

PART III

Competing on the Basis of Regional Well-being

23. Accessibility: distance in time from a major centre

The well-being of the inhabitants of a region crucially depends on the ability to access resources and services that are often available only in large economic centres. A region’s accessibility can thus be measured as the time necessary to travel to the closer centre.

Centres have been identified on the basis of a population threshold generally established at 300 000 inhabitants for a city and 500 000 for an urban agglomeration (see “Sources and Methodology”).

The travelling time necessary to reach the closer centre varies widely among OECD countries (Figure 23.1). Sparsely populated countries, such as Australia, the United States and Canada, show the largest ranges.

Differences in travelling time in most European countries are much narrower. This is particularly true of Belgium, the Czech Republic,

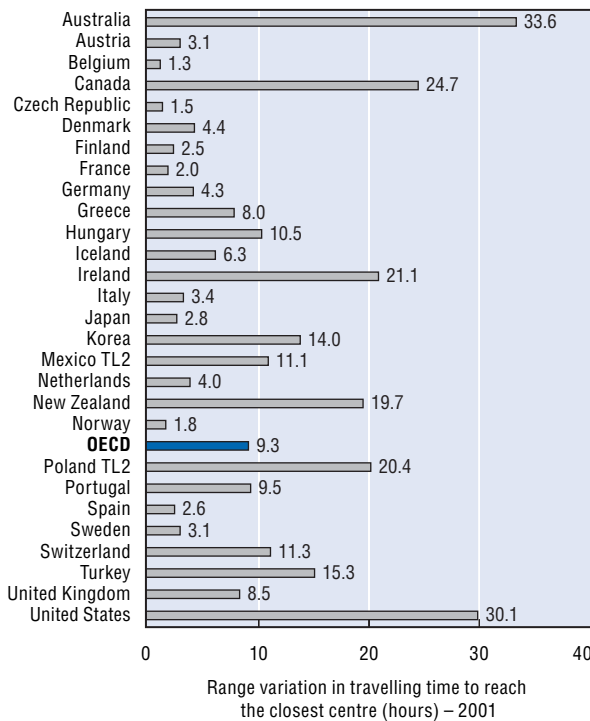
France and Norway, where no region is located more than two hours from the closest centre.

On average, the time an OECD citizen has to travel to reach the closest centre is 39 minutes in an urban region, 2 hours and 8 minutes in an intermediate region, and 3 hours and 10 minutes in a rural region (Figure 23.2).

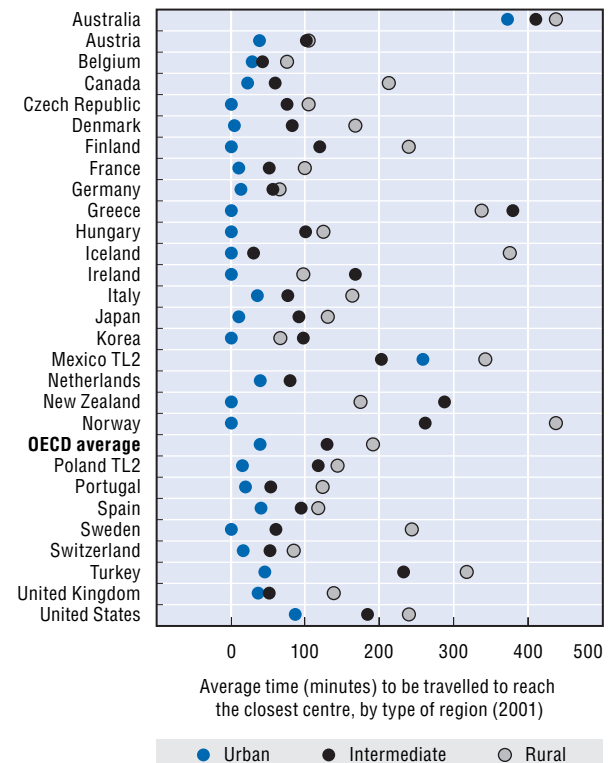
This general pattern, however, does not apply in all countries. In Greece, Ireland, Korea and New Zealand, the distance in terms of time is higher in intermediate than in rural regions.

Thus, low accessibility need not be synonymous with rurality. In fact, despite their closer location to urban centres, intermediate regions may face longer travelling times owing to high traffic flows (e.g. commuting) and/or to inadequate transport infrastructure.

23.1. Regional accessibility varies most in Australia and United States



23.2. On average, accessibility is higher for urban than for rural and intermediate regions



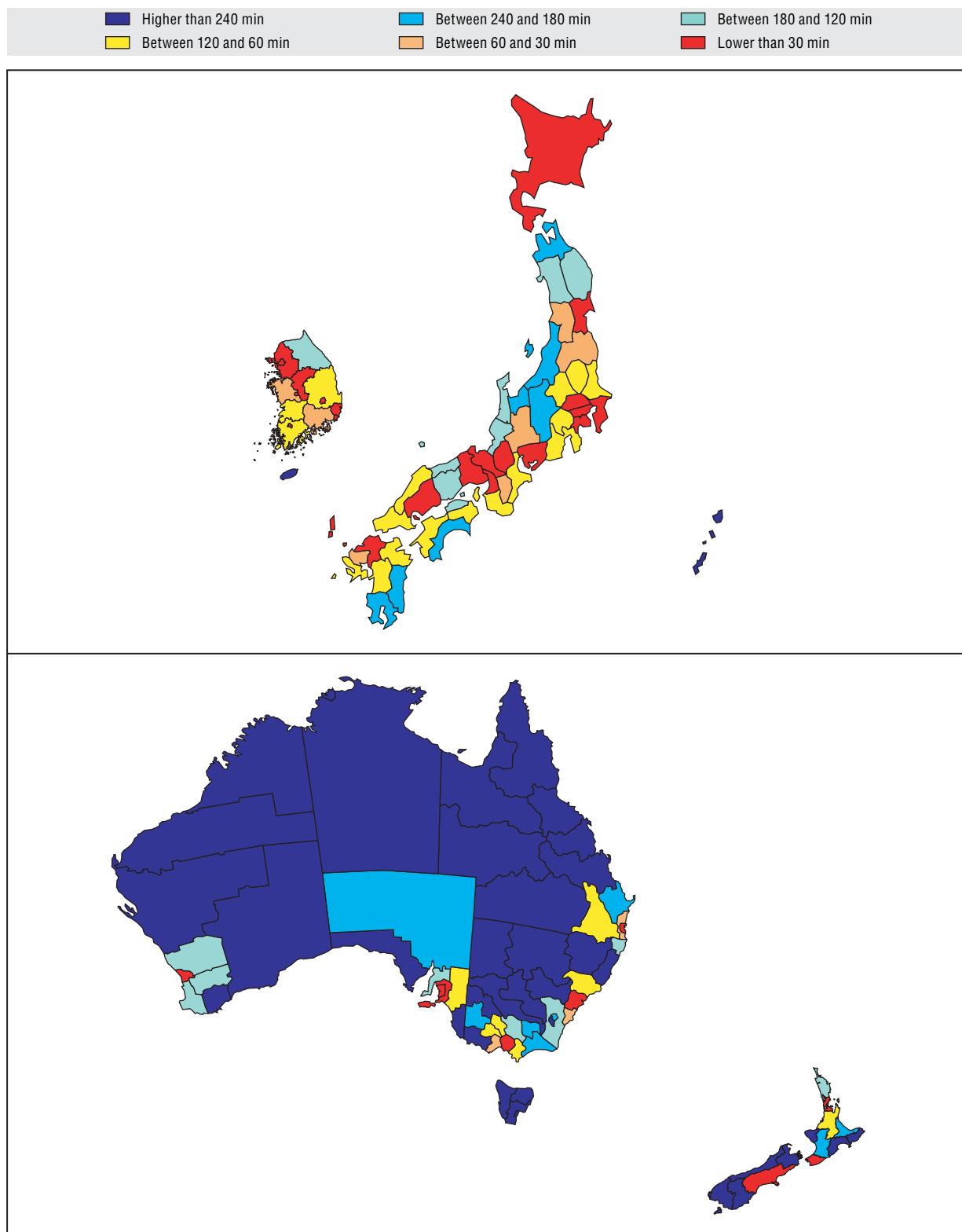
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Definition

City is defined as a large locality of a country, urban Agglomeration comprises the city or town and also the suburban fringe or thickly settled territory lying outside, but adjacent to, its boundaries. A single large urban agglomeration may comprise several cities or towns and their suburban fringes (see Sources and Methodology).

23.3. Accessibility: road distances in minutes – Asia and Oceania TL3

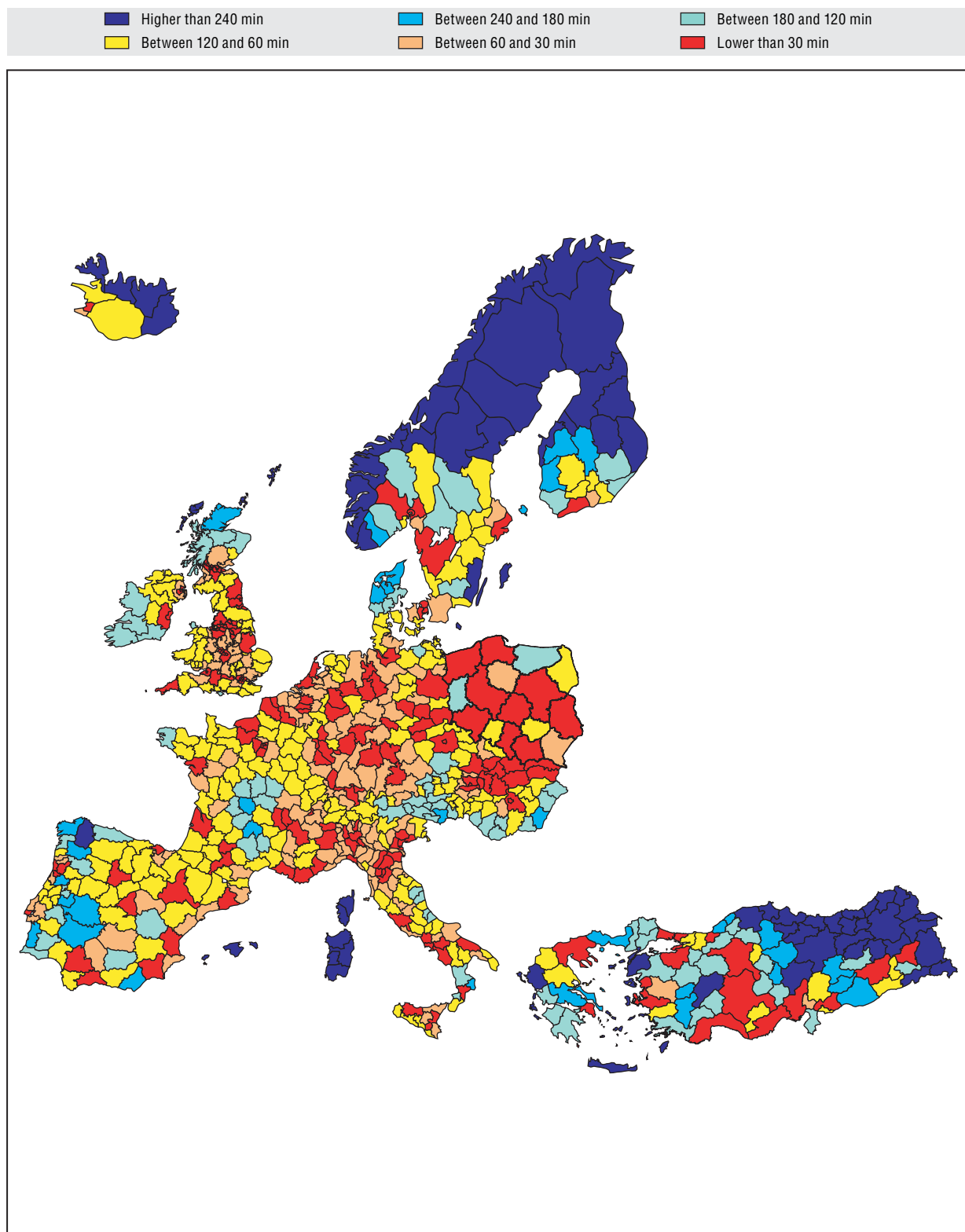
2001



Source: OECD Territorial Database.

23.4. Accessibility: road distances in minutes – Europe TL3 (Poland TL2)

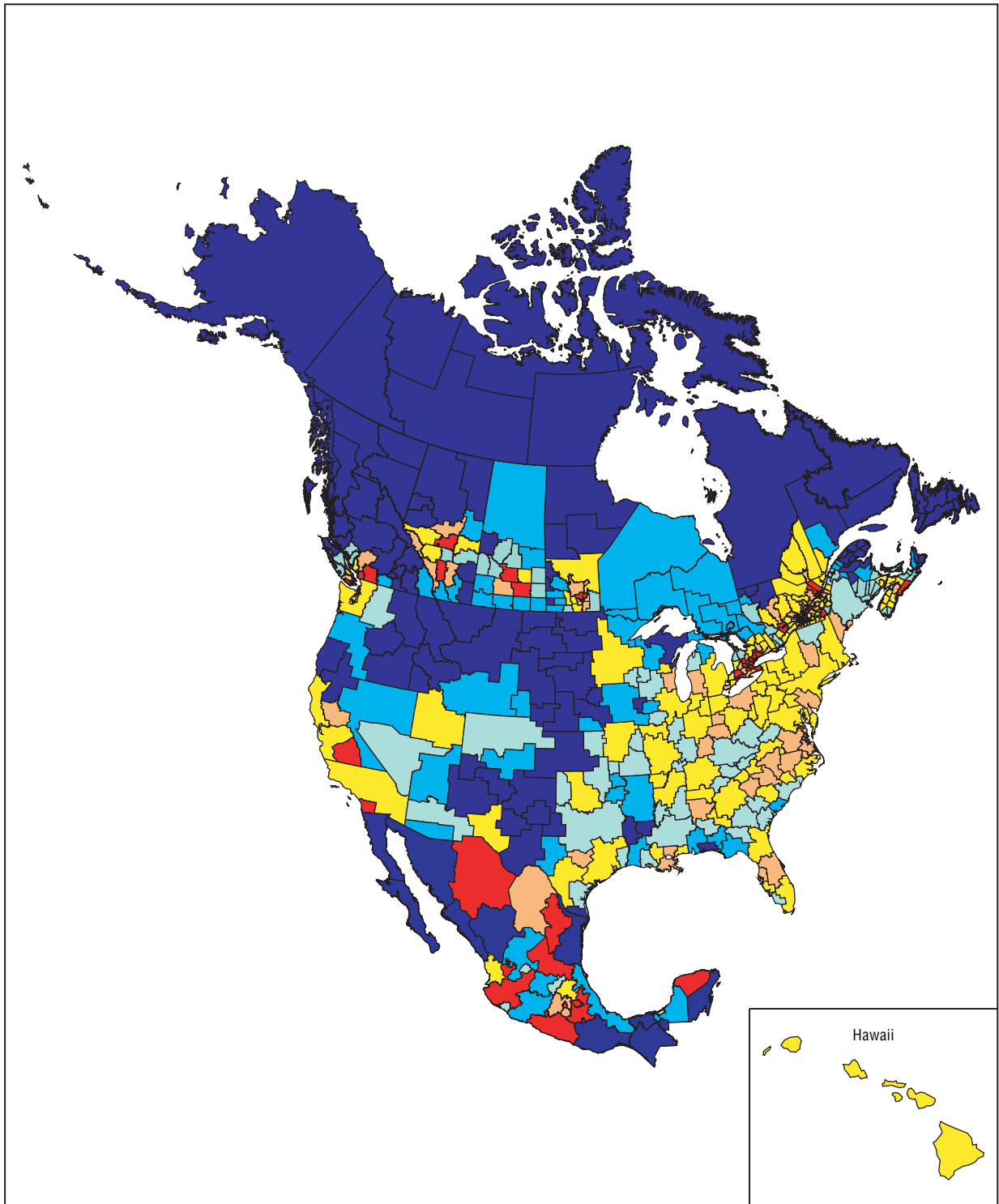
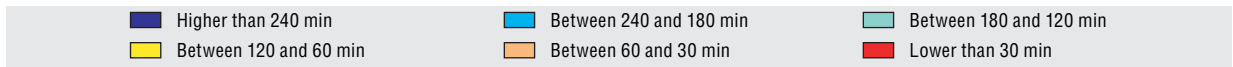
2001



Source: OECD Territorial Database.

23.5. Accessibility: road distances in minutes – North America TL3 (Mexico TL2)

2001



Source: OECD Territorial Database.

24. Home ownership

Home ownership contributes to well-being by providing owners with secure and affordable housing. Equity accumulated in homes represents the main source of wealth for households in most OECD countries and provides them with benefits such as collateral for loans.

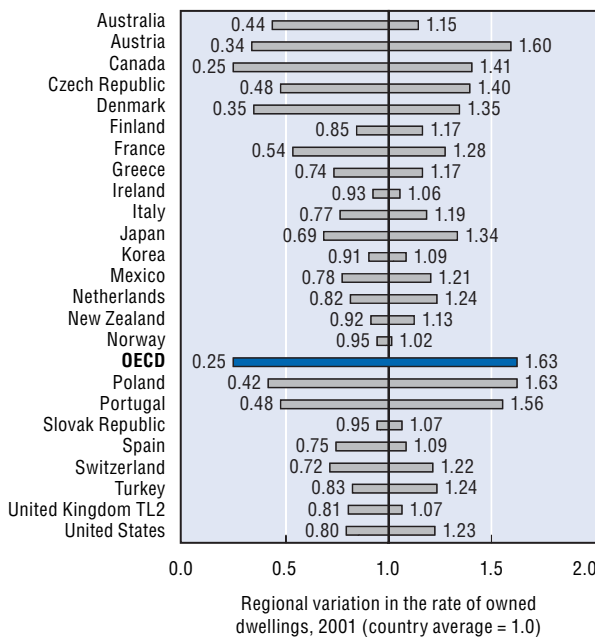
Home ownership varies significantly among OECD countries depending on the level of subsidies for rental housing, the existence of high-quality social housing and deductibility of interest payments on loans from taxable income.

In 2001, the share of owned accommodation showed significant regional variation (Figure 24.1). In Canada, for instance, the region with the highest percentage of owned accommodation had five times the percentage of the lowest. In Austria it was more than four times higher and in Denmark, Poland and Portugal it was more than three times higher.

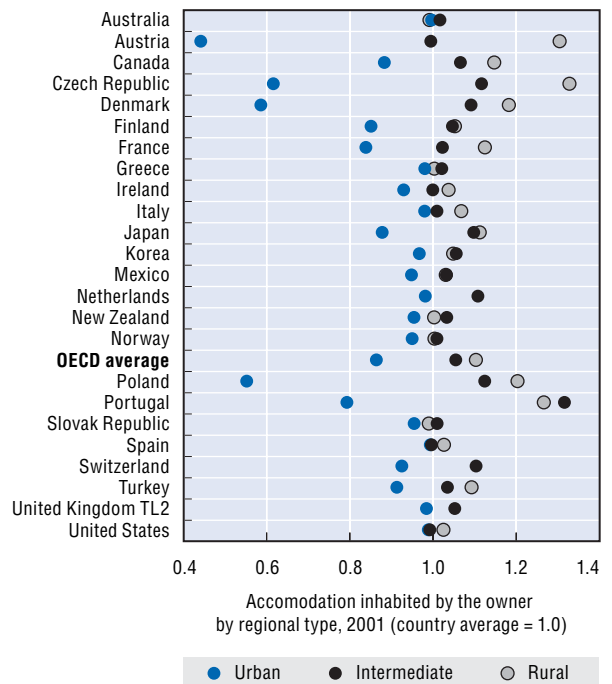
The percentage of owned accommodation is associated with the dwelling's location. It is higher in regions where values tend to be low, i.e. rural and suburban regions than where the cost of dwellings is high, i.e. urban regions. In 12 out of 22 OECD countries the region with the lowest rate of owned accommodation was the capital region; it was a rural region only in Canada, Turkey, Australia and Mexico.

In all countries considered, rural and intermediate regions have rates of home ownership higher than the national average, while the opposite holds for urban regions. Austria, the Czech Republic, Denmark and Poland have the lowest rates of owned accommodation in urban areas as compared to the national average, while Australia has the lowest rate in rural areas (Figure 24.2).

24.1. In 2001 the proportion of owned accommodation varied significantly among regions



24.2. In all countries rural and intermediate regions have higher rates of home ownership than the national average



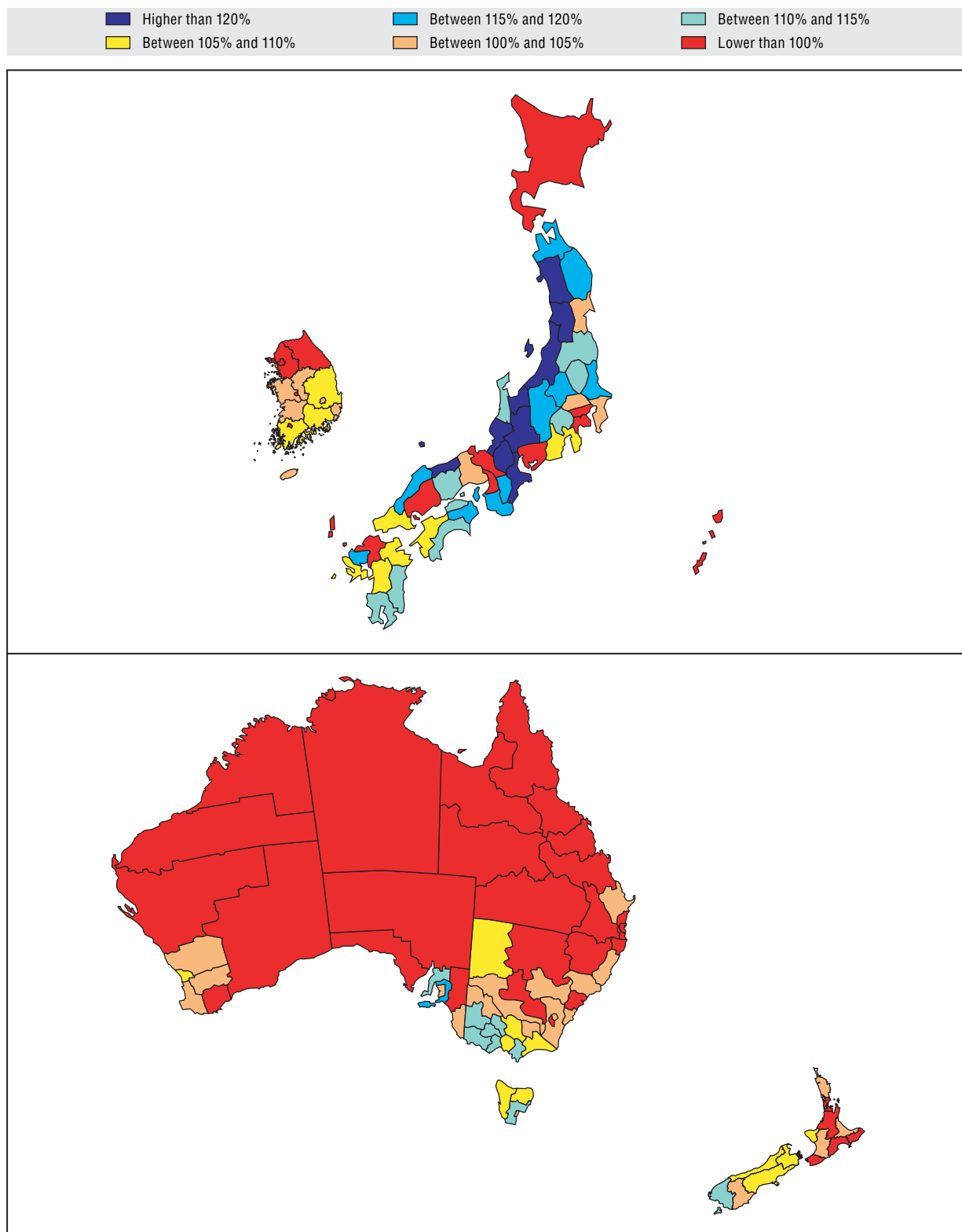
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Definition

The person whose name figures in the real property taxation register is considered the owner. In the population register, the address of the owner has to correspond with the address of the dwelling owned. In this case, the dwelling is considered to be occupied by the owner. A dwelling is considered owned either if it is fully owned or being purchased.

24.3. Home ownership by region: Asia and Oceania TL3

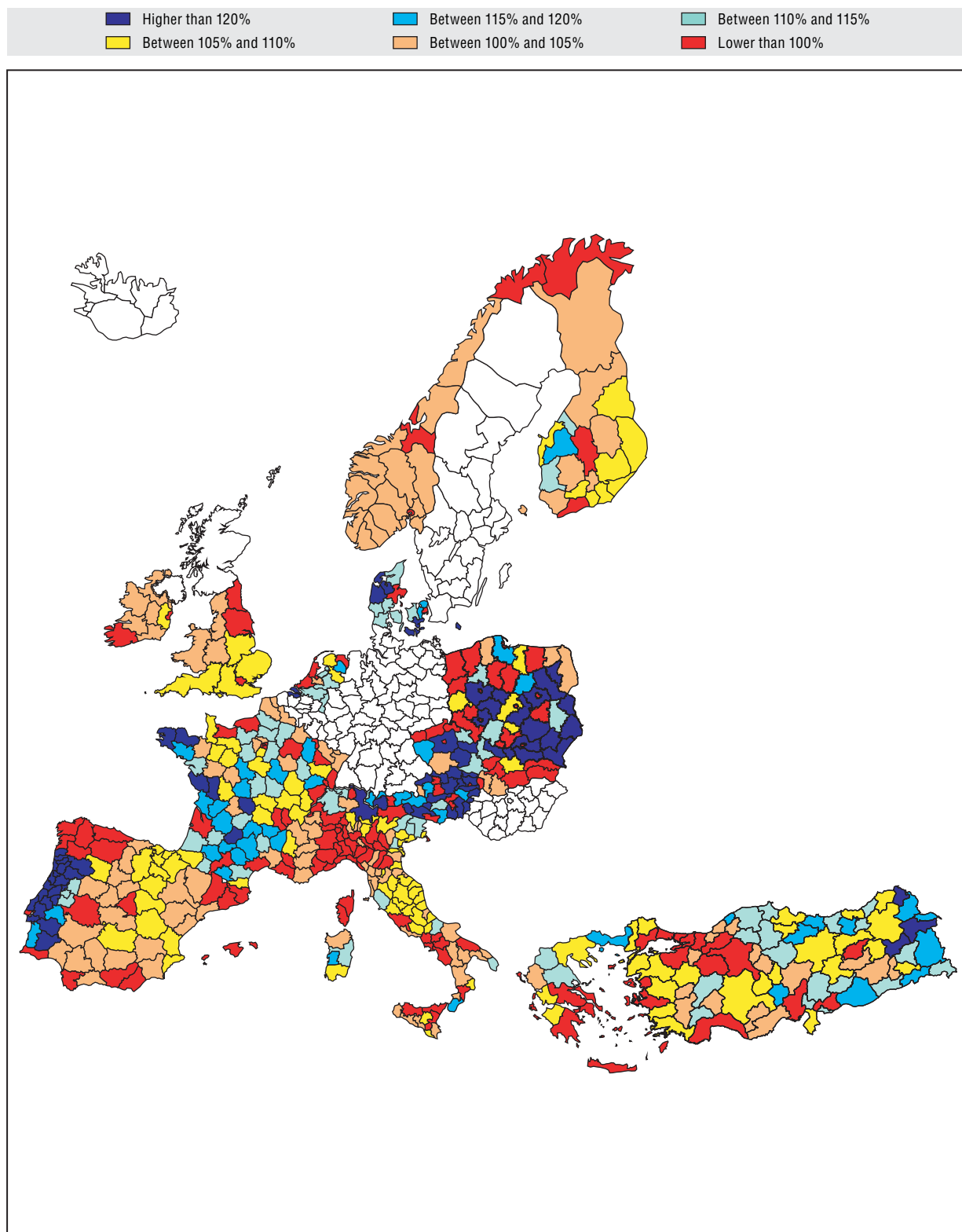
Percentage of the national home ownership rate 2001



Source: OECD Territorial Database.

24.4. Home ownership by region: Europe TL3

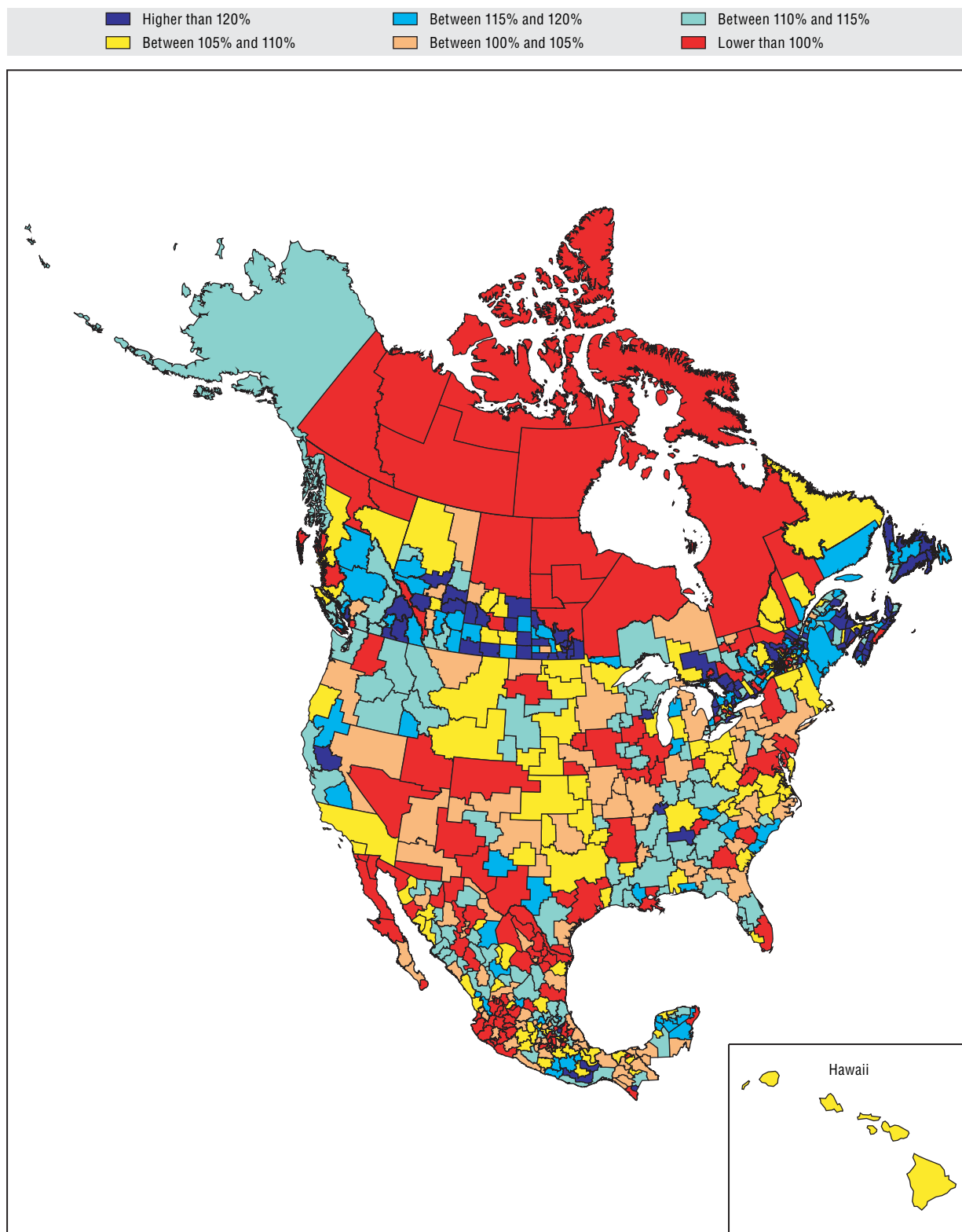
Percentage of the national home ownership rate 2001



Source: OECD Territorial Database.

24.5. Home ownership by region: North America TL3

Percentage of the national home ownership rate 2001



Source: OECD Territorial Database.

25. Education: student enrolment in tertiary education

Human capital is a major factor of growth for both countries and regions. A region's ability to invest in education and increase the skills profile of its labour force is an important factor of competitiveness.

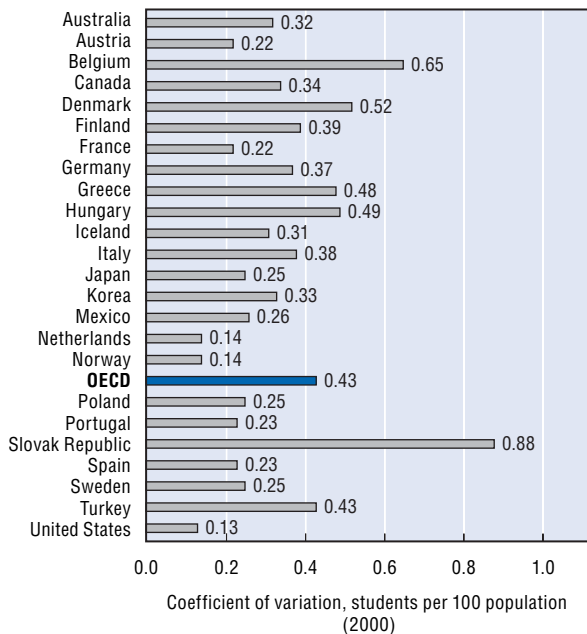
The enrolment ratio is a common measure of the level of participation in tertiary-level education. It indicates the capability of the education system to attract students, on the one hand, and the propensity of the population to obtain advanced qualifications, on the other. The ratio is defined as the total enrolment in tertiary-level education, regardless of age, as a percentage of the total population.

Enrolment in tertiary education is not evenly distributed among regions (Figure 25.1). In 2001 the Slovak Republic had the largest regional variation in

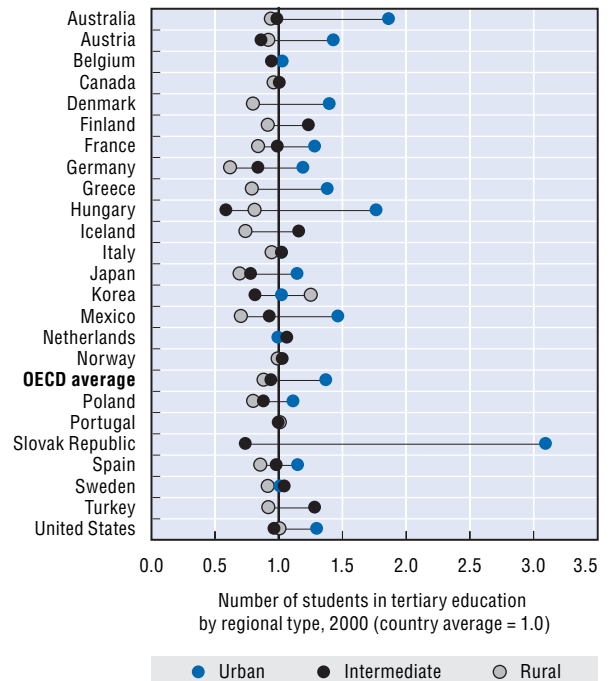
enrolment in tertiary education, with a coefficient of variation of 0.88. The United States, the Netherlands and Norway show very small variations in regional enrolment rates. In other countries, the coefficient of variation is close to the OECD average (0.43).

In a large majority of OECD countries, urban regions tend to have the highest percentage of people enrolled in tertiary education, although the three types of regions do not differ greatly (Figure 25.2). In particular, in the Slovak Republic tertiary enrolment rates in urban areas are three times the national average, while in Australia and Hungary urban regions almost double the country average. In Portugal, Norway, Canada, the Netherlands and Italy, tertiary enrolment ratios are more evenly distributed among urban, rural and intermediate regions.

25.1. In 2001, enrolment in tertiary education varied significantly among regions



25.2. The Slovak Republic had the highest density of students in urban regions



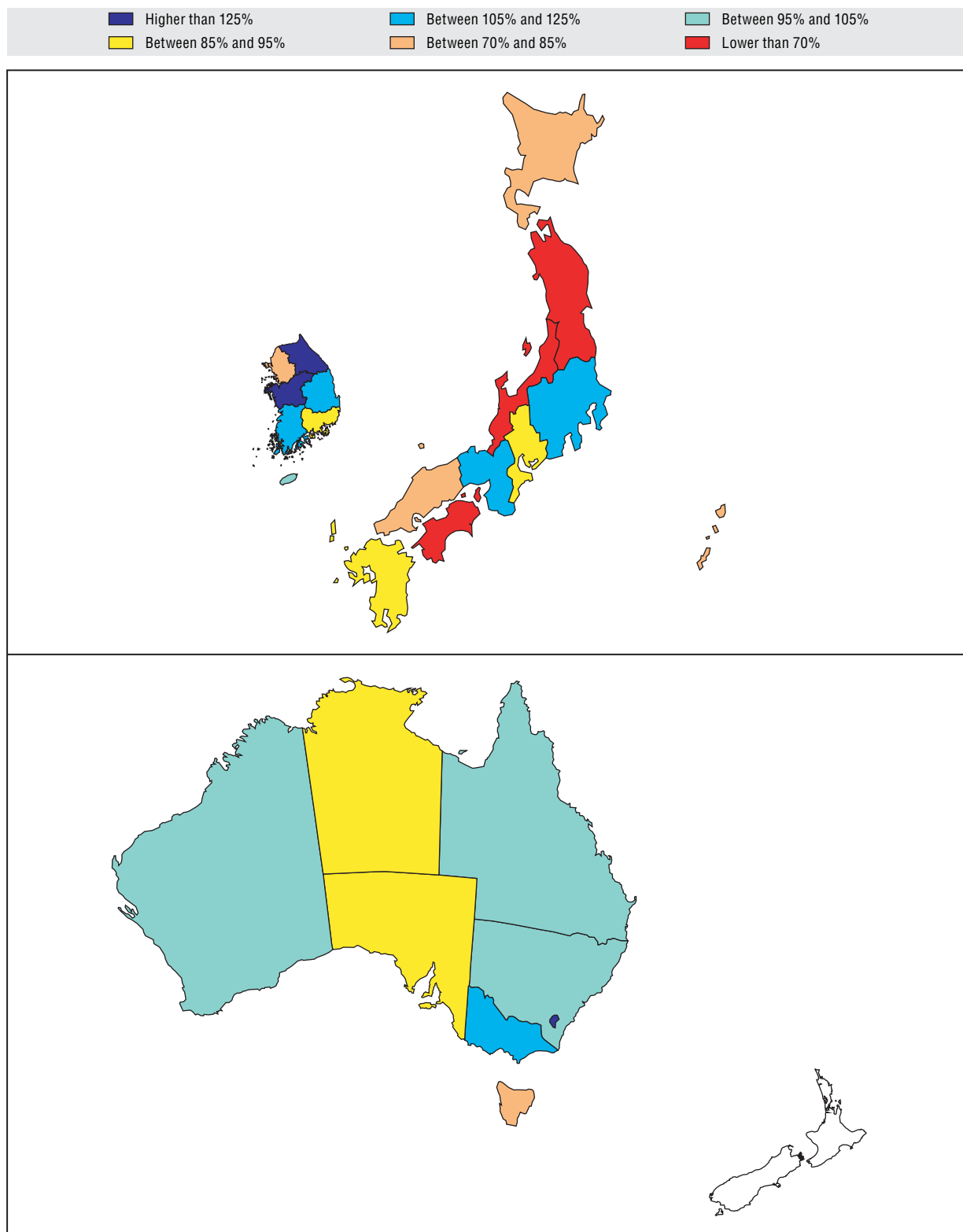
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Definition

Total enrolment in all types of schools and education institutions, including public, private and all other institutions that provide advanced (tertiary-level) organised educational programmes (ISCED 5-6; see OECD, *Classifying Educational Programmes, ISCED Implementation in OECD Countries*, OECD, 1999) regardless of age.

25.3. Students in tertiary education per inhabitant by region: Asia and Oceania TL2

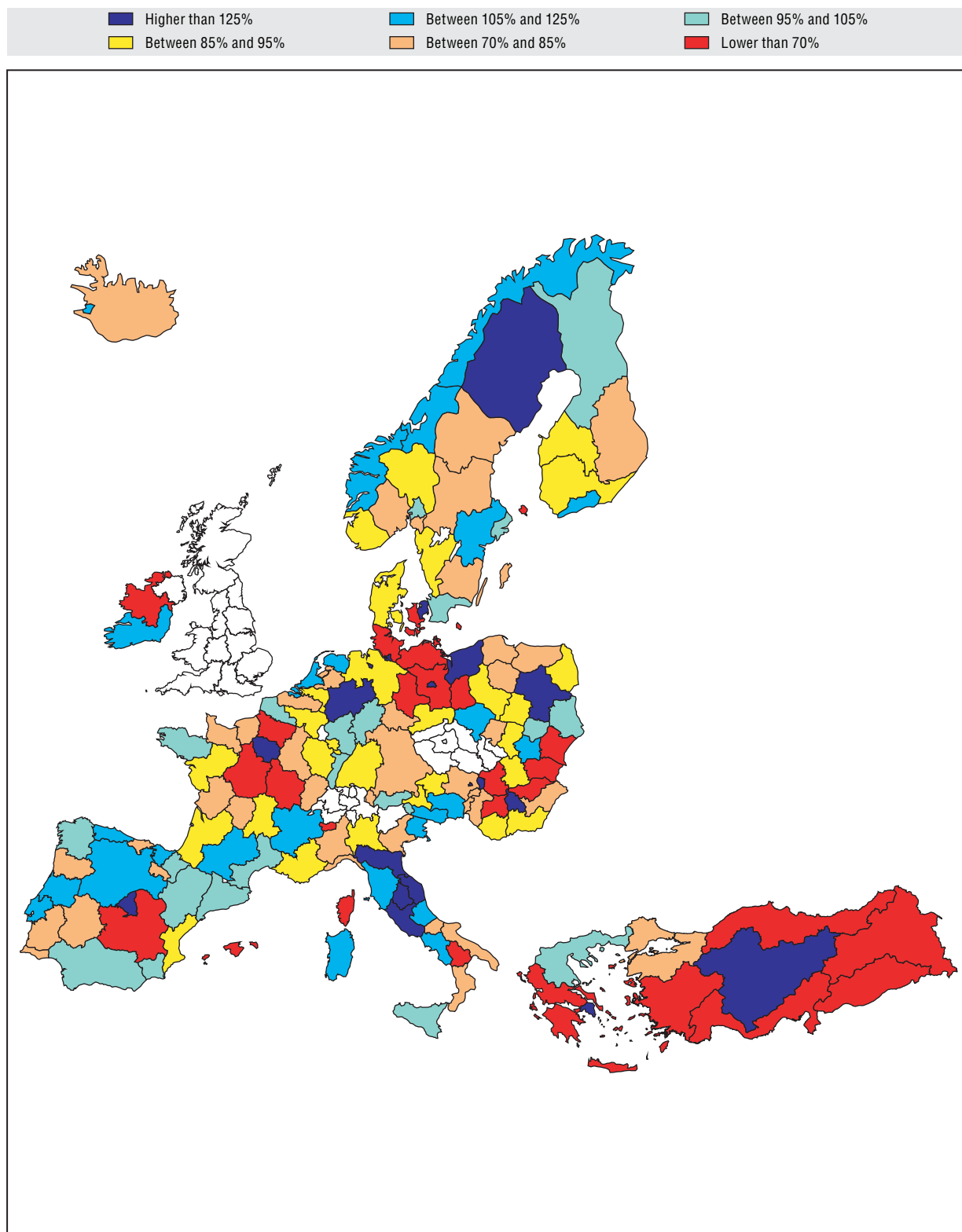
Percentage of national number of students in tertiary education per inhabitant 2001



Source: OECD Territorial Database.

25.4. **Students in tertiary education per inhabitant by region: Europe TL2**

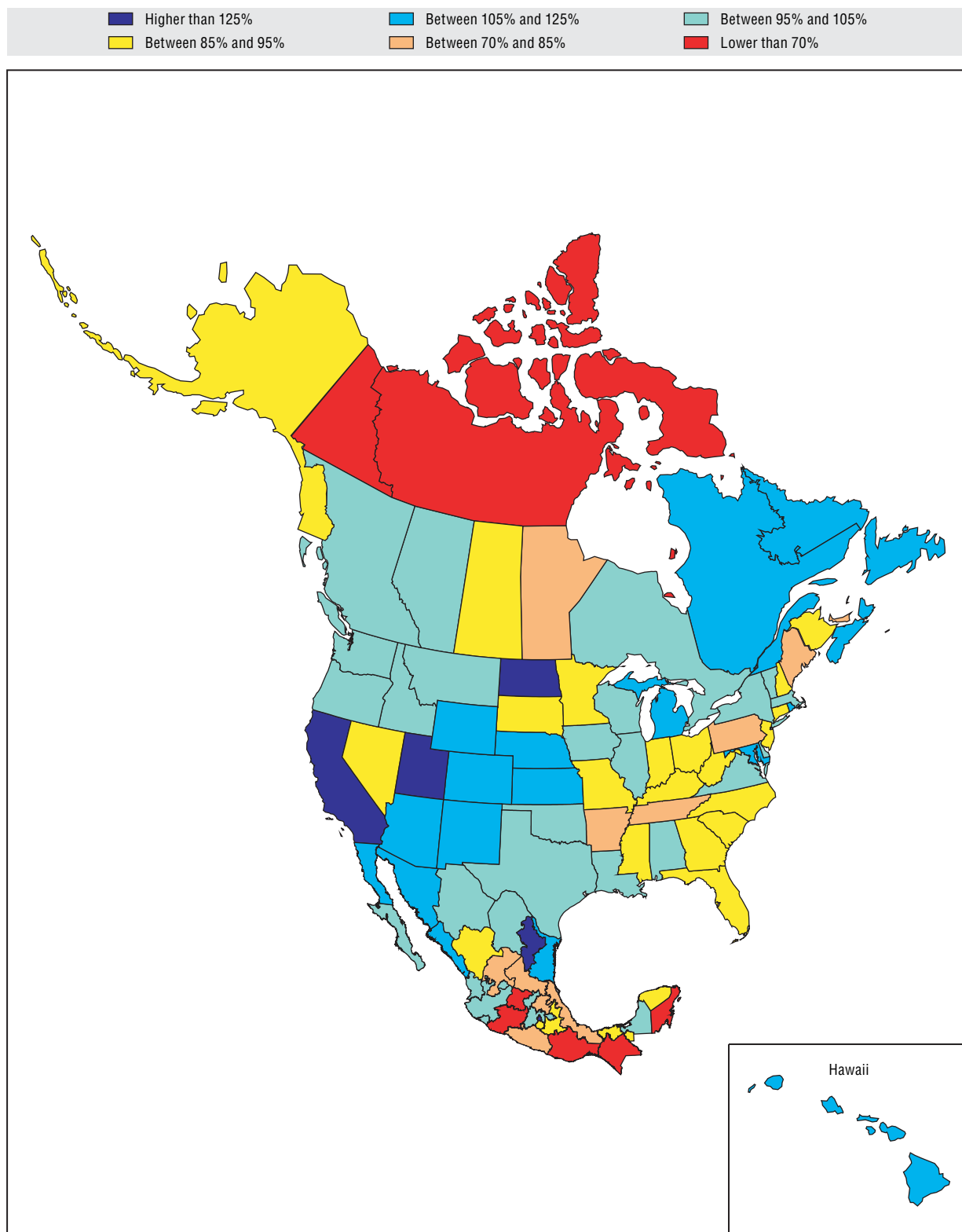
Percentage of national number of students in tertiary education per inhabitant 2001



Source: OECD Territorial Database.

25.5. Students in tertiary education per inhabitant by region: North America TL2

Percentage of national number of students in tertiary education per inhabitant 2001



Source: OECD Territorial Database.

26. Health: age-adjusted mortality rate

The age-adjusted mortality rate is a basic indicator of the health status of population. It is expressed as the ratio between observed and expected deaths, *i.e.* the number of deaths that would occur in a certain region if the age profile of the regional population was the same as that of the country. A value of the age-adjusted mortality rate greater than 1 indicates that, even taking into account differences in age, the mortality rate of the region is higher than the country average.

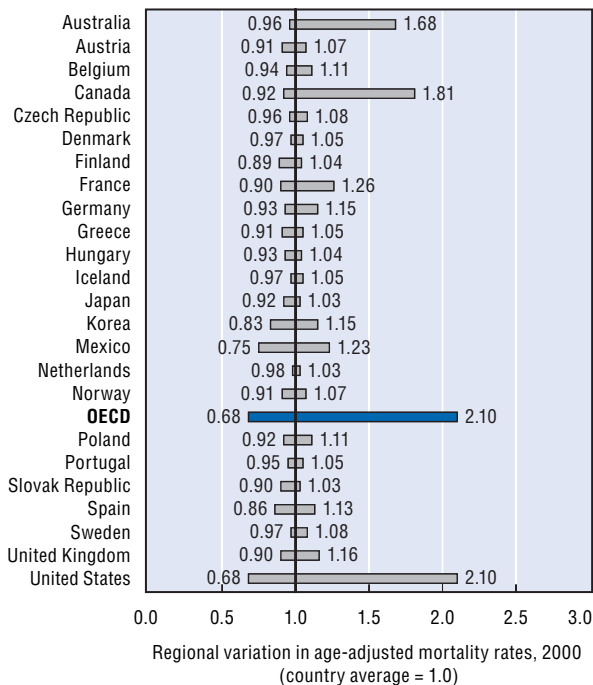
Mortality rates show large differences among regions within each country (Figure 26.1). In the United States, for instance, the mortality rate in the District of Columbia in 2001 was twice that of the rest of the country, while in Hawaii it was half the rate.

In Australia, the extreme values were recorded in the Northern Territories, where the mortality rate was 50% higher than the national rate.

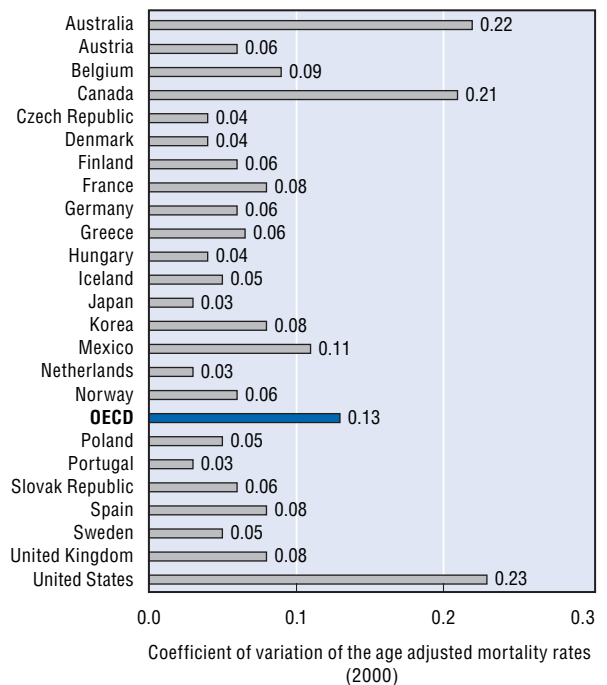
The coefficient of variation shows that the largest regional differences were recorded in the United States (0.23), Australia (0.22) and Canada (0.21). All the other countries show a relatively low coefficient of variation, with Japan, the Netherlands and Portugal scoring the lowest (0.03).

There is no clear pattern as regards differences between urban and rural regions. In about half of the countries considered (Austria, Denmark, Finland, France, Greece, Mexico, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal and the United States), mortality rates in urban regions are higher than in rural ones, although the differences are not very large (between 1% and 9%).

26.1. The United States shows the highest and the lowest rates of observed deaths



26.2. The coefficient of variation reveals the largest regional differences in United States and Australia



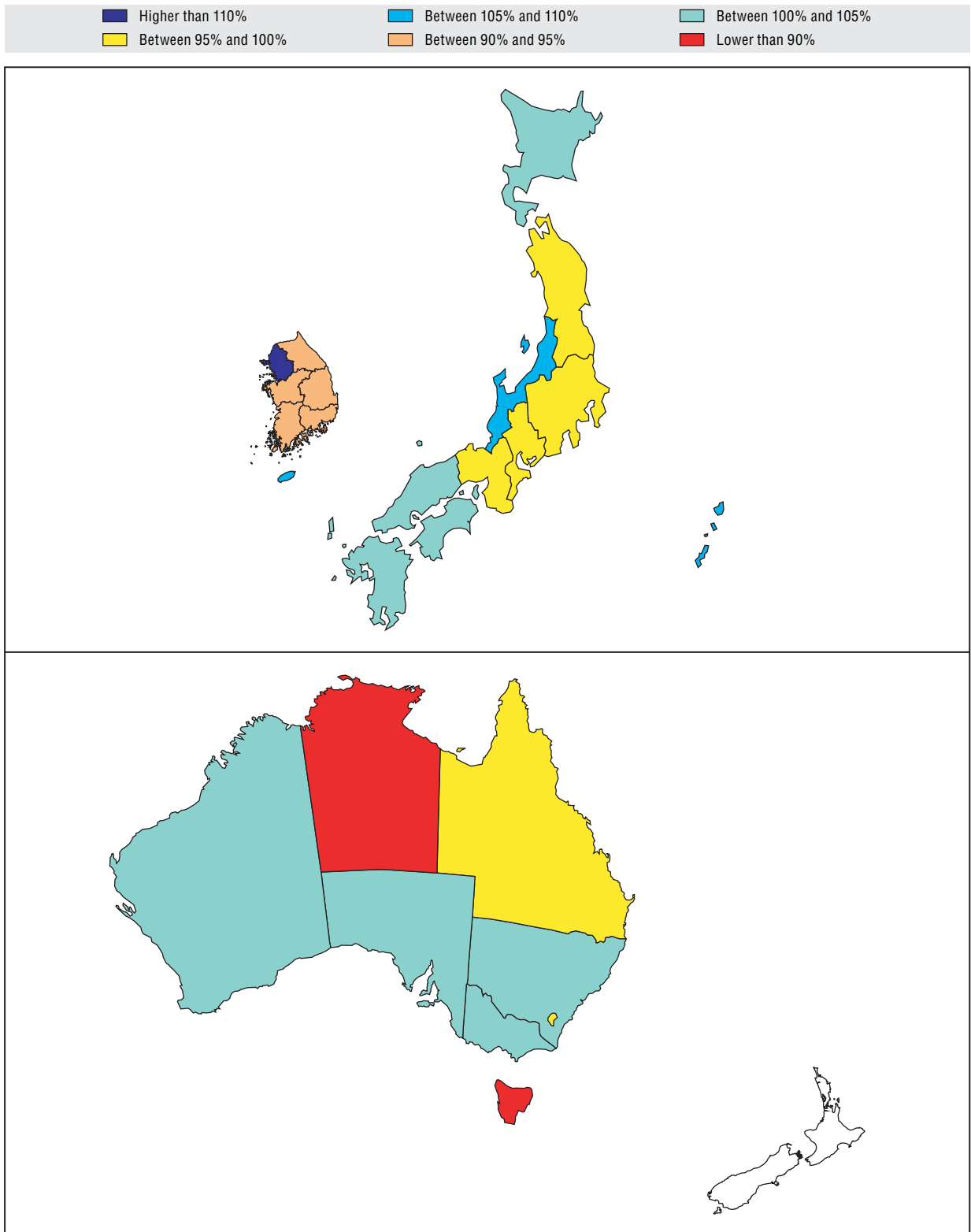
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Definition

Crude mortality rate has been adjusted for age, which is a primary factor of mortality. Age-adjusted rates eliminate the age bias due to the age profile of the population, thereby providing a much more reliable rate for comparison purposes.

26.3. Age-adjusted mortality rate: Asia and Oceania TL2

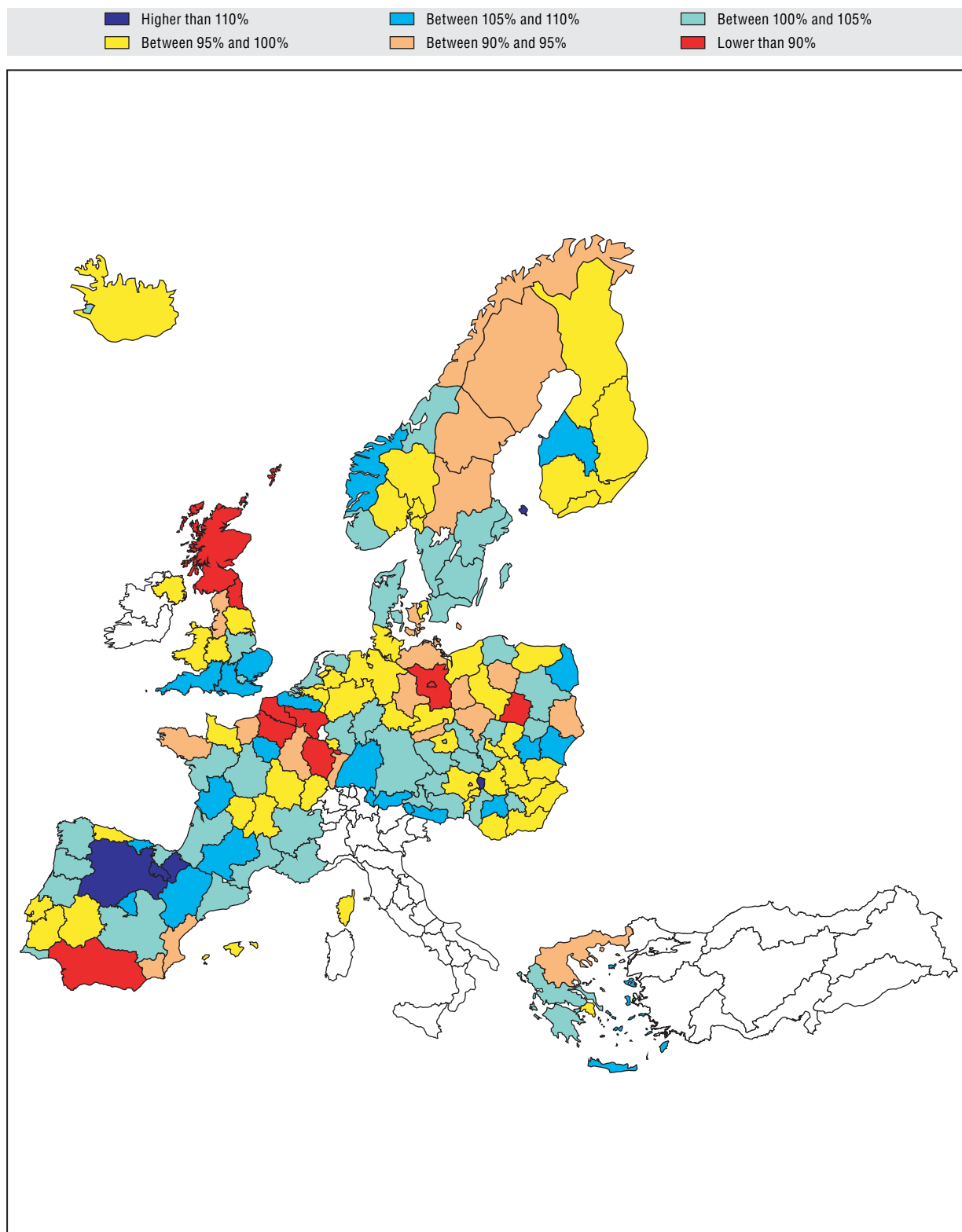
Percentage of the expected number of deaths 2002



Source: OECD Territorial Database.

26.4. Age-adjusted mortality rate: Europe TL2

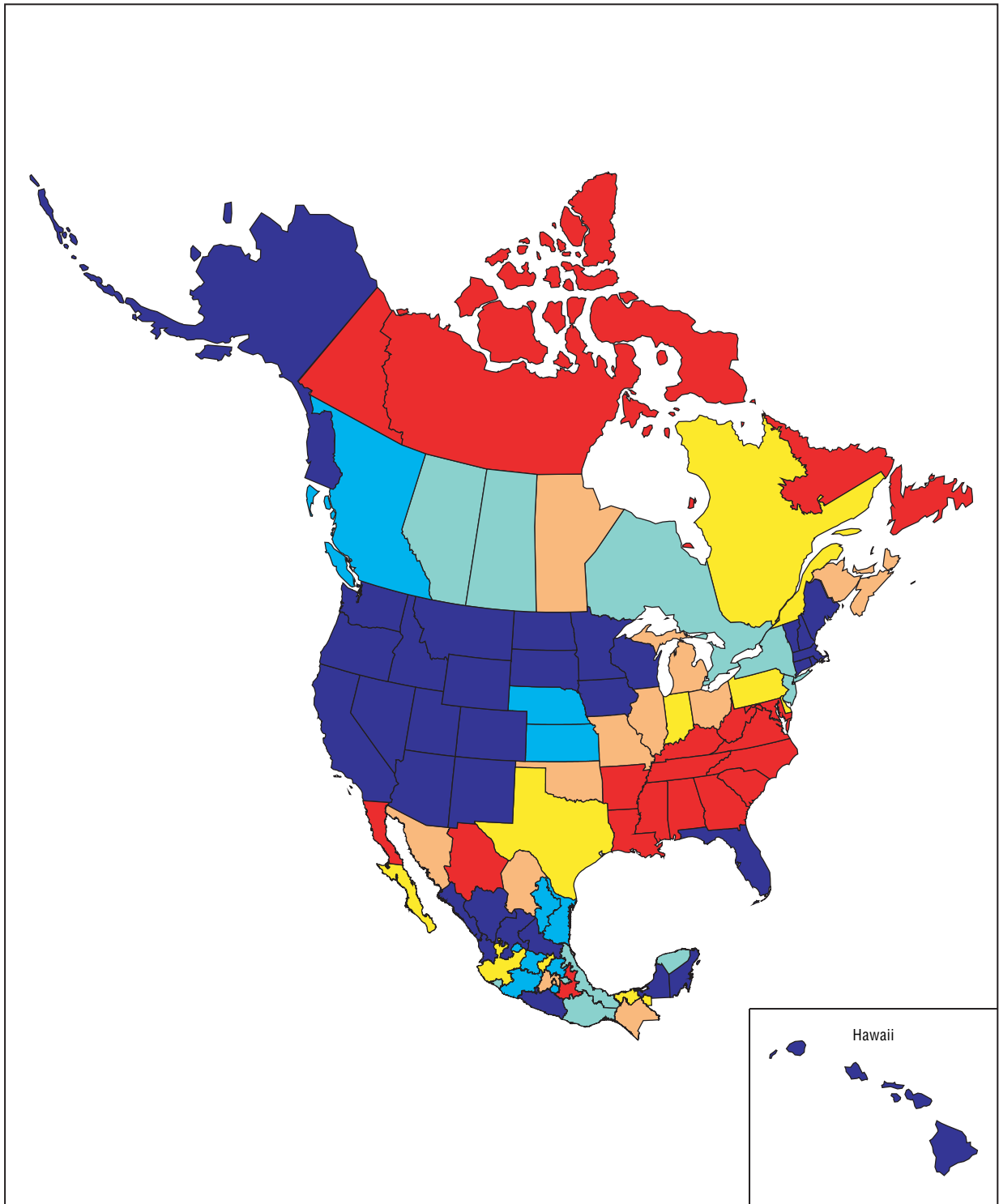
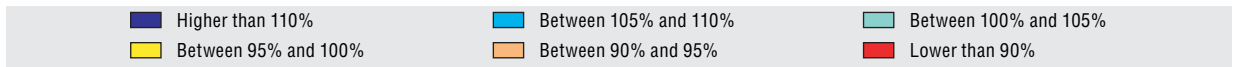
Percentage of the expected number of deaths 2000



Source: OECD Territorial Database.

26.5. Age-adjusted mortality rate: North America TL2

Percentage of the expected number of deaths 2000



Source: OECD Territorial Database.

27. Health resources: number of medical practitioners

In 2001, there were over 2 million medical practitioners in OECD countries, i.e. 2.9 doctors per 1 000 persons, on average.

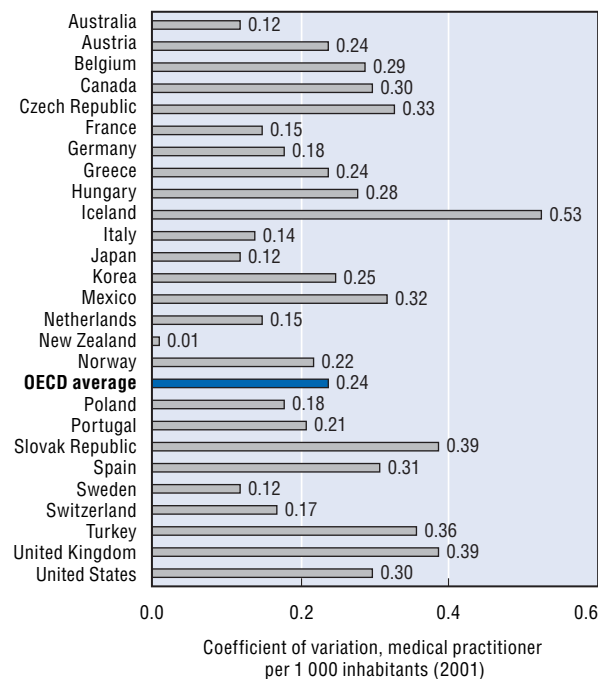
Despite wide regional differences in the number of doctors per capita, regional disparities – as measured by the coefficient of variation – tend to be quite narrow in most countries (Figure 27.1). In Mexico, for instance, the ratio of doctors to population in the region with the highest number of doctors per inhabitant is five times higher than in the region with the lowest number. Yet, regional disparities in Mexico are not very far from the OECD average, as the coefficient of variation is 0.32 and 0.24, respectively. This pattern indicates that even if there are some peaks in numbers of doctors per 1 000 inhabitants, usually in the capital region, access to health services is quite evenly distributed in the rest of the country.

Several countries, particularly New Zealand, Australia, Japan, Sweden, Italy, France and the Netherlands, show very small regional disparities.

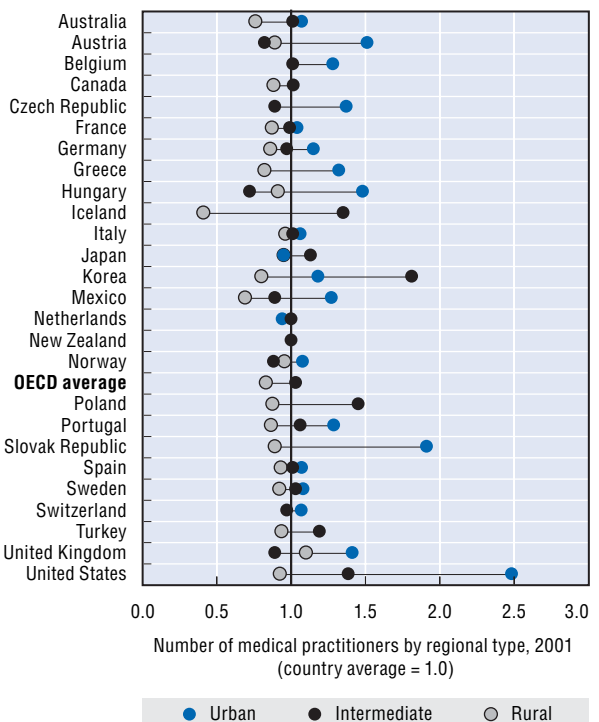
Regional disparities appear relatively large only in Iceland, where the coefficient of variation is 0.53. Low regional disparities are, at least in part, a consequence of the large size of the regions for which comparable data on doctors are available. In fact, as the size of a region increases, disparities tend to “average out”. Therefore, low disparities between large regions may hide large disparities between smaller areas within the region.

In almost all countries the number of medical practitioners per capita is highest in urban regions and lowest in rural regions (Figure 27.2). In the United States and the Slovak Republic, the number of doctors per capita in urban regions is double the country average, while in Austria, Greece and Hungary is at least 50% higher.

27.1. In 2001, regional disparities in doctors per capita were highest in Iceland and Poland and lowest in New Zealand



27.2. The population in urban regions tends to have access to more doctors than the population in rural and intermediate regions



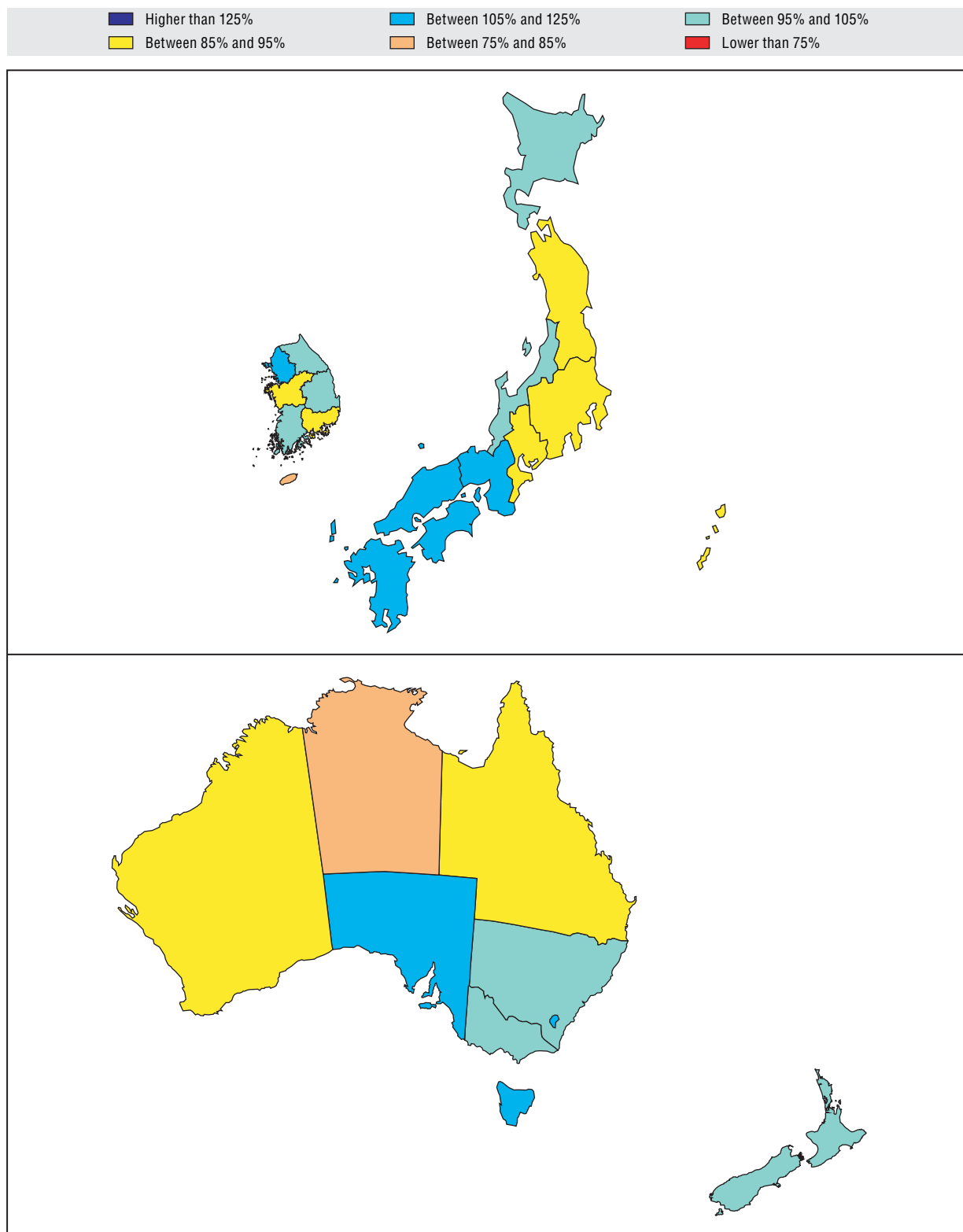
Statlink: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/827032656815>

Definition

Data for physicians are comprehensive of physicians in activity. This category includes physicians with a medical practice and those without one (working in industry administration or research) (Eurostat, *European Regional Statistics, Reference Guide*, 2003).

27.3. Practicing physicians per inhabitant by region: Asia and Oceania TL2

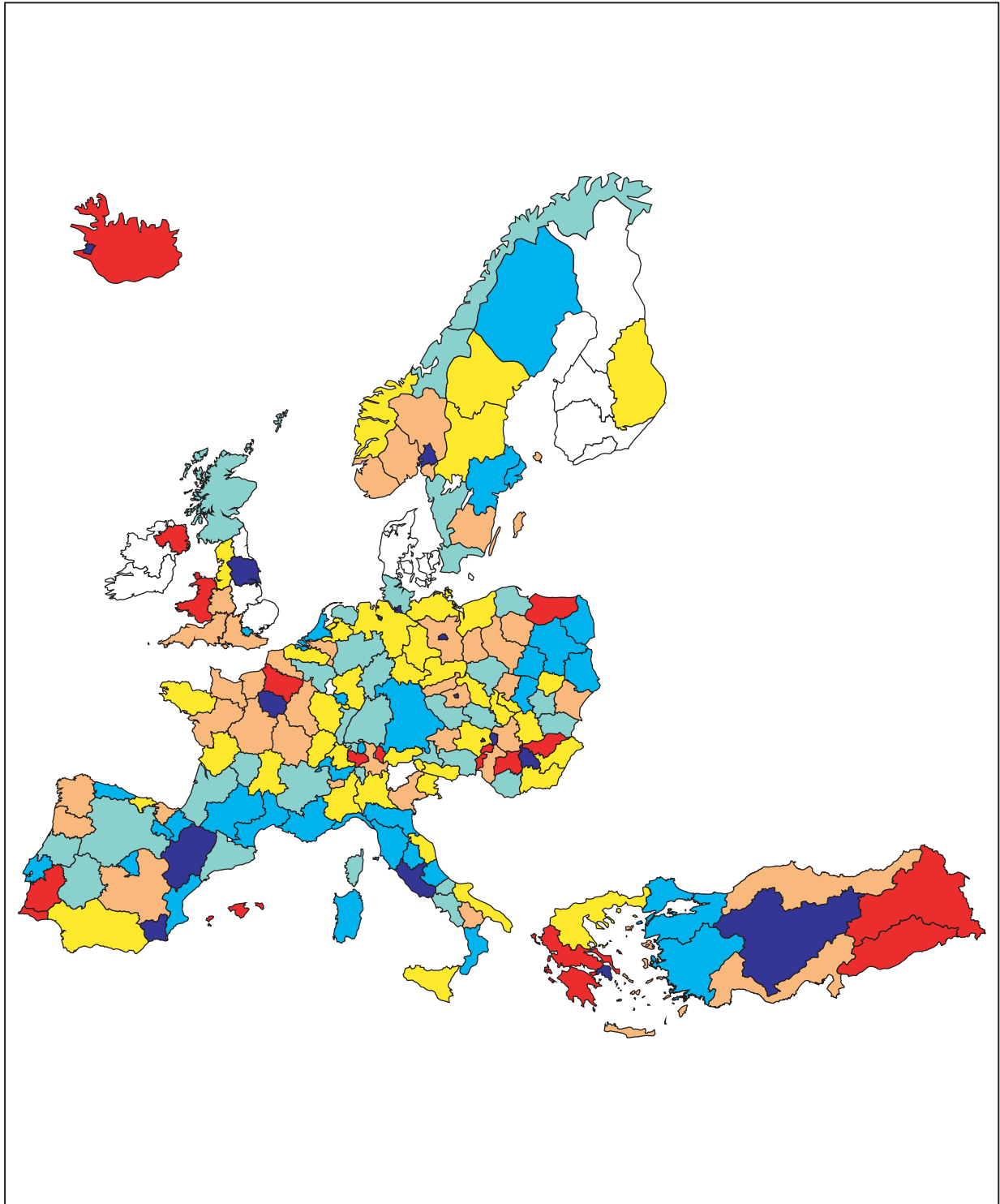
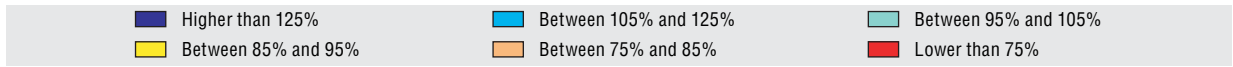
Percentage of national number of practicing physicians per inhabitant 2001



Source: OECD Territorial Database.

27.4. Practicing physicians per inhabitant by region: Europe TL2

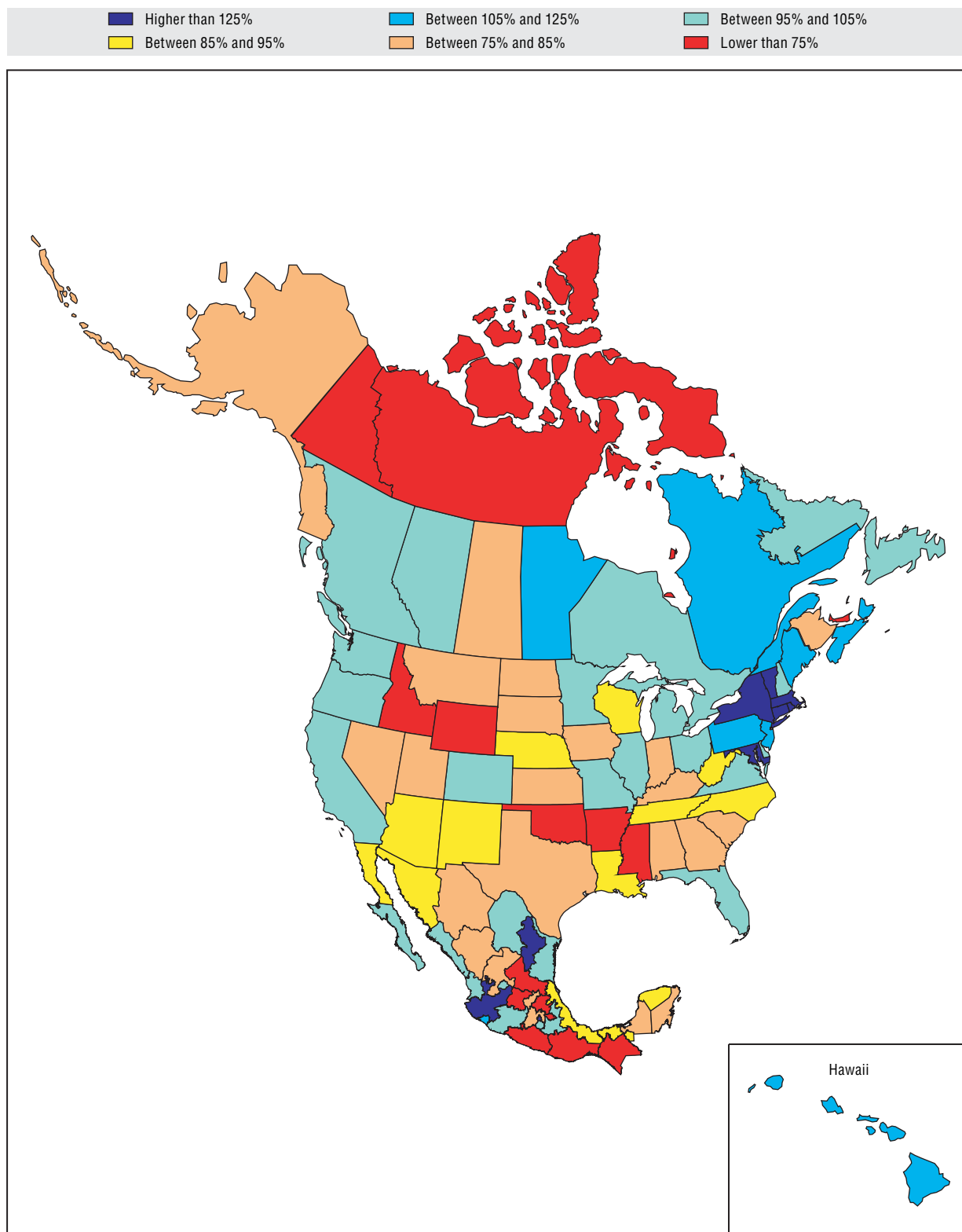
Percentage of national number of practicing physicians per inhabitant 2001



Source: OECD Territorial Database.

27.5. Practicing physicians per inhabitant by region: North America TL2

Percentage of national number of practicing physicians per inhabitant 2001



Source: OECD Territorial Database.

28. Safety: reported criminal offences against property

Safety is an important factor in the attractiveness of regions. It contributes to citizens' decision to live in a certain region and helps to create a positive business environment for firms.

The number of reported criminal offences against property is a common indicator of a region's level of safety.

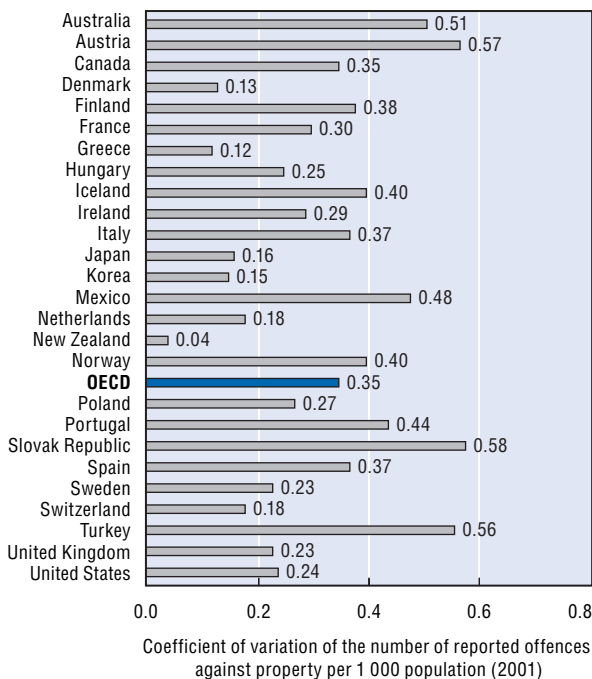
Lack of international standards for crime statistics makes international comparison difficult. Moreover, statistics on reported crime do not provide a clear indication of the safety of a given region because they are influenced by how crime is defined in national legislation, the statistical criteria for recording a crime and public willingness to report offences (see "Sources and Methodology").

In 2001 reported offences against property were unevenly distributed among regions within countries (Figure 28.1).

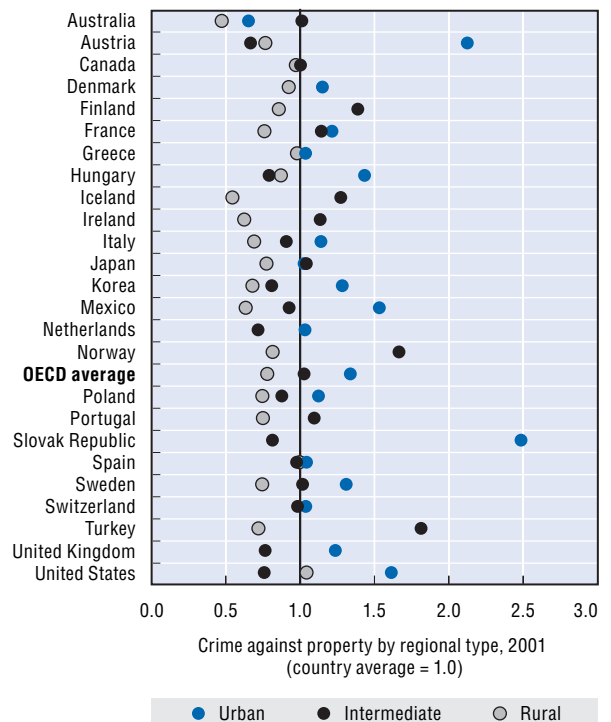
The high concentration of crime in the region of Bratislava (on average, more than double other regions) makes the Slovak Republic the country with the largest regional disparity in crimes against property, with a coefficient of variation of 0.58. Large disparities are also reported in Austria (0.57), Turkey (0.56) and Australia (0.51), while New Zealand, Greece and Denmark, as well as Japan and Korea show much smaller differences among regions.

In all OECD countries, offences against property per capita are more frequent in urban or intermediate regions than in rural regions (Figure 28.2). In the Slovak Republic, reported property offences are three times more frequent in urban than in intermediate regions, while in Austria, Iceland, Mexico, Norway and Turkey such reported offences are twice as frequent in urban or intermediate regions than in rural ones.

28.1. The Slovak Republic displayed the highest variation in recorded offences against property



28.2. Crimes against property are manifestly more frequent in predominantly urban regions



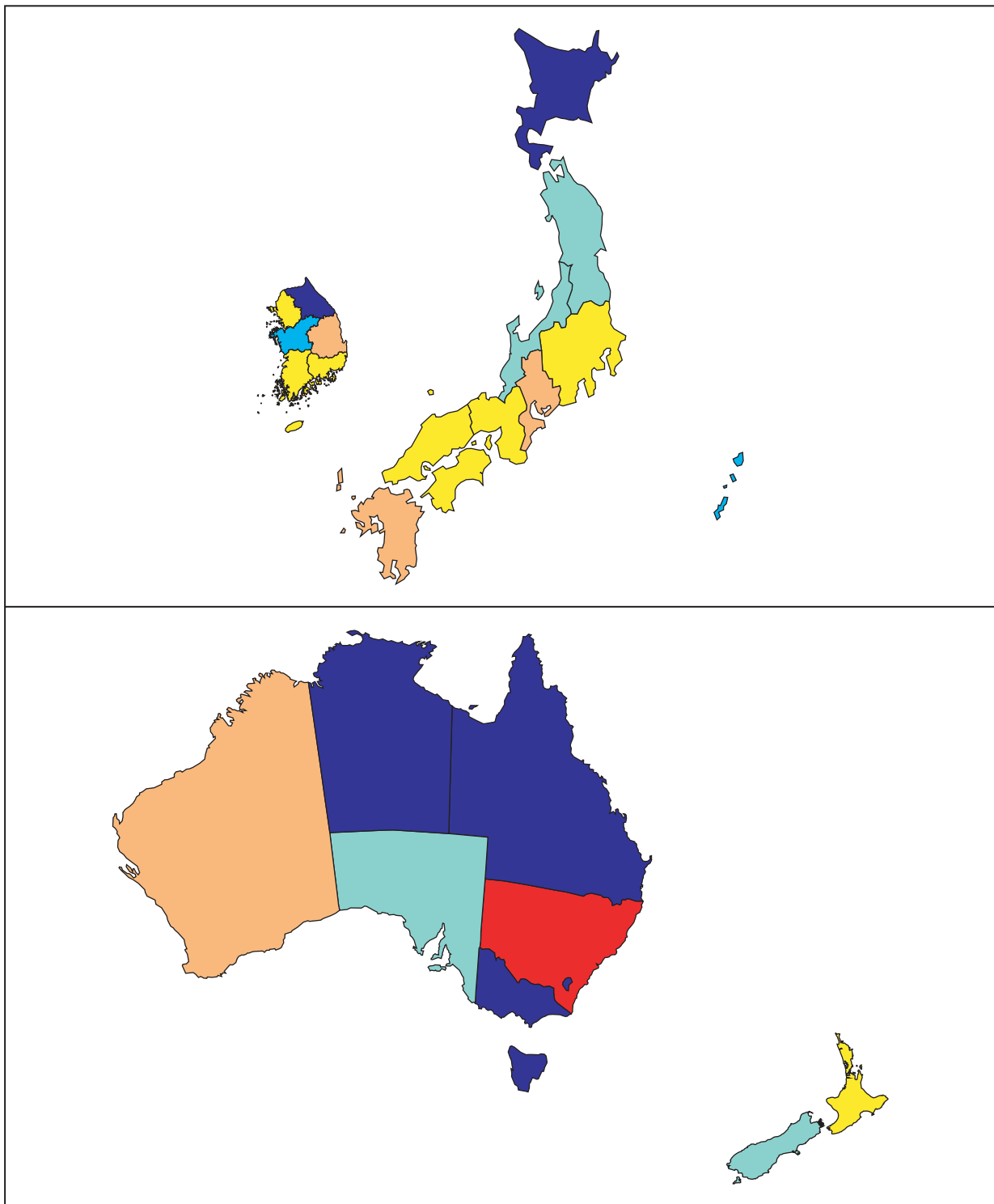
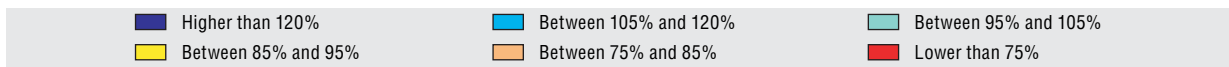
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Definition

Offences against property include: forgery, arson, burglary, theft, fraud, robbery, malicious damage to property.

28.3. Reported crimes against the property per inhabitant by region: Asia and Oceania TL2

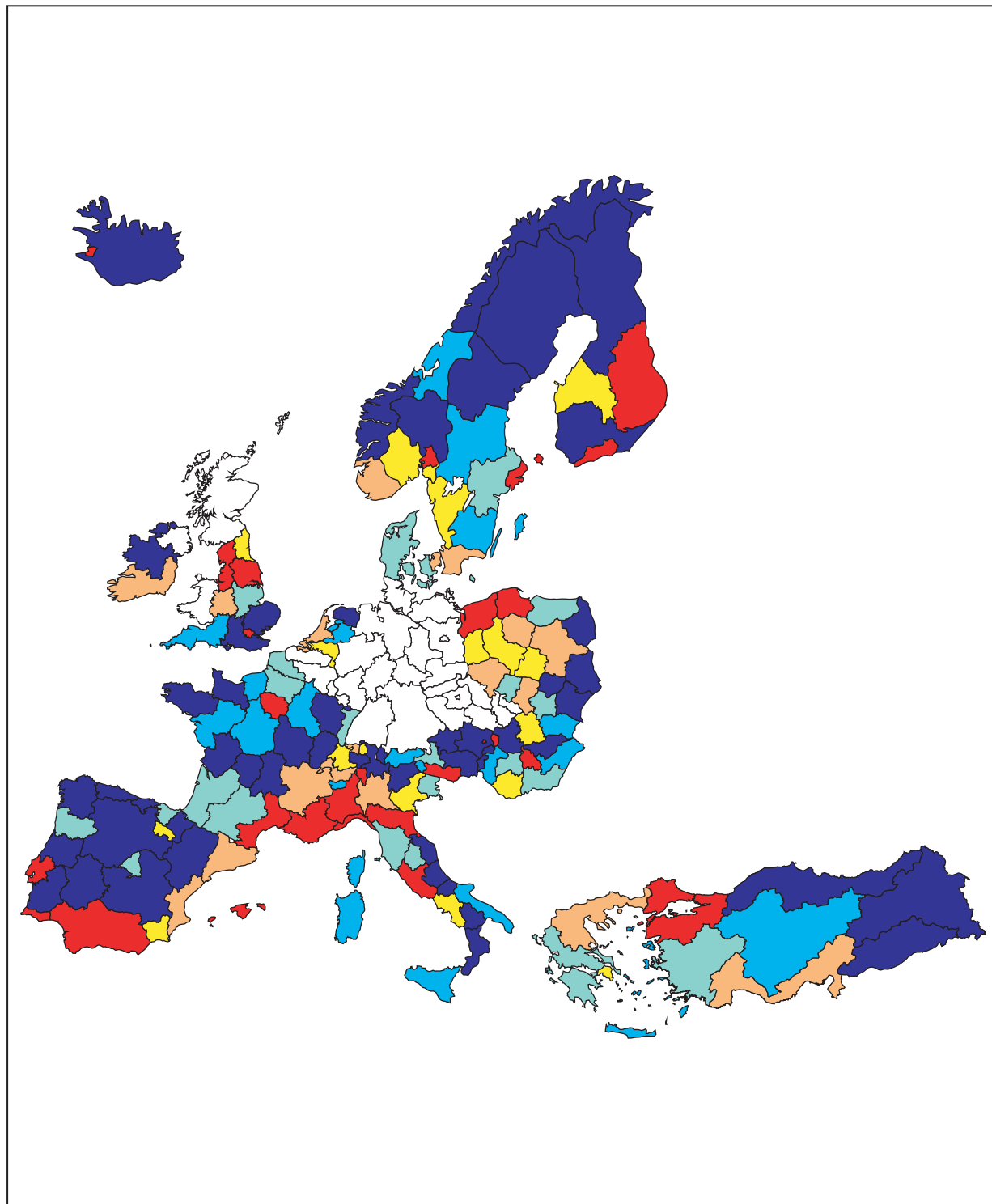
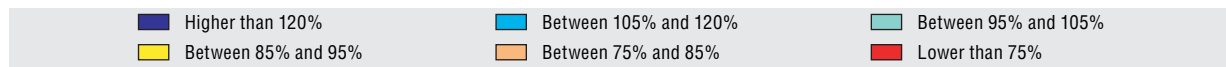
Percentage of national number of reported crimes against the property per inhabitant 2001



Source: OECD Territorial Database.

28.4. Reported crimes against the property per inhabitant by region: Europe TL2

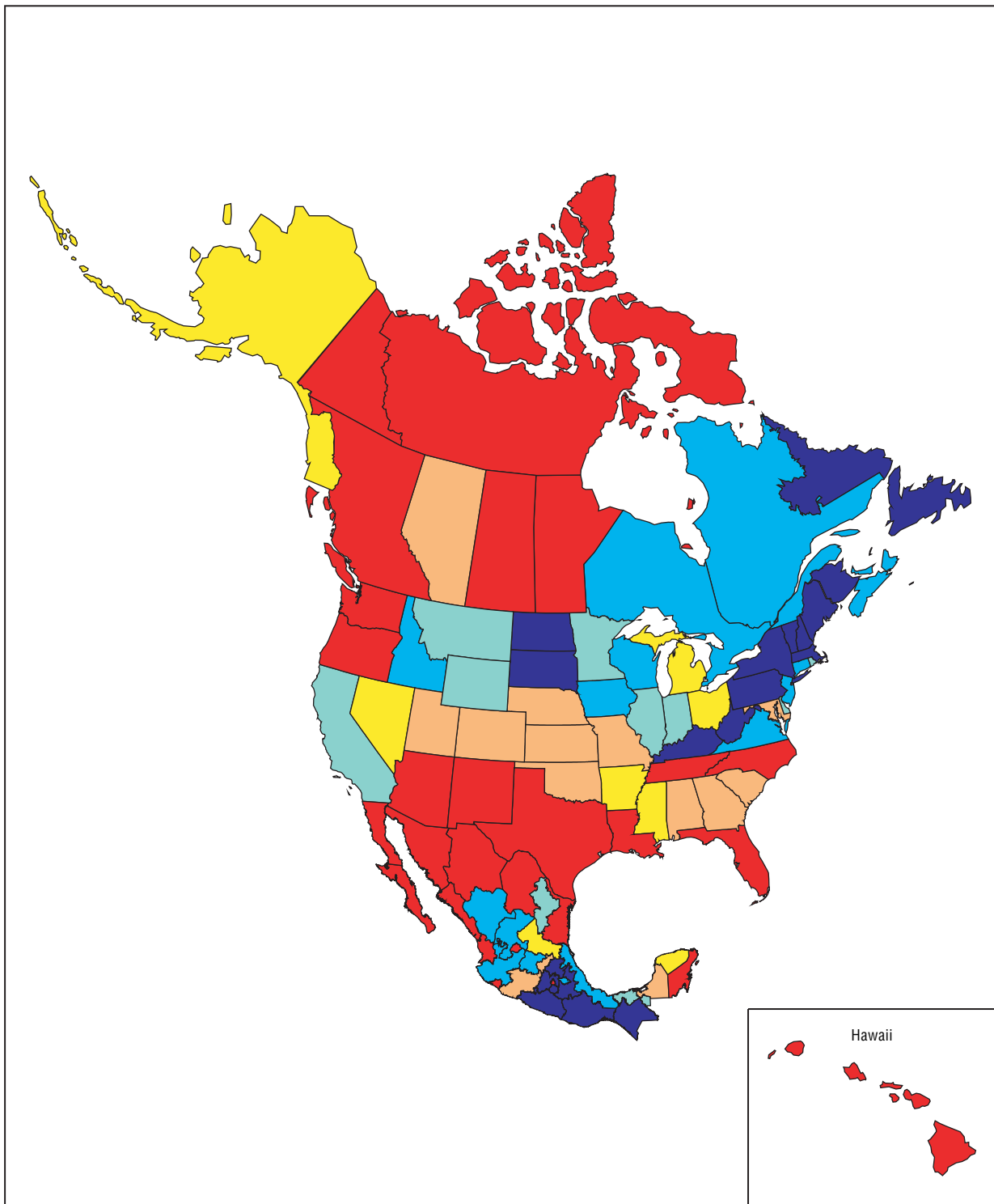
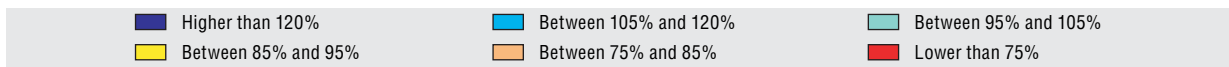
Percentage of national number of reported crimes against the property per inhabitant 2001



Source: OECD Territorial Database.

28.5. Reported crimes against the property per inhabitant by region: North America TL2

Percentage of national number of reported crimes against the property per inhabitant 2001



Source: OECD Territorial Database.

29. Safety: reported criminal offences against persons

Safety is an important factor in the attractiveness of regions. It contributes to citizens' decisions to live in a certain region and helps to create a positive business environment for firms.

Like crimes against property, reported criminal offences against persons is a common indicator of a region's level of safety.

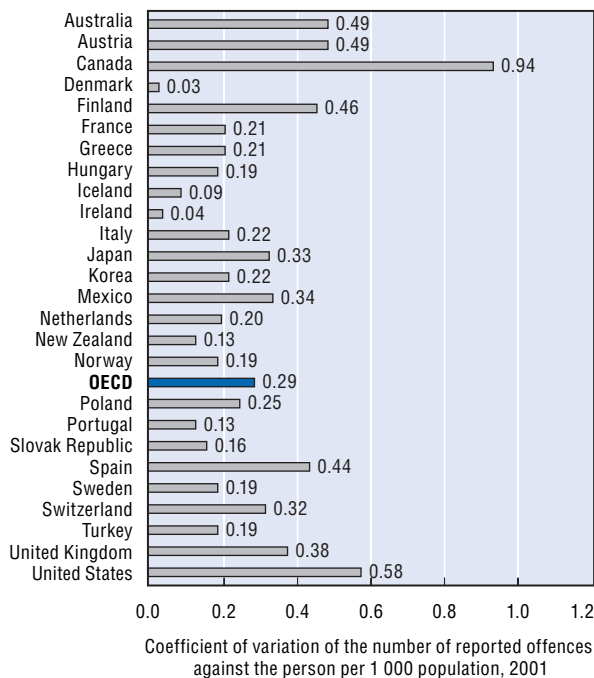
A reported criminal offence is defined as a violation of the law which is reported to the public authorities. The lack of international standards for crime statistics makes international comparison difficult (see "Sources and Methodology").

In 2001, regional disparities in the number of reported offences against persons were generally quite large (Figure 29.1).

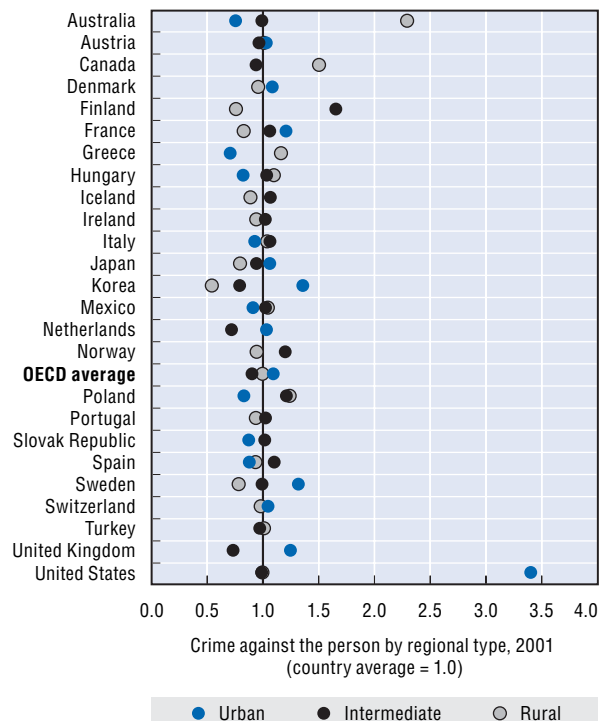
Canada is the country with the largest variation in the rate of reported offences against persons (0.94). The United States, Australia, Austria, Finland and Spain also show large regional differences, while reported crimes against persons are most evenly distributed in Ireland and Denmark.

As expected, in most countries the number of reported crimes against persons is higher in urban or intermediate areas (Figure 29.2). In the United States, per capita offences against persons are over three times higher in urban than in rural regions. The opposite pattern appears to hold for Australia, Canada, Greece, and Poland, where the frequency of crimes against persons is higher in rural regions.

29.1. In 2001 the number of reported offences against persons was unevenly distributed among regions



29.2. The United States and Korea show the highest frequency of recorded crime in urban regions, 2001



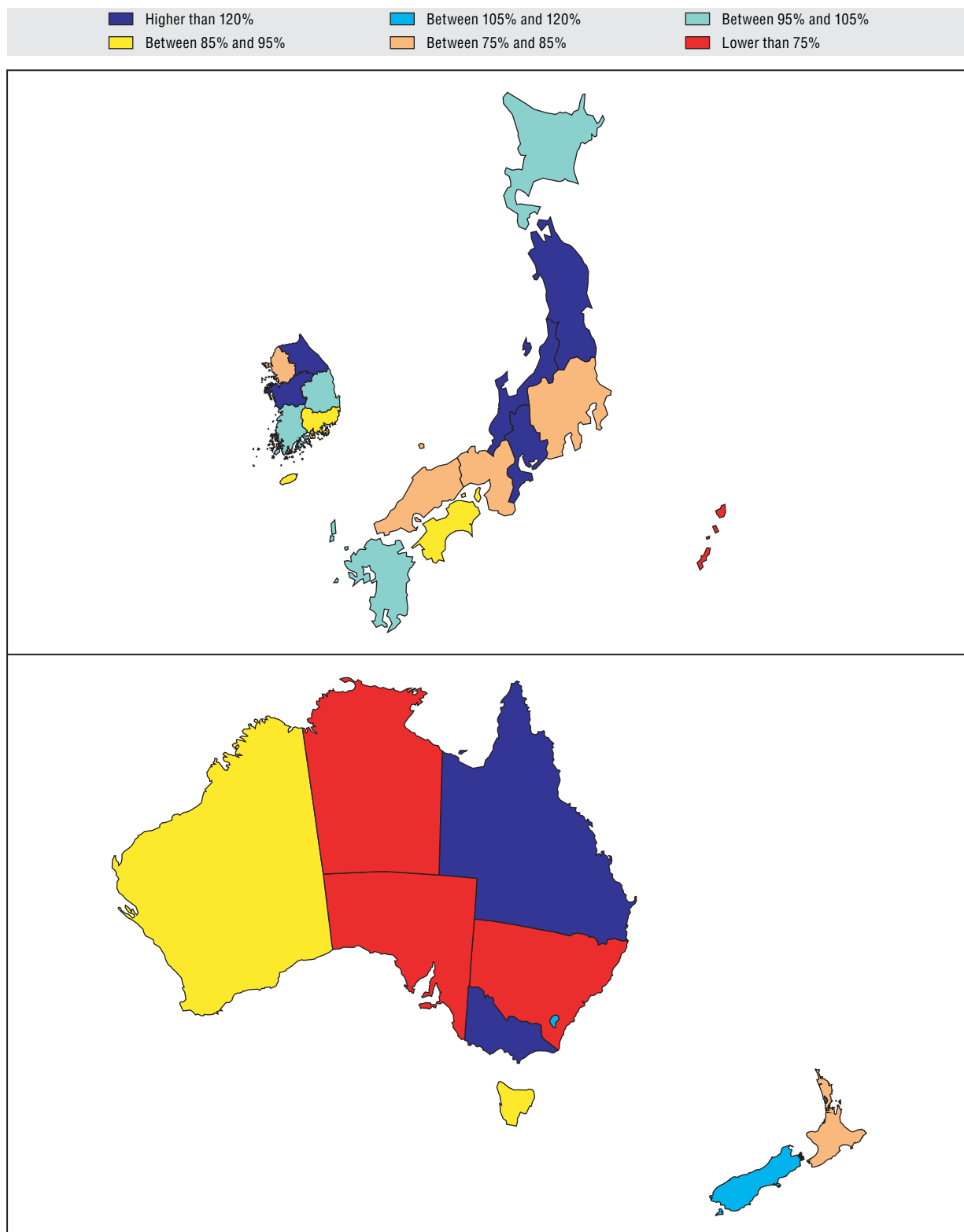
Statlink: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/280522251337>

Definition

Violence against persons includes homicide, attempted murder, sexual offences and assault.

29.3. Reported crimes against the person per inhabitant by region: Asia and Oceania TL2

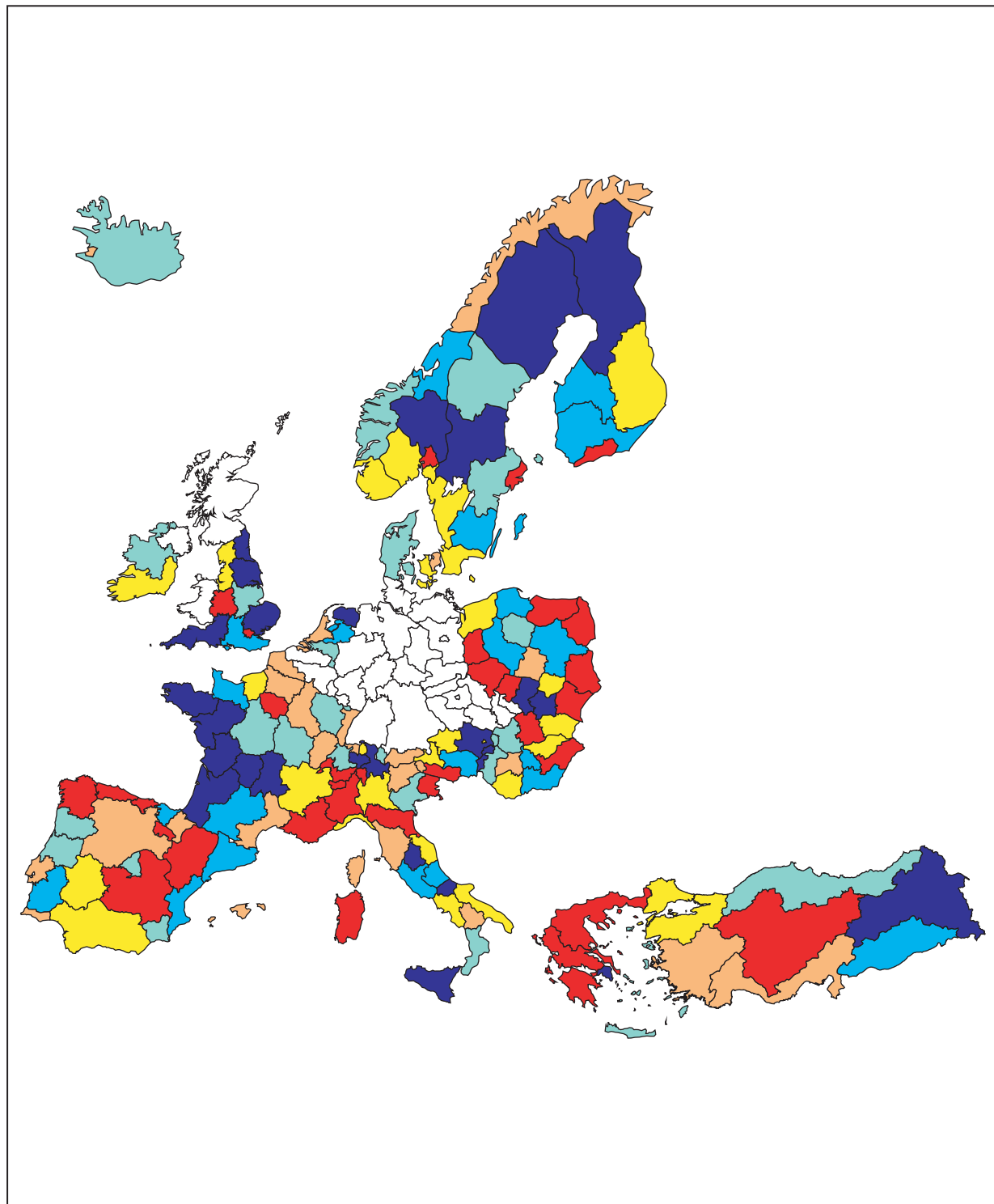
Percentage of national number of reported crimes against the person per inhabitant 2001



Source: OECD Territorial Database.

29.4. Reported crimes against the person per inhabitant by region: Europe TL2

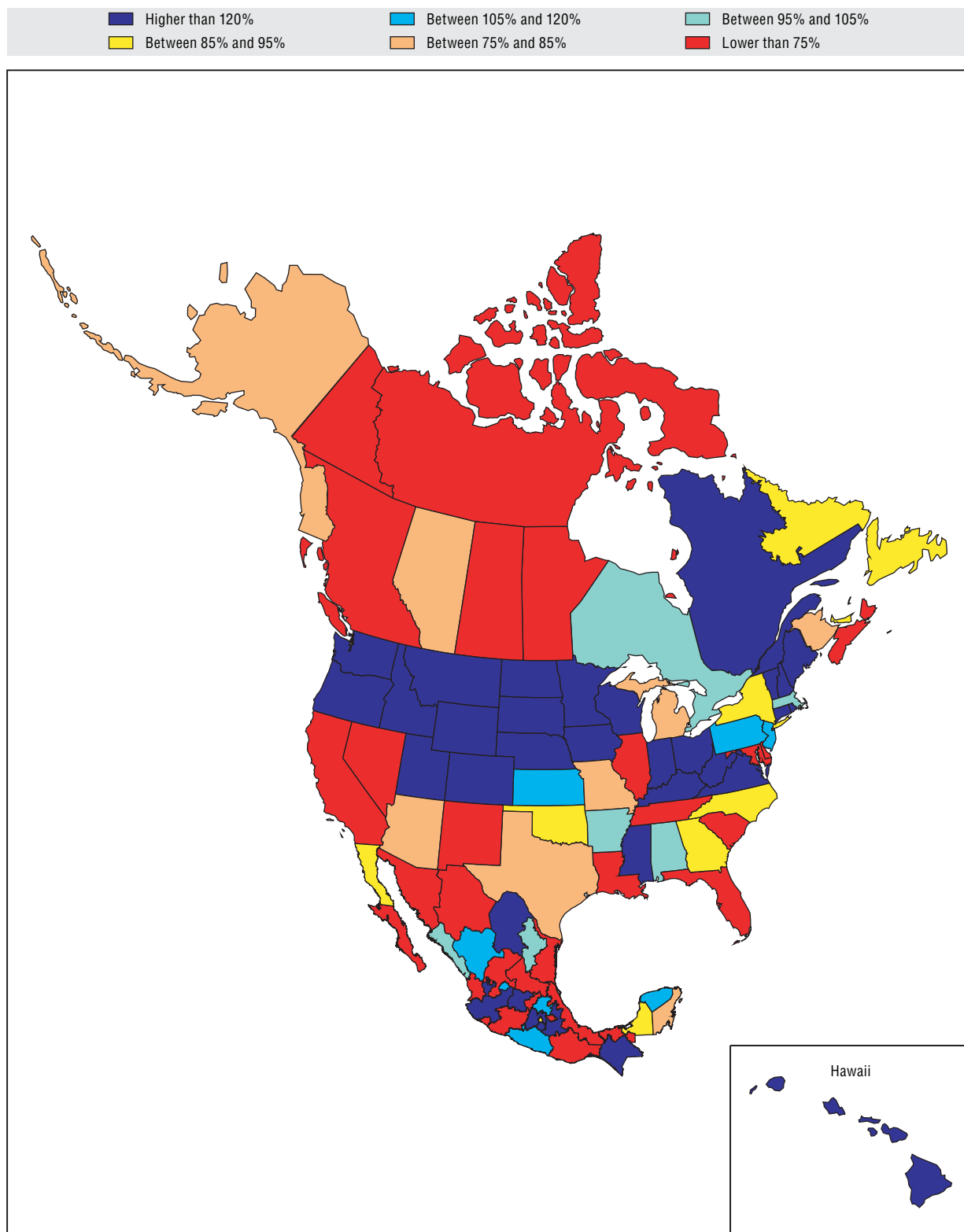
Percentage of national number of reported crimes against the person per inhabitant 2001



Source: OECD Territorial Database.

29.5. Reported crimes against the person per inhabitant by region: North America TL2

Percentage of national number of reported crimes against the person per inhabitant 2001



Source: OECD Territorial Database.

30. Road safety: fatal traffic accidents

Road accidents are responsible for a large number of injuries and fatalities. In recent years, many OECD countries have made considerable efforts to reduce the number and severity of transport accidents.

High-category roads, which run mainly through rural areas between cities, have the greatest traffic exposure in kilometres and more accidents than lower-category roads. Higher speeds on higher-category roads usually increase the seriousness of accidents and fatalities in rural and intermediate regions. On the other hand, the large volume of traffic in urbanised areas results in a larger number of accidents than in rural areas, although their consequences are usually less severe owing to more restrictive speed limits.

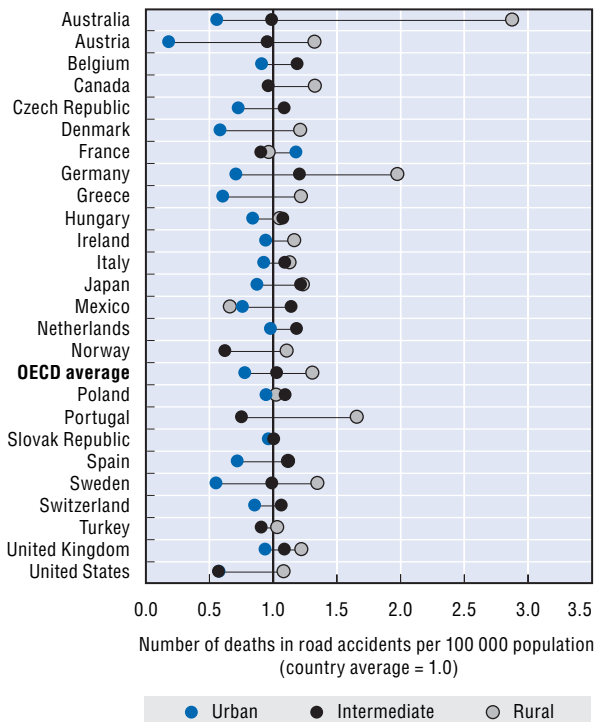
As an indicator of regional social well-being, road traffic fatalities present a major problem: the

figures refer only to the number of fatal accidents in a region, not to the traffic safety of its residents.

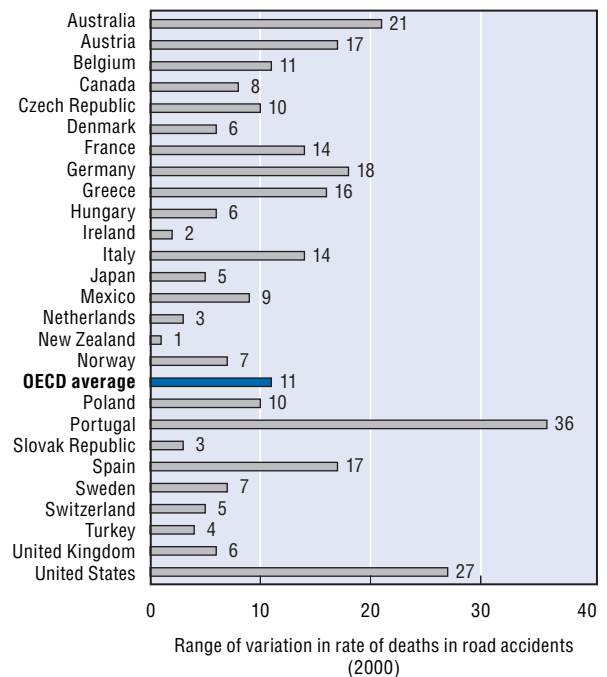
In 2000, deaths in traffic accidents were more frequent in rural and intermediate regions for all countries considered (Figure 30.1). Australia and Austria are the most extreme examples, with percentages of fatal traffic accidents in rural areas that were five and seven times higher, respectively, than in urban regions. Austria is also the country with the lowest density of deaths in urban regions (more than 80% below the country average).

Regional differences in the rate of fatal traffic accident were largest in Portugal (where the region of Alentejo peaks at 46 persons killed in traffic accidents per 100 000 population) and the United States, and smallest in New Zealand, Ireland, the Netherlands and the Slovak Republic (Figure 30.2).

30.1. In 2000 road accidents were more frequent in rural and intermediate regions



30.2. In 2000, Portugal and the United States showed the largest regional differences in the rate of fatal traffic accidents



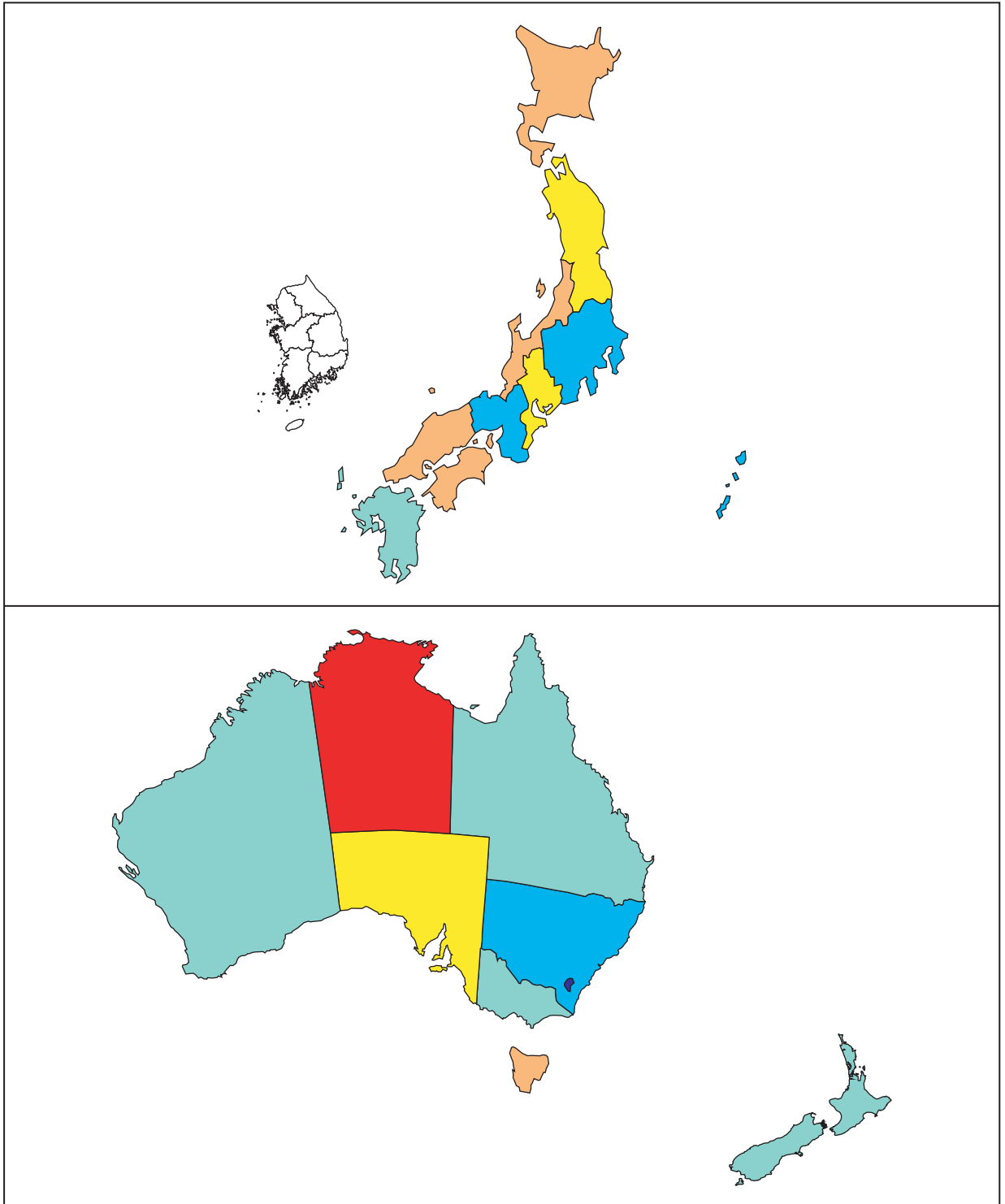
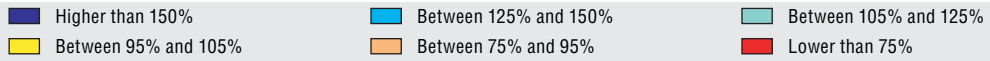
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Definition

Any accident involving at least one road vehicle in motion on a public or private road resulting in at least one person killed. Included are collisions between road vehicles, between road vehicles and pedestrians, between road vehicles and animals or fixed obstacles and of one road vehicle alone.

30.3. Deaths in traffic accidents per inhabitant by region: Asia and Oceania TL2

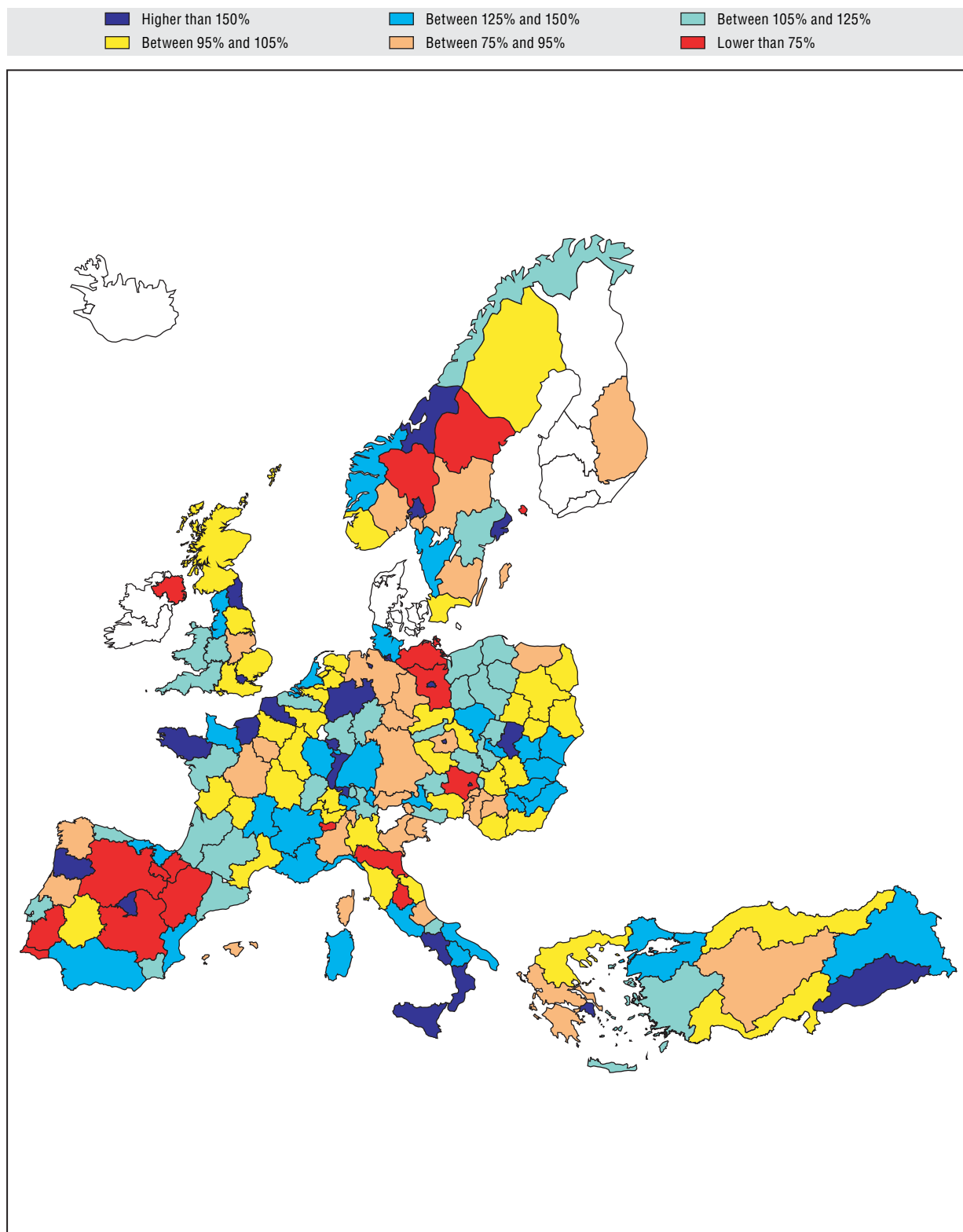
Percentage of national number of deaths in traffic accidents per inhabitant 2001



Source: OECD Territorial Database.

30.4. Deaths in traffic accidents per inhabitant by region: Europe TL2

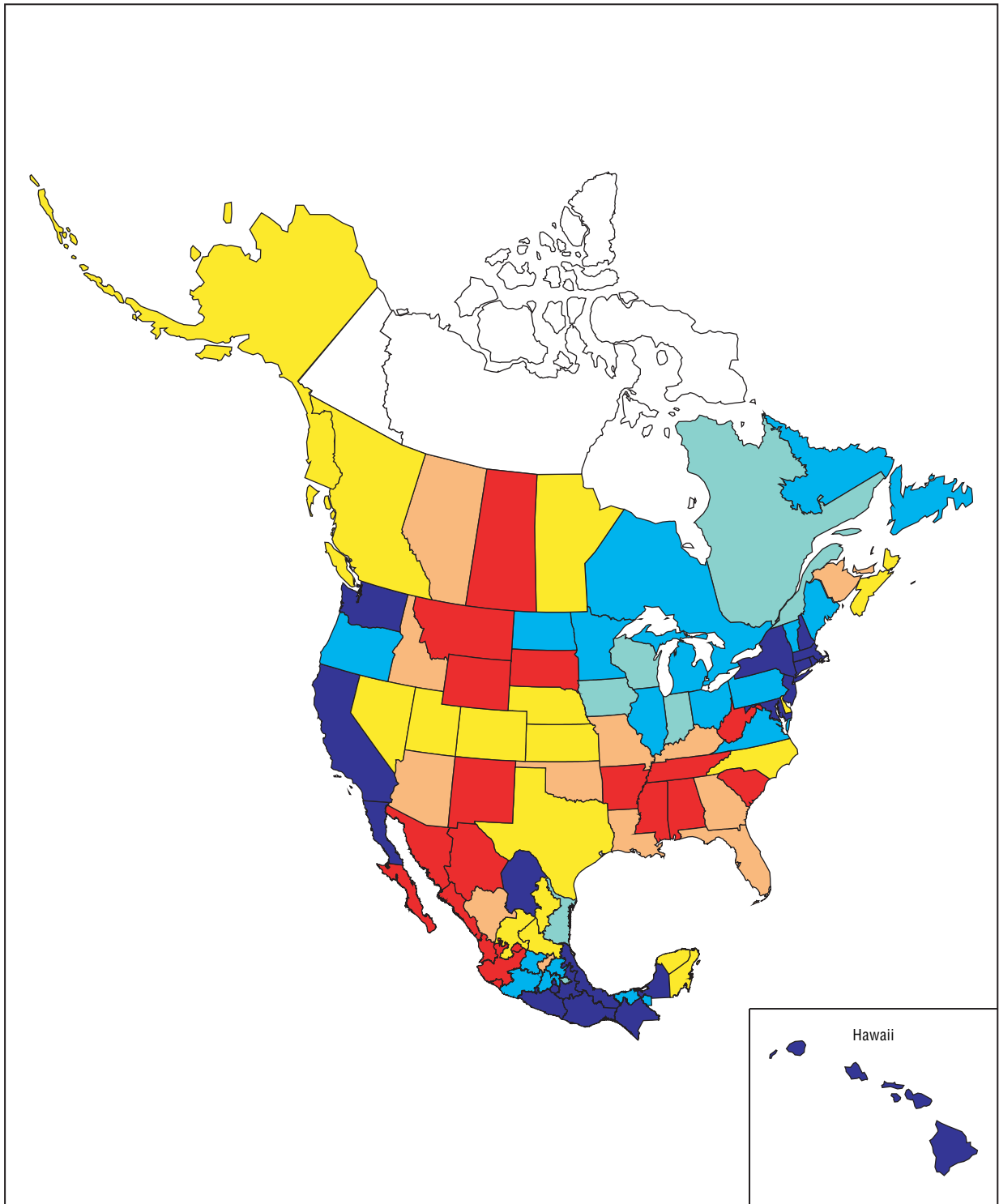
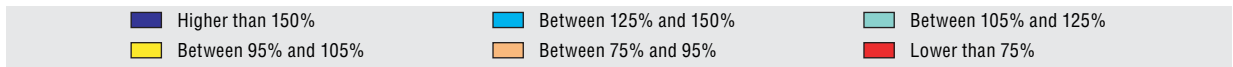
Percentage of national number of deaths in traffic accidents per inhabitant 2001



Source: OECD Territorial Database.

30.5. Deaths in traffic accidents per inhabitant by region: North America TL2

Percentage of national number of deaths in traffic accidents per inhabitant 2001



Source: OECD Territorial Database.

31. Environment: stock of private vehicles

The reduction of motorised traffic is a policy target in many OECD countries. Motorised traffic makes a significant contribution to overall pollution and is a major source of pressure on the regional environment.

The number of private vehicles per capita is commonly used to address policy issues related to the integration of environmental objectives in transport policies. The category “private vehicles” includes road motor vehicles for the carriage of passengers.

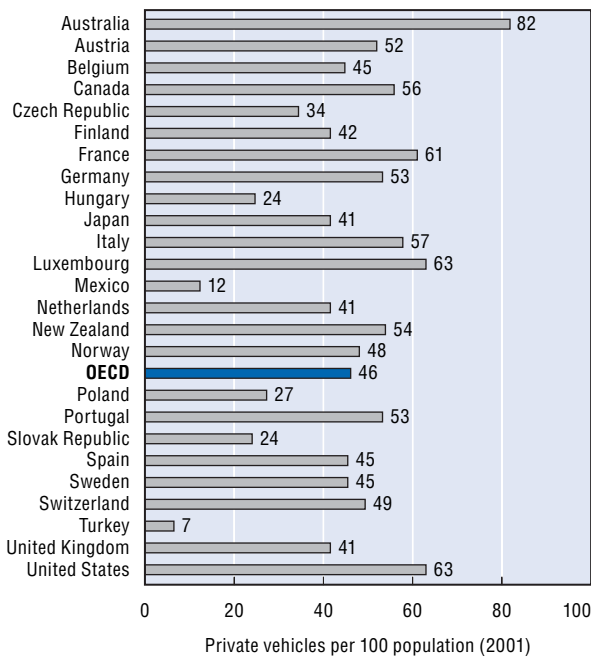
The number of vehicles per capita varies significantly among OECD countries (Figure 31.1). In 2001, Turkey had the smallest number of vehicles per 100 inhabitants (7) while Australia (82), Luxembourg (63) and the United States (63) had the highest.

In spite of the existence of extensive public transport networks and high parking costs, urban regions recorded in 2001 a higher number of private vehicles per capita in almost all OECD countries. Only in the United States, Sweden, Austria and Canada was the density of private vehicles higher in rural or intermediate regions.

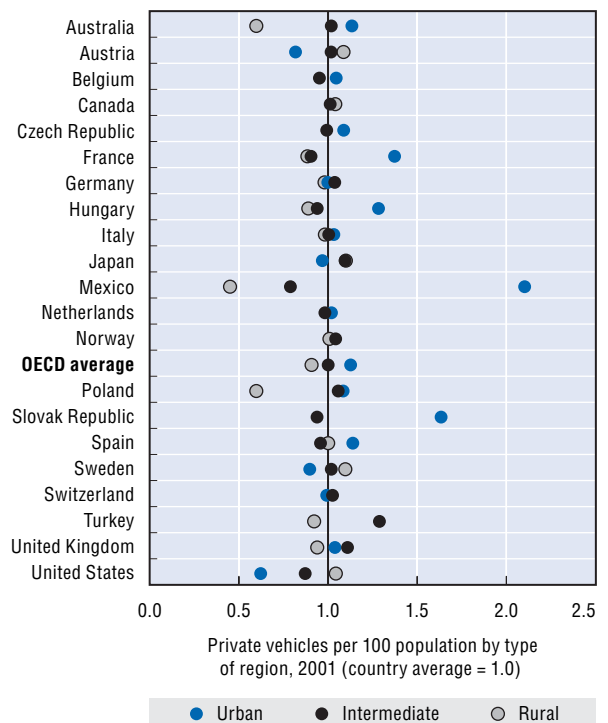
In Mexico the number of private vehicles per capita was almost five times higher in urban than in rural regions. Together with Poland and Australia, Mexico is also the country with the smallest number of vehicles per capita in rural regions.

In the United Kingdom and Germany, intermediate regions had the highest concentration of cars (9% and 2%, respectively, above the national average). As intermediate regions are often located around large cities, the higher number of vehicles per capita is likely to be due to commuting.

31.1. In 2001, Australia and the United States had the highest number of per capita private vehicles...



31.2. ... but the United States had the lowest number of vehicles per capita in urban regions



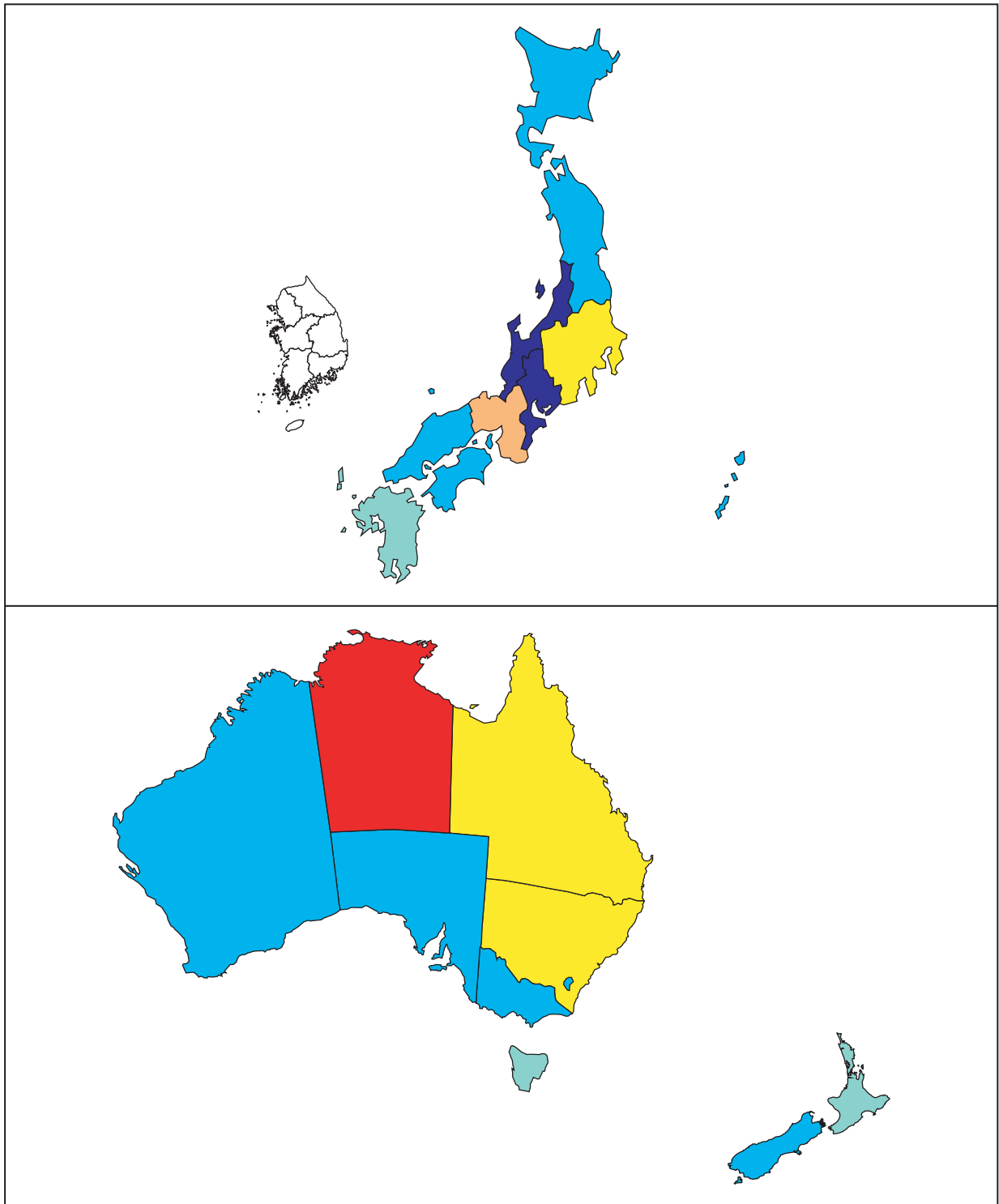
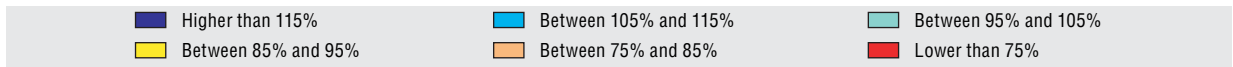
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Definition

Road motor vehicle, other than a motorcycle, intended for the carriage of passengers and designed to seat no more than nine persons including the driver. The term passenger car therefore covers micro-cars (do not need a permit to be driven), taxis and hired passenger cars, provided that they have fewer than ten seats. This category may also include pick-ups.

31.3. Number of private vehicles per inhabitant by region: Asia and Oceania TL2

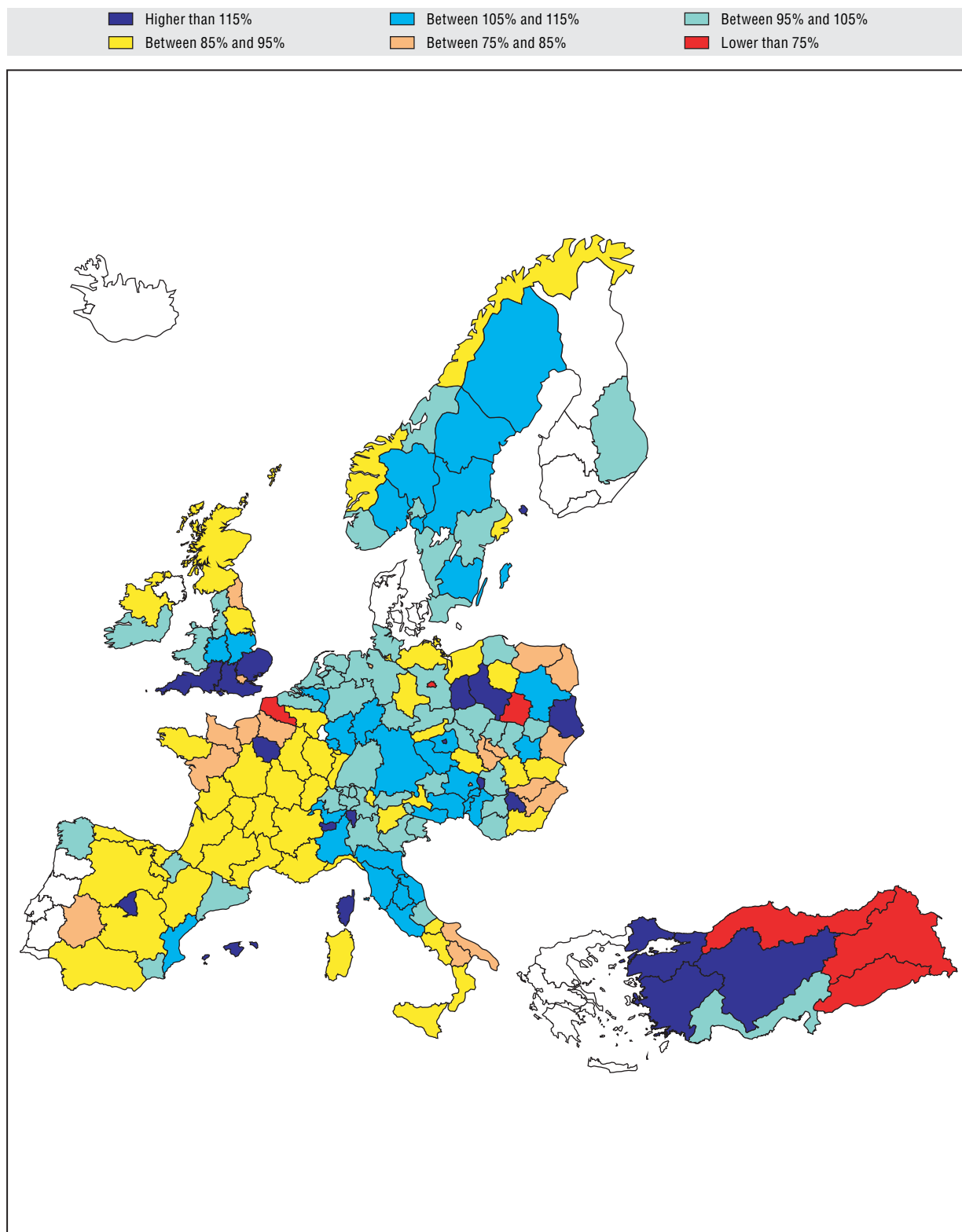
Percentage of national number of private vehicles per inhabitant 2001



Source: OECD Territorial Database.

31.4. Number of private vehicles per inhabitant by region: Europe TL2

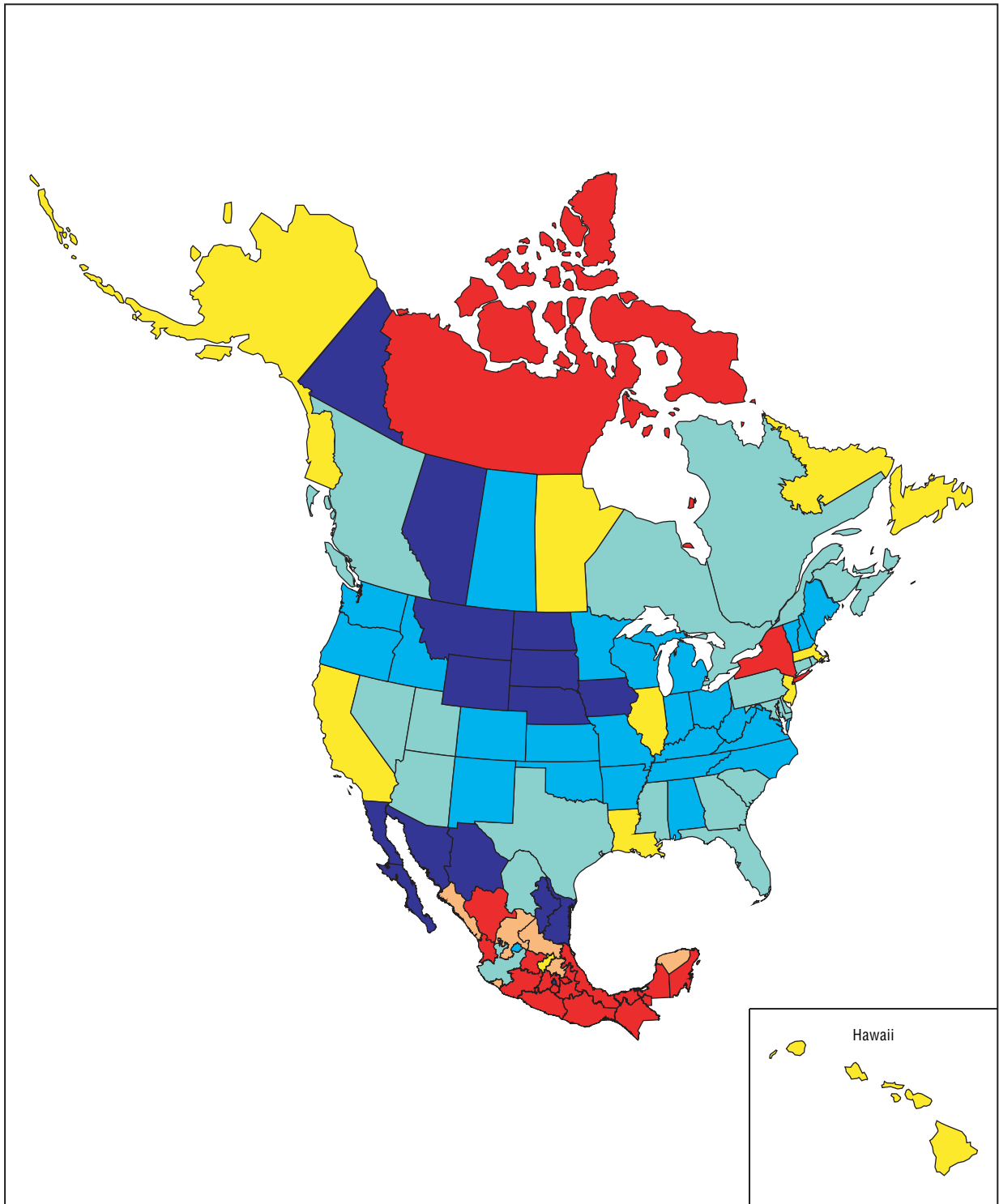
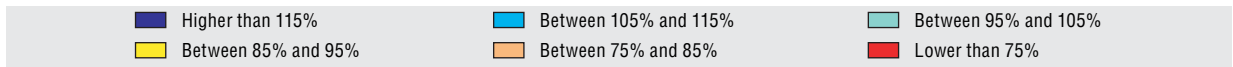
Percentage of national number of private vehicles per inhabitant 2001



Source: OECD Territorial Database.

31.5. Number of private vehicles per inhabitant by region: North America TL2

Percentage of national number of deaths in traffic accidents per inhabitant 2001



Source: OECD Territorial Database.

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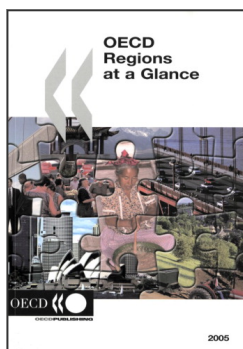
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