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# Uncovering the land development potential of municipalities in France

Thibault Lecourt

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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  
*Avignon University, UMR CNRS ESPACE (France)*

[thibault.lecourt@univ-avignon.fr](mailto:thibault.lecourt@univ-avignon.fr)



# Introduction

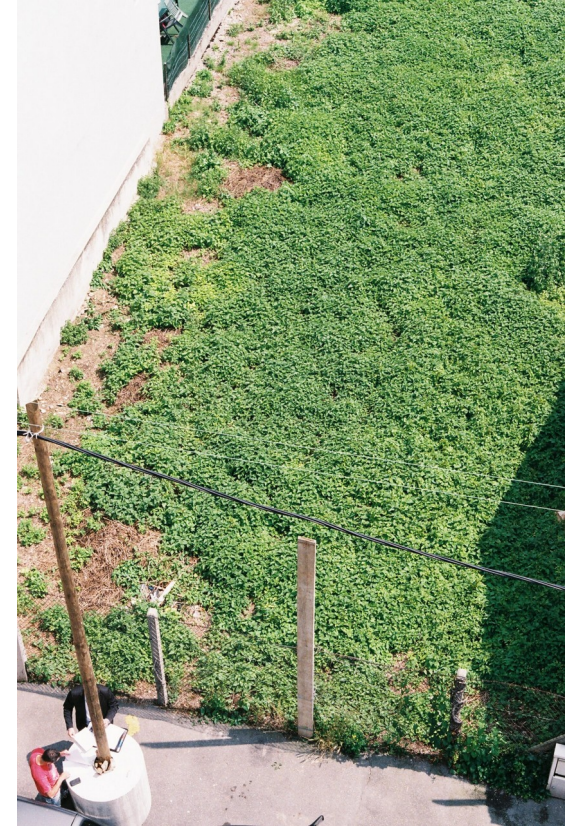
## Research context

- **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

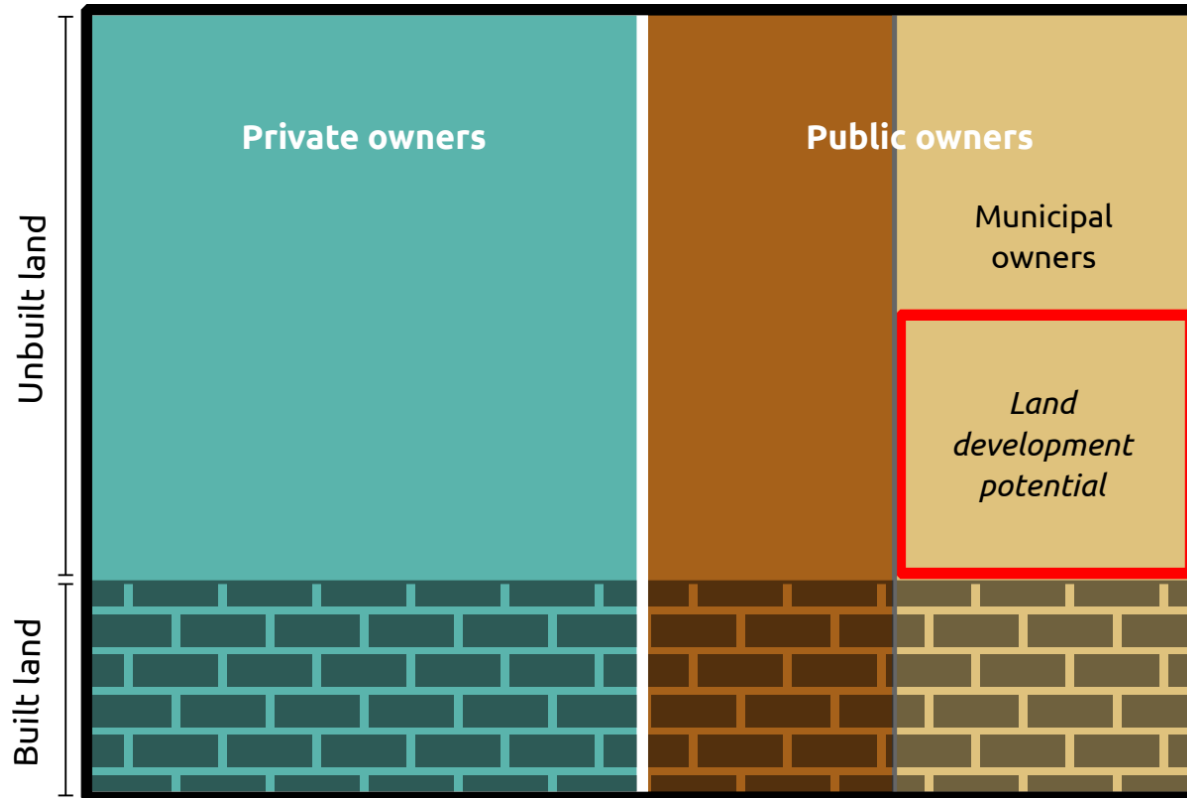
## Outline

→ **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

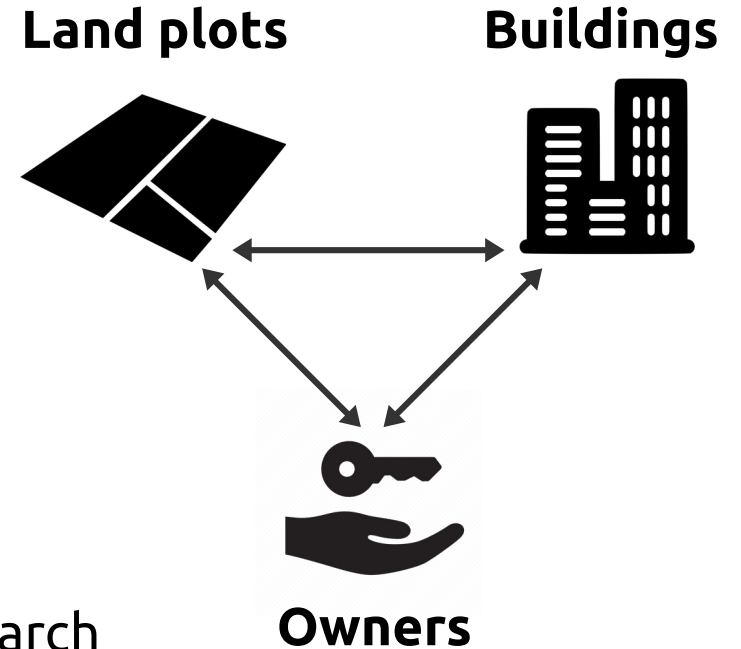
### Land tax files

#### ➤ Unprecedented data

- National scale
- From 2009 to 2022
- Disaggregated

#### ➤ Limits

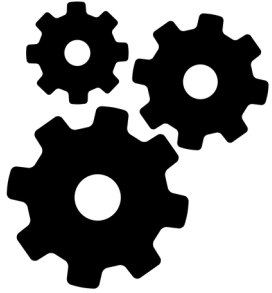
- Volume: 6 To
- Fiscal purpose: not suitable for land research





## 2. Data

### External data



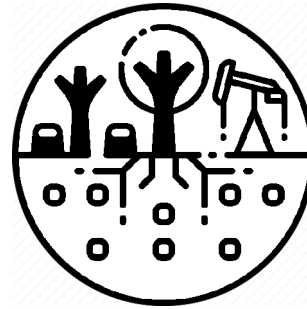
#### Uses & services

BD Topo  
*IGN*



#### Topography

RGE Alti 5m  
*IGN*



#### Soil contamination

BASOL  
*MTES*

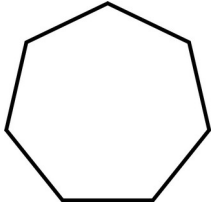


#### Brownfields

Cartofriches  
*CEREMA*

## 2. Data

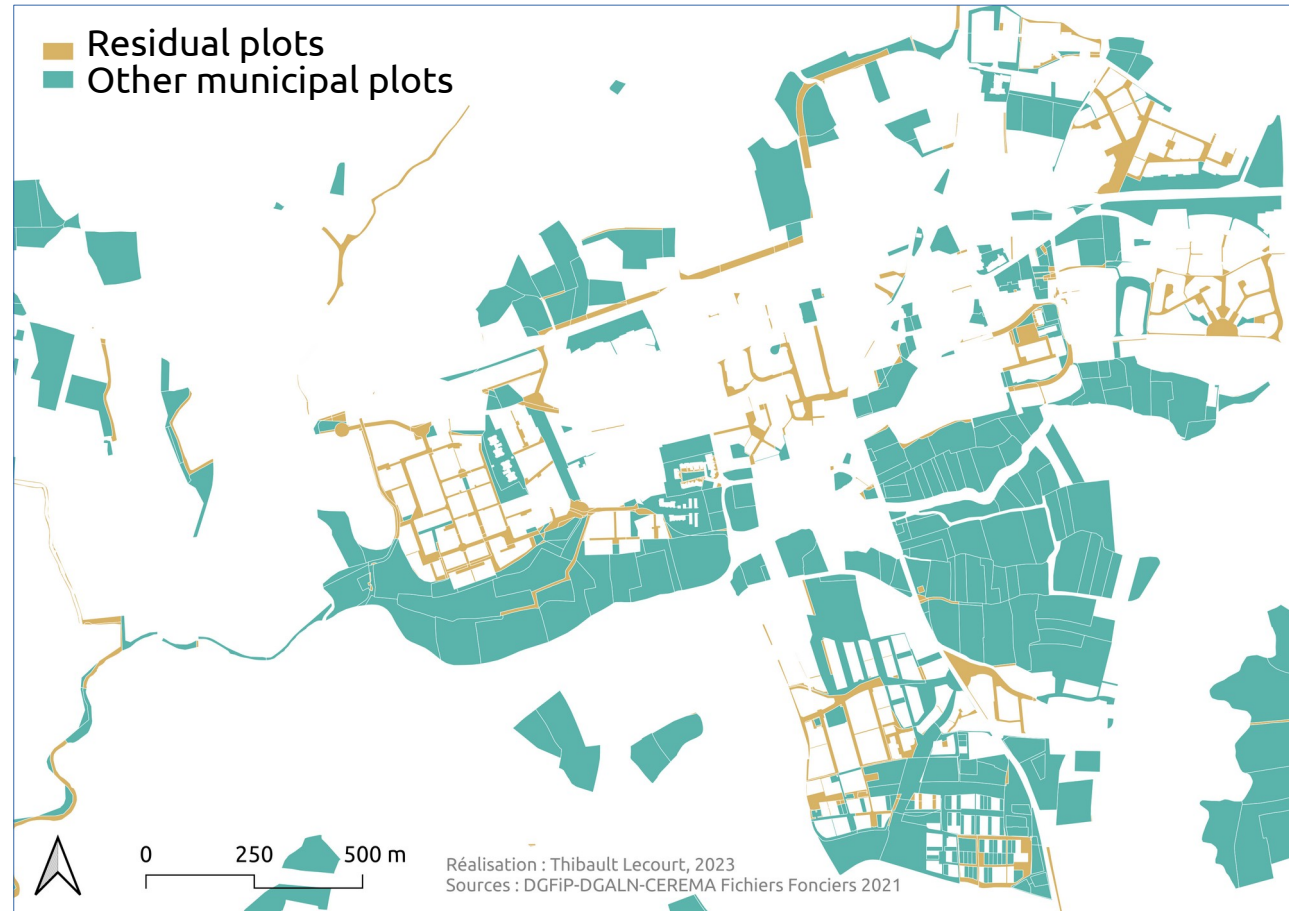
### Data creation



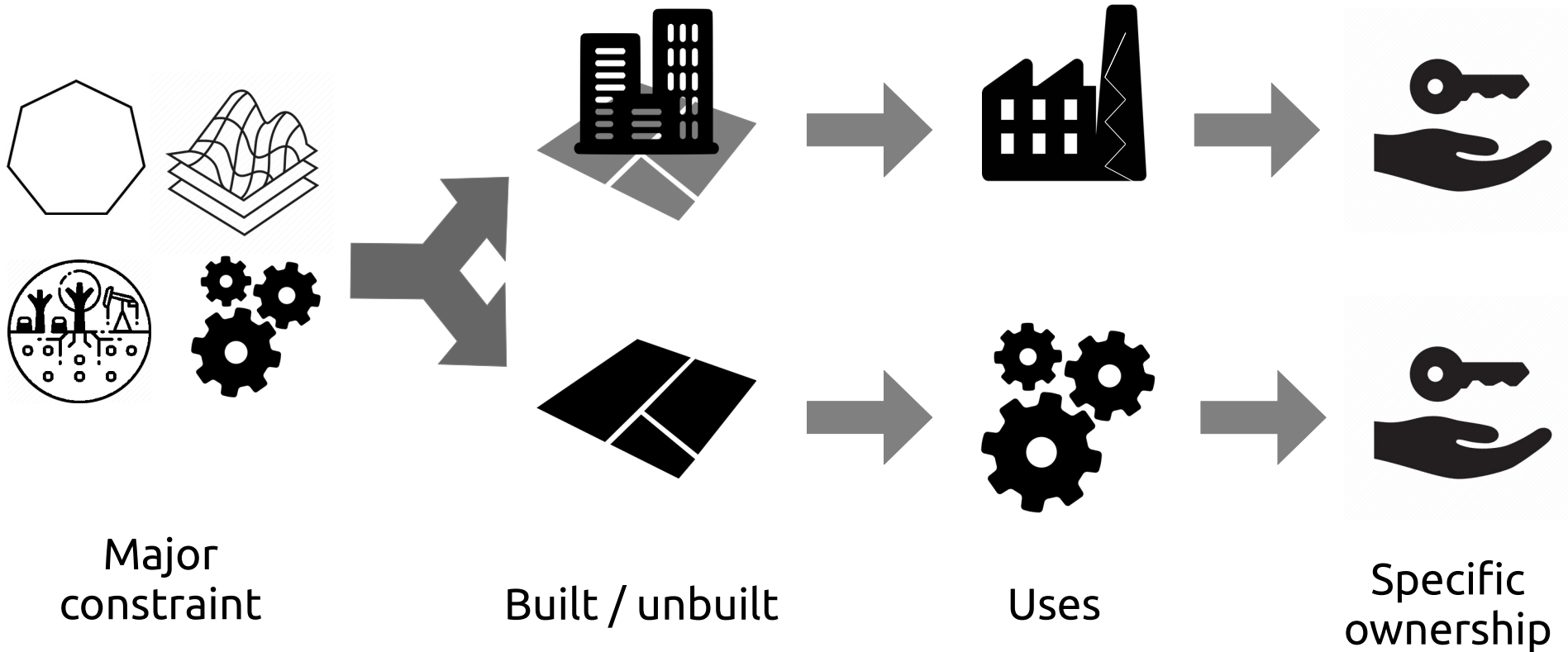
### Morphology

- Area
- Width
- Elongation index
- Miller circularity index

## Municipal land plots morphology

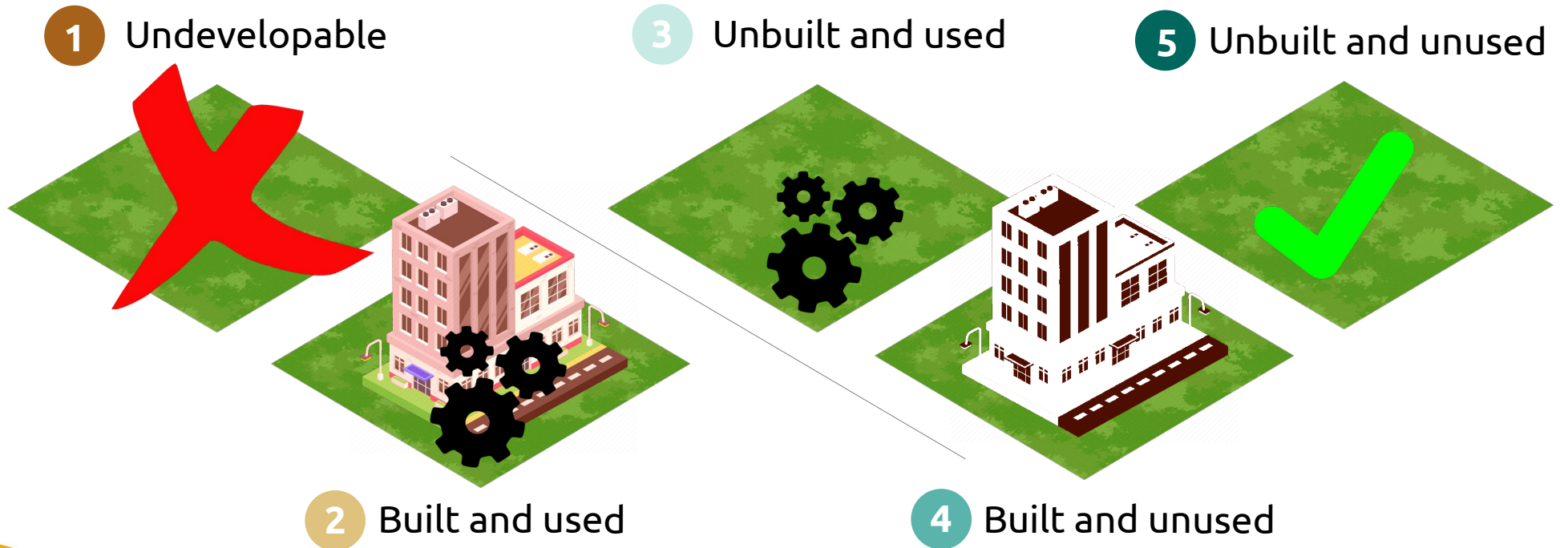


# 3. Methodology



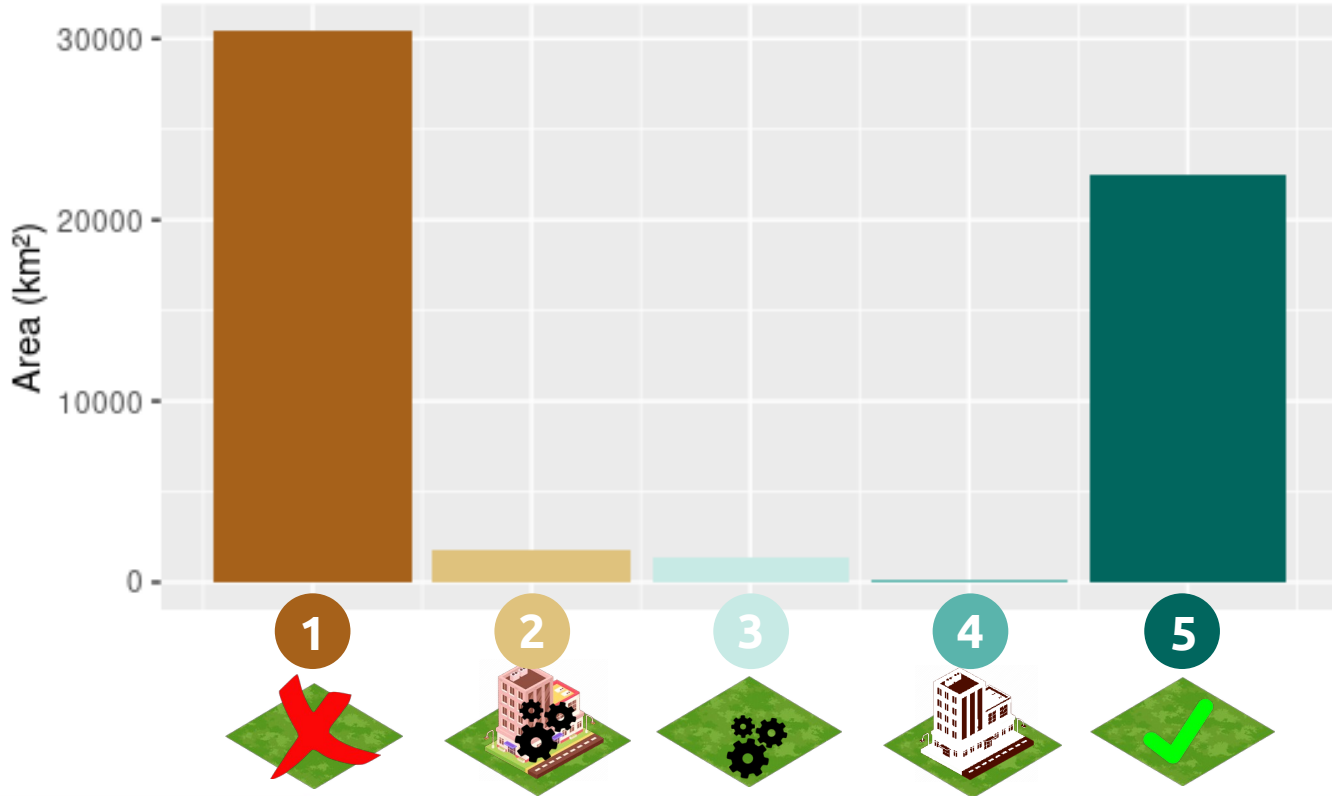
# 3. Methodology

## Scoring of land development potential



# 4. Results

## Municipal land ownership in 2021



Thibault Lecourt, 2023

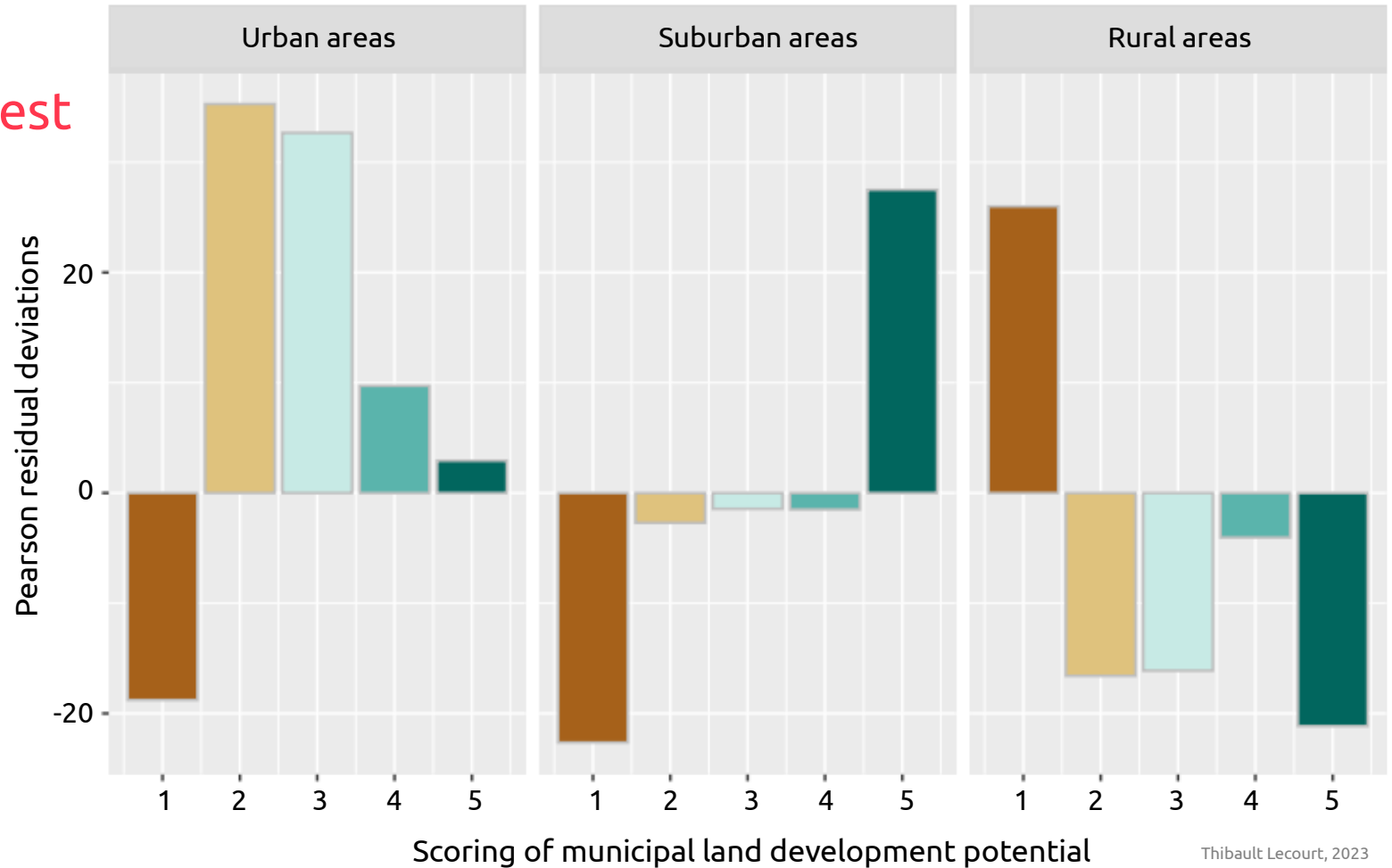
# 4. Results

## Robustness test

**Chi<sup>2</sup> 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!**

**Thibault Lecourt**

PhD Student  
Avignon University, UMR CNRS ESPACE (France)

[thibault.lecourt@univ-avignon.fr](mailto:thibault.lecourt@univ-avignon.fr)

