

# Studying sustainability in depopulating and remote localities

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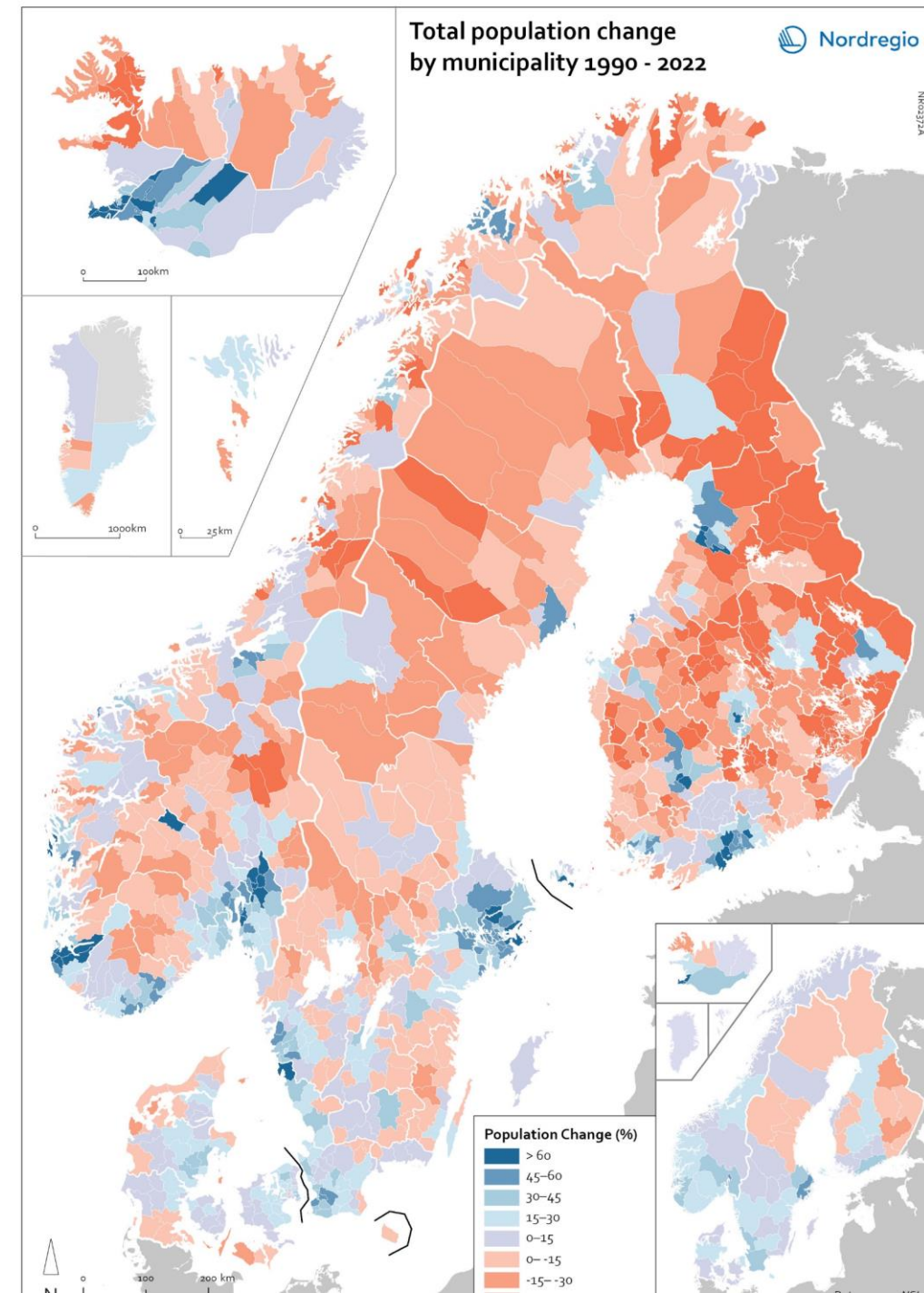
Why does it matter and how to  
approach this?





# Depopulation in the Nordics

- Current phenomena
- Plenty of conceptual measures: “*smart shrinking*”, “*right sizing*”, “*re-growth*”,...
- More often an issue of remote/rural areas
  - Many approaches to counter shrinkage in rural areas/smaller localities (Dax & Fischer 2018; Küpper et al. 2018; Nordregio 2025; Grundel & Magnusson 2022; etc. ...)
  - Often shrinkage also scale dependent (see Makkonen et al. 2022)
  - Large urban shrinkage not yet common in the Nordics compared to US for instance (e.g. Pallagast et al. 2017; Rhodes & Russo 2013; etc. )
- Expected to be present at some level continuously (e.g. Syssner 2022)



# Sustainability strategies in shrinking & remote localities...

- So why does needs to be tackled particularly?
  - Urban sustainability strategies do not fit with rural needs and socio-spatial structures (e.g. transport, housing, etc.)
  - Financial and human capital restraints to implement certain measures
  - Other problems more pressing on the political/socio-economic agenda
  - Rural livelihoods and socio-cultural framings
- Sustainability potentials
  - Holistic view on sustainability most important for shrinking places: resilient and sustained livelihoods (often inclined in right-sizing approaches and focus on 'quality of life')
  - Rural places contain great potentials to foster sustainable action (e.g. food & bio-resources, community action,...)
- Risks
  - Colonialization of rural space for urban/capitalist needs (e.g. resource extraction, energy infrastructure,...etc.)



# Sustainability strategies in shrinking & remote localities...

The big picture: institutional strategies (e.g. communal climate strategy, waste, transport, green economy, education...)







# Sustainability strategies in shrinking and remote localities...

Small scale and DIY approaches and strategies for sustainable livelihoods





Sustainability strategies in shrinking & remote localities...

Community building: good quality of life and resilient livelihoods



# What do we expect from you?

- Conduct a study and write a report on the potentials and challenges to promote (chosen) sustainability strategies in your case localities.
- Topical choice based on local needs and potentials (listen to the locals!), but also on your own capabilities.
  - Link to communal strategies or examples from elsewhere (e.g. experts met during excursions)
  - Preferably combine environmental and community beneficial approaches
  - Easy to implement but also (well argued) utopian pathways & small to large scale solutions
  - Solutions should follow the “do no environmental harm principle”



# What does this mean in practice?

1. **Listen to experts and take notes** of examples provided during the excursions & lectures carefully
2. **Read related academic literature** provided as well as own
3. **Online analysis** of your case locality including **document analysis** of strategies & projects
4. **Research planning:** what data could be gathered, how and to what end (assess group skills and capabilities!)
5. **Actively** collect **multiple sets of primary data** (e.g. survey, interviews, observations, experiments,...) during stay at case locality. *Engage with the locality!*
6. **Report writing:** solution-oriented report that should support the locality yet also integrate current academic trends





# What is important

- **Be communicative** & ask questions
  - **Foster a good group spirit!** Understand that people are different and have different abilities and needs.
  - **Be reliable** & in time
  - **Engage with the locality** and its activities
  - **Enjoy your stay** in the field localities
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- **No AI use for data acquisition, analysis, and report writing.** *Only use for translating data sources.*



# Some other important issues:

- A **data protection form** for your research has been created and is available on teams (in Finnish). Please provide respondents with the opportunity to look at it and generally take data protection (GDPR) aspects into consideration. Please save all raw data on teams in your groups channel.
- In terms of **complaints or problems** please contact Moritz Albrecht or the responsible teacher at your University. In case there is a more general problem you'll find info here: [Inappropriate treatment and harassment - UEF Kamu](#)



## WhatsApp-ryhmä



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QR code to join WhatsApp  
group

Ryhmän QR-koodi on yksityinen. Jos  
jaat sen jollekin, hän voi lukea sen  
WhatsApp-kamerallaan ja liittyä tähän ryhmään.