

The quest for 'sustainable communities' in the context of Britain's changing population

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The quest for 'sustainable communities' in the context of Britain's changing population

- Introduction: context and aims
- Approach via eyes of population geographer
- National level: South & North
- Regional level: a 'city region' perspective
- Local level: city, suburb, new urban, rural
- Concluding comments on policy and research

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Approach through the eyes of a population geographer

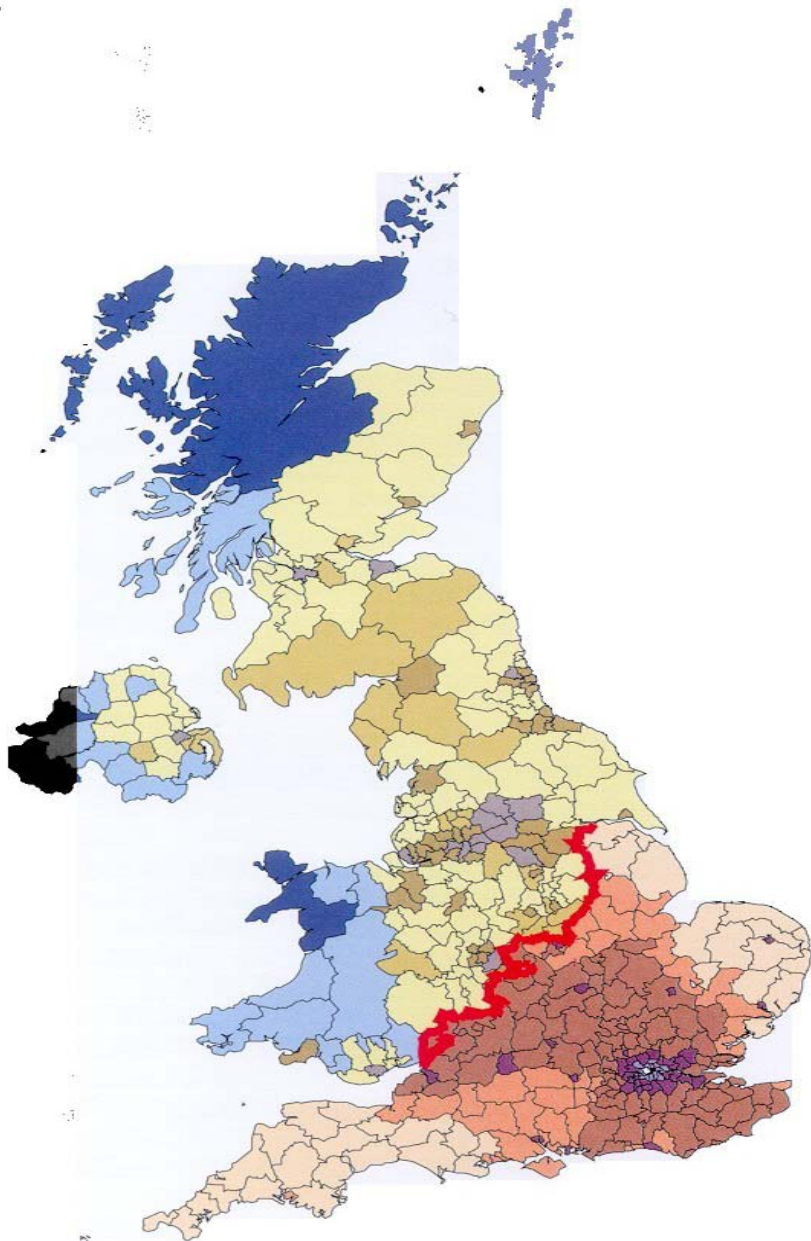
- **Primary emphasis on evolving patterns of population distribution, but also composition: ageing, household change, incomes, ethnic complexion, etc., and implications for profile of locational preferences**
- **Population data 1971-2001 mainly from mid-year estimates (but NB revised final estimates for 2001 released today) and censuses (but care needed over variations in coverage and population definition, NB students)**



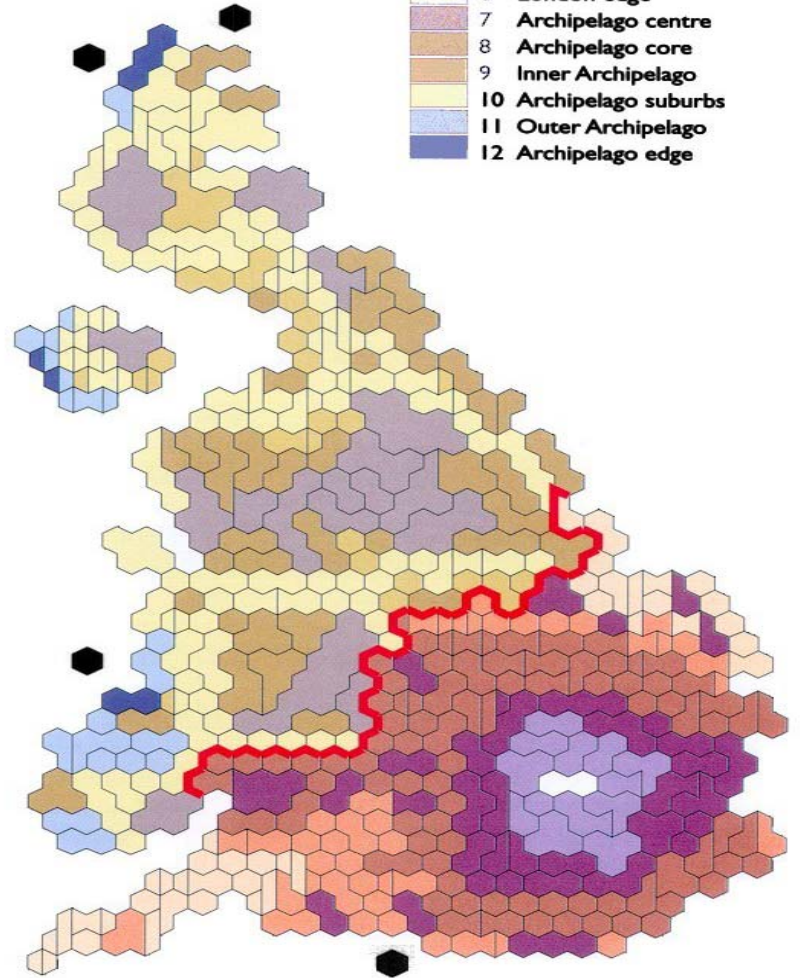
South/North: a major challenge if attention is focused on long-term trends, as noted by Dorling & Thomas in their 2001 Census atlas

- ‘Our conclusion is that the country is being split in half. To the South is the ***metropolis of Greater London***, which now extends across all of southern England in its immediate spatial impact. To the North and West is the ***archipelago of the provinces***, a series of poorly connected city cluster islands that appear to be slowly sinking demographically, socially and economically.’
(Dorling and Thomas, *People and Places: A 2001 Census Atlas of the UK*, Policy Press, 2004, p.7)
- And their representation of the future UK ‘if the UK continues to change in the ways of recent decades’ (p.187):





- London and Archipelago**
- 1 Centre of London
 - 2 London core
 - 3 Inner London
 - 4 London suburbs
 - 5 Outer London
 - 6 London edge
 - 7 Archipelago centre
 - 8 Archipelago core
 - 9 Inner Archipelago
 - 10 Archipelago suburbs
 - 11 Outer Archipelago
 - 12 Archipelago edge



UK's South/North gap continues to widen

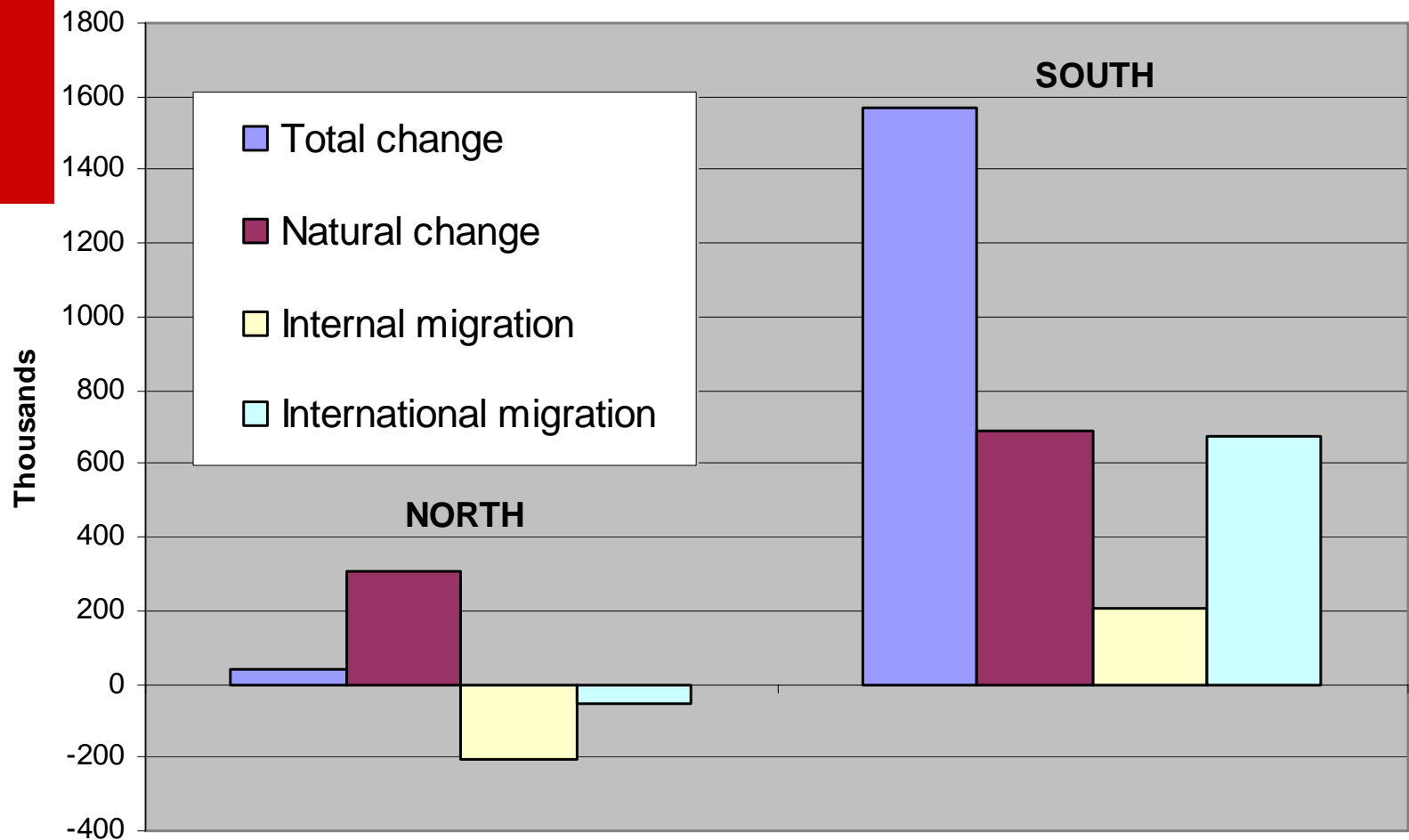
1991-2001 North +41k, South +1.57m

Area	Population (thousands)				
	1971	1981	1991	2001	<i>1971-2001 change</i>
UK	55928	56356	57438	59050	3122
South	26577	27139	28279	29850	3273
North	29351	29217	29159	29200	-151
	Population change (% for period)				
	1971-1981	1981-1991	1991-2000	1971-2001	Shift from 81-91 to 91-01
UK	0.8	1.9	2.8	5.6	0.89
South	2.1	4.2	5.6	12.3	1.35
North	-0.5	-0.2	0.1	-0.5	0.34
S/N gap	2.6	4.4	5.5		



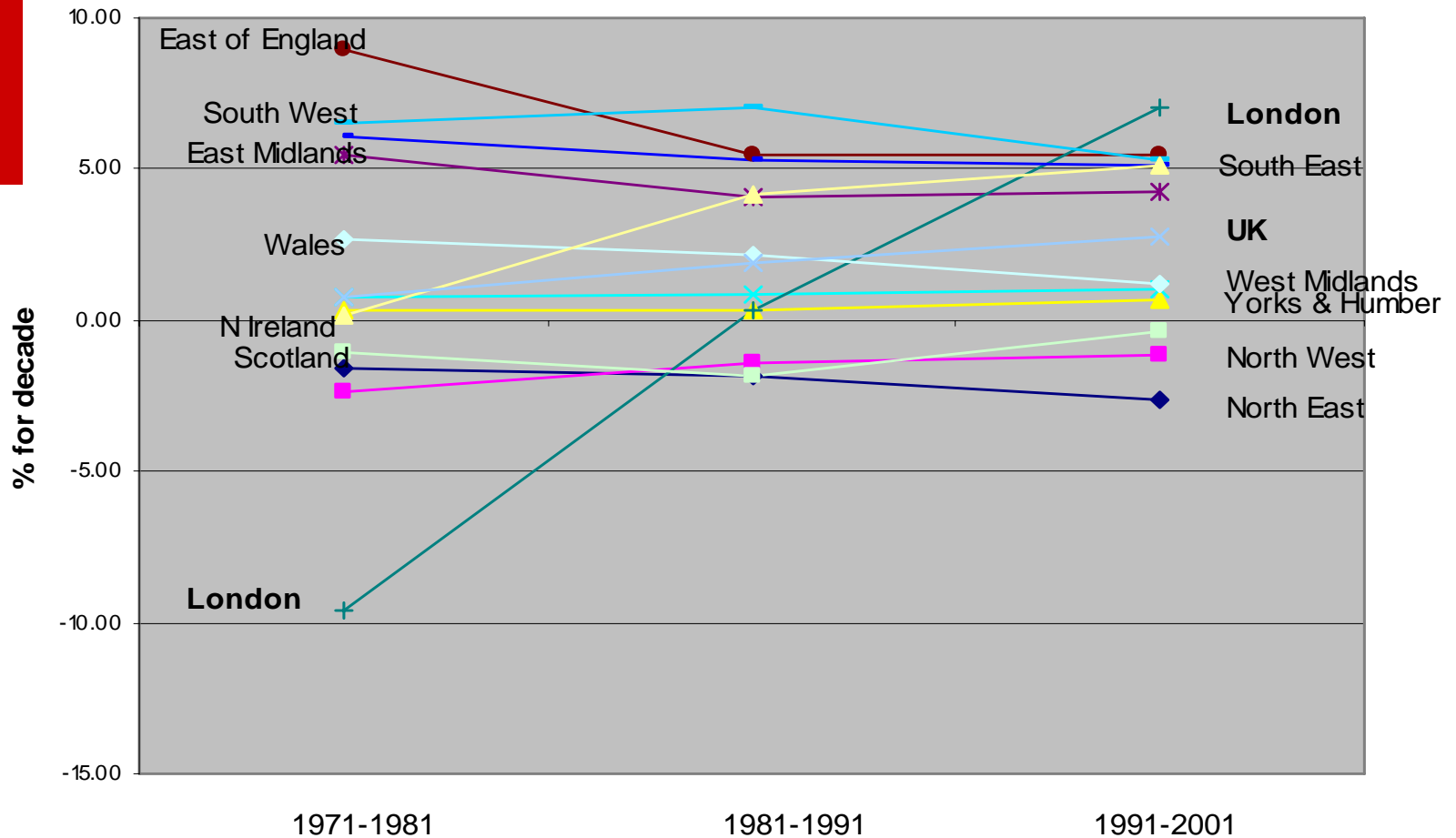
due to all three components of change 1991-2001 but primarily due to international migration

Population change, 1991-2001, for North and South, by component of change



And notably due to London's spectacular turnaround since 1970s

Population change, 1971-2001, by region/country



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Regional level: a 'city region' perspective

- **Government Office Regions too crude for analyses for *Sustainable Communities*, and individual LA districts too fragmented**
- **'City Region' a middle way that accords well with visions of settlement evolution from Howard, Geddes and Abercrombie through Hall and Self to:**
 - **latest academic version: Coombes, 2000**
 - **latest policy visions: Scottish Executive, England's Core Cities, ODPM's *Northern Way***
- **Consistent with emergence of polycentric urban configurations**



City Region 'cores' as leaders or laggards in City Region growth?

- Concerning the current debates about investing in 'core cities' so as to revive the regions
- To what extent are City Region cores growing more strongly than (the rest of) their Regions?
- How has the performance of the cores relative to their City Regions altered since the 70s?
- Definitions: 'core' = Regional City of each City Region; performance = population change (from Census, with checks against MYEs)
- What City Regions?



The Localities and City Regions framework

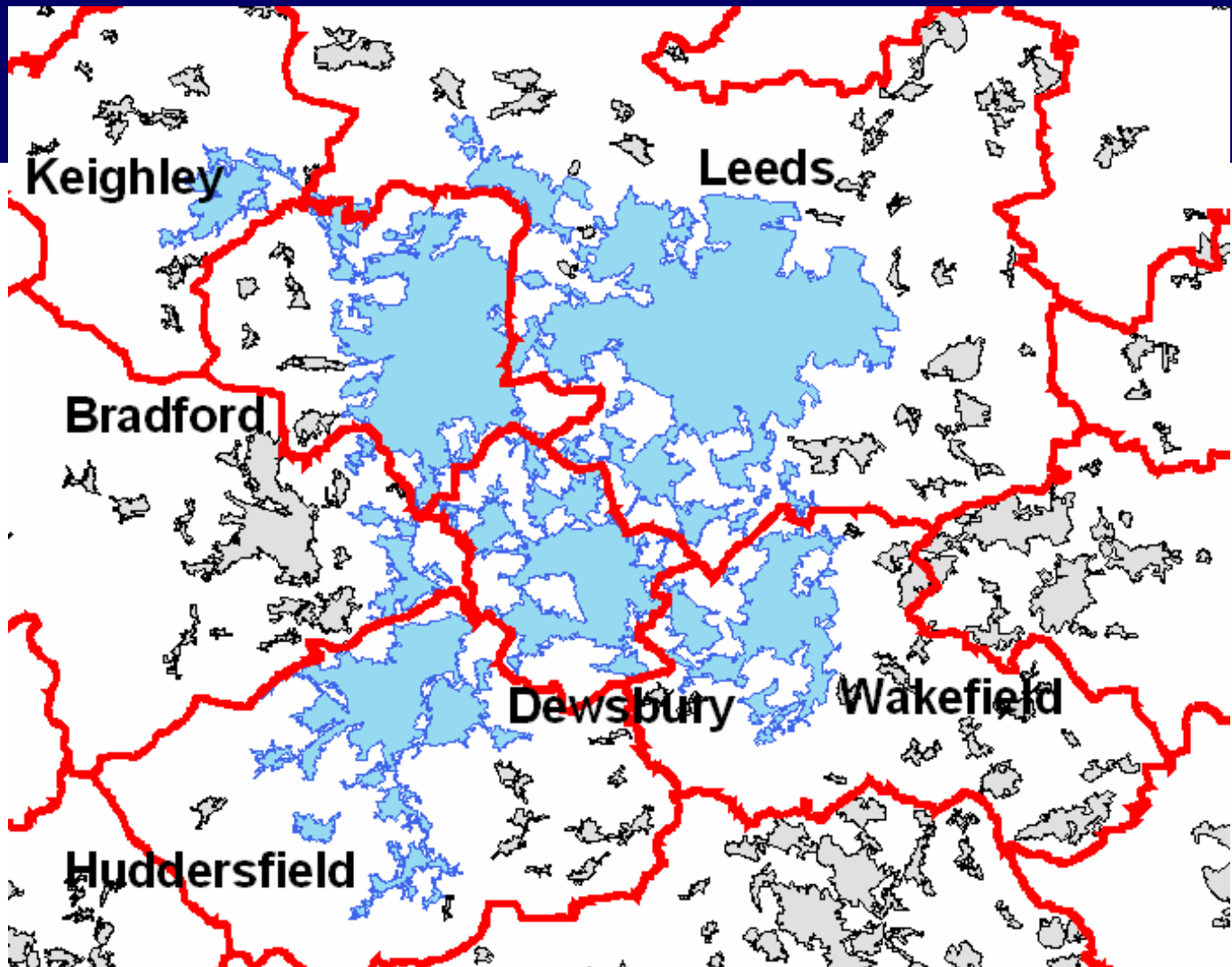
Derived from research for ESRC by CURDS: see Coombes (2000)

- Defined on the basis of information on functional linkages and areal associations
- 307 *Localities* which typically comprise at least one urban centre and adjacent linked areas, delineated using a Synthetic Data method drawing on many different strands of evidence on area linkages
- 43 *City Regions* centred on Localities with 'regional city' characteristics, and containing others linked by commuting and migration
- Examples: in and around W Yorks 'urban area', and southeastern England ...

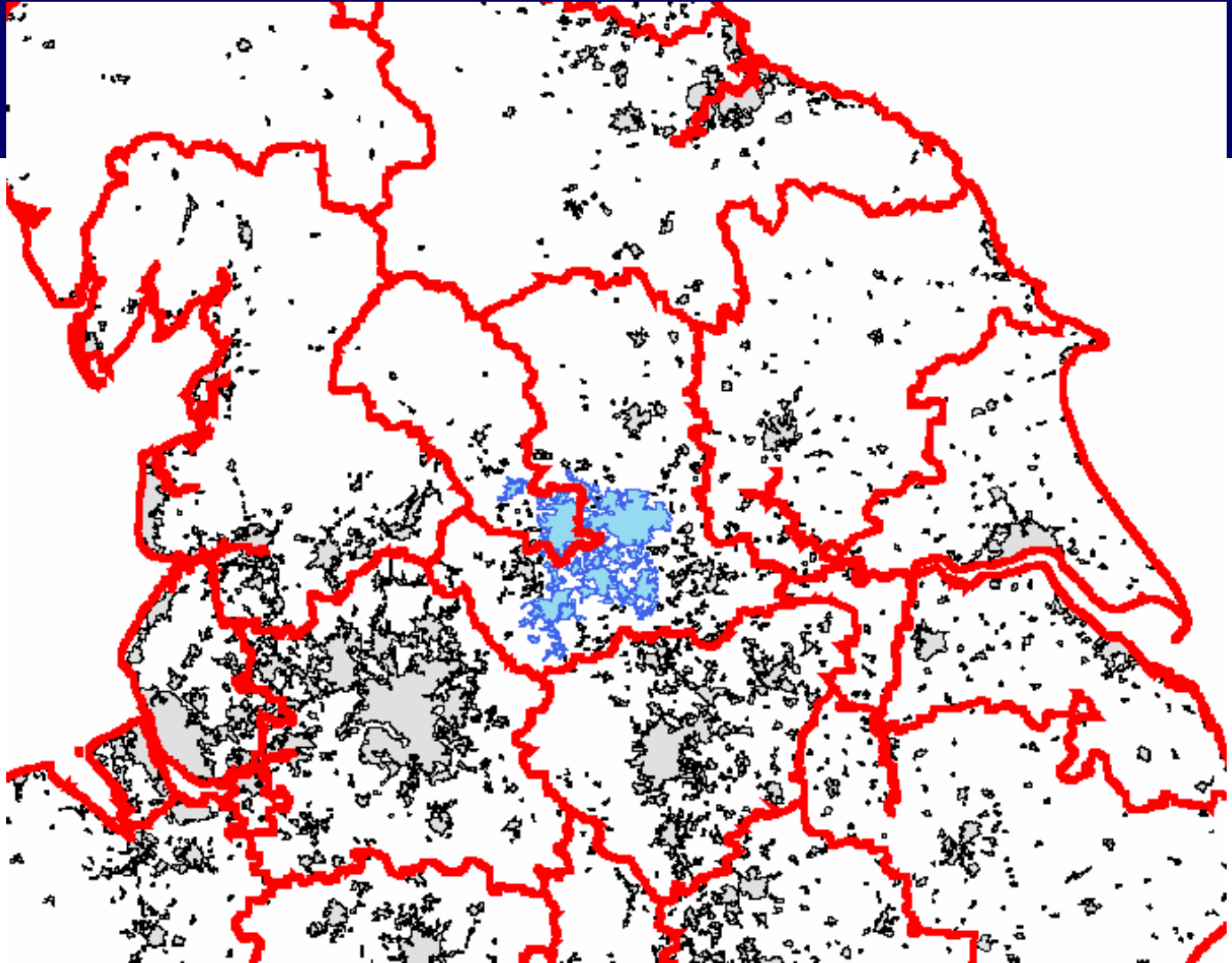
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Localities: clustered linkages = 'towns'?



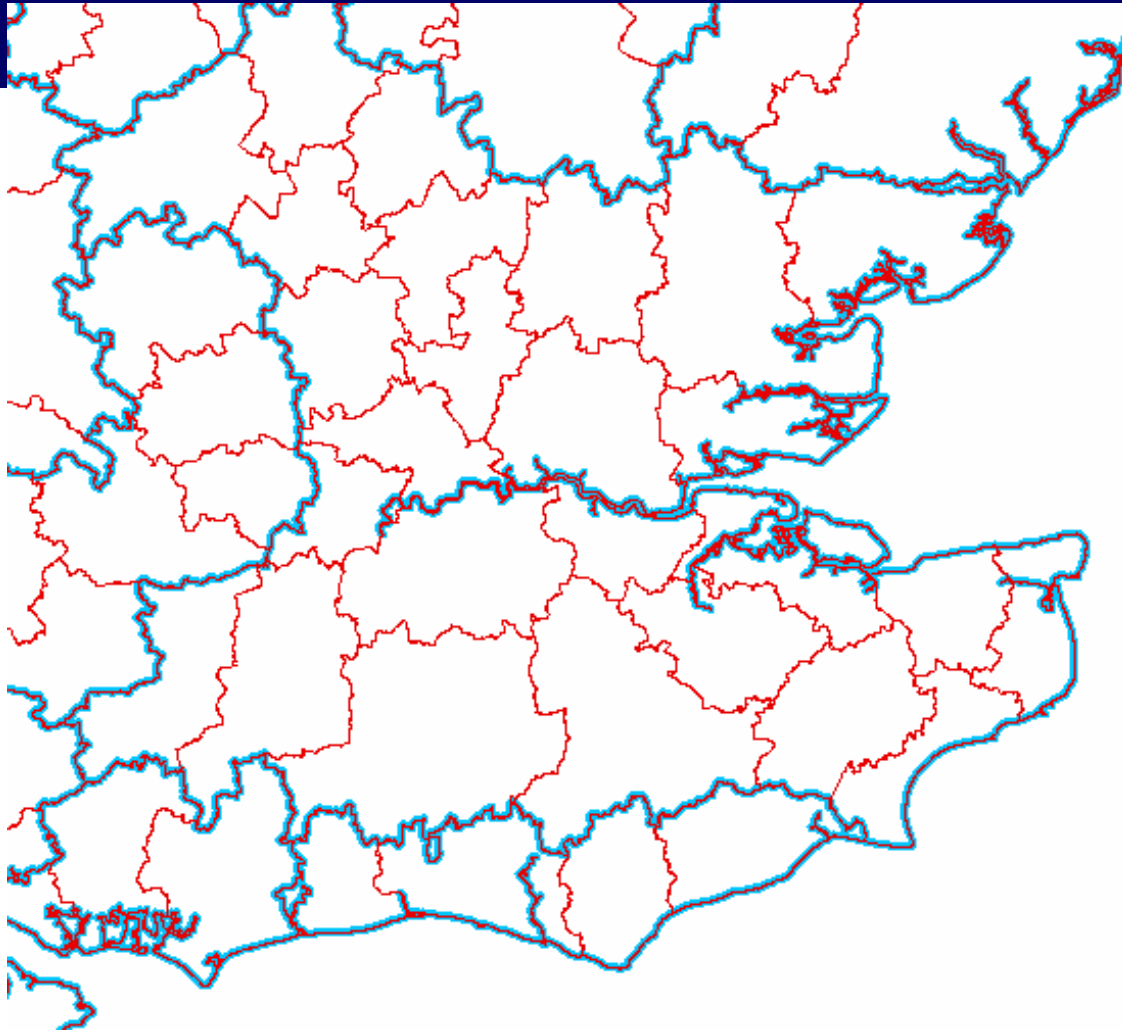
City Regions in northern England



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City Regions in southeastern England



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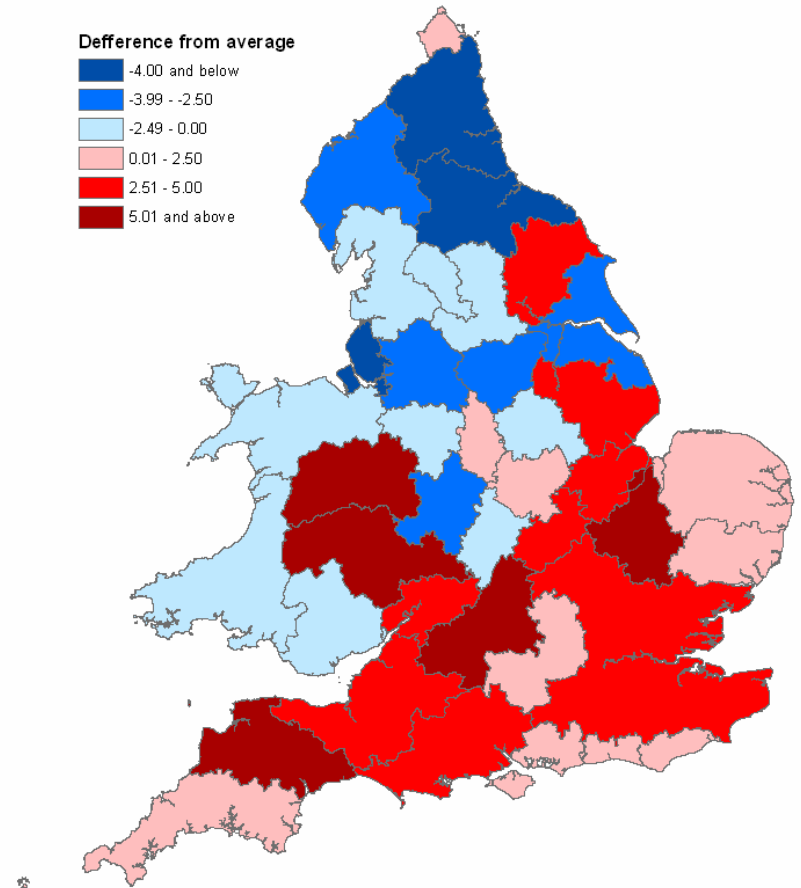
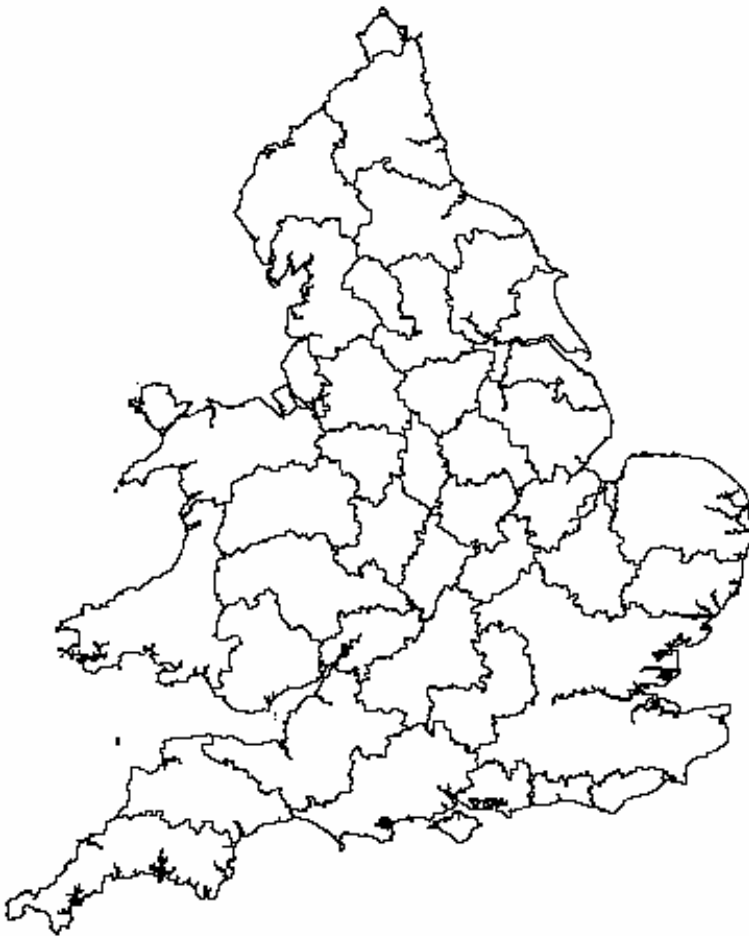
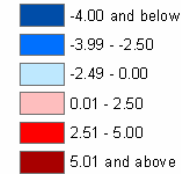


38 City Regions of England and Wales

with apologies to Scotland (5) & Northern Ireland (?)

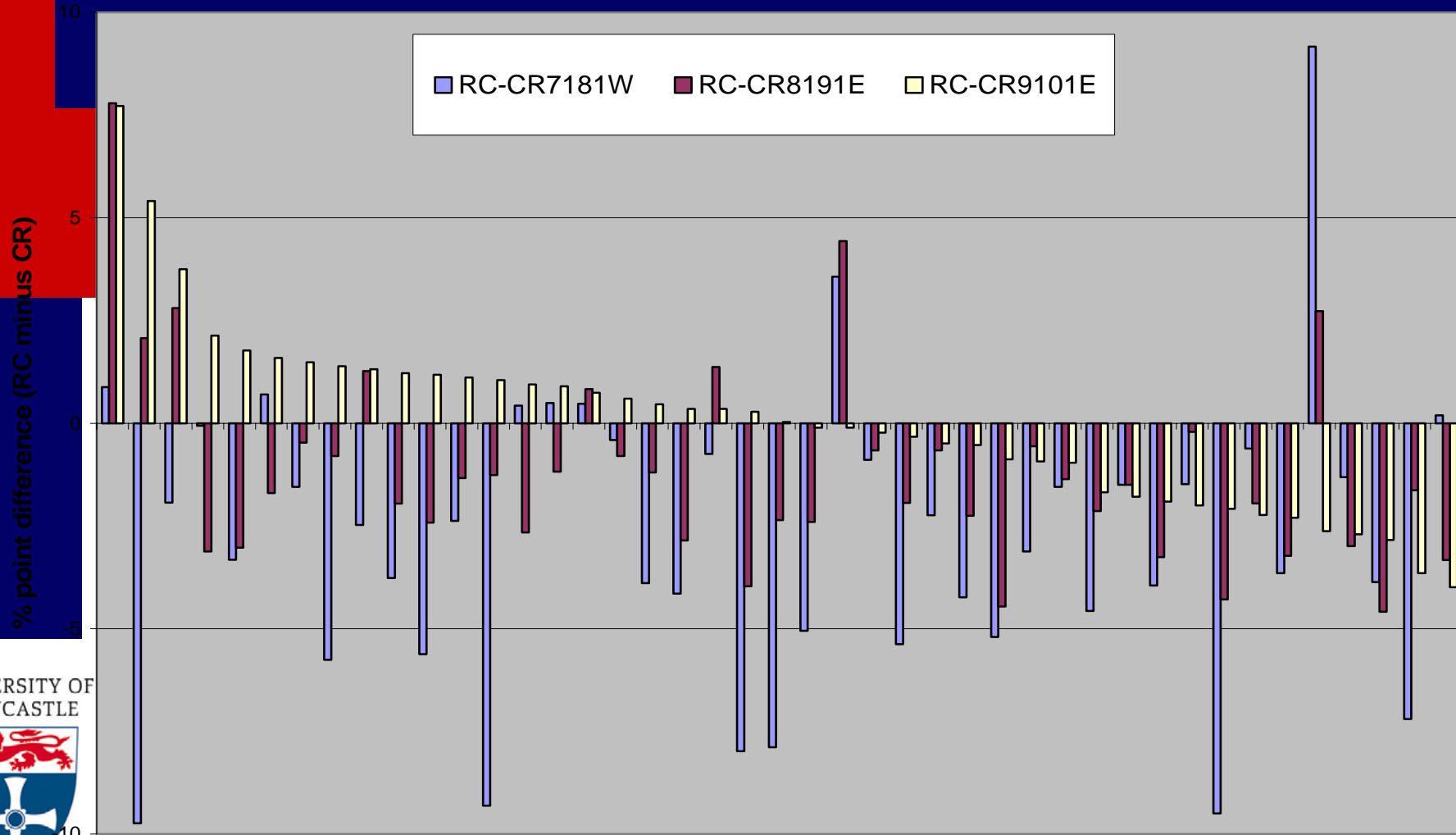
Population change 1991-2001 for City Regions,
% point differential from GB rate

Difference from average



Population change difference (% point) between Regional City and its City Region, 1971-1981, 1981-1991 and 1991-2001

Population change differential between Regional City and its City Region, 1971-81, 1981-91 and 1991-2001



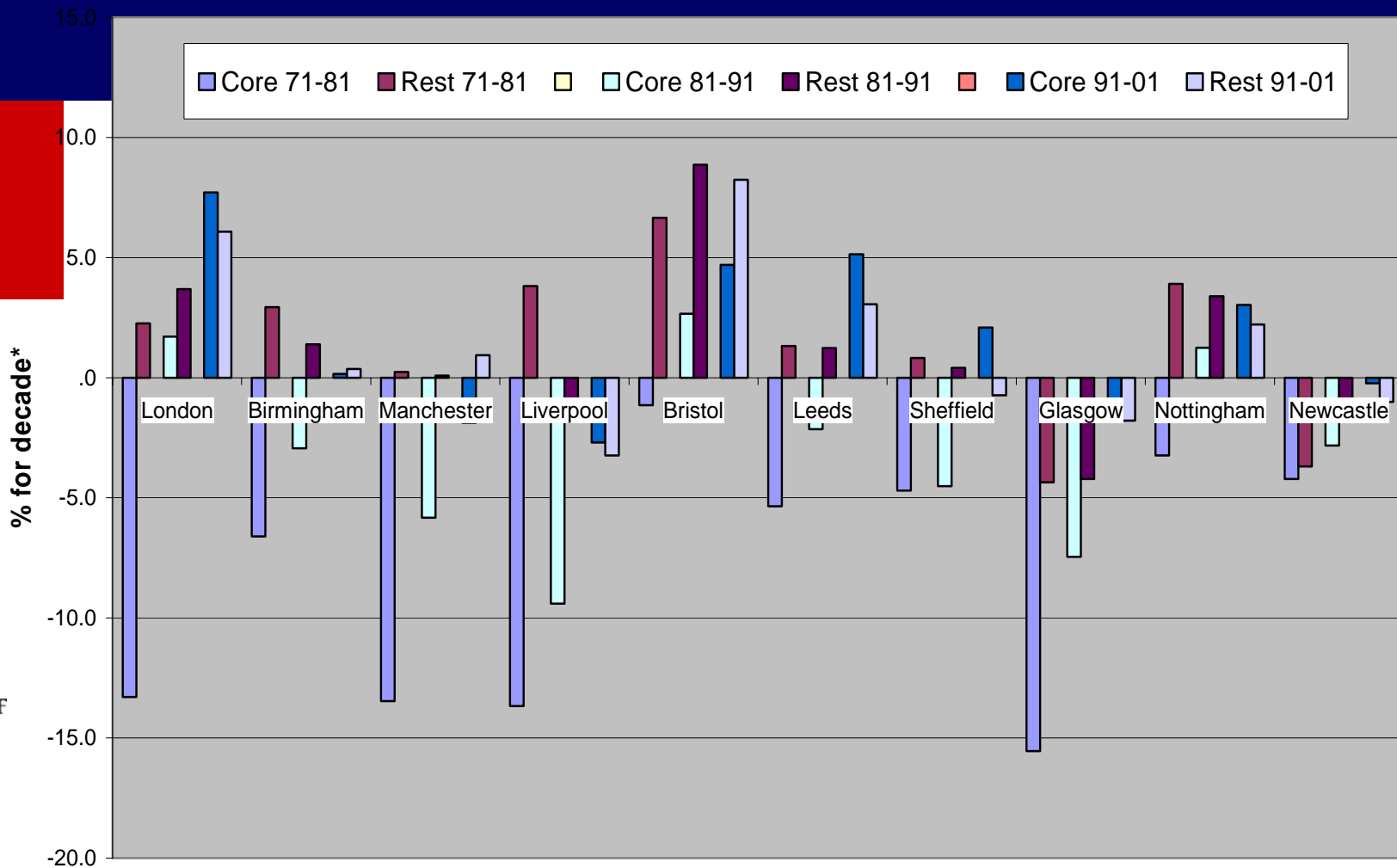
City region ranked by RC minus CR 1991-2001 rate differential

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Population change, 1971-2001, for 10 Regional Cities ('Core') and their City Region remainders ('Rest')

Population change, 1971-2001, for ten major cities and their City Region remainders

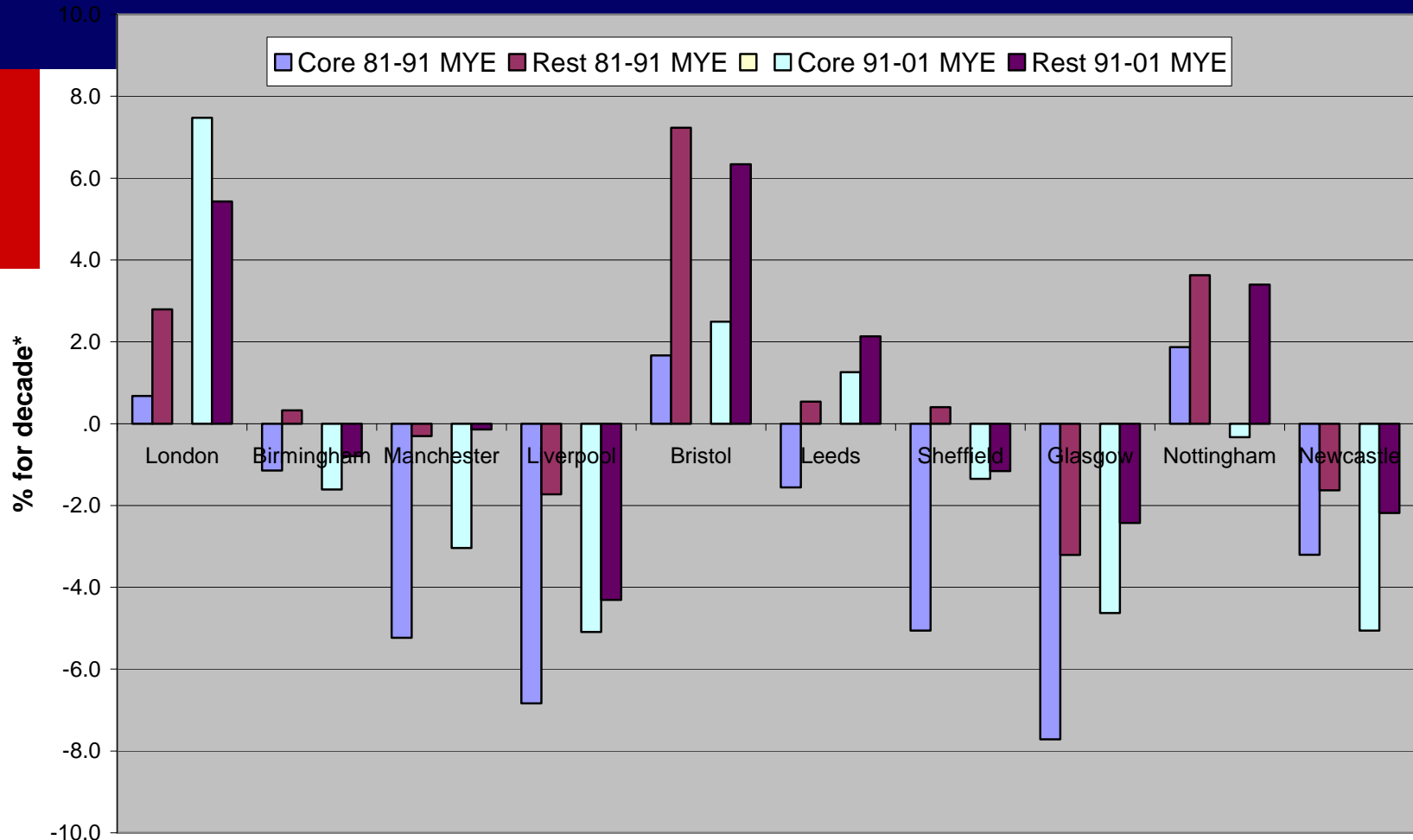


*NB. - actual rates (GB rate 1971-81 -0.7%, 1981-91 2.5%, 1991-2001 4.0%)



Population change, 1981-2001, for 10 Regional Cities and their City Region remainders (using 04.11.03 MYEs for LA-best-fits)

Population change, 1981-2001, for ten major cities and their City Region remainders (calculated from MYEs 4.11.03 using best-fit LAs)



*NB. - actual rates (GB rate 1981-91 1.9%, 1991-2001 2.7%)

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And the latest picture for ODPM's City Regions of the six Largest 'Core Cities' and London?

- **Core Cities group = Birmingham, Leeds, Liverpool, Newcastle upon Tyne, Manchester, Sheffield (plus Bristol and Nottingham)**
- **City Regions comprises three components:**
 - 1) **'Central City' = main LA**
 - 2) **'Ring' = rest of Metro County (except not Coventry)**
 - 3) **'Outer Ring' = Other 'tied' LAs**
- **For London, equivalents are (1) Inner Boroughs, (2) Outer Boroughs, (3) Rest of City Region (46 districts)**
- **As defined by Coombes for ODPM and Townsend**



Relative recentralisation trend for London, but still absolute decentralisation for Manchester, Liverpool and Newcastle, other 3 in between (% change, 1991-2001)

<i>% for decade</i>	London	Birm- ingham	Shef- field	Leeds	Man- chester	Liver- pool	New- castle
Central city	+9.2	-1.9	-1.4	+1.9	-3.3	-7.0	-5.1
Ring	+5.7	-2.2	-2.0	+1.0	-1.3	-4.1	-3.8
Outer ring	+4.5	+2.3	+0.6	+6.5	+1.0	-2.9	+1.0
City region	+6.0	-1.1	-1.2	+1.9	-1.3	-4.7	-2.5

Definitions (as defined by Coombes for England's Core Cities):

London: Inner Boroughs, Outer Boroughs, Rest of City Region.

Other cities: Named city, Rest of Metro County (excluding Coventry from Birmingham's), Rest of City Region.



The picture so far

- UK's South/North gap continues to widen, due to all three components of change and notably due to London's spectacular turnaround since 1970s
- For GB's 43 City Regions, Regional Cities were predominantly laggards in 1970s and 1980s, but half were leaders by 1990s
- For 10 main Regional Cities, all had lagging RCs in 1970s and 1980s, but in 1990s 6 had leading RCs
- BUT 'student' effect 1991-2001 casts doubt on this: Using MYEs for LA-best-fits, only for London was the RC leading CR in 1990s
- Other cities' smaller and patchier recovery ... and more limited 'central city' revival



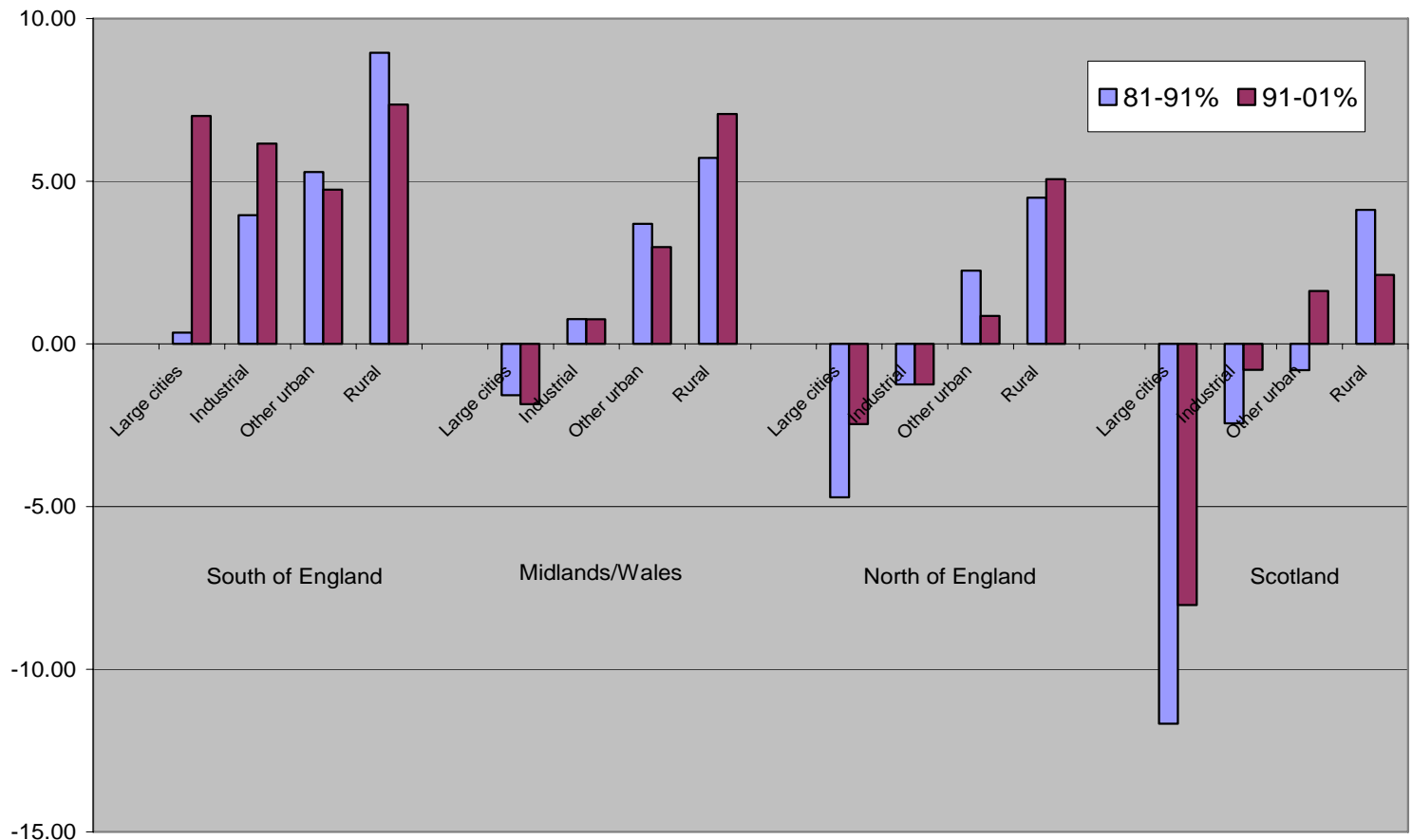
More briefly, the local level: city, suburb, new urban, rural

- **Nationwide, the population shift from larger to smaller urban places ('counterurbanisation') continues outside the South of England**
- **Outside metro areas, accelerating population growth for Small cities, Industrial, Accessible mixed urban-rural, Accessible rural districts**
- **BUT growth rate significantly lower in 1990s for New and expanded towns, Coastal towns (especially tourist-related), and Rural areas (but not 'Rural fringe') – though all these are still growing quite fast**
- **Some evidence:**



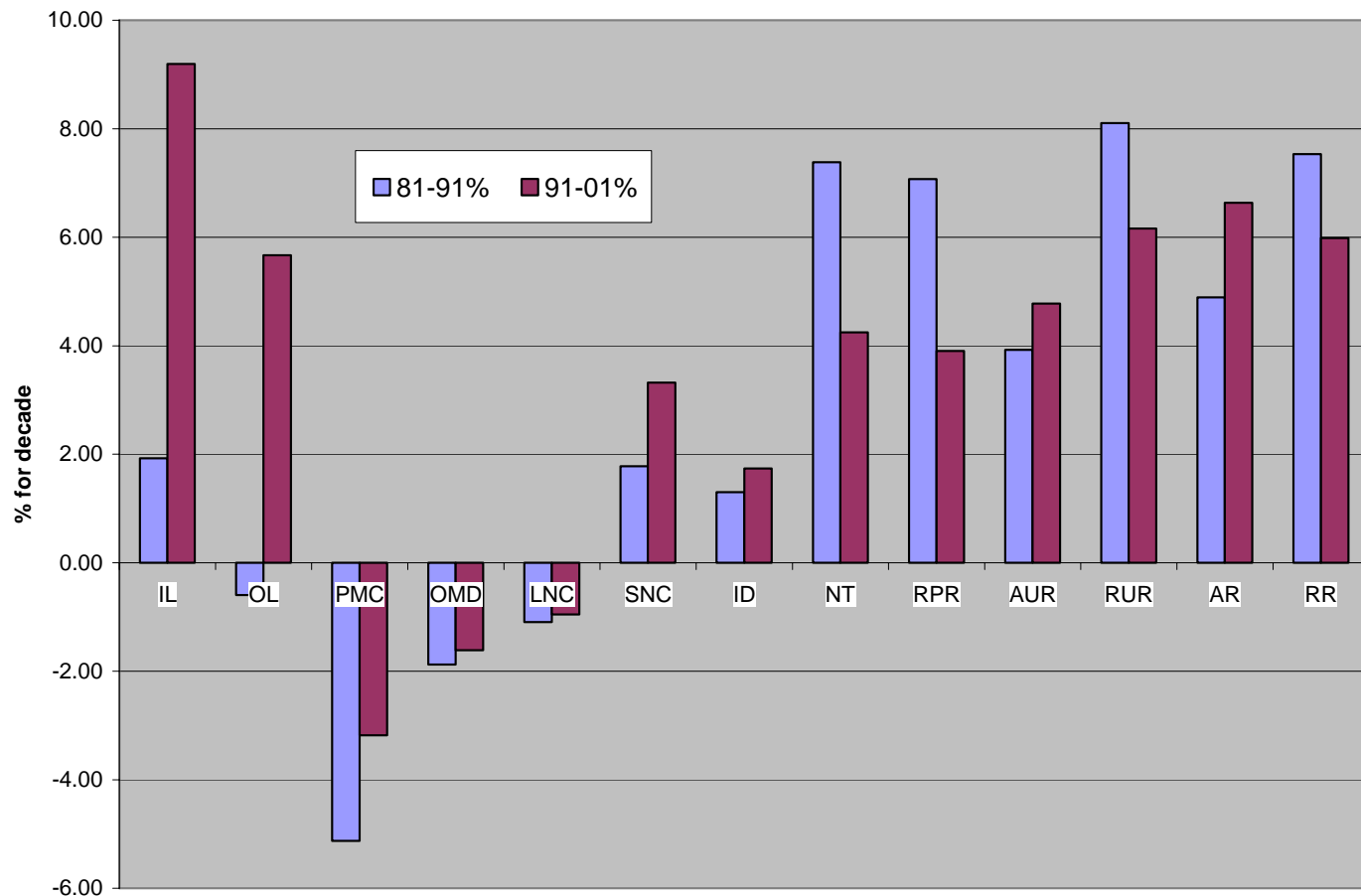
Counterurbanisation continues outside the South of England – in Midlands/Wales, North & Scotland (Columns = Large cities, Industrial, Other urban, Rural)

Population change, 1981-1991 and 1991-2001, by broad OPCS Dtype group and four GB regions, % for period

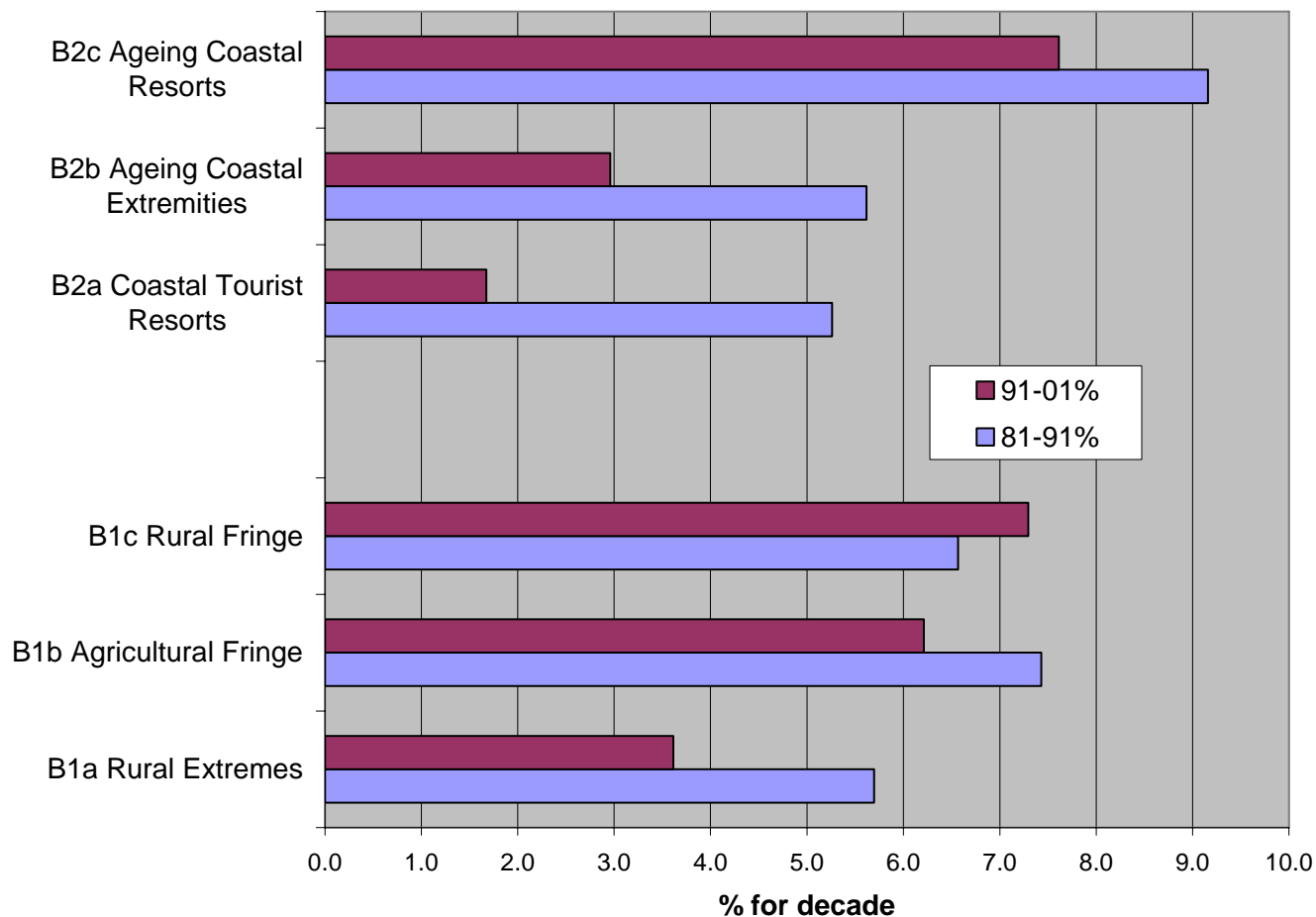


Accelerating population growth for Small cities, Industrial, Accessible mixed urban-rural, Accessible rural districts, **BUT Decelerating** for New and expanded towns ...

Population change rate, 1981-1991 and 1991-2001, by types of GB districts



... and also decelerating for Coastal towns (especially tourist-related), and Rural areas (but not 'Rural fringe')
- based on Vickers' UK district classification 2001 -



Key dimensions of population redistribution: in summary

- **Main gainers 1991-2001: The South, London, Inner London, Rural, New Towns, Small cities**
- **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**



Main dimensions and drivers of change that policy levers need to recognise

- **National: London's world city role in job growth and attraction of immigrants**
- **Regional: The forces helping Regional Cities to begin to lead their City Regions**
- **Local 1: The continuing 'flight from the city' and 'lure of the countryside' among middle-class whites**
- **Local 2: The weakening dynamics of remoter rural areas and some urban neighbourhoods**



Implications for developing 'sustainable communities' in town and country

- **Planning must not ignore the factors behind the South/North gap in economic growth**
- **Regional Cities can be expected to enjoy a major and sustained revival only with growth elsewhere in their City Regions**
- **Where smaller Northern cities and towns are growing, how not to jeopardise this in the discrimination in favour of the larger cities?**
- **In regions of stronger growth, how to ensure the sustainability of the areas of new building?**
- **In regenerating urban areas, how to consolidate while reducing the appeal of the countryside?**



Concluding comments

- **Focus has been on deep-seated trends, where any hoped-for reversal takes time. Await revised annual MYE (7 Oct) etc ...**
- **National/regional policy would benefit from better knowledge of the growth links between Regional Cities and their wider City Regions**
- **Regional/local policy would benefit from more info about the relationship between diversifying settlement patterns (eg polycentric regions) and diversifying household types (eg smaller, older, more varied ethnically)**



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Major demographic trends affecting lifestyles and housing preferences 1

- **Ageing:** long-term trend that has traditionally favoured UK's spas, coastal and rural areas, now the Mediterranean – where will the 1960s baby boomers be living in 2030?
- **Household types:** increasing household fission as people strive for independence and privacy – (officially) one-person household is modal type in London already, but not all 'Yuppies' in city centre locations – increasing number are **Middle-aged** and living in suburban areas



Major demographic trends affecting lifestyles and housing preferences 2

- **Ethnicity:** Non-whites as a rising share of population, but unevenly distributed – for how many and/or for how long will certain types of housing areas be preferred over others?
- **Social structure:** The ‘onion’ shape of the social hierarchy continues to transform, with growing bulge of middle class and a lengthening taper of least-well-off – towards continuing local-area discrimination between sought-after and low-demand areas?



And rise of 'quality of life' considerations in migration and residential choice

Households are less tied to particular locations irrespective of QoL, now that:

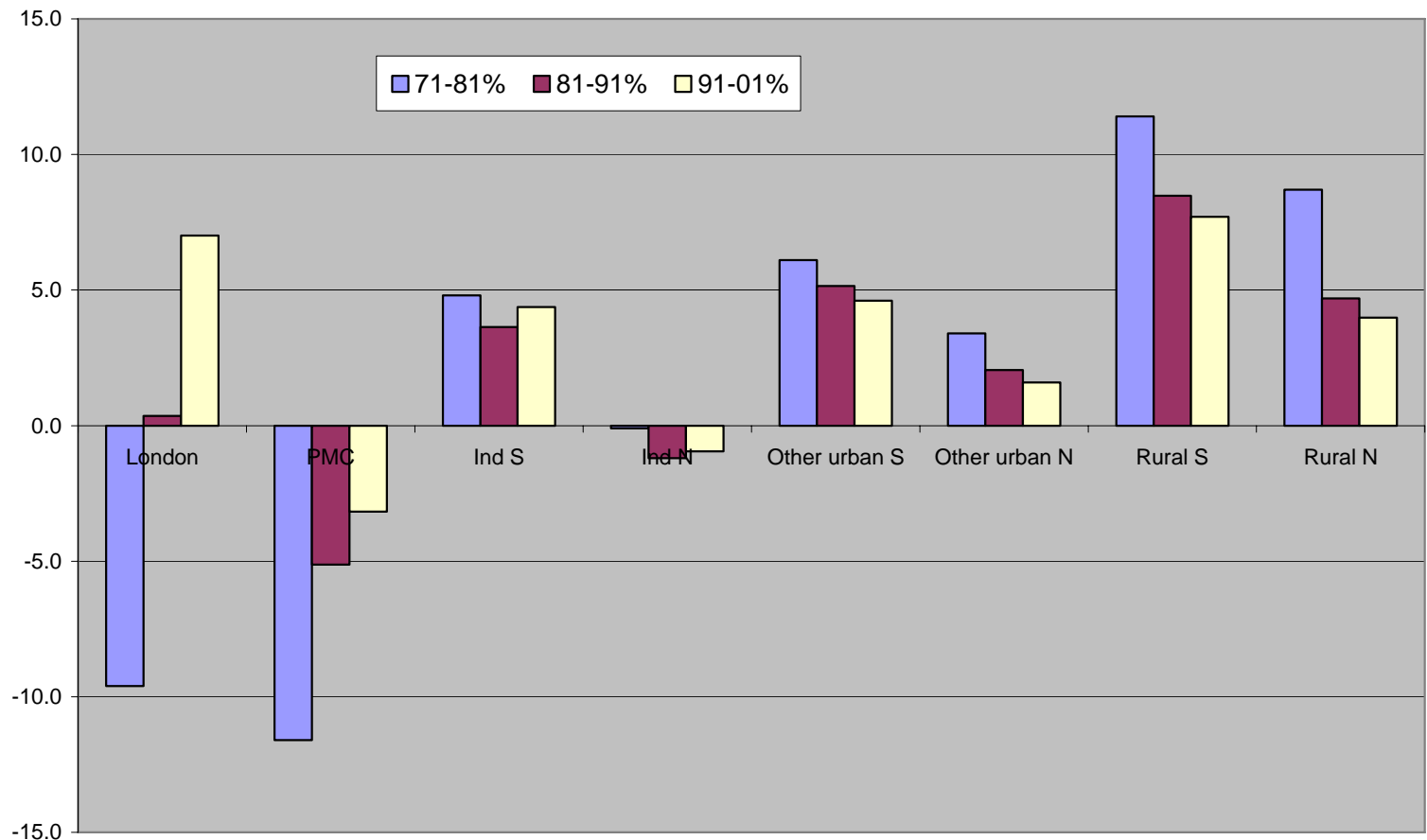
- the proportion with an employed person is falling
- more work at home or have no fixed place of work
- households with more than one worker opt for a 'balanced' location with access to a range of jobs
- daily mobility ('circulation') extends, as residential mobility ('migration') reduces

'Rural idyll' a deeply engrained attraction, along with escape from rat-race, congestion, high costs, crime, anti-social neighbours etc. Also a feeling that 'city centre' is no longer that central for many.



Population change, 1971-2001, by broad district type (major city, industrial, other urban, rural) and South/North

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



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