

### Population and population changes in regions

Climatic and environmental conditions together with economic opportunities and availability of services explain the geographic distribution of population within countries. In 2014, almost half of the population of the OECD (46%) lived in predominantly urban regions, which accounted for 6% of the total area. More than 70% of the population lived in predominantly urban regions in the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and Australia (Figure 2.1).

Predominantly rural regions accounted for more than one-quarter of the population and more than 80% of land area. In Ireland, the Slovak Republic, Hungary, Estonia, Austria, Slovenia and Greece, the share of the national population in rural regions was more than twice as high as the OECD average (Figure 2.1).

Rural regions in North America, Europe and Japan have been further classified as either close to a large urban centre or remote. Among the 26 OECD countries with rural regions, only in Sweden, Portugal, Greece, Denmark, and Canada does more than half of the rural population live in remote rural regions (Figure 2.1).

In 22 out of the 30 OECD countries considered, the share of population in predominantly urban regions has increased in the past 15 years, and significantly in Estonia, Canada, Finland, Japan, Austria, Turkey and Sweden (more than 2 percentage points). In almost all countries, predominantly rural regions have seen a decrease in population, with the exception of Ireland, the United States, Chile, Switzerland and Belgium (Figure 2.2).

#### Definition

OECD has established a regional typology to take into account geographical differences and enable meaningful comparisons between regions belonging to the same type. All regions in a country have been classified as predominantly rural, intermediate and predominantly urban. This typology has been refined by introducing a criterion of distance (driving time) to large urban centres. Thus a predominantly rural region is classified as predominantly rural remote (PRR) if at least 50% of the regional population needs more than one hour to reach a large urban centre; otherwise, the rural region is classified as predominantly rural close to a city (PRC). The extended typology has been applied to North America, Europe and Japan (see Annex A for the detailed methodology).

In all countries, with the exception of Ireland, predominantly rural remote regions displayed on average a decrease in population for the years 2000-14. On the other hand, populations grew in predominantly rural regions close to a city in the United States, Ireland, Switzerland and Mexico, while in the remaining countries, predominantly rural regions close to a city lost population (Figure 2.3).

On average, OECD population grew at an annual rate of 0.7% in the period 2000-14. The ten regions with the highest population growth rate are found in Mexico, Canada and Spain, with an annual population growth rate above 3.7%. Switzerland, Australia, Chile and the United Kingdom displayed positive population growth rates in almost all their regions (above 90%) between 2000 and 2014, while in Poland, Germany, Estonia, Japan and Hungary, the population decreased in more than 60% of the regions during the same period (Figures 2.4-2.7).

#### Source

OECD (2015), *OECD Regional Statistics* (database), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/region-data-en>.

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

#### Reference years and territorial level

2000-14; TL3.

TL2 regions in Brazil, China, Colombia, India, Peru, Russian Federation and South Africa.

The extended OECD typology is applied only to North America, Europe and Japan.

#### Further information

Brezzi, M., L. Dijkstra and V. Ruiz (2011), "OECD Extended Regional Typology: The Economic Performance of Remote Rural Regions", *OECD Regional Development Working Papers*, 2011/06, OECD Publishing. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/5kg6z83tw7f4-en>.

Eurostat (2013), *Urban-Rural typology*, <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/rural-development/methodology>.

#### Figure notes

2.1-2.3: Latest available year 2010 for Mexico.

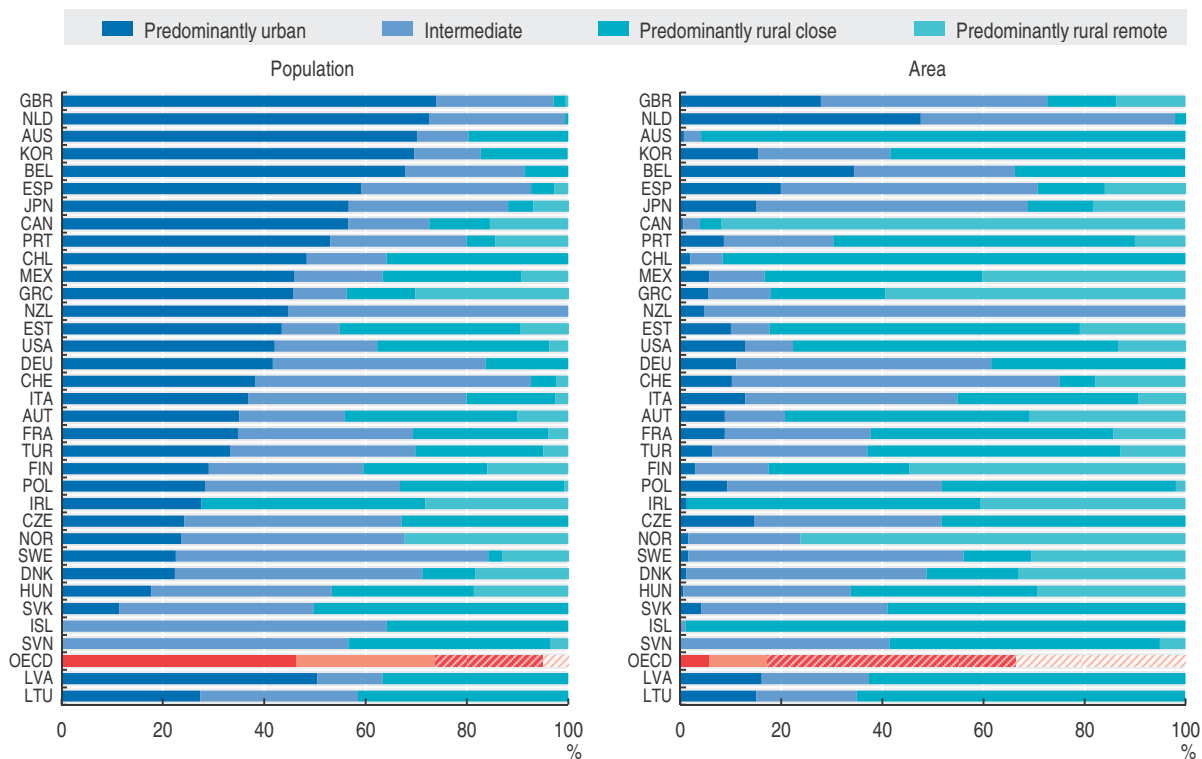
2.2-2.3: First available year 2001 for Australia, Greece, Japan, Korea, Turkey; 2003 for the Netherlands. Denmark is not included for lack of regional data on comparable years.

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

## 2. REGIONS AS DRIVERS OF NATIONAL COMPETITIVENESS

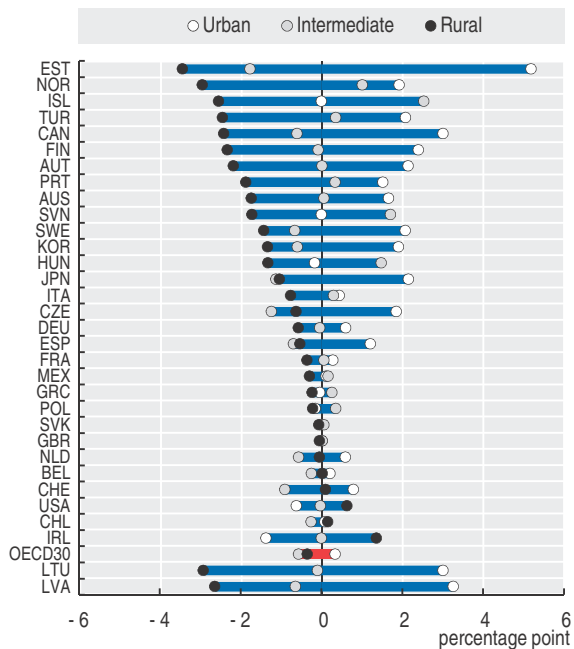
### Population and population changes in regions

#### 2.1. Distribution of population and area by type of region, 2014



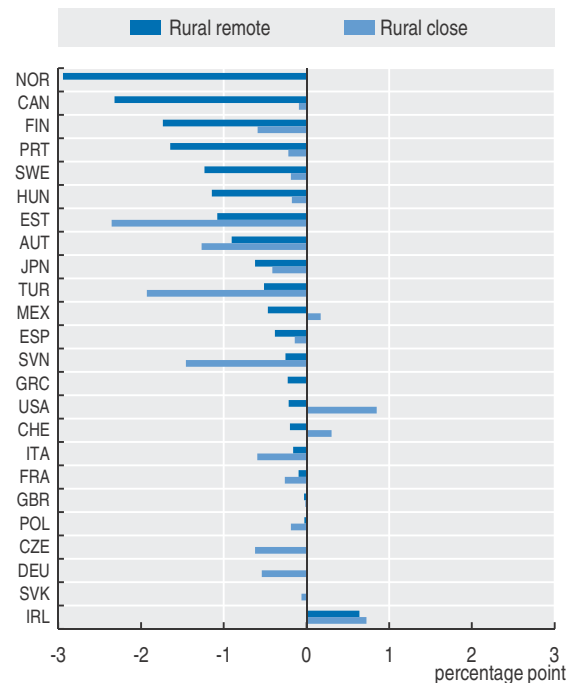
StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933363136>

#### 2.2. Change in the share of population by type of region, 2000-14



StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933363149>

#### 2.3. Change in the share of population living in rural regions, 2000-14



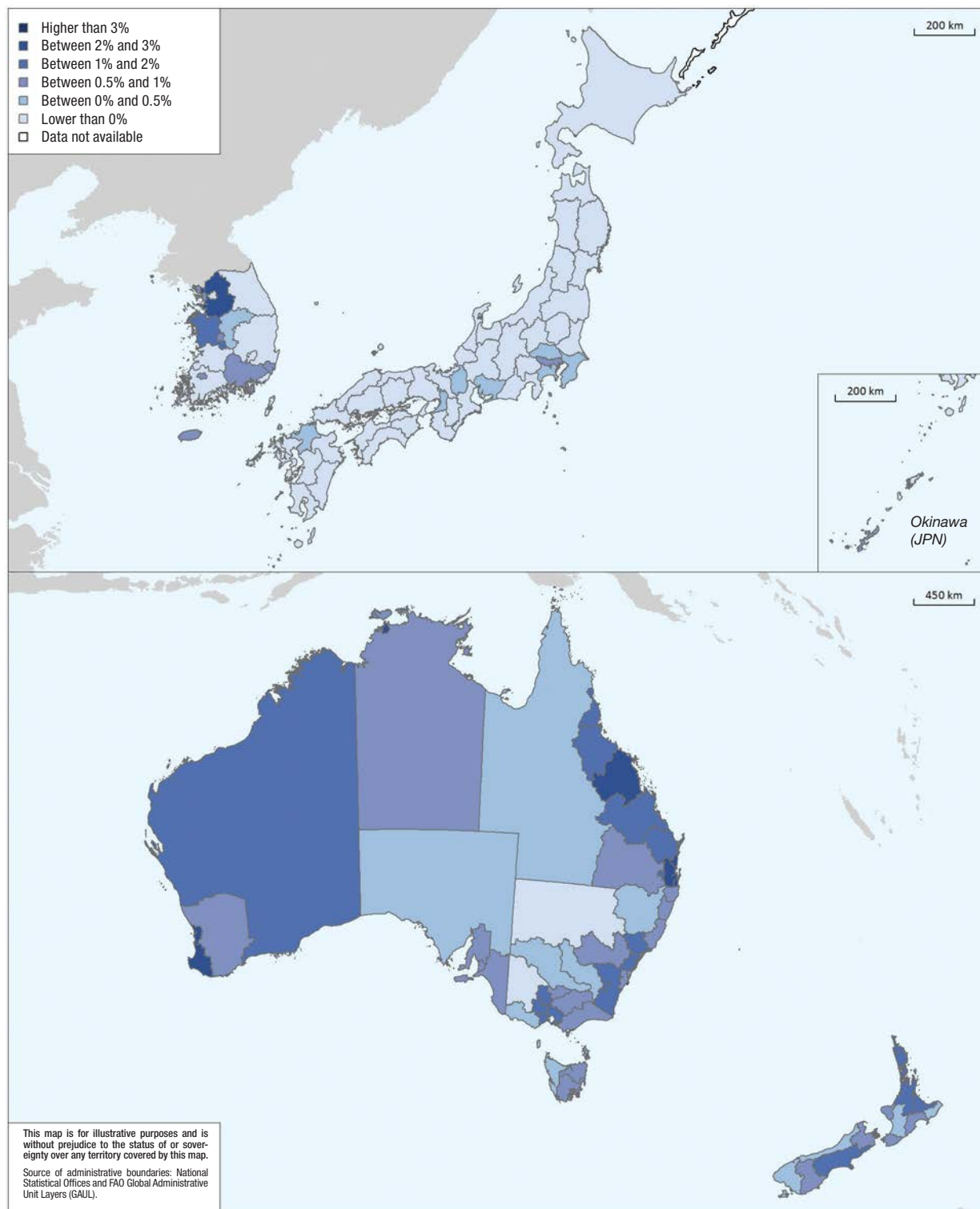
StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933363159>

## 2. REGIONS AS DRIVERS OF NATIONAL COMPETITIVENESS

### Population and population changes in regions

#### 2.4. Regional population growth: Asia and Oceania, 2000-14

Average annual growth rate, TL3 regions

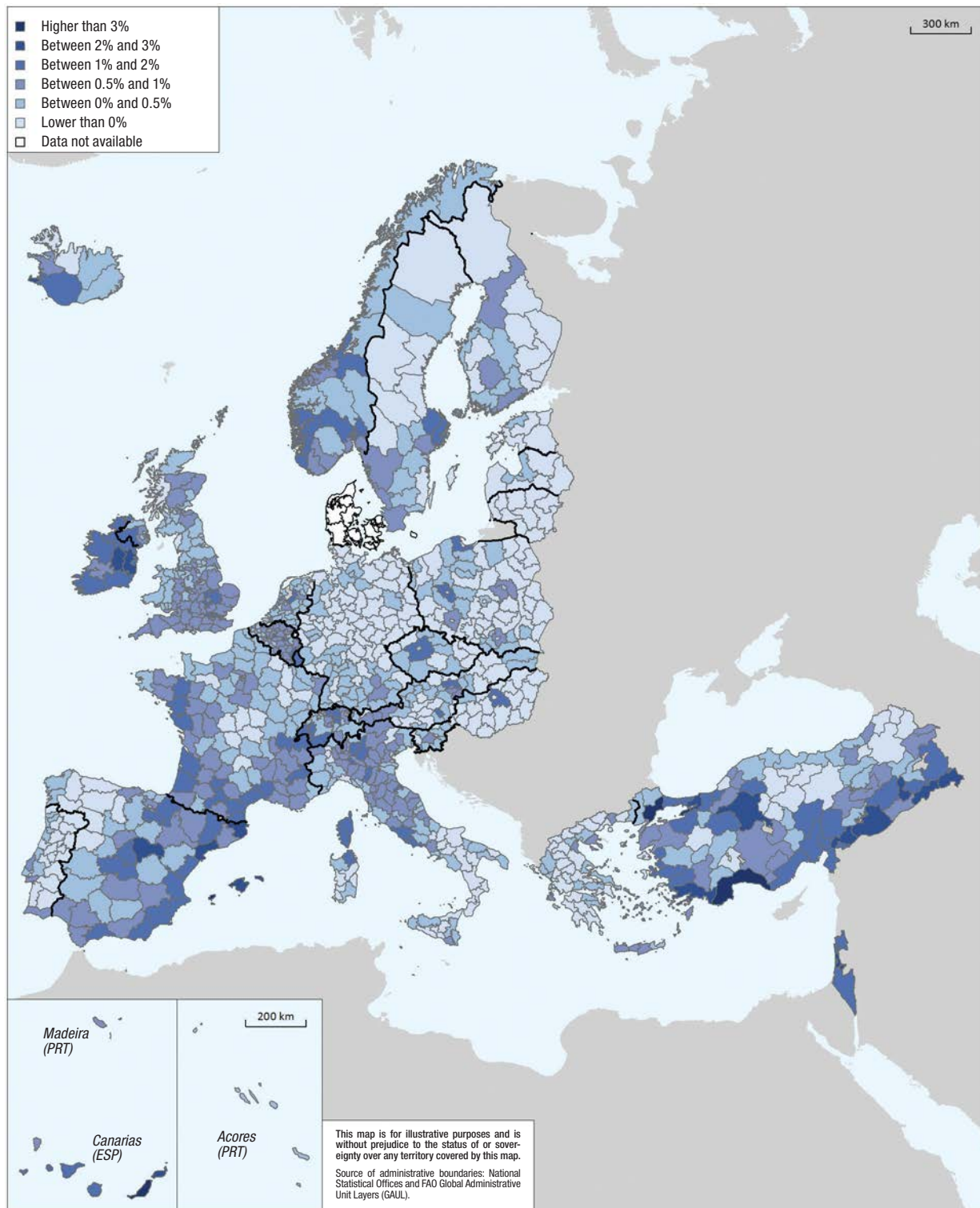


StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933363169>



2.5. Regional population growth: Europe, 2000-14

Average annual growth rate, TL3 regions



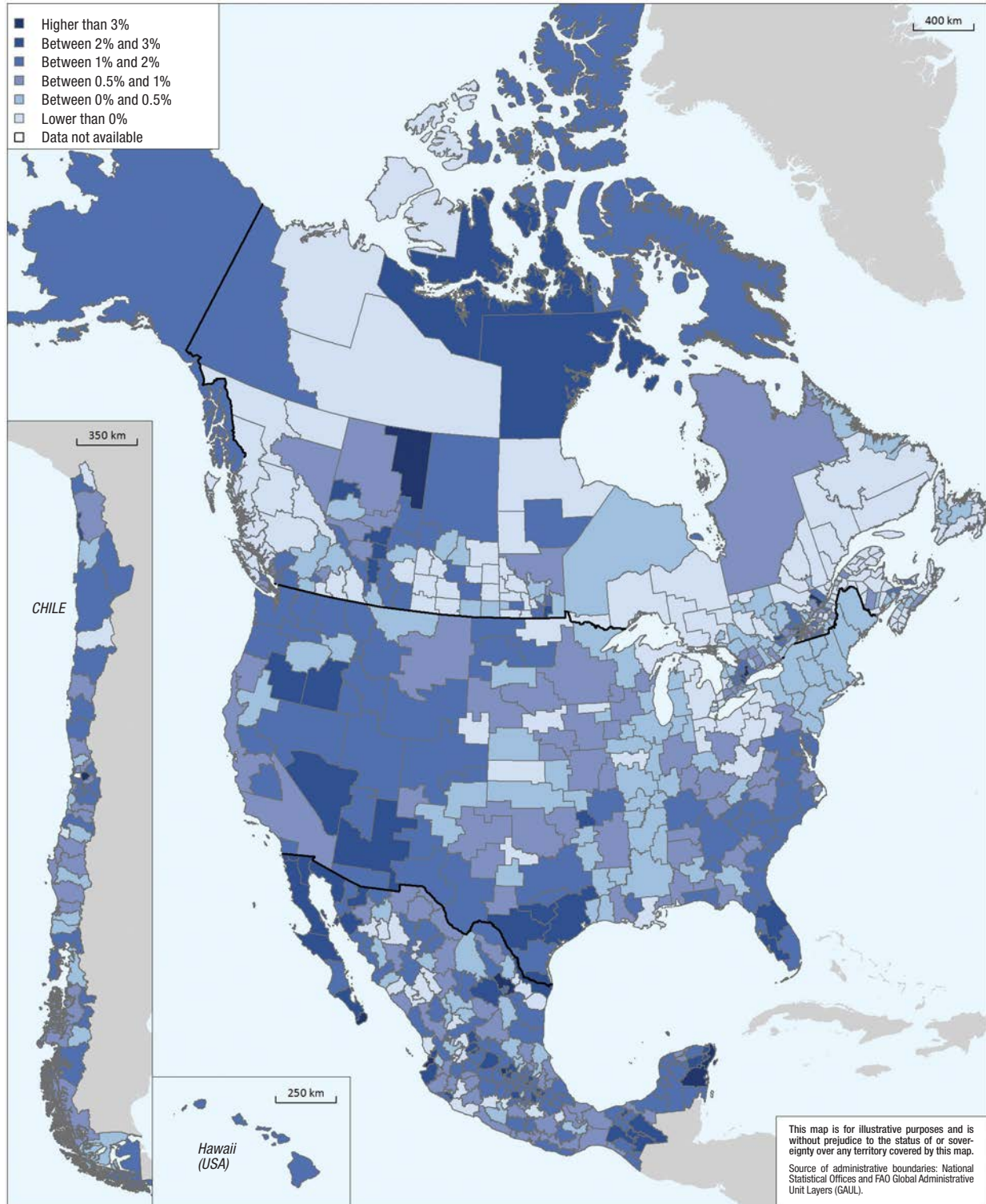
StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933364081>

## 2. REGIONS AS DRIVERS OF NATIONAL COMPETITIVENESS

### Population and population changes in regions

#### 2.6. Regional population growth: Americas, 2000-14

Average annual growth rate, TL3 regions

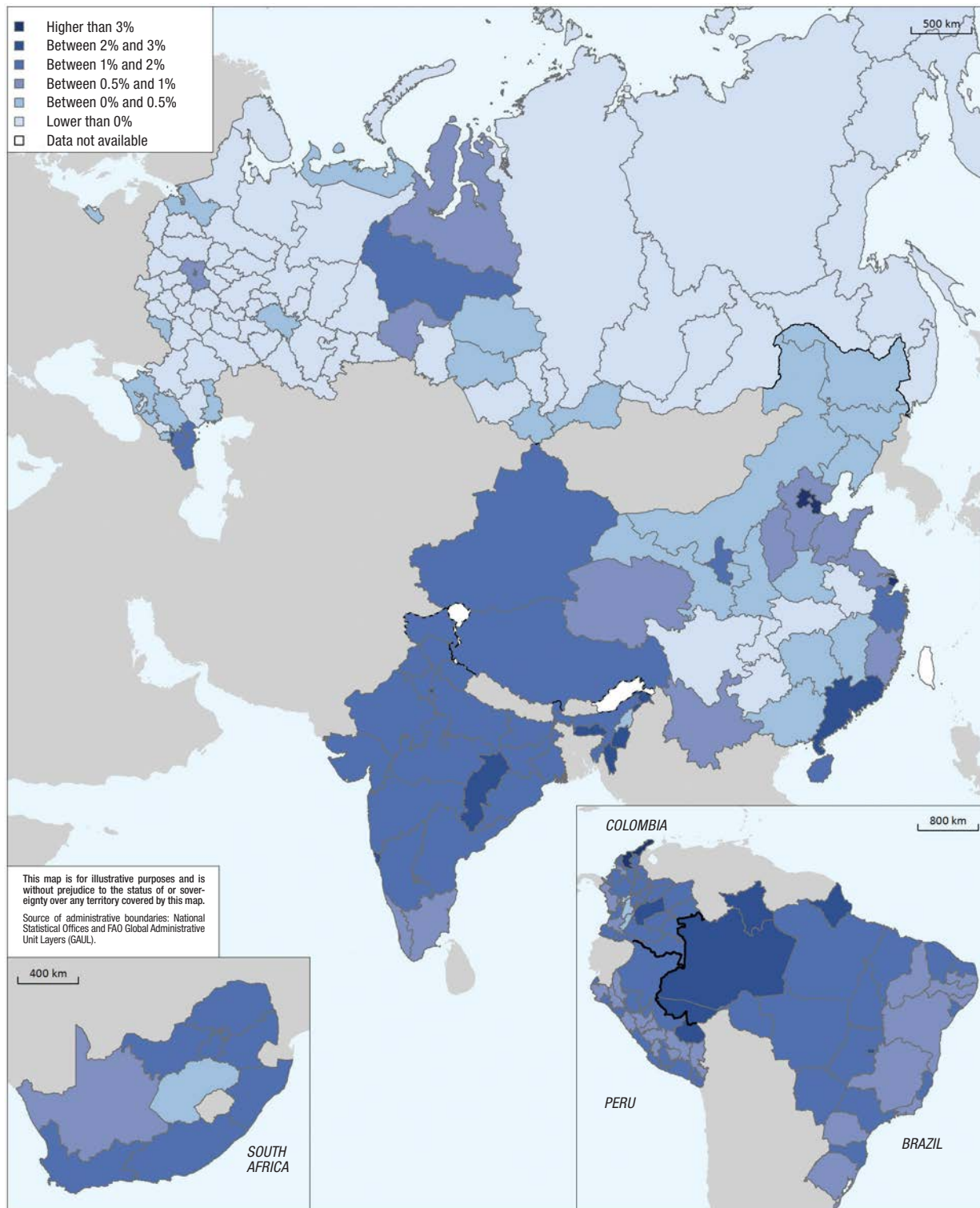


StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933364093>

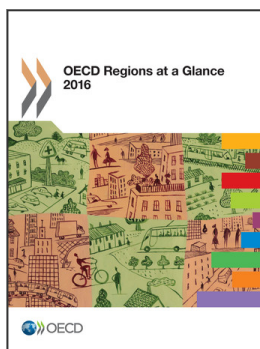


#### 2.7. Regional population growth: Emerging economies, 2000-14

Average annual growth rate, TL2 regions



StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933364107>



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