

The Death and Life of Great British Cities

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Outline

- 1 One-page summary
- 2 Broader comments
- 3 One point about empirics
- 4 One point about theory

One-page summary

Use 200 years of data from England and Wales.

Large, contiguous plots of land around the city are associated with:

- stronger specialization
- fast population growth earlier, decline later

Broader comments

Economies of scale, scope and density are most interesting in economics.

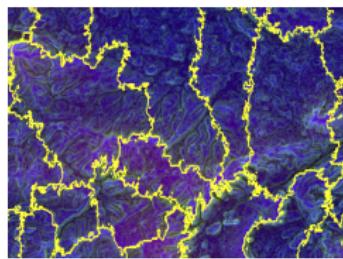
Big shifts in sectoral specialization, population, productivity and economic geography likely related.

Spatial macroeconomics is promising not only for historical development.

One point about empirics

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Meanshift algorithm clusters points in multidimensional space.

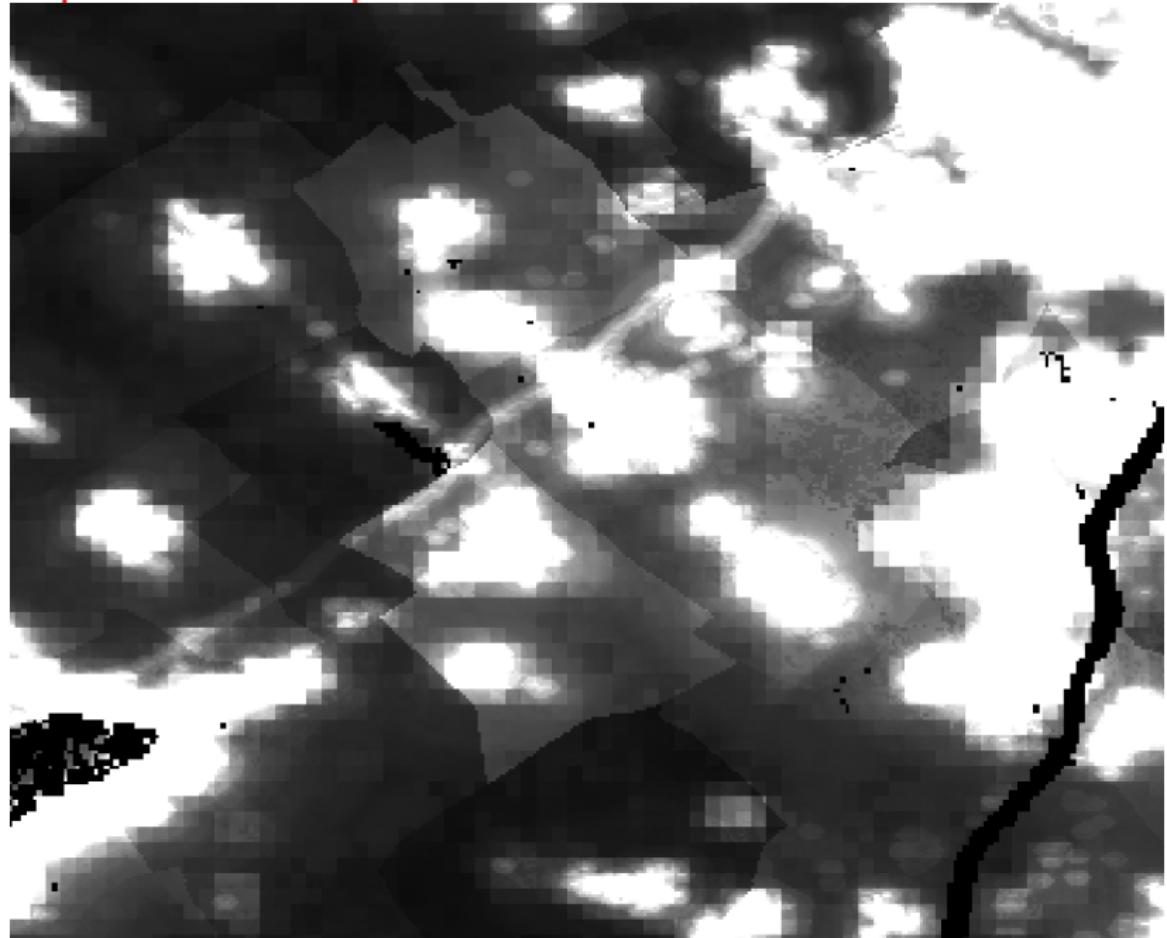


But

Much depends on relative weights of other dimensions; need to know more.

Very few spatial data is truly raster; often based on vectoral data; can be misleading.

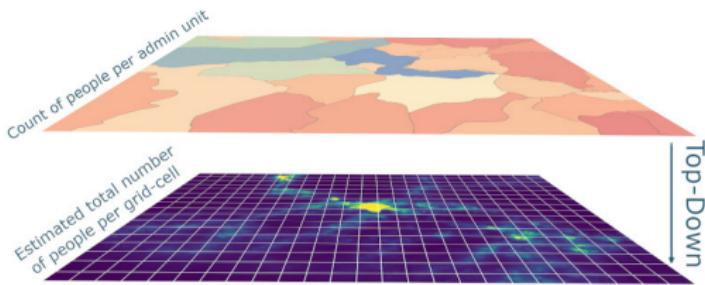
Example: WorldPop raster



Example: OpenStreetMap vector



This is a problem for all top-down datasets



One point about theory

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This is a reversal of fortune story. These stories are challenging for neoclassical economics for two reasons:

- 1 contradict perfect foresight
- 2 contradict free disposal

Why are some cities bad that used to be good?

- 1 myopia or externalities
- 2 adjustment costs, irreversibilities, non-convexities
 - more relevant for heavy industry
 - potentially relevant for spatial development