Researching the State of British Cities

Tony Champion
School of Geography, Politics and Sociology
University of Newcastle, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 7RU
Tel: 0191 222 6437; email tony.champion@ncl.ac.uk
Researching the State of British Cities

• Introduction
• ‘British cities’?
  - UN approach
  - UK alternatives
• ‘State of’?
  - Population change as indicator
  - Findings for alternative geographies
• Summary and issues for discussion
Introduction

• Very topical nowadays
  - ESRC Cities Programme
  - ODPM State of the Cities Report 2005

• Key questions
  - What cities?
  - What measures of ‘performance’

• Performance = population change rate
  - one of many in SOCR, but this for Popfest
‘Cities’?

- Mainly geog definition, but also cut-off size etc
- A live issue, e.g. for UN and IUSSP working grp
- LADs are used most commonly around world, but are very misleading – useless for UK!
- See UN stats: ‘city proper’, ‘urban agglomeration’ ‘metro area’ if available & no ‘UA’
- Netherlands manages well on this, not so UK
- USA has expanded its approach for 2000, see Ashgate book for other countries
‘British Cities’?

- Physically-defined Urban areas, but change over time & meaning undermined by Green Belts
- Functionally-defined urban regions better for analysing urban & regional system change, but need care: ‘mistakes’, decisions on approach (urban-centred or not) and cut-off size/edges
- Academic tradition of urban-centred regions e.g. Peter Hall, LSE, CURDS
- Latest for UK: GAME, GEMACCA, Core Cities, Coombes’ localities & city regions
My approach to British cities

• Mainly Local Labour Market Areas for individual places and types of places
• Plus some use of (pseudo) ‘urban areas’, based on recent work by Begg & Moore
• Also classifications of local-authority districts, e.g. updated OPCS, new ONS, Dan Vickers
• This choice prompted by my main reason for comparing places: ‘counterurbanization’ = negative relationship between size and growth rate of place (both very sensitive to places’ definitions)
• Use best fit of LADs because data is official estimates, not raw Census data


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>London</strong></td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>8.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prov Dom</strong></td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>6.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cities</strong></td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Towns</strong></td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rural Areas</strong></td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conurb Dom</strong></td>
<td>-4.00</td>
<td>-6.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prov Dom</strong></td>
<td>-2.00</td>
<td>-4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cities</strong></td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>-2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Towns</strong></td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>-4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rural Areas</strong></td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>-6.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SOUTH**

**NORTH**


Population change 1971-2001, by broad OPCS District Type and North/South, % for decade

Population change 1971-2001, by broad OPCS DTyple group and North/South, % for decade
Modified Vickers 2001 district classification, with 4 metropolitan categories superimposed and hybrid Group/Cluster categories of non-met districts, GB


- B2c Ageing Coastal Resorts
- B2b Ageing Coastal Extremities
- B2a Coastal Tourist Resorts
- B1c Rural Fringe
- B1b Agricultural Fringe
- B1a Rural Extremes

% for decade

- 1991-2001 (%): 7.3
- 1981-1991 (%): 6.0

% for decade


- London
- Leeds
- Sheffield
- Birmingham
- Manchester
- Newcastle upon Tyne
- Liverpool

% for decade


London
West Yorkshire
Greater Manchester
South Yorkshire
West Midlands
Tyne & Wear
Merseyside

% for decade

1991-2001
1981-1991
Summary: the main gainers and losers, improvers and backsliders

- Main losers 1991-2001: Metropolitan Counties, Clydeside, Industrial North
- Main improvers since 1980s: UK, LONDON, Leeds, Sheffield, Manchester, Small non-metro cities, S England industrial districts, Accessible rural and mixed districts
- Main backsliders since 1980s: Newcastle, New/expanded towns, Coastal resorts, Extreme rural