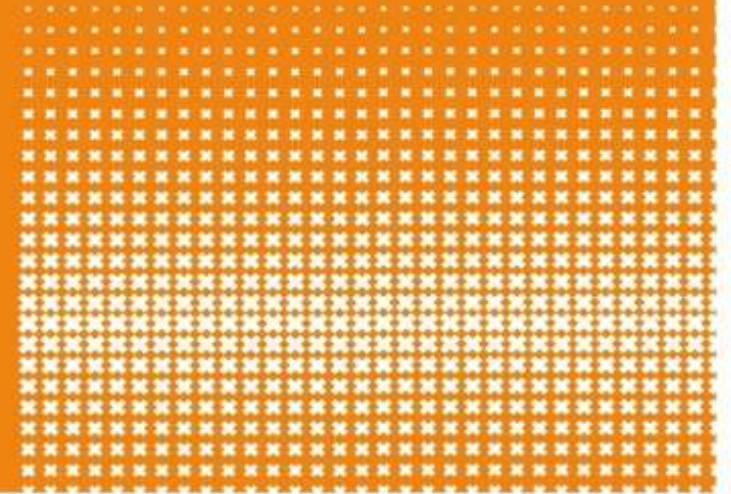




Frans Thissen – Department of Geography, Planning and
International Development Studies



Rural Poverty in Flanders

a diversity of poverty in a diversity of places

Rural poverty research in Flanders



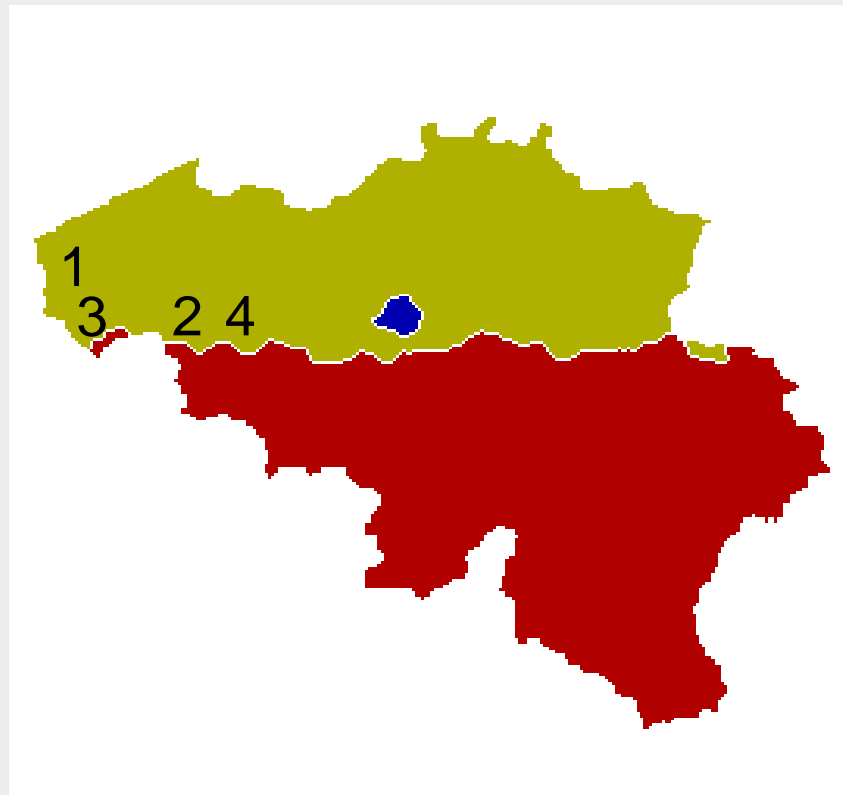
Henk Meert's contribution:

- Rural poverty on campsites
- Surviving strategies of the rural poor
- The negative effect of diffuse patterns of rural poverty

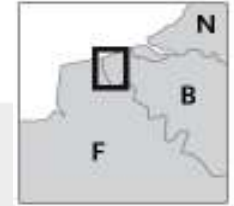
Emile Claus: 'rural life'



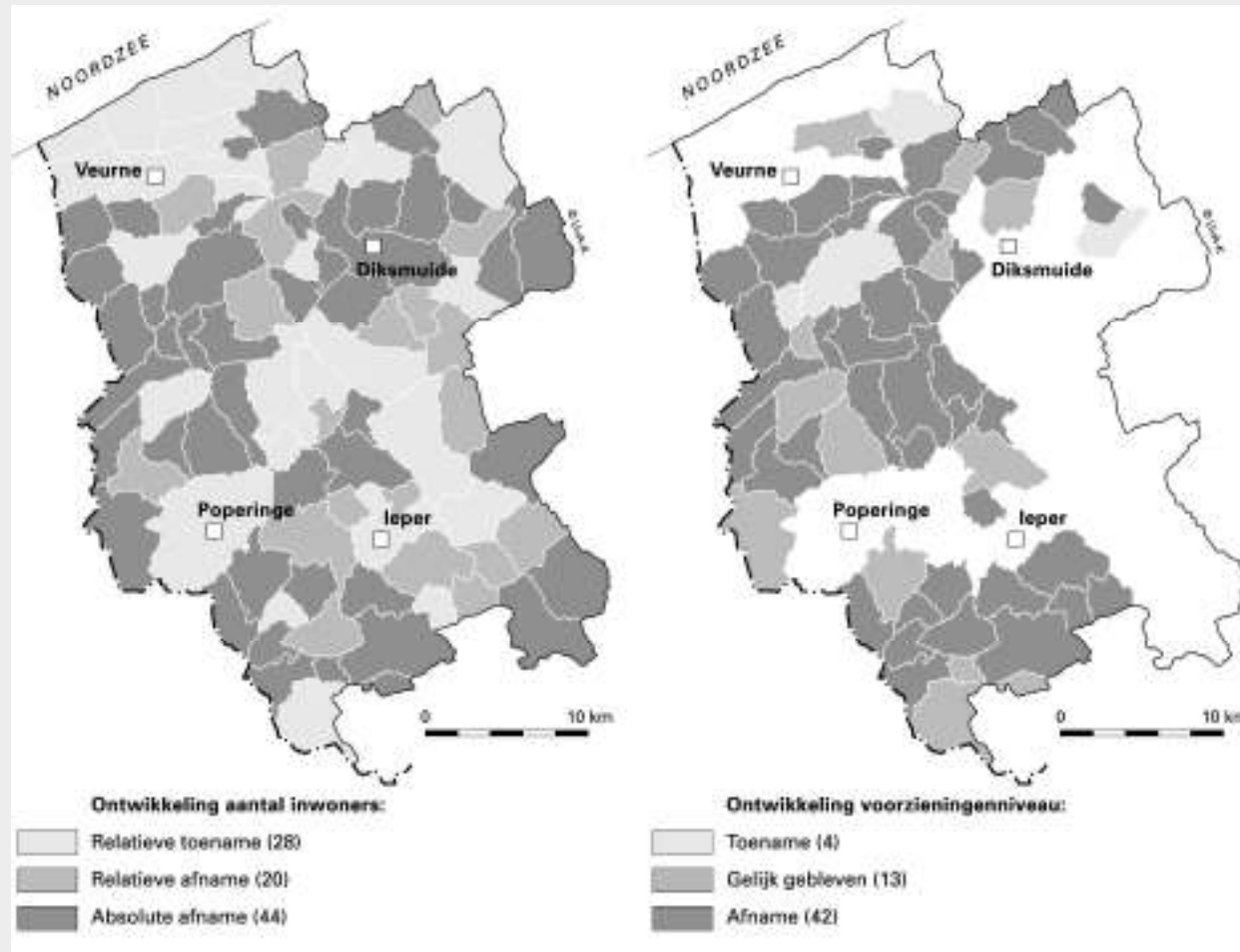
UvA involvement in research projects in Flanders



1. Quality of life in Westhoek villages (1997-98 and 2005)
2. Quality of life from the perspective of young people in the Leie and Scheldt region (2000)
3. Staying or leaving: young people in the Westhoek (S) (2005)
4. Social cohesion in S Flemish Ardennes (2007)

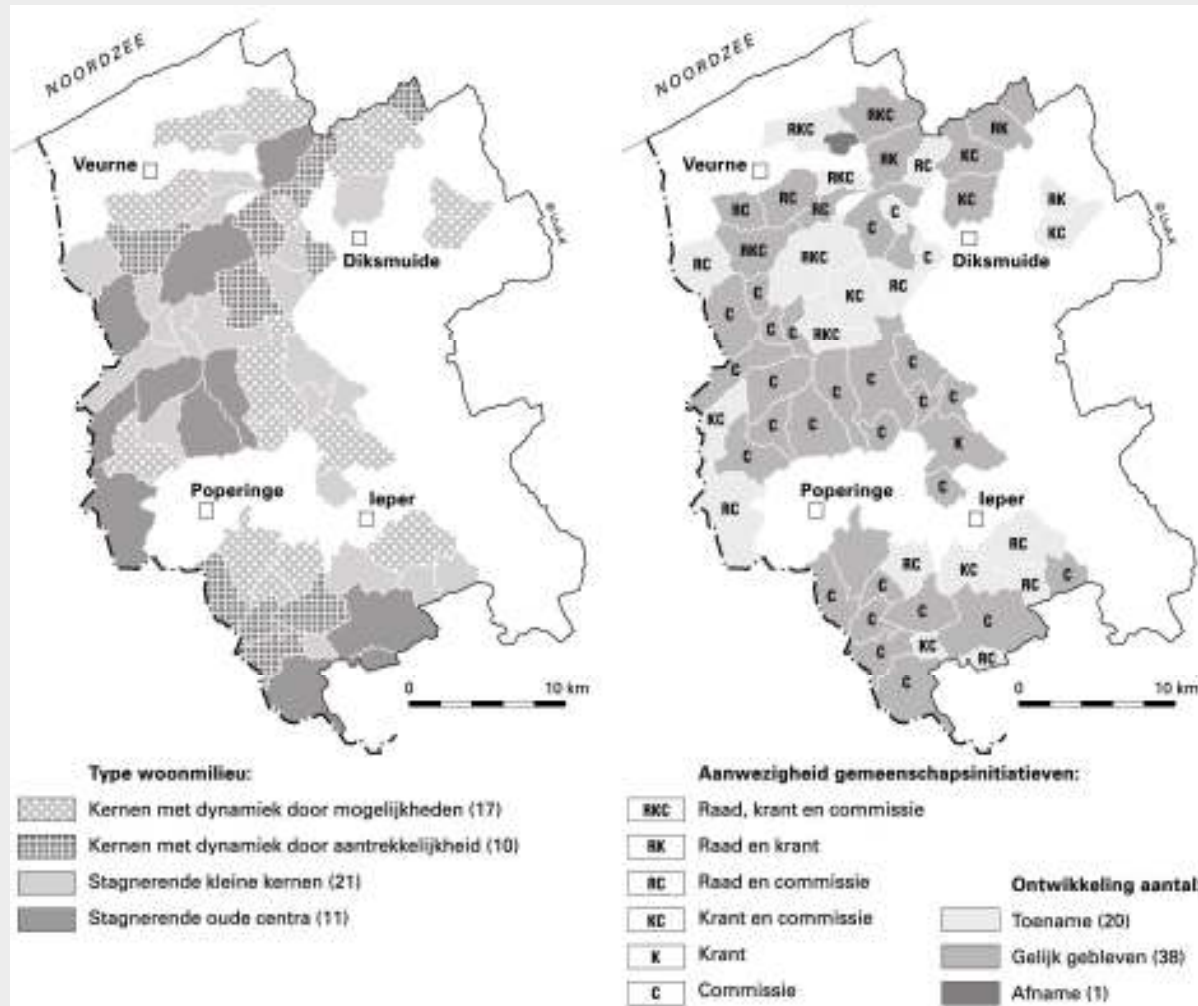


1. Quality of life in Westhoek villages 'Old diversity'



- Development of number of inhabitants
- Development of local service level
- Negative and without a real perspective

1. Quality of life in Westhoek villages 'New diversity'



- Development of residential function (dynamic vs. stagnating villages)
- Development of local initiatives ('services')
- More realistic, and with positive perspective

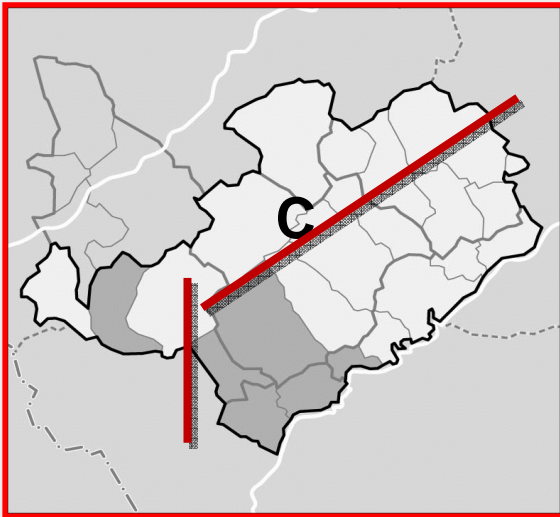
1. Quality of life in Westhoek villages



Rural poverty in the Westhoek:

- The low quality of the housing stock and the residential environment is the main factor behind local stagnation in villages
- Low quality housing attracts poverty in expanding housing markets

2. Quality of life for young people in Leie and Scheldt region



2. Quality of life for young people in Leie and Scheldt region

‘Old diversity’:

- Industrialised countryside with regional centre (Zwevegem, E-17) and periphery (along the language border)
- Important cultural and power dimension (local autonomous industrialisation)
- Strengthened by housing policy as reaction on local poverty (public housing)

‘New diversity’:

- Residential villages near Kortrijk and near Scheldt and Flemish Ardennes
- Mix of old traditional and new modern, reflected in housing and population characteristics

2. Quality of life for young people in Leie and Scheldt region

Rural poverty in the villages of Leie and Scheldt among young households

■ A definition of poverty

- Financial independence: disposable income in relation to household characteristics
- Six percent of independent young households were below the poverty line; local variation from zero to twelve percent

■ An alternative definition of poverty for young households: unsuccessful independency (financial, household formation, life style)

- Interviews in depth: poor are living outside the general accepted social patterns (handicapped, no friends, no trust in society)

2. Quality of life for young people in Leie and Scheldt region

Two patterns of rural poverty

Traditional pattern of spatial inequality

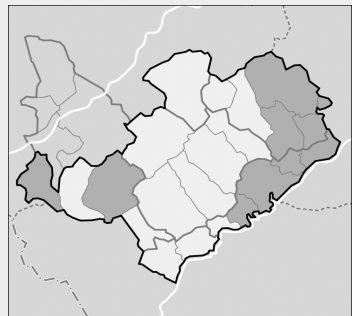
- Reproduction of patterns of the past because of the housing stock (cheap housing, social housing)
- Attracts households with a weak position on the housing market, from long distances
- Relatively concentrated

New, diffuse pattern of spatial inequality

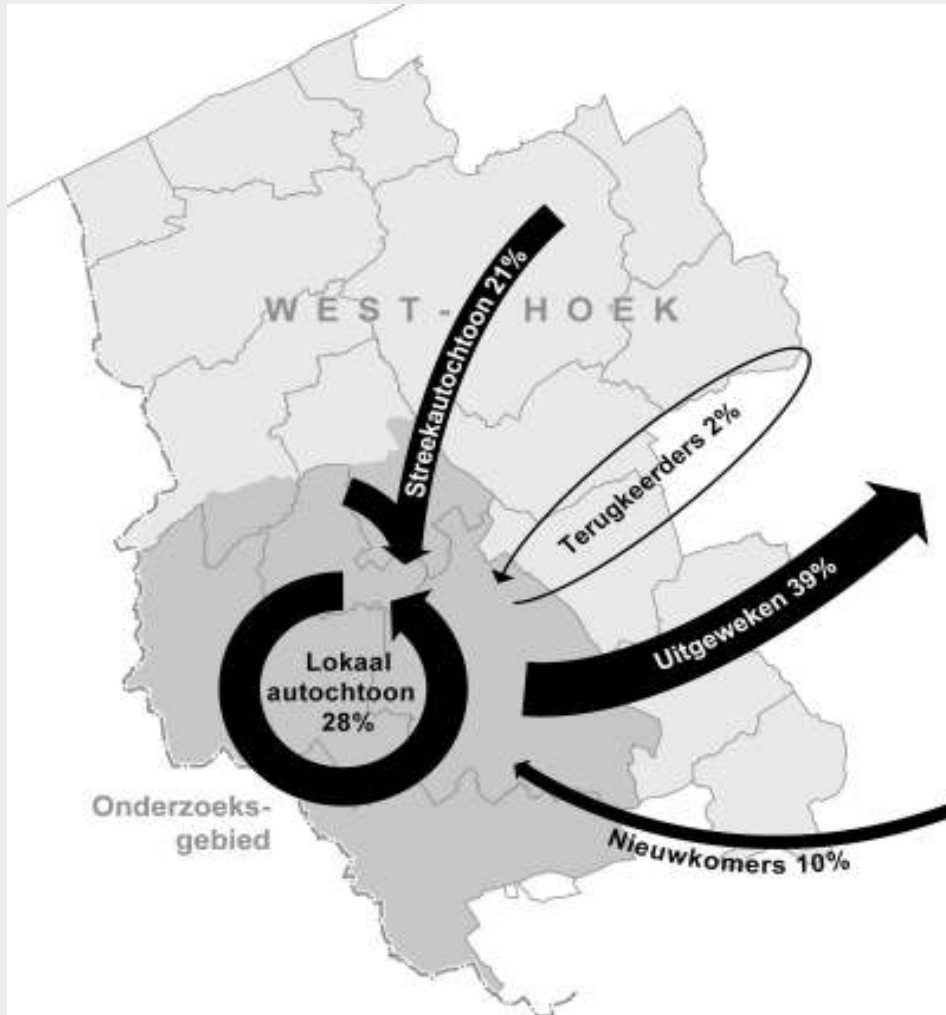
- Produced by scattered settlement development; loss of typical rural functions; growing interest of well-to-do households
- Poverty more often of local origin
- Diffuse character

2. Quality of life for young people in Leie and Scheldt region **Negative influence of diffuse patterns of poverty**

1. Denial of poverty-related problems (invisibility; rural idyll represents 'rich life')
2. Experiences of powerlessness and marginalisation (Cloke 1997)
3. Less successful in the development of survival strategies (Meert 2000)



3. Young people in the Westhoek: staying or leaving?



- Brain drain of young people: loss of human and social capital
- The knowledge economy: the emergence of new urban / rural contrasts?

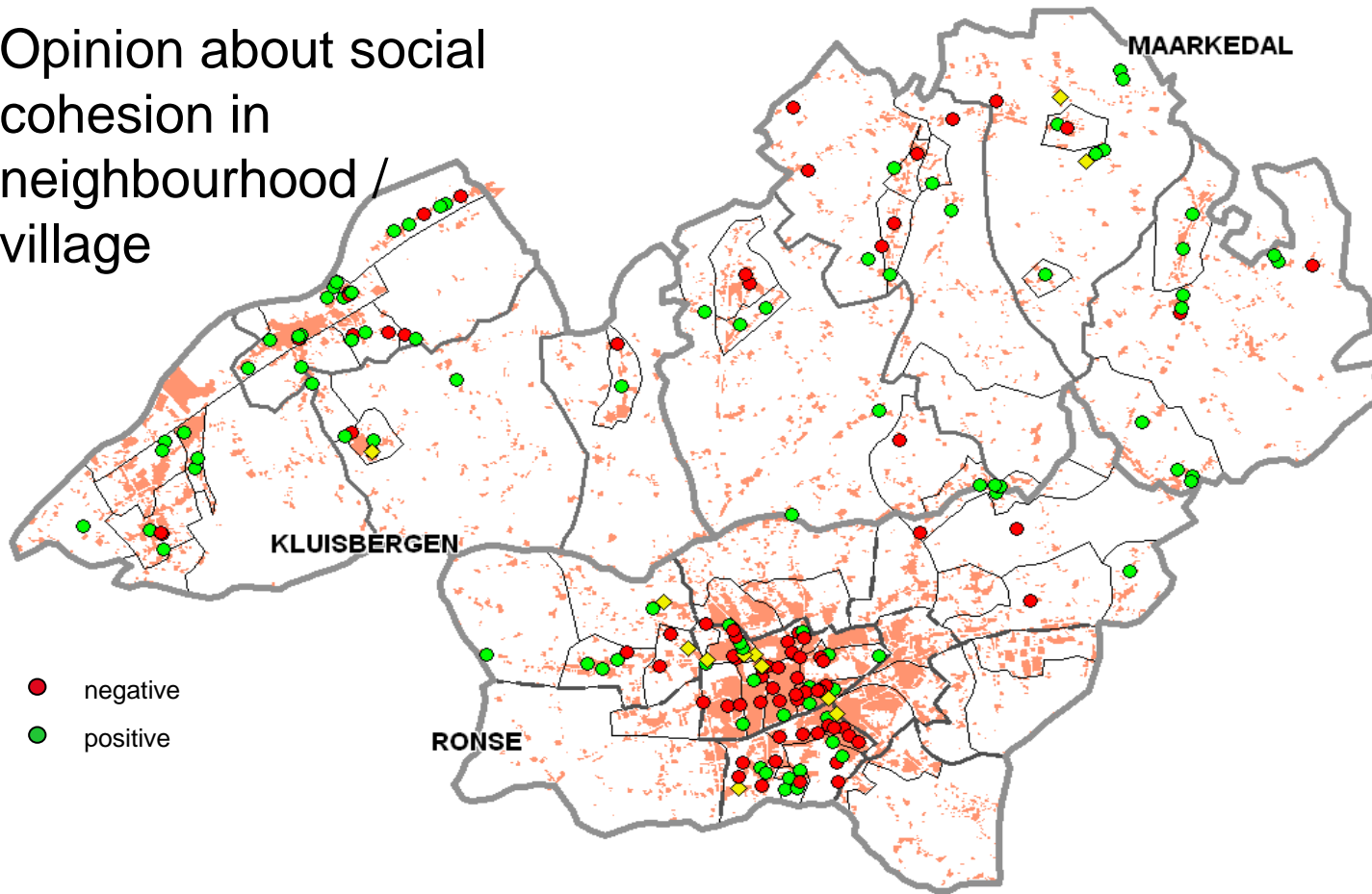
3. Young people in the Westhoek: staying or leaving? Migration intentions of rural youth



- (Perceptions of) Employment opportunities & identification with the home region
- National differences: higher education in an urban setting as a stage in the life cycle
- Regional differences:
 - Regional and local rootedness
 - The consumptive function of the countryside

4. Social cohesion in S Flemish Ardennes

Opinion about social cohesion in neighbourhood / village



- negative
- positive



4. Social cohesion in S Flemish Ardennes

	Labourers	Income	Looking for a job	Orientation on
1. Ronse citizens born and grown up in the region	Modal	Modal	Low	Local family; on regional service centres elsewhere
2. Villagers born and grown up in the region	Modal	High	Low	Very local; regional identity
3. Inhabitants born outside the region (not 4)	Low	High	Low	Regional orientation; strong political influence
4. Inhabitants with origin in non-western countries	High	Low	High	Local family (if available) and local services in Ronse

Two types of rural poverty (C Kesteloot)

Result of local developments:

- Changes in agriculture, local services and secondary sector
- Loss of jobs in agriculture, local services and secondary sector
- Commuters
- *Rural poor, backward in rural positions*

Result of regionalisation:

- Regionalisation of housing and labour markets
- Poverty of urban origin
- Suburbanisation of rich urban citizens
- *Migration of urban poor to cheap rural housing (incl camp sites)*

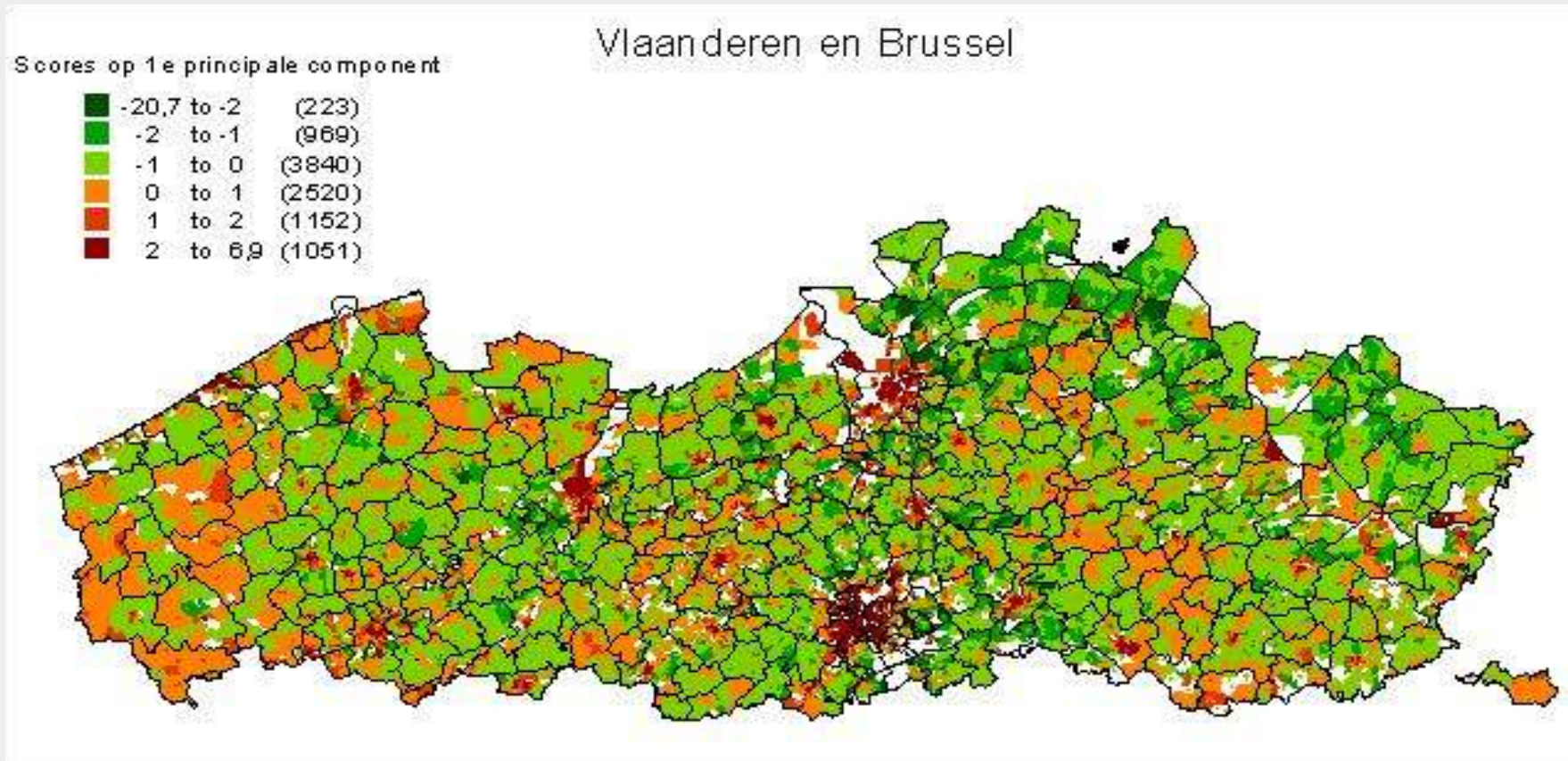
Maps rural poverty in Flanders and Brussels (census 2001, C Kesteloot)

Rural poverty

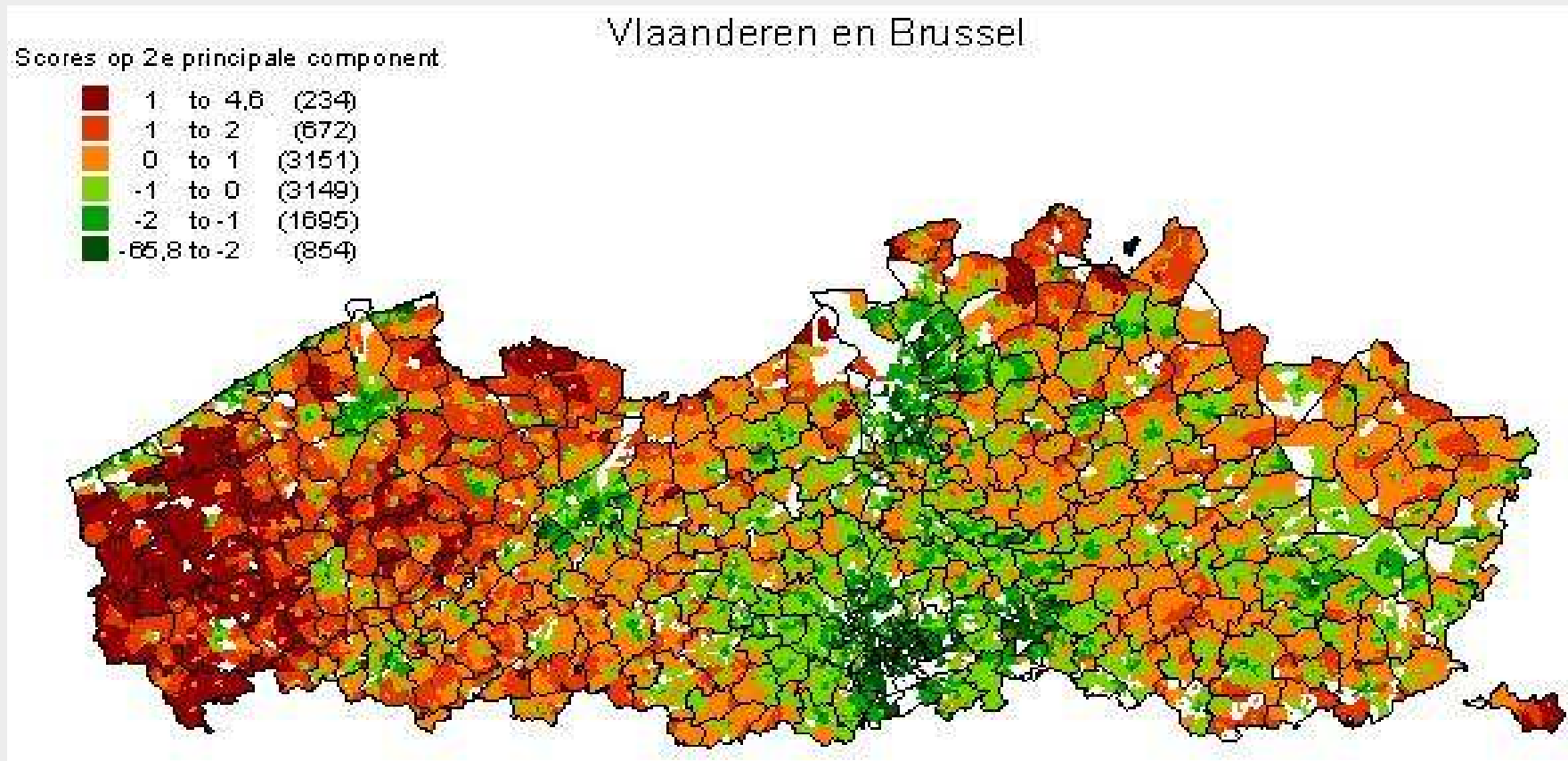
Urban poverty in rural setting



(General) poverty in Flanders and Brussels outside urban agglomerations (census 2001, C Kesteloot)

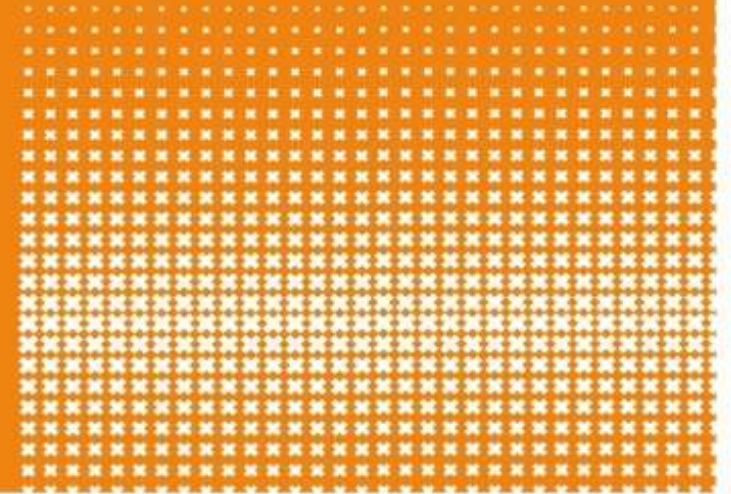


Rural poverty in Flanders and Brussels (census 2001, C Kesteloot)





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