

Established Small Towns in England Growth in the 19th Century

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Background

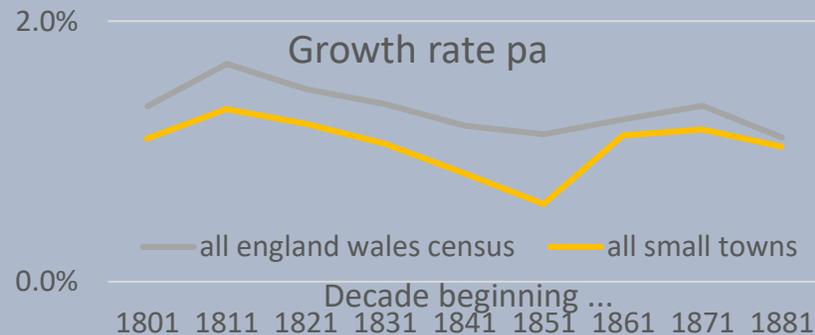
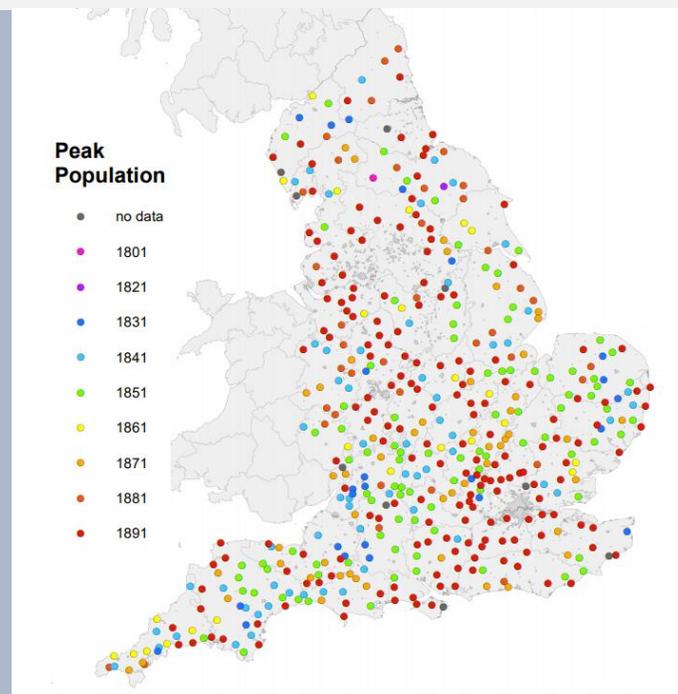
- Urban growth, rural depopulation and high levels of internal migration are key aspects of English demography in the 19th century.
- What happened to the network of early-modern small towns in this later period?

What is an established small town?

- Population not 'large' c1680 and under 5,000 in 1811
- Functioning market town c1680 and c1830
- Middlesex excluded
- There are 480 towns in England that satisfy all of these criteria.

Method

- Identify mappable units that intersect with each town and compile population from census data
- Calculate and map growth for each decade



Findings so far

- In aggregate the towns followed national trends in population growth but grew more slowly.
- From 1801-1851 most towns were growing.
- In the 1851-1891 period, there was much greater variation in growth trajectories.
- Many towns peaked in population growth mid-century – particularly in a band from Devon in the South West to Norfolk in East Anglia.
- Another group – including almost all of those surrounding London and Manchester, and many coastal and Midland towns, were growing in 1891.

What next?

- Compare the towns growth rates with that of their Registration District as a proxy for a rural hinterland.
- Investigate migration into and out of the towns using census birthplace data.
- Examine the migration relationship between town and hinterland in detail by case study.