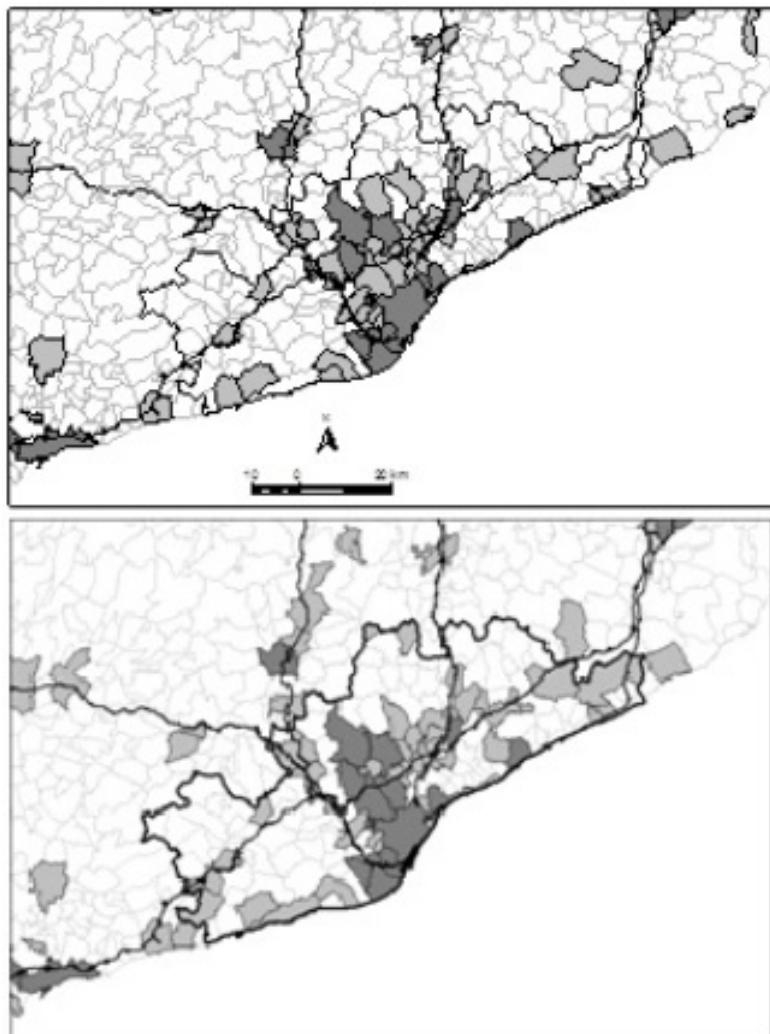


02/2015

Spatial Dynamics of Catalonia's Population since 1980



In 1995, the General Spatial Planning of Catalonia (PGTC) was passed in order to obtain a more balanced distribution of the population throughout the territory. Two decades later, the evaluation of the territorial and socio-environmental consequences of PGTC shows congestion around Barcelona, depopulation of certain areas such as the Pyrenees and high congestion and environmental deterioration of coastal areas, with consequences such as air pollution increase and very large risks of forest fires and floods.

In the early 1980s, the Generalitat of Catalonia, the Catalan Autonomous Government, developed a territorial plan, the General Spatial Planning of Catalonia (GSPC), approved in 1995. The main aims of the GSPC were to achieve a more balanced distribution of population, avoiding the

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"municipalities without changes".

Figure 1: Final results from clustering analysis.

Our results showed the spatial dynamics from the 1980s, essentially summarizing three situations: decongestion, depopulation and coastalisation. The decongestion of Barcelona has produced an increase of urban sprawl around the Metropolitan Region, producing increments of mobility and aggravating the dependency of private cars, and, in consequence, causing more atmospheric pollution. Although the rise of some re-territorialisation processes linked to protected areas and tourism activities, depopulation mainly occurred in the Catalan Pyrenees and in some inland municipalities with a high presence of dry farming, producing agricultural abandonment and increasing vulnerability to extensive wildfires. Finally, the process of concentrating population and economic activities in coastal spaces has produced excessive congestion, landscape degradation and more risk to floods.

Top left figure: Dynamics from 1980s (top) to 2009 (down) around the Metropolitan Region of Barcelona.

Pere Serra
Ana Vera
Antoni Francesc Tulla
pere.serra@uab.cat

References

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