

# Rural Spatial Justice:

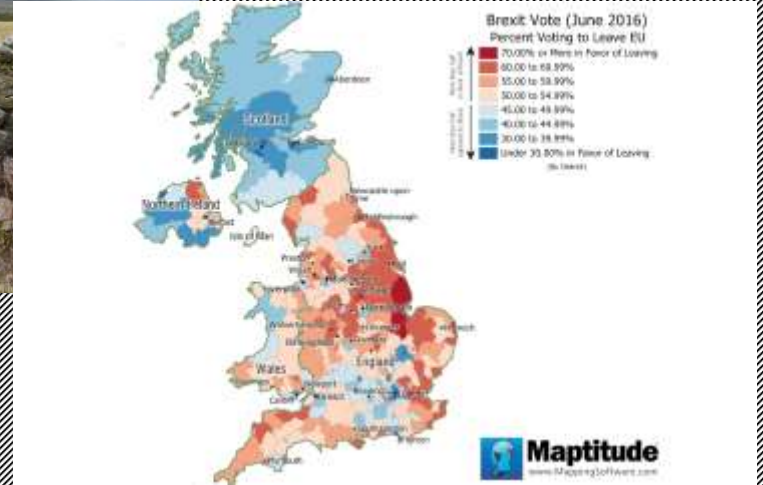
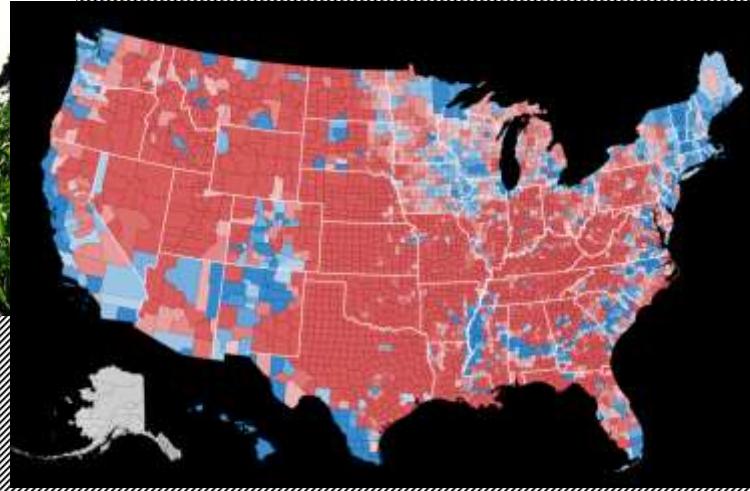
Rethinking Social and Territorial Inequalities

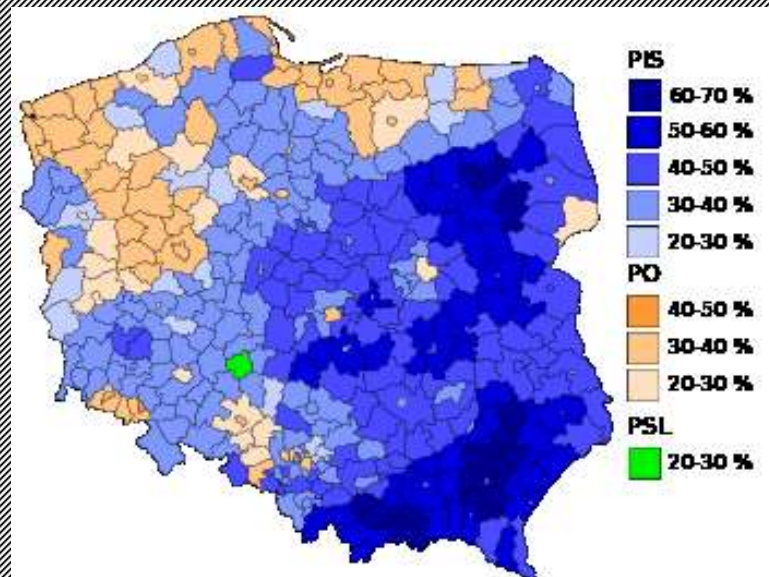
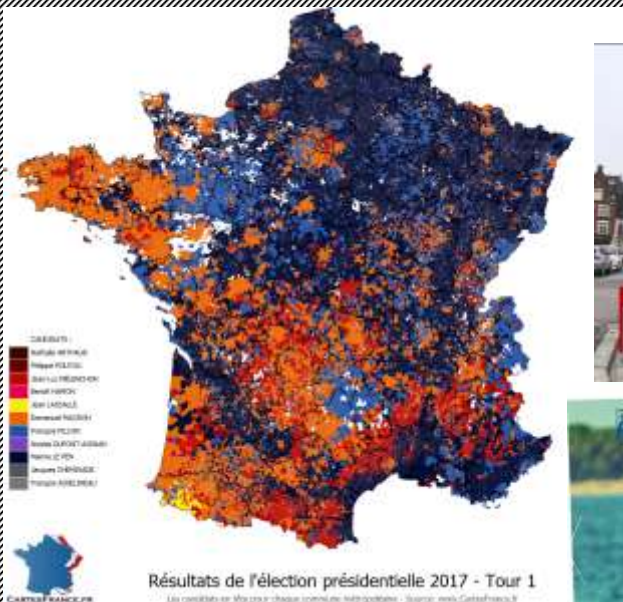


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# A New Political Geography?



- Metropolitan vs. Non-Metropolitan cleavage
- Rural and deindustrialised areas moving to non-conventional and populist political movements
- Not necessarily reflecting material economic inequalities
- Perceptions of marginalization
- A political geography of spatial (in)justice?

# Spatial Justice



- Territorial dimensions of social justice
- Spatial distribution of wealth and resources
- Lefebvre's (1974) *La production de l'espace*, and the 'right to the city'
- The right to access, occupy and use space
- Ed Soja (2010) *Seeking Spatial Justice*
- 'spatial (in)justice refers to an intentional and focused emphasis on the spatial or geographical aspects of justice and injustice. As a starting point, this involves the fair and equitable distribution in space of socially valued resources and the opportunities to use them.' (Soja, 2009, *The City and Spatial Justice*, p 2)

# Spatial Justice



- Spatial justice concerned not only with the geographical distribution of wealth and resources
- The distribution of space and access to space
- How the production and management of space produces inequalities and inequalities
- Emphasis on urban spatial justice
- Little work to date on *rural* spatial justice

# Rural Spatial Justice

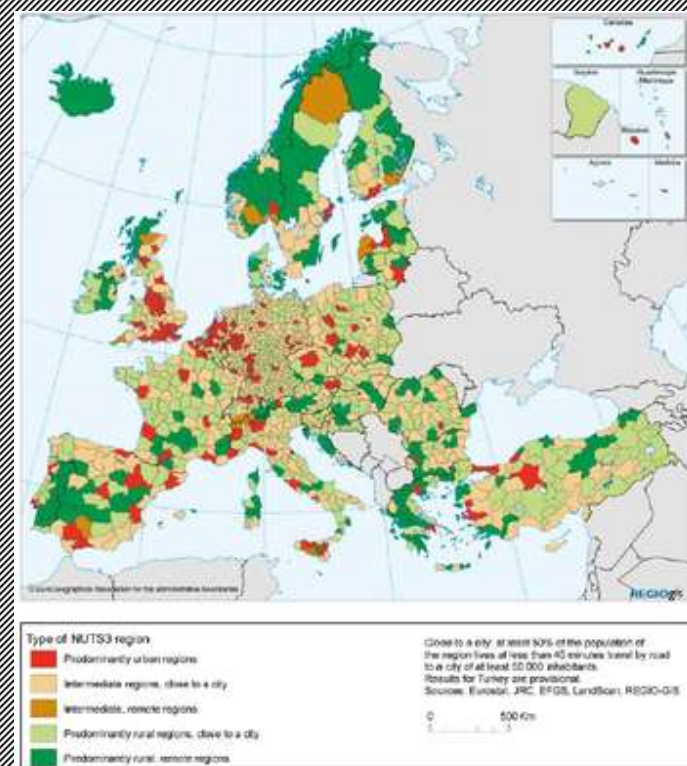
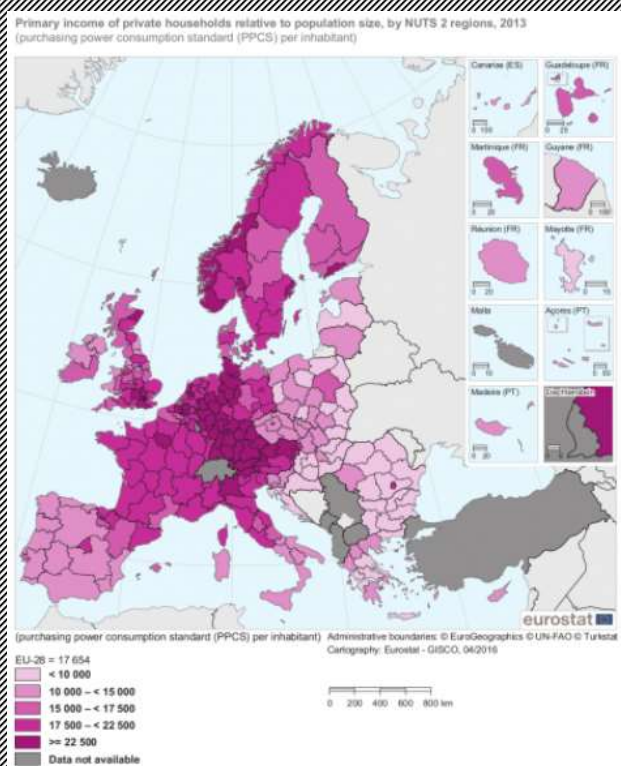


- Rural spatial justice as the mapping of territorial inequalities
- Rural spatial justice as access to rural space(s)
- Rural spatial justice and the production of inequalities
- Rural spatial justice and the perception of inequalities
- Rural spatial justice as a normative model

# Rural Spatial Justice and Territorial Inequalities



- Is the distribution of wealth and resources between rural and urban areas just?

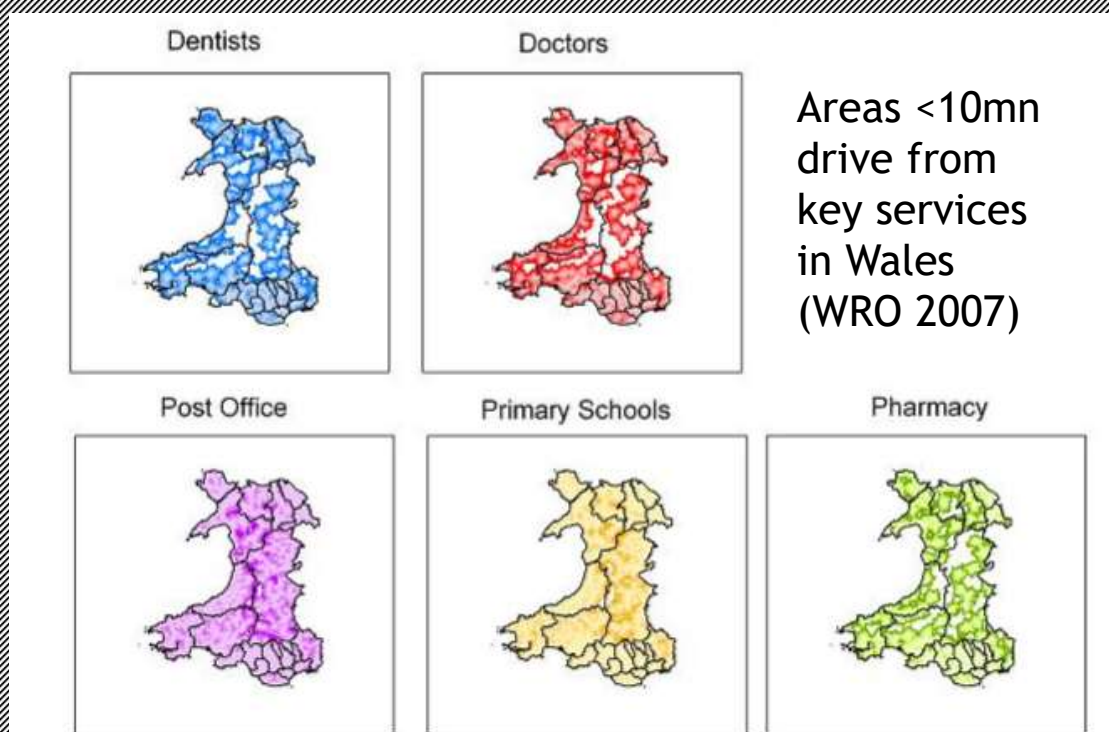




# Rural Spatial Justice and Territorial Inequalities



- Is the distribution of wealth and resources between rural and urban areas just?



# Rural Spatial Justice and the Right to Rural Space



- How does the unequal distribution of wealth and resources affect the ability of individuals to access, inhabit and use rural spaces?
- **Housing:** Who is excluded from living in rural spaces by inequalities in housing availability and affordability?
- **Work:** Who is excluded from rural spaces by limited appropriate employment and education opportunities?
- **Care:** Who is excluded from rural spaces by unevenness in health and care provision?

# Rural Spatial Justice and the Right to Rural Space



- For what groups are rights to access, inhabit and use rural space(s) compromised by prejudice, ignorance or a lack of supporting infrastructure?
- Immigrants and ethnic minorities
- Sexuality and alternative lifestyles
- Disabilities
- The right of endogenous rural residents to live and work in rural places and to use rural space in traditional ways

# Rural Spatial Justice and the Right to Rural Space



# Rural Spatial Justice and the Production of Inequalities



- What is the role of policy and the state in (re-)producing rural inequalities?
- Rural-urban classification as a governmental ordering device that produces spatial inequalities
  - Acceptance of lower service provision in rural areas
  - Discourses of rural resilience and self-reliance
  - Perceptions of what and who 'belongs' in rural space
  - Models of cost effectiveness loaded against less populated areas

# Rural Spatial Justice and the Production of Inequalities



- What is the role of policy and the state in (re-) producing rural inequalities?
- Economic and fiscal policies
  - Economic development policies focused on cities as drivers of economic growth (City-regions model)
  - Agricultural and trade policies
- Impacts of austerity and public service cuts
  - Disproportionate impacts from closures of public services in rural areas?

# Rural Spatial Justice and the Production of Inequalities



- How are inequalities within rural space (re-) produced by local power dynamics
- Land use and planning policies employed to protect exclusive middle class spaces
- Rural local government spending priorities for housing, schools, transport, social programmes etc.
- Effect of bottom-up rural development schemes in empowering more affluent middle class communities
- Opposition to developments that would create jobs, to social housing, or to refugee resettlement etc

# Rural Spatial Justice and the Production of Inequalities



*Rural spatial justice as multi-dimensional and complex*



# Rural Spatial Justice and the Perception of Injustice



- Inequality is quantitative, it can be measured
- Justice is qualitative, it is perceived
  
- Perceptions of (relative) material deprivation
- Perceptions of neglect or unfair treatment in government policy and spending
- Perceptions of marginalization from political power

# Rural Spatial Justice and the Perception of Injustice



“There is a hell of a lot of distrust about the political decision making process, a lot of people are quite disturbed about that and a lot of people feel that government, central government particularly, has little understanding of rural communities. A lot of them display very little understanding about how rural communities are being changed. A lot of people think rural communities are just forgotten about.”

Windfarm campaign leader, Devon



# Rural Spatial Justice as a Normative Model



- Is there an alternative to perceptions of spatial injustice fuelling rural support for populist and right-wing politics?
- Can 'Rural Spatial Justice' be deployed as a progressive vision for a more equal, just society?
- What would this mean for government policy, especially in relation to territorial development?
- What role can and should researchers play?

# Conclusions



- Proposing spatial justice as a framework for research on rural inequalities
- Moves beyond material inequalities
- Quantitative (inequality) to qualitative (justice)
- Spatial injustices within rural areas as well as between rural and urban areas
- Emphasis on (re-)production of injustices through policy
- Connecting perceived injustices and political action

# Integrative Mechanisms for Addressing Spatial Justice and Territorial Inequalities in Europe



- Analysis of policy discourses
- Econometric analysis & mapping of territorial inequalities
- Survey of perceptions of spatial inequalities
- Migration, territorial inequalities & spatial justice
- Multilevel policy-making and spatial justice
- Autonomy movements and territorial inequalities
- Re-imagining Regional Futures



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