University of Palermo | Department of Architecture
Master Programme in Spatial Planning | Year II
Academic Year 2026-2027 | First semester

Urban and Regional Policies

Module of Planning 2 Studio + Urban And Regional Policies Integrated Course

Prof. Ignazio Vinci

The socio-spatial targets of urban policy (Part I)

STRUCTURE OF THE COURSE

Lectures

- Policy challenges in contemporary urban areas
- Actors and policy-makers in urban policy
- The socio-spatial targets of urban policy
- Urban policy as a process
- European Union urban and regional policy
- Case studies

Readings

- Articles and papers

Project Work

- Policy analysis exercise

URBAN POLICY AND SPACE

In a very broad sense, urban policies were conceived to **repair the socio-economic and spatial distortions of urban development**.

In this exception, urban policy tends to coincide with urban planning itself, which, according to many theorists (e.g. Leonardo Benevolo) has been conceived to contrast the **social and environmental issues** determined by the **industrial revolution** and the consequent **demographic explosion of cities**.

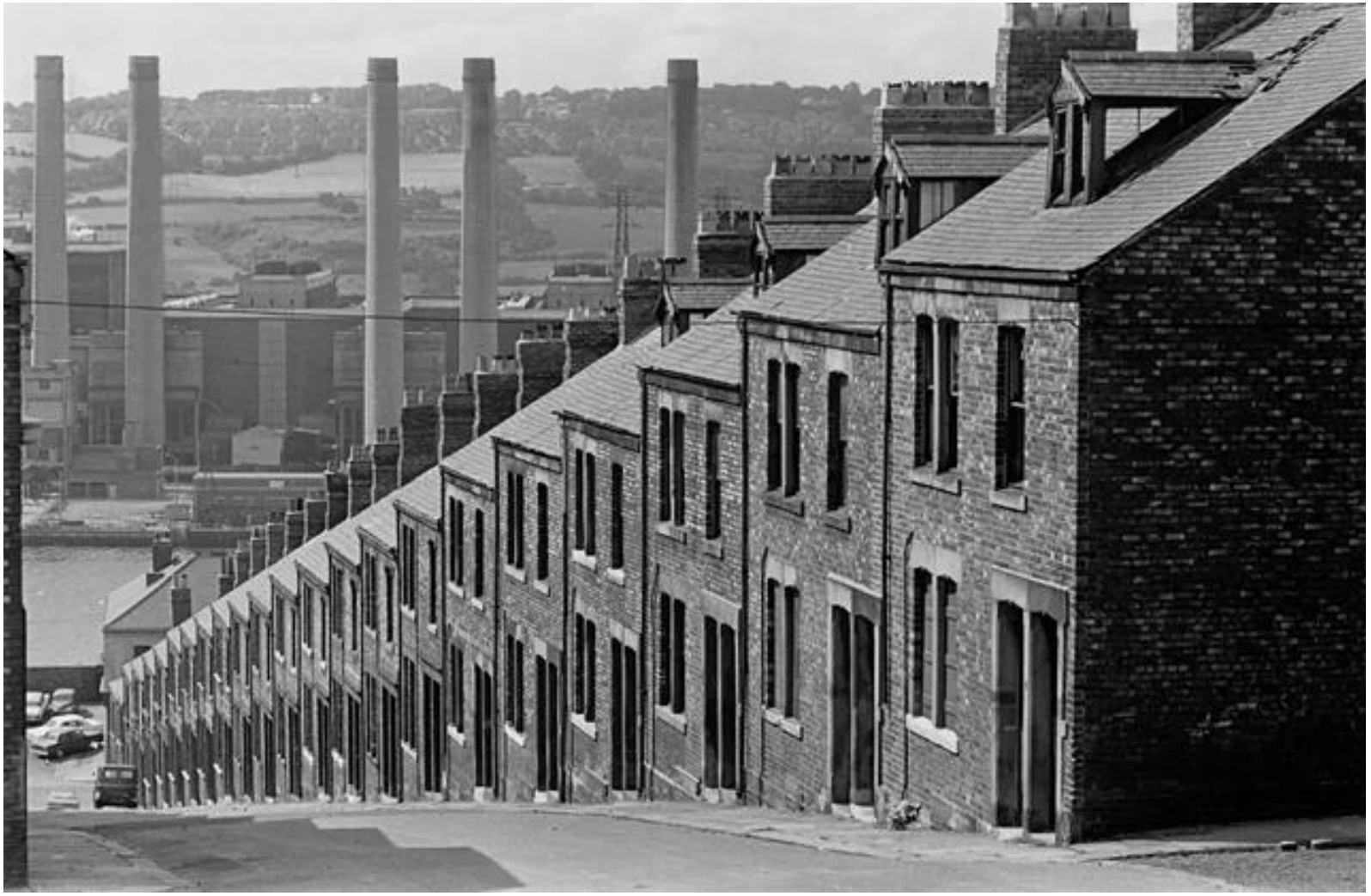
Among the missions given to early urban planning there were:

- Creating a **wealthy city**, contrasting the risks of overpopulation (e.g. pandemics).
- Creating **affordable houses** for the poor, to reducing inequalities.

This last objective, particularly, ended up becoming among the main issues that modern urban policy has had to face for decades: the **marginal, post-industrial, neighborhood**.

SPATIAL FOUNDATION OF CONTEMPORARY URBAN ISSUES

Housing the working-class



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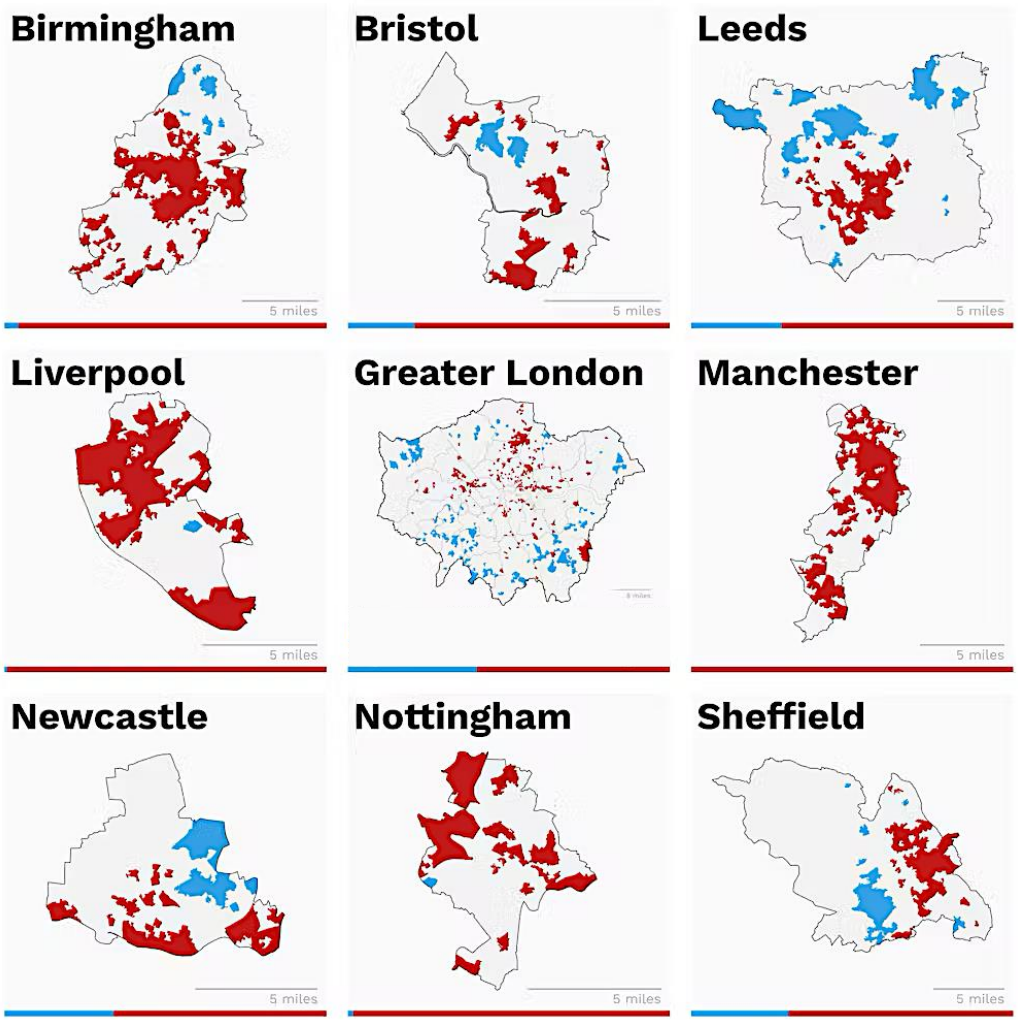


SPATIAL FOUNDATION OF CONTEMPORARY URBAN ISSUES

The social consequence of the post-industrial city

Areas among 10% least deprived in England

Areas among 10% most deprived in England



ADDRESSING SPATIAL INEQUALITIES

Motivations behind an area-based approach

Andersoon and Musterd (2005) identify at least three motivations behind the choice of an **area-based approach** in contemporary urban policies.

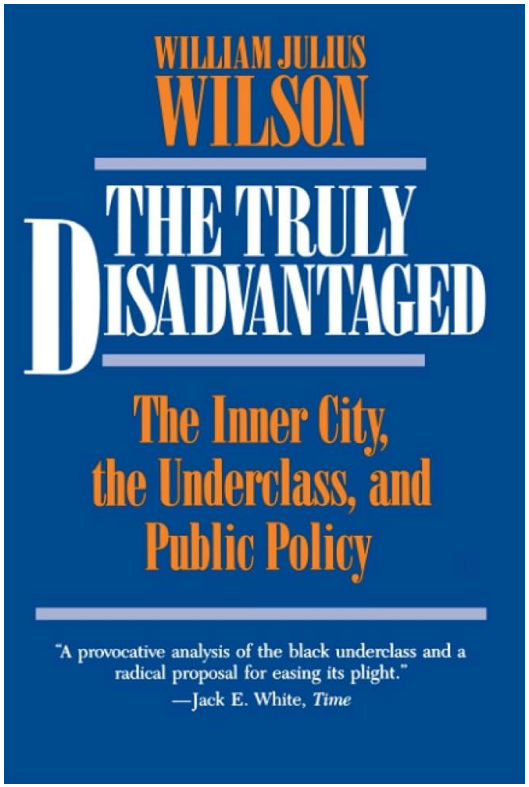
1. The first one is that some social problems tend to be spatially distributed in an unequal way and **concentrations** in certain areas **allows for addressing a large number of people** who require attention because of their disadvantaged position.

2. A second rationale is that the existence of **deprived or immigrant-dense neighbourhoods** creates a **relevant political problem**, particularly in welfare states having a social democratic governmental tradition.

3. The third driving factor behind area-based policies goes relates to the idea that certain **population compositions** in an area have more **negative effects** upon the **prospects of individuals** in these areas.

SPATIAL FOUNDATION OF CONTEMPORARY URBAN ISSUES

The Neighborhood effect



The **Neighborhood effect** is a sociological concept that refers to the impact of the residential environment on a **person's life outcomes** in terms of income, education, behaviour, health.

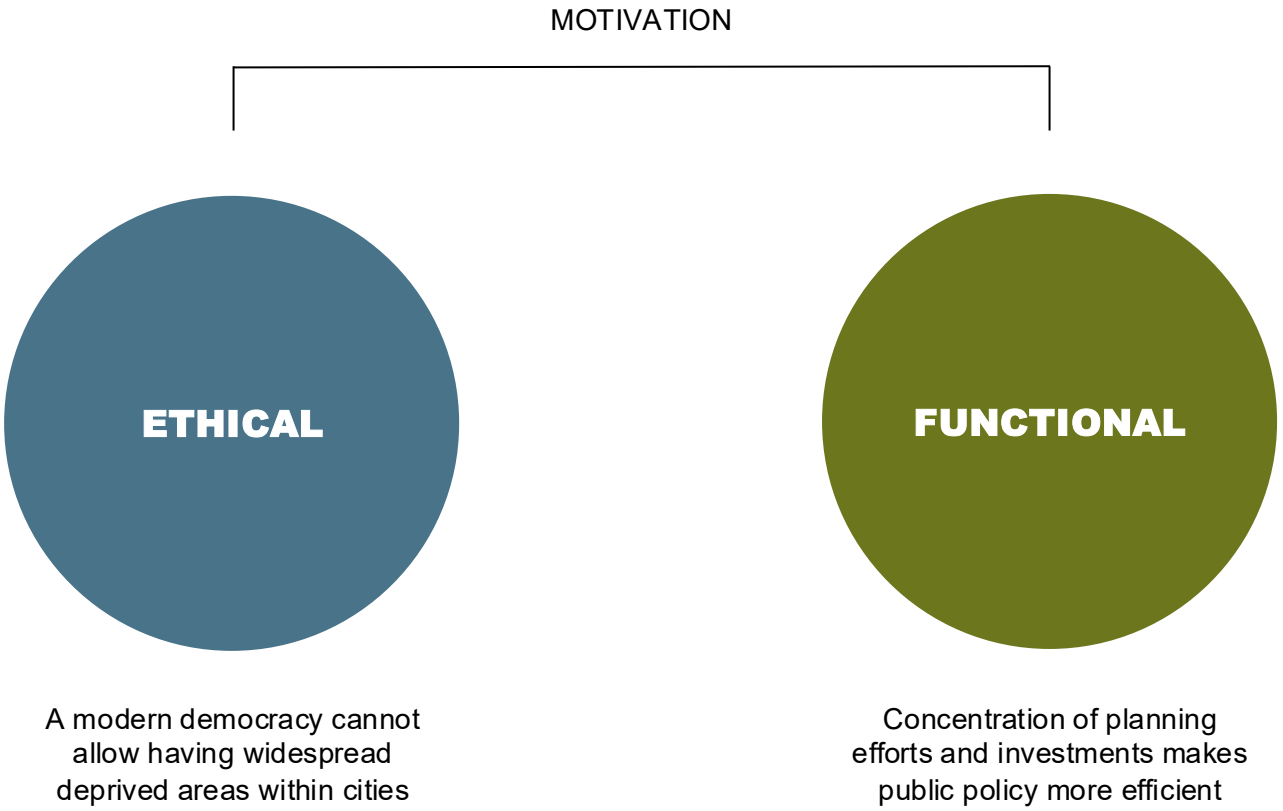
The concept highlights how **post-industrial job loss** and the flight of the middle-class from certain areas clustered low-income families into **hyper-segregated districts**.

Living in an area of **concentrated urban deprivation** can limit personal opportunities much beyond one person's family background, as a result of **peers' influence**, **physical conditions**, **poor local services** and, not least, the **neighborhood's stigmatisation** in the public opinion.

Research demonstrate that **disadvantage** usually **persists across generations** ('intergenerational transmission'), so that families living in poor neighborhoods tend to remain in these contexts, passing down spatial inequalities.

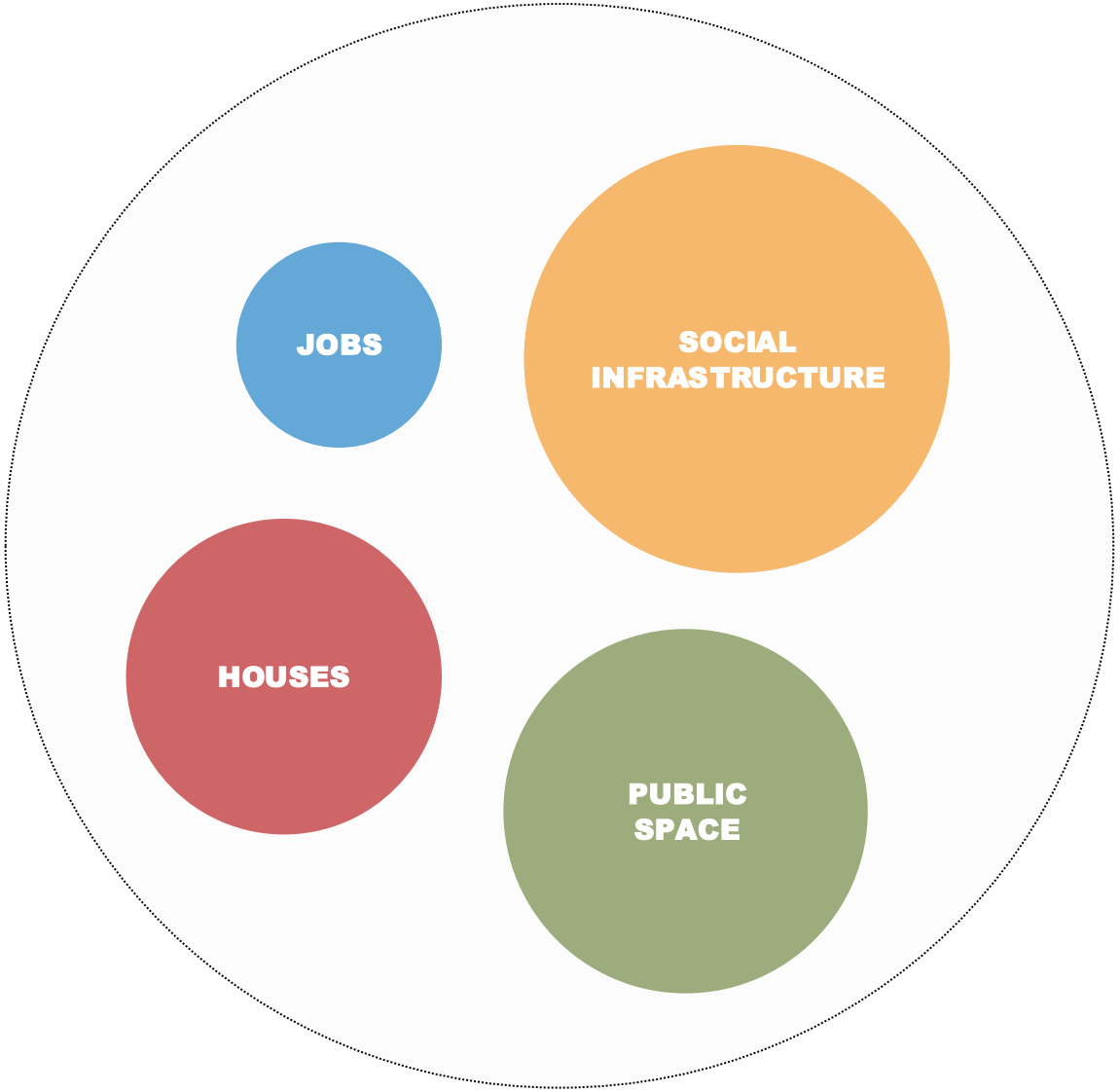
NEIGHBORHOOD-BASED URBAN INITIATIVES

Motivations behind an area-based approach

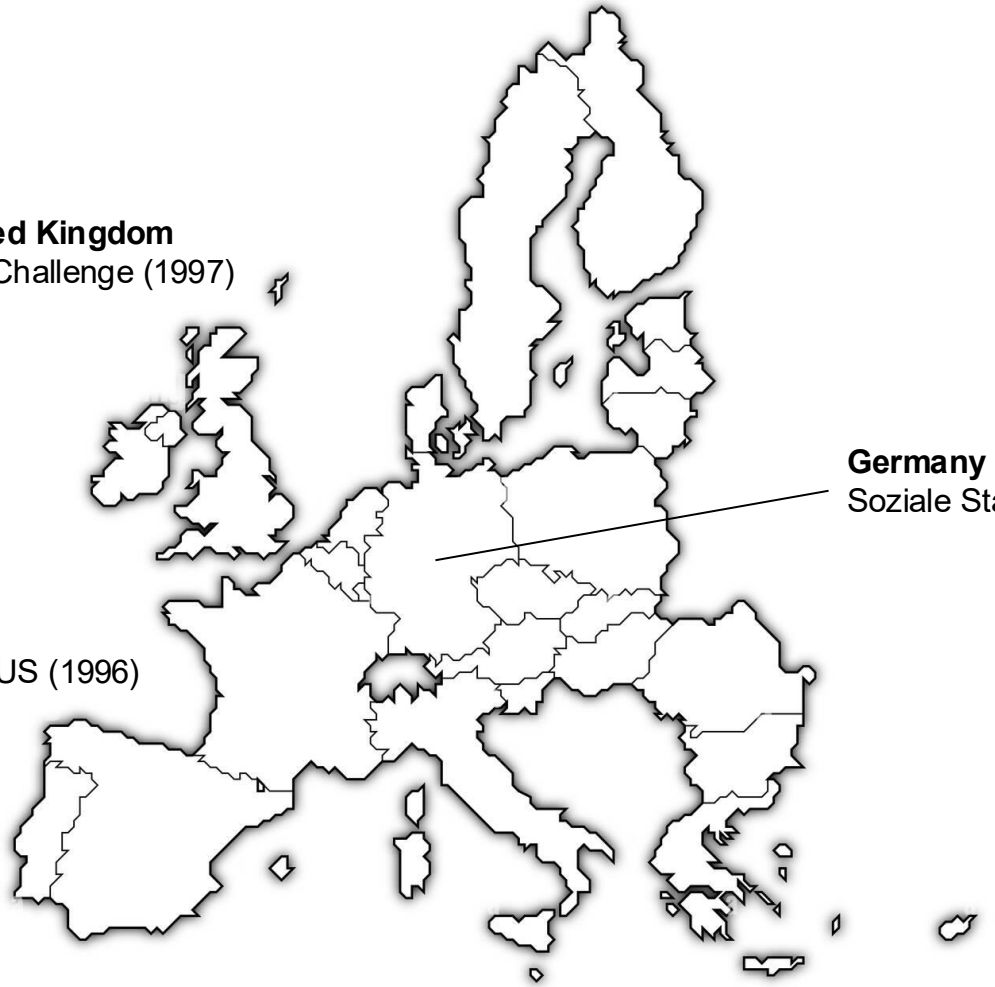


WHAT AN AREA-BASED APPROACH CONSISTS OF

PLACE
NEIGHBORHOOD



EARLY EXPERIMENTS OF AREA-BASED URBAN POLICIES



United Kingdom
City Challenge (1997)

Germany
Soziale Stadt (1999)

France
Politique de la ville - ZUS (1996)

Italy
Programmi di Recupero Urbano (1993)

NEIGHBORHOOD-BASED URBAN INITIATIVES

Politique de la ville in France (1988-1997)

Government

- Creation of the **Délégation Interministérielle à la Ville**, and of the **Conseil National des Villes** (1988)
- Creation of the **Minister de la Ville** (1990)

Laws

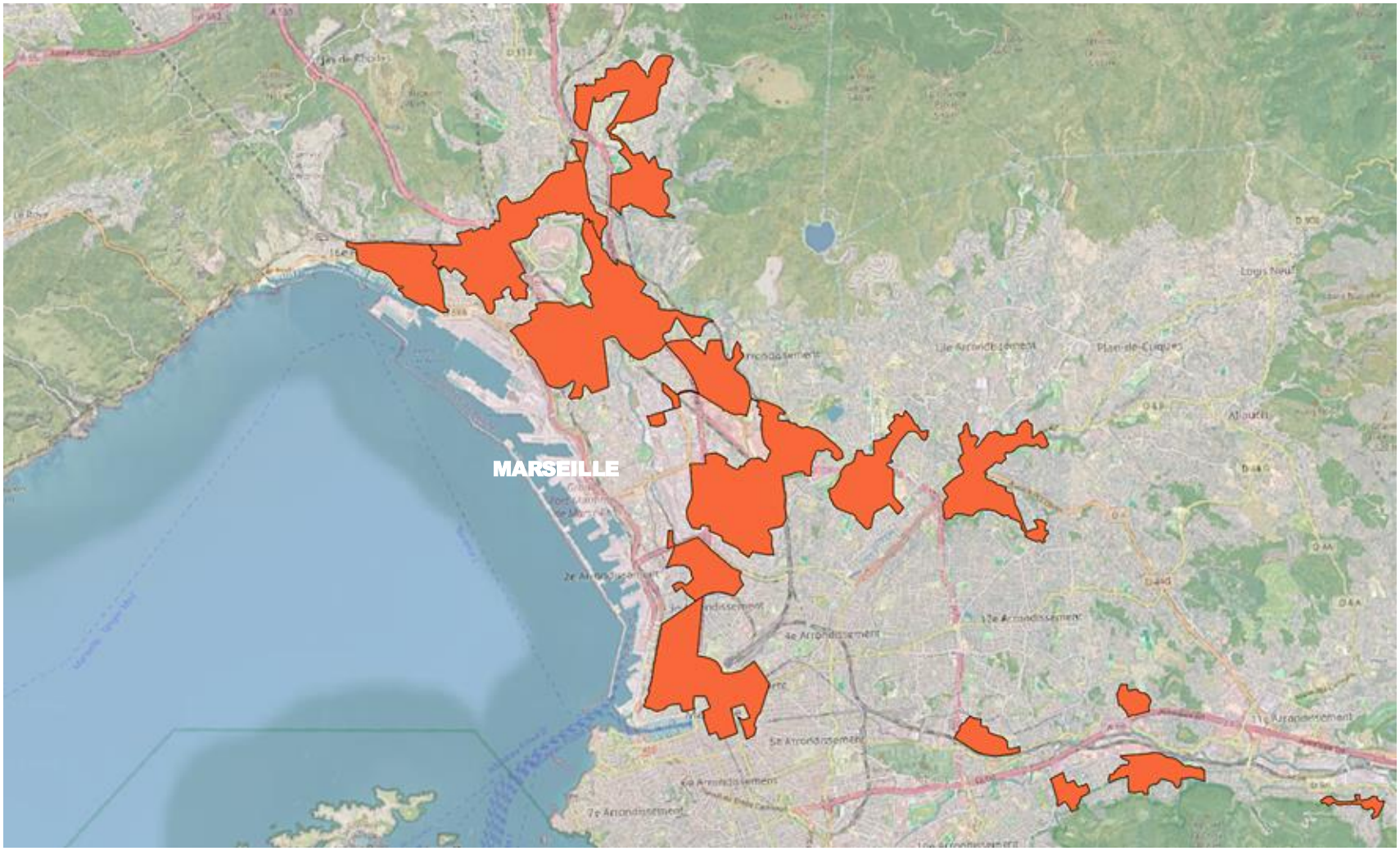
- **Loi relative à la Solidarité et au Renouvellement Urbains**
- Intervention in the housing sector, promotion of employment and the economic development in the neighborhoods, security and crime prevention, school education and the promotion of equal opportunities

National programmes

- Launch of **Contrats urbains de cohésion sociale** (1997), based on a mapping of French urban area to identify the neighborhoods eligible for support, designated as **Zones urbaines sensibles (ZUS)** (751 in the country).

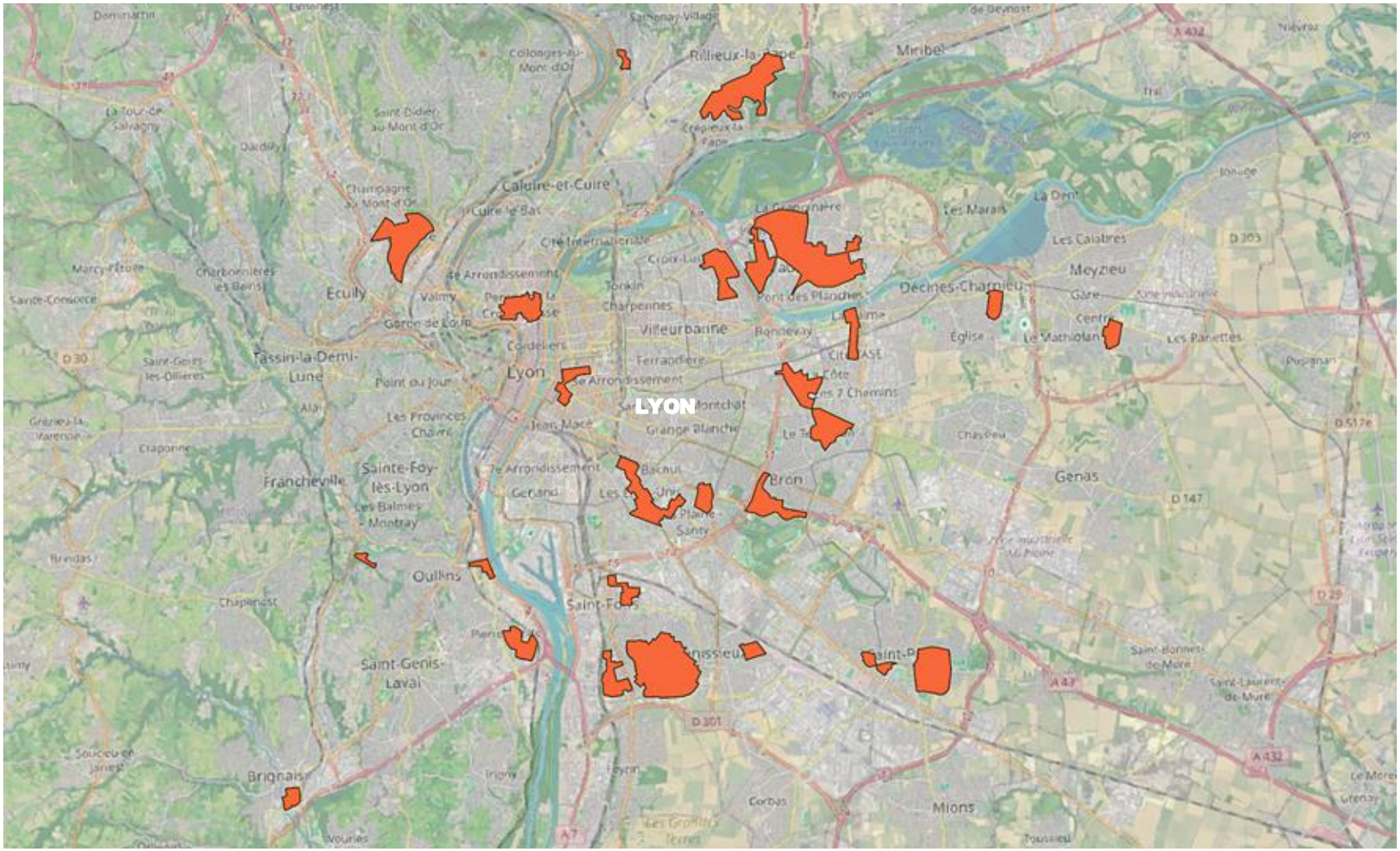
NEIGHBORHOOD-BASED URBAN INITIATIVES

Zones urbaines sensibles (ZUS) in Marseille



NEIGHBORHOOD-BASED URBAN INITIATIVES

Zones urbaines sensibles (ZUS) in Lyon



NEIGHBORHOOD-BASED URBAN INITIATIVES

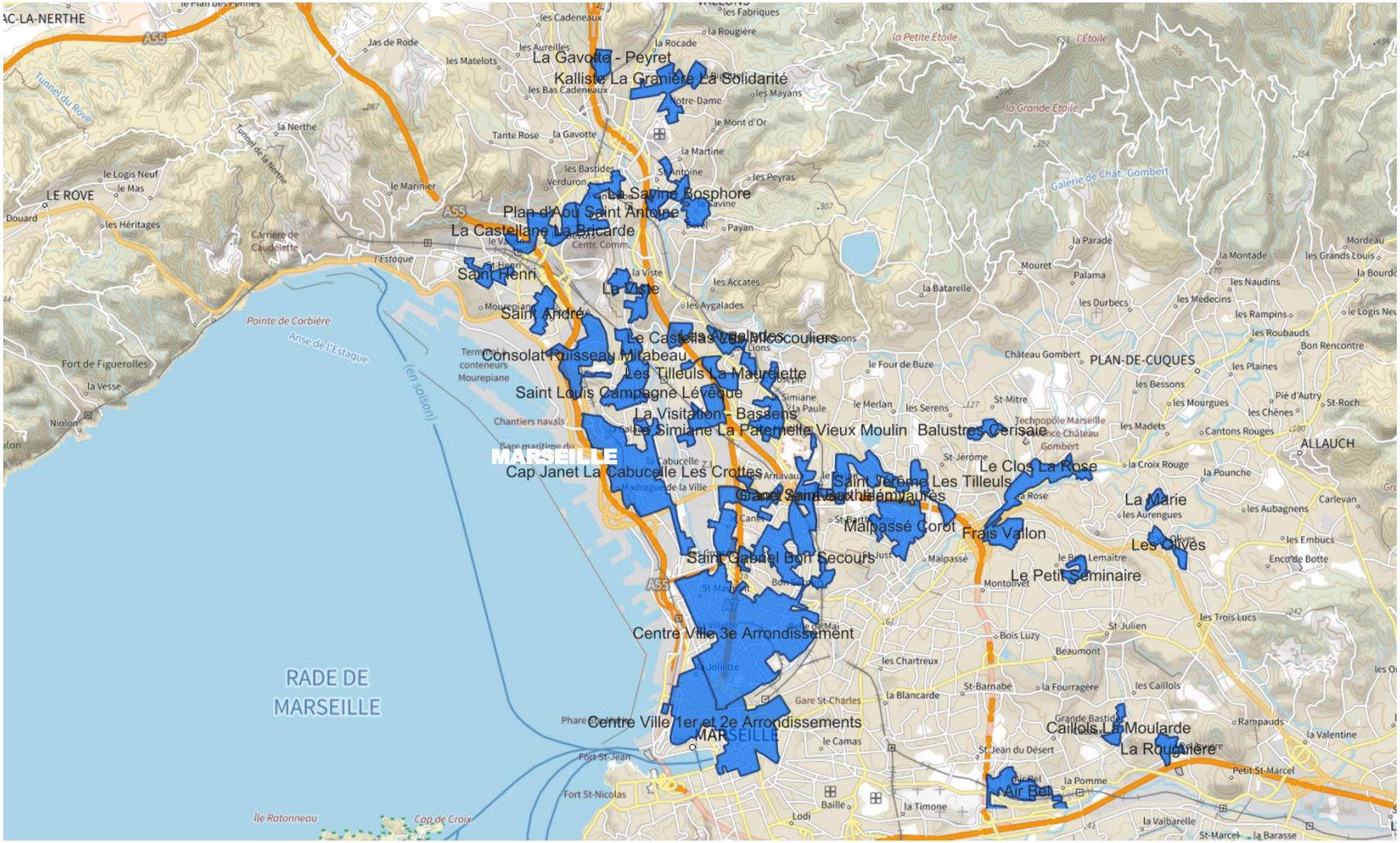
Politique de la ville in France (2014-)

Quartier prioritaire de la politique de la ville (QPPV)

- **1,500 priority neighbourhoods** (1,300 in mainland France and 200 in overseas territories).
- The main criterion used to delineate these neighbourhoods was the **concentration of poverty**, as defined by INSEE (the French National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies). This was determined by comparing **residents' incomes** with a reference median income based on a 200-metre grid or at census unit statistical area level.
- **Priority neighbourhoods** under the French Urban Policy are found in a wide **variety of urban and geographical settings**, including **suburbs**, **medium-sized towns**, **deteriorated historic city centres**, **peri-urban municipalities**, former mining towns, and neighbourhoods in France's overseas territories.

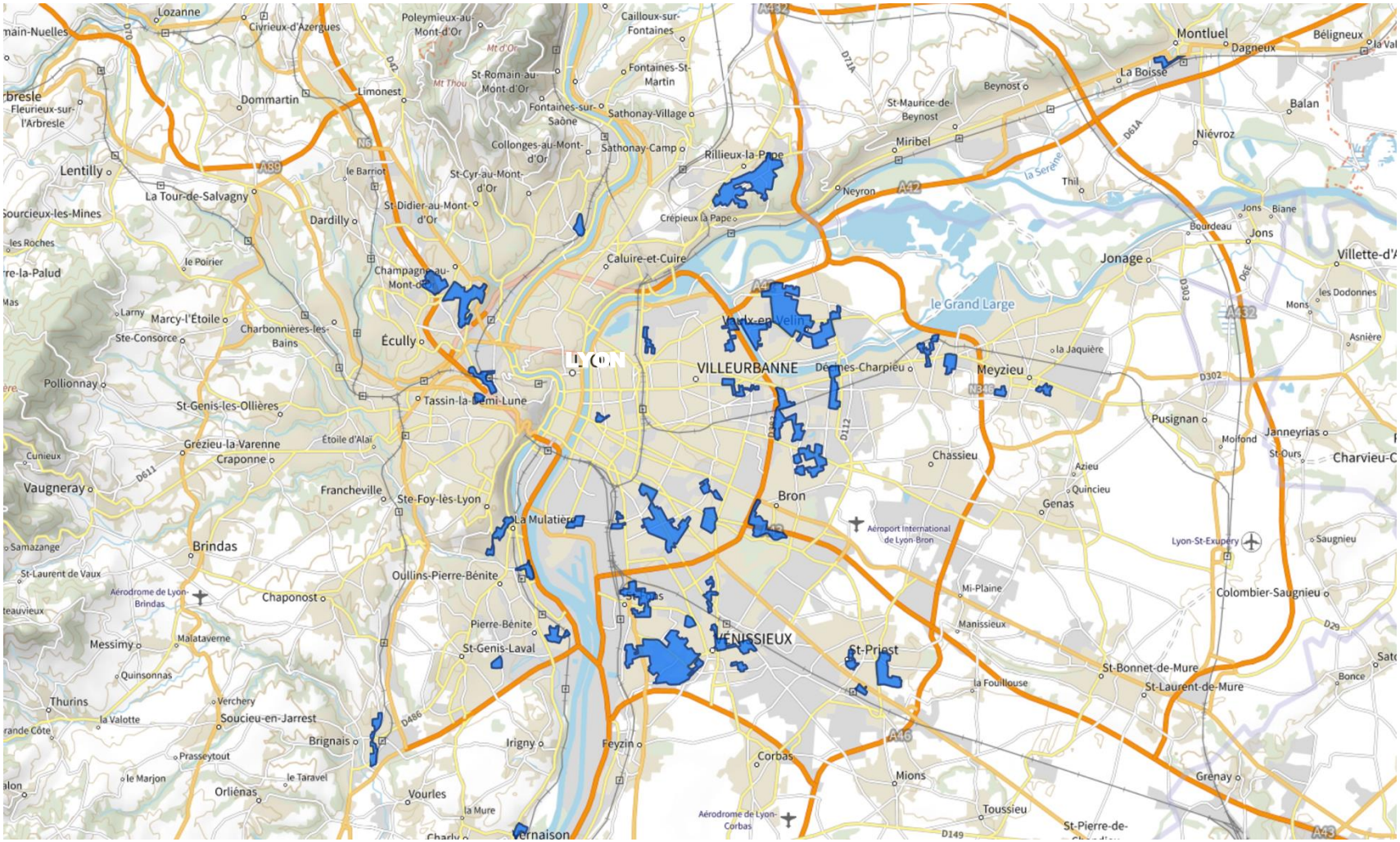
NEIGHBORHOOD-BASED URBAN INITIATIVES

Quartier prioritaire in Marseille



NEIGHBORHOOD-BASED URBAN INITIATIVES

Quartier prioritaire in Lyon



NEIGHBORHOOD-BASED URBAN INITIATIVES

Soziale Stadt programme in Germany (1999-2019)

Launched in 1999 by the German federal government and the Länder (federal states), the **Soziale Stadt** (Social City) programme was established to address growing socio-spatial fragmentation, infrastructure deterioration, and social exclusion in the **most disadvantaged urban neighbourhoods**.

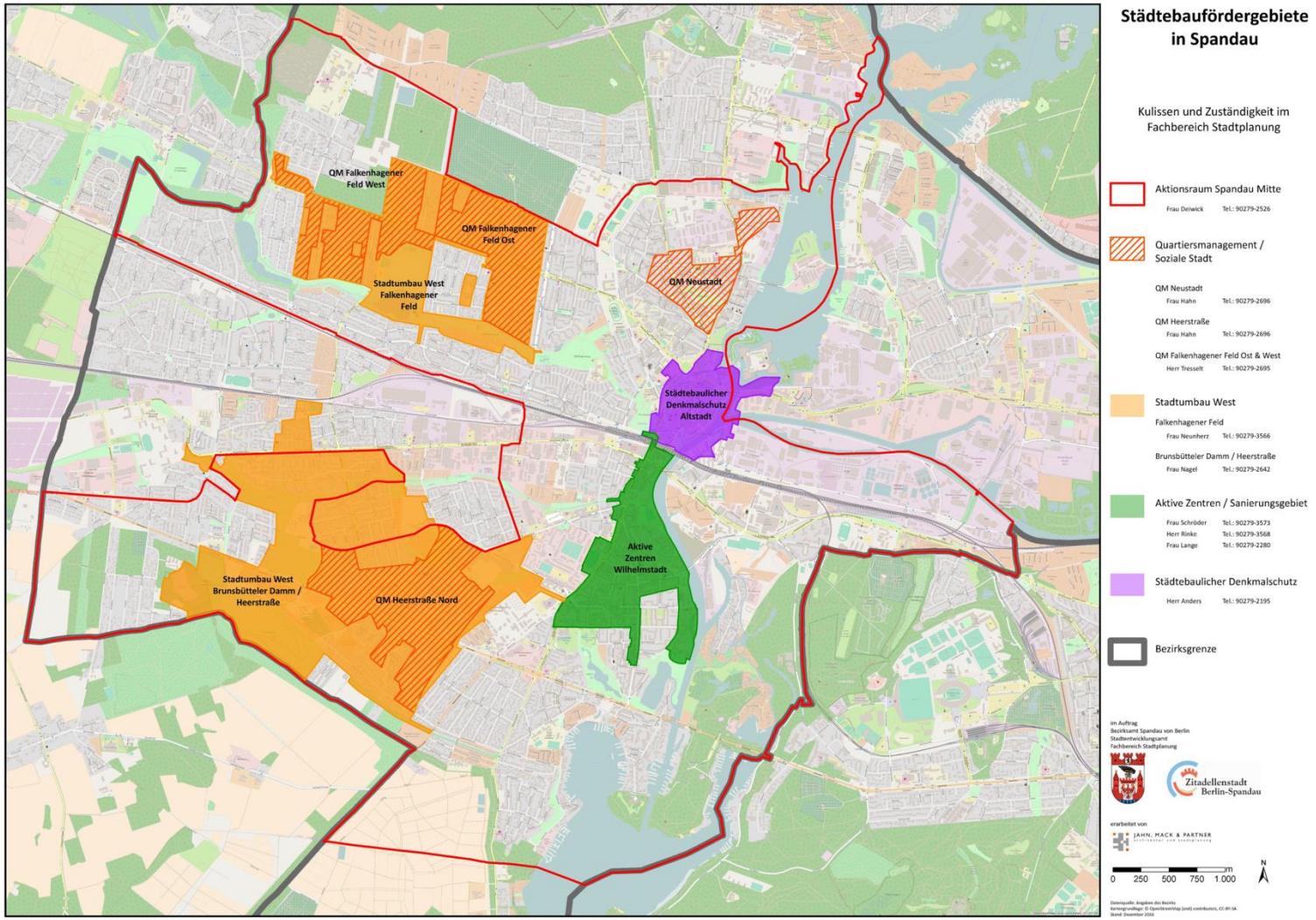
Soziale Stadt has supported hundreds of municipalities (544) and nearly a thousand targeted areas across Germany (965), investing billions of euros in public spaces, schools, social activities, and employment initiatives.

It combines physical **building renovations** and **infrastructure upgrades** with **social programs**, community participation, and local network building through **Quartiersmanagement** (**Neighborhood management**).

In the Neighbourhood management model, a physical office is set up with **neighbourhood managers** that acts as **intermediaries** between residents, the municipal administration, schools, and local associations.

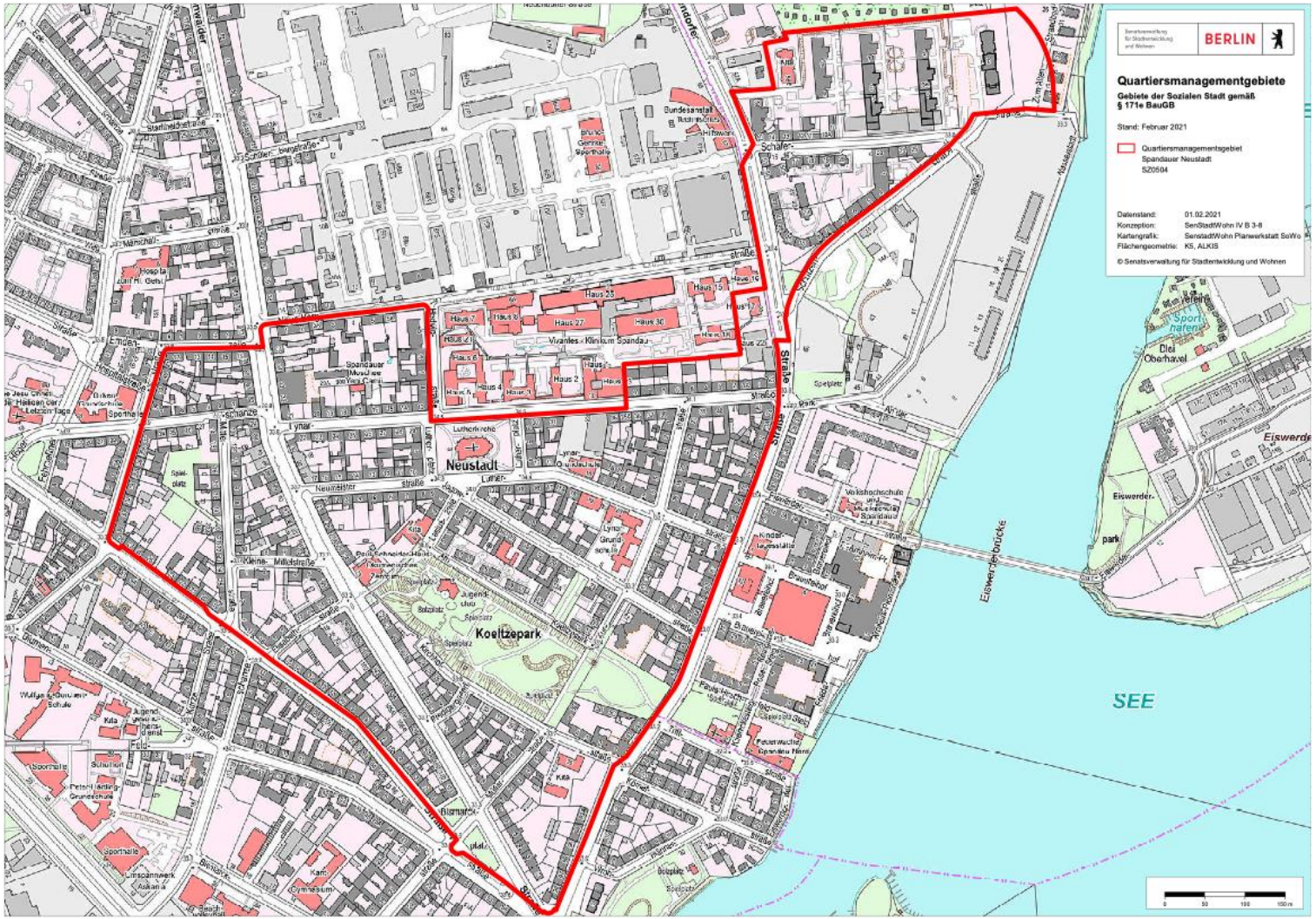
NEIGHBORHOOD-BASED URBAN INITIATIVES

Soziale Stadt target area in Spandau Neustadt



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Soziale Stadt target area in Spandau Neustadt



NEIGHBORHOOD-BASED URBAN INITIATIVES

Soziale Stadt target area in Spandau Neustadt



2002

NEIGHBORHOOD-BASED URBAN INITIATIVES

Soziale Stadt target area in Spandau Neustadt



2009

NEIGHBORHOOD-BASED URBAN INITIATIVES

Soziale Stadt target area in Spandau Neustadt



2021

NEIGHBORHOOD-BASED URBAN INITIATIVES

Soziale Stadt target area in Spandau Neu Stadt



2025

NEIGHBORHOOD-BASED URBAN INIATIATIVES

The EU URBAN Initiative

The European Union's **URBAN Community Initiative** was officially launched in 1994 (running its first cycle from 1994 to 1999), building directly upon precursor Urban Pilot Projects run from 1989 to 1993.

Eligible areas for the purpose of the initiative include a limited number of urban areas within cities and urban areas with a population of at least 100,000. Target areas were **geographically identifiable urban neighbourhoods** with a minimum size of population, a **high level of unemployment**, a **decayed urban fabric**, **critical housing conditions** and a **lack of social amenities**.

Actions in URBAN included: (a) Improvement of the urban environment, through the restoration of buildings and the creation of green spaces; (b) Creation of local jobs, particularly in the environmental, cultural, and community services sectors; (c) Integration of disadvantaged social groups into the education and training systems.

THE EU URBAN INITIATIVE

SUBURBS



Post-industrial neighborhoods

(Mainly in North-Central Europe)

HISTORIC DISTRICTS



Old Towns

(Mainly in South Europe)

INNER CITIES



Decayed central areas

THE EU URBAN INITIATIVE

	URBAN I	URBAN II
SUBURBS	45 (37%)	31 (44%)
HISTORIC DISTRICTS	23 (19%)	27 (39%)
INNER CITIES	38 (32%)	
MIXED	14 (12%)	12 (17%)

THE EU URBAN INITIATIVE

Palermo action plan (1997-2002)

Targeted area: **Half of the Old Town**
(1,1 km2 - 11,000 inh.)

Financial dimension: **20,7 meuro**

Partnership: **mainly public authorities**

Strategy: **culture-led regeneration**, with interventions like:

- Historic building restoration
- Renewal of public spaces
- Training programmes
- Support to local businesses in the art and craft sectors
- Lighting and energy saving in public buildings





CONTACT AND MATERIALS

Prof. Ignazio Vinci

ignazio.vinci@unipa.it

Teaching materials for the course will be published on a web page at the following link: **www.ignaziovinci.net**