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Uncovering the land development potential of municipalities in France

Thibault Lecourt

PhD Student

“The privatization of municipal land: spatial and statistical characterization”

under the supervision of D. Josselin and L. Casanova Enault
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Introduction

Research context

- **Neoliberalization of urban planning**
 - Austerity Urbanism (Peck 2012)
 - Privatization of public land (Christophers 2018)
- **Phenomenon well documented**
 - For state land (Adisson 2019 ; Whiteside 2020)
 - By local case studies (Olsson 2018 ; Adisson & Artioli 2020)
- **Research gap**
 - No empirical studies about municipal land privatization

Introduction

Research issue

- **Municipal land matters**
 - Central role in planning in France
 - 1st public landowner
- If municipal land is privatized, the capacity for development will be affected
- Need to focus on **developable land** that is likely to be privatized



Thibault Lecourt, 2012

Introduction

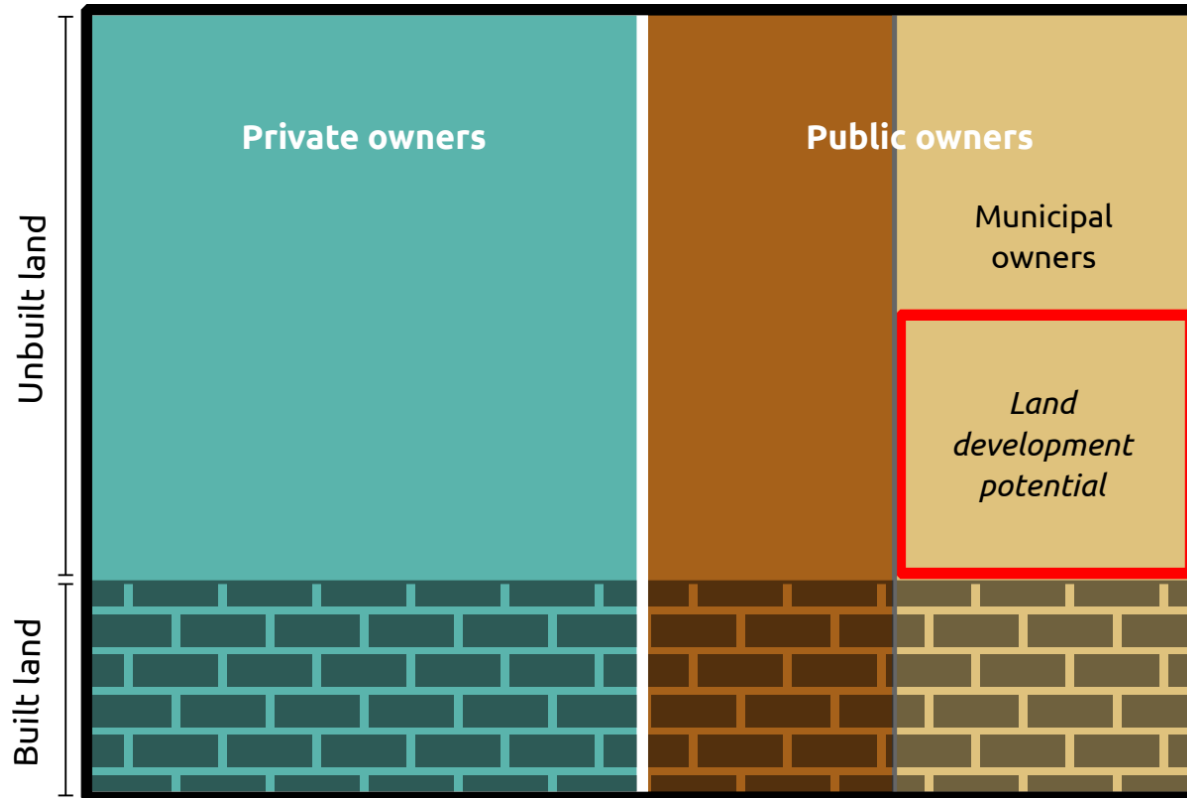
Outline

→ **Process to identify municipally owned land suitable for development purposes**

1. Theoretical framework
2. Data
3. Methodology
4. Results
5. Conclusion

1. Theoretical framework

What is municipal land development potential?



Thibault Lecourt, 2023

1. Theoretical framework

Land typology

- **Economic typology** (Comby 2010)
 - agricultural land
 - natural areas for recreation
 - natural areas for urban development
 - building plots
 - built-up land to be recycled
 - built-up land to be densified

2. Data

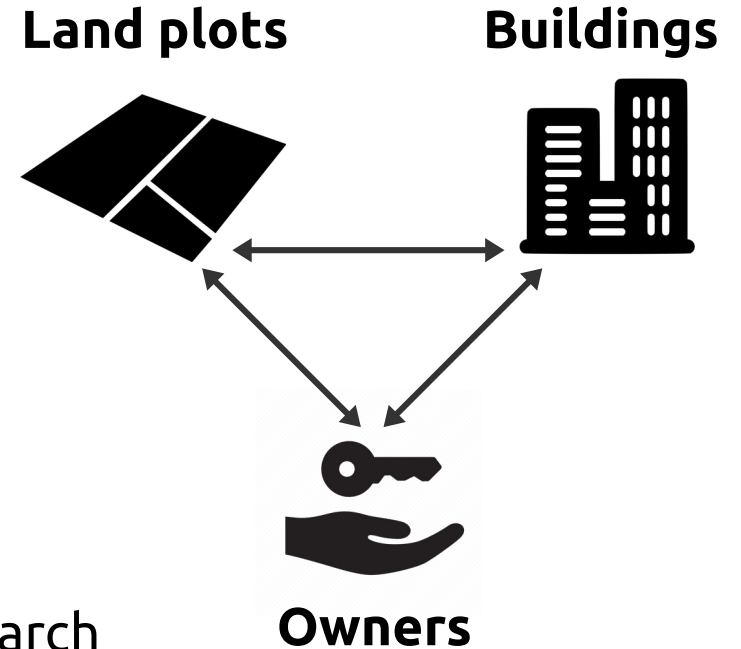
Land tax files

➤ Unprecedented data

- National scale
- From 2009 to 2022
- Disaggregated

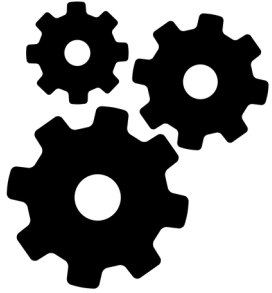
➤ Limits

- Volume: 6 To
- Fiscal purpose: not suitable for land research



2. Data

External data



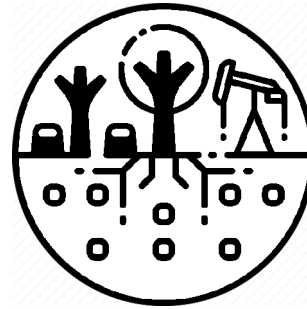
Uses & services

BD Topo
IGN



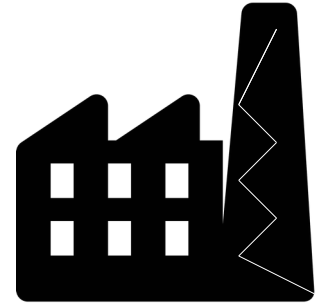
Topography

RGE Alti 5m
IGN



Soil contamination

BASOL
MTES

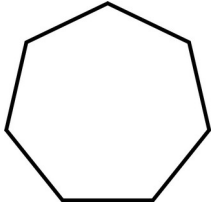


Brownfields

Cartofriches
CEREMA

2. Data

Data creation



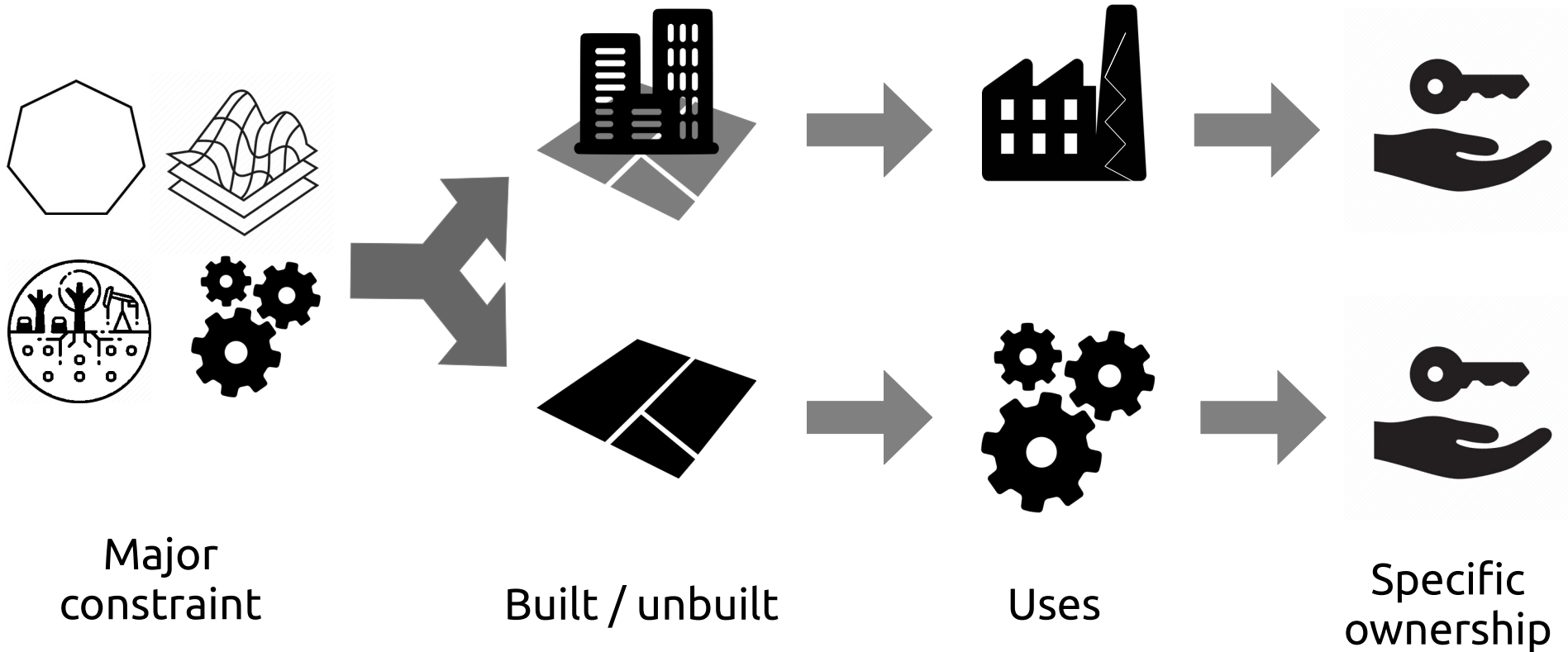
Morphology

- Area
- Width
- Elongation index
- Miller circularity index

Municipal land plots morphology

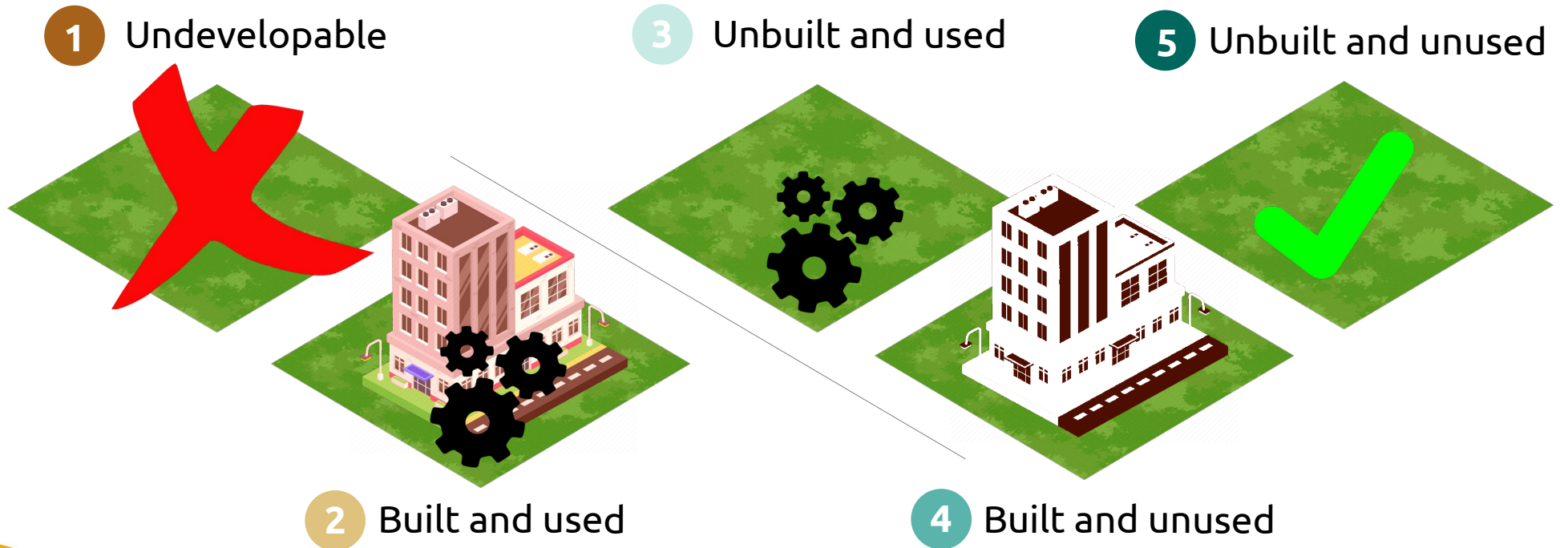


3. Methodology



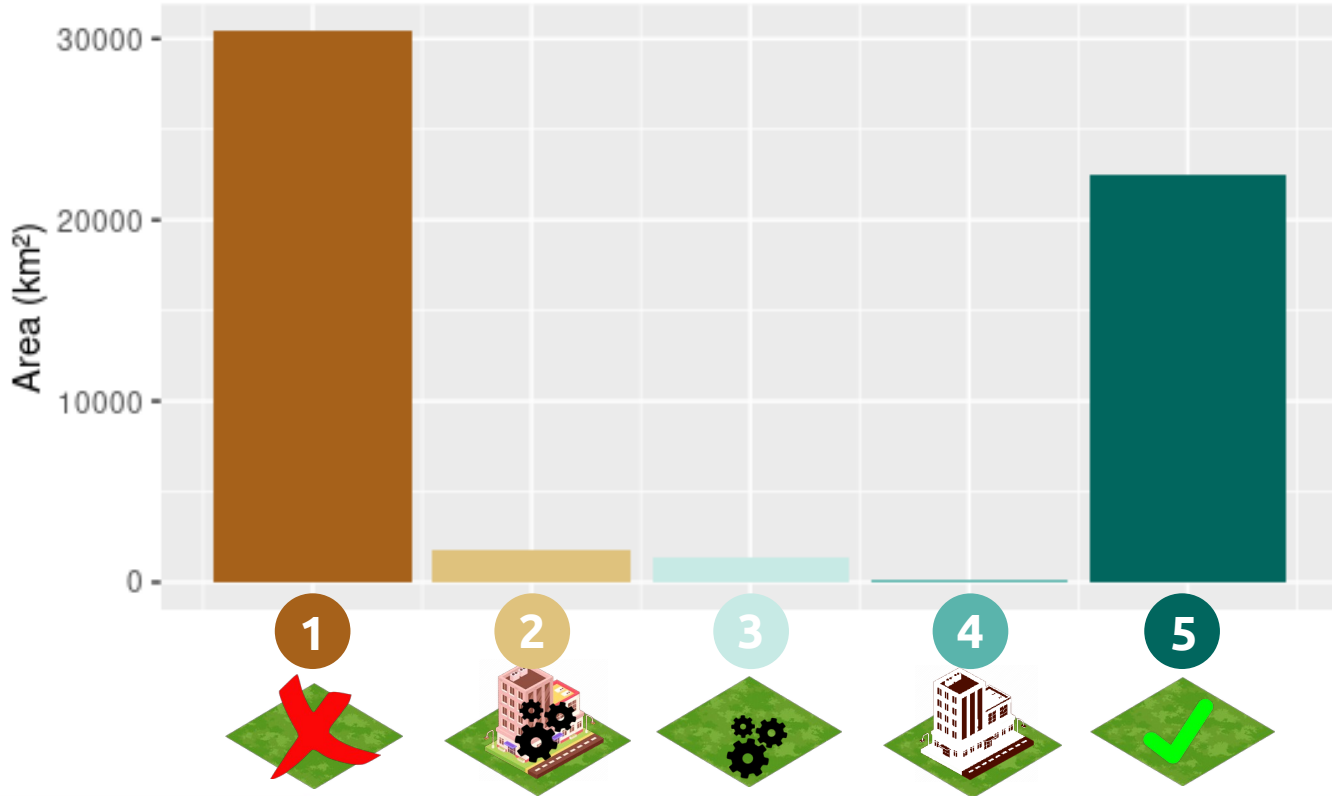
3. Methodology

Scoring of land development potential



4. Results

Municipal land ownership in 2021



Thibault Lecourt, 2023

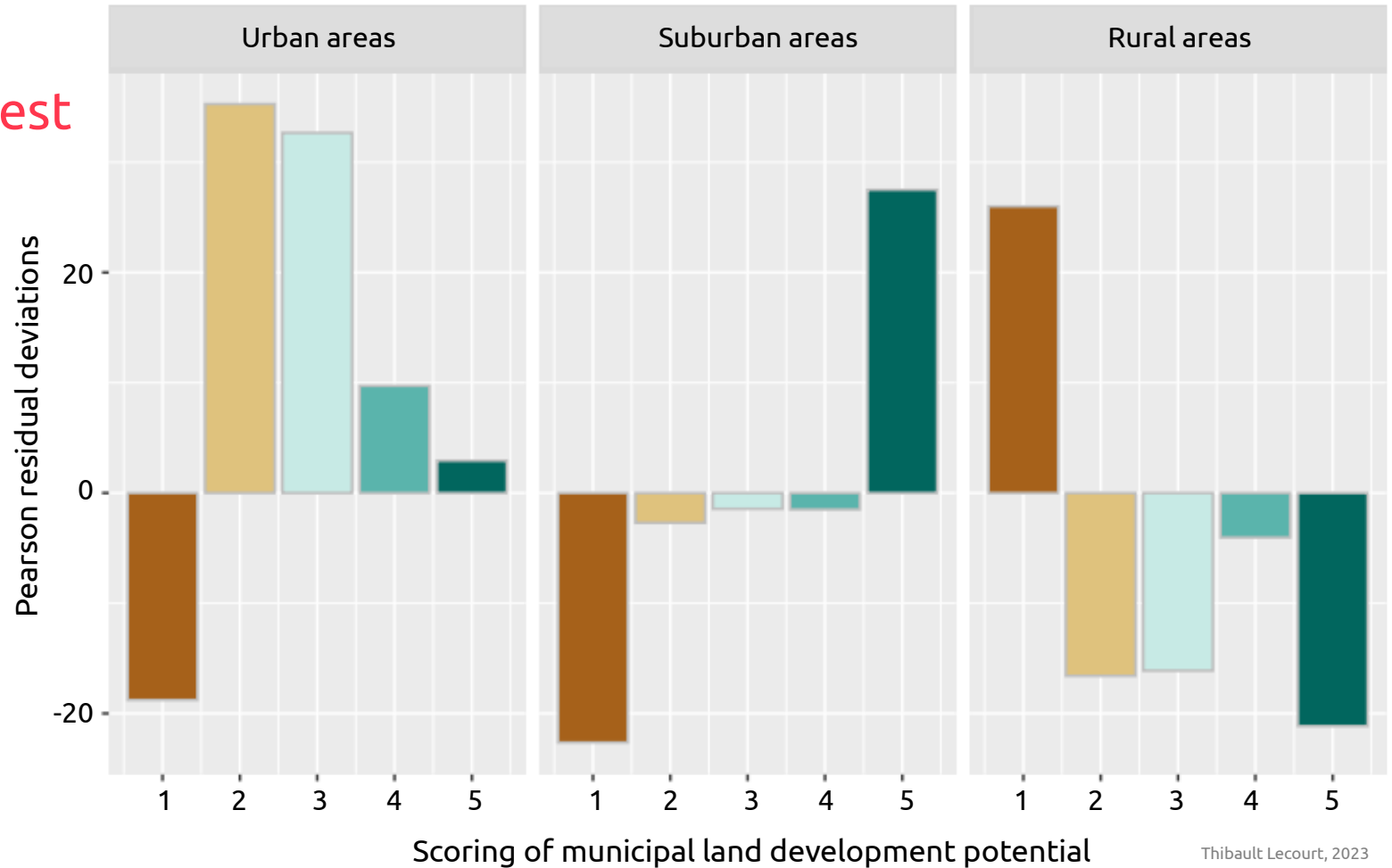
4. Results

Robustness test

Chi² test

Cramér's V
0.22

p-value
< 0.001



Thibault Lecourt, 2023

Conclusion

Highlights

- Land development potential can be identified through a multi-criteria GIS processing
- Municipalities in France mainly own undevelopable land
- Municipal developable land is over-represented in suburban areas

Perspectives

- The privatization of developable land can now be assessed independently
- Are municipalities losing land control for development ?

Thanks for your attention!

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