New approaches in analysing the regional evolution in France
Recent trends in the evolution of population in rural space

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Rural space and territorial issues in France

› Rural space occupies a great part part of French territory: low average density and many few populated areas.
› Economic importance of agriculture and food processing industry.
› Political influence of rural municipalities.
› Two majors issues of territorial planning:
  – Equity in accessibility to services and facilities
  – Balanced development of cities and rural communities (common topics: control of urban sprawling, development of touristic and recreational activities)
How to define rural space?

› Morphological space classification (urban units) and functional space classification ("Geographic Classification by Urban Area").

› Methodology of GCUA based on two main criteria: concentration of employment and intensity of the link with employment clusters measured by commuting travels.

› Distinction between "predominantly urban space" and "predominantly rural space".
Recent trends in rural space

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15 October 20008

Urban cluster
Periurban rings
Multipolar municipalities
Predominantly rural space
Rural areas cover 60% of the territory but gather only 18% of the population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number of municipalities</th>
<th>Number of inhabitants</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Population density (inhab./km²)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban clusters</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
<td>60.9%</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>792</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Periurban rings</td>
<td>29.6%</td>
<td>16.1%</td>
<td>24.3%</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multipolar municipalities</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predominantly rural space</td>
<td>50.7%</td>
<td>18.0%</td>
<td>58.8%</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: INSEE, 1999 Census
French new Census

› Last "traditional" Census in 1999. New Census since 2004 with important evolution in methodology.

› Main characteristic: data collection is annual but only a part of the territory is covered every year.

› Complete results at any geographical level after five years. Results for the first five-year period to be disseminated in June 2009 (reference year: 2006).

› Data available still provisory.
Sharp reversal in demographic trends for rural space since 1999

- Population number quite stable between 1962 and 1999 for rural space.
- Change of the trends since 1999: rural space is now gaining population in a rather sharp way. Population in rural space is now increasing quicker than in urban clusters.
- No link with a decline in major cities: density keeps increasing, at a rate even greater than in the 1990s.
Graph 2: Index of population by class of space in the Censuses since 1962

- Urban clusters
- Periurban rings
- Multipolar municipalities
- Predominantly rural space
- All
Migrations into rural rural space fuelled by cities on a larger scale

- Rural "revival" explained by internal migrations.
- Structure of net internal migrations between kinds of spaces has remained essentially unchanged since the 1990s. Urban clusters still the main suppliers of net migrations for all others kinds of space.
- Three significant modifications:
  - Net internal migrations from urban clusters into rural areas have increased;
  - Periurban rings are now also significant suppliers of net migrations into rural space.
  - Younger migrants.
### Table 4: Rate of net internal migrations between classes of space (for 10,000 inhabitants)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1990-1999</th>
<th>Urban clusters</th>
<th>Periurban rings</th>
<th>Multipolar municipalities</th>
<th>Predominantly rural space</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Urban clusters</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>Periurban rings</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>-3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Predominantly</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>31</td>
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Source: INSEE, 1999 Census

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Since 1999</th>
<th>Urban clusters</th>
<th>Periurban rings</th>
<th>Multipolar municipalities</th>
<th>Predominantly rural space</th>
<th>All</th>
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</thead>
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<td>94</td>
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<td>municipalities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Predominantly</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>64</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: INSEE, new Census, 2004-2007 data collection
New flows of migration loosely linked to urban sprawling

› Strong link between growth of population in some areas of rural space and growth of population in the most dynamic urban areas, but significant positive population variations are also present for rural areas in the least dense territories.

› Inside rural space, the rise of population has benefited relatively the most to municipalities the most distant from urban influence.
Urban areas – Change of population since 1999
Predominantly rural space – Positive variations of population since 1999
Absence of a similar dynamic in economic development

› Dynamic of employment is weaker in rural space than in urban spaces. Since 1999, rural space has been lagging behind national average annual growth rate of employment (respectively +0.9% +1.4%).

› At sector level, job losses in industry have stricken more harshly in rural space and no compensation has come from services.
Will these trends keep unchanged in a short term?

› To sum up: new rural demographic expansion, fuelled by rejuvenated migrations from urban areas, loosely correlated to urban sprawling.

› No counterpart in rural economic development. Gap with urban spaces has been widening.

› Still questions on origins, to investigate with the help of future Census results. In peculiar, need to have a check on a possible short-term component through:
  – Effects of credit crunch (access to house ownership has been hardened);
  – Effects of rise in transportation costs.