



**NORDREGIO**  
Nordic Centre for Spatial Development

# Planning Nordic City Regions: Challenges and Opportunities



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# UN: Planning Sustainable cities

... governments should increasingly take on a more central role in cities and towns in order to lead development initiatives and ensure that basic needs are met. This, to a large extent, is a result of the current global economic crisis, which has exposed the limits of the private sector – in terms of its resilience and future growth as well as the ability of the ‘market’ to solve most urban problems. **It is clear that urban planning has an important role to play in assisting governments to meet the urban challenges of the 21st century.**

As the world becomes numerically more urban, it is important that governments accept urbanization as a positive phenomenon and an effective means for improving access to services, as well as economic and social opportunities. **If urban planning is to play a more effective role as a consequence of this policy orientation, countries need to develop overall national urban strategies.**

UN Habitat (2009). *Global Report on Human Settlements 2009: Planning Sustainable Cities*. London: Earthscan.

# The economics of city-regions

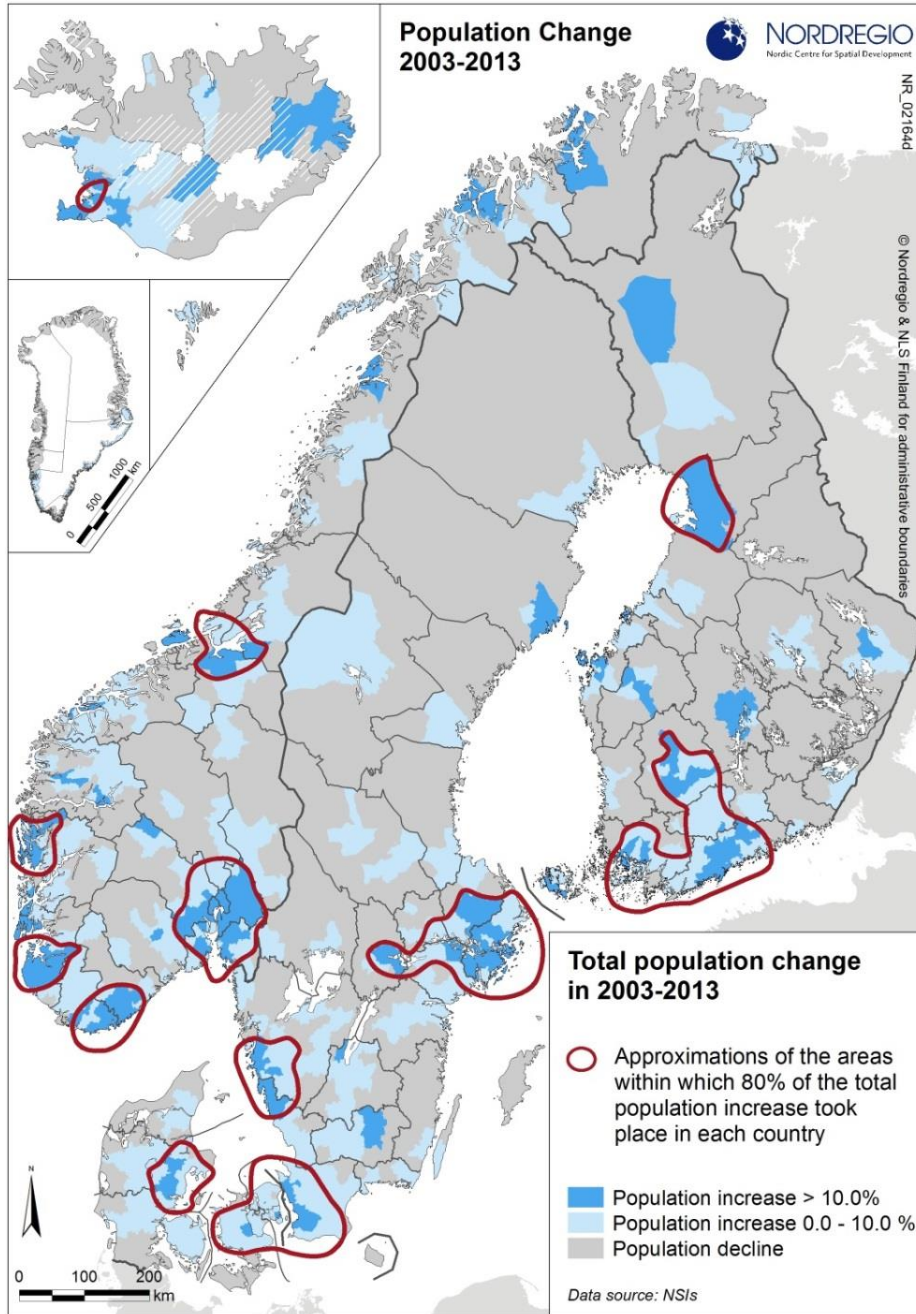
## ■ City-regions from an economic geographical perspective

“The city-regions are locomotives of the national economies within which they are situated, in that they are the sites of dense masses of interrelated economic activities that also typically have high levels of productivity by reason of their jointly-generated agglomeration economies and their innovative potentials.”

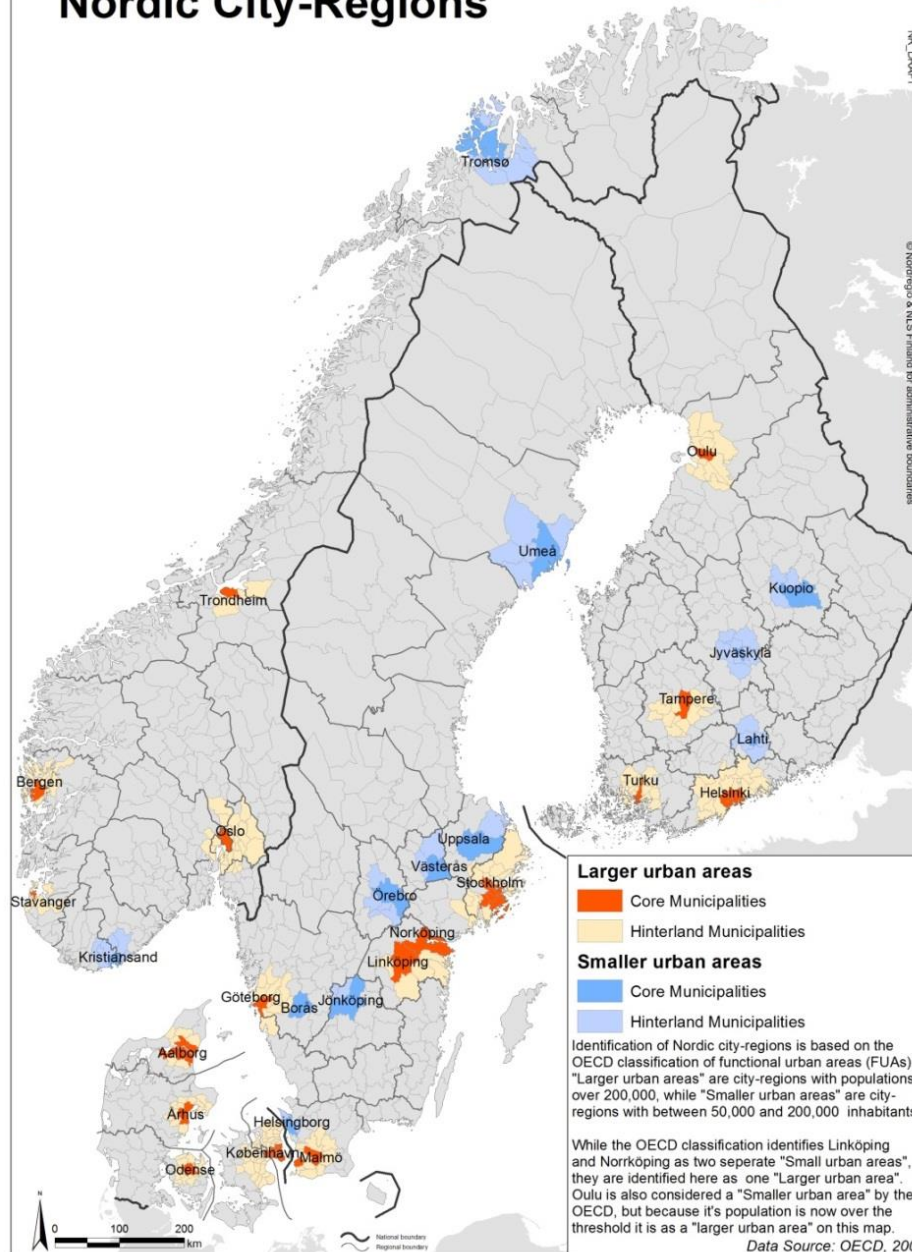
Allen Scott & Michael Storper (2003) Regions, Globalization, Development, *Regional Studies*, 37: 549-578.

## ■ City-regions from a political and institutional perspective

# Population Change 2003-2013



# Nordic City-Regions

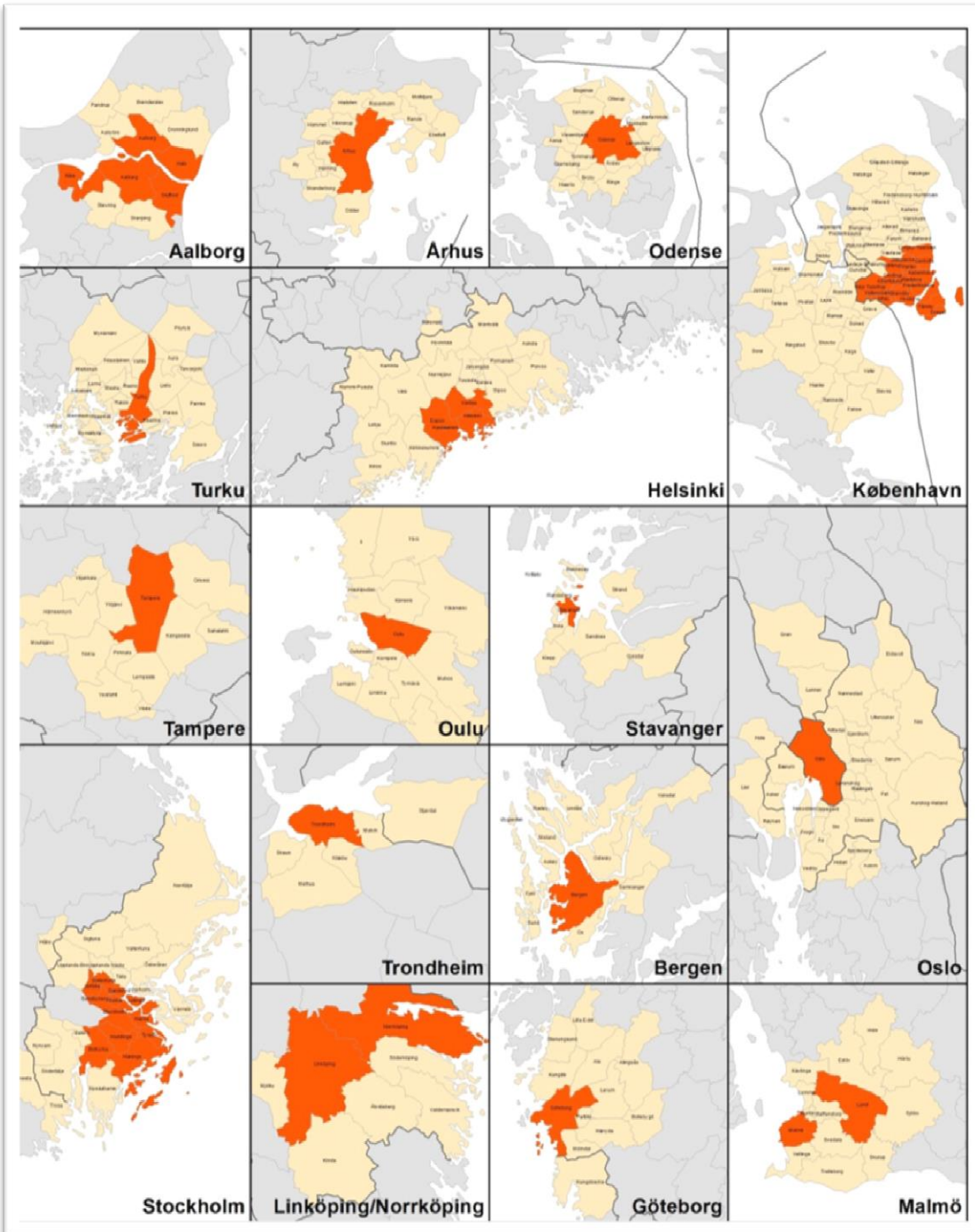


# The politics of city-regionalism

- City-regions from an economic geographical perspective
- City-regions from a political and institutional perspective

“... a strategic and political level of administration and policy making, extending beyond the administrative boundaries of single urban local government authorities to include urban and/or semi-urban hinterlands. This definition includes a range of institutions and agencies representing local and regional governance that possess an interest in urban and/or economic development matters that, together, form a strategic level of policy making intended to formulate or implement policies on a broader metropolitan scale.”

Mark Tewdwr-Jones and Donald McNeill (2007) *The Politics of City-Region Planning and Governance: Reconciling the National, Regional and Urban in the Competing Voices of Institutional Restructuring*, *European Urban and Regional Studies*, 7: 119–134





# Tour of Nordic city regions: 2014

- Five national meetings with the largest city regions, with representatives from municipal and regional authorities
- Three types of challenges/opportunities was identified:
  - 1) urban form and growth
  - 2) social cohesion and diversity
  - 3) implementation and governance
- Copenhagen, Malmö, Oslo, Tampere, and Reykjavik

# Urban form and growth

Spatial planning to green growth through the urban form

- how to combine qualities and densification processes
- how to accommodate rapid population growth
- how to locate and mix different urban functions

# Social cohesion and diversity

Social cohesion is both a key Nordic asset and a challenge

- creation of safe, secure and inclusive city-regional environments
- integration of an everyday life perspective in city-regional planning
- recognition of the diversified lifestyles and mobility patterns

# Implementation and governance

- compete, collaborate and communicate internally and externally
- multi-scalar and multi-sector cooperation needed to be competitive
- political and administrative collaboration based on functional networks
- state level has an important role to play in city-regions, but how?

# Questions

- Do we need (more explicit) national urban agendas/policies/politics in the Nordic countries? What can the state help with? What should the state not help with?
- Do we (also) need a Nordic urban agenda/policy/politics? Or what can the Nordic collaboration contribute with?

# Questions

- What should/could national urban agendas/policies/politics be? What should/could they include (and not include)? How should/could they be implemented?
- What could a Nordic urban agenda/policy/politics be? How could the Nordic perspective be of value (to the city-regions and/or to the national agendas/policies/politics)?