

## ***Manchester city-region case study***

### ***Notes on method***

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The method which is emerging in Manchester, looks at the trends and dynamics, alternative future scenarios, and the risks and opportunities in the peri-urban city-region. This needs both technical analysis and engagement with stakeholders.

The underlying paradigm is that of the peri-urban agenda as part of the larger complex system of the whole city-region, one which adapts and evolves in response to pressures and opportunities.

Generally we aim to look at the large and complex Manchester city-region with a series of cross-sections. This is spread rather thinly over a very broad agenda, but we see this as the only way to deal with the whole system, rather than a few of its parts. While this cannot aim to provide a complete picture, it should be a first stage which points towards the priorities for further research.

### **Key ‘transitions’ and research questions**

We see the peri-urban areas as integral with the wider city-region systems of which they are a part. This is itself in the middle of rapid structural changes or ‘transitions’. We can define these in three parallel strands:

#### ***Metropol-ization:***

This describes an ‘urban transition’ which is diffused and networked across wider peri-urban and rural areas.

Research questions:

- What are the physical transitions (housing development and transport), in the peri-urban areas?
- What are the socio-economic urban transitions (employment and social types), in the peri-urban area?

### ***Cultural capitalism:***

This describes a 'globalizing transition' as a process of restructuring, of economic and social activities, patterns and divisions:

Research questions:

- What are the new economic and social configurations which are emerging in the peri-urban areas?
- What are the stakeholders attitudes and perceptions of these ?

### ***Spatial ecology:***

This new term describes the 'green infrastructure' transition – a way of framing the inter-dependency of different components and functions which are located in space across the city-region.

Research questions:

- What is the physical state of the green infrastructure? and
- What are the economic and social dimensions of this?

### ***Governance and policy integration***

This theme explores the 'responses' to the challenges of the transitions above. Research questions include:

- What are the policy responses, current and potential, to the above challenges?
- What are the structures and processes of governance which are needed?
- What are the most interesting creative schemes, initiatives and projects?

## **Perspectives in time and space**

The trend and baseline data is the starting point. Then we look at forward projections and alternative scenarios, up to a horizon of 40 years. This adapts the PLUREL scenario framework and modeling results, to the issues which are most significant in the Manchester city-region.

There are also distinct spatial relationship issues to be looked at:

- From the regional level of spatial development – what are the impacts and outcomes on peri-urban areas?
- From the local level of spatial development – what is the scope for indigenous development (physical, economic or social) in peri-urban areas?
- What are the main types of linkages or relationships, between urban centres and peri-urban areas?

## Key policy agendas

On the ground we find that policy agendas come up through stakeholder experiences, as inter-connected chains of problems and solutions. (This is not to say that policy is fully integrated, but rather the opposite). We follow in more detail, three key agendas:

- Housing development, communities, lifestyles
- Employment, economic development, infrastructure
- Environment, local quality and green infrastructure

## Case study programme

- A programme of semi-structured interviews in each case study area.
- The first theme (2008) is on ***current trends & policies***.
- The second theme (2009) is on ***future scenarios & opportunities***.
- There is an annual stakeholder workshop, to present the results, share best practices, and build European links.
- The study uses a variety of methods: policy analysis: technical analysis: and a parallel 'evocative' project with creative and media students.
- In mid 2010 the results will be brought together and presented to the PLUREL international scientific meeting, to be held in Manchester.