

# Urban-rural relations in Europe

ESPON 1.1.2



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## ESPON 1.1.2 Final Report

Edited by Christer Bengs & Kaisa Schmidt-Thomé

Centre for Urban and Regional Studies  
Helsinki University of Technology

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# Foreword

This report presents the results of the project “Urban-rural relations in Europe”, which was conducted within the ESPON 2000-2006 Programme. The project was co-ordinated by the Centre for Urban and Regional Studies, Helsinki University of Technology, and included the following institutions (partners, subcontractors and observing partners) and persons:

- Centre for Urban and Regional Studies (CURS), Helsinki University of Technology (HUT):  
Christer Bengs, Kaisa Schmidt-Thomé, Hanna Ristisuo, Marina Johansson, Anu Allt and Maëva Balay
- Centre for Urban Development and Environmental Management (CUEM), Leeds Metropolitan University:  
Simin Davoudi, Michelle Wishardt, Trevor Hart and Kevin Thomas
- OTB Research Institute for Housing, Urban and Mobility Studies, Technical University of Delft:  
Wil Zonneveld, Dominic Stead and Bas Waterhout
- TAURUS - Institute at the University of Trier:  
Christian Muschwitz and Simone Reinhart
- TERSYN Agence Européenne Territoires et Synergies:  
Jacques Robert
- Centre for Geographical Studies (CEG) University of Lisbon:  
Jorge Gaspar, Eduarda Marques da Costa, Ana Estevens, Mário Barroqueiro and Nuno Marques da Costa
- Regional Development and Policy Research Unit (RDPRU) University of Macedonia:  
Lois Labrianidis and Stella Kyvelou
- Economic and Financial Studies and Quantitative Methods (Sefemeq), Faculty of Economics, University of Rome Tor Vergata:  
Maria Prezioso, Nicola Lugerì and Alessandro Locatelli
- National Institute for Regional and Spatial Analysis (NIRSA), NUI Maynooth  
Jim Walsh and Jeanne Meldon
- Austrian Institute for Regional Studies and Spatial Planning (ÖIR):  
Friedrich Schindegger, Gabriele Tatzberger and Anton Hendrich
- Nordregio: Jörg Neubauer
- Mcrit: Andreu Ulied and Laura Turró Bassols
- VÁTI, Hungarian Public Company for Regional Development and Town Planning: Erzsébet Visy
- Ljubljana Urban Institute (LUZ): Maja Simoneti

The report has a number of authors. They have based their contributions on the various working documents of the project. The editors, Christer Bengs and Kaisa Schmidt-Thomé, are responsible for the final selection of the material and for the possible contradictions with the original partner contributions. Selected working material from the various Workpackages and case studies is available online (see Annex 8 for the links).

The summary has been compiled by Christer Bengs & Kaisa Schmidt-Thomé.

The Chapter 1 has been written by Christer Bengs, except for subchapter 1.3, which has been written by Kaisa Schmidt-Thomé. The section of urban-rural functional relations draws heavily on the contribution of Dominic Stead as well as the section 1.3.1. Chapter 1.

The Chapter 2 is based on the Working Documents of the Workpackage 4, written by Simin Davoudi, Michelle Wishardt, Trevor Hart and Kevin Thomas (see also Annex 8 for links to material that is available online).

The Chapter 3 has been written by Christer Bengs. Jörg Neubauer has elaborated the statistics and maps on national definitions. Tomas Hanell has contributed in developing the methodology. Hanna Ristisuo has elaborated the statistics and maps on the interrelations of various criteria and the harmonised typology. Eduarda Marques da Costa has produced the factor analysis and Kaisa Schmidt-Thomé has contributed comments all the way.

Chapter 4 has been written by Jim Walsh, Kaisa Schmidt-Thomé, Dominic Stead and Eduarda Marques da Costa. The findings were summarized in 4.3 by Kaisa Schmidt-Thomé. The analysis is based on case studies (see Annex 7 for the authors), which are also available online (see Annex 8 for the links).

Chapter 5 has been written by Christer Bengs.

Chapter 6 has been compiled by Christer Bengs drawing on policy conclusions from the other chapters as well as various contributions of Jacques Robert, Simin Davoudi and Kaisa Schmidt-Thomé.

The Annexes have been compiled by Kaisa Schmidt-Thomé, Hanna Ristisuo and Maëva Balay, drawing partially on the Working Documents of the Workpackage 2, written by Simone Reinhart and Christian Muschwitz.

CURS wants to express its gratitude to all partners involved for a very pleasant and professional co-operation, to a number of ESPON projects that have always been eager to collaborate as well as to the Co-ordination Unit and the Commission for their great assistance during the whole process. We also want to thank the national contact points, which have provided us with insightful comments.

The contents of this report are the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the ESPON Monitoring Committee.

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## 4 Socio-economic diversification and interconnectedness of urban and rural areas

This chapter extends the analysis of urban-rural relationships by the use of case studies. Through these studies more detailed information on processes and relevant policy initiatives are presented which complements the analysis undertaken at NUTS3 level. As urban-rural relations do not coincide with administrative boundary systems, analyses based on datasets organised according to such systems can only provide limited insights into the processes underlying and shaping urban-rural relationships.

The case studies are representative of the different categories identified in the typology of urban-rural characteristics (presented in Chapter 3) and they address three different themes:

- socio-economic diversification,
- territorial interdependence and
- land use profitability.

The first two deal mainly with functional relations while the third deals primarily with structural and power relations. Table 4.1 summarises the location of each case study in a matrix based on the area types and the three themes. The findings of the two first case study themes are presented in the subchapters 4.1 and 4.2 – and summarized in 4.3. The questions of land-use profitability and urban sprawl are dealt with in Chapter 5.

The case studies were prepared by project partners and some subcontractors, as well as by the two observing partners<sup>1</sup>. The case studies can be accessed at the website<sup>2</sup> of the project. Some key features of the cases are presented in Annex 7.

The case studies undertaken for this project build on the research undertaken for the Study Programme on European Spatial Planning (SPESP)<sup>3</sup>. The final report from the SPESP project identified several dimensions of economic, socio-cultural and political transitions which were considered to be underpinning changes in contemporary urban-rural relationships. These are summarised in Table 4.2.

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<sup>1</sup> see Annex 7 for the names and institutes of the authors.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.hut.fi/Units/Separate/YTK/research/ur/cases/>.

<sup>3</sup> SPESP 2000.

Table 4.1  
Elaborated case studies according to type of area and main themes.

		Socio-economic diversification		Territorial interdependence		Land use profitability	
		Functional relations				Structural relations	
	Case study areas	services, production of tangible goods	education/ knowledge production of intangible goods	flows of people, commuting	amenities (water, waste)	land vs. population	land prices, exploitation systems
<i>1 Urban, high human intervention</i>	NL: Randstad & Green Heart +	X			X		X
	NL: Blue City		X		X		X
	D: Berlin, Barnim				X		X
	IT: Rome						X
	FI: Helsinki						X
	SE: Stockholm						X
	ES: St.Miquel de B.						X
<i>2 Urban, medium human intervention</i>	France		X		X		
	Ireland		X		X		
<i>3 Urban, low human intervention</i>	France		X		X		
<i>4 Rural, high human intervention</i>	HU: Gyor		X		X		X
<i>5 Rural, medium human intervention</i>	UK: Ryedale		X		X		
	FR: Albi		X				X
	IR: County Meath		X		X		X
<i>6 Rural, low human intervention</i>	PT: Figueiro		X		X		
	PT: Algarve		X		X		
	SI: Dolenjska		X		X		

The SPESP case studies highlighted the need for new perspectives on urban-rural relationships with more attention to networking between places, more emphasis on the 'drivers' of the new relationships at different territorial scales and greater attention to policies and strategies that can facilitate new territorial relations. Furthermore, as a summary of the case study work undertaken, a list of key urban-rural relationships was identified:

- home-work relationships
- central place relationships
- relationships between metropolitan areas and urban centres in rural and intermediate areas
- relationships between rural and urban enterprises
- rural areas as consumption areas for urban dwellers
- rural areas as open spaces for urban areas
- rural areas as carriers of urban infrastructure
- rural areas as suppliers of natural resources for urban areas.

Table 4.2  
Key drivers of changes in urban-rural relationships

Theme / driver	Trends	Implications
1) Changing patterns of economic activity	Industries are increasingly open to competition on a global scale.	Traditional economic linkages between rural areas and nearby towns are weakened. The significance of endogenous initiatives and new partnerships is upgraded.
	Some activities are increasingly footloose and can avoid congested metropolitan areas. Vs. Some activities depend on the diversified milieus of the metropolises.	Territories find themselves positioned in a range of spatially-differentiated economic relations.
	Growing concern with soft infrastructure investment in training, education, research and institution building.	Also rural towns need to find innovative approaches to develop new activities and partnerships.
2) Dynamics of innovation and learning	Territories able to remain competitive need to have local cultures which promote continual adjustment and innovation. In some activities information can be codified for production over distances – in others the innovation is bound up with tacit knowledge resources.	Relation between innovation capability and territory, and between urban and rural areas, is not straightforward.
	It is difficult to avoid promoting spatial unevenness when fostering innovation capacity.	The critical role for territorial government is to promote the development of hard and soft infrastructures which promote learning capacity both in urban and rural areas.
3) Changing demographic profile	The population is ageing and fertility rates fall. The participation of women in the labour markets increases. The society is increasingly mobile.	Certain metropolitan “escalator” regions continue to draw attraction with their diversity. In rural areas also minor flows of active population can be significant.
4) Social change and differentiating lifestyles	The socio-spatial relations are increasingly diversified and fine-grained.	The mosaic of affluence and poverty is manifest in both urban and rural areas.
	The questions of lifestyle differentiation and consumption patterns have an important role in the economy.	Various urban and rural localities with special qualities (landscape, services) start to attract certain groups (eg. the elderly).
5) New bases for culture, identity and citizenship	Successful territories should be able to provide both “safety-assets” and “opportunity assets”.	Many rural areas and small towns lack “opportunity assets”.
	Design of place-identities (both “happy as sleepy” and “vital and dangerous”) becomes crucial.	New kind of professionalism within spatial planning needed.
6) Environmental sustainability as motivating concept	Need to address the environmental degradation is becoming more and more evident. Policies aiming at sustainability are being promoted.	The distinction between urban and rural areas are broken apart. Ecosystemic and biospheric ways of conceptualising territorial linkages come to the fore.
7) Challenge of government and policy-making.	Shift from rule-bound top-down government to multi-actor and multi-level governance is taking place.	The capacity of the sub-national government is crucial in building the urban-rural bridges.

In the SPESP these relationships were given no specific geographical reference – they were not related to any spatial context but were rather floating in space. The current project highlights the importance of the long-term trends and ruptures in urbanisation tendencies in various parts of Europe, referring to the differential urbanisation theory. The purpose of this chapter is thus to revise the SPESP findings – to locate the various key trends in the differentiated urbanisation patterns of Europe and to identify the key tendencies behind the urban-rural settings that seem to be of importance from the

perspective of spatial policy making. This then leads to the discussion whether the ESDP policy goals can be promoted through operationalising them in the form of concrete urban-rural sensitive measures.

#### **4.1 Socio-economic diversification and urban-rural relations**

As discussed in Chapter 1, the restructuring of both urban and rural areas result from complex interplays of global/European, national and regional/local factors. Here the purpose is to draw together findings concerning socio-economic diversification and the implications of the restructuring process for urban-rural relations. Firstly, two national level case studies (France and Ireland) are presented and compared with each other. Then findings from the regional level case studies are discussed, using examples of the most illustrative cases concerning the socio-economic questions. The findings of the two themes 4.1 and 4.2 are presented jointly in chapter 4.3.

##### **4.1.1 Comparison of country level case studies: France and Ireland**

###### *France*

In France, a new classification of urban and rural areas that takes account of their interactions was introduced in 1996/97. Two broad territorial categories were introduced: (a) areas with dominating urban character and (b) areas with dominating rural character. Each broad category is further sub-divided into a total of eight area types extending from "urban poles" to "isolated rural areas". Over the past two decades, significant contrasts have emerged in the demographic and labour market performances of the different area types. Urban poles experienced modest gains in population mainly because of negative migration flows while suburban municipalities that comprise peri-urban areas had significant gains in population mainly due to net in-migration. Within rural areas the main contrast is between 'rural areas under slight urban influence' and 'isolated rural areas' where population is declining. These adjustments according to the different area types have resulted in pronounced regional contrasts. The highest levels of population and employment increase occur in the west and south/southeast, which can be contrasted with declines in an axis extending from the northeast to the southwest, and also significant declines in older industrial areas especially in the northwest.

Detailed statistical analysis of the demographic and labour market performances of the different components of the urban system demonstrate the importance of socio-economic diversification trends. For example, industrial restructuring associated with the decline of traditional sectors has resulted in net out-migration and high unemployment in approximately 20 medium sized towns mainly in the northeast. The largest cities with a strong orientation to new economic sectors and significant administrative functions have experienced net-outmigration and low levels of employment increase. By contrast, medium sized towns with significant public functions and especially those located in the south of the country, had very high net-in migration and employment gains. Also there are numerous small towns in mainly coastal and mountain areas that are particularly attractive for retired people and for tourists. These areas have had above average gains in population and employment.

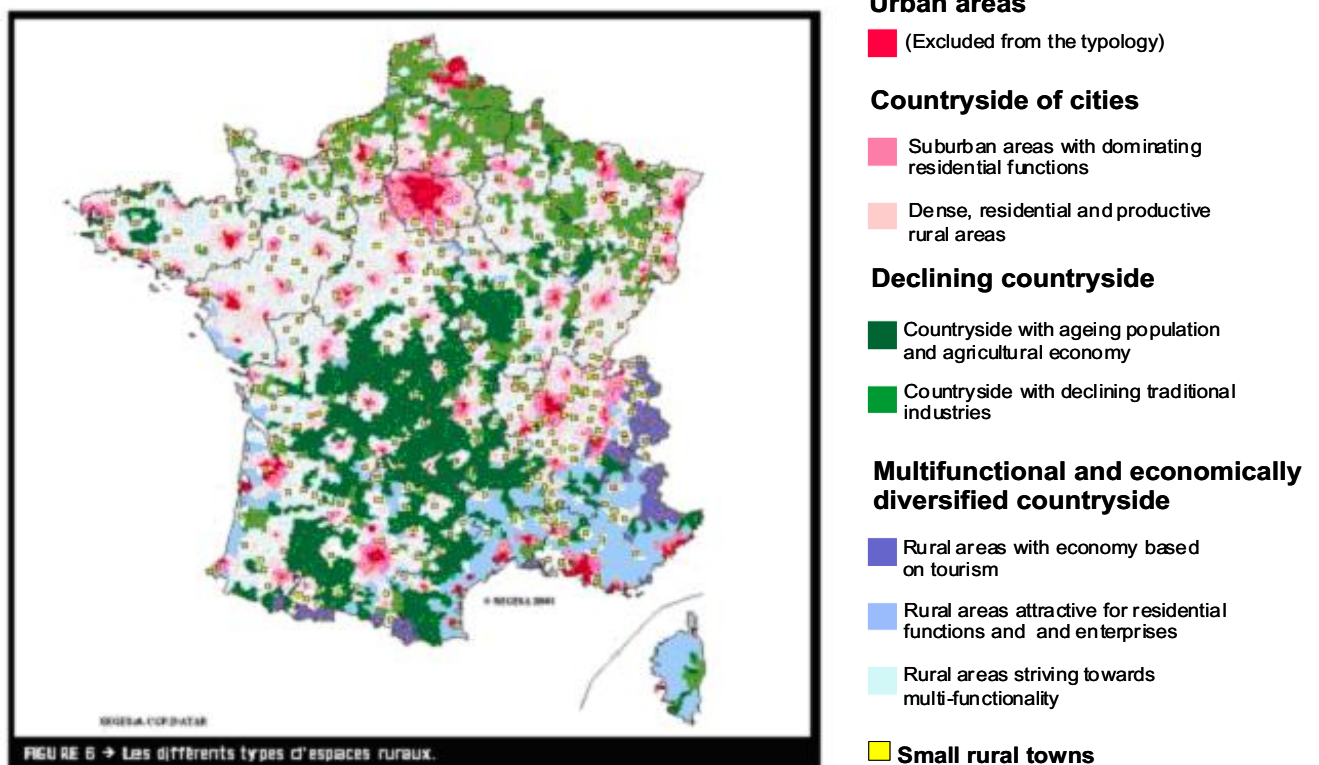
In 1999, there were 10.6 million persons (18 % of the total population) residing in the 'areas with dominating rural character'. Net in-migration is the dominant demographic

factor in most of the rural areas including both those that are near urban centres and those that are isolated. Medium and small towns continue to be the main providers of public and private services for rural areas.

The trends noted for France are due to several factors that include the tendency for high level personal and business services to concentrate in cities, the deconcentration of industrial employment and lower level public services from urban to rural areas, and the increasing role of rural tourism in distinctive parts of the country.

A typology of the countryside (Map 4.1) has been developed, which identifies three basic categories:

- The countryside of cities
- Multifunctional and economically diversified countryside,
- Declining countryside.



Map 4.1: Typology of the French rural areas  
 (Source: Quelle France rurale pour 2020? DATAR 2003)

Different types of urban-rural relations are associated with each category. The 'countryside of cities' consists of two sub-categories that represent different types of urban-rural relations. The first sub-category includes the first suburban ring of large and medium size urban areas, which are very densely populated and are continuing to grow rapidly as a result of in-migration. Many of the workers living in these areas are reliant on car-based commuting to work in the neighbouring urban centres. By contrast, in the outer suburban rings of the large and medium sized cities population densities are lower and a greater share of employment is in endogenous activities. Thus the urban-rural

interactions are less intense in terms of daily commuting, compared to those of the residents of the first suburban ring, but they may be more intense in terms of accessing deconcentrated public and private services.

The 'multifunctional and economically diversified countryside' can also be sub-divided into two sub-categories on the basis of the level of multifunctionality already achieved. For example, in the Mediterranean regions and, to a lesser extent, along the Atlantic coast and in the southwest there are many rural areas that are attractive for residential functions, tourism and enterprises. The dominant urban-rural relationship in these areas concerns the migration of retired people from cities as well as the interactions with medium size and large cities for the provision of services.

There are many rural areas, especially in the west, where primary agriculture and agri-food processing are still very important in terms of employment. Manufacturing employment is mostly located in small towns and is generally in decline. These areas are undergoing a rapid diversification towards mainly urban based tertiary activities. In these rural areas the dominant rural urban relations are generally over short distances to access services and employment opportunities.

The 'declining countryside' areas combine three handicaps: low population density, declining populations and mono-activities. Two sub-regions can be identified. The first are the mountain areas and hilly landscapes that are characterised by very low population density and an ageing population that is still heavily dependent on low productivity agriculture. Urban-rural relations in these areas are mainly concerned with the provision of basic services.

The second sub-category are rural areas with declining traditional industries and are found mainly in the northern half of the country. Employment has been heavily concentrated in traditional manufacturing sectors that are now in decline. The total population is ageing and declining due to natural decrease and net out migration. Urban-rural relations are mainly concerned with commuter flows between the countryside and small and medium sized towns in addition to interactions for access to basic services.

In summary, recent experience in France points to the emergence of new forms of urban-rural relations in the 1990s. The traditional dualism between urban and rural areas is being replaced in response to increasing economic diversification. New economic bases are now emerging related to residential functions and recreational activities. The growth of large agglomerations has slowed and a number of small and medium sized towns as well as rural areas have found new sources of prosperity.

### *Ireland*

The Irish case study exemplifies many trends that are similar to those described for France. However, there are important contextual differences not the least being that the share of the population living in rural areas in Ireland, after allowing for differences in definition, is more than twice the level in France. In many respects Ireland is more akin to a region in France. Another significant contrast between Ireland and France is that since the early 1990s Ireland has undergone a fundamental socio-economic transformation. Unlike most other regions in Europe the economy of Ireland is exceptionally open and, therefore, the location patterns of enterprise and employment are disproportionately influenced by globalisation considerations. The socio-economic transformation is driven by several factors but for this analysis of urban-rural relations the most notable are, on

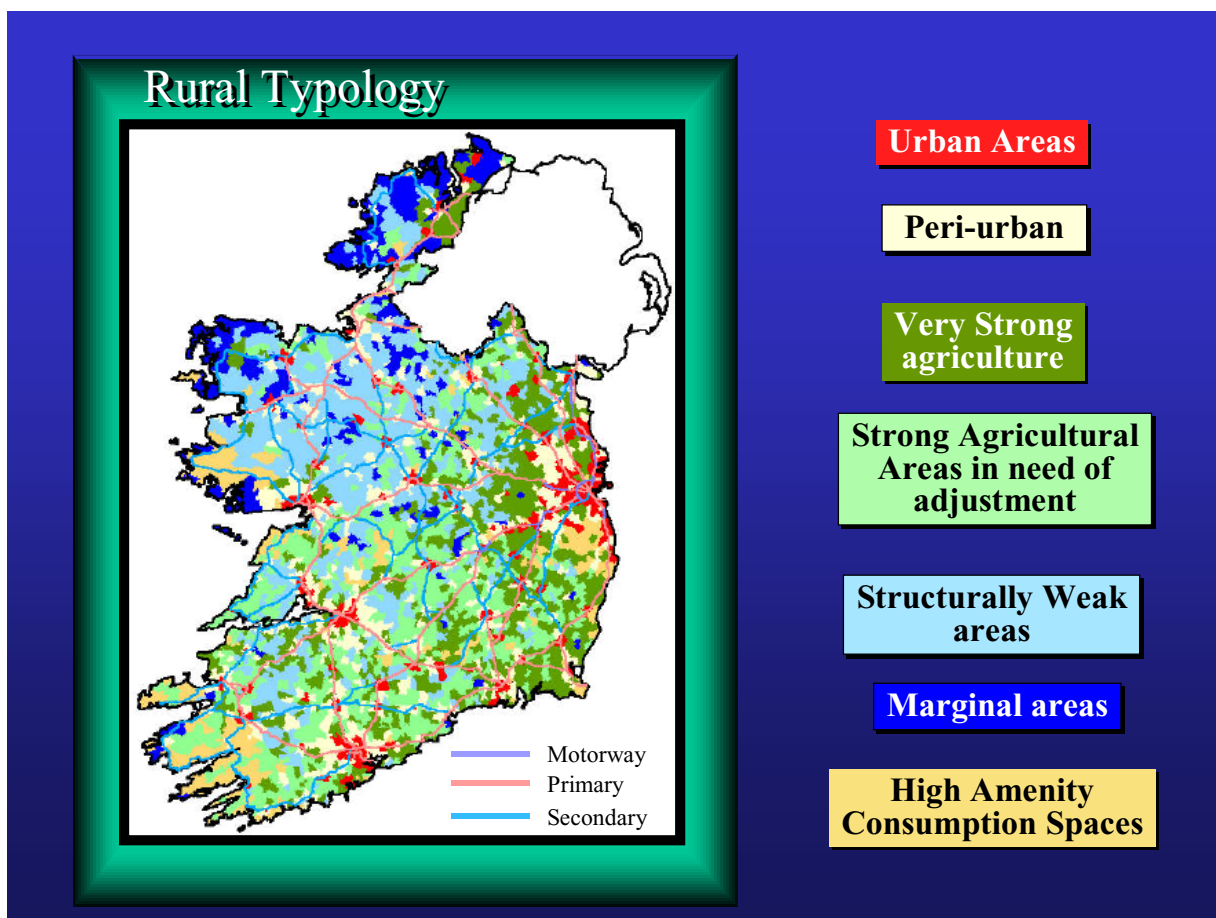
the one hand, the very high reliance on foreign direct investment in high value added sectors, which has been mostly concentrated in the larger urban centres and, on the other hand, the very significant decline in the role of primary agriculture and other traditional industries, especially in rural areas.

The socio-economic transformation since the early 1990s has significantly altered the traditional patterns of urban-rural relations. Distinctive peri-urban zones are evident around all of the major centres of population. More significantly the geographical extent of these zones has expanded since the mid 1990s in response to several factors. The single most important driver has probably been the cost of housing in the larger urban centres, especially Dublin. In a context of a very rapidly increasing work force and simultaneously changes in household structures (the total number of households increased much more quickly than the population) the supply of housing was unable to keep pace with demand, which resulted in spiralling house prices. In response increasing numbers of people opted for housing at very considerable distances from their places of employment. The deconcentration of population has been facilitated by increased levels of car ownership and by improvements in the road and commuter rail infrastructures. The dominant types of rural-urban relations in the expanding peri-urban areas are related to commuter flows and also longer distance movements for higher level personal and public services. There are also several locations on the fringes of the greater Dublin commuting hinterland that are in high demand for second homes and holiday homes, and thereby constituting another new type of rural urban relation, especially in the southeast of Ireland.

Beyond the expanded peri-urban zones approximately 14 % of the population reside at very low densities (average of 15 persons per sq km) in rural areas that cover just over half of the country. In these areas characterised by high dependence on low productivity agriculture, a weak urban system and low quality transport infrastructure there has been a long history of net out migration and population decline. Consequently rural urban relations are more localised and mainly confined to travel for low level public and private services as well as short distance commuting. However, there is one form of longer distance rural urban interaction that has broader and longer term consequences. It relates to movement of school leavers to universities and other third level educational institutions, which are mostly based in the larger urban centres. The majority of students from rural areas remain in the urban areas after they graduate into the labour market.

Finally, there are some relatively remote rural areas that have experienced a significant transformation in the 1990s. These are usually areas of outstanding natural beauty where strong tourism and recreation related economies have developed. These areas have also attracted large numbers of in-migrants, many of whom have set up new enterprises that are catering for markets that are frequently in very distant urban centres. Between 1991 and 2002 the total population of these rural areas, which to a large extent share the characteristics of new consumption spaces, had the highest levels of population and employment increase. The rural urban relations in these areas are frequently over long distances and take the form of visitor flows, migrant labour from urban areas outside of Ireland, and movements of high quality craft and other products to national and international markets. At the same time for many of the indigenous traditional residents of these areas their urban-rural relations are mostly very local for access to basic services. One of the consequences of high levels of tourism related activities is a high demand for second homes, which increases the level of competition faced by local home buyers.

Map 4.2:  
 Typology of rural areas in Ireland (prepared by Celine McHugh and Jim Walsh)



The policy responses to improving urban-rural relations in Ireland are contained in the White Paper on Rural Development and the National Spatial Strategy, which has recently been augmented by Strategic Planning Guidelines for each region. Considerable emphasis is placed on strengthening linkages between rural and urban areas and on developing local and regional capacities through a network of Gateways and Hub towns. In response to widespread public controversy concerning housing in the countryside, new planning guidelines have been prepared.

In summary, the high economic growth rates of globalising Dublin have contributed to the further supremacy of the capital. Around Dublin the urbanisation pressure is very high, resulting from the rapid increase of land prices in urban areas together with perception of enhanced quality of life in rural areas.

The development of rural population over recent decades shows an increasingly complex pattern. Declines are evident in the most marginal rural areas and increases are confined mostly to the commuting hinterlands of the larger urban centres. Increase is also occurring in some coastal zones where there has been evidence of greater economic diversification particularly in the tourism sector. The increase in consumption of leisure and tourism related services has given some rural areas new roles as consumption spaces that are vitally linked to often-distant urban centres. The areas with traditional agricultural sector

have been prone to decline. Efforts to compensate the loss of agricultural employment have resulted in increasing reliance on either farm based diversification or off-farm employment. These adjustments have taken place especially in the rural areas where linkages to urban areas can be established.

### *Summary*

A distinction can be made between those new urban-rural relations that correspond with more or less *irreversible flows* and those which correspond to *daily, weekly or more regular mobility* between urban and rural areas. The first category refers to flows associated with out-migration from the cities to the countryside, and relocation of productive activities from large urban centres to smaller ones or to the suburban areas, and also to more distant rural areas that offer the prospects of a higher quality of life. The second category involves journeys to work, plus access to services and recreational facilities, motivated by perceptions of the attractiveness of places and the quality of life.

In both France and Ireland the long and short terms interactions correspond with broad classes of rural areas in the following way:

- Peri-urban zones: Interaction on the long term is about in-migration of both young families and retired population. In the scale of Ireland this concerns especially the peri-urban zone of major cities, whereas in France also most medium-sized cities have such zones. In the Dublin hinterland there is also an increasing demand for second homes and holiday homes. In terms of short term interaction the key question is the intense commuting. Also higher level personal and public services bring about movements over long distances.
- Low-density rural areas: What comes to long-term interaction, the movement of school-leavers to urban areas with higher level educational institutions is significant. The daily urban-rural relations are more localised , travelling for public and private services as well as short distance commuting. The pattern will be affected if the shift from the high dependency on low productivity agriculture towards farm based diversification of off-farm employment proceeds.
- Remote areas with natural beauty & Rural areas in coastal regions: Long-terms movements include in-migration to the new consumption spaces and establishment of new enterprises catering non-local markets. A special feature is the in-migration of retired people. Short-term movements include frequent flows of visitors, migrant labour and products to and from major cities or abroad. However, most indigenous traditional residents remain in the sphere of very local urban-rural interaction.

It seems that several key features of the socio-economic restructuring are similar but the pace of change is more rapid in Ireland, where the viability of major centres is highly influenced by global players of the economy and where the primary agriculture is experiencing a very significant decline. In France also many medium-sized cities prosper, especially if they are located in attractive regions.

#### **4.1.2 Findings from regional cased studies**

##### *Randstad and the Green Heart*

The case study of the urban rural relationships in the Randstad and the Green Heart illustrates the role of spatial planning in managing the increasing pressures on the Green

Heart. In contrast to most of the case studies there are no parts of the Green Heart that may be regarded as inaccessible; it is estimated that 95 % of the land area is within a ten minute drive from a motorway. Improvements in accessibility coupled with a desire among a large segment of the population for rural living has placed the Green Heart under considerable pressures for many years. Since the 1960s planning strategies have sought to promote different forms of compact urbanisation while strongly supporting the preservation of rural open spaces. In 1977 the policy document on rural areas extended the role of the Green Heart from its primary function as an agriculture resource to also include the roles of leisure pursuits and nature conservation. Later plans highlighted the potential for functions such as tourism and recreation along with nature protection.

One of the consequences of improvements in transport infrastructure is that there has been some relocation of employment to the edges of the cities, often to sites near motorway junctions, and also the emergence of the Randstad as almost a single regional labour market for some professions. Associated with these trends are high levels of commuting within the Randstad and also into and out of the polycentric zone enclosing the Greenheart. The case study illustrates that even a long term commitment to spatial planning and managing the tensions between urban and rural areas is difficult in a context of high densities of population.

#### *The Algarve region in Southern Portugal*

This case study illustrates very well the outcomes in respect of urban-rural relations from local economic restructuring resulting from increasing levels of international tourism in southern Europe. Analysis of demographic trends since the 1980s reveals significant contrasts between 'repulsive areas' (mostly inland mountainous areas) and the coastal areas. It is also evident that improvements in transport infrastructure and investments in selected seaside resorts beyond the core coastal areas are helping to revitalise some rural areas that were previously in decline.

There are several effects associated with the high reliance on tourism. The role of agriculture is greatly diminished due to the dynamics of local labour markets which draw rural labour into urban based tourism services, and also due to the diminishing productivity of a residual ageing rural workforce, especially in the inland areas. Thus the traditional primary production based urban-rural relations have been severely reduced and replaced by new types of relations such as increasing supply and demand for seasonal homes. The role of the larger urban centres as the economic core areas and the principal employment locations is confirmed by data on commuting. These data point to the commuter hinterlands becoming more extensive and also to increasing levels of interaction between the urban centres contributing to the formation of urban axes as along the coast.

There are several effects associated with the high reliance on tourism. The role of agriculture is greatly diminished due to the dynamics of local labour markets which draw rural labour into urban based tourism services, and also due to the diminishing productivity of a residual ageing rural workforce, especially in the inland areas. Thus the traditional communities in these areas and weakens the capacity to provide urban based services to dispersed rural dwellers. By contrast, in the rapidly expanding areas associated with the influx of international tourists the landuse pressures are unsustainable in some cases. Already there is evidence that the process of urban expansion into formerly rural areas has brought about the irreversible destruction of important habitats. The seasonality of tourism gives rise to particular problems in relation to water and sewerage infrastructure

capacity that impact on both the visitors and the indigenous population. A summary of the functional and structural tensions in the area is contained in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Functional and structural tensions: impacts on urban-rural relations  
(Based on: CC DR-ALGARVE 2004 and AMAL 1999)

Domain	Tensions	Impacts	
		Positive	Negative
Land and landscape	• High population concentration in the coastal areas	*	**
	• Depopulation of the inland areas		***
	• Development model causing swift, profound structural changes in the settlement patterns	*	**
	• Multi-nuclei spatial organisation (Faro – Loulé - S. Brás de Alportel - Olhão)	***	
	• Housing seasonality		***
Conservation of nature	• Ria Formosa natural park		***
	• Disruption of important habitats		***
	• Re-naturalized biotopes (e.g., the <i>sobreirais</i> and the dry-land orchards of carob and almond trees)	*	**
Environmental quality	• Significant improvements in water treatment, storage, transport and distribution	**	*
	• Significant improvements in the treatment of urban solid waste	**	*
Tourism and Leisure	• Socio-economic structure dominated by the tourist industry	**	*
	• Strong seasonality		***
	• Heavy reliance upon one single "product" (sun and sea)		***
	• Naturally favourable conditions (sun and sea)	***	
Agriculture	• Decrease in the share of the agricultural sector, in association with the abandonment of traditional agricultural systems	*	**
	• Increased economic value of the traditional products	***	
	• Exploration of the richest land for specific productions (fresh vegetables, ornamental flowers and plants, subtropical citrus fruits)	***	
Employment	• Increased reliance of the tertiary sector, particularly tourism-related sectors (insufficiencies in the remaining sub-sectors)		***
	• The secondary sector has a relatively insignificant role in the region - in particular the canning industry has lost much of its importance in recent years		***
	• Increasing importance of fish farming (including quality products such as oysters)	**	*
Infrastructure and accessibility	• Improvements in the road network over the past decade (external accessibility)	***	
	• Intra-regional accessibilities remain insufficient		***
	• Enormous pressure upon the Faro airport in the summer	*	**
	• Insufficient education and health infrastructure		***
	• Heavy pressure upon the infrastructure, facilities and services at times of especially high seasonal concentration		***

### *Ryedale in North Yorkshire*

This case study examines the effects of counter-urbanisation on the 'remote rural' district of Ryedale in North Yorkshire. The area is one of low density where the population of 51,000 has been increasing rapidly over the past twenty years. Net in-migration has been the dominant influence on the population dynamics, though much of the in-migration consists of elderly people. There is an on-going transition from agriculture and manufacturing towards services. In contrast to some other rural areas experiencing counter-urbanisation the majority of the service jobs in Ryedale are in low paid part-time services.

One of the most notable features of Ryedale is the increasing demand for houses by in-migrants from the larger urban centres in the region. There is also an increasing demand for rural houses as second and holiday homes. The increased demand for second homes can lead to a number of undesirable outcomes such as local housing crises with members of the local population having to participate in more competitive property markets, and also in some areas further decline in the number of shops and other services as holiday / second home owners tend to make less use of local providers and since they are present in the area for only parts of the year. The evidence from north Yorkshire is that rural service providers are benefiting less than they might have expected from urban-rural migration.

The trends described in Ryedale are the outcome of several factors including more people willing to undertake car based longer journeys to work; the decline in job opportunities in rural areas and the increasing need for off-farm employment for members of farm households; planning restrictions on greenfield sites which encourages housing supply in the smaller urban centres; and for some the lure of the countryside as a venue for a higher quality of lifestyle.

The policy implications arising from the experience in North Yorkshire include the need for closer integration of rural and urban policies and for greater co-ordination of local and regional plans. In response to the local housing crises special measures have been introduced to selectively permit development of protected green field sites subject to a number of conditions. This is an attempt to encourage younger and lower income local people to remain in the area and to counteract the effects of urban-rural migration.

#### *Region of Gyor in Hungary*

The Region of Gyor in Hungary exemplifies the challenges for rural urban relations, and in particular the consequences of the political transitions since the early 1990s, in the former socialist countries of Eastern Europe. Pre 1990 economic development was mainly lead by state controlled heavy industries, which were located in the urban areas. The labour intensive growth of heavy industries involved the concentration of people in large housing estates in the cities. Much of the industrial labour force was made up of migrants from rural areas. Apart from the immediate hinterland of Budapest the populations of the rural settlements throughout Hungary were in decline.

Since 1991 there have been fundamental changes in the management of the economy and also in the distribution of powers between local and central administrations. As a result there have been some very significant changes in population distribution. Most notably there has been a large increase in the volume of out-migration from the larger urban industrial centres to the surrounding rural areas. Most of those moving were escaping from the gloomy housing conditions and the deteriorating inner cities. Others left the cities because they had lost their employment in the course of the industrial restructuring and could no longer afford the increasing costs of privatised housing. The increased level of political independence given to local governments in relation to land management made it more difficult to achieve co-operation in spatial planning.

Gyor is the largest city in the West-Transdanubian region and has been a major industrial centre. While the food and textile sectors have declined it remains a strong centre for the manufacturing of trucks. Since the late 1990s there has been a shift towards a knowledge based economy with the establishment of three major research centres. Gyor is also

favoured by its strategic location in the growth corridor connecting Budapest and Vienna and it is also a gateway city near the northwestern national border of Hungary.

In 2001 the municipalities in the region surrounding Gyor formed an association to promote co-operation between the urban and rural areas. Several new firms have been established in the municipalities neighbouring Gyor and there is a growing demand for housing in these districts. The housing market is also distorted by increasing levels of speculative (foreign) investment in property leading to an escalation in land prices.

Population in the neighbouring municipalities is increasing mainly due to in migration and approximately 70 % of the employees are commuting to work in the urban region of Gyor. There are also significant counterflows of workers on a daily basis as many urban employees work in the firms located in the hinterland, many of which are linked to the industries in the city. The relocation of some employment outside the city and the new patterns of migration have altered the traditional socio-economic divisions between the urban and rural areas leading to a convergence in socio-economic profiles. While the nature of urban-rural relations has changed the intensity of urban-rural integration is less than it might be due to deficiencies in the transportation systems and networks.

### *Summary*

The link between global-local relations and urban-rural relations becomes highlighted also in several regional case studies. Especially the role played by international tourism in socio-economic restructuring of the Algarve region has had rather drastic urban-rural implications. The concentration of population in the multi-poled coastal zone on the cost of the more continental, rural areas has been rapid. If the hinterlands are to benefit from the tourist flows, their service providers must form alliances with the service providers in the major urban agglomerations and holiday resorts. The overcrowding facing the south may turn to the advantage of the north.

The role of leisure time is of increasing significance in the restructuring of the economy. Access to consumption spaces is an important aspect from the perspective of urban-rural relations. High quality environments are as magnets not only for residents but also for enterprises. However, the regional cases tell still more about relocations of enterprises to the outer rings of urban agglomerations than about moving to the more remote countryside. In this respect the decisions related to infrastructure investments play of decisive role.

## **4.2 Interconnectedness of urban and rural areas**

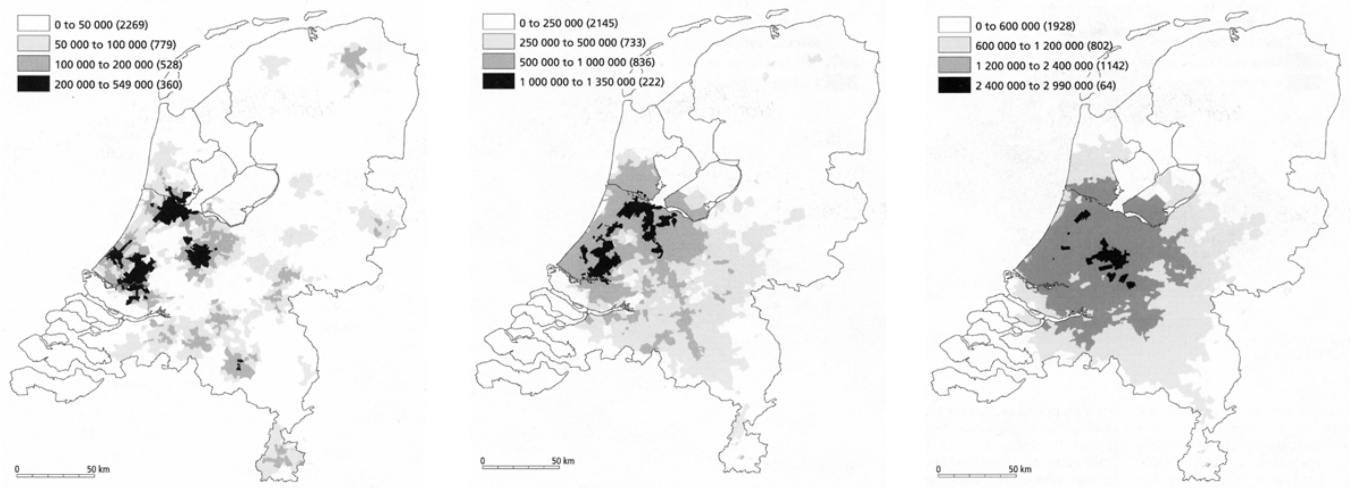
### **4.2.1 Commuter catchments**

The increasing reach of cities and towns into their hinterland is the consequence of a range of factors that are similar in most if not all of the case studies. Factors include the increasing ownership and use of the car, the development of new transport infrastructure, differences between urban and rural property prices, changes in information and communication technology (ICT), changes in the economy and the labour market, and environmental and quality of life factors (some of these factors are discussed in more detail in section 4.2.2) These factors have all contributed to trends in suburbanisation, periurbanisation and 'rurbanisation' and have led to the enlargement of functional urban regions and the increasing functional interdependence of urban and rural areas within

those regions. For many residents of rural areas without access to a car, employment opportunities have declined.

In 1850 the **Green Heart** (NL), was still difficult to cross and most new infrastructure was built around it. Since then, this picture has changed and a substantial amount of development has taken place, including housing, industry and road infrastructure. By the end of the 20th century, the Green Heart is no longer an inaccessible part of the country: more than 95 % of the land areas of the Green Heart was within a 10-minute drive from a motorway. During the 20th century, the relatively isolated position of the villages and towns within the Green Heart was replaced by high accessibility, with important consequences for urbanisation and development pressures. It meant for example that during the 20th century the Green Heart became a highly desirable place to live within reasonably close proximity to the Randstad's cities.

In terms of accessibility to employment in the area, it has been reported<sup>4</sup> that the number of jobs within a 15-minute commute is highest in the Randstad's urban centres: Amsterdam, Rotterdam, the Hague and Utrecht. However, this picture changes when a longer commuting time is considered. The number of jobs within reach of a 30-minute commute is highest in suburban areas between the large urban centres. And within a 45-minute commute, the number of jobs within reach is quite similar for almost all parts of the Randstad, including the Green Heart. This leads van Ham et al to conclude that the Randstad is close to being a single regional labour market for some professions. Consequently, the Green Heart not only offers a pleasant residential environment, it provides a very attractive and convenient location for people who want to maximise their opportunities in the labour market, particularly those in higher income groups (long distance commuting is obviously less attractive for lower income groups). In addition, accessibility is likely to become more dependent on information and communication technology (ICT) for a growing group of people. As new developments in ICT take place, new possibilities for working and living at a distance may open up for an increasing



(a) jobs within a 15-minute commute

(b) jobs within a 30-minute commute

(c) jobs within a 45-minute commute

Map 4.3: Accessibility to jobs within the Randstad (Source: van Ham et al 2001).

<sup>4</sup> van Ham et al 2001.

number of people, with likely consequences for greater land use pressures on rural areas such as the Green Heart and further spatial fragmentation.

Another study<sup>5</sup> suggests that although commuting time for residents of the Green Heart did not change very substantially between 1980 and 1990, the mode of transport did. In 1980, 55 % of commuting journeys were car-based and ten years later 65 % of commuting journeys were by car. During the same period, the proportion of travel-to-work journeys by public transport decreased from 12 % to 7 % and the proportion of journeys by foot decreased from 4 % to 2 % (ibid.). The use of the bicycle for commuting journeys remained fairly unchanged between 1980 and 1990. Commuting trends of residents in the four main cities in the Randstad during this period were quite different to the situation in the Green Heart.

In an attempt to reinforce relations with the Barcelona Metropolitan Region (BMR) by constructing new roads and introducing of a faster train service, the case study of **Sant Miquel de Balenyà** (ES) has experienced the suburbanisation of population and employment. Similar trends can also be seen in the cases of **Berlin** and **Barnim** (DE). In **Győr-Moson-Sopron** (HU), suburbanisation and car commuting has increased whilst public transport services remain infrequent. New industries have been developed on greenfield sites while older industrial areas have become derelict, decentralising the pattern of employment and commuting. Various footloose industries have contributed to this trend, some of which have since moved away because of the end in tax exemptions and increases in the cost of labour (e.g. IBM in Székesfehérvár).

In **Ryedale** (UK), within the commuter belt of prosperous cities such as Leeds and York, increases in commuting are related to factors such as increasing car ownership and use and, more specifically, the declining costs of motoring compared to average income levels. The decline in 'traditional' rural employment such as agriculture and the lower financial returns from the sector have also led to shifts in the nature and location of employment that rural residents are now engaged in. An increasing number of residents have more than one job and these jobs are often in urban areas. Limited opportunities for local training also adds to increasing work-related travel. The situation in Ireland is quite similar in the fact that agricultural decline and urban prosperity has led to increasing commuter catchments from rural to urban areas. Differences in property prices have also had an important influence here. The rapid growth in the Irish economy during the 1980s and 1990s and the concentration of high value-added industries (e.g. electronics, pharmaceuticals, software design) and highly skilled employment opportunities in large urban areas, notably **Dublin** (IRL), has also resulted in the greater attraction of the urban areas for employment.

In the **Algarve** (PT), the decline in agriculture and manufacturing in rural areas and the growth in employment opportunities in urban areas (due for example to increases in tourism and the service sector) have been key influences on commuting change. **Dolenjska** (SI) has experienced similar declines in agriculture and manufacturing in rural areas. In the Algarve, urban areas have become substantially more prosperous in comparison to rural areas. Tourism has played a key role here. Large new developments, such as the University of the Algarve, have also created new functions for the region and increased the range of employment opportunities in the urban area. Cities in the region have reaffirmed their predominant role as employment centres (particularly in the case

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<sup>5</sup> Clark and Kuijpers-Linde 1994.

of the service sector), drawing labour from far beyond their respective municipal boundaries. This phenomenon is clearly manifest in recent commuting patterns. This corroborates the idea that the influence of the cities can be felt in increasingly farther areas and that the level of inter-city interaction is growing. These changes are closely associated with the dynamics of employment and economic activity and, at the same time, with improvements in the accessibility and transport system and in the spatial mobility of the families.

### *Summary*

The enlargement of the functional urban regions has contributed to an increasing flexibility what comes to employment opportunities, but it seems to come coupled with an increasing work-related travel. As the growth is in most cases associated with increasing ownership and use of private cars, the sustainability of the tendency is questionable.

#### **4.2.2 The causes and effects of migration between urban and rural areas**

Population change in many (but not all) of the case studies has experienced similar trends, although the time at which they have been experienced has not always been concurrent. The out-migration towards the suburban ring is a common feature in many of the case studies, including the British, Dutch, French, German, Hungarian, Irish and Slovenian cases. In the British, Dutch, French, German and Irish cases, population shifts beyond the suburbs into more rural areas has also taken place.

Almost half of the 49000 population of **Rydale** (GB) currently live in isolated rural dwellings and small villages. Over the last decade, population growth in this rural authority has been higher than in any other part of the surrounding region (Yorkshire and the Humber). The population of the region barely increased between 1982 and 2002 (<2 %), whilst Ryedale experienced a 18 % growth in population. These population changes are mainly attributable to migration than natural replacement. Furthermore, the area experienced some significant changes in the age structure of the population, with major increases in the older age groups and large decreases in the younger age groups (children and young adults). During this period, there has been a substantial amount of out-migration of young adults as a result of factors such as the lack of education, employment and training opportunities, and the scarcity of affordable housing. The area has a significant number of second homes: second homes account for more than 5 % of the total housing stock in the area and, in some villages, the proportion of second homes is as high as 40 % of the total housing stock. A wide variety of factors are thought to contribute to the recent population trends including quality of life issues, the growing prosperity of urban areas in the region (e.g. York and Leeds), new opportunities for home-working (via ICT for example), the declining costs of car ownership and use in comparison to average income, and the prevalence of dispersed employment and shopping areas.

The 1960s and 1970s saw substantial rates of population increase in the rural **Green Heart** (NL) and relatively low rates of population growth in the surrounding cities of the Randstad, despite the strategy of 'concentrated deconcentration' and the designation of overspill locations for new development. These increases in the growth of the rural population were fuelled by a variety of factors such as intense development pressures from the surrounding urban area and increasing levels of car ownership and use. From

the 1980s onwards, the growth in the population of urban areas was increased through a new policy approach that gave more emphasis to urban regeneration, the compact city and the control of development outside urban areas. By the mid-1990s, population growth in urban areas was approaching the national average growth rate, and growth in the Green Heart had almost been stemmed to the national average. However, a number of factors continued to make rural living more attractive, including environment and quality of life issues<sup>6</sup>. Researchers<sup>7</sup> point to a policy inconsistency that has contributed to this situation: national policies to restrict growth in the Green Heart being promoted at the same time as government initiated incursions into the Green Heart, such as a high speed train line and increases in motorway capacity.

In the 1970s and 1980s, population change in **France** was generally characterised by urbanisation and rural depopulation but this has now substantially changed. Since the early 1990s, the populations of many urban areas have not experienced further increases and there has been growth in certain rural areas such as 'accessible rural' areas and 'attractive rural' areas. 'Accessible rural' areas grew as a consequence of their proximity to urban areas (within commuting distance), whilst 'attractive rural' areas grew as a consequence of tourism and retirement (mainly in coastal and alpine regions). Substantial population increases have also taken place in suburban locations. Small and medium-sized towns also experienced growth in both population and prosperity. Many rural areas outside the 'accessible rural' and 'attractive rural' categories experienced population decline. Some second homes are being converted to 'first' homes, particularly in the vicinity of large urban areas and in the more popular retirement areas. Some of the reasons put forward to explain these population trends include the dispersal of employment from urban centres, ICT (and new possibilities for working), and increases in car ownership and use.

Because of the city's recent history, population trends in and around **Berlin** (DE) are somewhat different (in timescale at least) when compared to many other German city regions. Nevertheless, the region has experienced some typical trends in population change, albeit over a shorter time period. Until German reunification in 1990, Berlin had been separated from its hinterland for decades. Thereafter, emigration to the surrounding region (Brandenburg) took place. The decision to relocate the German government and various state institutions in Berlin led to a large increase in commercial and residential developments in the 1990s. However, the total population of the city in 2002 was still lower (by 2 %) than a decade previously. A large number of people chose to move to suburban areas and smaller centres of Brandenburg where property prices were substantially lower than in Berlin. More recently still, the population has also increased in the more rural areas that are still within commuting reach of the city. As well as the difference in property prices between Berlin and the surrounding area, a number of other factors have contributed to these population changes. These include new transport connections and infrastructure, and quality of life issues.

During the 1970s, Hungary experienced both urban and rural depopulation, except in the major cities. The fastest rates of decline were experienced in the smallest settlements. These trends continued during the 1980s, during which time urban depopulation in the larger cities also took place. In the 1990s, a substantial amount of out-migration occurred

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<sup>6</sup> Stead & Hoppenbrouwer 2004

<sup>7</sup> van der Valk & Faludi 1997

to the suburbs due to quality of life (e.g. urban pollution, poor housing conditions in urban areas), employment change (e.g. the closure of old industries) and increasing housing costs in urban areas. Between 1990 and 2001, the population of Hungary decreased by almost 2 %, whilst in the **Győr-Moson-Sopron** region, population increased by 1.5 %. During this period, the population of the city of Győr remained more or less constant, whereas the population in the Győr urban-region grew by 5 %. Settlements neighbouring Győr (mainly rural in nature) experienced population growth rates between 4 and 8 %: in-migration gain was the main reason for this growth. Housing development close to the city and along the main transport routes grew particularly fast. At present, around two-thirds of the employed population in the Győr urban region work in the city of Győr and around 70 % of the employed population living in the settlements around Győr commute to the city. The typical new residents in the settlements neighbouring Győr are young people in their first home.

In Ireland, two-fifths of the population reside in rural areas, making it still a relatively rural country in comparison to many other European member states. The population of rural Ireland is dispersed: housing is often in the form of single remote dwellings or small villages. Whilst there has been a significant decline in the rural population over the long term, the trend has been reversed in many areas over recent decades. There have been substantial population increases in the commuting hinterlands of the larger urban areas, especially in peri-urban areas, as well as in some coastal zones where there has been greater economic diversification, particularly tourism. The most marginal rural areas, on the other hand, have continued to experience population decline. The population of peri-urban areas has grown particularly rapidly in the last decade or so. Between 1996 and 2002, the population in peri-urban areas increased by 11 % compared with an increase of 7 % in all rural areas, 9 % in all urban areas, and 8 % across the country as a whole. In county **Meath**, for example, 74 % of the population increase between 1996 and 2002 was due to net in-migration. In a substantial number of cases, one or more members of these in-migrating households had work in Dublin. One of the principal reasons for the rapid growth of population in the peri-urban areas is related to the cost of housing. A large number of younger households are choosing to locate in these locations for cost and quality of life reasons and accepting the associated higher transport costs and longer journey times.

Over recent decades, **Dolenjska** (SI) experienced relatively high levels of urban growth (close to a doubling of population in urban areas between 1961 and 2000), suburbanisation (close to a 50 % increase in population between 1961 and 2000) and also some rural depopulation (more than a 10 % decrease in population between 1961 and 2000). Against this long term trend, however, a number of more recent and quite different trends can also be observed. Between 1991 and 2000, the urban population slightly decreased, whilst the suburban and rural populations both increased slightly, indicating that the growth of urban areas may have stopped, suburbanisation is continuing and rural repopulation may have recently begun. Dormitory towns have begun to emerge (together with increased commuting patterns) and there has been an increase in second homes for tourism purposes.

In the **Algarve** (PT) and **Sant Miquel de Balenyà** (ES), population change has experienced somewhat different trends than those in the case studies mentioned above. In general, the Algarve has experienced rapid urbanisation near the coast, whilst areas further inland have experienced population decline, especially in the more rural parts.

Areas where population has increased most rapidly tend to contain more younger residents (and more seasonal inhabitants) whilst areas where population has decreased tend to contain more ageing residents. Tourism has been a key driving force behind population change here. Additional transport infrastructure (including roads and an airport), agricultural change and new regional functions (e.g. higher education, regional government) have also been important influences on population change. Sant Miquel de Balenyà has mainly experienced new development along road and rail transport infrastructure (i.e. suburbanisation) as a consequence of additions to the network and the increase in employment outside the urban centre. In both the Portuguese and Spanish case studies, the role of medium and small-sized towns and cities appears to have become more important for the region in terms of population, employment, services and facilities.

In general, it seems that the patterns of population change are quite similar in many case studies and that some of the driving forces behind these changes are common: examples include increases in car ownership and use, the expansion of transport infrastructure, ICT developments, employment change and the image of the rural idyll (mainly relating to quality of life). Push factors are also at work in several cases: these include high property prices in urban areas and the poor quality of the urban environment.

There are a number of similarities in policy responses to these patterns of population change but there are also differences. In the Green Heart, the policy response to suburban and rural migration over recent years has been urban containment strategies, urban renewal programmes and tighter planning controls on rural development. In Ryedale (and in England as a whole), planning policy has also traditionally placed restrictions on building in rural areas to maintain the character of the countryside. However, one consequence of such a policy is the lack of affordable housing for local residents. The Ryedale local plan attempts to favour local rural inhabitants by selectively allowing the development of protected greenfield sites. This has been developed in the form of a 'Rural Exceptions Housing' policy, which aims to support the development of small-scale affordable housing schemes in rural areas as an exception to the normal policy of development restraint in the countryside. In Ireland, one policy response has been the introduction of a strategy of Gateways and Hubs in the National Spatial Strategy to try to focus the development of housing and employment in specific growth centres, increase the competitiveness of cities and promote better connections between these centres. Specific roles for smaller urban centres as well as general guidelines in relation to housing in the countryside are intended to complement the Gateways and Hubs strategy.

One of the main consequences of the population trends in many of the case study areas is an increasing tension between different land uses (e.g. housing, recreation, agriculture), especially in suburban and peri-urban locations. Because most increases in population are taking place in these locations, a substantial amount of greenfield land has been developed to accommodate this growth. In some cases, this greenfield land was previously agricultural: some of this land had already become marginal due to changes in economics of the agriculture but other parts were still profitable. In Győr for example, the built-up area has increased by around 50 % over the last 10 years, much of which was previously agricultural land (mainly arable). In some cases, the greenfield land developed previously had a recreational and/or biodiversity function (e.g. open space, forest), and its change means a decrease in local recreation options and/or a decline in biodiversity.

Another key feature of population change in the case studies is the 'greying' of some rural communities. The increasing proportion of elderly residents in some case studies

(e.g. Ryedale, Algarve, parts of France) means that local services and facilities are increasingly important but their provision is often declining (e.g. local shops and public transport services in Ryedale). In addition, the increasing number of seasonal residents (due to second homes and other forms of tourist accommodation) in these types of area makes it increasingly difficult to sustain local services and facilities. Changes in other resource use patterns are considered later in section 4.2.4.

Various case studies highlight the difficulties of addressing urban-rural issues with policy measures. In a number of cases, including Sant Miquel de Balenyà for example, there is a lack of policies, plans and a competent authority to develop urban-rural strategies beyond the urban level. In France, the situation is similar. There is a large number of small local authorities (almost 36,000) and territorial governance is very segmented. However, in recent years, a number of inter-municipal cooperation structures with significant statutory powers were established, both in urbanised regions and in rural areas. Many of these structures have to deal with urban-rural issues. Although there are signs of more policy coherence, particular in terms of land-use planning, public transport and environmental protection, it is too early to draw clear and convincing conclusions. In the case of the Green Heart, it too has no official administrative status and there is no single authority responsible for developing policies or strategies that encompass urban-rural issues. However, a number of non-statutory coalitions exist with the aim of developing coherent policies across the Randstad and the Greenheart. Because the coalitions have lacked executive powers and their role has been mainly confined to research, monitoring, consultation and advice, their influence has been limited.

### *Summary*

Out-migration towards the suburban ring is a common feature in most of the case studies. In several cases also population shifts beyond the suburbs into more rural areas have taken place, but such shifts have been more selective what comes to destinations, leaving large areas in several countries in continuing depopulation. A wide variety of factors are thought to contribute to the recent migration trends. They include quality of life issues associated with living environments, the prosperity of urban areas in the region, opportunities for home-working (via ICT for example), the declining costs of car ownership and use in comparison to average income, and the prevalence of dispersed employment and shopping areas.

### **4.2.3 Interconnections of functions in urban and rural areas**

Many case studies show how several functions that were formerly of purely urban nature can now be found in areas that are classified as rural. Many rural areas have seen a shift from primary and industrial activities to more varied economic activities (e.g. Blue City, Ryedale, Győr). Housing preferences of the skilled workforce are thought to play an increasing role in the location decisions of some employers. Tertiary functions such as leisure and recreation have increased, especially in accessible, attractive rural areas (e.g. attractive landscapes, villages, natural habitats) and/or when close to prosperous urban regions. In the case of the Green Heart in the Netherlands, a substantial proportion of visits to the area (around 70 %) were from residents of the adjacent Randstad, many of these visits are for recreation purposes and the majority of these visits are for a short time (around two thirds of visits are for less than a whole day).

Within urban regions, various specialised functions no longer require a central location – the meaning of centrality has changed and the catchment areas of most functions have increased as a consequence of increasing levels of car ownership and use. Where some specialised services still need to be close to their clients, it is often travel time rather than travel distance that counts most. Fast transport links by road and air bridge long distances which has implications for local services and facilities which are declining in many rural areas. The ‘greying’ of some rural areas make the need for some basic level of services and facilities more important. However, the mobility of many local residents and the seasonal nature of some rural populations (as a consequence of tourism for example) make it more difficult to provide viable services and facilities for rural communities. In settlements outside the market towns in Ryedale, around three quarters have no shop or primary school, around half have no post office, and almost a third have no public transport service. Many key rural services are declining at a rate above the national average within the region and a similar picture emerges for health and welfare services within the area.

Clearly, the sparsity of services is partly a reflection of the logistics and costs of supplying services to rural areas where travel and transport costs are high. However, the decline of these local services over time means that people have to travel more often to urban areas for access to schools, shops, health facilities, business and financial services. This decline, when coupled with the limited availability of public transport, further isolates many rural communities. Lack of mobility puts some sections of the rural population, particularly women, the elderly and young people, at a severe disadvantage in terms of searching for employment and access to services.

The proximity to urban centres or to road infrastructures influences the role of small and middle-sized towns in the interdependence of functions. The role of small and medium-sized cities is quite different depending on whether they are located in areas with a strong urban influence, in intermediate ones or in rural areas. The case of Figueiró dos Vinhos in Portugal illustrates the role of small cities in rural areas and highlights three important phenomena:

1. the key role of small towns in low density areas in allowing for a minimal level of demand to be reached, thereby ensuring the economic viability of certain economic activities and efficiency of services, specially of private ones
2. the improvement in the provision of social and basic services in the rural areas
3. the role of the private automobile in defining functional systems and commuter flows, whether between different municipalities or between the rural and urban areas, which points to the interdependency between neighbouring municipalities.

The value of rural land in some areas has experienced large changes. Where development has been permitted, the value of land has risen from its agricultural worth to its development worth. The low profitability of agriculture in the peripheral rural regions means new potential for forestry, environmental protection, tourism or recreation land uses. In several case study areas, the share of forests is currently on the increase. In areas closer to major urban centres and tourist areas, agricultural land is more prone to real estate speculation. In attractive rural areas the rise of second homes contributed to increase land prices and consequently to the change of traditional land use (e.g. the share of agriculture in total area is reducing). In Ryedale, the second home market has doubled in value due to counter-urbanisation process. In the Algarve, the second home market has had an inflationary effect on local house prices and affected the economics of other

activities including agriculture and industry. Many suburban or edge-city locations have taken over previous urban functions. This has resulted in an increasingly decentralised structure within urban regions, where the share of criss-crossing flows has grown rapidly where there has been infrastructure with capacity to allow this to take place.

What still persists of the urban-rural dichotomy to a considerable degree, is the importance of agricultural production in rural areas, although the significance of this sector for rural areas has declined in most case studies. More importantly, areas of intensive agriculture can also be found immediately outside densely built-up metropolitan areas (around the Randstad for example). These areas often create a major part of the agricultural production although the relative importance of the sector in terms of employment is small. In rural areas where employment in agriculture is at a high level, the communities can still be very dependent on the low-productivity agriculture. This is evident in certain parts of Ireland and Portugal, for instance. However, the future development of the agricultural production in Europe is a crucial question for both kinds of areas – in central areas it is the landscapes that are the concern, in peripheral areas it is the viability of localities.

### *Summary*

Many suburban or edge-city locations have taken over previous urban functions. This has resulted in an increasingly decentralised structure within urban regions, where the share of criss-crossing flows has grown rapidly because of the infrastructure with capacity to allow this to take place. Tertiary functions such as leisure and recreation have increased, especially in accessible, attractive rural areas (e.g. attractive landscapes, villages, natural habitats) and/or when close to prosperous urban regions.

The 'greying' of some rural areas make the need for some basic level of services and facilities more important. However, the mobility of many local residents and the seasonal nature of some rural populations make it more difficult to provide viable services for rural communities and make them more dependent on urban areas. If this trend is coupled with the limited availability of public transport, it further isolates many rural communities. Some sections of the rural population, particularly women, the elderly and young people, at a severe disadvantage in terms of searching for employment and access to services. Among the case study areas the dividing line what comes to rural accessibility of services seems to be the presence of viable small and middle-sized towns. This highlights the central role of the various urbanisation phases (discussed in Chapter 1) in explaining development in urban-rural relations.

#### **4.2.4 Changes in the use of resources**

In addition to the increasing use of land in suburban and peri-urban locations for housing and other types of 'urban' development (see section 4.2.2 and Chapter 5), a number of other changes in the pattern of resource use can also be observed in the case studies. The case studies also help to identify a number of new opportunities for more sustainable patterns of resource use within some areas.

The Portuguese and Slovenian case studies reveal that many residents of rural areas are inadequately served by basic services such as water, power or waste disposal. In Figueiró dos Vinhos (central Portugal), 98 % of the population have access to the public water supply system but problems remain such as the fact that water supply is often in excess

of demand. The construction of a dam has been approved that will increase supply and produce energy. There are also insufficient wastewater treatment plants and some which are in need of upgrading. Parts of the wastewater collection and treatment infrastructure is inadequate and has contributed to the degradation of the hydrological system. The relief and the distances that separate rural villages make it difficult to collect and treat wastewater discharges. In Figueiró dos Vinhos, only 20 % of the population is covered by the wastewater collection and treatment system. The vast majority of the local population is served by a municipal waste disposal system but very few have access to any recycling facility.

The Dutch Blue City case study highlights another quite different water resource issue. Here, a small new town is planned to be developed on 1,500 hectares of previously agricultural land. More than half of this area (800 hectares), however, will be flooded to create a lake. New dwellings will occupy 200 hectares and 350 hectares of land will be allocated to nature conservation and forestry. The new lake will have a variety of functions including water catchment, recreation and nature conservation. Since the mid 1990s, when a number of rivers in the Netherlands almost flooded, which would have put substantial parts of the country under water and required the evacuation of thousands of inhabitants, national policies concerning water shifted from a drainage strategy to a water storage strategy. This meant providing more space for water storage in case of high water. Such policies were also considered necessary for regions more distant from the large rivers in the Netherlands (e.g. Rhine, Maas and Schelde). In 1998 the water board in the area around the Blue City took the decision to flood a polder that was not officially appointed as overflow area in order to avoid the risk of the flooding of Winschoten, a town with around 20,000 inhabitants. The Blue City project provided the perfect opportunity for an additional water overflow area and thus the plans received support from the local water board (including participation in the public private partnership created to develop the scheme) under the condition that water storage was a key objective in developing the Blue City.

Various case studies (from France, the Netherlands, Portugal and Slovenia for example) highlight the opportunities for using local rural resources more effectively and also sustainably that can also potentially provide benefits for local rural areas. Examples include agro-tourism and the promotion of local products, the utilisation of biomass for more sustainable energy sources, the development and promotion of compatible recreation facilities in protected areas (nature reserves, areas of special landscape character, etc.).

### *Summary*

Case studies reveal that many residents of rural areas especially in southern and eastern Europe are inadequately served by basic services such as water, power or waste disposal. At the same time there is a pressure from the urban areas to locate resource facilities such as water treatment plans and storages and sites for waste disposal in the rural areas. On the other hand various case studies highlight the opportunities for using local rural resources more effectively, such as utilisation of biomass. A peculiar example is the Dutch Blue City case study area where a large agricultural area is to be flooded to create a lake, that serves both as flood protection (providing additional space for water storage in case of high water) and as an attraction for the new residential area. It can be seen as an attempt to combine the provision of recreation facilities, protection of natural areas and development opportunities of private investors.

### 4.3 Summary of the findings of Chapter 4.1 and 4.2

#### 4.3.1 Tendencies and situations in urban-rural relations

Based on the case studies covering themes “Socio-economic diversification” and “Territorial interdependence”, it was possible to trace a series of “urban-rural situations” influenced by the major (aspatial and spatial) tendencies shaping European space. Each of the situations is connected to the questions of public interest in a different way and needs to be discussed in detail what comes to operationalisation of the policy options and to the possible role of urban-rural partnerships. The key findings are presented in the tables 4.4–4.6 below, but the discussion related to policy recommendations continues in Chapter 6.

Table 4.4:  
Tendencies and respective “urban-rural situations” vs. questions of public interest – part 1

<i>tendency</i>	<i>u-r aspects</i>	<i>implications for various parties</i>	<i>possible preconditions / exceptions</i>	<i>key questions of public interest</i>	<i>policy options</i>
increasing global-local inter-connections	Capacities of localities to position themselves in the global economy have clear urban-rural implications.	Major urban regions with strategic functions continue to play a role as global nodes.	Fluctuations in global economic development brings instability to the development trajectories.	degree of openness towards global economy: opening up or turning inwards?	competitiveness: role of the national level as gatekeeper
		Integration of smaller urban regions and rural localities is more selective.	“Thematic” global hubs can exist also outside of major urban regions (e.g. due to tourism).	searching for special success stories or sticking to the secure mainstream?	cohesion: finding and mobilising resources from each locality; sustainability: dealing with the development pressures in globally attractive regions
growing size and declining number of commuter catchment areas	Inclusion in functional urban regions grows in importance.	Densely populated, urbanised countries continue to face urban-rural migration.	This does not necessarily mean decline of population in the urban centre: e.g. parallel immigration can compensate the out-migration.	sufficient attractiveness of the urban agglomerations as places of residence?	cohesion: avoiding increasing segregation within urban regions
		Sparsely populated countries continue to face depopulation of rural areas.	There can be major exceptions e.g. in remote rural areas with intense links with the urban exist.	possibilities to build on the rural resources and their links with the “outside” world?	cohesion: room for local views and identity formation vs. global marketing

#### *Increasing global-local interconnections*

As discussed in Chapter 1, the increasing economic globalisation touches different kinds of areas in very different ways. The case study of Ireland is of special interest here. Since the early 1990s Ireland has undergone a fundamental socio-economic transformation. Unlike most other regions in Europe the economy of Ireland is exceptionally open and, therefore, the location patterns of enterprise and employment are disproportionately influenced by globalisation considerations. The factors with direct relevance for urban-

rural relations are, on the one hand, the very high reliance on foreign direct investment in high value added sectors which has been mostly concentrated in the larger urban centres and, on the other hand, the very significant decline in the role of primary agriculture and other traditional industries, especially in rural areas.

What has happened in the increasingly globally integrated Dublin has had significant consequences for the country as a whole. The high economic growth rates, increasingly concentrated distribution of highly skilled employment and large increase in the number of persons at work have contributed to the further supremacy of the capital. Around Dublin the urbanisation pressure is thus enormous, resulting from the rapid increase of land prices in urban areas together with perception of enhanced quality of life in rural areas.

#### *Growing size and declining number of commuter catchment areas*

In most parts of Europe the tendency seems to be the increasing size of functional urban regions or commuter catchments areas due, not only to the improvements in physical infrastructure and accessibility, but also to the possibilities offered by the developing communication technology. The diversification of the urban economies and the widening labour market areas increase the flexibility to find jobs within a wider urban agglomeration. This improves the possibilities to live in the (accessible) rural areas.

In the European perspective there seems to be a dividing line between the densely populated, urbanised countries and the more sparsely populated countries. The first group is characterised rather by the migration from urban to rural areas than from rural to urban. In the second group the countries face further concentration of population around the major urban centres, meaning parallel suburbanisation and depopulation of the most sparsely populated areas. Certainly important exceptions to this rule exist – here the crucial explaining factor seems to be the viability of the network of medium-sized cities (see further below).

#### *Growing interdependencies within larger urban regions*

In nearly all of the major urban regions that were covered by the case studies, the tendency has been towards increasing spatial interconnectedness of areas within those regions. Within the urban regions as a whole this has meant increasing diversity, but in a minor node of the region the tendency might have been an opposite one, towards increasing specialisation. The overall diversification has probably benefited the majority of the population, at least what comes job opportunities. Where major investments in accessibility within the region have been made, the tendency has been even stronger. In those areas the criss-crossing or circular connections have attracted offices and industries to locate along the transport corridors, which has made it possible to draw even more commuters from all areas well connected to the corridor in question.

As stated above, the increasing flexibility to find jobs improves the possibilities to live in the (accessible) rural areas. This applies to both the "original" rural population, that gets new job opportunities, and to the newcomers, who further increase the share of commuters in the rural population. Although the newcomers mean growing market potential in the rural, their presence often enriches the economic base of the rural areas only selectively. In some regions their higher standard of living may even contribute to widening of social disparities.

Table 4.5:  
Tendencies and respective “urban-rural situations” vs. questions of public interest – part 2.

<i>tendency</i>	<i>u-r aspects</i>	<i>implications for various parties</i>	<i>possible preconditions / exceptions</i>	<i>key questions of public interest</i>	<i>policy options</i>
growing interdependencies within larger urban regions, deconcentration of several activities	Some rural areas are well connected to several nodes (both centres and emerging edge cities) within the region.	There is increased freedom to choose residential area in the rural without limiting access to employment.	Freedom is often conditioned by accessibility; lack of public transport excludes some groups (e.g. low-waged).	amount and nature of investments in accessibility?	competitiveness: criss-crossing access to be promoted in the name of flexibility cohesion & sustainability: public transport to be promoted, use of private car discouraged
		Purchasing power and interests of new of rural residents create potential for diversification.	Antagonism between the rural and the urban groups can create obstacles; rural services face competition from the urban ones as commuters and other mobile groups can use more distant services.	new residents integrated in the life of localities?; possibilities for the “indigenous” to take action?	cohesion: possibilities to engage in bottom-up activities crucial, incentives for supporting local employment and training
medium-sized towns of the more urbanised countries are increasingly viable	There are additional employment opportunities for rural areas as well.	Purchasing power and interests of new of rural residents create potential for diversification.	New jobs may be of seasonal or part-time nature only.	part-time residents used as a resource in developing local businesses?	competitiveness: taking the best out of the expertise of both permanent and part-time residents
	Attractive rural areas in their vicinity are also increasingly well-off.	Potential for diversification increases; the most popular area might face surprisingly strong development pressure.	Emergence of low-paid service class is possible.	local housing affordable for low-waged residents?	cohesion: combating segregation between the various groups

For the urban region the economic benefits have been quite obvious. However, the social and economic sustainability of the trend is far from self-evident. The development of public transport routes has usually not kept the pace of motorway investments, for instance, which has tempted or forced the people to use a private car.

*Medium-sized cities of the more urbanised countries are increasingly viable*

The analysis of the development trajectories of urban regions indicates a tendency towards an increasing wealth of the medium-sized towns. The large metropolitan areas are no longer that superior in their performance – measured by population and employment figures. Also smaller centres that are mostly “outside the global market” are able to be successful. They enjoy a certain economic stability as their economic base relies on the service sector. Often the successful towns are also located in attractive environments

that draw residents with a considerable purchasing power. In such urban regions it is actually often the surrounding rural area that is the lure for settling in that region.

What comes to the ESDP main goals of prompting polycentricity and urban-rural relations, the case study material, especially the case of France, clearly illustrates that many urbanised and densely populated countries that experienced rather early industrialisation, are already heading towards an increasingly polycentric urban system. This means that the urban-rural interaction will also be on the increase. As this development may have several unsustainable effects, it is increasingly important to study the qualitative development of the increasing interaction and not to pursue links per se.

Table 4.6:  
Tendencies and respective "urban-rural situations" vs. questions of public interest – part 3

<i>tendency</i>	<i>u-r aspects</i>	<i>implications for various parties</i>	<i>possible preconditions / exceptions</i>	<i>key questions of public interest</i>	<i>policy options</i>
role of rural areas as arenas of consumption is growing in significance	The "rural idyll", i.e. the perception of better quality of life in the rural motivates suburbanisation/ counter-urbanisation.	Especially young adults with families, as well as the retirees migrate out of the cities.	Sometimes migration to rural is conditioned by ICT-access. Remote, non-spectacular rural continues to lose population.	chances to overcome the "digital gap" between urban and rural?: the attractiveness of urban living and the urban environment promoted?	competitiveness/ cohesion: equal opportunities for urban and rural areas to access ICT networks competitiveness/ sustainability: respecting housing preferences but not with the cost of losing the strengths of rural areas through overcrowding
	In accessible rural, both agricultural and "natural" areas are important for recreation.	Flows of visitors in rural areas are on the increase.	Large-scale development projects might push the old ruralities away.	maintaining the attractivity despite increasing inflows? identifying win-win policies for nature conservation, tourism and/or agriculture?	sustainability: provision of recreational areas but not with the cost of losing the strengths of rural areas through overcrowding
	Rural land is suburbanised meaning loss of agricultural, conservation and recreational land.	Access to local open space becomes more limited.	Development on land previously closed or otherwise inaccessible can ease the pressure.	provision of new areas for recreation or conservation?	
	Remote but attractive/ well-marketed rural areas form long-distance urban-rural links.	Specialising in eg. small hobby-groups can be a sufficient base for diversif. at the local scale.	The educational level or the skills of the "indigenous" population might not match the expectations.	focus on education and capacity building?	competitiveness / cohesion: support for joint marketing of thematic attractions, links of the rural entrepreneurs with the main tourism service providers in the cities

### *Role of rural areas as arenas of consumption are growing in significance*

For the rural areas close to strengthening urban regions the implications have been twofold. On the one hand the diversifying economy offers a greater variety of jobs – if the qualifications of the rural residents match with the urban expectations. On the other hand many rural businesses find it harder to compete with the urban ones that can more easily benefit from the economies of scale. This problem actually partially arises from the

closer connectedness with the urban – as the share of commuters to urban areas in the rural population increases, the relative importance of the rural services decreases.

The case study evidence shows that the accessible and attractive areas close to diversified urban nodes get the greatest gain. They receive qualified, well-off migrants – and thus often good tax revenues for maintaining public services. If these people also use their purchasing power in the rural areas, they add to the viability of private services. The social dimension can, again, be more problematic, if the urban and rural realms get to clash against each other, as was the case in the Oldambt, the Netherlands, when the Blue City project was introduced. The less well-off rural residents that do not match the qualifications of the urban labour markets or cannot access the jobs e.g. due to the poor public transport, might end up being as a low-paid class of “servants”. Some indications of this kind of development was found through the Ryedale case.

The less accessible rural areas seem to find it harder to diversify the economic base – when, at the same time, the agricultural sector is becoming increasingly marginal as a source of income. The possibilities of small towns and the surrounding countryside to maintain their economic viability seem to some degree to correlate with the population density. The search for life-savers has mainly been directed in the service sector – often in the services of the urban areas or services directed for the urban residents. Where rural areas have been able to sell themselves as consumption spaces, the diversification has been quite successful. Some hope has also been loaded to the role of teleworking.

Tourism, both as recreation on day-trips and longer-term stays, is certainly a key sector that can help in preserving the viability of the rural areas. However, it can also mean that the degree of rurality (seen through socio-economic lenses) actually becomes less as part-time urban residents move into the area and as the development of the service sector is increasingly guided through the needs of those “outsiders”. This might not bother the newcomers, as long as the rurality that they came to seek for e.g. in the landscapes persists the urban pressure.

One of the most persistent roles of the urban areas seems to be the one of providers of higher education, as the Chapter 3 also indicated. At least a certain period of people’s life is urban if they want to acquire higher education. From the perspective of rural areas the crucial questions would thus be, 1) where the educated people live and work outside of that period and 2) whether the human capital of the rural areas, that is associated with different kinds of “rural skills” or is “imported” from the urban areas, is sufficient to provide a solid base for socio-economic development.

Several cases highlight the importance of educated population. Apart from bringing in purchasing power and the resulting possibilities to provide services, it is often expected that the educated population helps in maintaining natural and cultural heritage of the rural areas. As the case of Figueiró shows, the area that has suffered from ageing and depopulation is gaining new chances through the part-time occupants of the housing stock. Even the seasonal occupancy can be of great importance as the new residents seek for new kind of services from the area and thus diversify the economic base – if the supply of the needed services can be organised. This is again partially dependent of the availability of (skilled) workforce.

Many residents of rural areas especially in southern and eastern Europe are inadequately served by basic services such as water, power or waste disposal. At the same time there is a pressure from the urban areas to locate resource facilities such as water treatment

plans and storages and sites for waste disposal in the rural areas. On the other hand various case studies highlight the opportunities for using local rural resources more effectively, such as utilisation of biomass.

#### **4.3.2 Lessons for the definitions of urban and rural areas**

The patchwork of urban and rural areas is not easy to capture by indicators. Much of what is mapped as rural at NUTS3-level e.g. in the urban-rural typology of the project is predominantly urban when analysed and measured in terms of flows and functions. However, this does not change the fact that the land cover, i.e. the characteristics of the living environment, are still connected to rurality in people's minds. In these terms the rural areas adjacent to urban areas that are slowly eaten up by urban sprawl are losing that rurality that the people actually came to look for in the first place.

As the traditional rural way of life is hardly existent in today's Europe (although one could say that the remote areas of e.g. Romanian countryside dependent on the self-subsistent agriculture could still be of this category), the meaning of rurality is on the move. It can be increasingly seen as a mindscape that gets connected closer to some kinds of environments than to others. Non-urban character does not necessarily mean that one would find rurality there. Approaches that take rural areas simply as residuals of the urban areas do not tackle the current patchwork of urban-rural relations.

The urban and rural must increasingly be seen as perceptions of people and not as something that can be fully captured by indicators defined outside of the localities. This is also the key to dealing with the confrontations. Even in the very urbanised countries of the European core it is possible to find clashes between urban and rural camps – even if the absolute differences between the “original” rural residents and the newcomer are relatively small (see an extract of the Blue City case below).

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## “Blue City” in North East Groningen, the Netherlands

The so-called Blue City in North East Groningen is a very interesting attempt to “combat peripheralisation”. The rural area known as Oldambt will be transformed into an urban area. The aim is to create a lake of about 800 hectares and to build about 1500 new luxury dwellings. The agricultural functions will disappear in favour of residence and recreation. The plan has certainly faced opposition from the local population. The policy makers, however, expect a positive economic influence of the “invasion” of the rich residents. The project is also expected to bring new jobs – around 400 on the long term.

The farmhouses in the Oldambt area tell about the fertile land and prosperity of the farmers of the 19th century, although most of the land lies fallow as the profitability of agricultural production in the area – under current CAP regulations – is very low. Jobs in the agricultural sector and in processing of e.g. potato-starch disappeared in the late 1980s and raised the unemployment rates. Nowadays the rates are low. The age structure of the region shows a slight dominance of older ages.

The population density of East Groningen area (185 inh/km<sup>2</sup>) is above the European average (107 inh/km<sup>2</sup>), but 2,5 times lower than the Dutch national average. Also a high share (80 %) of the population is considered to live in rural areas (according to Dutch standards). Despite the relative marginality of the area in the Netherlands, the population density alone can be considered as one “strength” of the region what comes to the economic base: an own market potential exists despite the relatively low incomes of the residents.

The question is now, to which degree the lower densities and lower housing prices can attract residents from the Western part of the country, where there is an high demand for spacious living, and how far can the potential socio-economic diversification benefit the local communities. The rural Oldambt will see the rise of a more urban Blue City – will that result in anything else than in rising housing prices of the former Oldambt residents? Will the profitters of all this rather be the developers, the land speculators? How this kind of megalomaniac project can be implemented in a rural area, has thus brought us to the question of power relations and land use profitability.

The effects of the Blue City project are awaited with mixed feelings. Besides the question of housing prices, the opponents of the projects keep on asking, what kind of jobs will the home workers and retired people bring with them, and how could the “other kind of people” of the rich enclave fit the local community. The war-like situation, when the project was introduced, has gradually turned into a more silent opposition. With regard to improving the economic situation of the region the inhabitants seem to think that “anything is better than another industrial zone, a military airport of large pig farms”.

The Oldambt case clearly shows the role of the “mental component” in the urban-rural relationships. The rural community feels threatened by the “aliens”, the “outsiders”, that are labelled as rich “urbanites” of the more well-off Randstad. The enclave kind of project underlines the existence of “two camps” and unavoidably makes the local people pose the “good old days” of prosperous farms and small-scale traditional rural life against the invasion of the modern, the large-scale actors and “ignorance” of the urban what comes to rural values. Paradoxically the potential newcomers e.g. from the Randstad area might feel that they are actually searching for a “rural idyll” in the Blue City. For them a brand new housing area at a lake or a golf course can also represent rurality – the old farmhouses and traditional agricultural landscapes, or what will be left of them, might also be appreciated by them.

The role of leisure time and related services are, together with the growing local market potential and purchasing power, the most crucial questions of the economic diversification. It will be very interesting to follow to which degree the old agricultural background will be perceived as cultural heritage with economic potential, or will the new landscape values related more to the “newly created natural heritage” draw all the attention.