

Title: Life and migration trajectories and territorial inequalities in France

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#### Context :

For several decades, there has been a significant aging of the population in western Europe (Dubuc, 2021), especially in regions with a history of heavy industry, such as metal and steel production (Kisiel, 2020). This trend is closely tied to an unstable economy. Consequently, numerous regions experience decreasing populations (Dubuc, 2004), as people move to more alluring hubs that offer superior employment prospects. The movement of certain groups can result in a downward spiral, with decreased services, fewer job opportunities, and an increasing elderly demographic. These regions, commonly referred to as vulnerable zones so-called fragile territories, will undergo analysis alongside other territories. The top focus of France's national strategy is the growth of these regions, which have experienced a persistent decline in their birth rates.

This research aims to delve deeply into the personal journeys of individuals residing in France. Our focus will be on their migration paths influenced by sociodemographic, educational, job market entry, and professional growth factors.

This presentation takes a spatial and longitudinal approach (Robette, 2011, Cordazzo et al., 2016). It aims to identify migration paths, both within regions and between different types of territory: isolated rural areas, outlying areas, small or medium-sized towns, and large urban agglomerations.

#### Proposed approach and aims :

The data used are those of the permanent demographic sample (EDP) and the population census, which are very rich and precise. They provide information on the evolution of individual lives, taking into account socio-demographic characteristics, places of residence, work, housing, family and professional careers. Our objective is to examine the impact of sociological and geographical factors on life-course decisions, using statistical probability and trajectory analysis. To achieve this, we will employ multimodal modelling to analyse various migration patterns, including those who stay put, those who leave, and those who return home. Furthermore, we will investigate what drives individuals to leave their communities, particularly during their formative years. We will focus on fragile territories, examining both individual traits and life trajectories. To supplement our quantitative research, we plan to conduct qualitative interviews with both residents and policymakers. This approach aims to uncover hidden facets of life-course journeys that may elude traditional survey methods. Gaining insights into diverse perspectives, regardless of migration status, holds great value in understanding the complexities of human existence.

It's essential to consider the systems established by regional government policies, as well as their perspective on future growth opportunities.

It's common knowledge that a significant number of young people relocate to different cities during their studies and job searches, especially towards the alluring metropolis (Rowe, 2020). However, astonishing statistics reveal an overwhelming majority of students choose to settle down in their hometowns after graduation (Joubaire et al., 2024). We aim to uncover if they do so out of necessity, such as insufficient finances, or whether it's financial necessity driving them back to their parental abode or a strong sense of belonging to their home region. By examining all factors at play, we can truly understand what drives these returns.

The span of accessible information allows for a depiction of the transformation of these systems. It's intriguing to examine how events like economic downturns or global pandemics, such as COVID-19, influence their development.

#### Anticipated Outcomes :

We anticipate discovering correlations between an individual's professional integration, migration history, demographic background, and attachment to their childhood homeland. This could potentially explain why certain 'fragile' regions experience population declines, as they may hinder the employment prospects of people regardless of their migration status, particularly among those who remain in the area or return after completing their education.

The departure from the family residence, essential for transitioning into adulthood, can vary significantly based on factors such as the region's classification, the parents' professions, educational attainment, gender, relationship dynamics, and career progression.

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