting that migration, aside from demographic dynamics, has affected the size of urban regions. Population growth within countries, though, has been quite varied. Compared to the national population growth rate, the population growth in large urban regions has been particularly intense in Germany (8 times higher), France and Sweden (4 times higher), Australia and Turkey (almost 3 times higher). On the contrary, both in Hungary and to a lesser extend Poland – where the total population has decreased in the past ten years – the decrease in large urban agglomerations has been faster (Figure 8.8).

8.7 Per cent of national population living in large urban TL3 regions, 2005

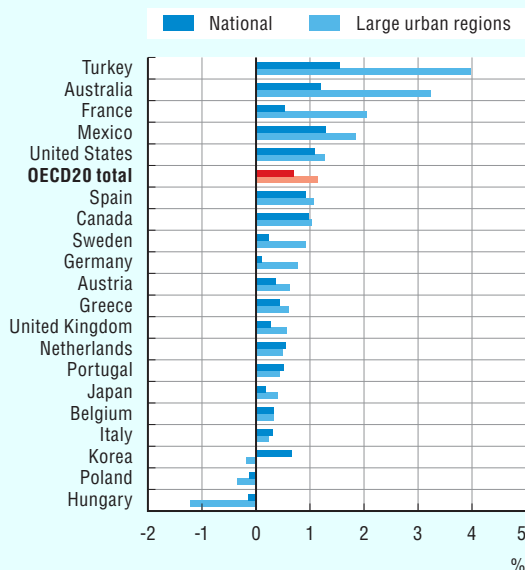
In the Netherlands, 64% of people lived in urban regions with more than 1.5 million inhabitants.



1. The share would be 12.4% if the TL3 regions of Inner London East (almost 1 080 thousand inhabitants) and Outer London South (1 166 thousand) were added.

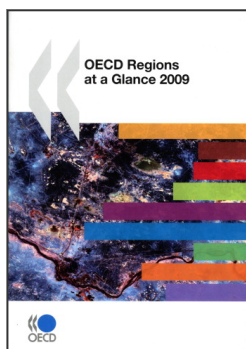
8.8 Percentage yearly change in total population living in large urban TL3 regions and in the whole country; 1995 to 2005¹

In Turkey, the population in large urban regions grew 4% annually from 1995 to 2005.



1. Poland 1999-2005.

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/523707103346>



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