

**EDORA:**  
European Development Opportunities  
for Rural Areas

**Dispelling “Stylised Fallacies” and  
“Turning Diversity into Strength”**

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# Outline

1. Some thoughts on; convergence and diversity, idiographic approaches v. generalisation, and equalisation v. fulfilling potential.
2. The structure of the EDORA project
3. Generalisation:
  - a. Story lines and meta-narratives
  - b. Macro-scale patterns – typologies.
4. The specific; some observations from Exemplar Regions
5. Conclusions: what have we achieved?

## Some Apparent Contradictions

- Globalisation = increasing uniformity, convergence
  - except in terms of rural development...?
- Common view that rural areas in Europe are becoming increasingly diverse (assumption of EDORA Spec.).
- Parallel rise in qualitative methods, idiographic interpretation, rather than quantitative analysis and generalisation.
- Policy shift from compensation and equalisation towards an ethos of enabling each area to reach its potential (New Rural Paradigm).
- → diversity = potential, “turning diversity into strength” (TCGP 2008)

2 Questions arise:

1. Is there a continuing role for generalisation in rural/regional development research? What is it? How can we ensure that generalisations are useful in a policy context?
2. If rural areas are moving towards increasing diversity, what was the (assumed) previous, more uniform, state, from which they are diverging?

## What are “Stylised Fallacies”?

*(Hodge 2004)*

“General debate about rural policy often seems to adopt **persistent presumptions** about conditions in ‘rural England’. While perhaps not always stated explicitly, debate is often conducted with **implicit generalisations**....

...we argue that many generalisations about the state of affairs in ‘rural’ areas are **partial** or **inaccurate**, **misleading** and **unhelpful**. We characterise these unjustified generalisations as **‘stylised fallacies’**. “

...or “**Inaccurate Stereotypes**”?

## Some “Stylised Fallacies” ....

- Rural = Agrarian
- The “rural exodus”...
- Rural dependency culture...
- Rural labour markets dominated by secondary segment, poor human capital, low activity rates, disguised unemployment...
- Rural areas are not good environments for entrepreneurship and innovation...
- The impacts of globalisation are predominantly negative in rural areas...

Assumptions behind rural policy?

These need to be challenged and replaced by generalisations which reflect the “real world” of 21<sup>st</sup> century rural Europe...

Implications for appropriate policy?

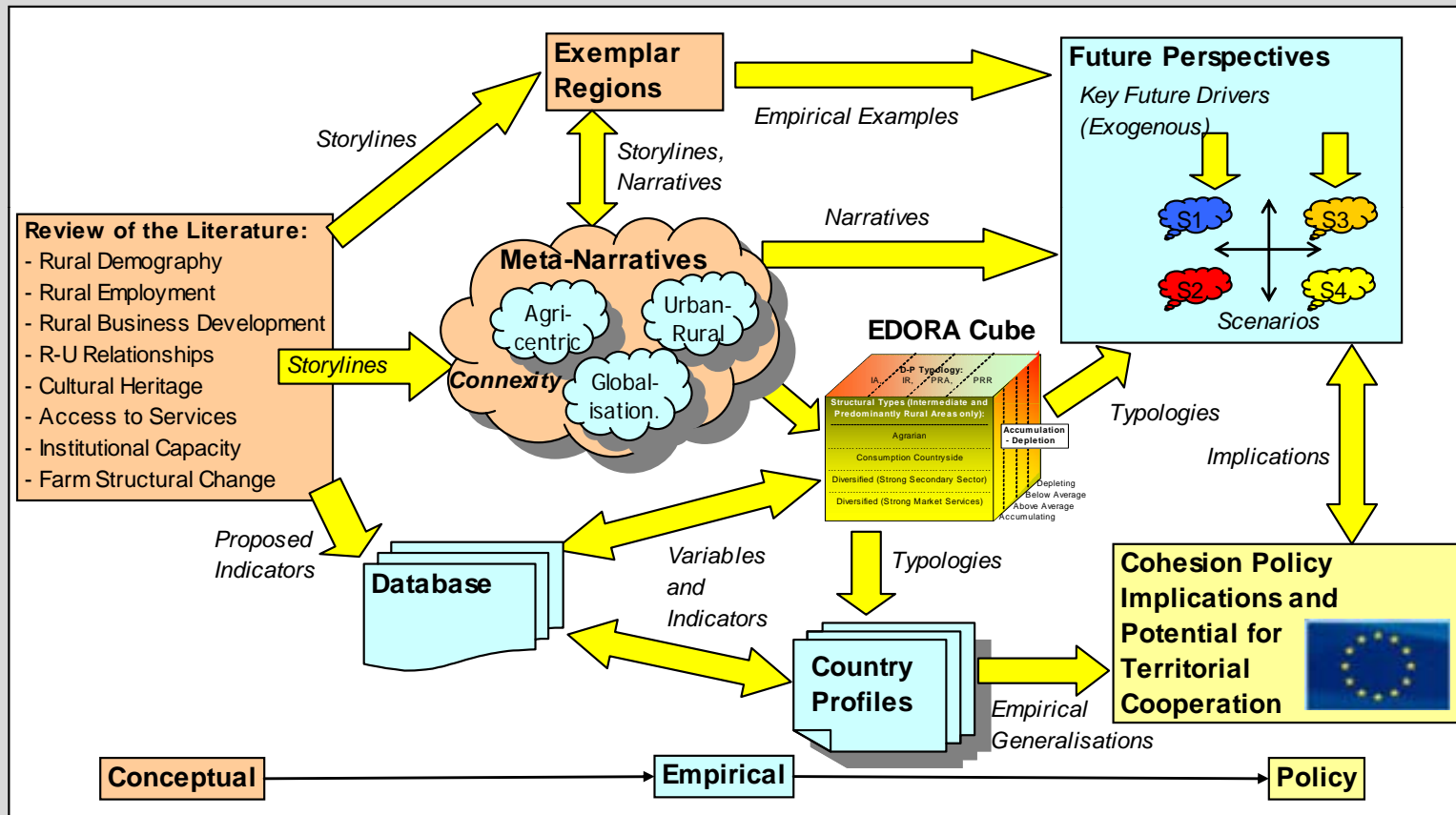
## The EDORA Project Objectives (According to the Specification)

...to describe the main processes of change which are resulting in the increasing differentiation of rural areas.

...to identify development opportunities and constraints for different kinds of rural areas...

...to consider how such knowledge can be translated into guiding principles to support the development of appropriate cohesion policy.

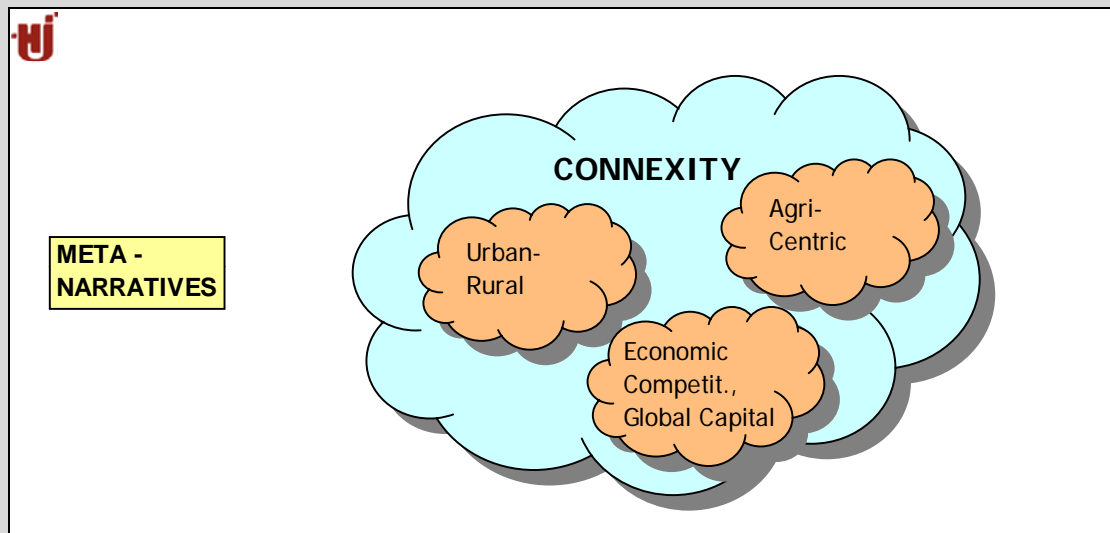
# The EDORA Project



# Meta-Narratives

- *...a meta-narrative is a **story about a story**, encompassing and explaining other 'little stories'...* (Wikipedia)
- The “little stories” or “**story lines**” are the changes taking place in specific socio-economic characteristics (e.g. demography, economic structure, access to services, environmental change etc. etc...)
- The Meta-Narratives pull the “story lines” together into a coherent, synthetic, “big themes” of rural change.
- **Meta-Narratives:**
  - Help us to understand the way in which different facets of rural change interact.
  - Help us to systematically describe change in individual rural areas.
  - Should take account of both current changes and look ahead to likely future developments.
- **But they are not:**
  - Discrete regional development paths.
  - Associated in a one-to-one way with different kinds of rural areas.

# The EDORA Meta-Narratives



Overarching theme of increasing **"CONNEXITY"** (Mulgan) – "network society", "relational space", "multi-level governance".

1. Agri-centric narrative (post-productivism, structural polarisation, multifunctionality etc).
2. Urban-rural (core-periphery) narrative.
3. Economic Structural Change and Globalisation...

## Why produce a Typology?

- To review explanatory potential of the Dijkstra-Poelman version of the OECD typology.
- Explore potential to elaborate it; add (structure and performance) aspects to U-R dimension.
- Elaborated typology should then serve as a framework for analysis of recent trends, consideration of future perspectives, and policy implications.
- To correct/replace “Stylised Fallacies” (Hodge 2004) about rural areas as background to rural/regional policy debate.
- To provide a means of “benchmarking” for regional and national policymakers.

Notes: (i) It's a typology of “non-urban” Nuts 3 regions, rather than (strictly speaking) a typology of rural areas.

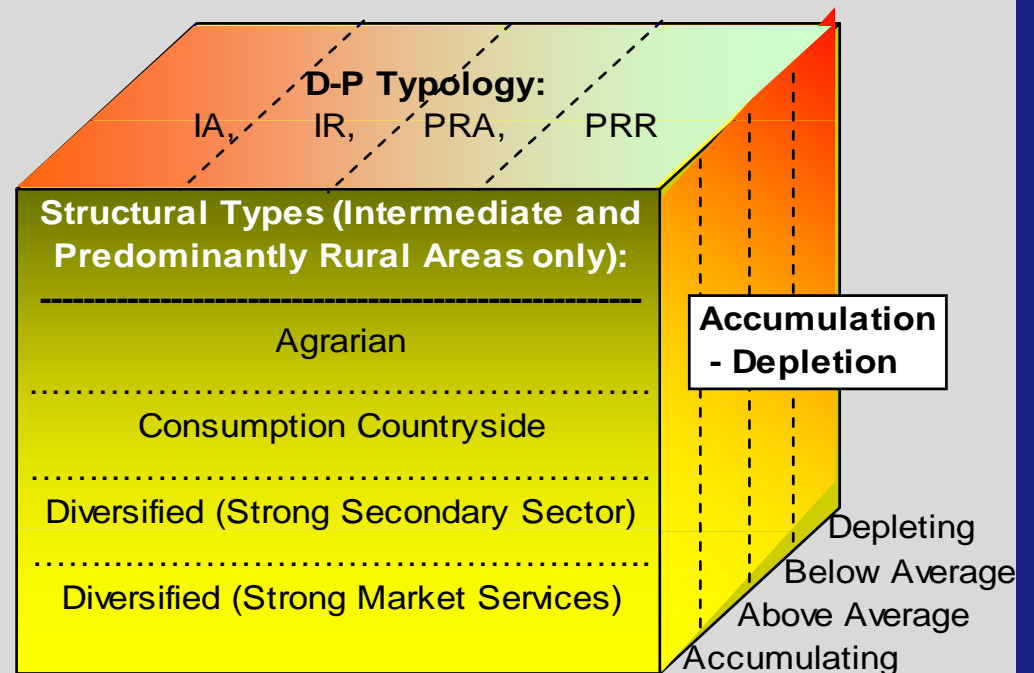
(ii) Tension between need to find more valid generalisations about Rural Europe, and the “turning diversity into strength” approach.

# The EDORA Cube

...more of a three-dimensional framework for analysis, rather than a one-dimensional classification.

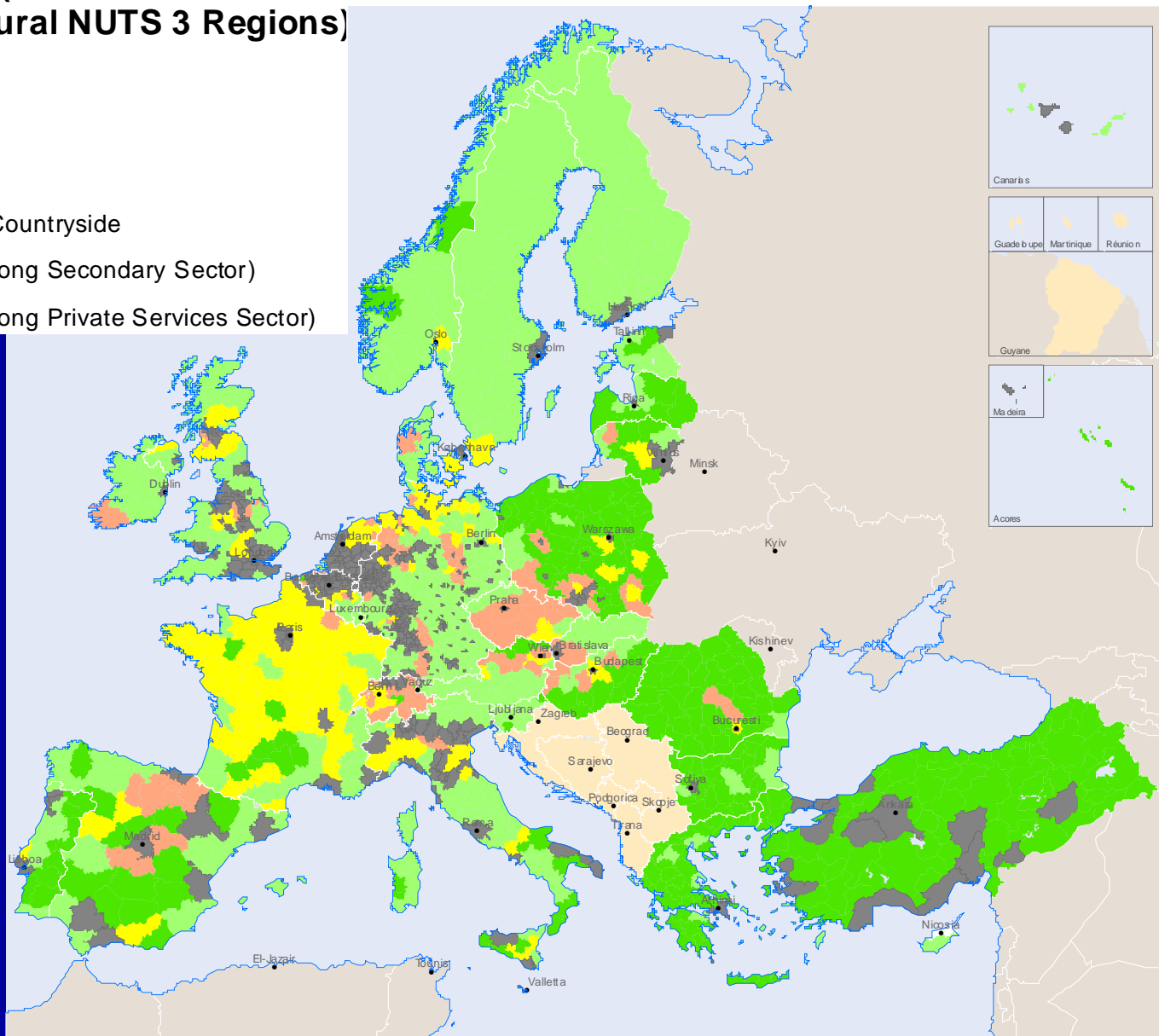
The three dimensions are:

- Urban-Rural (remote/accessible)
- Economic structure (diversification).
- Accumulation – Depletion (performance).



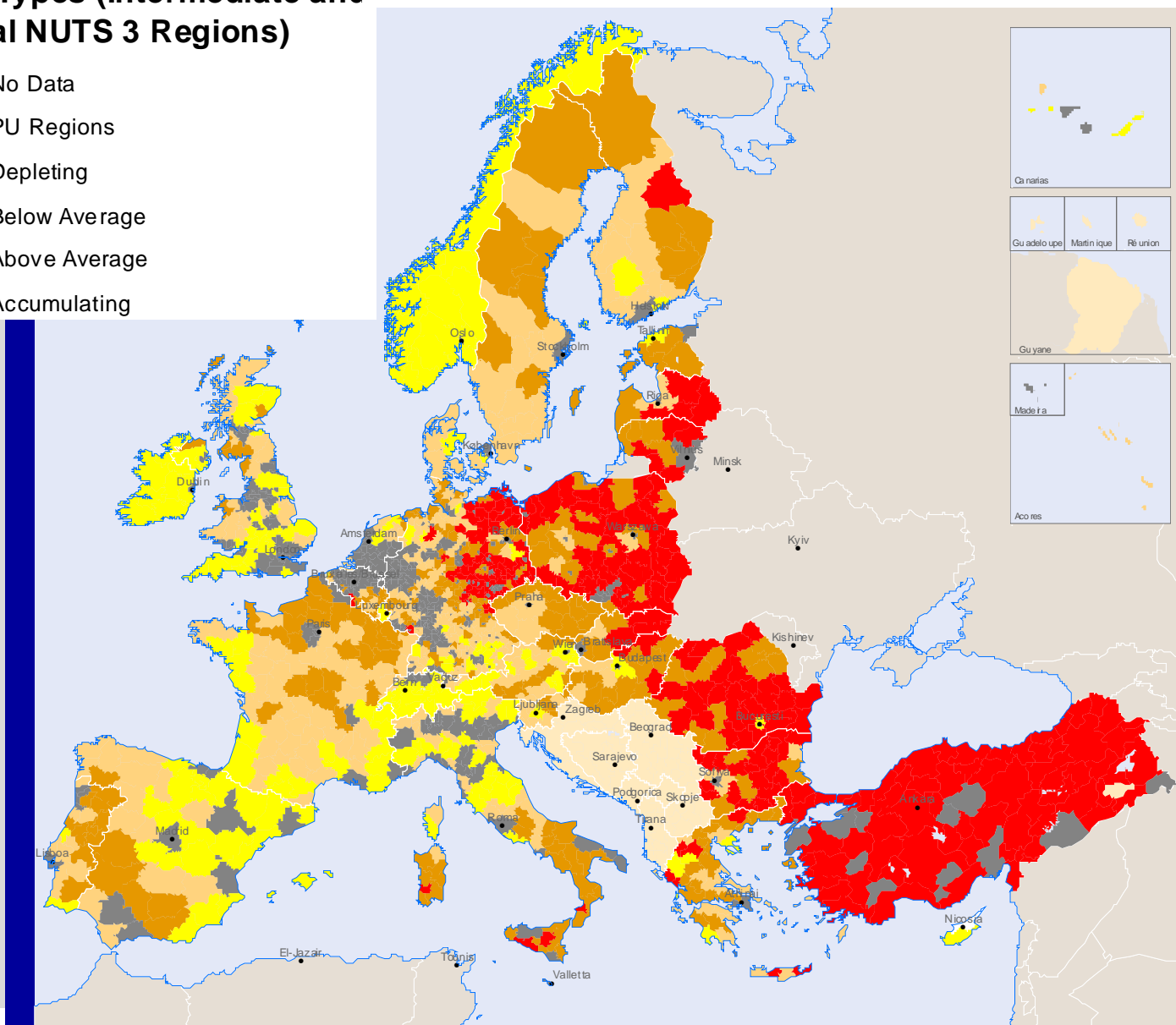
## Structural Types (Intermediate and Predominantly Rural NUTS 3 Regions)

- No Data
- PU Regions
- Agrarian
- Consumption Countryside
- Diversified (Strong Secondary Sector)
- Diversified (Strong Private Services Sector)



## Performance (A-D) Types (Intermediate and Predominantly Rural NUTS 3 Regions)

- No Data
- PU Regions
- Depleting
- Below Average
- Above Average
- Accumulating



## Some Generalisations which emerge from the EDORA Typologies

- Agrarian regions are mainly concentrated in an arc stretching around the eastern and southern edges of the EU27.
- The rest of the European space is a patchwork of Consumption Countryside, Diversified (Secondary) and Diversified (Private Services).
- Agrarian regions and Diversified (Secondary) regions tend to be relatively low performers, (Depleting).
- The Consumption Countryside regions and the Diversified (Private Services) group are both high performers, and likely to continue to “accumulate” in the future.

## Comparing D-P with EDORA Structural Typology

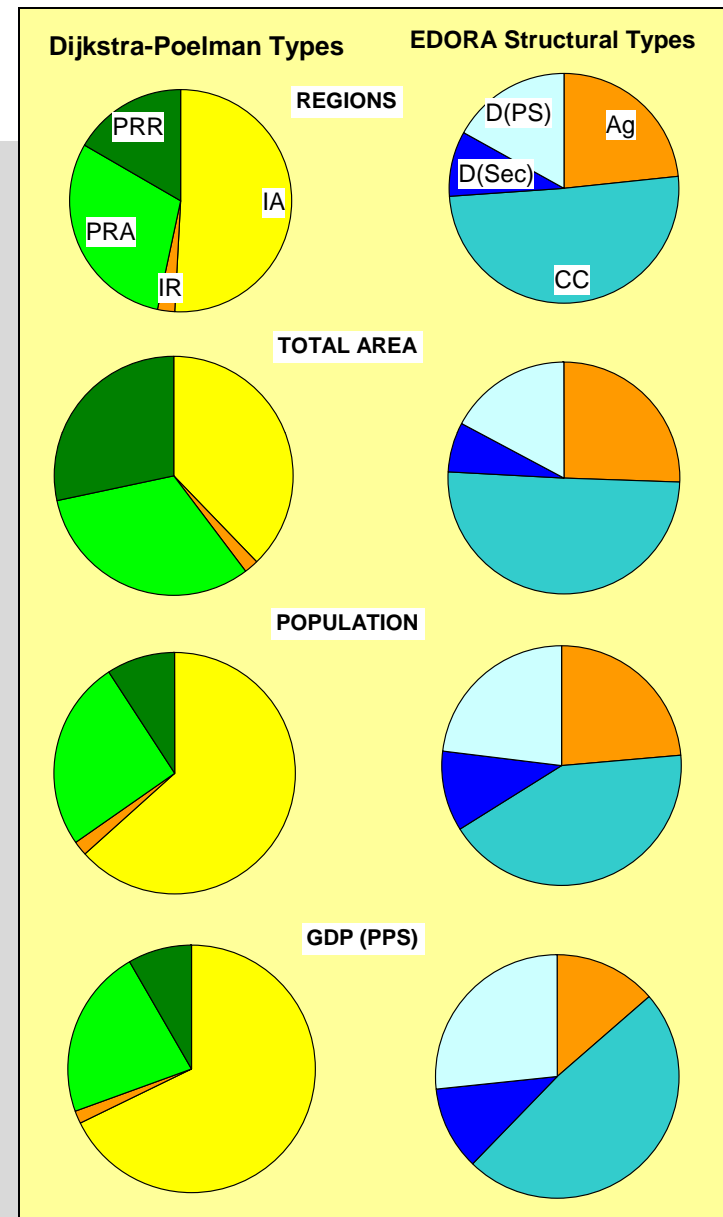
(NB %s relate to Intermediate+PR Total)

### D-P Typology

- **Types uneven in size** (e.g. Intermediate Remote very small - 23 regions 2% pop.)
- **Intermediate Accessible** dominates – especially in terms of population and GDP (>60%).
- **Predominantly Rural regions** (both accessible and remote) have much smaller share of population and GDP than of regions or area.

### EDORA Structural Typology

- **Consumption Countryside** is the dominant type, even in terms of GDP and population.
- **Agrarian type** – roughly a quarter of area, regions and population, but much smaller share of GDP.
- **Diversified (Market Services)** less than a quarter of regions, area, and population, but more than a quarter of GDP.
- **Diversified (Strong Secondary)** – 17% of area but only about 10% of population and GDP.



## Statistical Assessment of the EDORA Structural Typology:

### Purpose

1. To assess the extent that the Structural typology is meaningful (discriminates well) in terms of differences in “performance”.
2. To assess the benefits of combining the D-P and Structural Typologies, or of distinguishing the I from PR within the Structural Typology.

### Method Used:

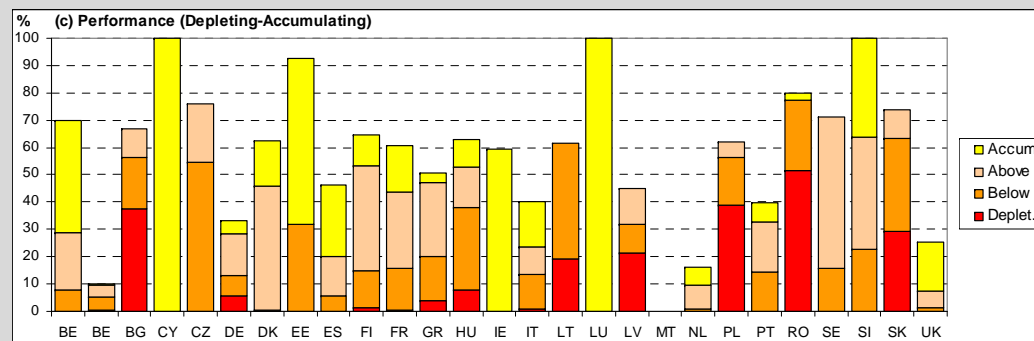
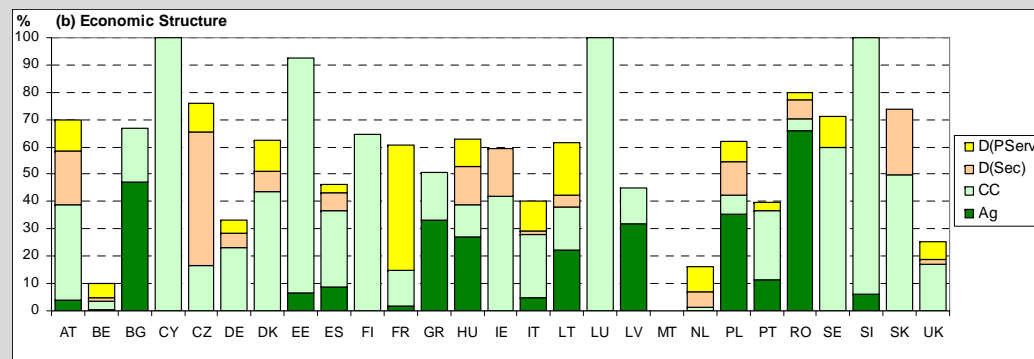
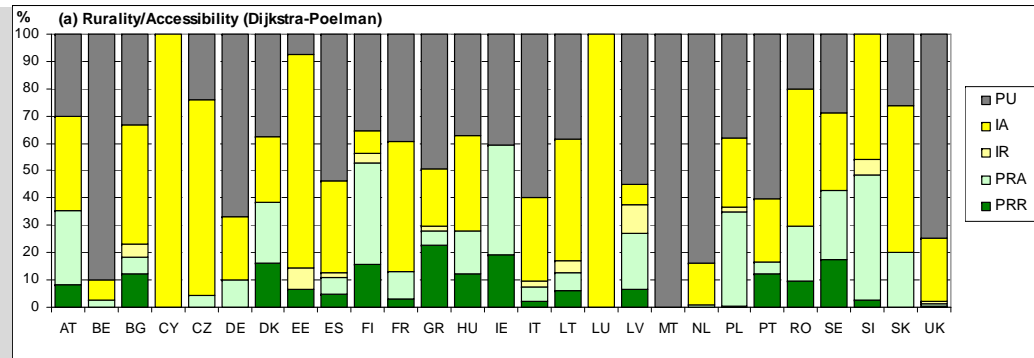
Excel TTEST function used to estimate the probability of different pairs of types deriving from the same population. All possible combinations of types presented in a symmetrical matrix.

Interpretation: small probability (eg  $<0.05$ ) means that the types represent populations of regions which are different in terms of their performance.

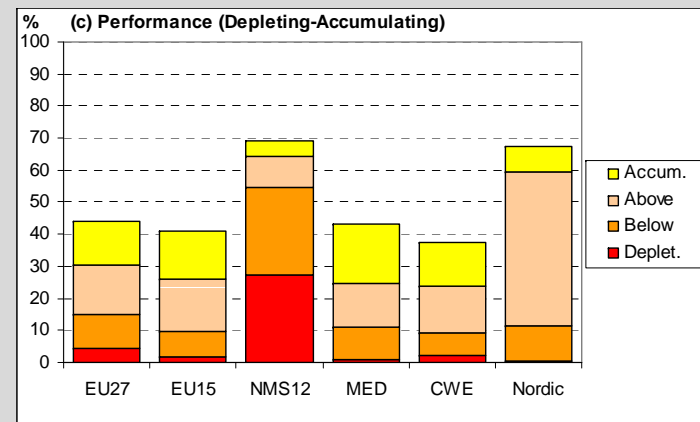
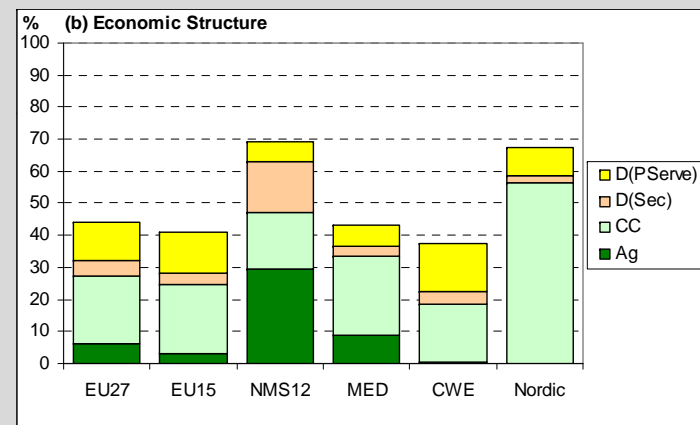
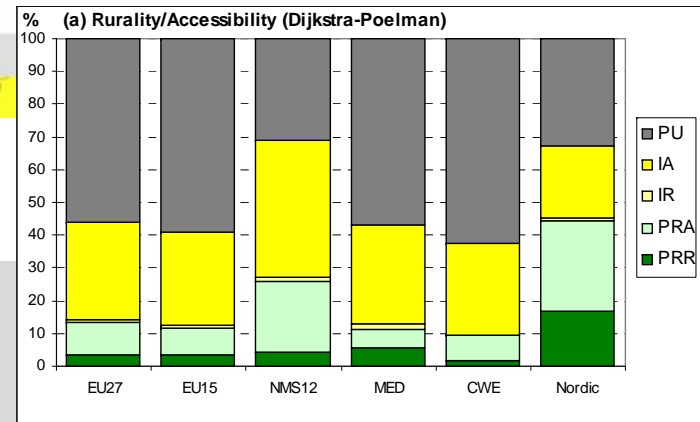
### Findings:

1. That the Structural typology discriminates rather well between regions in terms of performance.
2. That combining the Structural Typology with the DP, or presenting results for I and PR separately, reduces its discriminative power.

# Country Profiles



# Macro Region Profiles

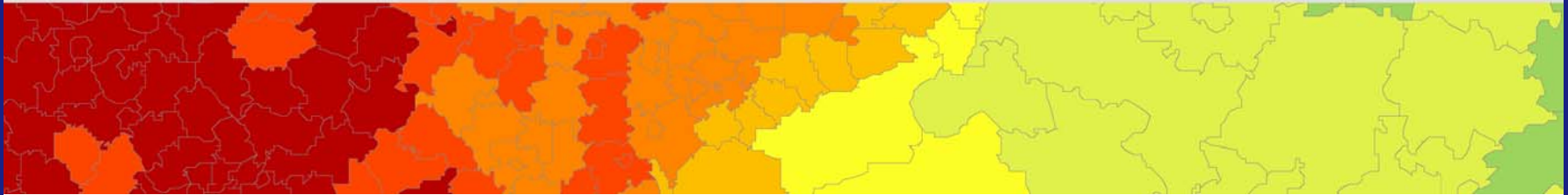


## Exemplar Regions

- Holistic analysis to deepen understanding of interaction of the Grand Narratives in different contexts.
- 12 regions in 7 MS.
- Lots of evidence of increasing “connexity”, but also evidence of continuing importance of Euclidian distance.
- The Agri-Centric narrative does not always progress towards para- or peri-productivism, but sometimes towards stagnation or abandonment.
- Impact of Globalisation in NMS heightened and compressed by accession.
- Variability in the rate and trajectory of rural change (incremental-“turnaround”). Specific events commonly seem to trigger reversals...
- Social capital, institutional capacity, and styles/structures of governance are crucial ...(policy implications).

# Conclusions

- EDORA has used a meta-narrative approach to make sense of the complexity of rural change, and to derive more appropriate generalisations about processes of change.
- The EDORA cube (three regional typologies) provides some basic generalisations about the key geographic patterns.
- Together it is hoped that these will help to weaken the influence of the “stylised fallacies” which linger in the rural policy environment, at European, MS, and regional levels.
- EDORA has reiterated the call for more appropriate, evidence-based, territorial rural cohesion policy, by establishing a clear conceptual and empirical architecture more attuned to contemporary rural realities.
- The second EDORA paper, which follows, will explore the implications of this framework for assessment of alternative paths of change over the next 20 years, and consider the implications for policy design and implementation.



...Thank you for your attention.

