



Rural Well-being:

Geography of Opportunities

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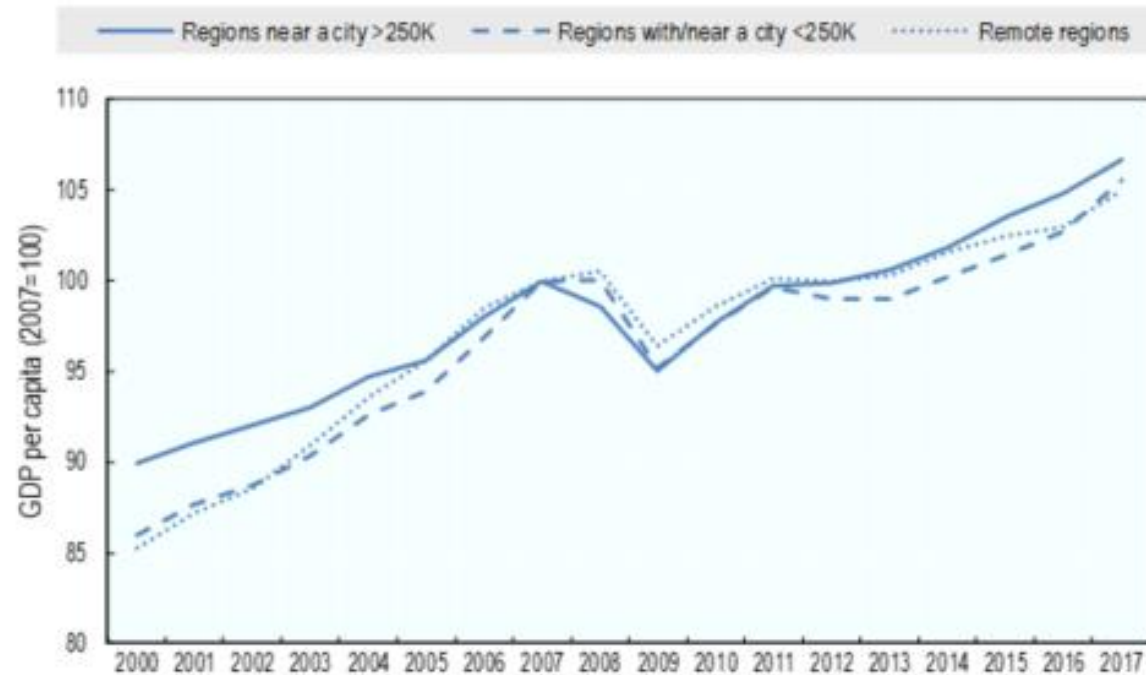
Resilient futures

13 October, European Week of Regions and Cities



How to build resilience to economic shocks and demographic changes

The income per capita gap of regions far from large cities widened after the crisis



Note: 2017 extrapolated values for France and Japan based on 2001-16 regional growth rates. Based on available data for 1 536 TL3 regions in 28 countries. GDP is in USD PPP with base year 2015.

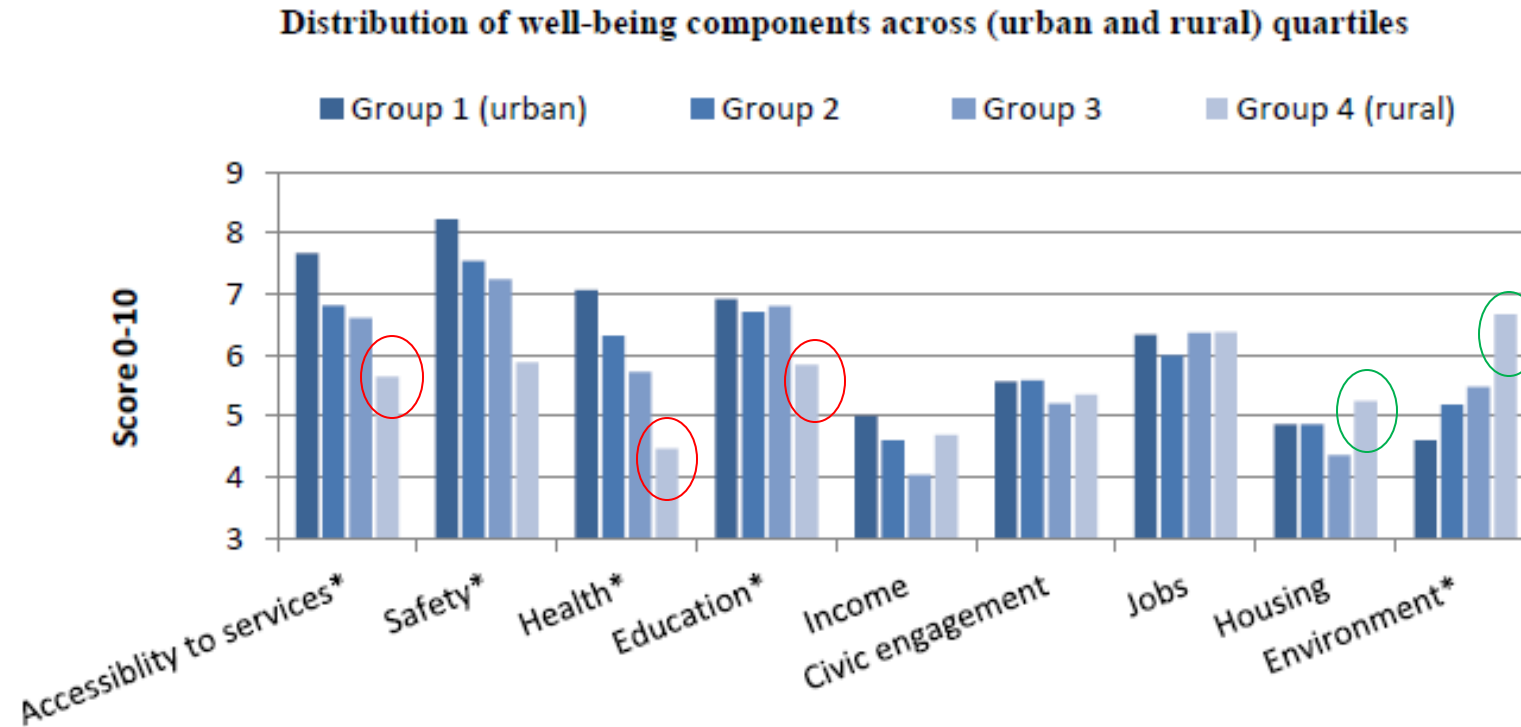
Source: (OECD, 2019) OECD Regional Statistics (database), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/region-data-en>.

Shrinking and ageing

- Attractiveness of rural regions
- Long term planning
- Economies of Scope
- Integrated solutions
- Flexible responses
- Holistic approach
- Strategic approach to service provision (digitalisation, skills, planning, empowering local communities)



Strengths and gaps in rural regions to build resilience in well-being



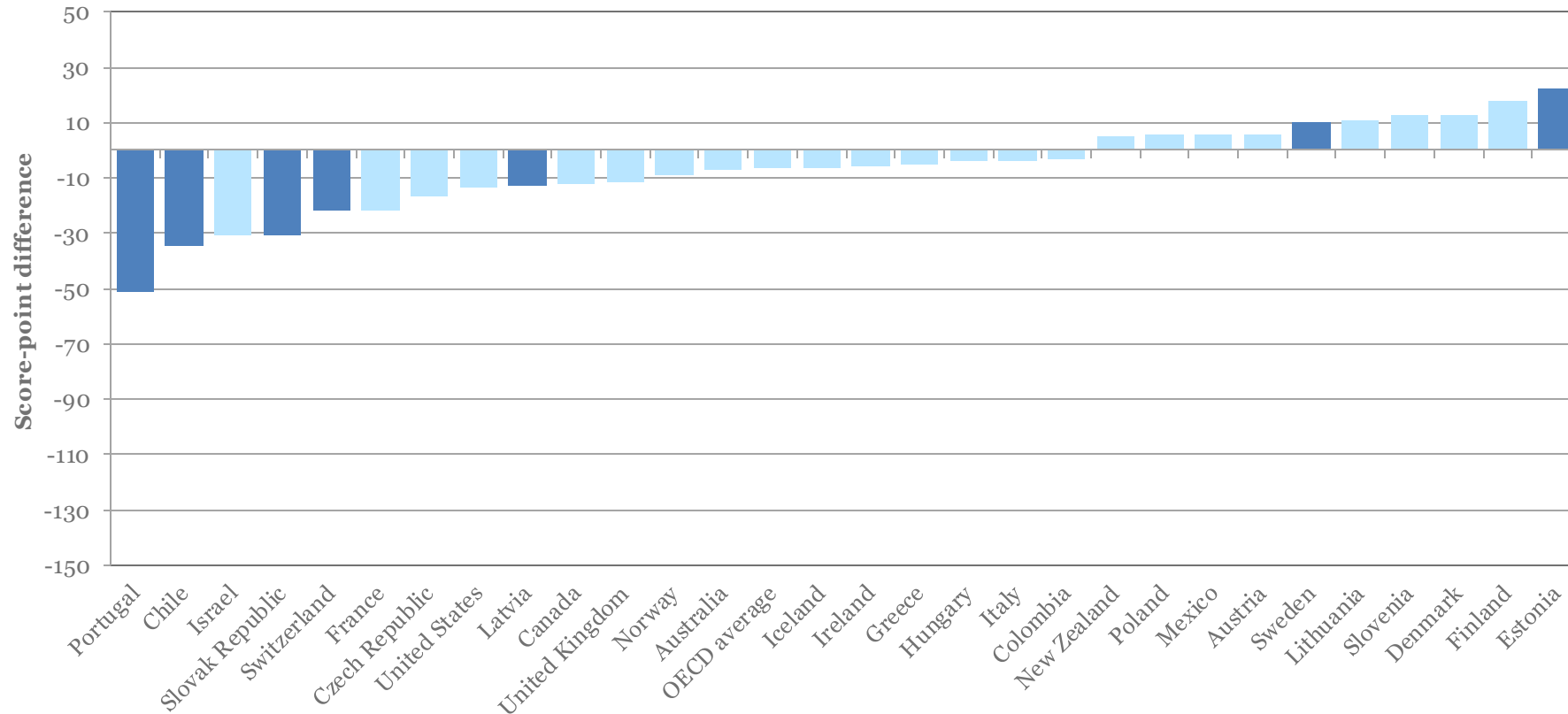
- **Rural dwellers** have better environment conditions and more affordable housing
- Jobs and income in line with urban dimension
- **Rural regions** lag in access to services, safety, health and education



Skills and human capital in rural regions

The rural-urban gap in reading performance (PISA)

After accounting for students' and schools' socio-economic status



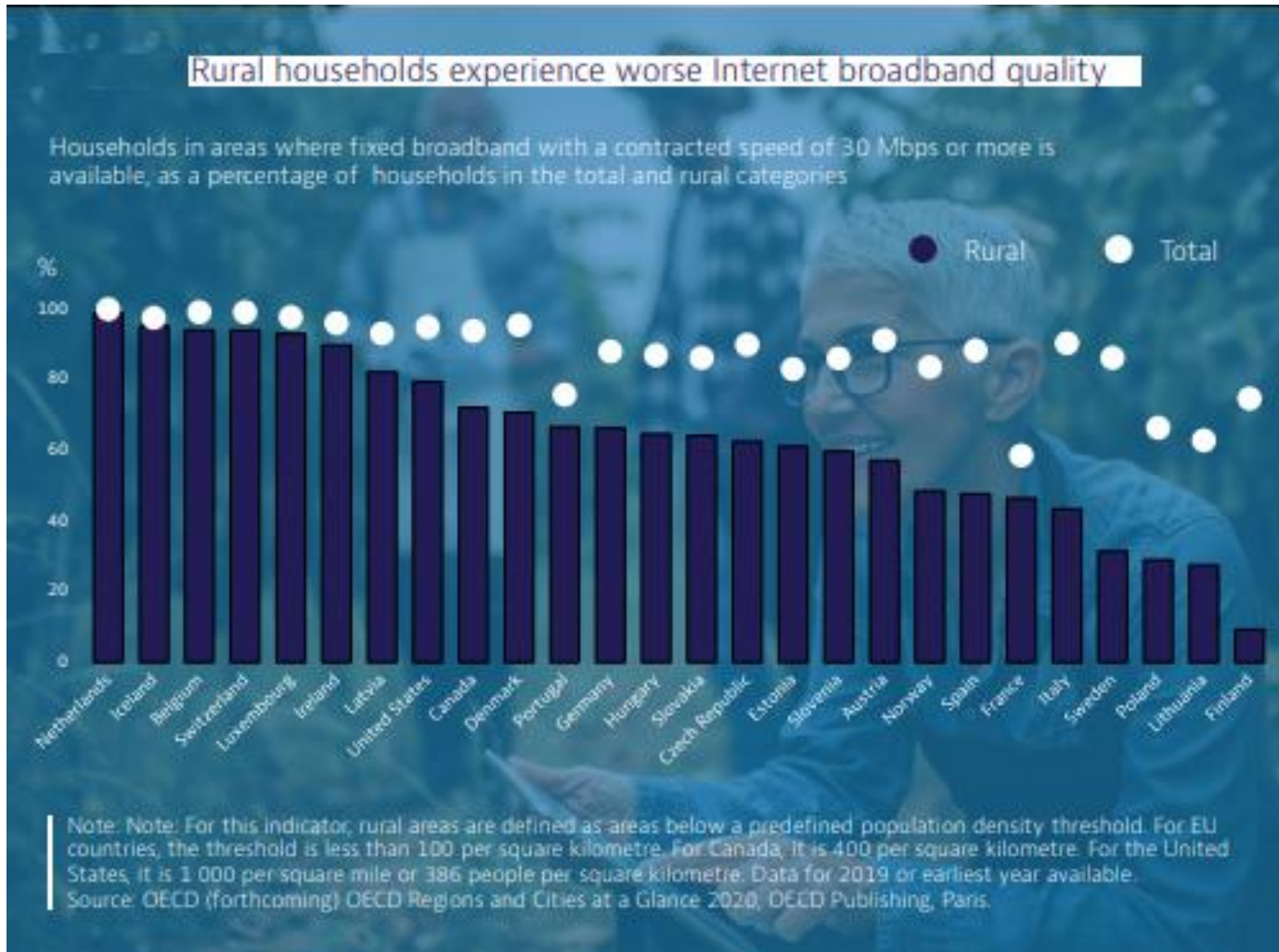
Notes: Results based on linear regression models.

Statistically significant coefficients are marked in a darker tone.

Source: PISA 2018 Database; adapted from Echazarra and Radinger (2019).



The digital agenda a critical pillar for the future of rural places



- **Digital infrastructure** is a necessary but not sufficient condition to make the most of digital opportunities



COVID Policy Implications of Coronavirus Crisis for Rural Development

A “new normality” and new opportunities in rural places

Although policy responses have focused on addressing rural vulnerabilities in 4 policy areas ...

Rural vulnerabilities



- High share of essential workers
- Low share of jobs that can be done remotely.
- Weak availability quality broadband and lower digital skill levels
- An older, poorer, less healthy population
- Limited health service capabilities (i.e. lack of ICU beds and specialised doctors)
- Logistical issues with testing

1. Improving health responses & access to medical services

2. Strengthening basic services in rural places

3. Supporting rural workers and businesses

4. Improving digital infrastructure and accessibility

...there are a number of opportunities emerging for rural places from the COVID-19 crisis

Opportunities

Higher relevance to enhance quality and use of digital tools/broadband in rural regions

Remote distributed work might increase linkages between rural and urban

Shift in consuming habits can favor local products and destinations

Greater awareness to ensure accessibility to quality services (ehealth, e-education)

Reshoring of strategic industries that were once delocalised (i.e. raw materials)

Momentum to accelerate a just transition towards a low-carbon economy for rural communities

Mobilise and strengthen local networks and co-operative structures to face future shocks

[Policy Implications of Coronavirus Crisis for Rural Development, June 2020:](#)



Rural policies must be forward looking

