

"Understanding shrinkage of rural peripheries: the analysis of macro and micro level factors of change (examples from Lithuania)

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THE MAIN IDEA

- THE LONG LASTING SHRINKAGE OF PERIPHERAL PLACES (WHEREVER THEY ARE) IS RELATED TO PREVAILING OUTMIGRATION, WHICH IS TO SOME EXTENT INEVITABLE PROVIDED MACRO LEVEL FACTORS REMAIN STABLE.
- EVEN IF OUTMIGRATION IS MORE INTENSIVE, THE IMMIGRATION CAN BE OF SIMILAR IMPORTANCE FOR THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT, EVEN IF IT'S LESS NUMEROUS.
- IN OTHER WORDS, THOUGH ATTENTION ON EMIGRATION IS BIG, STRUCTURE AND SCALE OF IMMIGRATION POSSIBLY DETERMINES THE FUTURE OF SMALL RURAL PLACES MORE.
- THE LOCAL ACTORS (MICRO LEVEL) CAN INFLUENCE THE FATES OF CONCRETE PLACES, WHICH COULD PROSPER EVEN WITH SHRINKING POPULATION WHEN MACRO LEVEL FACTORS FACILITATE GENERAL POLARISED DEVELOPMENT
- **THE ROLE OF NEWCOMERS AND LOCAL LEADERS ON THE FUTURE OF SMALL PERIPHERAL PLACES**

15MIN > AKTUALU > ŠVIETIMAS

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Nepilnų klasių išlaikymui savivaldybės pasiryžusios atseikėti ir po 100, ir po 200 tūkst. eurų



Main idea and aims

The project seeks to establish the impact of immigration on the development of peripheral rural areas.

- Quantitative methodology for the identification of the relative influence of immigration on general socio-demographic trends in peripheries. **What influence immigration is making?**
- Qualitative methods for the revelation of the role of local actors (role of human agency in development processes). **What influence new-comers are making (can make) in particular places?**

In other words: **how micro-level agents can influence trends caused by macro-level factors?**

New-settlers as an external factor that has the potential to alter the development of small peripheral places where every person counts...*(Role of Agency and regional development against all odds. Regional studies Vol. 57, eds Sotarauta and Grillitsch, 2023)*

Polarised development in Europe and Baltics

The polarized development of capitalistic countries is perceived as a “natural” outcome of market economy (*either because of market imperfections, agglomeration economies or nature of capitalist society (economy)* – Hadjimichalis and Hudson, 2014; Rodriguez-Pose, 2018)

Polarized development of former communist countries is extremely evident as changes towards present neo-liberal political and economic system were extremely sharp (LANG et al., 2015; LANG and HAUNSTAIN, 2017)

These processes are even more visible in the Baltics as free market economy effects were accompanied with changing status of their capital cities – former administrative centres of “Pribaltic republics” and cities in CEE bordering agricultural areas had almost no suburbs (LEETMAA & TAMMARU, 2007; SÝKORA & OUŘEDNÍČEK, 2007; TAMMARU ET AL., 2009, LANG et al, 2021,)

SO FAR...

- THE INCREASING SOCIO.SPATIAL POLARISATION INTO CORE AND PERIPHERAL REGIONS HAS ONLY RECENTLY REACHED LEVELS CHALLENGING SOCIAL AND TERRITORIAL COHESION AS WELL AS THE EUROPEAN PROJECT AS A WHOLE (DIJKSTRA ET AL., 2018; RODRÍGUEZ POSE, 2019)
- THE DEVELOPMENT OF SMALL PERIPHERAL PLACES (*LEFT BEHIND PLACES*) HAS BEEN UNDER DISCUSSION DURING RECENT DECADES BUT OBVIOUS ANSWERS FOR THEIR DEVELOPMENT HAVEN'T BEEN FOUND.
- **EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP** AND **ACTIVE COMMUNITIES** ARE AMONG THE MOST OFTEN ANSWERS SEARCHING FOR THE WAY OUT OF PRESENT TRENDS AT MICRO SCALE (LOCALLY)

THEORY - BODY OF PRINCIPLES OFFERED TO EXPLAIN PHENOMENA

ALL EXPLANATIONS ARE BASED ON ONLY **2** MAIN DRIVING FORCES AND THEIR INTERPLAY:

- 1. HUMAN AGENCY OR PREFERENCES AND INTENTIONS OF HUMAN BEINGS... – **WHO SHOULD BE INTERVIEWED?**
- 2. SOCIAL AND PHYSICAL STRUCTURE OR CONTEXT IN WHICH THESE PREFERENCES APPEAR AND ARE SHAPED (LIMITATIONS OF HUMAN ACTIONS) – **WHAT DATA SHOULD BE ANALYSED?**

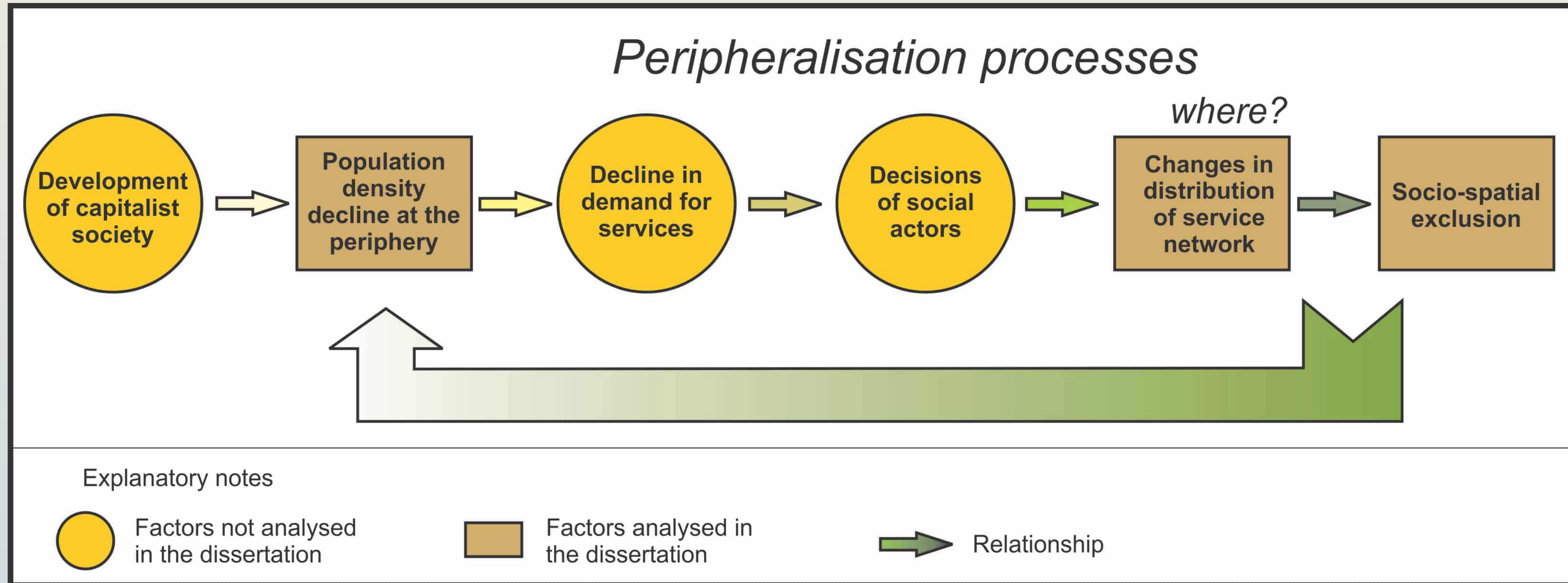
*WHY DOES PERIPHERY SHRINKS? – BECAUSE PEOPLE **DON'T WANT** TO COME AND STAY THERE OR (AND) **ARE FORCED** (PERSUADED) TO LEAVE IT OR NOT TO COME THERE.*

SOCIETY AND SPACE

THE MOST IMPORTANT THING TO HAVE IN MIND WHILE STUDYING REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROCESSES:

- **All** CHANGES (ECONOMIC, TECHNOLOG, SOCIAL, CULTURAL....) OF SOCIETY WILL INEVITABLY RESULT IN CHANGING SPACE THIS SOCIETY OCCUPIES AND VICE VERSUS. THE CHANGE IN STATE SOCIAL POLICY OR TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY OR FASHION WILL HAVE POTENTIAL TO CHANGE RESIDENTIAL, ECONOMIC DISTRIBUTION, ETC.. – SO ITS UNDER CONSTANT CHANGE
- MOST OF FUNDAMENTAL CHANGES SO FAR WERE RELATED TO CHANGING TECHNOLOGIES, WHICH FINALLY RESULT IN DIFFERENT DISTRIBUTION OF JOBS, INCOMES, POPULATION, POWER ETC.
- INNOVATIONS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN THE MAIN DRIVER OF REGIONAL CHANGES (STRUCTURAL CHANGES) AND THEREFORE THE ONLY OBVIOUS PREDICTION IS THAT SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION OF SOCIETY WILL BE CHANGING BECAUSE INNOVATIONS WILL NOT STOP

Shrinking – self refueling process? The formation model of socio-spatial exclusion



Principle-based model for the formation of socio-spatial exclusion

(source: compiled by V. Baranauskienė on the basis of Sanderson, 2000; Giddens, 2005; Europos Parlamento Regioninės..., 2008; Daugirdas ir kt., 2013; Hadjimichalis ir Hudson, 2014; Lang ir kt., 2015; Kuhn, 2015; Baranauskienė ir Daugirdas, 2017; Pociūtė-Sereikienė, Baranauskienė ir Daugirdas 2019a, 2019b)

METHODS AND DATA SOURCES

THE METHODOLOGY, METHODS AND TECHNIQUES ARE DEFINED BY THE GOAL AND EPISTEMOLOGY (SUBJECTIVIST OR OBJETIVISTIC) OF THE RESEARCH

OUR GOAL – THE REVELATION OF THE INFLUENCE OF IMMIGRATION ON RURAL PERIPHERIES (*IN THIS CASE WE KNEW TOPIC (THEME) AND WE NEED TO CHOSE TERRITORIAL OBJECT – ITS VICE VERSUS IN YOUR CASE 😊*)

- 1. QUANTITATIVE METHODS FOR THE DELIMITATION OF „RURAL PERIPHERIES“, TRENDS OF SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC DEVELOPMENT AND INFLUENCE OF IMMIGRATION, SELECTION OF CASE STUDY AREAS (*OR FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM, (THEME) IN YOUR CASE*)**
- 2. QUALITATIVE METHODS – FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ROLE OF LOCAL ACTORS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF PARTICULAR PLACES FACING QUITE SIMILAR STRUCTURAL „PRESSURES “ (CONTEXTS). (*OR FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF PLACE SPECIFIC ATTITUDES AND FACTORS*)**

QUANTITATIVE METHODS OR MACRO-LEVEL STUDIES: REVELATION OF GENERAL TRENDS, IGNORING SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE

- SECONDARY DATA SOURCES (STATISTICAL DATA, WHERE IT'S AVAILABLE) HELP TO REVEAL HOW WIDESPREAD IMMIGRATION IS AND WHAT INFLUENCE IT CAN MAKE ON DELIMITATED RURAL PERIPHERIES
- PRIMARY DATA SOURCES (SURVEYS, WHERE IS FUNDING OR *CHEAP LABOUR FORCE...*), COULD FULFIL GAPS OF STATISTICS

QUALITATIVE METHODS – HELPS TO REVEAL PLACE AND PERSON SPECIFIC FACTORS : AGENCY (MICRO) LEVEL ANALYSIS. KNOWLEDGE ABOUT CONCRETE

1. SECONDARY SOURCES: DOCUMENTS, MEDIA, BOOKS, GOOGLE STREET VIEW...

2. PRIMARY DATA SOURCES (GATHERED DURING FIELD TRIPS):

- SENSUAL EVIDENCES (WHAT CAN BE SEEN, HEARD, SMELLED, TOUCHED, TASTED)
- SEMI-STRUCTURAL) INTERVIEWS WITH MAIN LOCAL ACTORS OF CHANGE, REVEALING THEIR ATTITUDES ON IMMIGRATION AMONG LOCALS :
- LOCAL MUNICIPAL LEADERS (GOVERNMENT)
- LOCAL COMMUNITY LEADERS (PUBLICITY)
- LOCAL BUSINESS LEADERS (ECONOMY)
- THE NEWCOMERS (MAIN TARGET GROUP)

METHODOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Used methods:

Quantitative

(analysis of secondary sources)

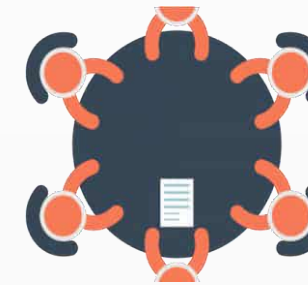


Of the Department of Statistics of Lithuania in 2001, 2011 and 2021 population and housing census data and individual level data



Qualitative

(analysis of primary data)



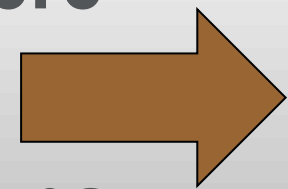
Semi-structured interview



Qualitative data are analyzed using MAXQDA, quantitative data are analyzed using GIS programs.



The questions were structured into ten main groups:



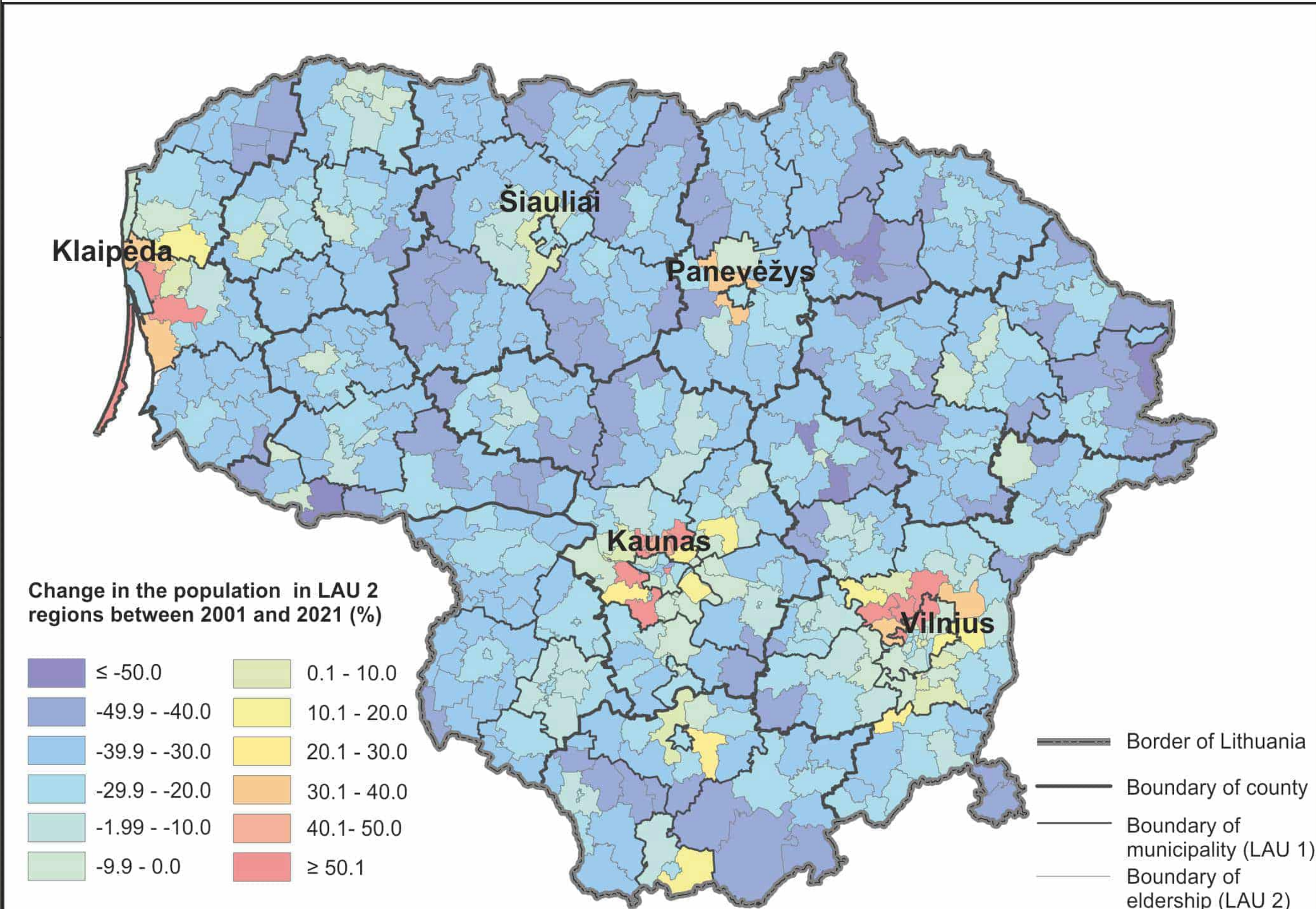
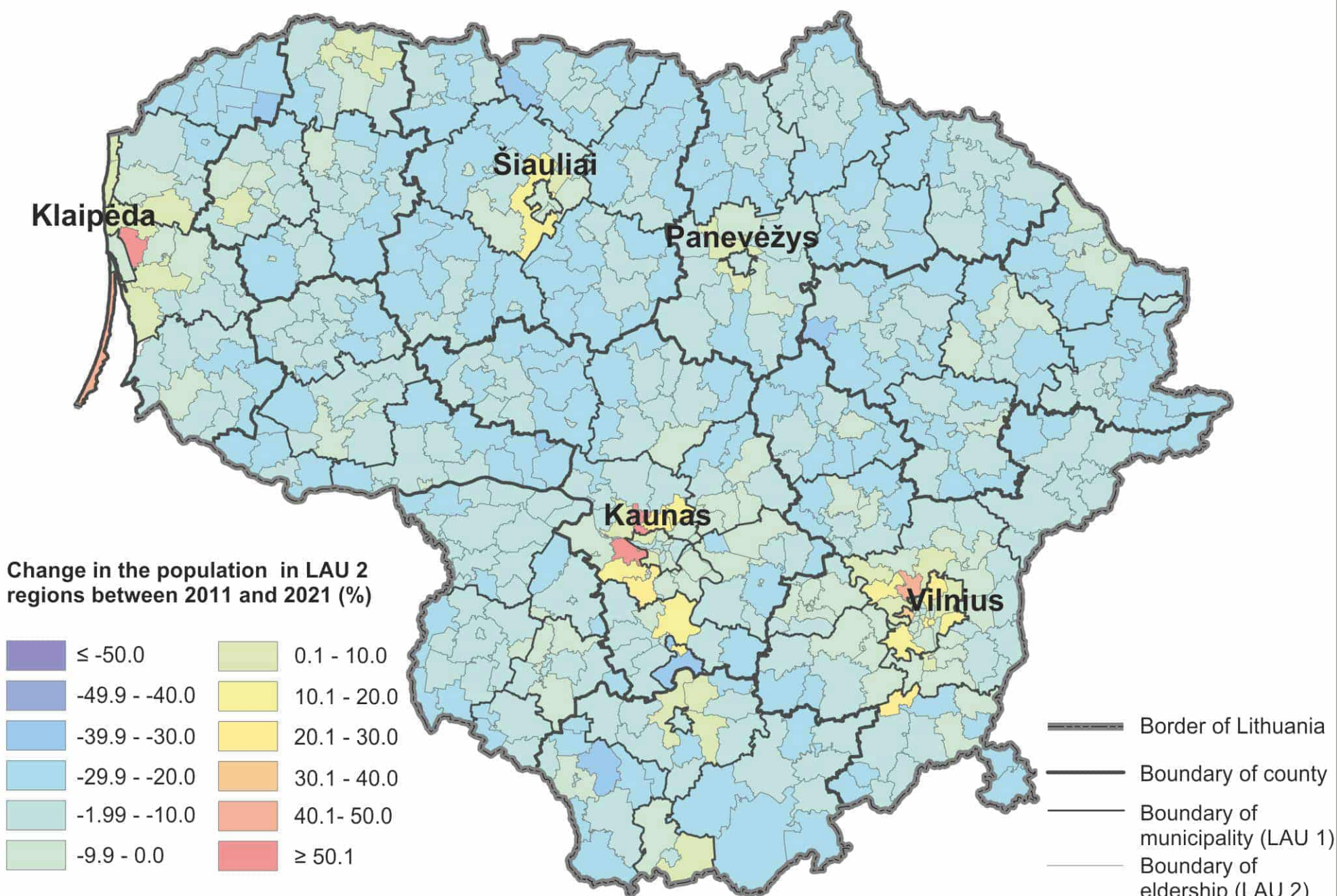
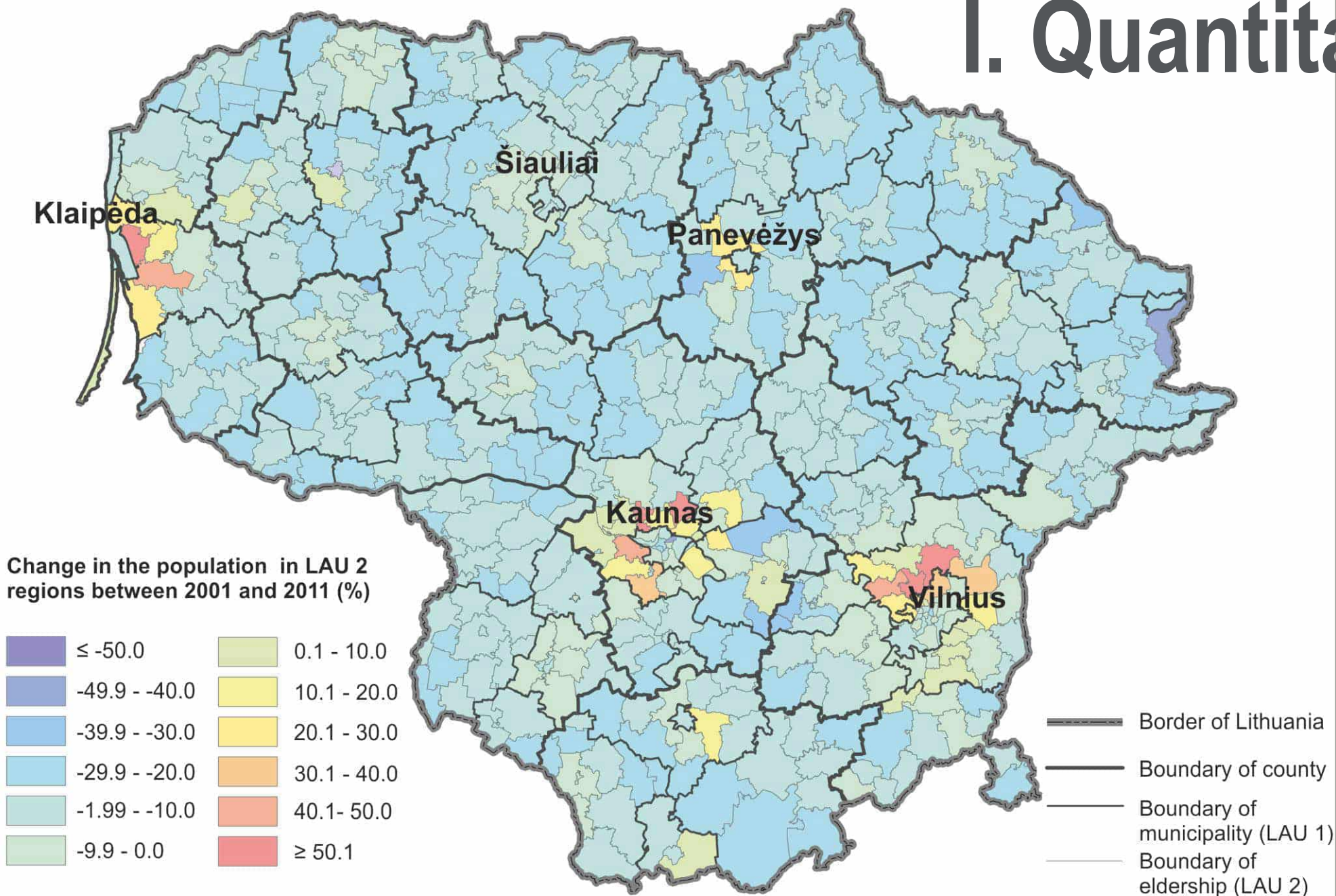
- I. Questions revealing personal/individual data
- II. Questions revealing the motives of innovation
- III. Questions revealing the characteristics of the territory
- IV. Questions revealing public infrastructure
- V. Questions revealing the community, community activities and relations with the community
- VI. Questions revealing attitudes towards immigration from other countries
- VII. Emigration revealing questions
- VIII. Questions that reveal leadership
- IX. The most important questions revealing territorial problems
- X. Questions revealing the prospects of the area's development

44 interviews were conducted (in 13 rural reference municipalities):
28 community leaders (leaders of community organizations (14) and elders (leaders of LAU2 region) (14)),
16 settlers.

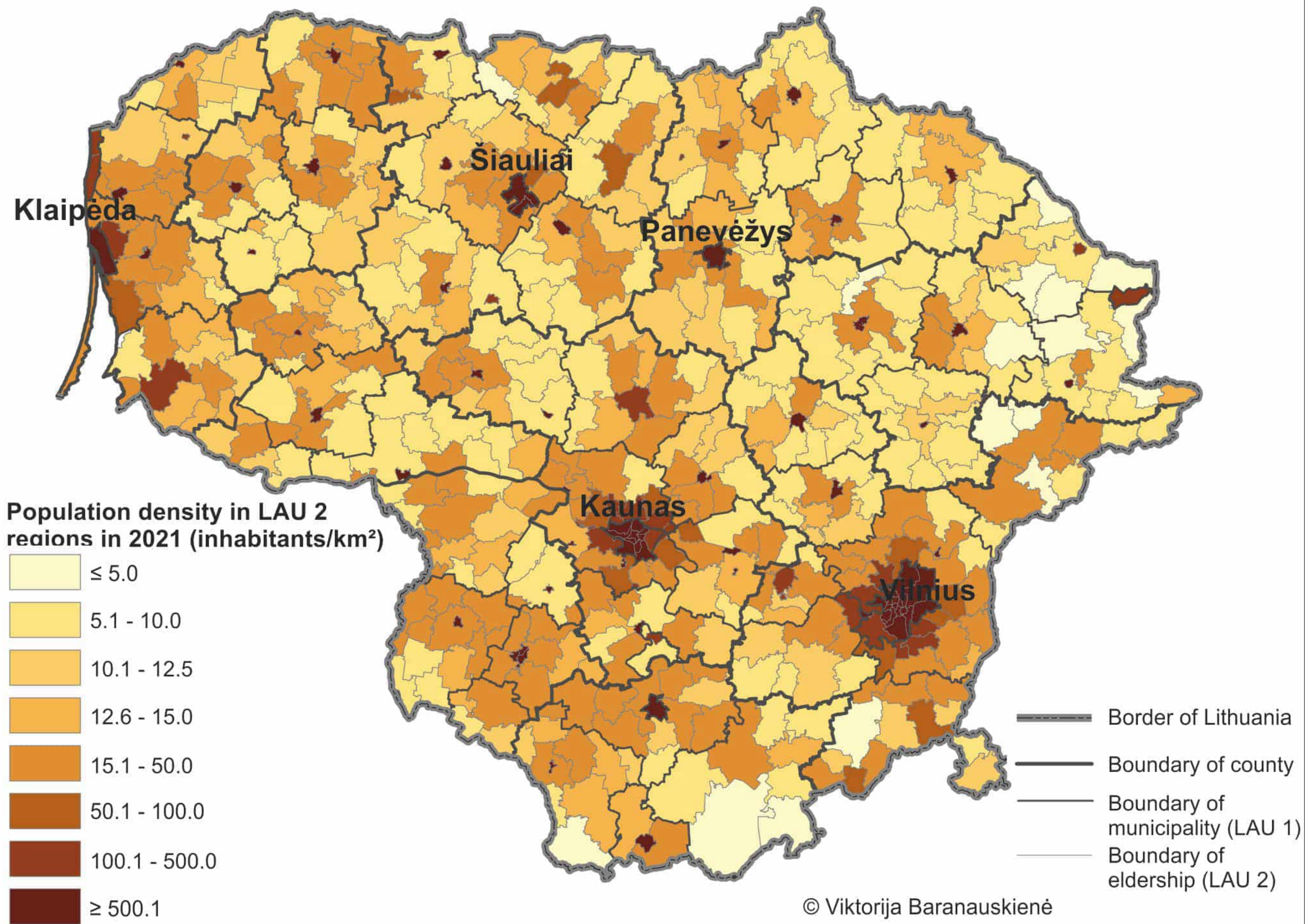
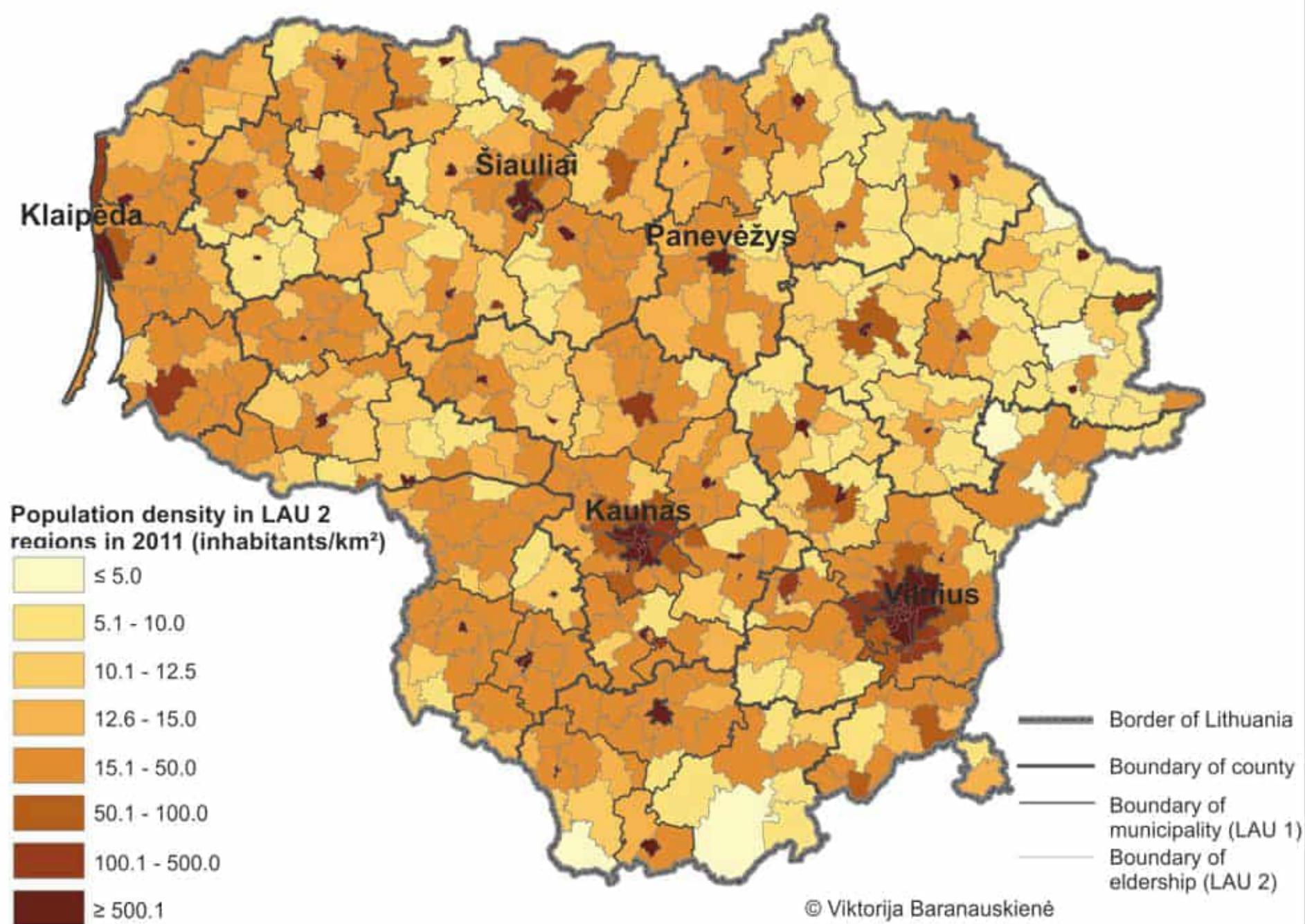
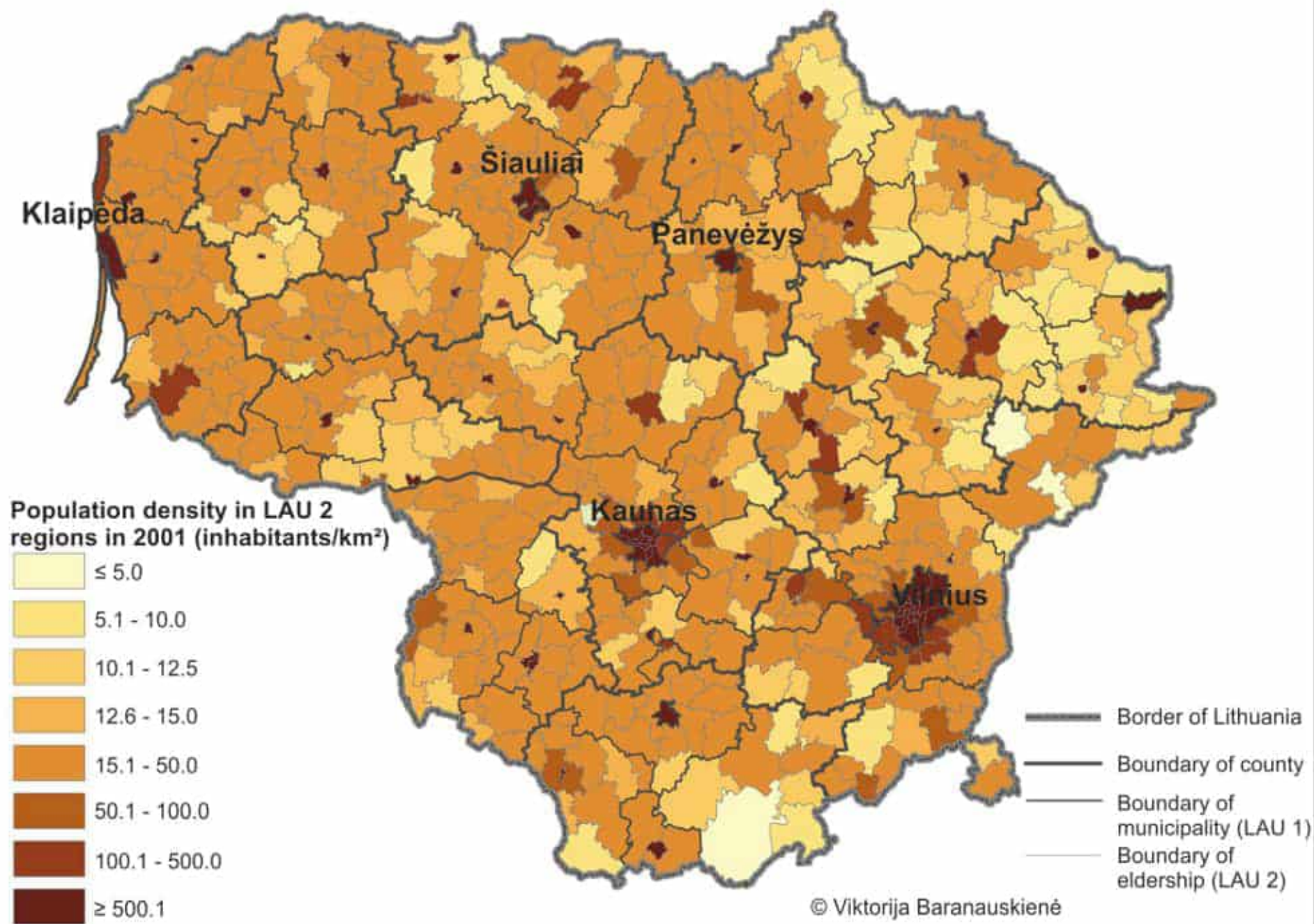


I. Quantitative part: demography, peripheries and migrations

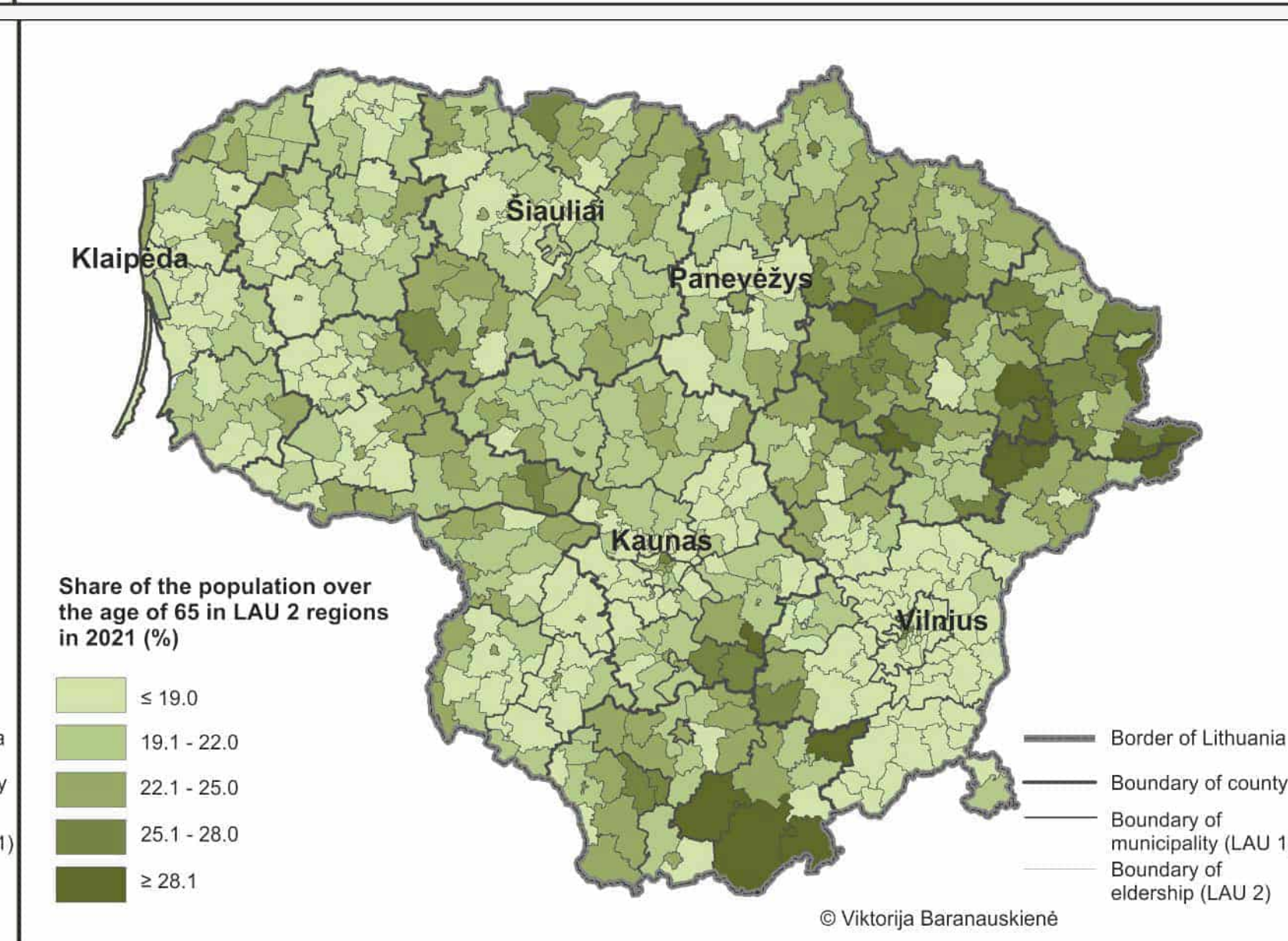
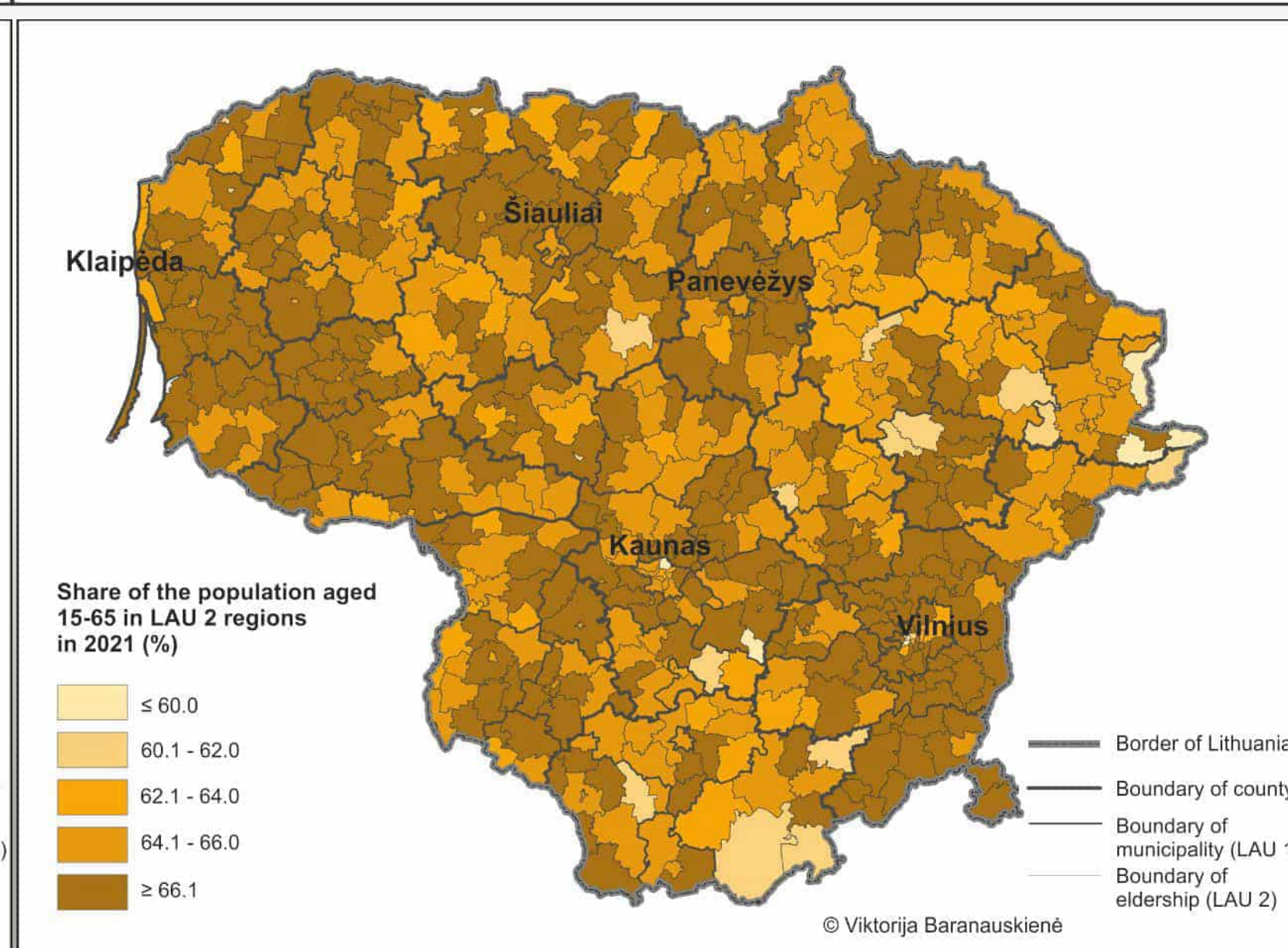
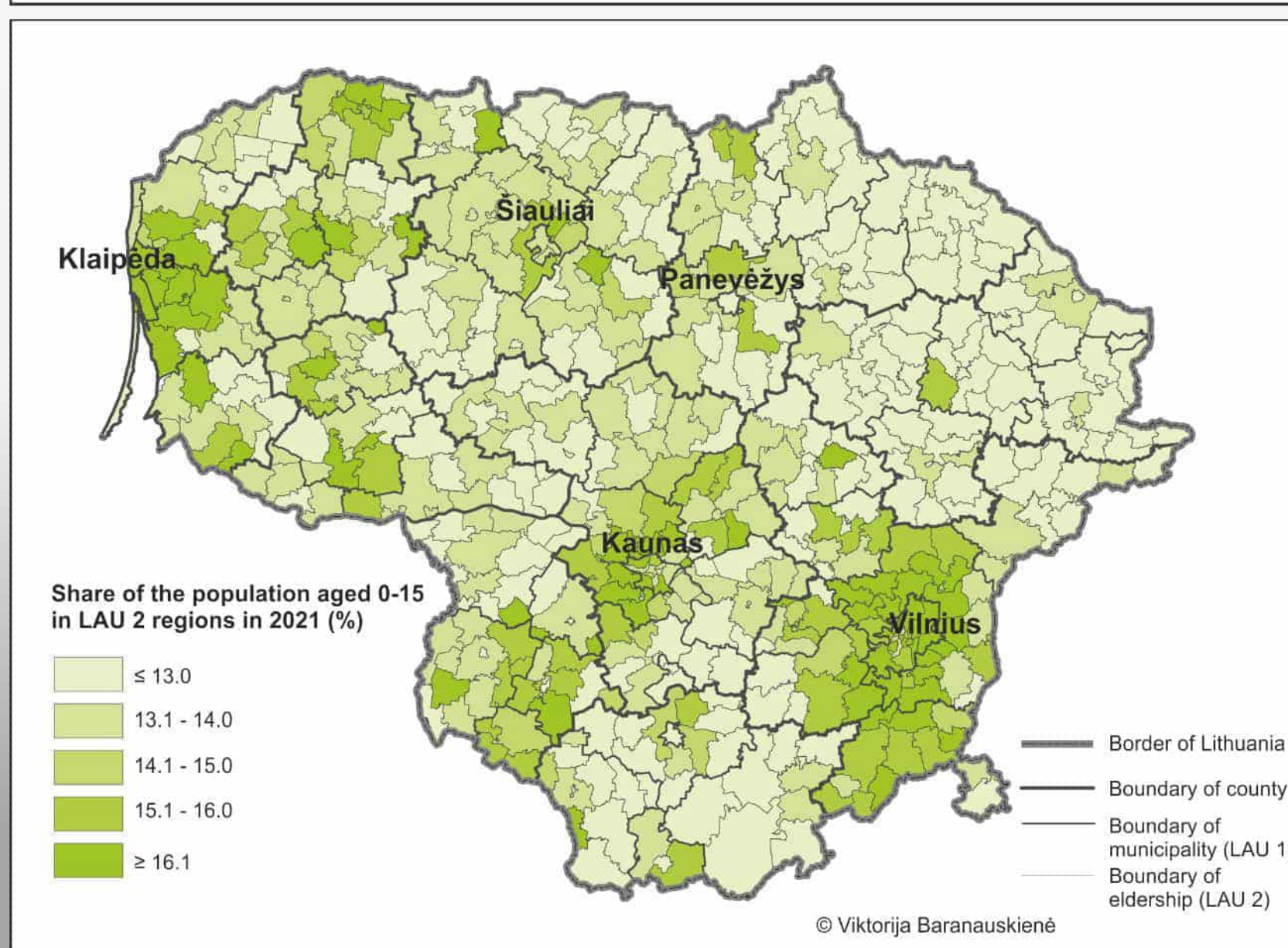
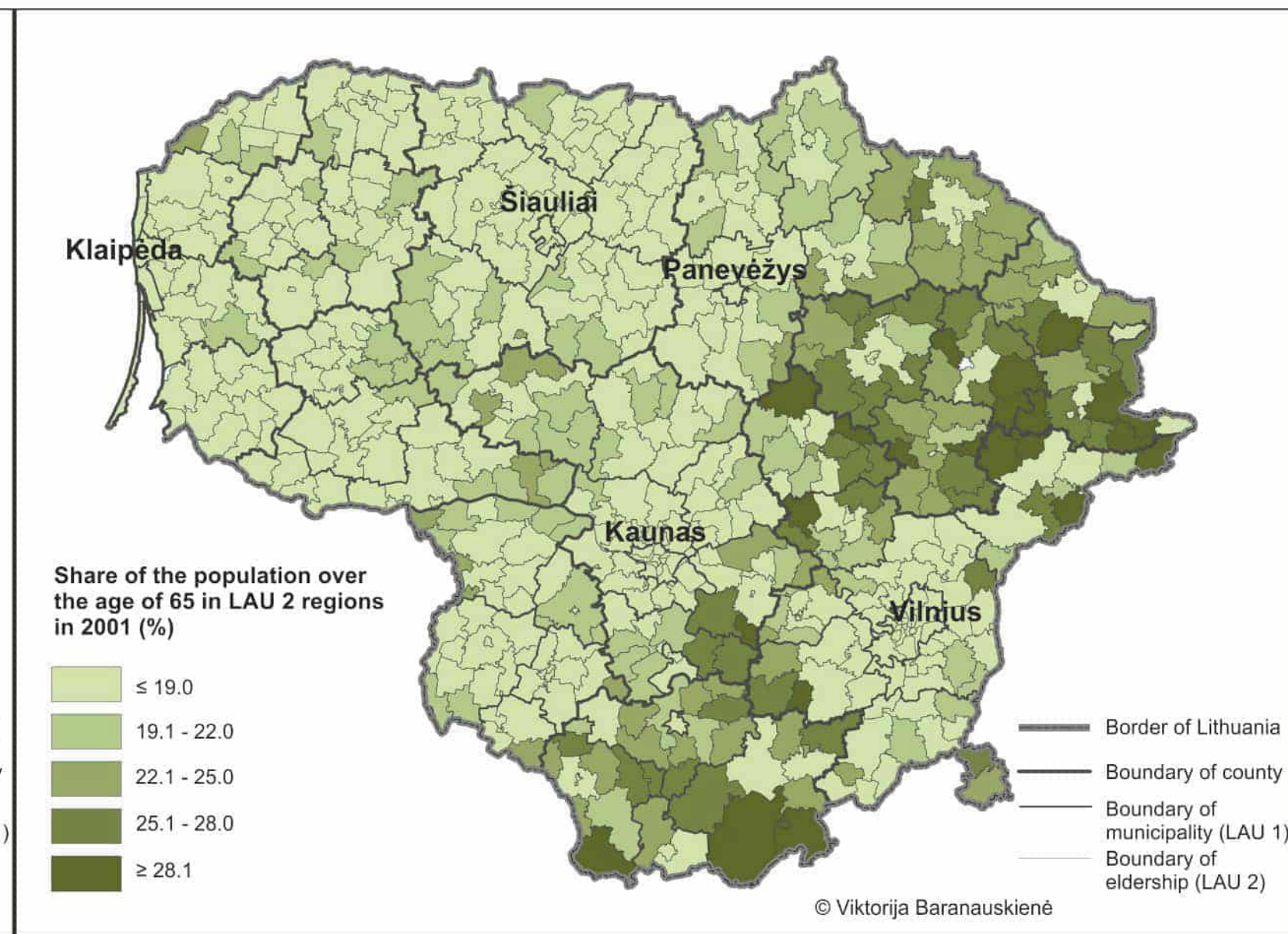
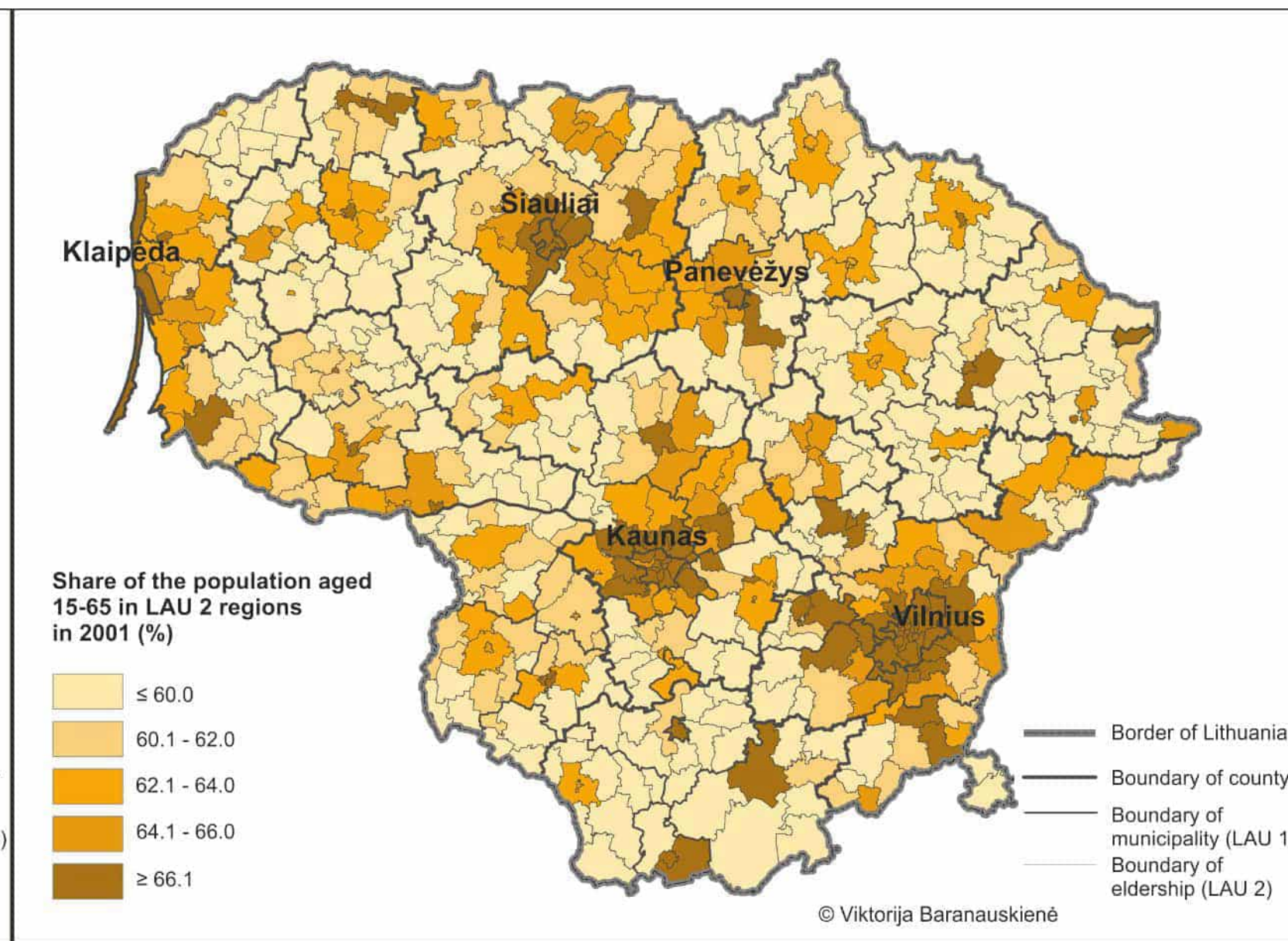
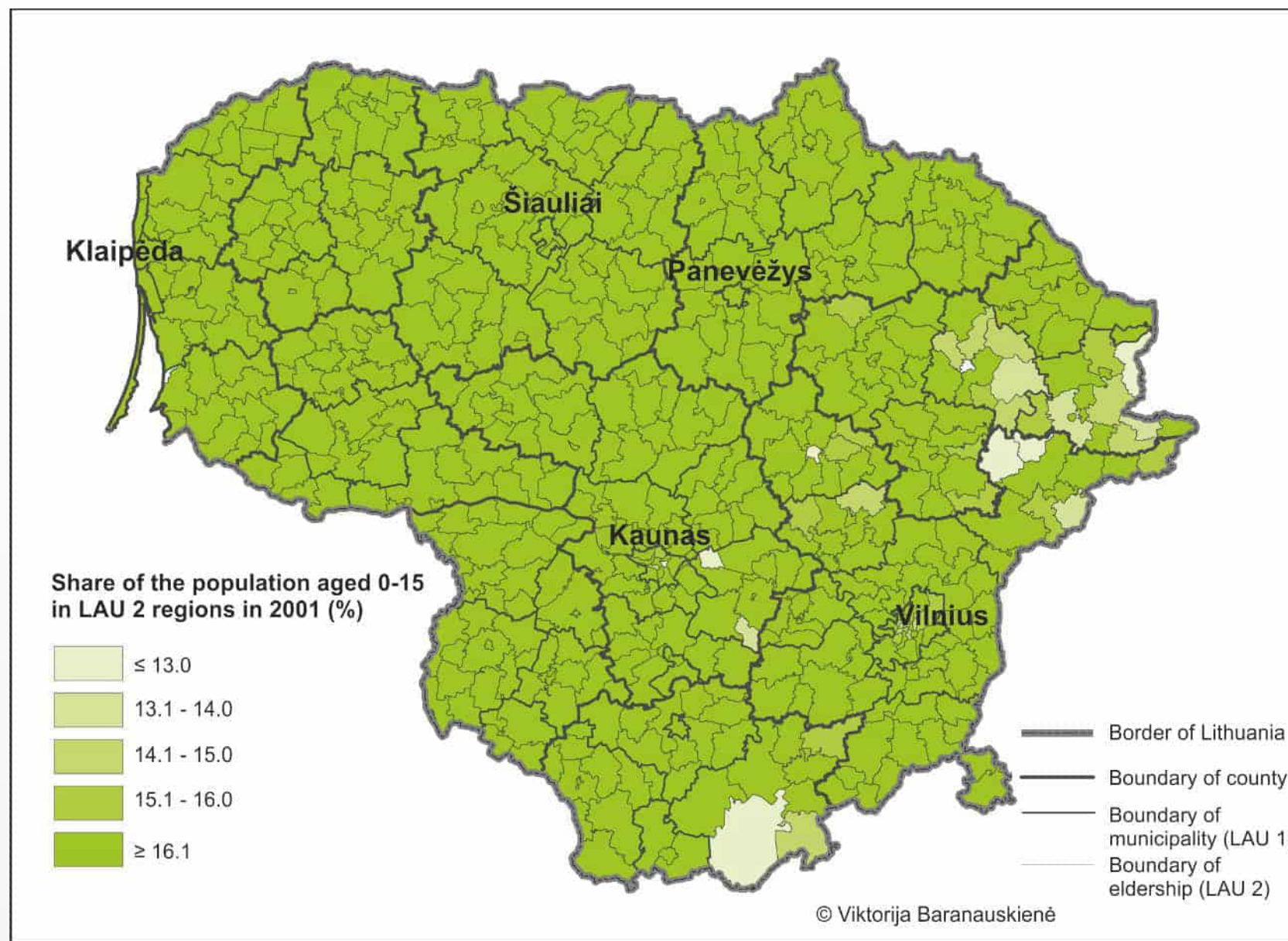
Population change 2001-2021



Population density



Age structure of the population



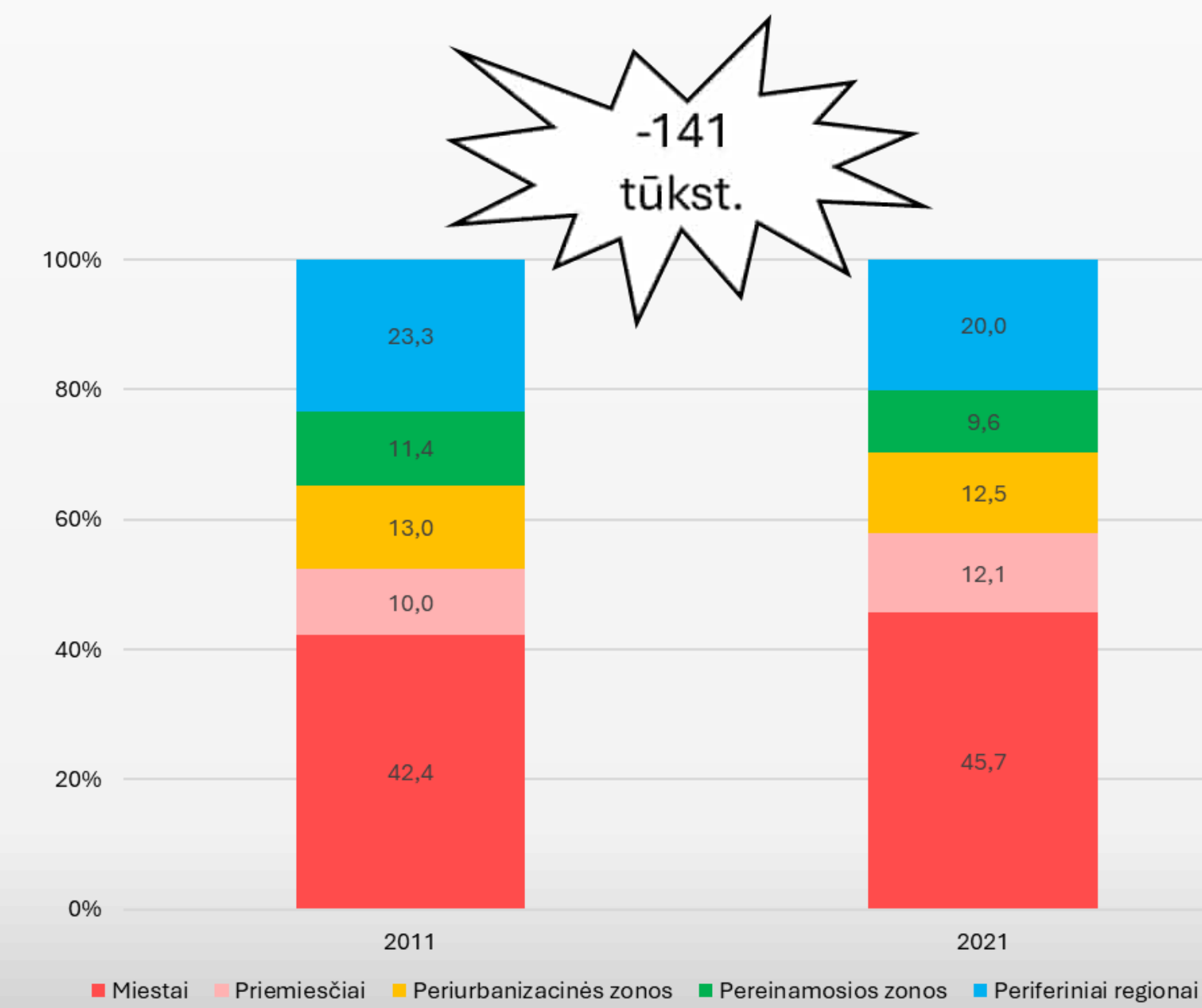
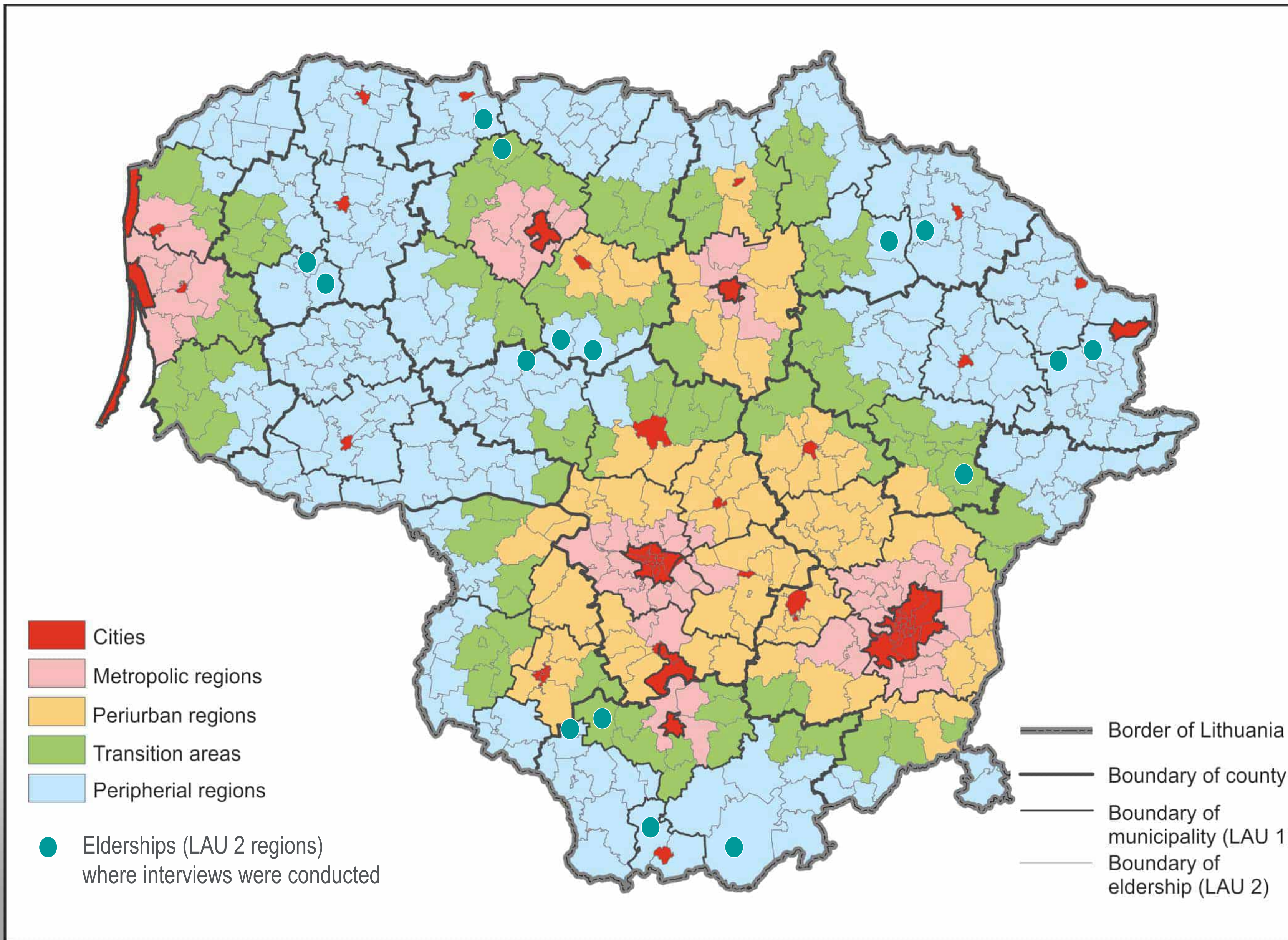
Research GAP: Multilocal living – what is a real number of residents in rural places?

Are the places where people live for months, weeks, days uninhabited?

- * The number is unknown, but the influence is growing (*it's becoming normal to have second house*)
- * As a phenomenon, it does not exist either in statistics or in politics (development strategies)
- * A potential factor for development in regions lacking human resources
- * The impact is ambiguous: reduces real-estate supply, limits counter urbanisation (Adamiak, Pitkanen, Lehtonen 2016)
- * highly uneven across Lithuania. Much more intense in periurban areas



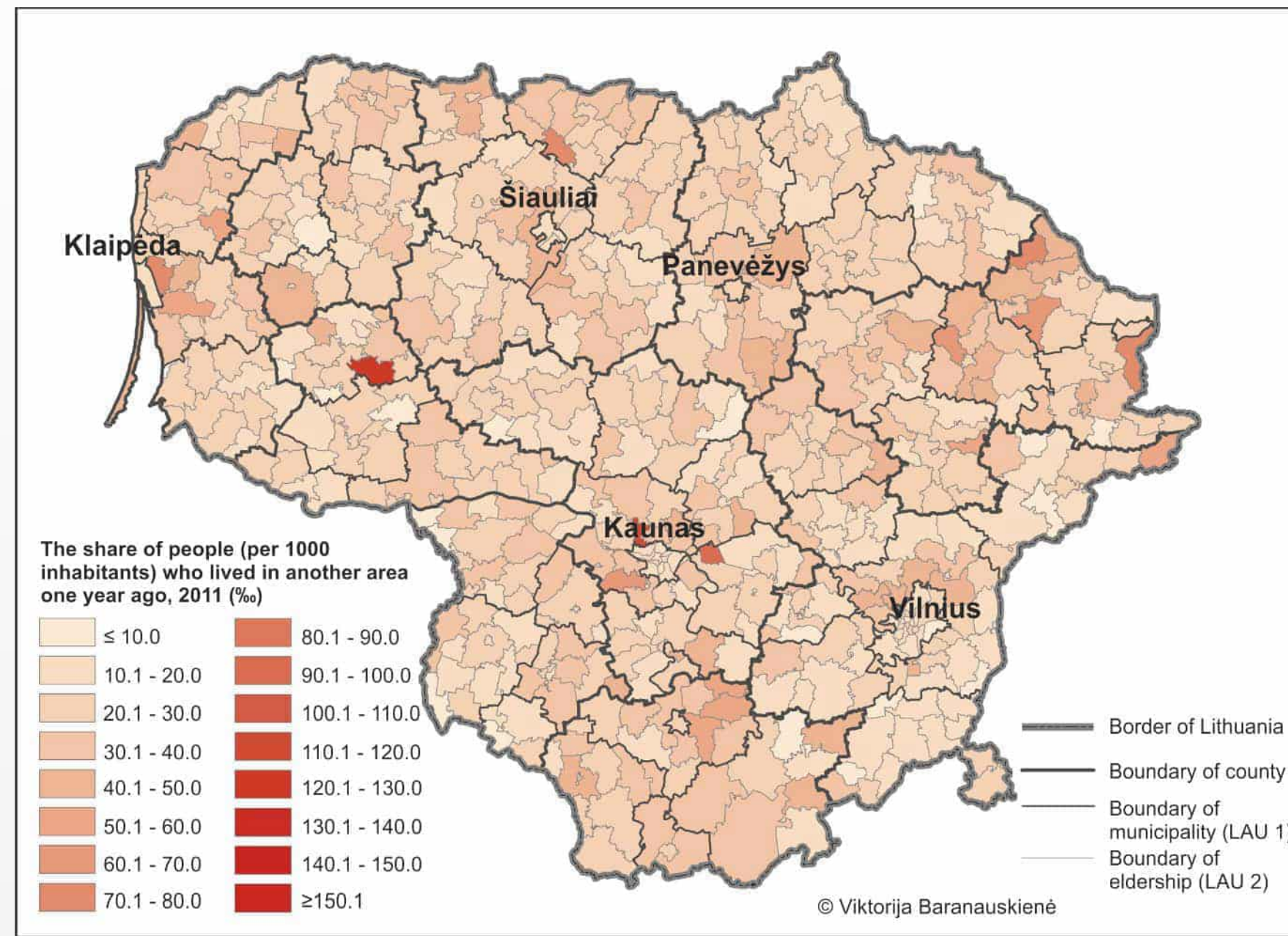
Identification of peripheral regions and selection of reference areas



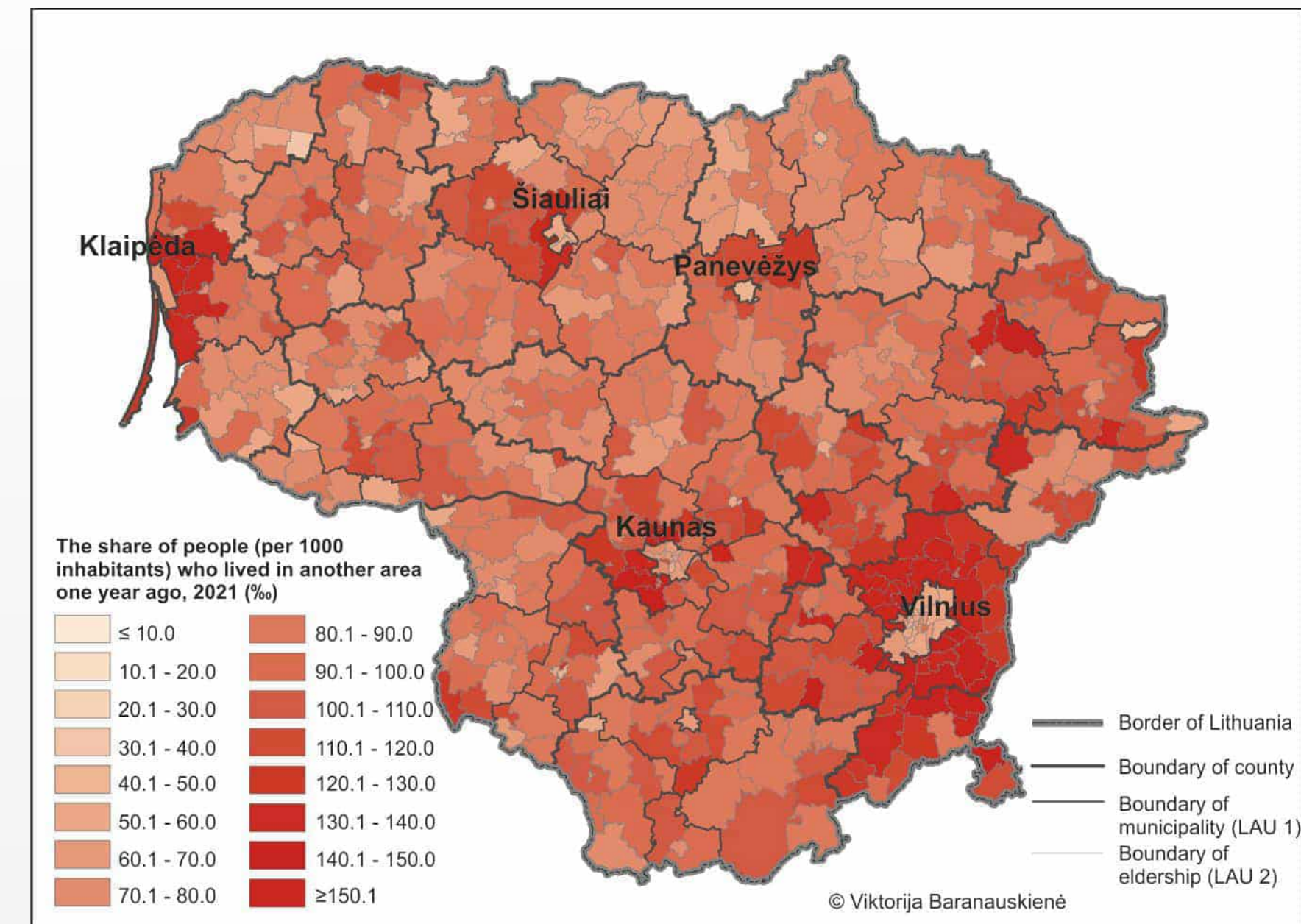
Interviews were conducted in 13 LAU 1 region (municipalities) (16 LAU 2 region (eldership)) (peripheral regions and transition zones)

Processes of immigration in 2011-2021

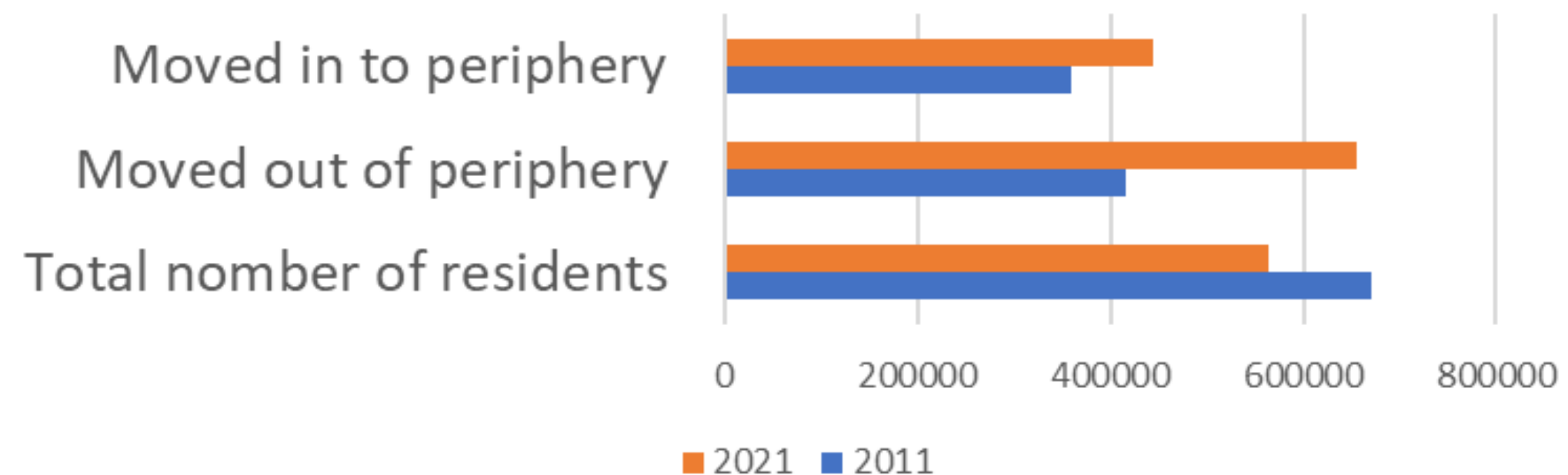
2011



2021



Migration of residents of peripheral regions
(Share of population decreased from 22,2% till 20,1 % of total)

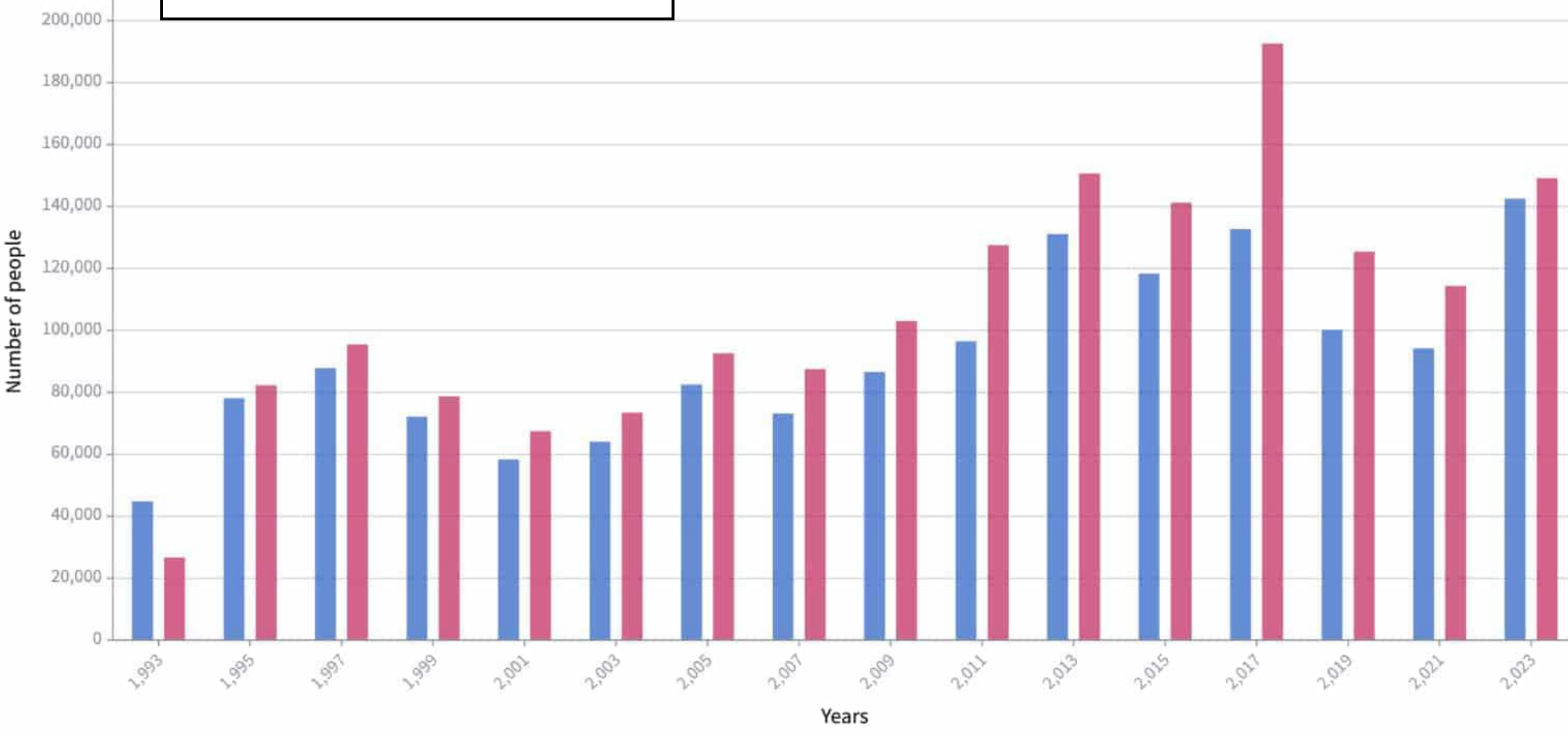


Share of immigrants in LAU 2 regions in 2001-2021 (source: National Data Agency, 2022)

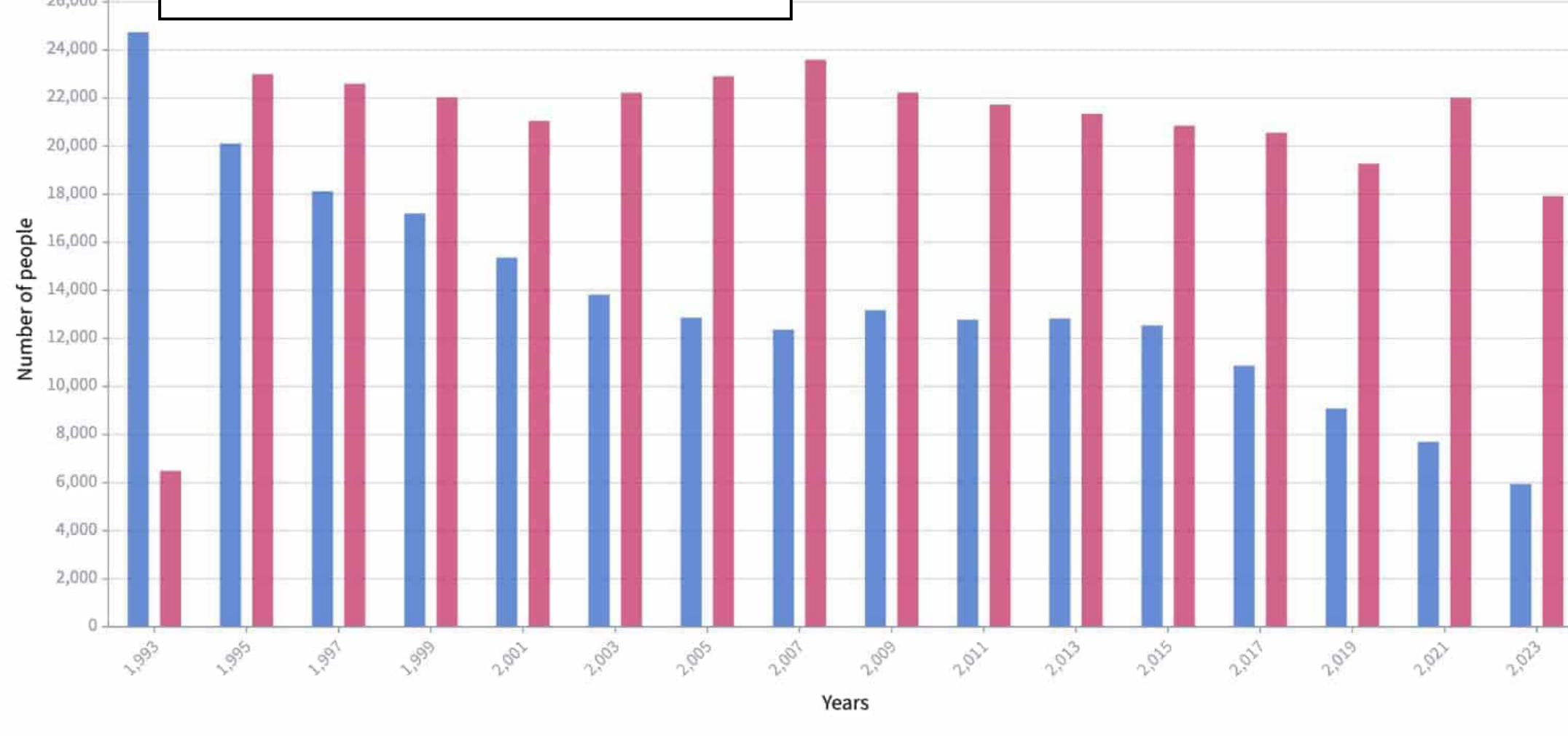
Both emigration and immigration are increasing, what also indicates, that new-commers compose ever bigger part of shrinking rural peripheral regions

Dynamics of population change in peripheral regions

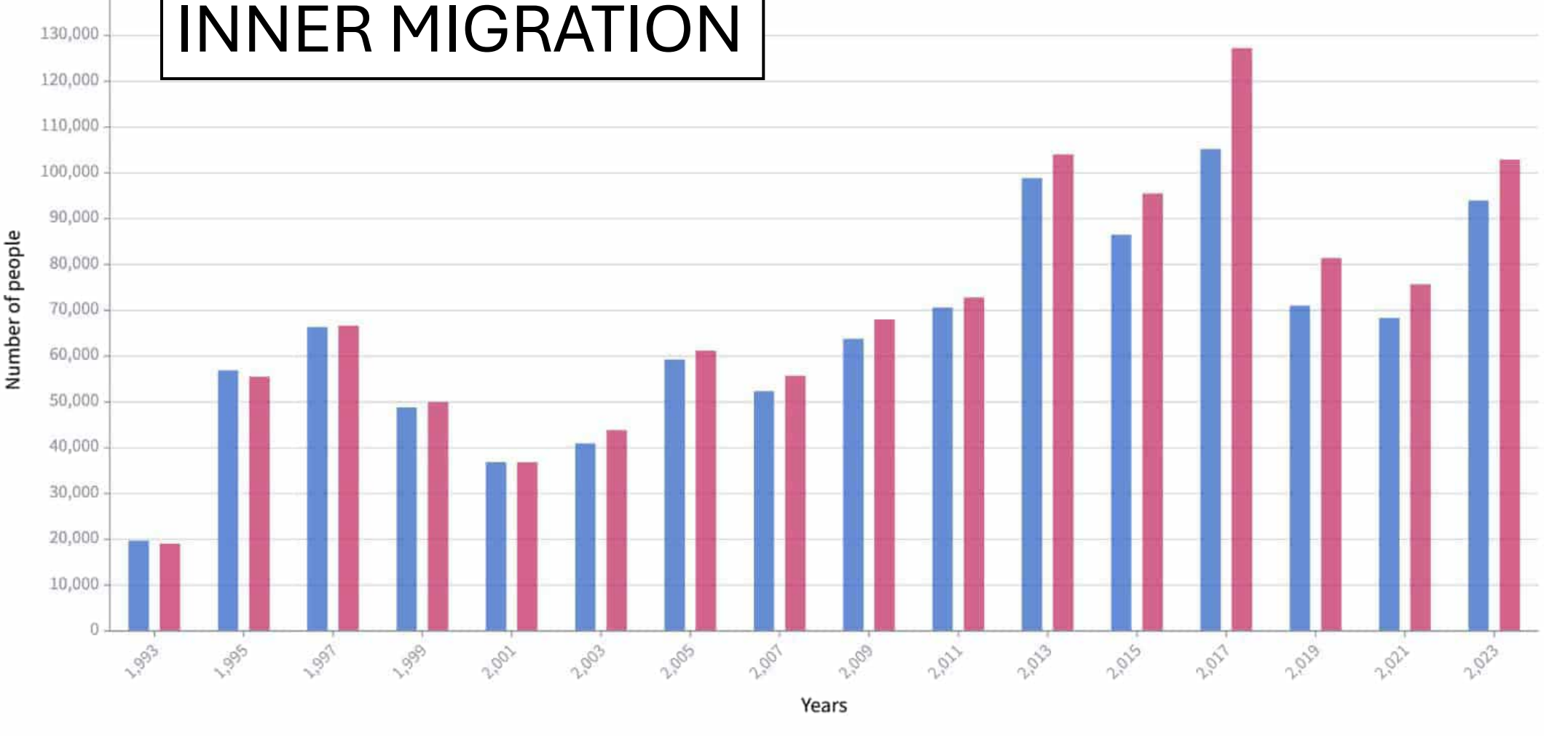
TOTAL CHANGE



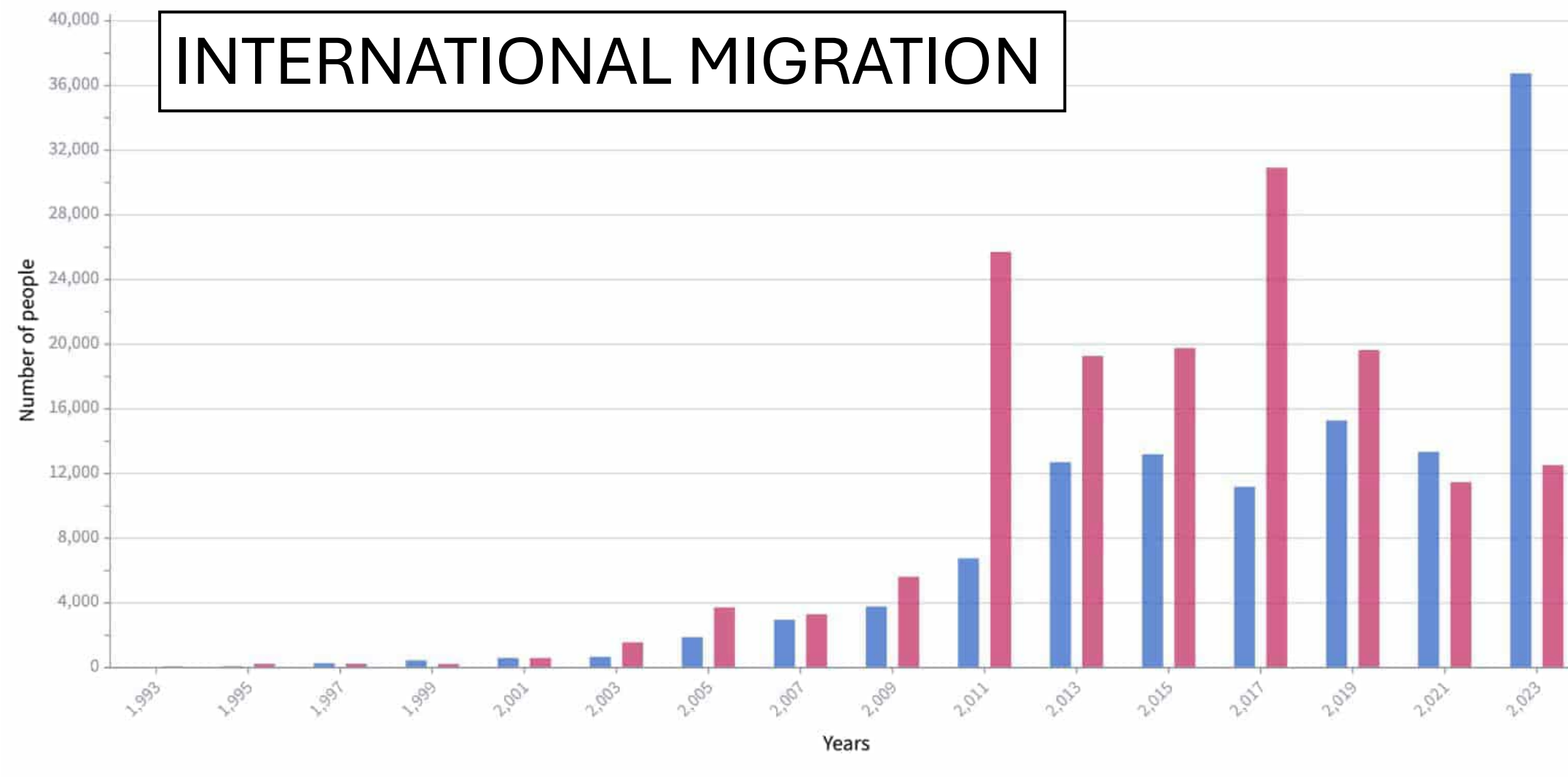
NATURAL CHANGE



INNER MIGRATION

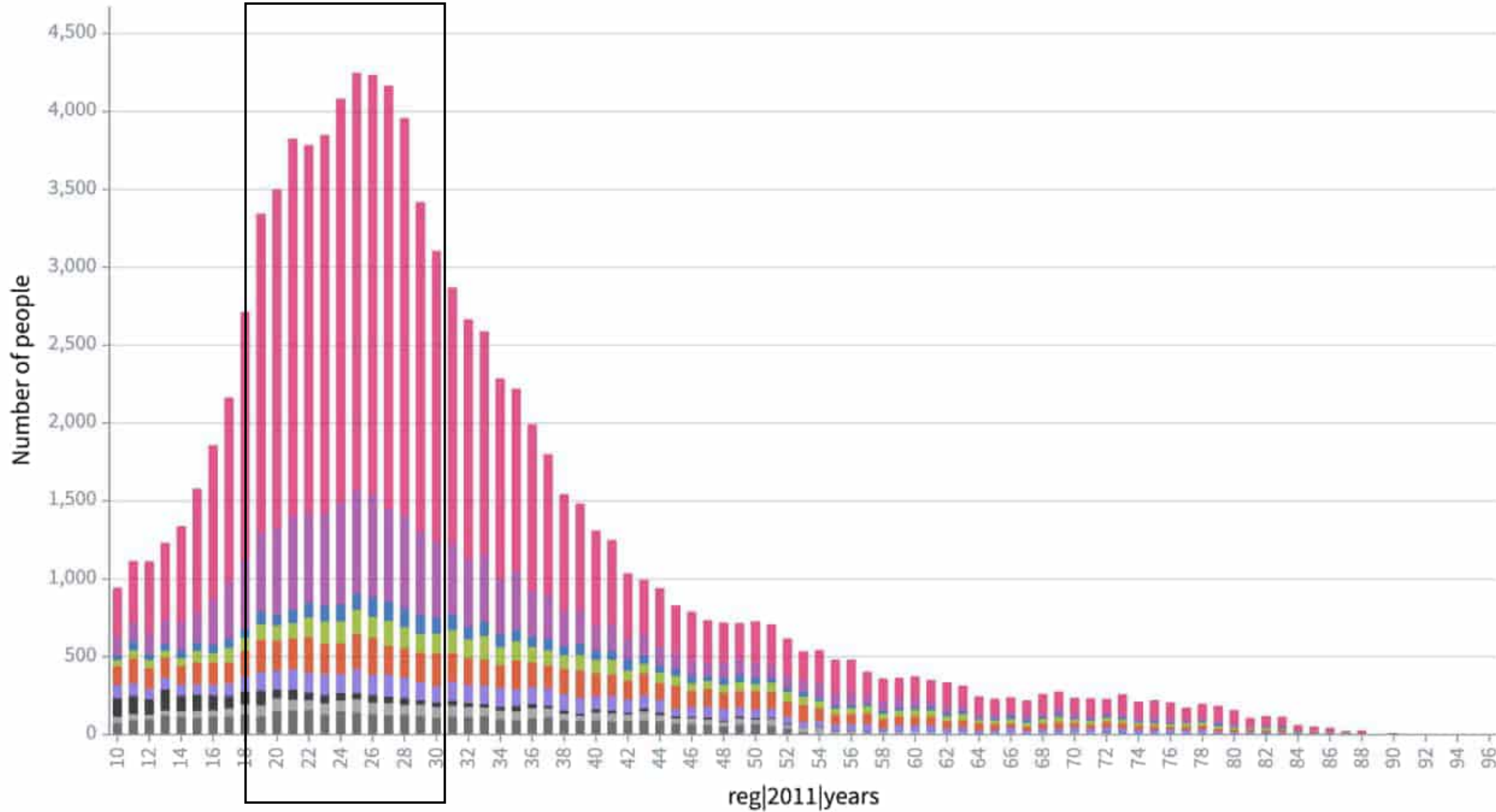


INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION



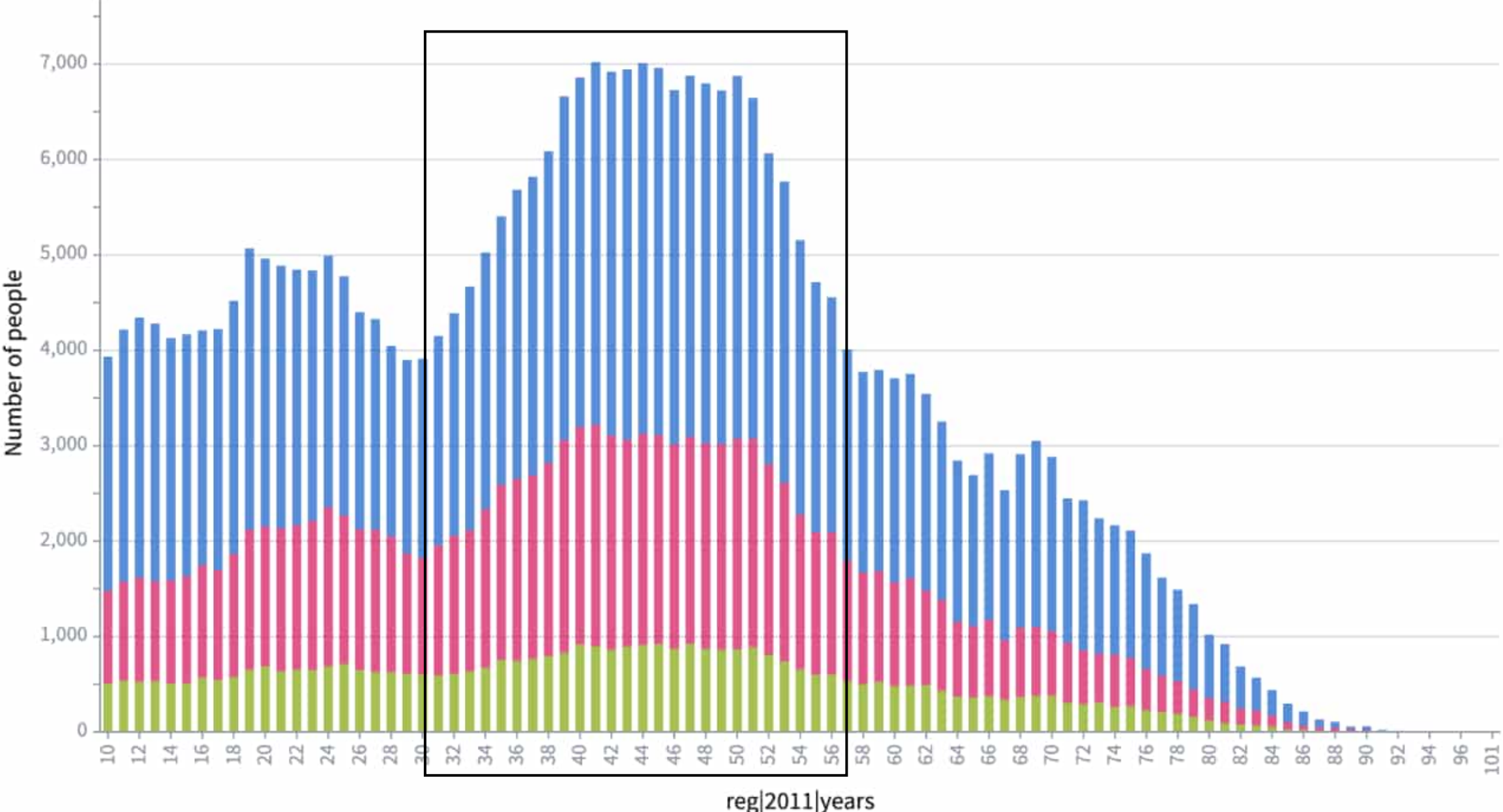
Population age and direction of migration from peripheral rural regions

Moved to NOT-peripheral regions



In 2001 lived in peripheral rural region & migrated at least once between 2001 – 2021

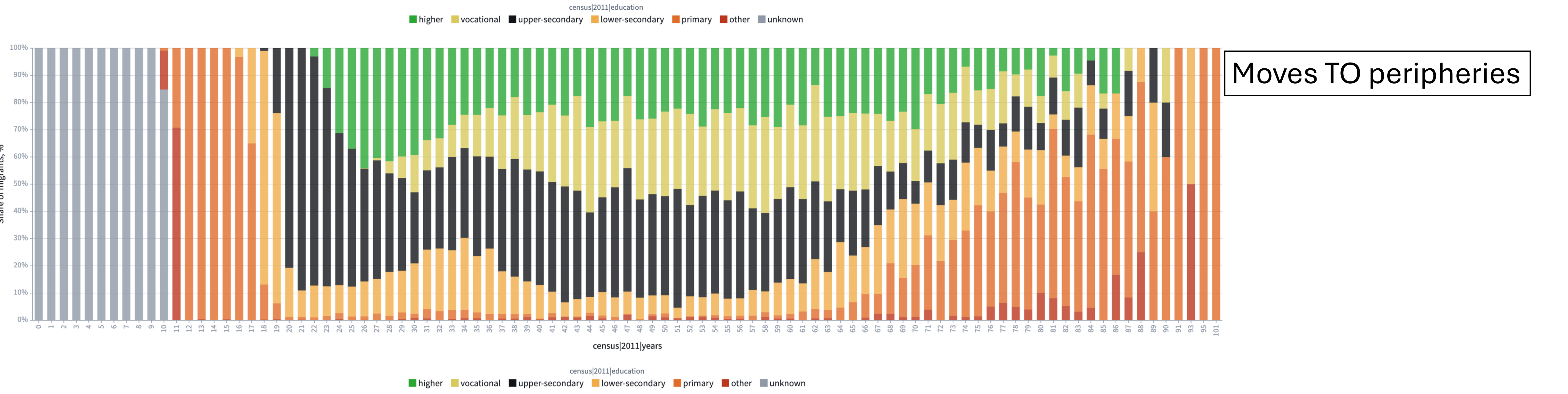
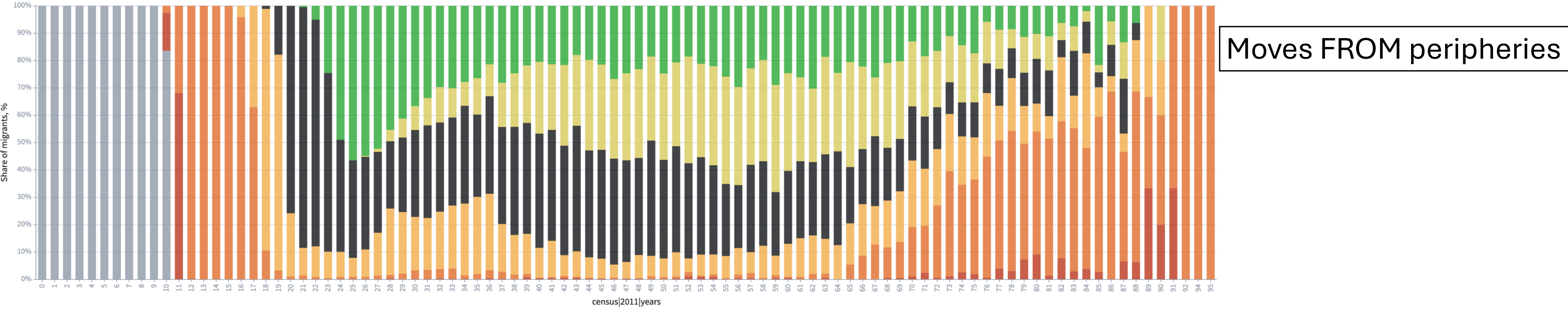
Moved to peripheral regions



reg|2021|category
 Cities Suburbs Periurban zone Cities of the periurban zone Intermediate periphery
 Cities of the intermediate periphery abroad LT unknown unknown

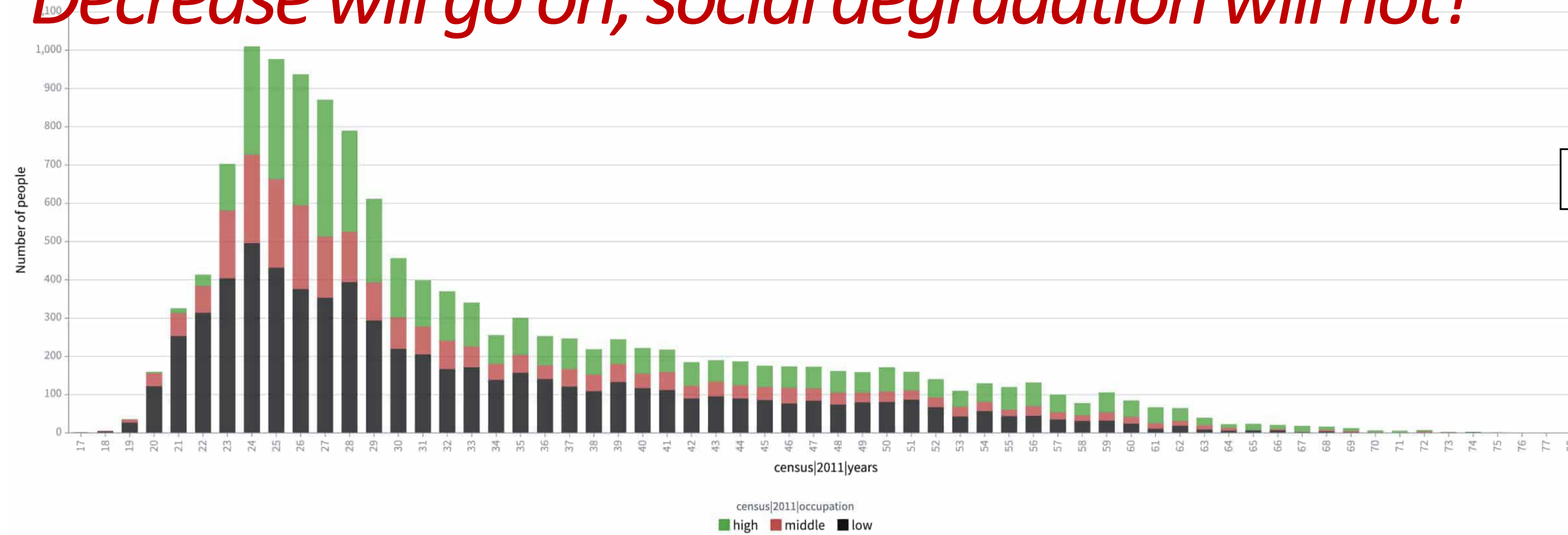
reg|2021|category
 Peripheral rural regions Peripheral cities Peripheral city suburbs

Education – new trend: there is no essential differences of education level between those coming to or leaving peripheries. Migrations do not damage educational structure of peripheries any more.

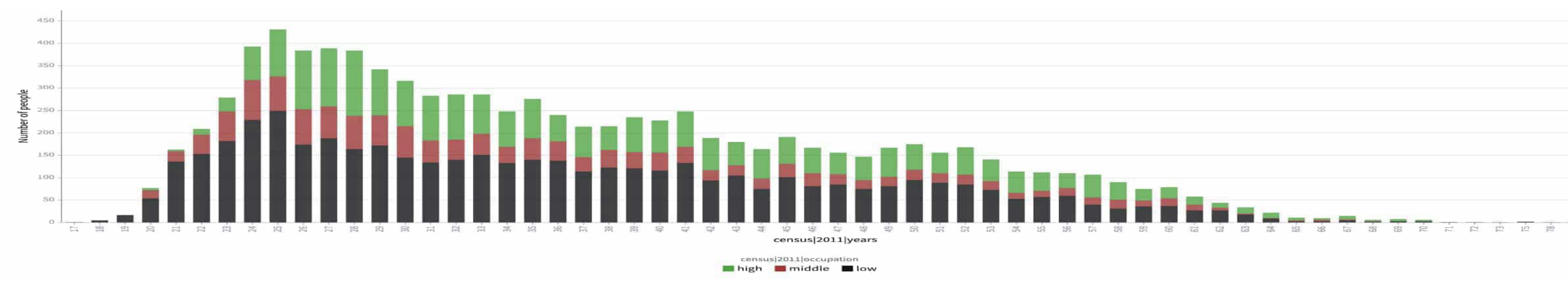


Occupation – emigration of youngsters outnumbered immigration 2 times, migration of other groups is balanced.

Decrease will go on, social degradation will not?



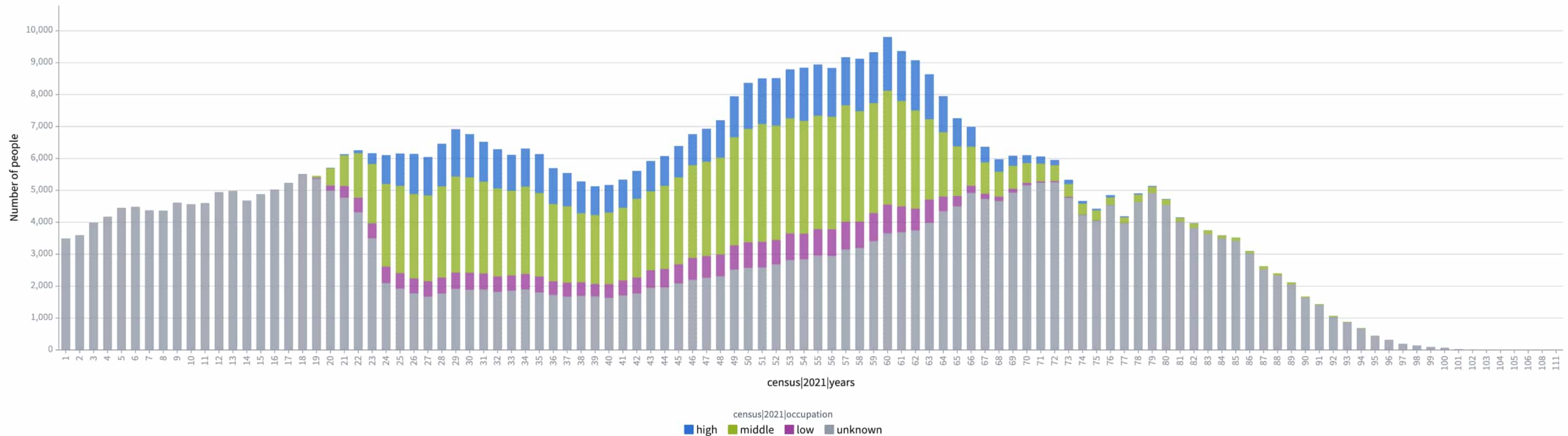
Moves FROM peripheries



Moves TO peripheries

Occupational structure of peripheral regions, 2021: unemployment or shadow economies? jobs in public sector only visible?

Occupational status



Who migrates in peripheries?

- Immigrants to the peripheries are considerably older than emigrants from the peripheries but the age composition of immigrants is mixed.
- Widows have the highest probability to migrate between peripheries., while not married persons have the least one.
- The probability of **moving from city or abroad to the periphery is higher for better educated persons.**
- During the second decade the probability of moving to the periphery from city or foreign country was increasing along with increasing professional status but also increased probability to move for unemployed.
- Periphery is not a place of choice to spend one's last life years (*weak silver economy?*).

II part: Qualitative research:

(attitudes towards Lithuanian, Ukrainian, and illegal immigrants and their contribution)

Positive attitude (grounded in usefulness of newcomers):



„I think so. I think so. .. Maybe some jobs would come along with those people or something else? I don't know.“

„Well, yes, it helps. As I mentioned, they already contribute [laughs] [...] The doctor from Alytus used to come only once a week, while she could have stayed here [in the settlement], and now we have a Ukrainian woman who works all week and really contributed, I think, to the well-being of the town and its residents.“

„... it is the strong economic situation that contributes, well, whether they like it or not, they usually find some kind of job, for they living and at the same time economy develops in Akmenė municipality. That's good, I would think. [...]

„If a hardworking person... Well, you see, it also depends on the person. I think it wouldn't be a problem if someone settle down provided he has initiative to work instead of waiting for the government allowance

General community attitudes towards immigrants and settlement (II)

Positive attitude only towards returning emigrants: (Place attachment matters)

„Maybe they would come back... It would be beneficial for a place [...] but if it's a complete stranger who doesn't even know who, with whom and about what..., then I don't think he would be interested [...] I don't think that one would do some change, but if, I'd say, here was his birthplace or some other attachment...“

Very positive attitude towards **Ukrainian war refugees** (*sympathy, involvement into local life matters*):

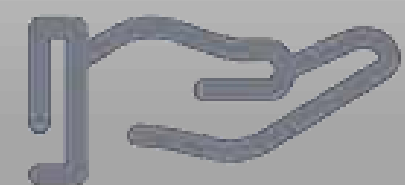
„Very, very positive [smiles]. [...] Because we really had 2 women from Ukraine with their families in [in the settlement], we embraced them very quickly and accommodated them, and attracted the community. They participated in all events, always came, helped, that alone says it all.“

There is also a **more positive, understanding attitudes** toward illegal immigrants (*sympathy is important factor*)

No one will run away from a good life, so whatever [laughs], if life was good for you, then you would stay...“

No, no, no, not malicious. But all people have the understanding that there are all kinds of people among them, just as there are all kinds of people among us. Sometimes you need to be afraid of Lithuanian more than that one or the other [laughs].“

„Everything is fine. We don't see any problems. If [smiles] they want, they can buy, they can live and we'll help. [...] Well, there would be various opinions. Some would like it, some would not but I think we are all humans and we still have to help each other. After all, we cannot immediately decide that one will be like this or like that. Well, it wouldn't be correct.“



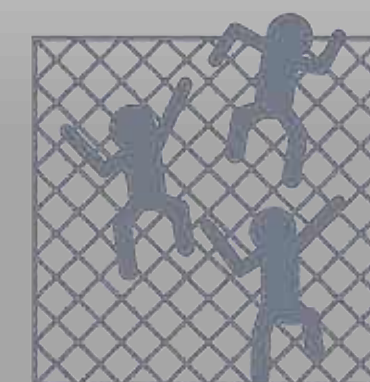
Negative attitudes towards illegal immigrants (fear, safety matters)



"Illegal immigrants must be looked after, safeguarded, must be kept in a locked area".

*„If we talk about those migrants who are rushing to us here through the border [laughs], I can say that **people treat them with such fear** because you didn't know, because the border is very close here. Let's say that **they would come to the house, knock, enter**, well, anyway... **They looked at them, you know, very suspiciously or angrily**“.*

*„„But if there was some place [for the accommodation of illegal immigrants], then I think that [our residents] or **would completely locked themselves in their houses, the windows and doors would be blocked, either there would be a big unrest**. [...] There were refugees who escaped from Belarus, so their freedom and everything else was restricted. I mean, they were inhabited at school. There were also a few persons in Verebiejai who didn't like it, but then everything was fine.“*



Cautious attitudes towards all, even Lithuanian immigrants (**Security first**)



*„**The village would be afraid.** [...] **The village would be afraid, yes,** I am afraid. I'm not afraid myself [laughs], but the village probably would be. Here everyone knows each other and **those “newcomers”** sometimes cause that fear, but then, when you get used to it, it seems... [...] There were many from Klaipeda. We were more or less afraid when they moved here... And we got used to it, and nothing. [...] emphasis maybe there is more fear here.“*

*Because now we live very quietly, we have no thief, no nothing, everything... So, such peace, maybe it would be the first thing for the people of the village: „And now what to expect? **Or maybe someone is coming now? Or maybe something will be stolen? Or maybe it won't be so calm here?**“ Well, I would say, maybe that's the reaction, but if everything is calm there for a week, next and a month, so... It would be like today [smiles].“*



Cautious attitudes towards newcomers – *rural mentality is a factor?* (II)

„And if someone moved here somehow, I don't think it's favorable for people... Well, maybe that mentality is also different, that there is no tolerance. But I think there is a rural problem here. Just **generally rural intolerance for others. It doesn't matter what minorities we come from**“.

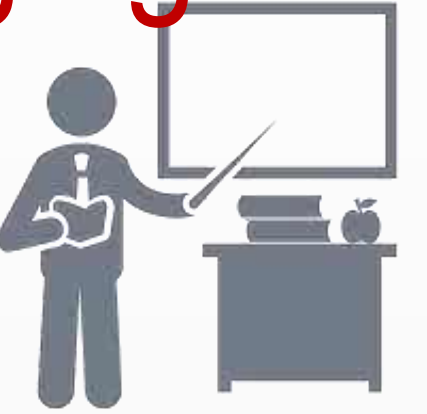
„**Villagers are not very trusty anyway. They'll put some kind of a label on you probably** [laughs] and more probably, I think, **you'll be disliked** because the majority is still over 50 and older people. There are a lot of pensioners, youth is youth, but **older people are already looking trustlessly**.“

Skeptical attitude towards "own" immigrants as well :

„... When we came back... Ah, but anyway, every second person told us: „Yeah, yeah, - how long will you stay here? Well, **you will turn around and drive away**“. Well, let's face it, if you left, because life was very good abroad, **but you'll come back here and not survive**. This is what every second person told us. **Everyone laughed: „How long will you stay here and drive back? “.** Well, there is such an attitude....“

What benefits are immigrants bringing? (I)

(The impact on some but not all rural places is evident, though path-changing examples are very few)

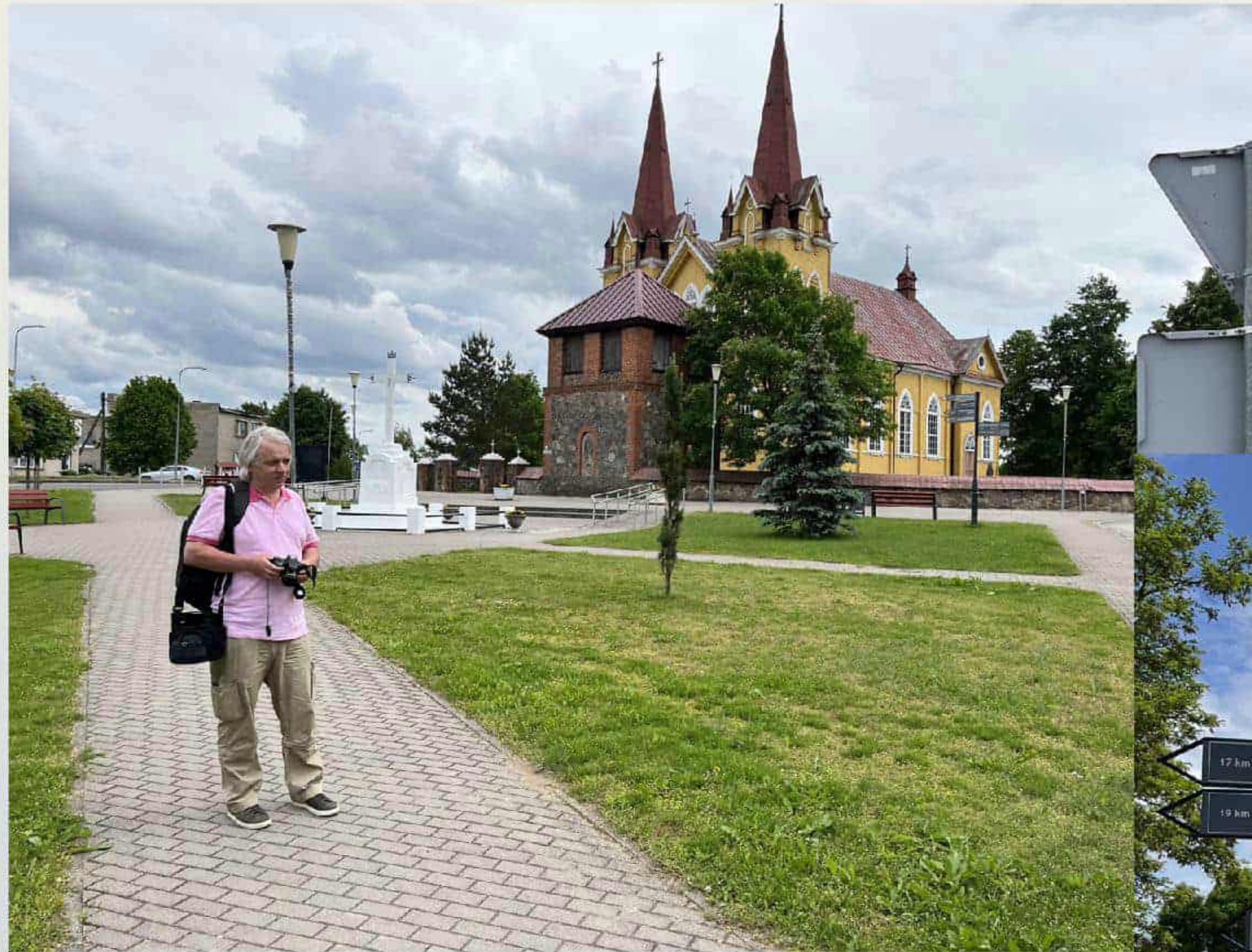


- Increases the number of pupils in schools.
- “Hard-working” immigrants, especially with no language barrier increase labour supply.
- Provides services to residents.
- New jobs are created, and unskilled work is done (in agriculture, education, cleaning services, etc.).
- Actively participates in community life.

- In general the fact that new residents are coming and emigration (as its is understood) disappears is making very positive influence on the mood of local population

Concluding remarks

- The influence of new settlers depends on many local micro-level factors and probably is minimal in cases when new settlers choose rural locations as “suburban“ homes of industrial towns... Such a situation is very common in the multipolar urban system of Lithuania.
- The attitudes towards immigrants and new-settlers are very much place dependant and every settlement has its own prevailing understanding on how „dangerous“ or potentially useful various kinds of immigrants can be for the development of their rural community..
- So far immigration processes are too weak to reverse shrinking trends in most peripheral regions but their role should relatively increase as communities become smaller. At present it makes a visible positive impact on the development of certain rural communities (especially in those with favorable geographic location, attractive environment, active local leaders) but in many cases, its impact is very minimal.



VERY NICE AND VERY CLEAN
AND VERY CALM AND VERY
EMPTY...
IS IT A PROBLEM? FOR WHOM?



Visual evidences from Lithuanian peripheries: nice and tidy but empty spaces



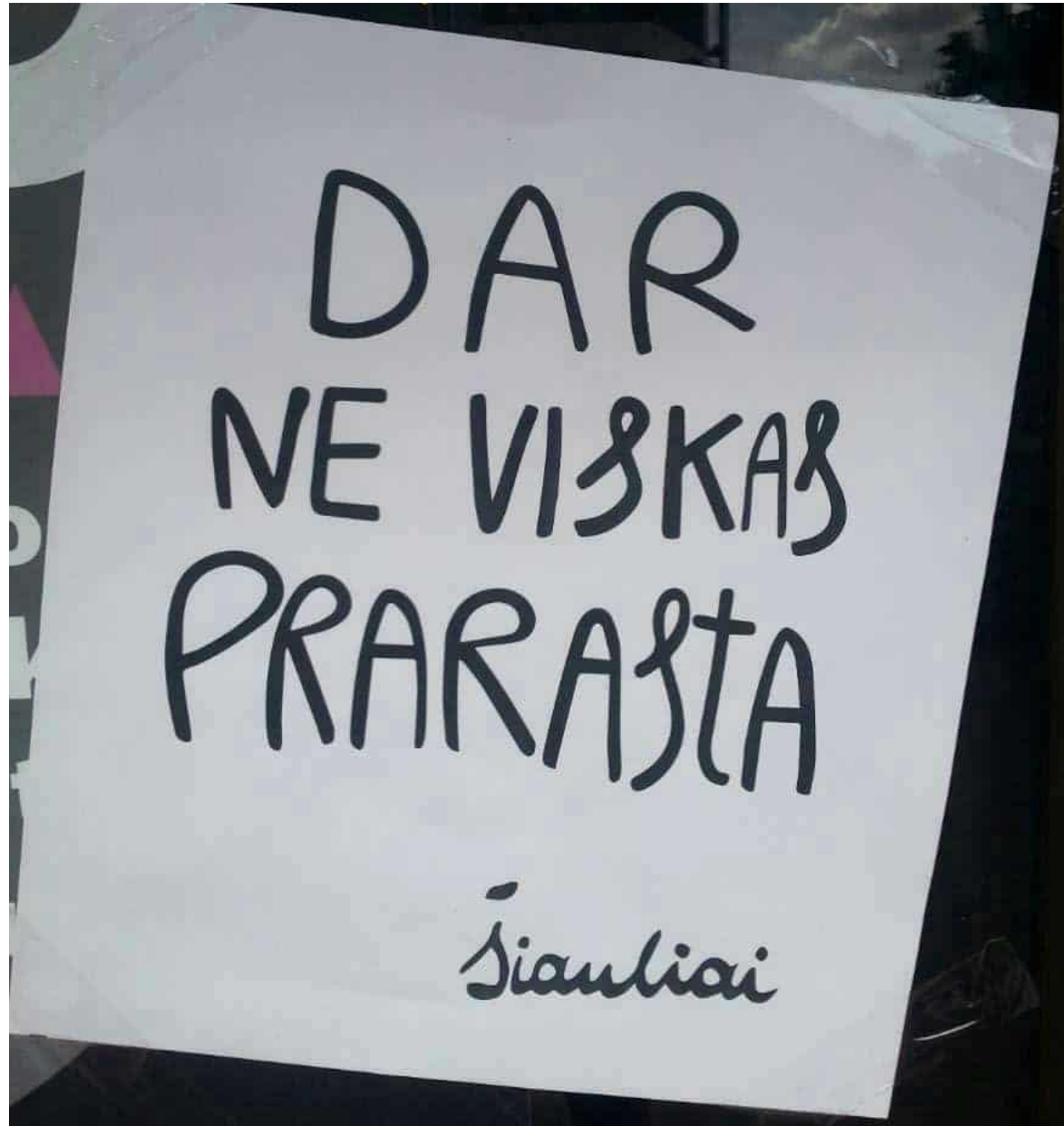
Visual evidences from Lithuanian peripheries shrinking comes with a price





RIP
INFRA-
STRU-
CTURE





Shrinking industrial centres – another consequence of metropolisation in Baltic countries

**Is it possible to curb the shrinkage of Šiauliai city?
Yes!**

Poster taken in Šiauliai telling „**Not everything is lost yet**“ (author: E. Narbutaitė)

Population decline - since 1992 LT lost around 25%, while Šiauliai 32,8 % of pop.

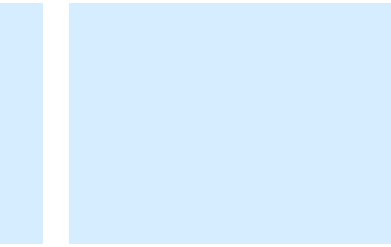
Municipal response

How the city is dealing with urban shrinkage? (results of qualitative research)

The **main tasks** the local government underlines:

- Attract **young people** to the city what would bring new knowledge
- Attract **foreign investment**
- Invest and strengthen in **industrial sector**
- Encourage **entrepreneurship**
- Encourage **communication between business and education** institutions
- Invest in **city parks and leisure** infrastructure
- To fasten **renovation** of housing estates project
- To fight for staying the **„University city“** (!!!)

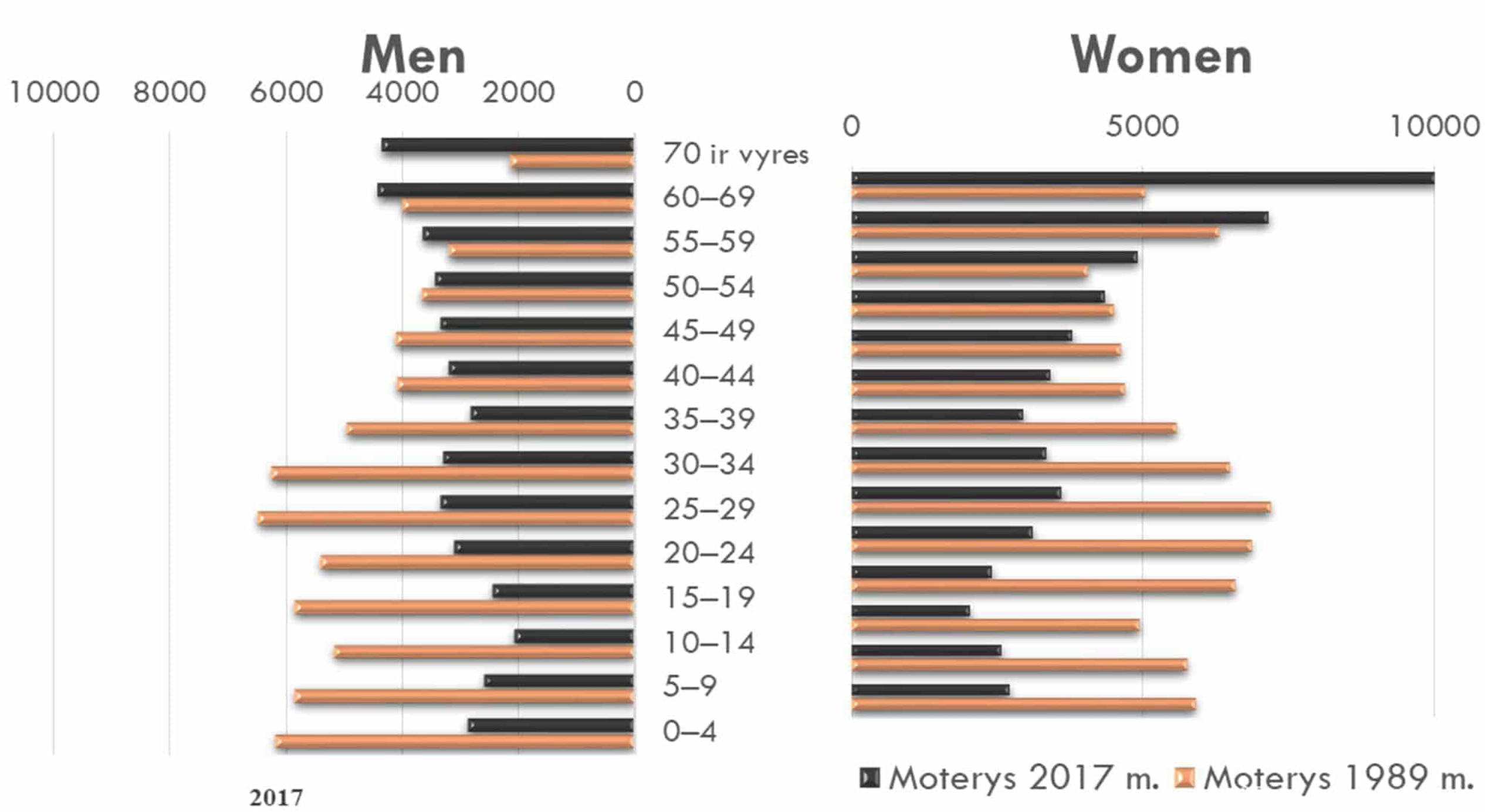
Can new industries change demography of shrinking cities?



ŠIAULIAI FREE ECONOMIC ZONE

Šiauliai Free Economic Zone is an industrial park with developed infrastructure and exceptional tax advantages for foreign investors. We are an object of national importance intended for industrial development, regional and national business environment improvement.

[View Full Map](#)





Thank You!

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