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The Changing Nature of Urban and Rural Areas in the United Kingdom and other European countries

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European urbanisation in context

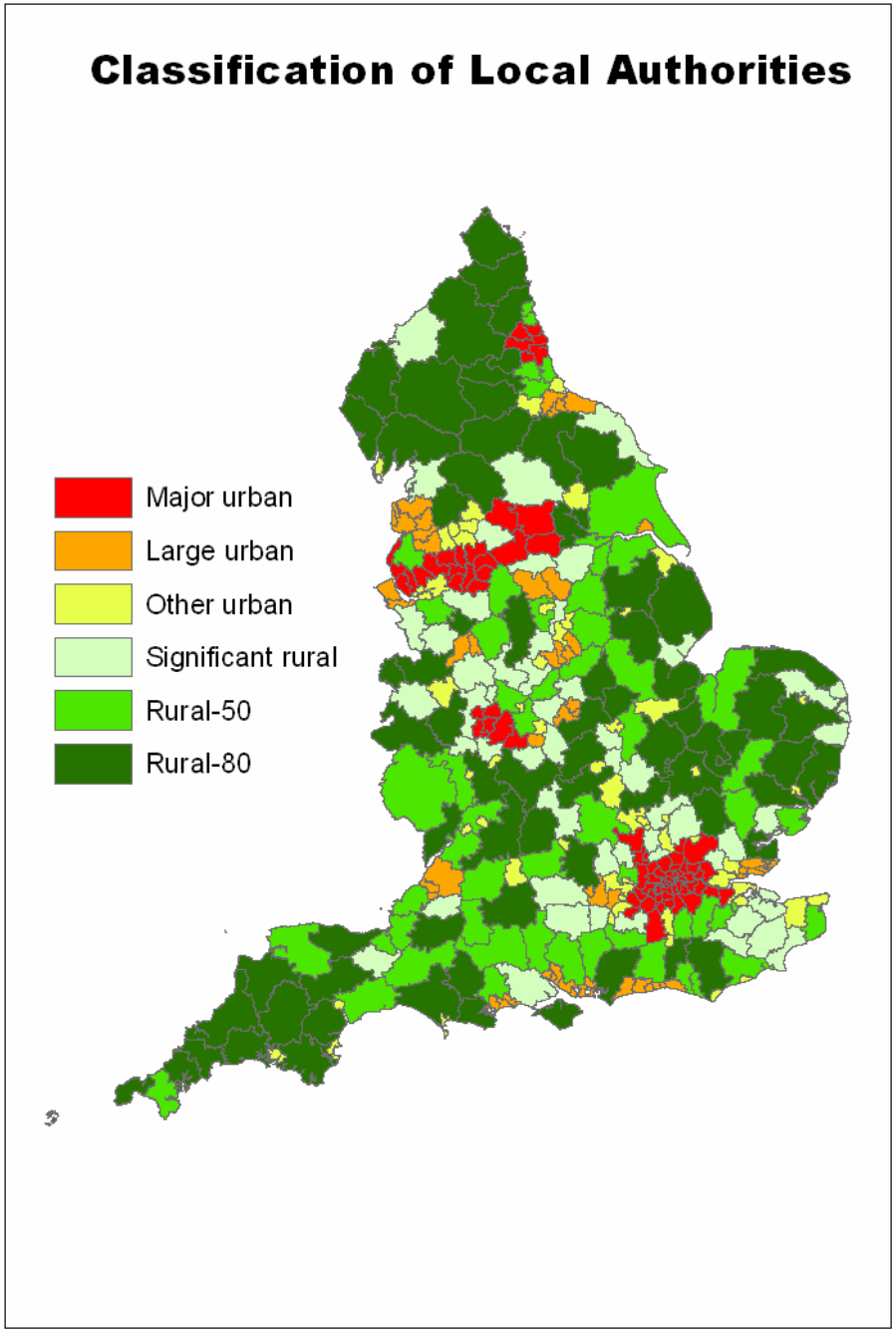
- UN data (WUP 2005 revision) put Europe's 47 countries at 728m people in 2000, up 11% from 1970, expected to fall by 4% by 2030
- Overall picture 1970-2000 of urban growth (+111m or +27%) and rural decline (-39m or -16%)
- Therefore, continuing rise in level of urbanisation: 63% 1970, 69% 1985, 72% 2000, 74% 2015, 78% 2030
- Still big differences across Europe, but diminishing: 2000 North 83%, West 76%, South 65%, East 68% (2030: 87, 83, 74, 74)
- So, only low rates of urbanisation now, and the measure is losing its meaning because of blurring of urban/rural differences
- Still some interest in distribution by city size, but now there is more interest in (daily) urban systems, networks, urban/rural relations

The case of the United Kingdom

- Good example of current patterns of interest, given that England & Wales was already 78% urbanised in 1901
- Britain's 2001 level of urbanisation (on agglomeration basis) depends on size cut-off: 93% if all urban areas included, 88% if only those with 2k+ residents, 79% if only 10k+ (which is most common cut-off for governmental purposes) – see Table 1
- Across size range, a clear counterurbanisation pattern of population change (growth rate rises with falling size) – see Table 2
- But most demographic analyses are based on classifications of areas based on broad urban/rural status, e.g. Urban, Mixed, Rural – see DEFRA district-level classification map below)
- These also show clear counterurbanisation gradient, driven entirely by domestic migration, cf international migration and natural increase, which are higher for more urban areas – see Table 3
- While social & economic differences between urban and rural areas diminish, demographic contrasts widen: age, ethnicity – e.g. Fig III

GB population 2001, by population size of settlement

Size of urban area 2001	2001 population	% 2001 population	% 2001 cumulative
1,000,000 +	15,475,010	27.1	27.1
500,000 - 999,999	3,554,356	6.2	33.3
200,000 - 499,999	7,332,922	12.8	46.2
100,000 - 199,999	5,402,465	9.5	55.6
50,000 - 99,999	4,361,740	7.6	63.3
20,000 - 49,999	5,451,565	9.5	72.8
10,000 - 19,999	3,365,573	5.9	**78.7**
5,000 - 9,999	2,746,740	4.8	83.5
2,000 - 4,999	2,728,752	4.8	88.3
1,500 - 2,000	721,342	1.3	**89.6**
1,000 – 1,499	845,587	1.5	91.0
Under 1,000	1,067,490	1.9	**92.9**
Other settlement	4,050,396	7.1	100.0
Great Britain	57,103,938	100.0	n/a



DEFRA classification of districts

Local Authority districts (LAs) are classified into rural and urban types.

Each of England's rural LAs is classified by the proportion of its resident living in rural settlements:

eg. in Rural-80, 80% of residents live in a settlement with under 10,000 residents or a 'Larger Market Town'.

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Population change 2001-2006, England, by broad district type

Urban/rural classification of LA districts	Overall change	Natural change	Inter-national migration	Within-UK migration
	%/year	%/year	%/year	%/year
England	0.53	0.21	0.36	-0.04
Urban	0.39	**0.35**	**0.57**	-0.54
Mixed	0.59	0.19	0.24	0.16
Rural	**0.77**	-0.08	0.05	**0.79**

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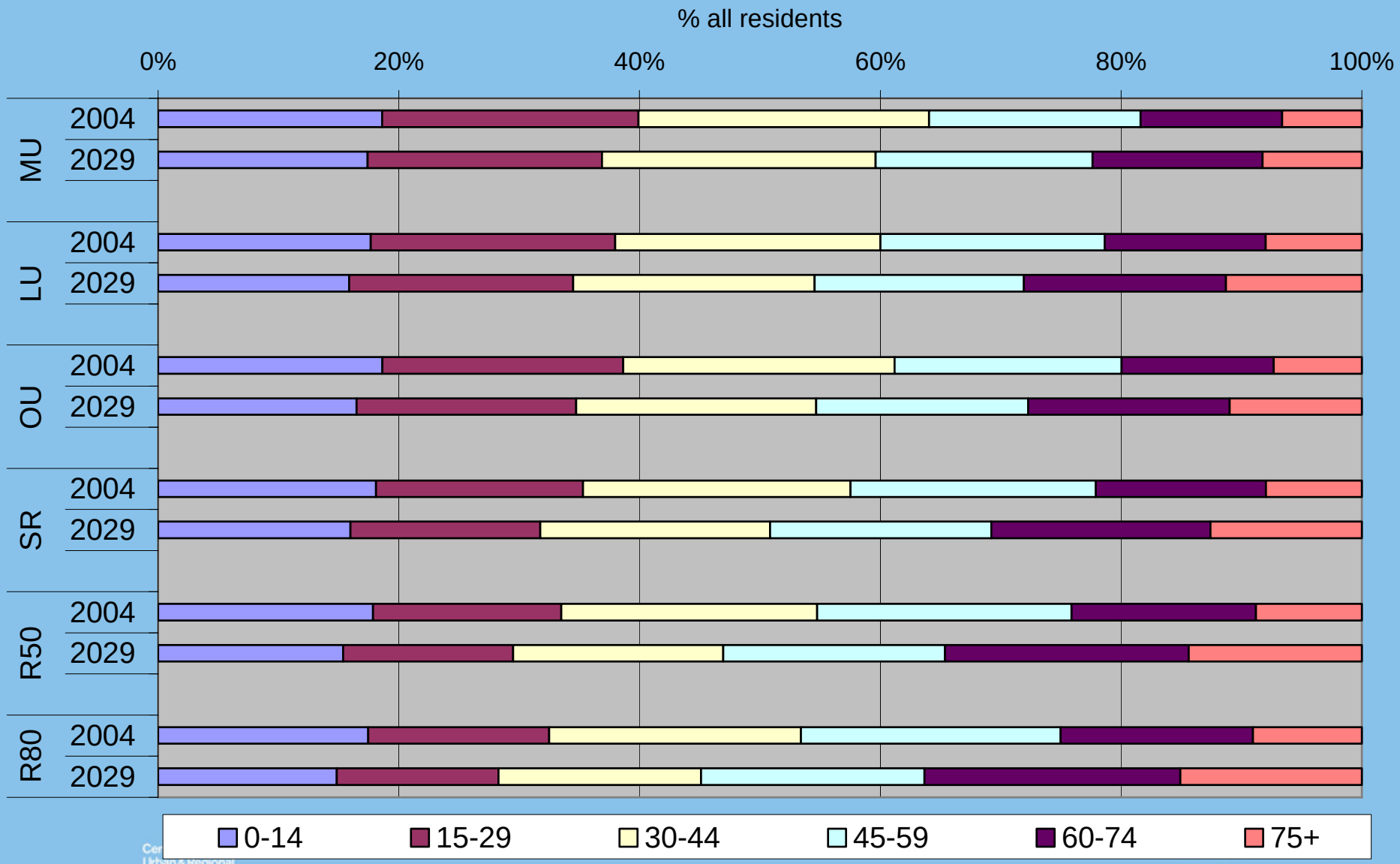
Age composition of England's population 2004 and 2029, by DEFRA district type



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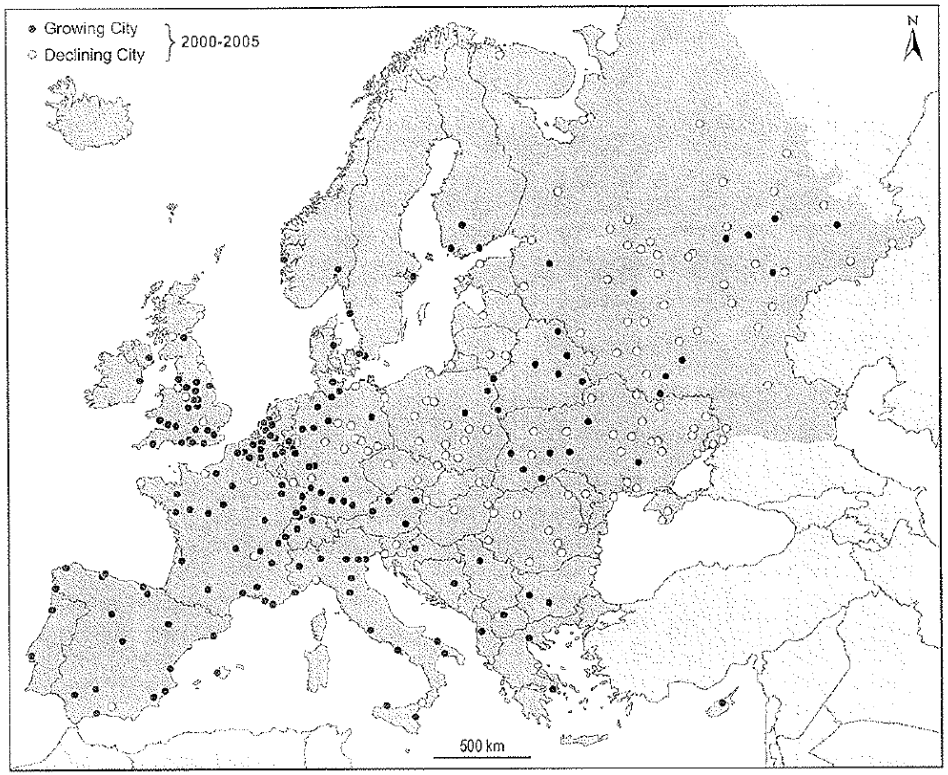
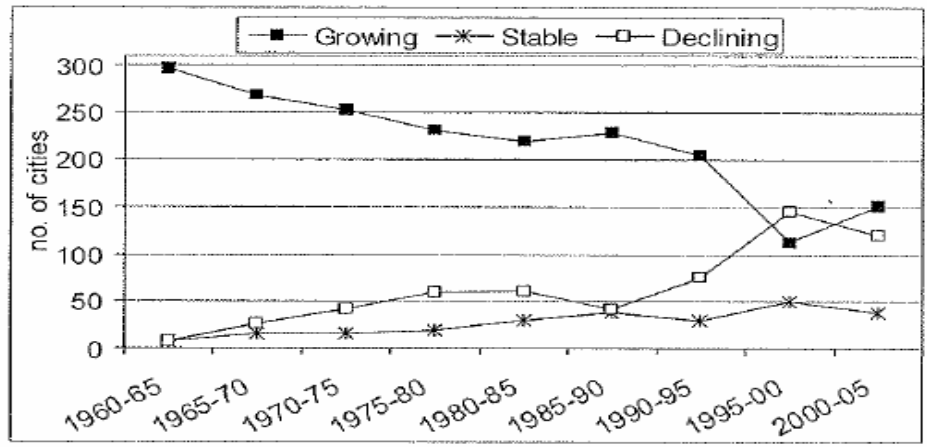
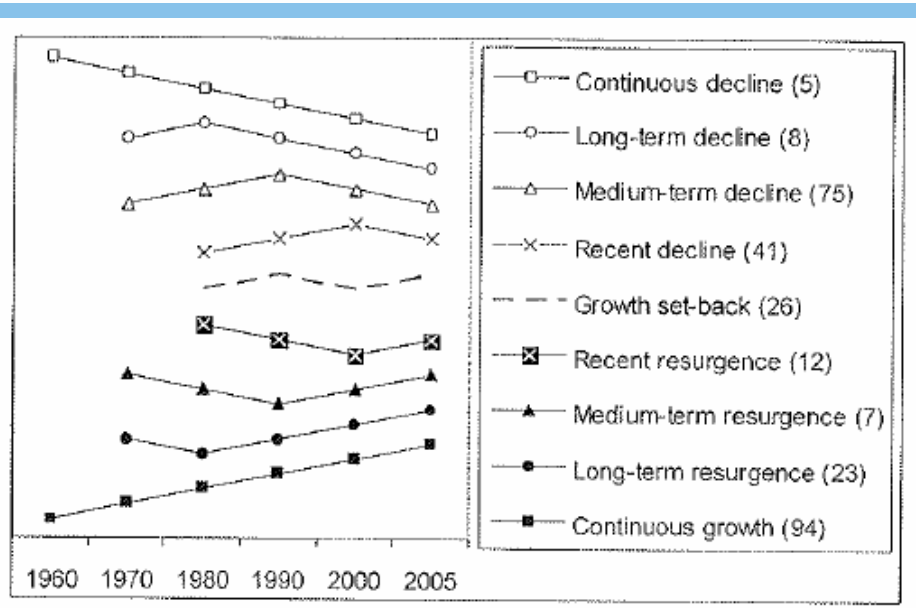
The wider European scene: resurgent cities?

Fewer cities growing in 1990s than 1960s, but small increase in number 2000-2005 (Turok & Mykhnenko, 2007)





Note: The 'stable' group includes cities with a +/-0.11% arithmetic mean change in population per year (i.e. +/-5% absolute population change between 1960 and 2005).



The wider European scene: national analyses of urban system change

- Analyses based on Geyer & Kontuly (1993) model of 'differential urbanisation' based on which of 3 sizes is growing fastest

- **Case studies since 1950**:

  Finland: PR 1955-65, CU 1965-75, U(2) 1990-98

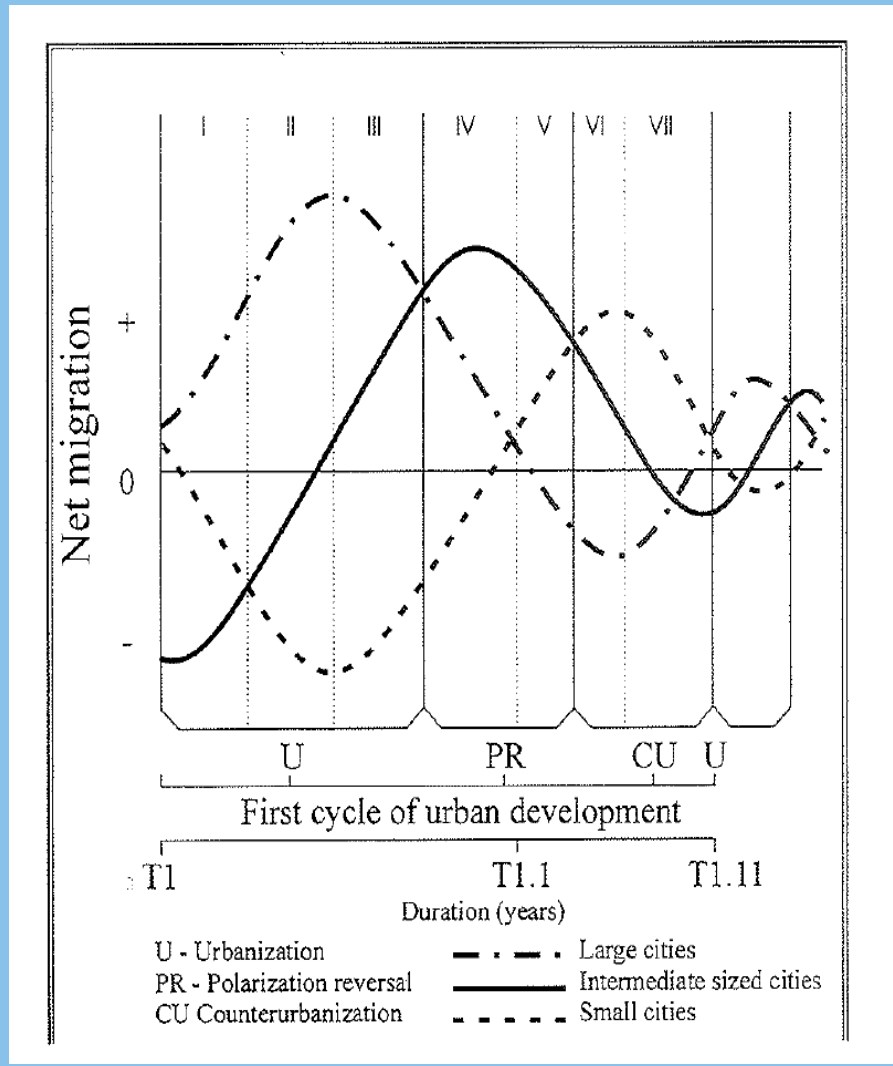
  Britain: CU since 1931

  W Germany: U 1950-61, PR 1961-70, CU 1970-87, PR 1987-95

  Estonia: U 1950-90, U 1990-2000

  Italy: U 1921-71, PR 1971-97

  Russia: U 1926-89, PR 1989-99



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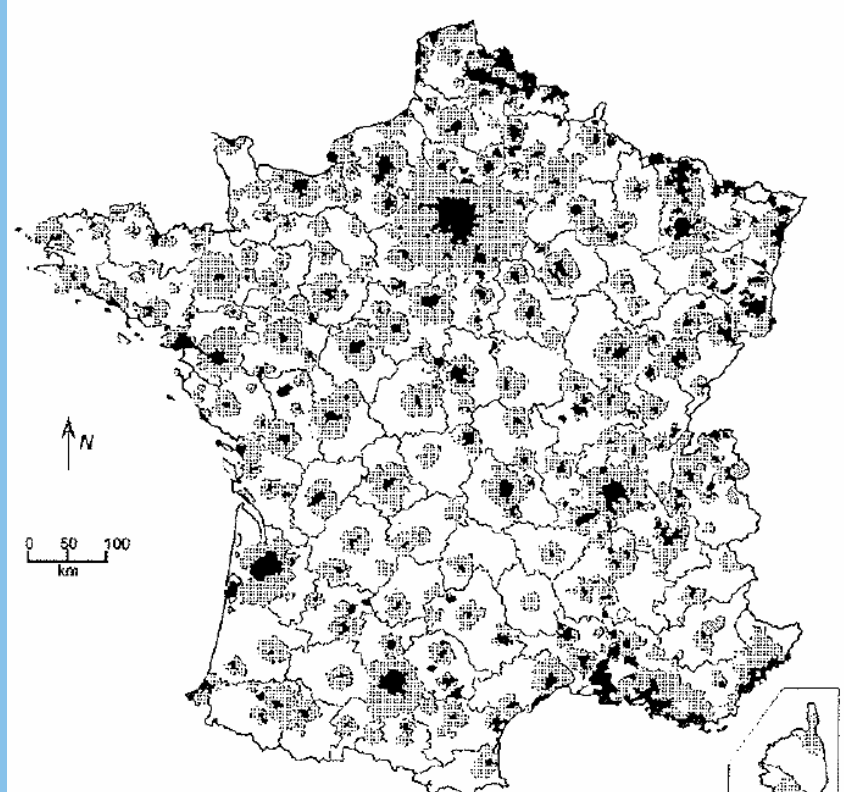
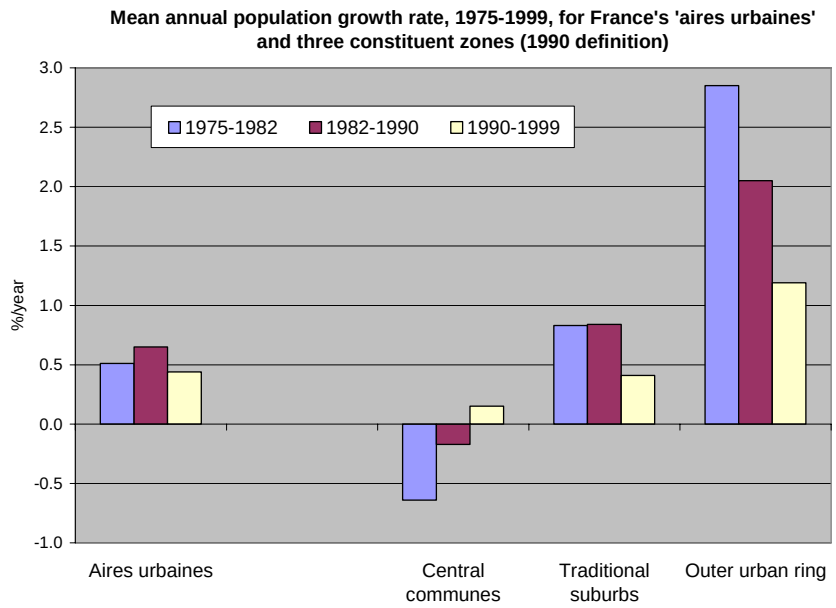
The wider European scene: urban sprawl

- Traditional preference for city life in Continental Europe, but now urban sprawl is increasing
- Example of France: expanding daily urban systems ('aires urbaines'): 1968 32,733 km2, 1999 176,000 km2 – see map:
- Population growth 1990-1999: core +0.15%, suburbs +0.41%, outer ring +1.19%. But this gap is smaller than in 2 previous periods – see chart:





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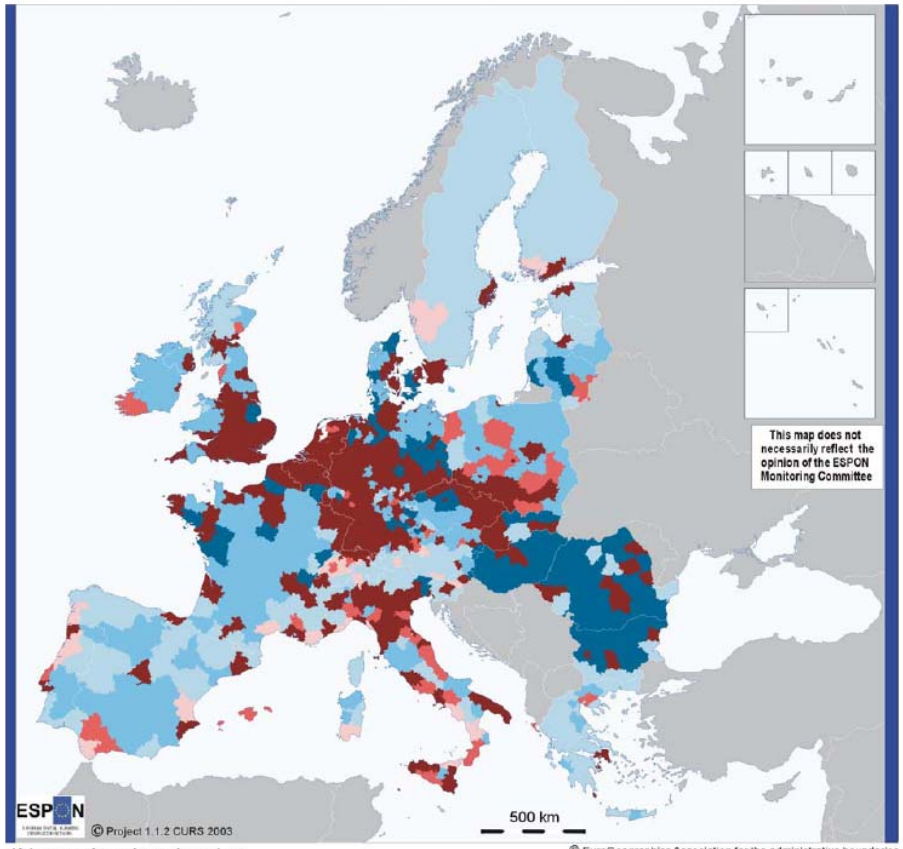
Implications for studying urban and rural areas

- Urban development trends not only make the task of urban definition more difficult: they challenge the underlying rationale for this
- ‘Is it possible and sensible to make a distinction between urban and rural areas in Europe?’ (Bengs & Schmid-Thomé, 2006, for ESPON)
- Yes, they say, but based on larger areas like England’s district types (they use the even larger NUTS3 regions)
- They derive 6 types, based on high/low degrees of urban influence (measured by density, urban size) X high/medium/low degrees of human intervention (measured by land cover) – see map (& Table 4)
- Seen as replacing an earlier regional typology of rural-urban spatial patterns by Moriconi-Ébrard and Eurostat (1999) – see map

Map 1 (ESPON 1.1.2)



© EuroGeographics Association for the administrative boundaries

Urban-rural typology, based on population density, FUA ranking and land cover

- **High urban influence, high human intervention**
- **High urban influence, medium human intervention**
- **High urban influence, low human intervention**
- **Low urban influence, high human intervention**
- **Low urban influence, medium human intervention**
- **Low urban influence, low human intervention**

Ranking of Functional Urban Areas (FUAs):
Origin of data: EUROSTAT, National Statistical Offices, National experts
Source: Nordregio, ESPON Data Base

Population density:
Origin of data: EU15 and CC's: Eurostat
Norway and Switzerland: National Statistical Offices
Time reference: 1999

Land cover types:
Origin of data: EEA, Corine Land Cover 90

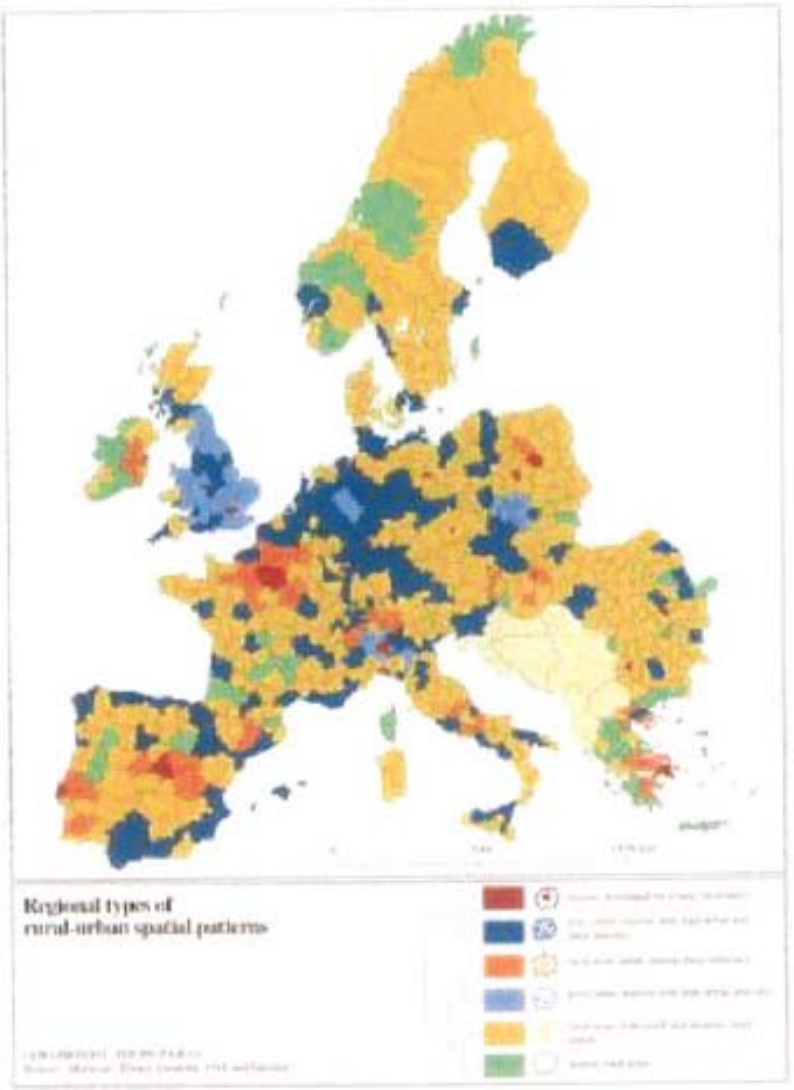
Source: ESPON Data Base

The criteria for urban influence:
- Population density above the average (107 inhabitants/km^2 in EU25+4)
- And/or at least a European level functional urban area (based on typology made by ESPON Action 1.1.1)

Degree of human intervention is estimated through the average shares of land covers (in EU23+3, no data on Cyprus, Malta and Norway):
High human intervention: at least the share of artificial surfaces above average (3,48%)
Medium human intervention: at least the share of agricultural land above average (50,36%)
Low human intervention: only the share of residual land use above average (46,16%)

Map 3.24. Urban–rural typology.

Map 2 (Moriconi-Ébrard and Eurostat)



Geopolis / Eurostat,

In conclusion

- Settlement size is still regarded as important for classifying space, but mainly for the bigger urban areas: a wider range of criteria is used for smaller settlements and more rural areas
- As suggested by Coombes (2004), three groups of criteria measure related but different aspects of 'urbanisation': settlement size, intensity or concentration of settlements, accessibility to services - hence the value of multi-dimensional classification like ESPON 1.1.2
- Also major issue of what territorial units to classify: administrative units usually tend to be unsatisfactory
- Probably the best general-purpose approach is a 2-level schema based on (1) physically-defined areas (e.g. 'urbanised areas') and (2) functionally-defined regions (e.g. 'metropolitan regions')
- Not a new idea – see UN (1969) and UN (1973). But it is high time that this sort of alternative was developed further, judging by the wealth of evidence on new forms of urbanisation recently assembled by National Research Council (2003) and Champion & Hugo (2004)