Mind the Gap: Understanding the ‘London Effect’

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Preliminary draft. Please do not quote or cite without permission
Today’s presentation

- Short, non-technical introduction to an early-stage project
- Using many data sources
- Only recently started working with LS - hoping to learn more today
- Comments and suggestions welcome throughout
To begin:

- Comparisons of London to all 8 other regions of England
- A number of different measures
- Focus on changes from early 1990s to recent years
London, then and now

Secondary education:¹

- Second-worst performance in GCSEs in 1991
- Best performance in 2011

¹Source: DfE School Performance Indicators
London, then and now

Secondary education: 
- Second-worst performance in GCSEs in 1991
- Best performance in 2011

Primary education:
- Second-worst performance in Maths in 1995, worst in English
- Best performance in 2011

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²Source: DfE School Performance Indicators
Surveyed crime:\(^3\)

- Second-highest rate of deliberate violent crime in 1994
- Second-lowest in 2011

\(^3\)Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales
Drug deaths and suicides:\(^4\)

- Highest drug-use death rate in 1994, second-lowest in 2011
- Highest suicide rate in 1994, lowest in 2011

\(^4\)Source: ONS Mortality Statistics
London, then and now

Drug deaths and suicides:\(^5\)

- Highest drug-use death rate in 1994, second-lowest in 2011
- Highest suicide rate in 1994, lowest in 2011

Cancer and Obesity:\(^6\)

- Smallest increase in obesity 98-11
- Greatest decline in cancer 98-11

\(^5\)Source: ONS Mortality Statistics
\(^6\)Source: Health Survey for England
London, then and now

Economy:

- Largest increase in median wages and inequality\(^7\)
- Largest increase in poverty\(^8\)
- Largest increase in house prices\(^9\)

\(^7\)Source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings
\(^8\)Source: Households Below Average Income statistics
\(^9\)Source: UK Land Registry
Londoners, then and now
Londoners, then and now

Demographic changes 91-11:10

- Only region to get younger
- Fastest population growth (24% ↑)
- 20 ppts fewer whites
- 15 ppts fewer UK-born

10Source: UK Census
Huge changes, good opportunity to look at several questions:

- When the population of an area changes rapidly, are individuals displaced?
  - Where do displaced individuals go?
- What are long-run effects on children?
- How does policy influence ‘gentrification’?

Difficult to make causal statements, need to refine question...
Tower Blocks
Tower Blocks

- Social housing built mainly in 1960s
- Wildly popular at the time
- But tastes change...
David Cameron vows to ‘blitz’ poverty by demolishing UK’s worst sink estates

Government to spend £140m on rehousing and tearing up planning rules as PM says neglect has led to gangs and antisocial behaviour
Tower Blocks
Tower Blocks

• Since at least 1990s, policies to demolish tower blocks
• Possibly an important aspect of changes in London
• Very little quantitative work on topic
• No unifying dataset
Tower Blocks

Constructed dataset of several thousand tower blocks using:

- FOI requests
- Architectural archives
- Blog / news posts
London Tower Block Locations 2017

Demolished

Standing
Tower Blocks

Two questions:

1. What happens to surrounding areas when a block demolished?

2. What happens to individuals living in demolished blocks?
Tower Blocks: Area analyses

Initial analysis / sense-check:

- Tower blocks in 1991 located in poorer, more ethnically diverse areas

- Among blocks, those demolished tended to be in poorer areas
Tower Blocks: Area analyses

Trends over time:

- Areas with demolished tower blocks see falls in crime relative to areas with standing tower blocks
- If anything, areas with demolished tower blocks become more ethnically diverse
Tower Blocks: Individual impacts

With micro-data, hope to match to individuals, asking:

- Where are individuals displaced to?

- What happens to later employment, education and health outcomes?
Potential very useful resource for studying long-run effects of demolitions on individuals:

- Large representative sample
- Low attrition
- Little measurement error
ONS Longitudinal Study

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Currently waiting for access to postcode data, so watch this space...!
Conclusion
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- London’s story is interesting
Conclusion

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- Novel dataset on tower blocks
• London’s story is interesting

• Novel dataset on tower blocks helps fill gaps in literature

• Huge potential for using LS to understand long-run impacts on individuals