

2 RURAL STATISTICS: APPENDICES

Appendix 3: "AGEING & THE RURAL POPULATION"

In one of the main sections of this unit (**Unit 2.04: "The 'Make Up' of - and Changes to - the Rural Population"** [[CLICK HERE](#) -> to access this]), the idea was briefly considered that the age profile of the rural population has been changing over the past 20-30 years. In one of the other appendices (**Appendix 1: "Population Age Profiles"** [[CLICK HERE](#) -> to access this]) the use of 'standard' population profiles by 10-year age bands was introduced, as a helpful way of comparing different subsets of the English population; e.g. rural & urban, the different regions, individual districts.

As will be made clear in another appendix (**Appendix 4: "Migration & the Rural Population"** [[CLICK HERE](#) -> to access this]), age & ageing within the rural population cannot be divorced from the issue of migration within England as a whole - and the impact this has on the rural population, especially certain rural districts & larger areas of a number of the English regions.

The issue of ageing was the subject of the important publication "**The Ageing Countryside: the growing older population of rural England**", edited by **P. Low & L. Speakman** (CRC/Age Concern, 2006). Some of the material from this publication has been made available on the internet, and a rather larger proportion of its contents are also available here as summaries:

"The Greying Countryside" P. Lowe & L. Speakman [[CLICK HERE](#)]

"Demographic Change in Rural England 2: aspects of population change" A. Champion & J. Shepherd [[CLICK HERE](#)]

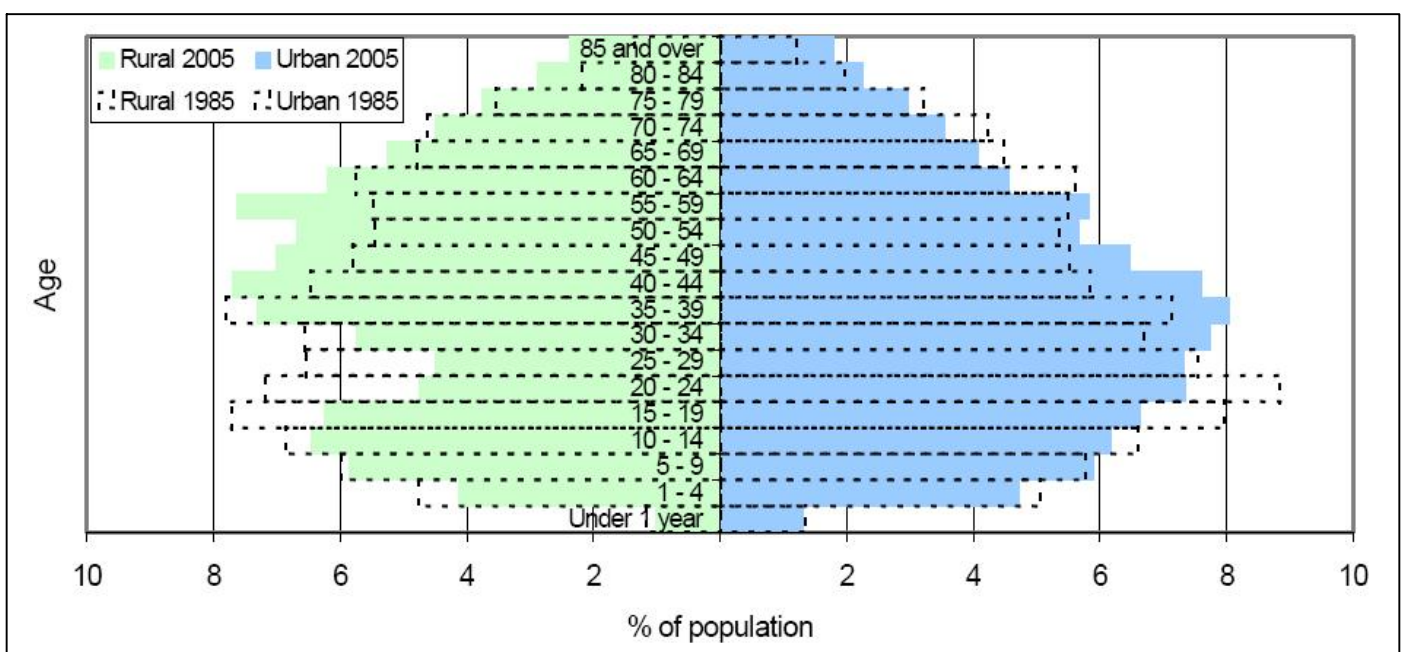
"Demographic Change in Rural England 3: The Role of Migration" A. Champion & J. Shepherd [[CLICK HERE](#)]

"A Place in the Countryside: migration & the construction of rural living" I. Hardill [[CLICK HERE](#)]

Also relevant is the CRC publication:

"Population & Migration: State of the Countryside Update" (2007) [[CLICK HERE](#)]

Some results & discussion from these documents are included here.

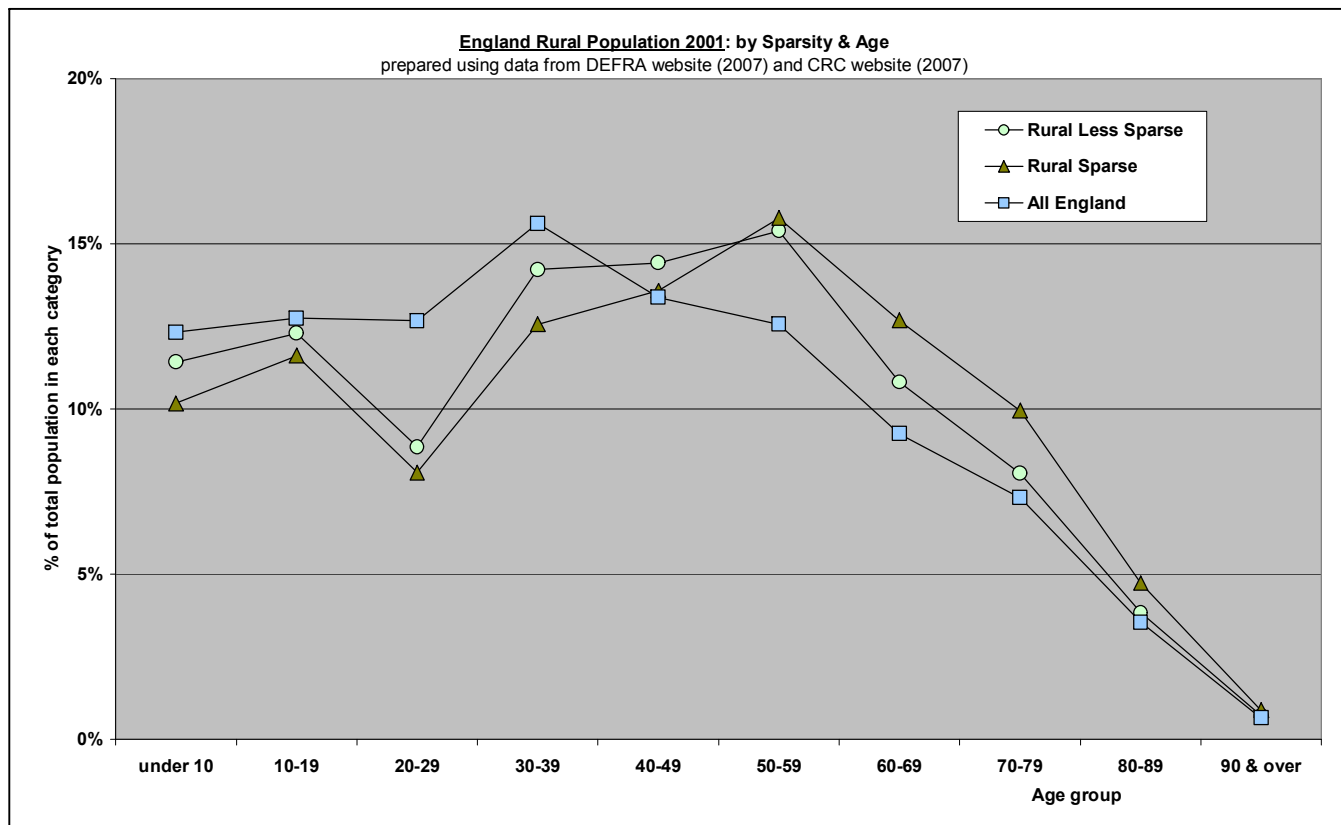


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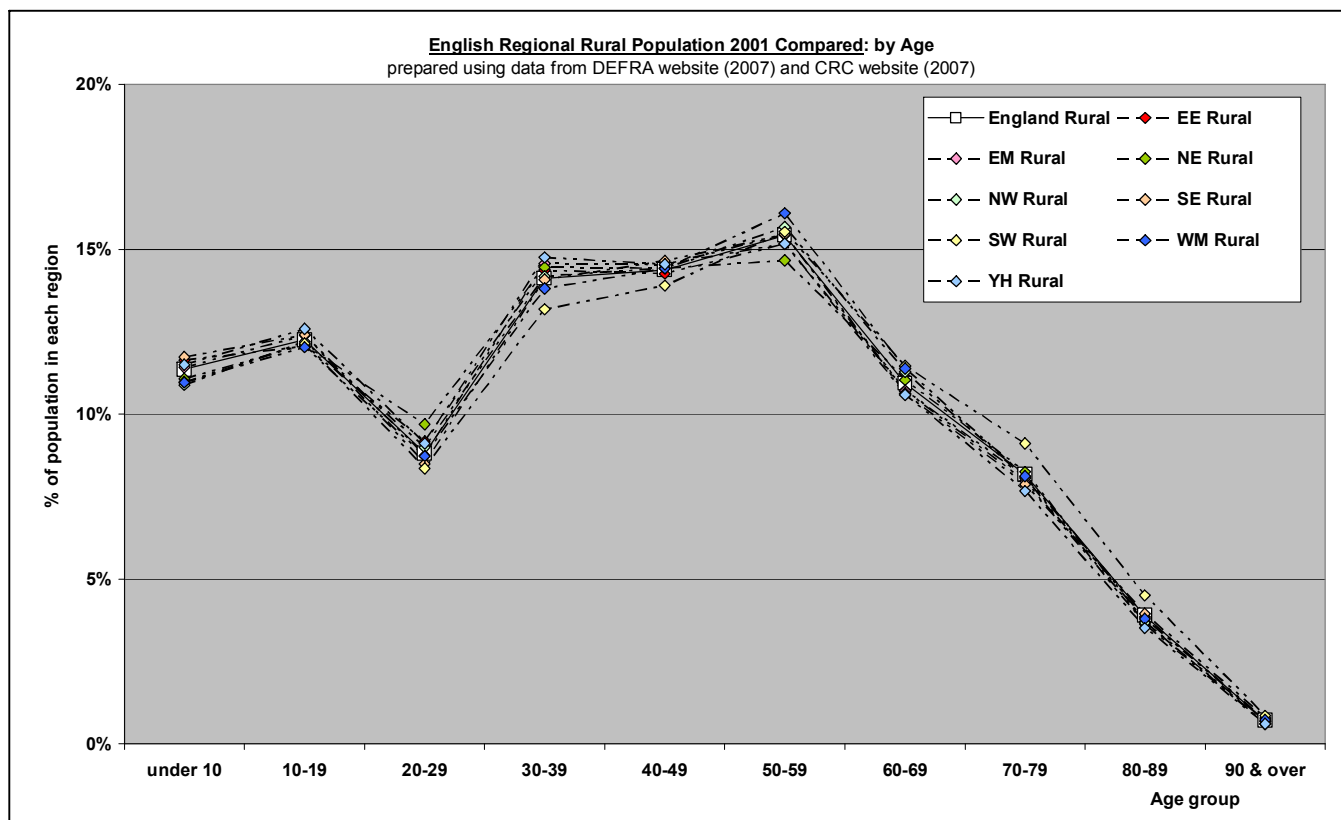
This revisits material presented earlier, highlighting two things about the rural population of England between 1985 and 2005:

- The rural population has a different overall profile to the urban population
- The age profile of the rural population has changed noticeably in 20 years (so has the urban profile, but in different ways)

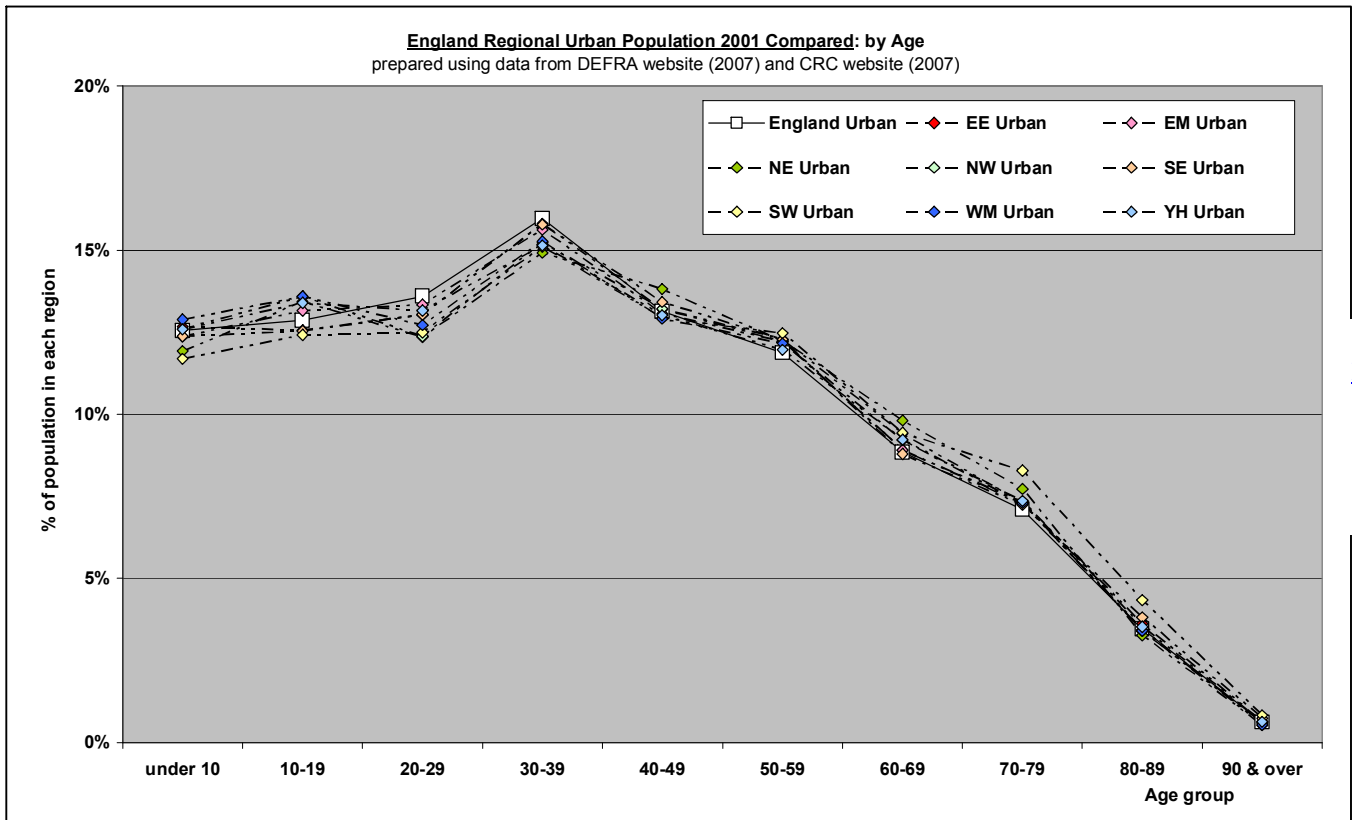
The different population age profiles between rural & urban England are highlighted in the following graphs based on data from the 2001 national census:



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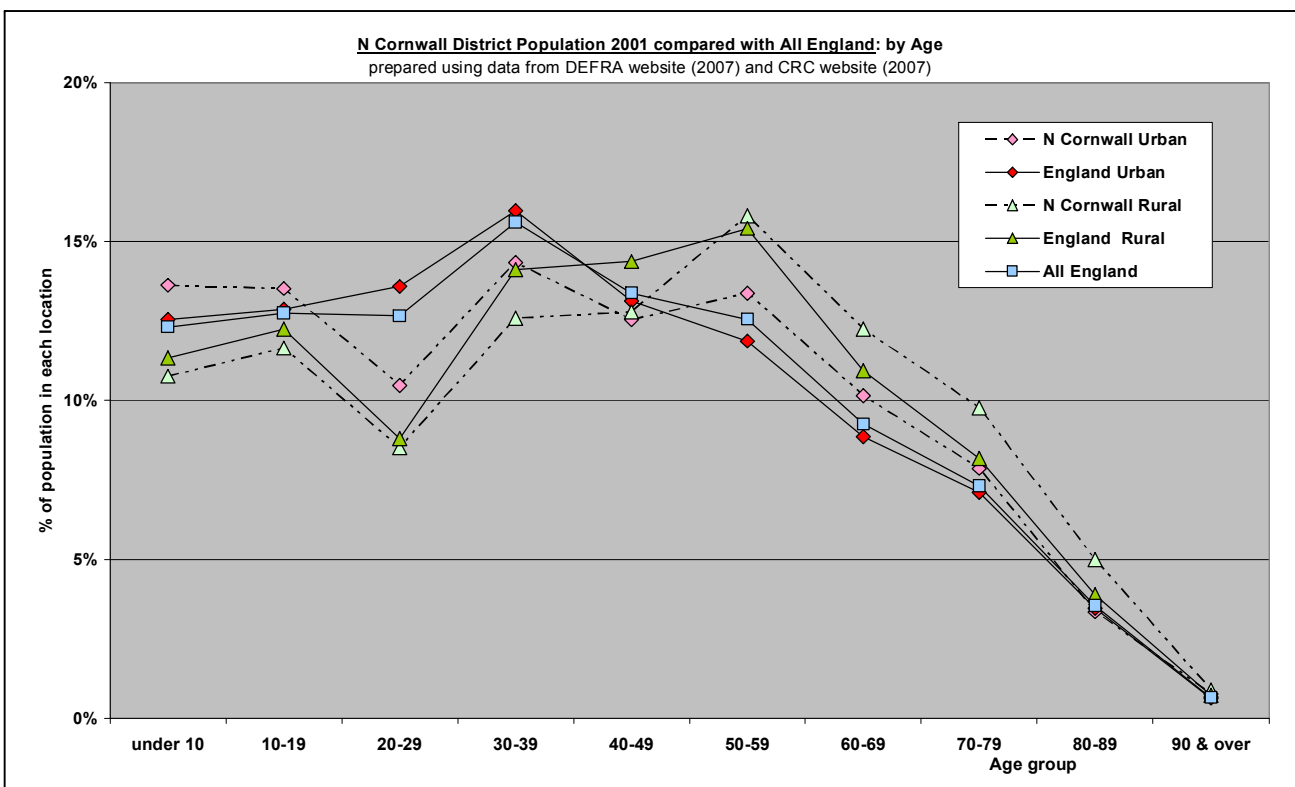
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As noted previously, there are two differences between rural & urban England clearly visible in the population age profile for 2001 (first of the 3 graphs above):

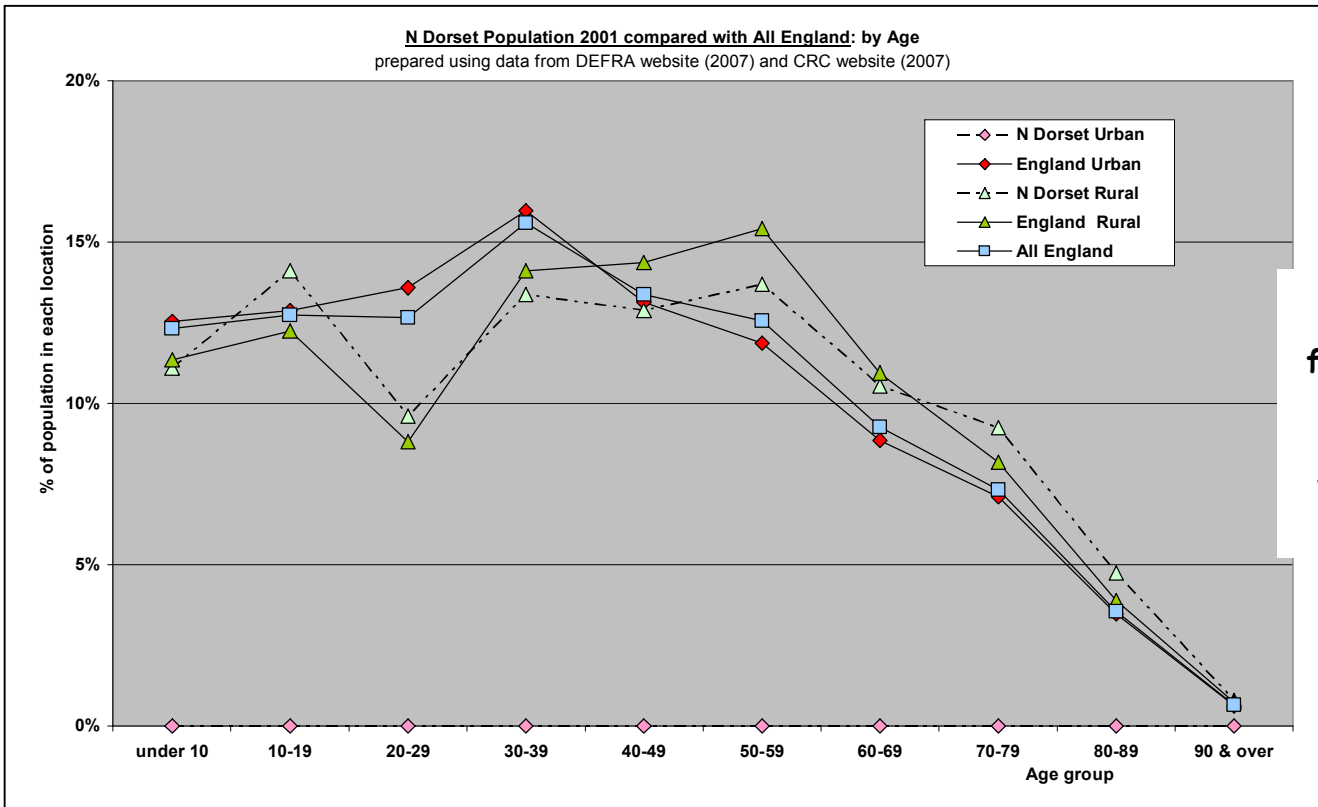
- Rural England has a significantly lower proportion of its population in the age bands 10-29, compared to urban England
- Rural England has a significantly higher proportion of its population in the age bands 40-69, compared to urban England

The English regions show broadly similar age profiles for both rural & urban populations.

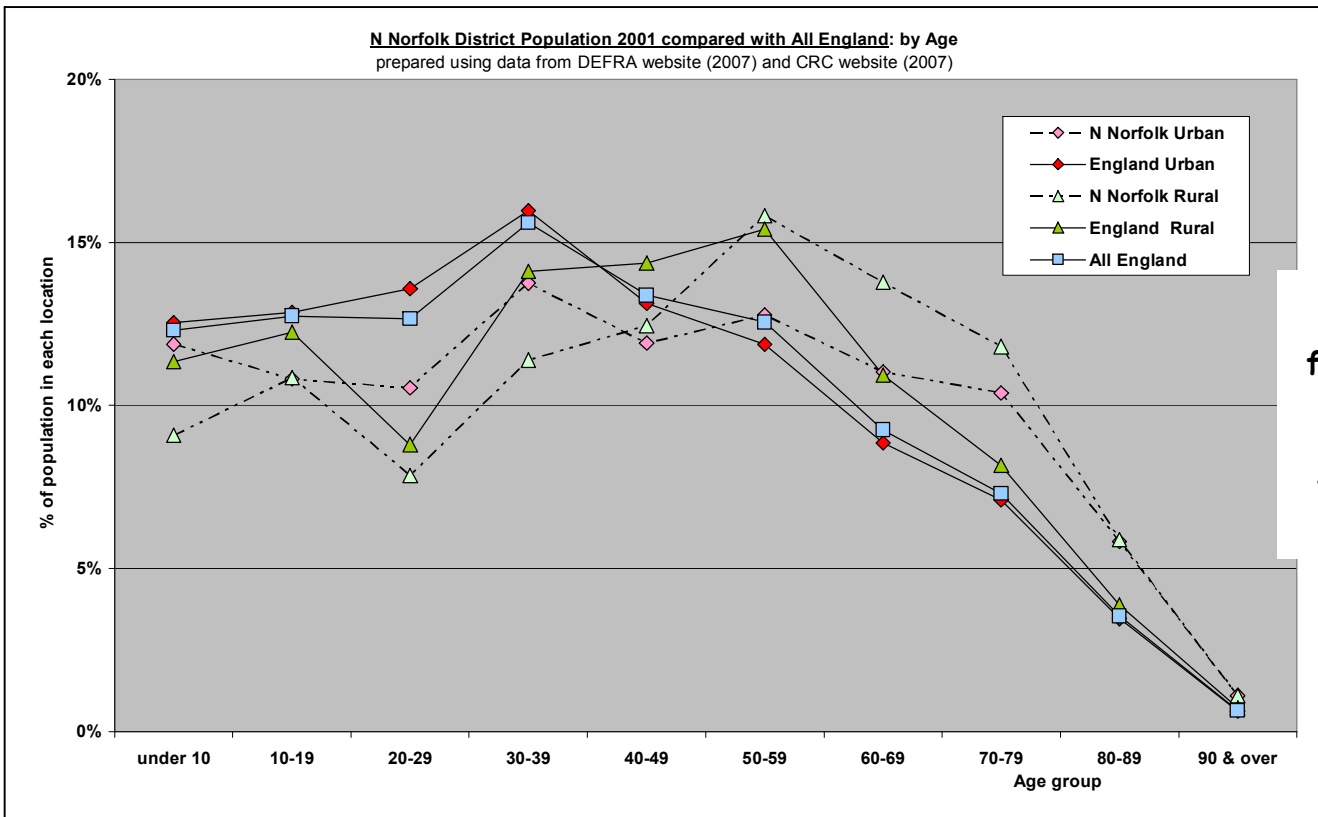
The situation is rather different when we look at specific districts:



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for a full set of profiles for this district



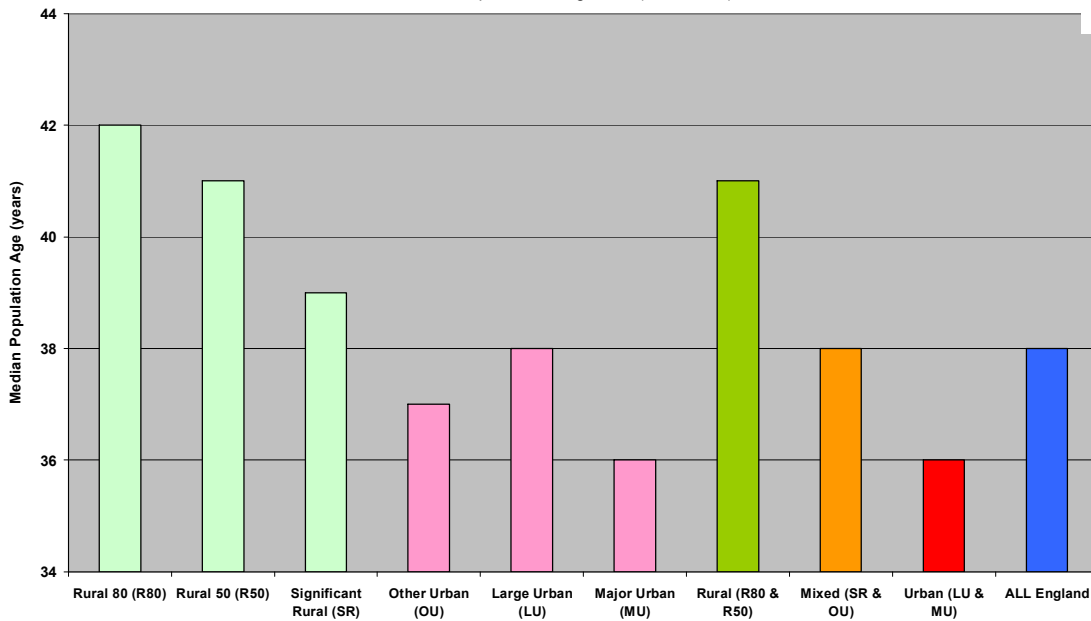
[CLICK HERE](#) ->
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for a full set of profiles for this district

North Cornwall district has one of the highest levels of in-migration since 2001, while North Dorset & North Norfolk are two districts having amongst the highest proportion of rural residents - based on 2001 national census figures. These three districts clearly have very different population age profiles from the overall 'picture' for England or the regions. In all three cases, there are significant differences for the rural population profiles, while in North Cornwall & North Norfolk, the urban population profile is also significantly different. North Dorset has no urban population at all.

England Median Population Age 2001: by District Category
Data from "Population & Migration" (CRC, 2007)



[CLICK HERE](#) -> for a larger image

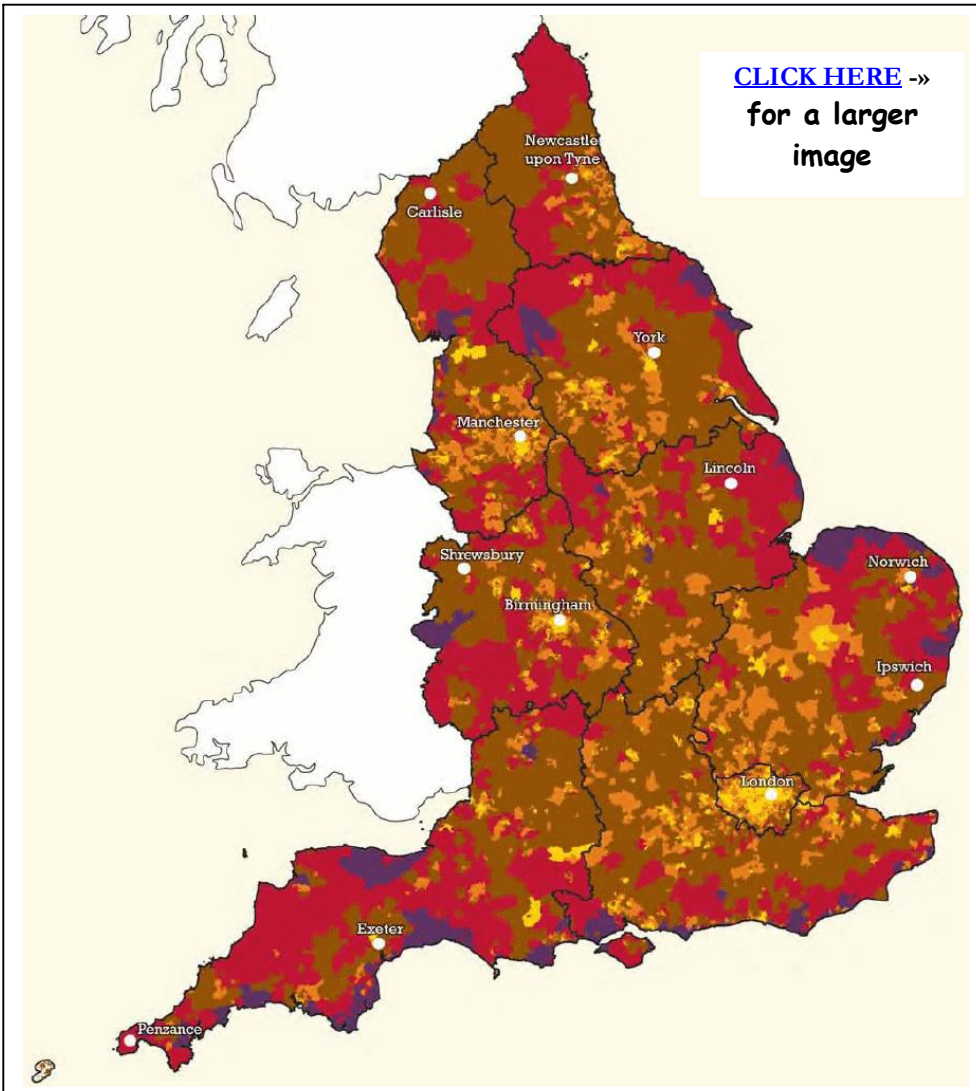
Also considered earlier was the issue of the median age of the English population, and how this was seen to vary with the rurality of the area being studied. The chart shows the difference between rural & urban at a district level.

[CLICK HERE](#) -> for a larger image

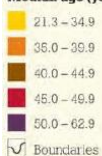
The map provides a quite striking comparison across the whole of England. The darker red & purple areas - worked out at a level more local than the district - reveal the places with highest median population age. These mostly coincide with the traditional areas for retirement.

This all reinforces the widely accepted perception that the rural population as a whole is more aged than the urban population. This is more pronounced in certain rural locations, and - as the fuller population age profile graphs show - in certain types of rural settlement (e.g. villages).

The key point at issue here, though, is how these changes have developed over time, and whether the aged rural population (however defined) is growing faster than its urban equivalent.



Median age (years)

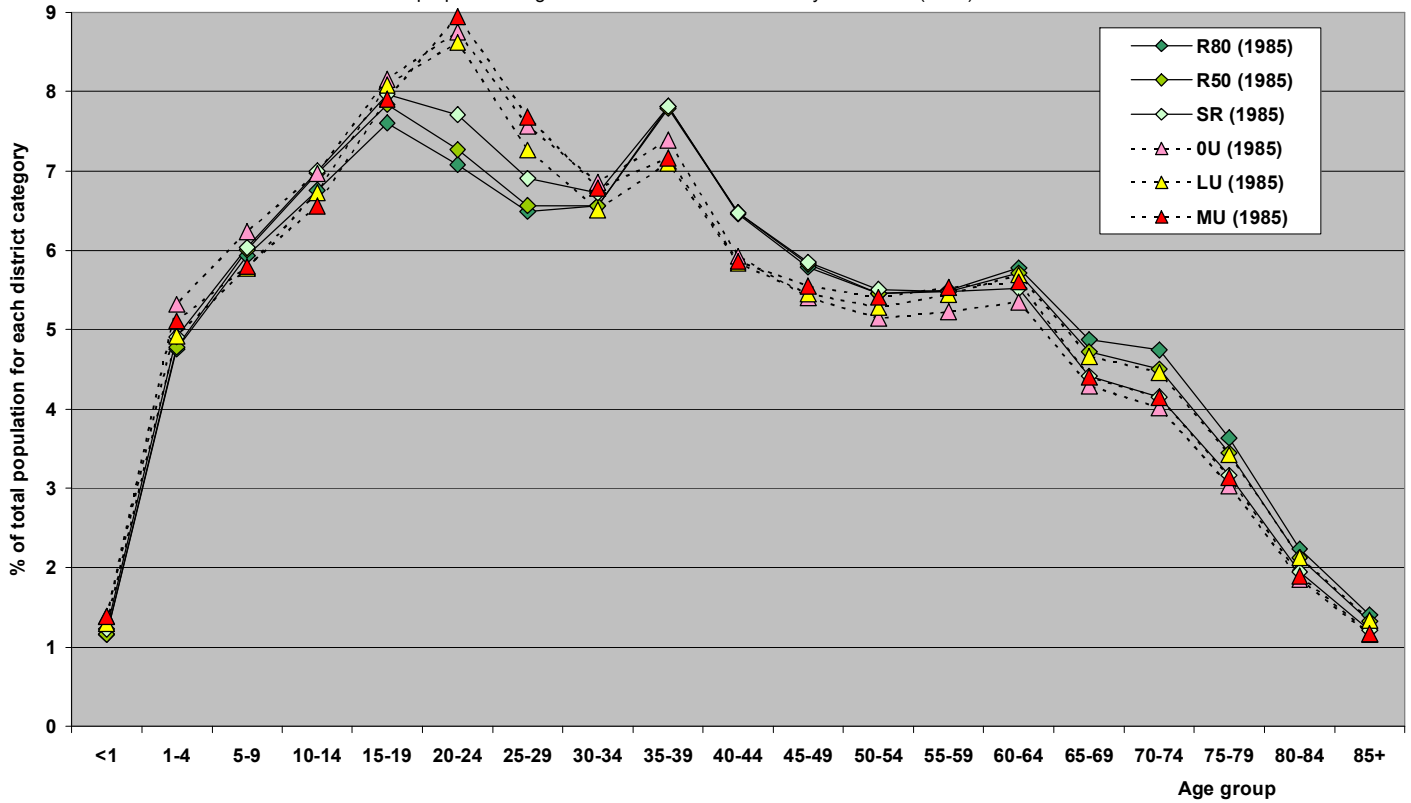


Note:
(i) The 2004 median age figures are derived from Middle Super Output Area population estimates, which are experimental statistics.

Source: Office for National Statistics, 2006. Mid-2004 Median Age.

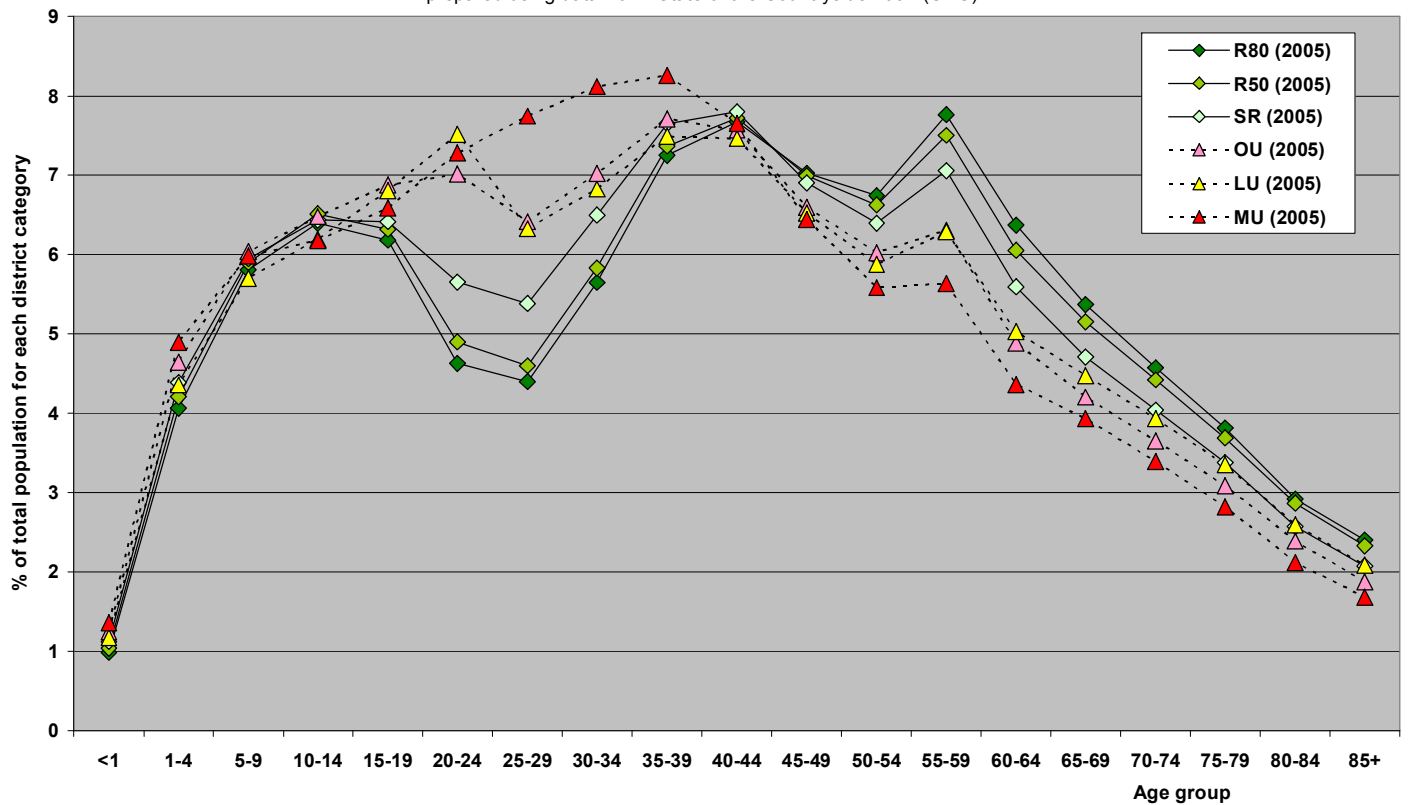
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England Population Profile 1985: All District Categories by Age
 prepared using data from "State of the Countryside 2007" (CRC)



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England Population Profile 2005: All District Categories by Age
 prepared using data from "State of the Countryside 2007"(CRC)



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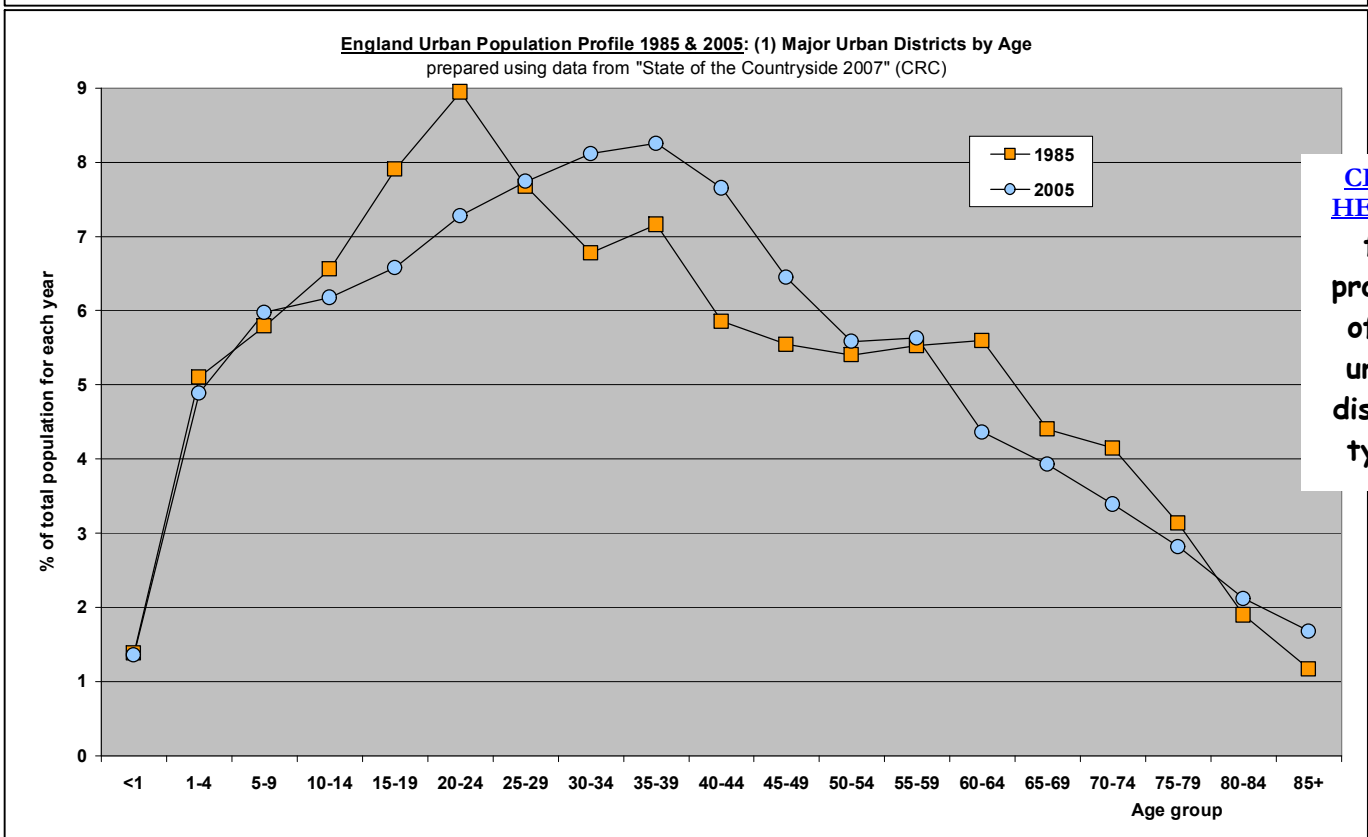
Population data is available for the 6 different district geographical categories in England that gives the age profiles for 1985 & 2005; i.e. spanning 20 years. Unfortunately the age

bands used are different to those employed in the age profiles earlier in this module. But just from these sets of graphs for 1985 & 2005, two very clear conclusions are possible:

- In 1985, the age profiles of the three rural district categories (R80, R50 & SR) were much closer to those of the three urban ones (OU, LU & MU) than in 2005.
- By 2005, the age profiles for all district types had changed significantly, but for rural districts some of this change was much more profound - in particular the reduced proportion of the population in the age bands 10-29 years.



[CLICK HERE ->](#)
 for profiles of all rural district types

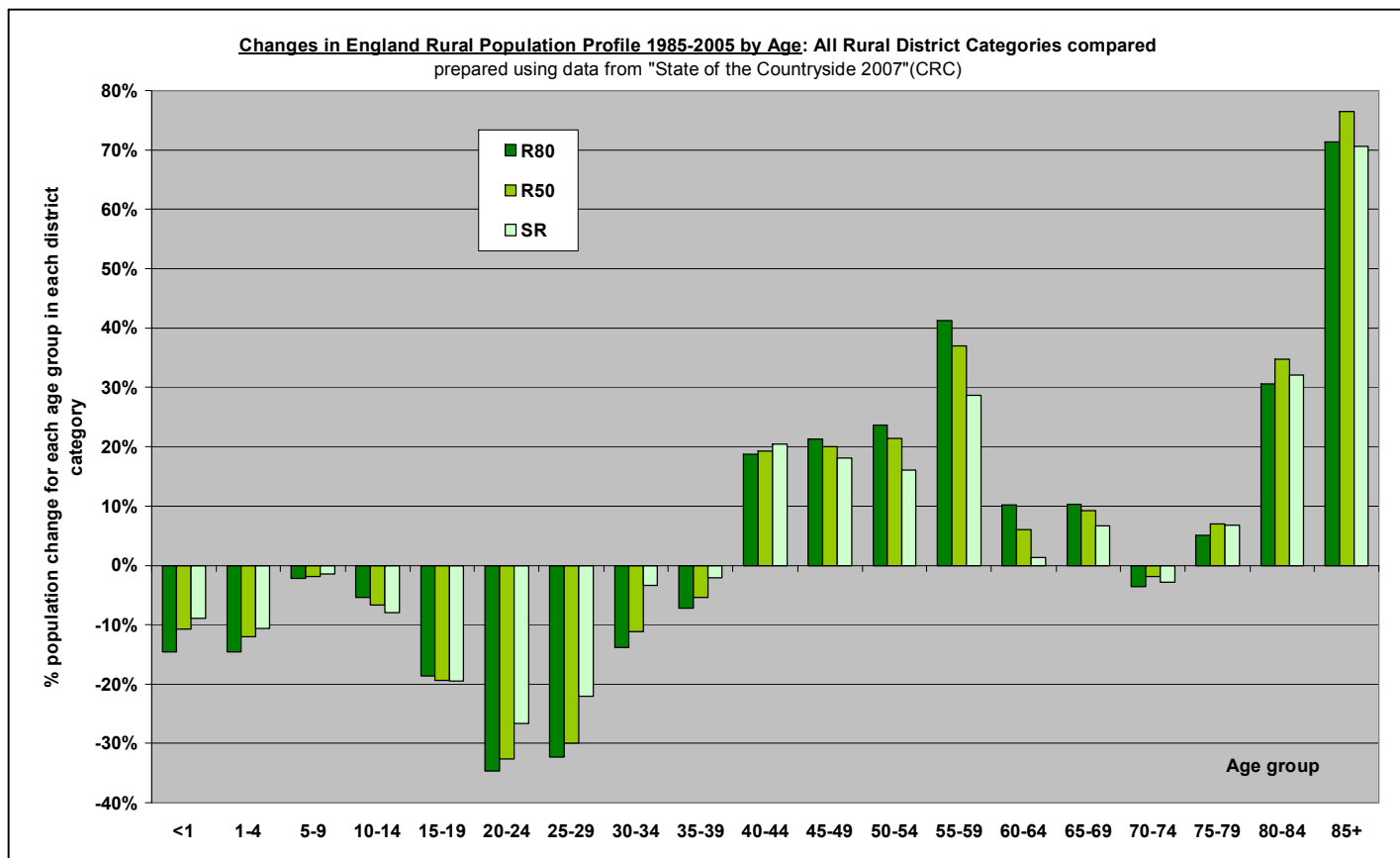


[CLICK HERE ->](#)
 for profiles of all urban district types

The two graphs above show population age profile changes for the most rural (R80) and most urban (MU) district categories 1985-2005. Both show substantial change, but the R80 graphs reveal that in the 20 years to 2005, the rural population aged markedly:

- a far smaller proportion of those aged 10-29 (with MU districts registering a much smaller decrease in ages 10-24, but an increase in ages 29-50)
- a significantly higher proportion of those aged 40-64

Similar patterns are observed for the other rural district categories, an observation that is reinforced by the following chart looking at the percentage change 1985-2005 for the 3 rural district categories across all the age bands of the overall profile:



[CLICK HERE](#) -> for a larger image

The pattern of change in the population age profile 1985-2005 is the same for all three rural district categories; what varies between them is simply the amount by which the proportion of each age band has altered in 20 years. There is no comparable pattern for the urban district categories:

[CLICK HERE](#) -> for Rural District categories individually

[CLICK HERE](#) -> for Urban District categories individually

[CLICK HERE](#) -> for All District categories individually compared together

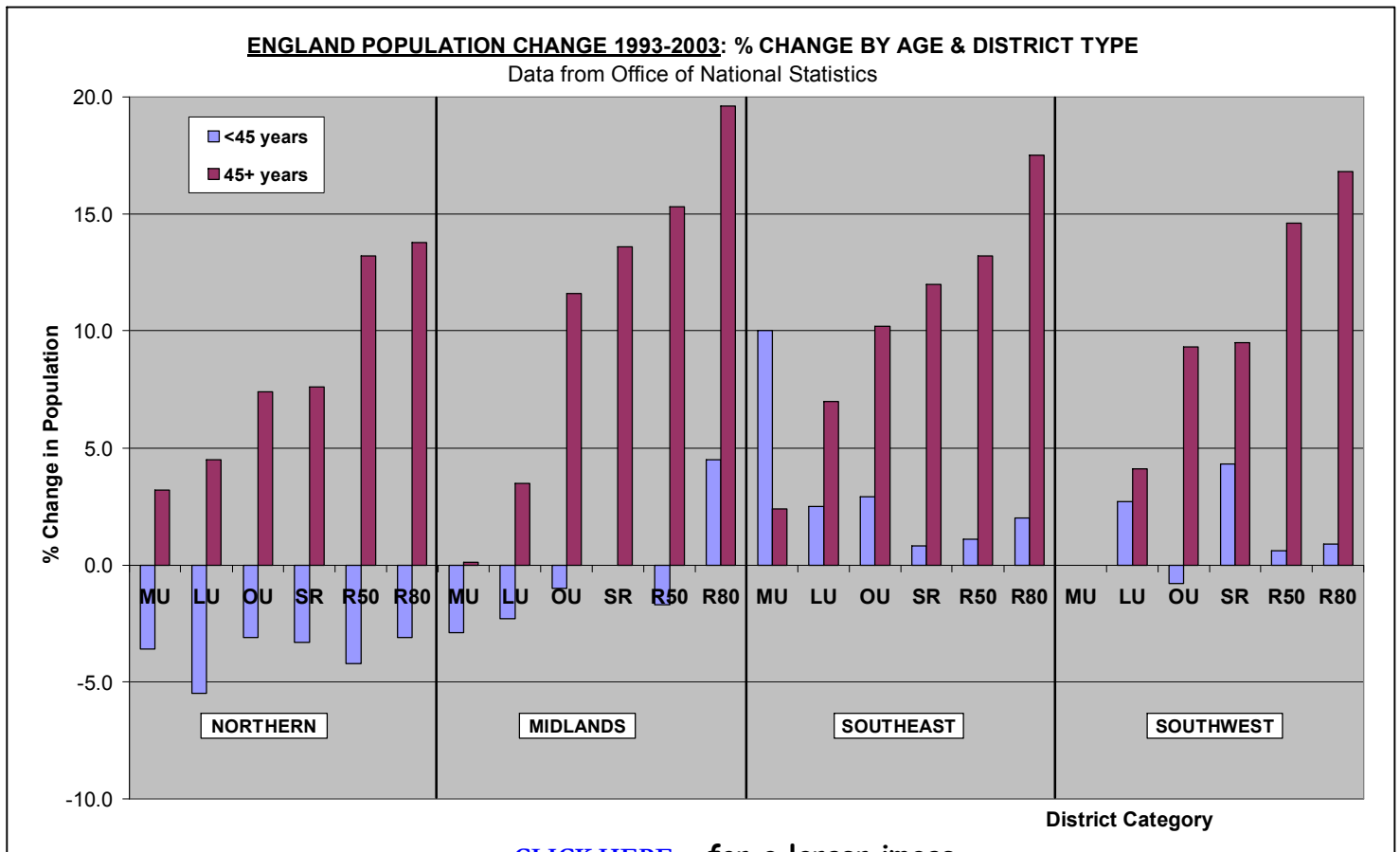
[CLICK HERE](#) -> for R80 & MU District categories compared directly

[CLICK HERE](#) -> for Combined Rural & combined Urban District categories compared

This final chart clearly shows the key differences in nature (rather than in degree) of the age profile changes between rural & urban England in the 20 years to 2005:

- Rural districts show decreased sub-populations for 5-9, 35-39 & 35-39, where urban districts show increases in these age bands
- Rural districts show increased sub-populations for 60-64, 65-69 & 70-79, where urban district show decreases in these age bands

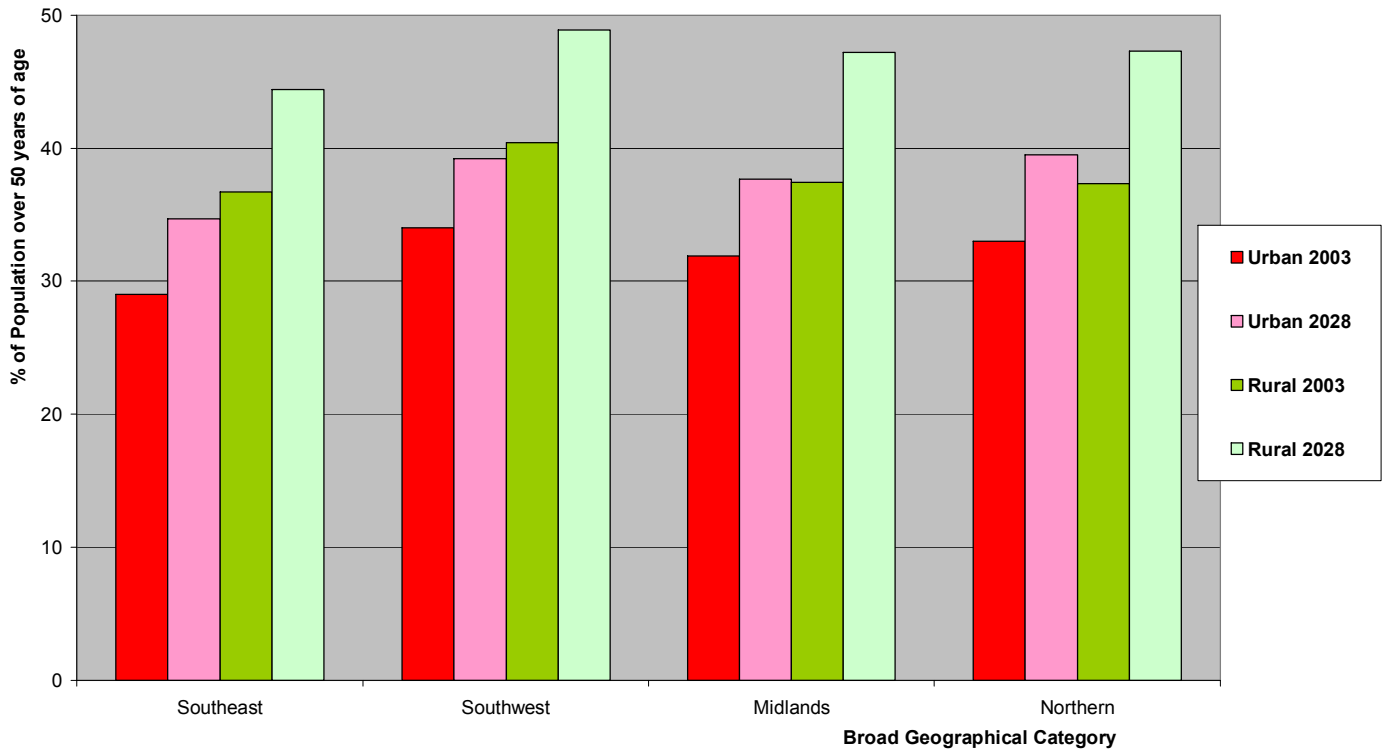
A different survey of population data shows even more starkly the ageing nature of the English population, which is accentuated for rural districts ... and which shows a clear variation linked to the general region of the country:



Over only a 10-year period (1993-2003) the changing proportion of under-45s and 45s-and-over in the population were measured. In all cases the increase in rural proportions of 45s-and-over was significantly higher than for urban districts in the same general regions. With the under-45s the picture was rather different; especially noticeable is the difference between southeast & northern regions - in the southeast the under-45 population *increased* for all district types, in the northern region the under-45 population *decreased* for all district types. Something significant has been happening with the under-45 population with *opposite* trends in the southeast (generally the most prosperous part of England) and the north (generally the least prosperous). Some of the reasons for this are considered in **Appendix 4: "Migration & the Rural Population"** [[CLICK HERE](#) -> to access]

Finally, population projections have been prepared, estimating the future changes in England's population - and especially the rural population - as a result of the ageing trends that have been shown clearly above. Although these are estimates, they have a very important role in the areas of policy & planning. Both government bodies - national, regional & local - and NGOs, as well as 'players' in the so-called Third Sector (voluntary & community organisations ... like the church) have to plan & budget. The proportion of elderly in the (rural) population, and the rate at which this proportion is likely to change, will have profound consequences for the distribution of funds within various budgets; e.g. health, social services and transport & infrastructure.

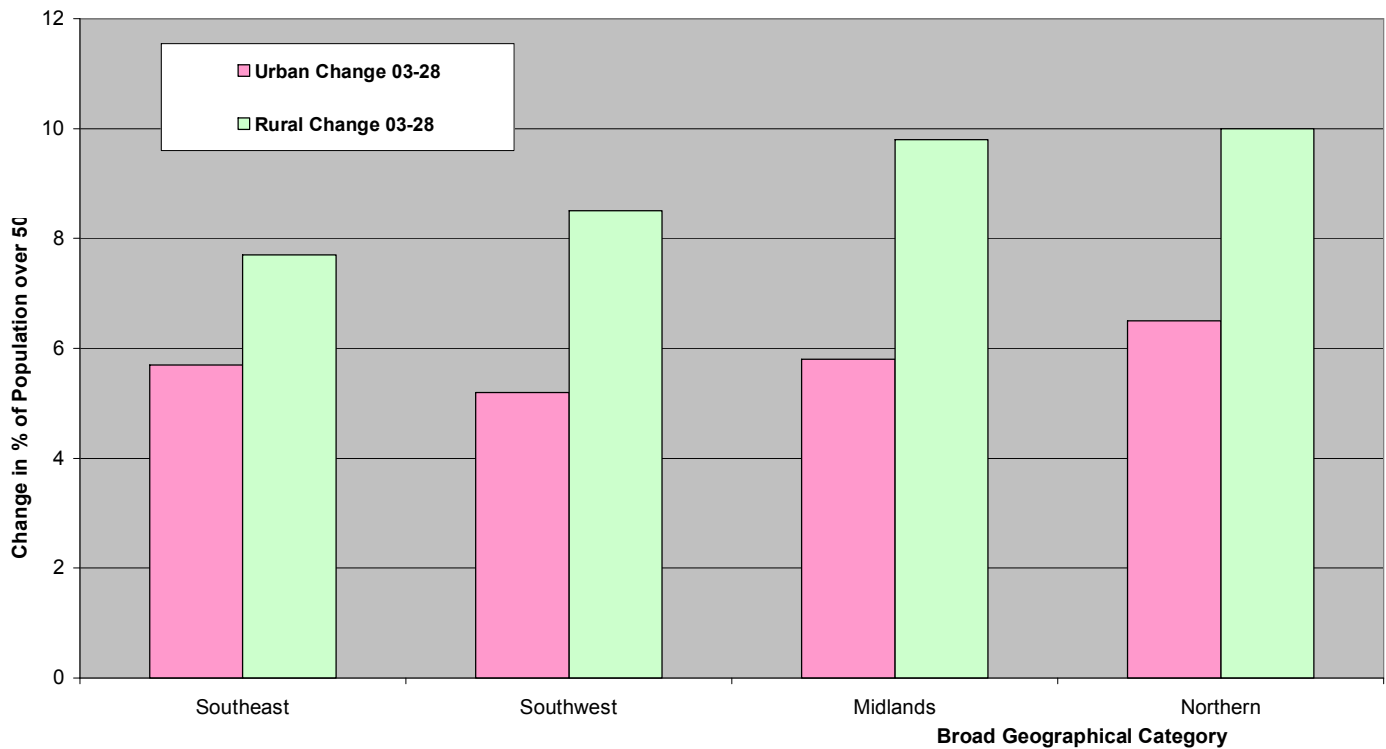
ENGLAND POPULATION - PROJECTED CHANGES 2003-2028:
POPULATION OVER 50 YEARS OLD BY BROAD GEOGRAPHICAL CATEGORY
 Data from Office of National Statistics (2006)



[CLICK HERE](#) -> for a larger image

[CLICK HERE](#) -> for chart for rural district categories

ENGLAND POPULATION CHANGE - PROJECTED CHANGES 2003-2028:
POPULATION OVER 50 YEARS OLD BY BROAD GEOGRAPHICAL CATEGORY
 Data from Office of National Statistics (2006)



[CLICK HERE](#) -> for a larger image

By looking at the proportion of the population over-50, projected changes were mapped for a 25-year period - from 2003 to 2028. In all regions & in all district types, the proportion of the population represented by the over-50s is expected to rise:

- the lowest projected increase is for urban districts in the southwest at 5.2%
- the highest projected increase is for rural districts in the north at 10.0%
- but in every case the rural increase projected is substantially greater than for urban
- R80 district are projected to have the highest proportion increase in over-50s for every general region - of around 20% of the 2003 figure for over-50s

It has been suggested - and this is taken up in **Appendix 4: "Migration & the Rural Population"** - that the changes observed to date, and the projected changes, in the age profile of the rural population (i.e. the increasing proportion of older age-bands and decreasing proportion of some younger age-bands) are largely as the result of migration. Several 'streams' of migration that affect the age balance can be envisaged:

- Arrival of retirees in the countryside
- Exodus of young adults for urban areas
- Departure of pre-retirement groups from urban areas

These need more detailed consideration.

[CLICK HERE](#) -> to return to the start of this section

[CLICK HERE](#) -> to return to **Unit 2.04:**
"The 'Make Up' of - and Changes to - the Rural Population"

[CLICK HERE](#) -> to go to **Appendix 4:**
"Migration & the Rural Population"

[CLICK HERE](#) -> to return to breakdown of Unit 2

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