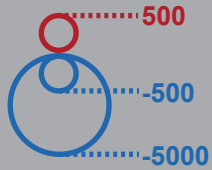


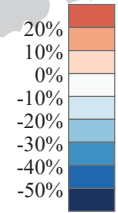
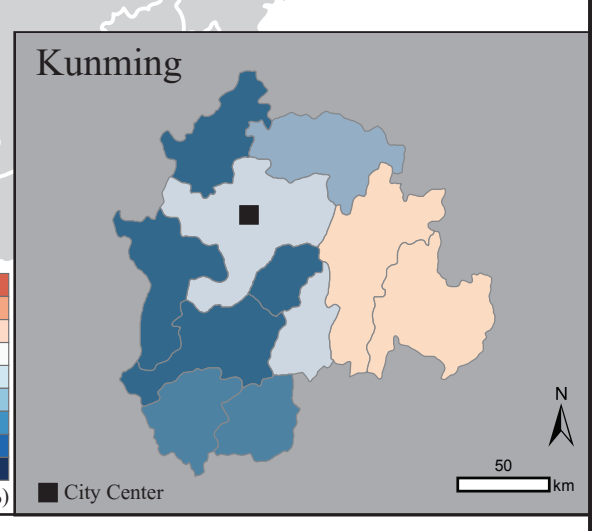
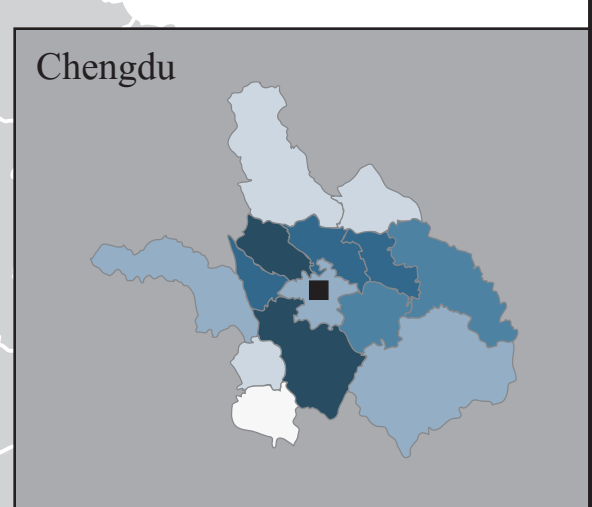
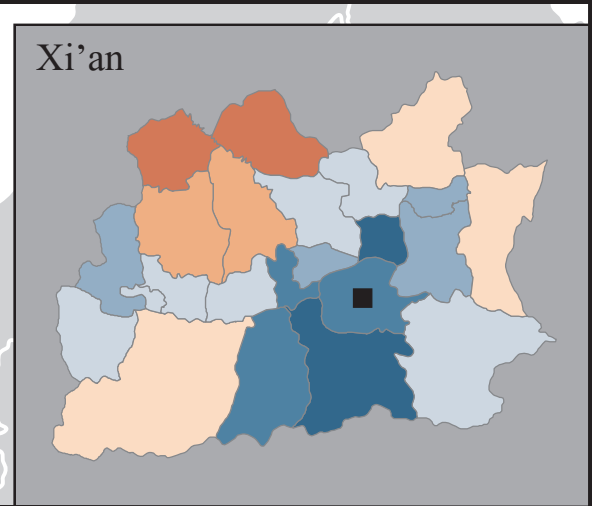
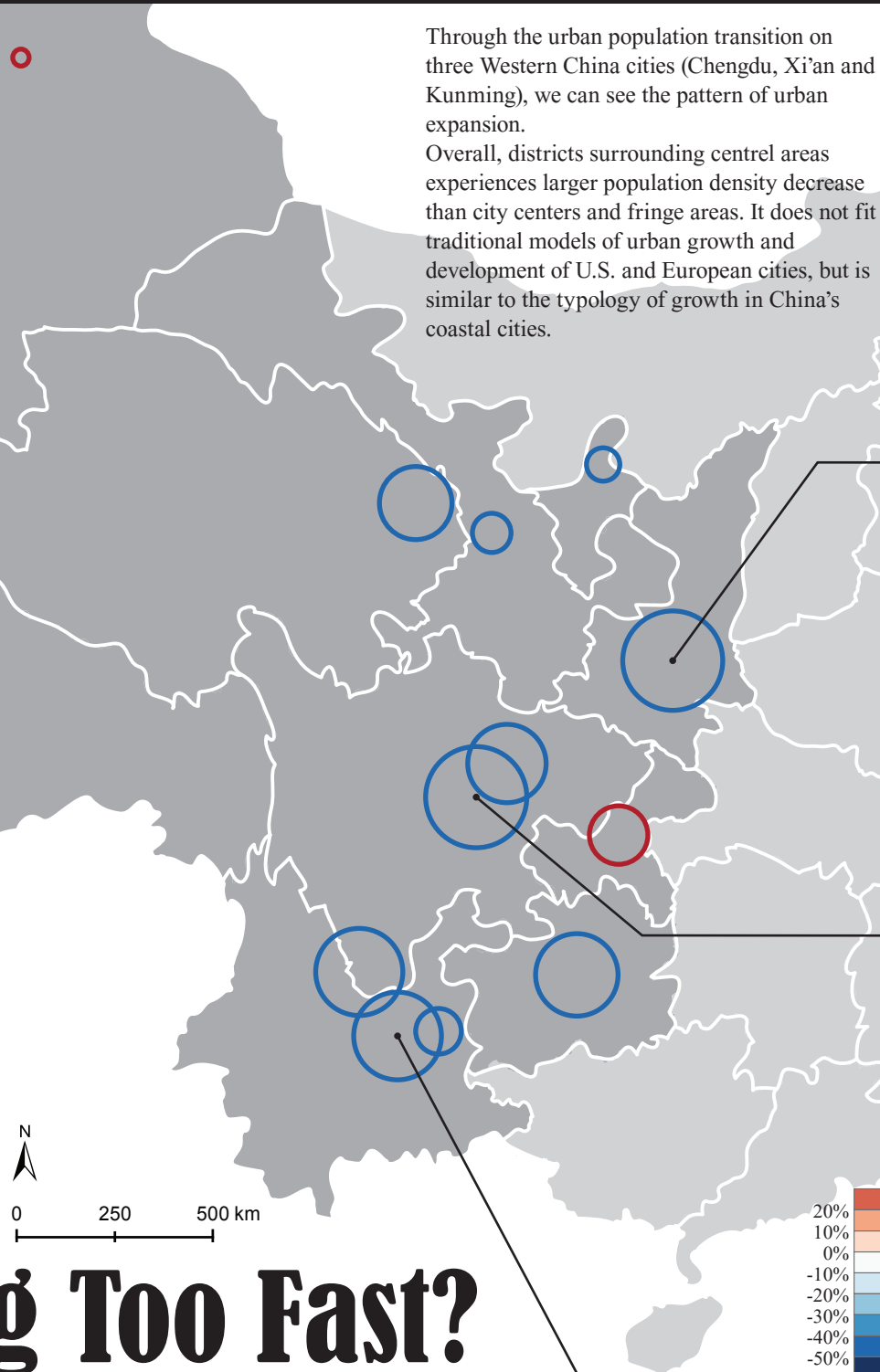
Population density change
1990-2010 (person/km²)



Cities in China have exploded in size, population, and impact during the last three decades after economic reforms since 1980s. However, the urban population density of major cities has decreased since then in Western China. This is because the growth of population is not as fast as urban expansion.

Given the disadvantageous geographical location of these Western cities, this rapid urban expansion could be tied to strong central planning and to the enormous and long suppressed demand for housing. This pattern of urban expansion has consumed a large amount of arable land, which is environmental hazardous, and leads to social inequalities, including but not limited to the reallocated farmers, floating workers, educated youth, and homosexual group. These findings need to be taken into account in future planning and management of urban land, for such efforts will impact social, economic, political and environmental systems.

Through the urban population transition on three Western China cities (Chengdu, Xi'an and Kunming), we can see the pattern of urban expansion. Overall, districts surrounding central areas experiences larger population density decrease than city centers and fringe areas. It does not fit traditional models of urban growth and development of U.S. and European cities, but is similar to the typology of growth in China's coastal cities.



Expanding Too Fast?

urban population transition since 1980s' economic reform in Western China