

## 2. GEOGRAPHIC CONCENTRATION OF THE ELDERLY POPULATION

Over the last 30 years the elderly population (those aged 65 years and over) has increased dramatically in all OECD countries. In 2003, the elderly population in OECD countries represented 14% on average (Figure 2.1).

### The burden of ageing is unevenly spread

As elderly people tend to concentrate in a few areas in each country, a small number of regions will face most of the social and economic challenges raised by an ageing population. In 2003, 35% of the elderly population lived in only 10% of OECD regions (Figure 2.2). The percentage was much higher in Australia (61%), Canada (58%) and Iceland (50%), where 10% of regions accounted for no less than half of the total elderly population. The elderly population was more evenly distributed in the Slovak Republic, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Belgium and Norway, where less than 20% of the total elderly population resided in 10% of regions.

The geographic concentration index compares the geographic distribution of the elderly population and the area of all regions, not just the top 10% (Figure 2.3). According to this index, Canada and Australia (82) were the countries with the highest concentrations of elderly people in 2003. In addition, the concentration index was significantly above the OECD average (38) in Mexico (52), Sweden (49) and the United Kingdom (47). In contrast, the

concentration was lower in the Slovak Republic (14), the Czech Republic (20), Hungary (22), the Netherlands and Belgium (24), and Ireland (25). During 1998-2003 the concentration of the elderly population increased most in Japan (2), Korea, Greece, Portugal, Iceland, Spain, Turkey, and Italy (1) and decreased most in Switzerland, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and Hungary (-1).

### Dependency rates are higher in peripheral areas

The concentration of the elderly population may be a function of the total population – more population, therefore more elderly people – or it may be due to disparities in elderly dependency rates – same population but more elderly people.

A comparison of concentration indexes for the total population and the elderly population shows that in 2003, the total population was more concentrated than the elderly population in the United Kingdom, Portugal, Spain, Norway, Korea, Japan, New Zealand, Greece, France and Ireland (Figure 2.4). Dependency rates tend to be higher where the population is less concentrated, i.e. in “peripheral” regions.

Only in Poland was the elderly population more concentrated than the total population. This implies that Poland’s dependency rate tends to be higher in areas where the population is more concentrated, generally urban regions.

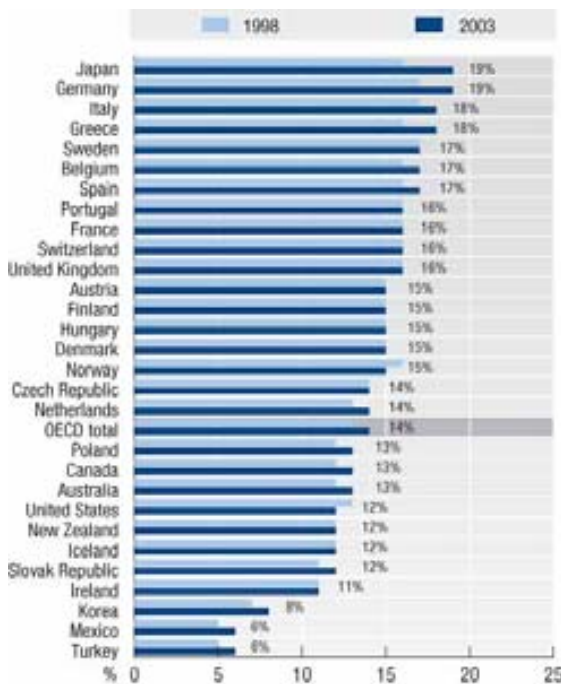
#### Definition

The elderly population is the number of inhabitants over (and including) 65 years of age, with population considered either as the average population in a given year, or the population at a specific date during the year. The elderly dependency rate is defined as the ratio of the population aged 65 years and above to the working age (15-64) population.

## 2. GEOGRAPHIC CONCENTRATION OF THE ELDERLY POPULATION

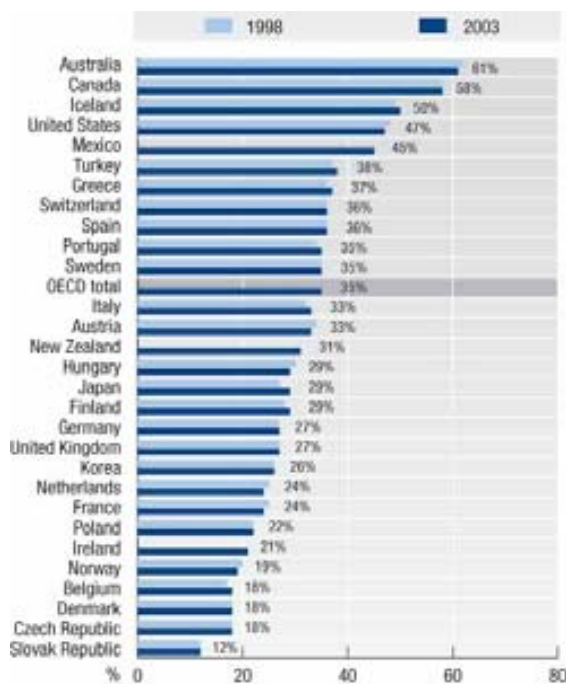
### 2.1. The percentage of elderly people varies significantly among OECD countries

Population 65 years and over as a per cent of total population



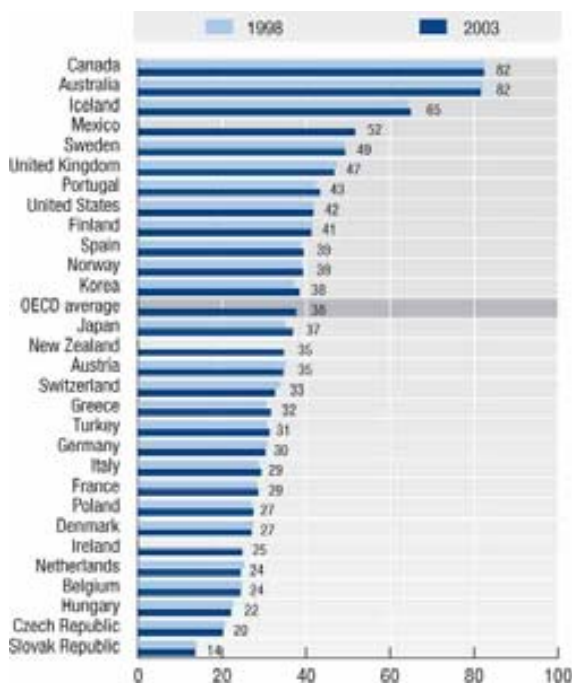
### 2.2. 35% of the total elderly population lives in only 10% of regions

Per cent of national elderly population who live in the top 10% of regions with the highest number of elderly people (TL3)



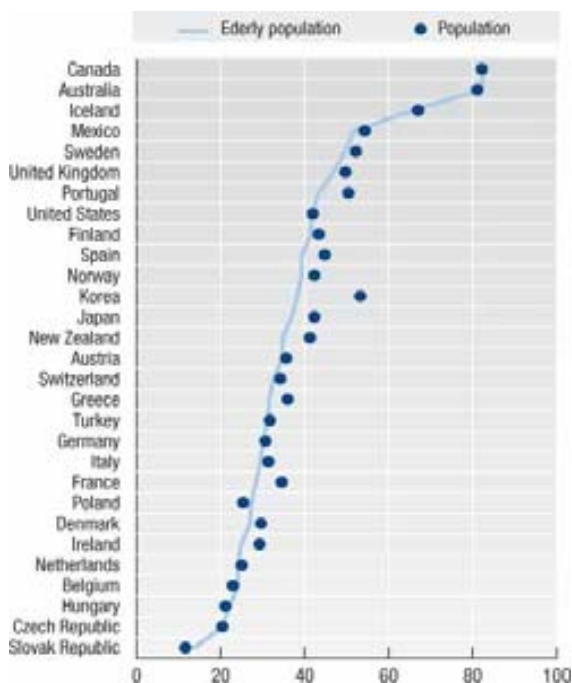
### 2.3. Canada and Australia were the countries with the highest concentration of elderly population in 2003

Index of geographic concentration of elderly population (TL3)



### 2.4. The elderly population tends to be less concentrated than total population

Concentration index, 2003 (TL3)

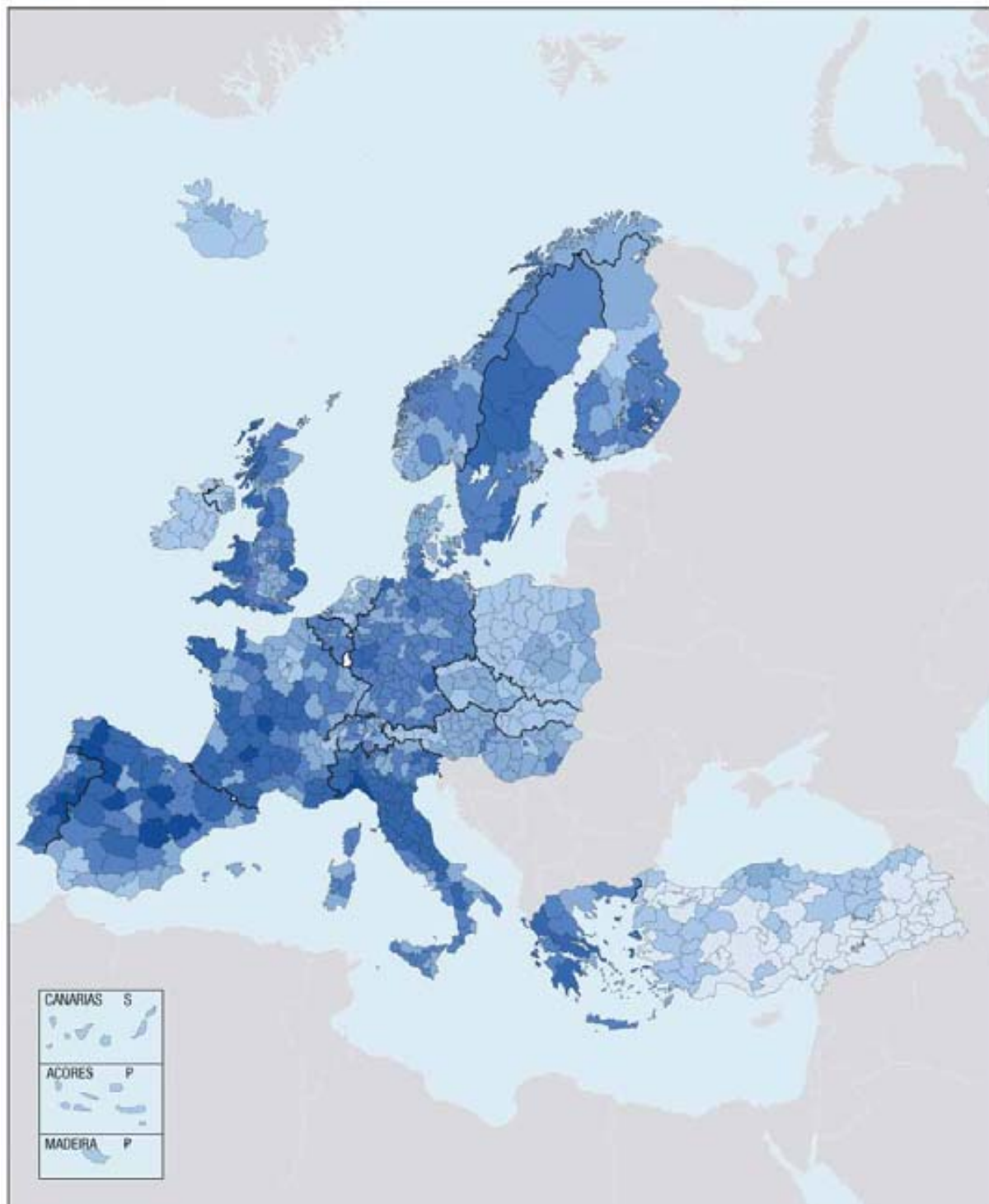
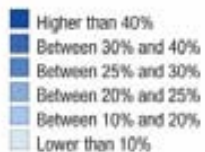



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### 2.6. Regional elderly population: Europe

Elderly dependency rate 2003



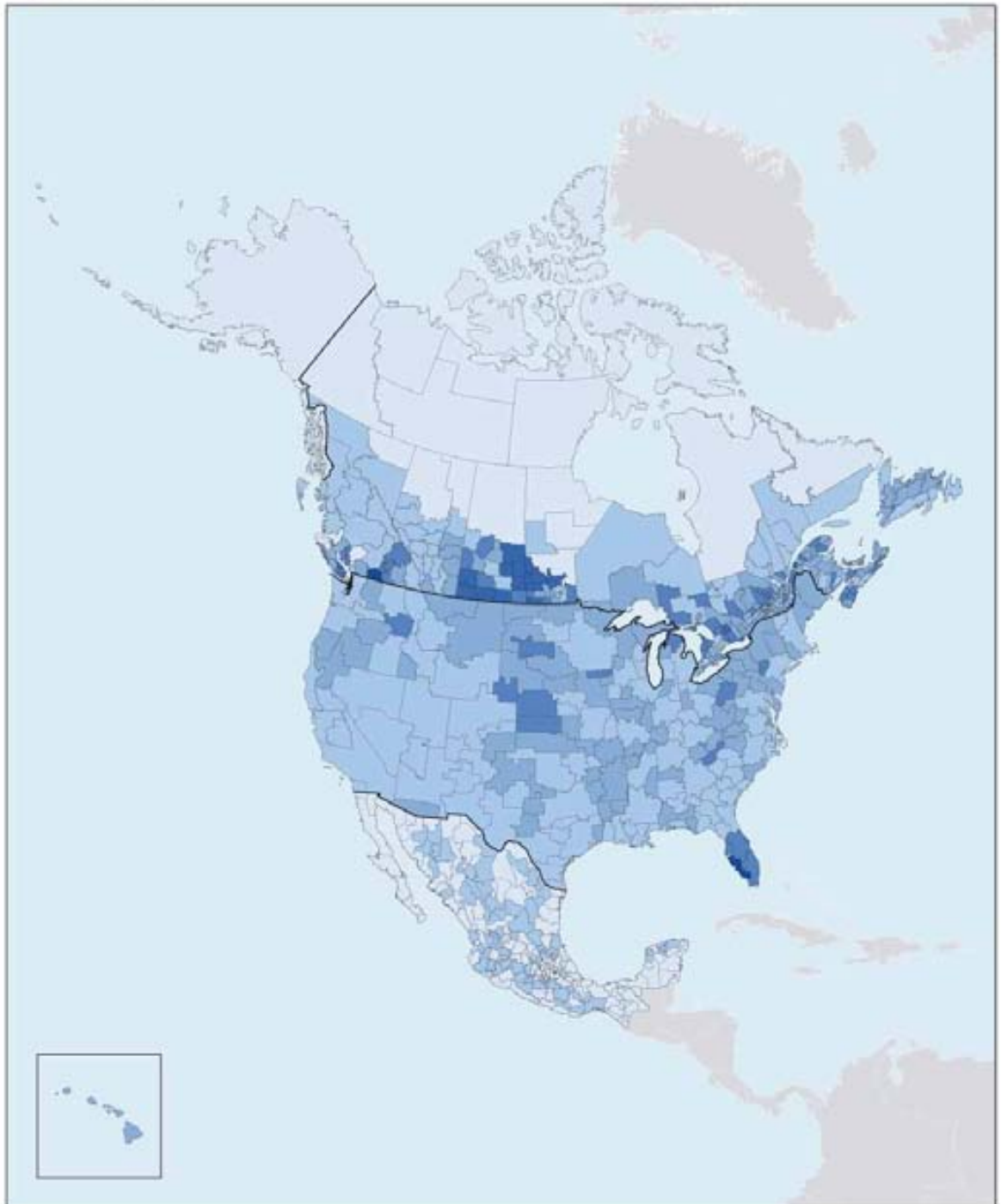
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## 2. GEOGRAPHIC CONCENTRATION OF THE ELDERLY POPULATION

### 2.7. Regional elderly population: North America

Elderly dependency rate 2003

- Higher than 40%
- Between 30% and 40%
- Between 25% and 30%
- Between 20% and 25%
- Between 10% and 20%
- Lower than 10%



StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/722331574356>

### Rural and intermediate regions will face the challenges of ageing populations

Over the last 30 years the elderly population has gradually increased in all OECD countries. Some regions, however, are in a better position than others to meet the challenges of ageing societies.

The first factor is the region's capacity to generate sufficient resources to provide for the needs of elderly people (e.g. health care, assistance, homecare, transport). This capacity depends on the balance between those who are economically active and continue to generate wealth and those who are no longer active because of their age. The elderly dependency rate, i.e. the ratio of the population aged 65 years and above to the working age (15-64) population, provides a common statistical measure for this balance. To the extent that regional resources are insufficient, the provision of services for elderly people will depend on transfers from the national (i.e. federal) government.

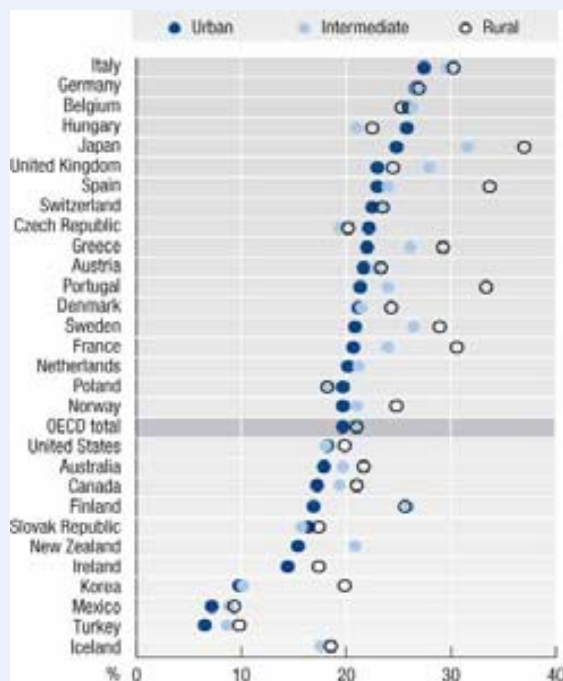
In 2003, the elderly dependency rate across all OECD regions was higher in rural and intermediate regions (21%) than in urban regions (20%) (Figure 2.8). This general pattern was particularly pronounced in certain countries (Japan, Spain, Portugal, France and Italy) where the elderly dependency rate in rural regions was above 30%. The Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland were the only countries where dependency rates were highest in urban regions.

The second factor affecting a region's ability to cope with ageing is the concentration of elderly people. Regions with large elderly populations can exploit economies of scale in the provision of health care and personal services. By the same token, regions with small elderly populations may bear higher costs owing to the lack of economies of scale.

Consistent with the global trend towards urbanisation, in 2003 only a small share of the elderly population (23%) lived in rural regions. The majority lived in urban and intermediate regions (31% and 46%, respectively) (Figure 2.9). Therefore, owing to higher elderly dependency rates and lower concentrations of elderly people, the challenge of ageing is likely to be greater in rural than in intermediate and urban regions.

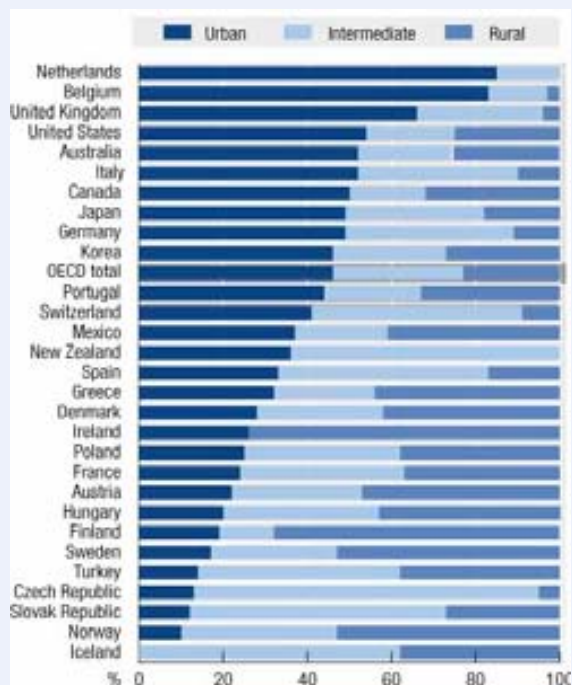
#### 2.8. The elderly dependency rate is greatest in rural regions in 18 OECD countries...

Elderly dependency rate in urban, intermediate and rural regions, 2003 (TL3)



#### 2.9. ... even though only 23% of the OECD elderly population lives in rural regions

Distribution of elderly population into urban, intermediate and rural regions, 2003 (TL3)



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## Symbols and Abbreviations

<b>OECD (25) average</b>	Unweighted average of 25 OECD countries.
<b>OECD (25) total</b>	Sum over all regions of 25 OECD countries.
<b>OECD (25)</b>	Range of variation over all regions of 25 OECD countries.
<b>TL2</b>	Territorial Level 2.
<b>TL3</b>	Territorial Level 3
<b>NOG</b>	Non Official Grid
<b>*</b>	Differences in the definition of data or regions. Please check the “Sources and Methodology” section.
<b>PU</b>	Predominantly Urban
<b>IN</b>	Intermediate
<b>PR</b>	Predominantly Rural
<b>PPP</b>	Purchasing Power Parity
<b>USD</b>	United States Dollar







## **I. REGIONS AS ACTORS OF NATIONAL GROWTH**

1. GEOGRAPHIC CONCENTRATION OF POPULATION
2. GEOGRAPHIC CONCENTRATION OF THE ELDERLY POPULATION
3. GEOGRAPHIC CONCENTRATION OF GDP
4. REGIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO GROWTH IN NATIONAL GDP
5. GEOGRAPHIC CONCENTRATION OF INDUSTRIES
6. REGIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO CHANGES IN EMPLOYMENT
7. GEOGRAPHIC CONCENTRATION OF PATENTS

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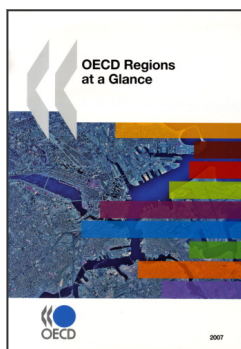
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**From:**  
**OECD Regions at a Glance 2007**

**Access the complete publication at:**  
[https://doi.org/10.1787/reg\\_glance-2007-en](https://doi.org/10.1787/reg_glance-2007-en)

**Please cite this chapter as:**

OECD (2008), "Geographic concentration of the elderly population", in *OECD Regions at a Glance 2007*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

DOI: [https://doi.org/10.1787/reg\\_glance-2007-4-en](https://doi.org/10.1787/reg_glance-2007-4-en)

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