

Chapter 2

URBANISATION:

A core feature of Nordic population growth

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The population of the Nordic countries increased by 7.4% between 2005 and 2015 and has now reached 26.5 million inhabitants. Since 1995, the Nordic population has grown by about 2.6 million people. Population change at the European regional level shows that the population increase has mainly occurred in regions with major urban areas, but the map of population change in the municipalities suggests a more nuanced picture as it also shows the concentration of people in and around urban areas. The population in the 30 largest functional urban areas has grown by 21.5% during the last 25 years or in absolute terms, by more than 2.5 million people. Total population growth outside these functional urban areas has been less than 70 000. In short, over the last twenty years, more than 97% of the population growth in the Nordic Region has occurred within the 30 largest functional urban areas.

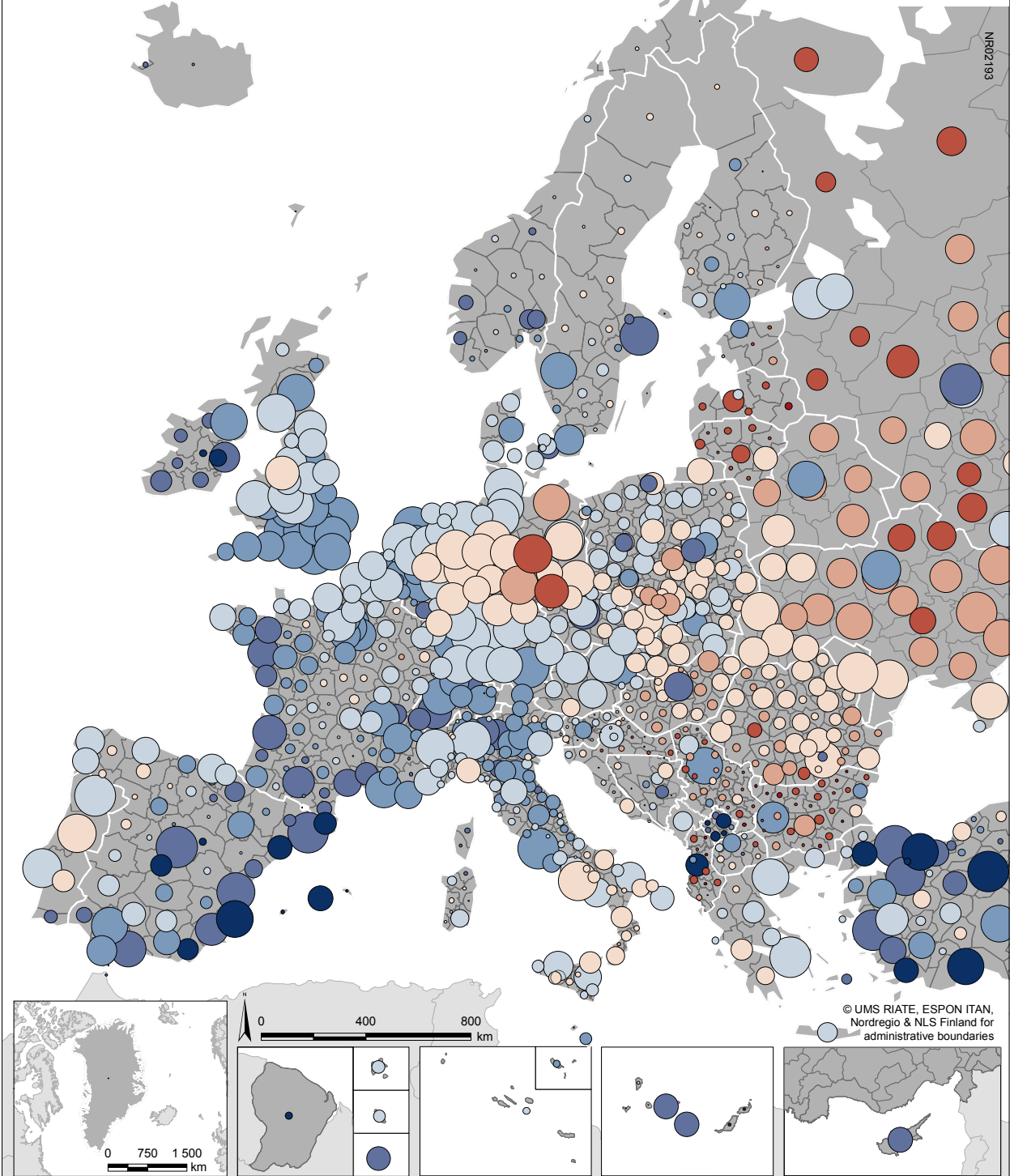
Population changes in European regions

The map of population change in European regions (figure 2.1) shows that the fastest growing regions in Europe with a population increase above 2% between 2000 and 2013 are to be found in Ireland, Spain, Albania, Macedonia and Turkey. There is a clear divide in Europe between east and west, with many regions, especially in the Baltic countries, Russia, Ukraine, Bulgaria and Romania experiencing a population decrease, while population increases are experienced in many other regions (particularly in the more populated regions) in the western part of Europe. This pattern may however already be in the process of dissolving since the map of popula-

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tion change in European regions 2000-2013 with population size by region (figure 2.1) indicates an east-west belt of regions with population decline in Germany while many smaller regions in, for example, France and Sweden also have declining populations. Furthermore, the Balkan countries display a more diverse pattern with some larger regions growing (see for example Albania and Macedonia) although the largest decreases are also found in Albania (Gjirokastër and Dibër), Bulgaria (Vidin and Vratsa), Latvia (Latgale), as well as parts of Germany (Suhl and Spree-Neisse).

Total population change in European regions 2000-2013
with population size by region



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Annual average population change in Europe 2000-2013, in %
at regional level*

| Population increase, % | Population decrease, % |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| 0.0 – 0.5 | -0.5 – 0.0 |
| 0.5 – 1.0 | -1.0 – -0.5 |
| 1.0 – 2.0 | -2.0 – -1.0 |
| 2.0 > | < -2.0 |

Number of inhabitants in 2013

| |
|-------------|
| 1,000,000** |
| 750,000 |
| 500,000 |
| 100,000 |
| 50,000 |

Size of circle is relative to the number of inhabitants of the region in 2013

* NUTS 2/3 (mix), SNUTS 2. NUTS 2: AT, BE, CH, DE, EL, NL, PT & UK. SNUTS 2: BY, FO, GL, MD, RU, UA
** 1,000,000+ inh.: decreased circle size for visibility

2000-2013 data, except: IS, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (DE), MK, RO & UK 2000-2012. AL 2001-2012. BA 2000-2010. HR 2002-2013. MD 2005-2013. RS 2002-2011. TR 2008-2013. XK 2011-2013. Estimates: AL, XK
No data: Brčko District (BA), Republika Srpska (BA) & Transdniestria (MD)

Source: Eurostat, NSIs, Nordregio

Figure 2.1.: Total population change in European regions 2000-2013

Significant growth concentrated in capital and metropolitan regions

In the Nordic Region, the population has increased in the most populated areas of Sweden and Finland decreased in the less populated areas of these two countries (figure 2.2). In Denmark, Iceland and Norway, all regions have had a population increase between 2000 and 2013. The most significant population increases in the Nordic countries have been concentrated in the capital regions, but with a bit less of an increase in Helsinki region than in the others. In Norway the regions of Bergen, Stavanger and Trondheim have also grown by more the 1-2%. The map on population changes in the municipalities in the Nordic countries, between 2005 and 2015, shows that the population increase took place in the more populated municipalities of Denmark, the Faroe Islands, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, as well as in many coastal municipalities in southern Norway and southern Sweden (figure 2.2). The concentration of

people to urban areas is also evident at this scale as all the largest municipalities have seen an annual average increase between 1 and 2.3%. Even if in relative terms, the largest population increases were in relatively small municipalities in Iceland, western Finland and western Norway such as Kjósarhreppur, Liminka and Rennesøy among others which had annual average population change above 3%.

In absolute terms the urban concentration is even more evident with the most significant population increases occurring in the capital cities and metropolitan regions. The largest population increases for the period 2005-2015 were in the municipalities of Stockholm (+147 000 inhabitants), Oslo (+118 000) and Copenhagen (+78 000) followed by the other largest Nordic municipalities (Helsinki, Göteborg, Malmö, Espoo and Bergen). This population growth in the capital regions and metropolitan areas has not however only occurred in the core municipality but also in the surrounding suburban and peri-urban municipalities. The population increase is in many cases even higher in the surrounding municipi-

City-regions and functional urban areas: elements of definition

City-regions or functional urban areas are usually defined based on three aspects or assumptions (Rodríguez-Pose, 2008). Firstly that there is a (city or urban) core (or cores) surrounded by secondly a (regional or suburban) hinterland, i.e. based on centre-periphery notions. The centre and periphery are, thirdly, connected through some sort of functional links or linkages. In statistical and empirical terms the linkages are often defined in terms of commuter flows, local or regional labour markets or different types of economic activities such as catchment areas.

The OECD uses grid data to identify 'urban cores', which is an urban cluster of more than 50 000 inhabitants and 1500 inhabitants/km², while commuting data is used to demarcate the 'hinterlands' (15% commuting to economic core) but the geographical building block is municipalities (LAU 2). The OECD definition categorises functional urban areas into four classes:

- Small urban areas, with a population of between 50 000 and 200 000
- Medium-sized urban areas, with a population between 200 000 and 500 000
- Metropolitan areas, with a population between 500 000 and 1.5 million
- Large metropolitan areas, with a population above 1.5 million

Iceland is not included in the OECD statistics because it does not produce statistics on inter-municipal commuting. But the Greater Reykjavik area (Höfuðborgarsvæðinu) should be considered as a (approximate) medium-sized urban area with a population of 211 282 (Statistics Iceland, 2015, p. 30). The Greater Reykjavik area includes the following municipalities (population in 2015): Reykjavik (121 822), Kópavogur (33 205), Seltjarnarnes (4 411), Garðabær (14 453), Hafnar örður (27 875), Mosfellsbær (9 300) and Kjósarhreppur (216) (Statistic Iceland, 2015, p 30).

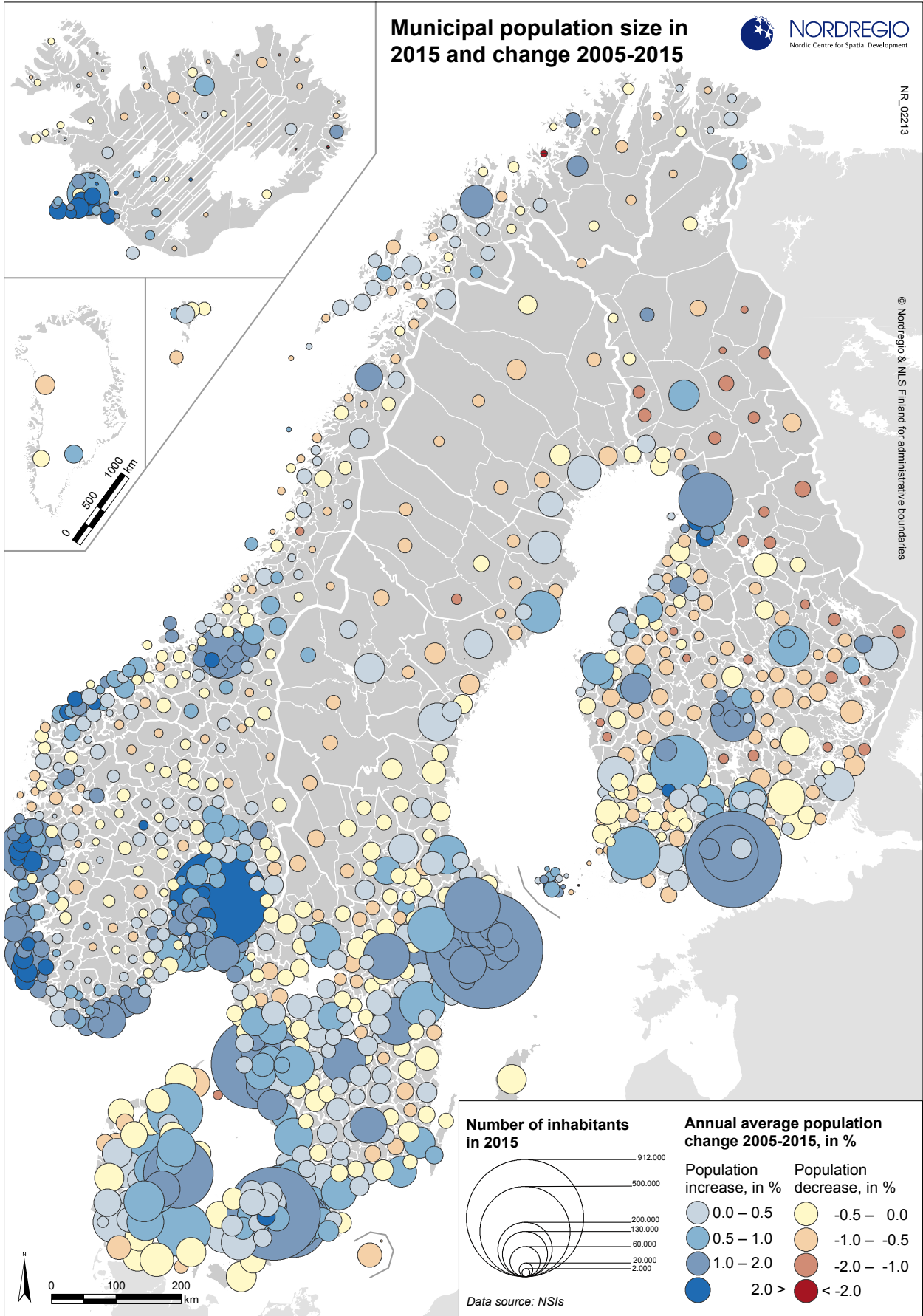


Figure 2.2: Municipal population in 2015 and change 2005-2015

Table 2.1 Population in the Nordic urban areas 1995-2015

| | 1995 | 2000 | 2005 | 2010 | 2015 | 1995-2015 (%) |
|-----------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|---------------|
| Stockholm | 1724552 | 1818571 | 1888246 | 2035303 | 2213757 | 28,4 |
| Copenhagen | 1872262 | 1931883 | 1968515 | 2029539 | 2128512 | 13,7 |
| Helsinki | 1247663 | 1335763 | 1396784 | 1476471 | 1563429 | 25,3 |
| Oslo | 996857 | 1057915 | 1110655 | 1215615 | 1332173 | 33,6 |
| Goteborg | 790730 | 818229 | 852962 | 898984 | 951784 | 20,4 |
| Malmö | 584493 | 604478 | 630610 | 680207 | 720823 | 23,3 |
| Aarhus | 422434 | 436749 | 454197 | 473349 | 496131 | 17,4 |
| Tampere | 346873 | 363047 | 383151 | 406293 | 426609 | 23,0 |
| Bergen | 313669 | 325990 | 342935 | 370091 | 400512 | 27,7 |
| Odense | 353723 | 357025 | 360951 | 367901 | 373810 | 5,7 |
| Turku | 286998 | 301036 | 310529 | 319467 | 333224 | 16,1 |
| Aalborg | 286604 | 291067 | 294903 | 300954 | 310738 | 8,4 |
| Stavanger | 211975 | 225960 | 238651 | 264243 | 290054 | 36,8 |
| Trondheim | 193925 | 202116 | 213137 | 232129 | 250994 | 29,4 |
| Oulu | 182080 | 197554 | 216198 | 233505 | 250381 | 37,5 |
| Uppsala | 191868 | 197820 | 203814 | 216142 | 228736 | 19,2 |
| Reykjavík | 156513 | 171792 | 184244 | 200907 | 211282 | 35,0 |
| Linköping | 179849 | 179946 | 184008 | 191769 | 199576 | 11,0 |
| Örebro | 172097 | 175632 | 179350 | 186921 | 196664 | 14,3 |
| Västerås | 172866 | 172650 | 177855 | 182542 | 191141 | 10,6 |
| Helsingborg | 163807 | 166029 | 171595 | 182319 | 190597 | 16,4 |
| Jyväskylä | 141294 | 148500 | 157790 | 166569 | 174353 | 23,4 |
| Lahti | 157127 | 158101 | 160730 | 164794 | 167302 | 6,5 |
| Norrköping | 144778 | 142650 | 144386 | 148563 | 154412 | 6,7 |
| Jönköping | 131723 | 133106 | 136786 | 144032 | 150359 | 14,1 |
| Umeå | 133486 | 136564 | 140893 | 144536 | 149872 | 12,3 |
| Kristiansand | 109556 | 115352 | 120300 | 128499 | 138096 | 26,1 |
| Kuopio | 116494 | 118699 | 120844 | 123620 | 132957 | 14,1 |
| Borås | 96123 | 96342 | 98886 | 102458 | 107022 | 11,3 |
| Tromsö | 68988 | 71631 | 74712 | 79286 | 84770 | 22,9 |
| Total population in FUA | 11951406 | 12452197 | 12918616 | 13667008 | 14520070 | 21,5 |
| Total population in Norden | 23737549 | 24112131 | 24551396 | 25505422 | 26478386 | 11,5 |

Note: The boundaries of the urban areas are in accordance with the OECD's definition (see OECD, 2012), and based in the municipal boards from around 2001, except for Reykjavík where the area of Greater Reykjavík includes the following municipalities: Reykjavík, Kópavogur, Seltjarnarnes, Garðabær, Hafnarörður, Mosfellsbær, Kjósarhreppur (see Statistic Iceland, 2015). The population data comes from Nordregio.

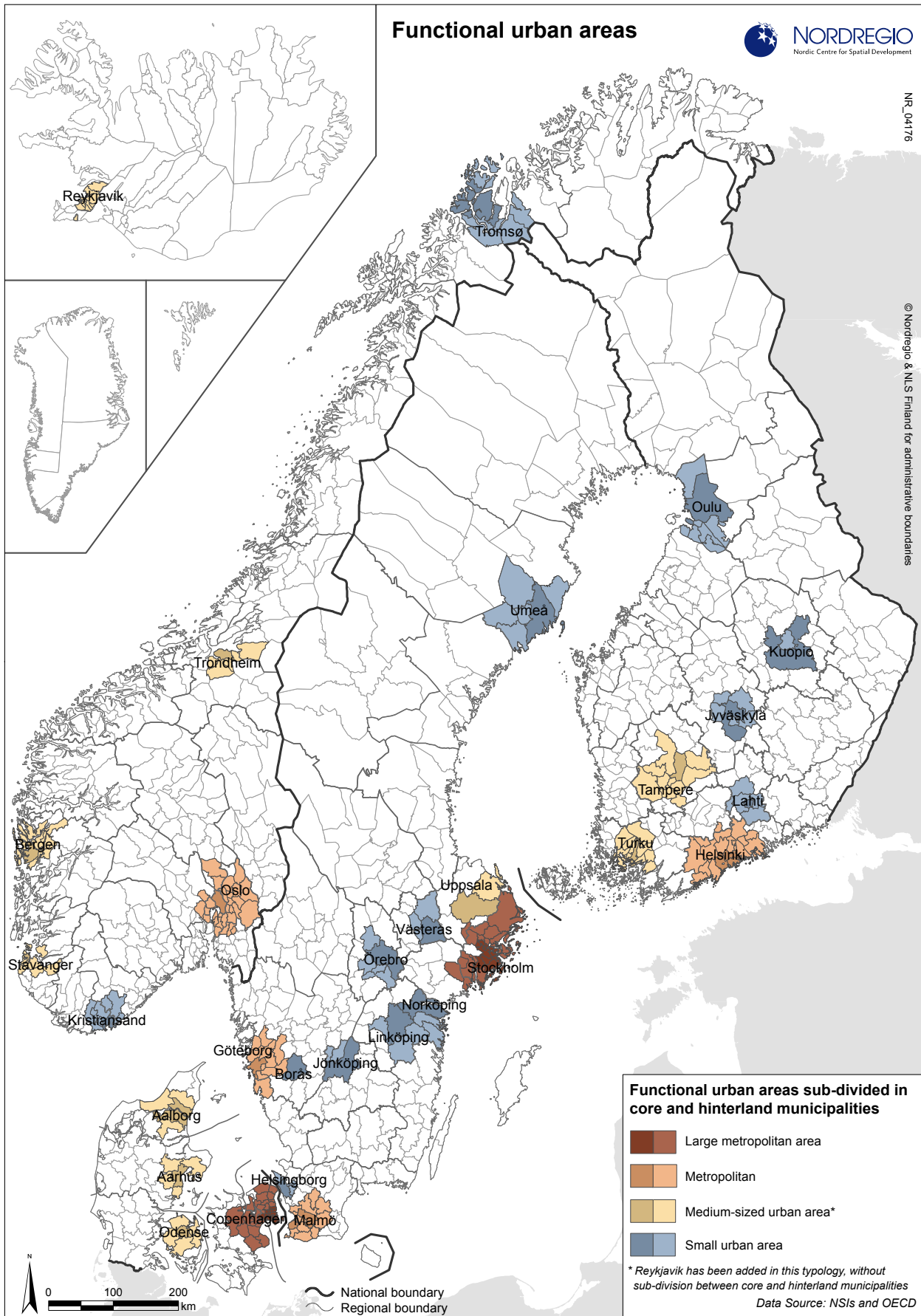


Figure 2.3: Nordic functional urban areas (FUAs). Note: typology based on the OECD definition that includes four types of functional urban areas: small urban areas (50 000 to 200 000 inhabitants), medium-sized urban areas (200 000 to 500 000 inhabitants), metropolitan areas (0.5 to 1.5 million inhabitants) and large metropolitan areas (above 1.5 million inhabitants). Iceland has been added into the OECD typology, where the Greater Reykjavik area is classified as medium-sized urban area (211 282 inhabitants in 2015; Statistics Iceland, 2015, p. 30)

palities, for example, the municipalities of Sundbyberg and Solna adjacent to Stockholm have seen an annual average increase beyond 2.5% while Ås, south of Oslo, has also seen a comparable increase.

Population decrease occurred primarily in municipalities with already small populations and in municipalities located in the inner and northern peripheral parts of the Nordic Region, especially in Finland, the northern parts of Iceland, Norway and Sweden, as well as in Greenland. In relative terms, the municipalities with the largest population decrease are to be found in eastern and northern Finland (Puumala and Hyrynsalmi) and eastern Iceland (Fljótsdalshreppur and Breiðdalshreppur) as well as in insular municipalities in Norway (Loppa), Finland (Sotunga) and Denmark (Læsø) with annual average decreases beyond -1.5%. In absolute terms, the most significant population decreases for the period 2005-2015 were in a number of Danish (i.e. Lolland, Bornholm and Frederikshavn) and Finnish municipalities (i.e. Kouvola, Savonlinna, Jämsä) each of which lost between 2 000 and 6 500 inhabitants. There was however a population increase in the largest municipalities in the sparsely populated areas in the northern part of the Nordic Region (i.e. Luleå in Sweden, Tromsø in Norway, Rovaniemi and Oulu in Finland). This indicates the attractiveness of urban municipalities of regional importance in the sparsely populated parts of the Nordic Region.

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Urbanisation, urban growth and functional urban areas

Urbanisation is usually defined as the population growth of urban areas in relation to the total population of the country (or the world). It should not be conflated with urban growth which often refers to the physical extension of an urban area or to some general notion of economic growth. Implicit in the term urbanisation is the process of people moving from rural areas to urban areas. As a result conclusions drawn about the degree of urbanisation that is occurring are contingent upon how

Table 2.2. Population of Urban and Rural Areas at Mid-Year (thousands) and Percentage Urban, 2014

| Major area, region, country or area | Urban | Rural | Total | Percentage urban |
|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|-------------------------|
| WORLD | 3 880 128 | 3 363 656 | 7 243 784 | 53,6 |
| EUROPE | 545 382 | 197 431 | 742 813 | 73,4 |
| Denmark | 4 935 | 705 | 5 640 | 87,5 |
| Finland | 4 577 | 866 | 5 443 | 84,1 |
| Iceland | 313 | 20 | 333 | 94,0 |
| Norway | 4 084 | 1 008 | 5 092 | 80,2 |
| Sweden | 8 251 | 1 381 | 9 631 | 85,7 |

urban (or rural) areas are defined. In an attempt to re-define the notion of 'urban' the OECD uses grid data to identify 'urban cores', and commuting data to demarcate the 'hinterlands', but the geographical building block is municipalities. The OECD distinguished between four classes of functional urban areas (see box).

If the OECD's definition of functional urban areas is used in the Nordic Region (figure 2.3) almost 55% of the population live in the 30 largest urban functional areas. The population in these areas increased by around 2.5 million from 12 million in 1995 to about 14.5 million in 2015 (table 2.1). Growth varies significantly however between different functional urban areas, from Stockholm (almost 500 000) to Norrköping (10 000). The six metropolitan areas have grown by almost 1.7 million inhabitants. In relative terms, the Greater Reykjavik area and some of the Norwegian urban areas have grown the most, though Stockholm, Malmö and Gothenburg in Sweden and Helsinki and Jyväskylä in Finland have also grown significantly. This is a rather different definition than the one often normally used to show that more people are living in urban areas than in rural areas.

According to the UN more than 80% of the population in the Nordic countries live in urban areas compared with about 75% of the European population and about half of the world's population (see table 2.2.). It is estimated that the percentage of the population residing in urban areas in Sweden and Denmark will be above 90% in 2050 (UN, 2014). Moreover, drilling further down into these figures reveals that they are based on national statistics and that how urban areas are defined differs significantly between different countries (and that these definitions are generally not in accordance with those provided by the OECD). For example, in Sweden, Denmark and Iceland an urban area is a place with more than 200 inhabitants, in Norway however an urban area needs to have a population of at least 2000.

How urban a society is, cannot however be defined only in terms of numbers. Already in 1938, Louis Wirth noted that "the degree to which the contemporary world may be said to be urban is not fully or accurately measured by the proportion of the total population living in cities" (p. 2). In his classical essay with the telling title *Urbanism as a Way of Life* he argues that "the urban mode of life is not confined to cities". If urbanism is considered a social phenomenon and as a way of living perhaps the statement that about 80% of the Nordic population lives under urban conditions may not be so misleading after all. Is not the holiday resort and second home part of an urban way of life? For example, through new technology people living in more sparsely populated (urban) areas can be as connected and integrated into urban ways of living as others, while simultaneously people living in

more densely populated areas can be detached from so-called urban lifestyles though poor accessibility to infrastructure and services.

City-regions: policy potentials and challenges

There is an increased belief that the city-region (as a type of functional urban area) is the most appropriate scale for urban and regional policy and governance in a globalised world (e.g. Rodríguez-Pose, 2008). Various functional city-regions might reflect the everyday travel patterns, regional identities or business networks extending beyond administrative municipal and/or regional (or even national borders). This does however create political and policy dilemmas in a democratic system based on territorial mandates. Furthermore, the regional scale in the Nordic countries does not, historically, hold a strong position in terms of either administrative structures or political loyalties.

It is important to recognise that the size and shape of functional urban areas or functional regions in more general terms is dependent on which function is being considered. There is thus no 'one-size fits all' here, no perfect region utopias. Furthermore, most definitions of city-regions (such as the OECD's definition of functional urban areas) continue to be based on assumptions about core-periphery linkages in a continuous geographical space such as an economic unit, and do not recognise relational spatial networks, for example business networks, or other dimensions such as those in the cultural realm, such as regional identities. In an international perspective the Nordic Region as such might be considered a functional region with the capital cities as core nodes if business locations and networks are considered, but where the so-called 'hinterland' extends all over the world, and where there is also, perhaps, a shared Nordic Regional identity based on their shared history (e.g. Smas & Schmitt, 2015).

Each of the Nordic functional urban areas has grown continuously in population terms over the last 20 years. This has of course had many positive effects but it has also created challenges for these cities and regions particularly in terms of the need to accommodate these new citizens. Developments in Europe and in the world during the autumn of 2015 with refugees seeking asylum in Europe have put further pressure on the Nordic countries and their city-regions. It is however encouraging to note that the larger Nordic city-regions already recognise this challenge. A clear conclusion from joint meetings with municipal and regional authorities in different Nordic city-regions is that social cohesion is recognised simultaneously both as the most vital asset and the most prevalent challenge (Smas, 2015).