



MAPS

... a different view of the UK

This chapter suggests that your view of these countries has been created by the environment in which you grew up. Throughout this book the reader is assumed to be an 18-year-old student who has just gone to university or is just about to go there. Your view of the UK has been built up through how the media have depicted the UK, through how you were taught at school to view human geography, and through what your friends and family told you.

If you grew up in Britain then you grew up with the view shown on the right of Figure 1.1. However, throughout this book the view on the left will be used (see page xiv overleaf). Both images show the same value at every place – the height of land. But the gridded population cartogram on the left uses a map projection that gives every person equal space and shows that most people live at relatively low heights (at low altitude). The land-area map on the right is good for studying land. It is the traditional map used by the media in Britain, but it is not a good map to use to see people.

The media need to sell newspapers or gain viewers and listeners. They tend to present a salacious view of life in Britain, concentrating on the highs and lows, on the lives of the very rich and the travails of the very poor. Ultimately the media consist of just another collection of people, most of whom were very like you when they were 18. What they were taught and how they were shown the country and world they lived in influenced them too.

One thing you can be sure of is that the picture of the UK presented in this short book is not the picture that was presented a decade or two ago. However, this book too is just as influenced by its author's exposure to the media, the schools he attended, and the views of his family and friends as your views are. I've just had a little more time to think about these things, and I think we can look at these countries in a new way as a result of those influences and that thinking. What I am asking you to do is to bear with me while I try to present you with a different view of the country you grew up in. I am trying to present that view from your point of view. This chapter begins by looking at where 18-year-olds live, and which of them go to university. How uneven is this landscape, and how in turn is that likely to be shaping the view of the UK which university students have?



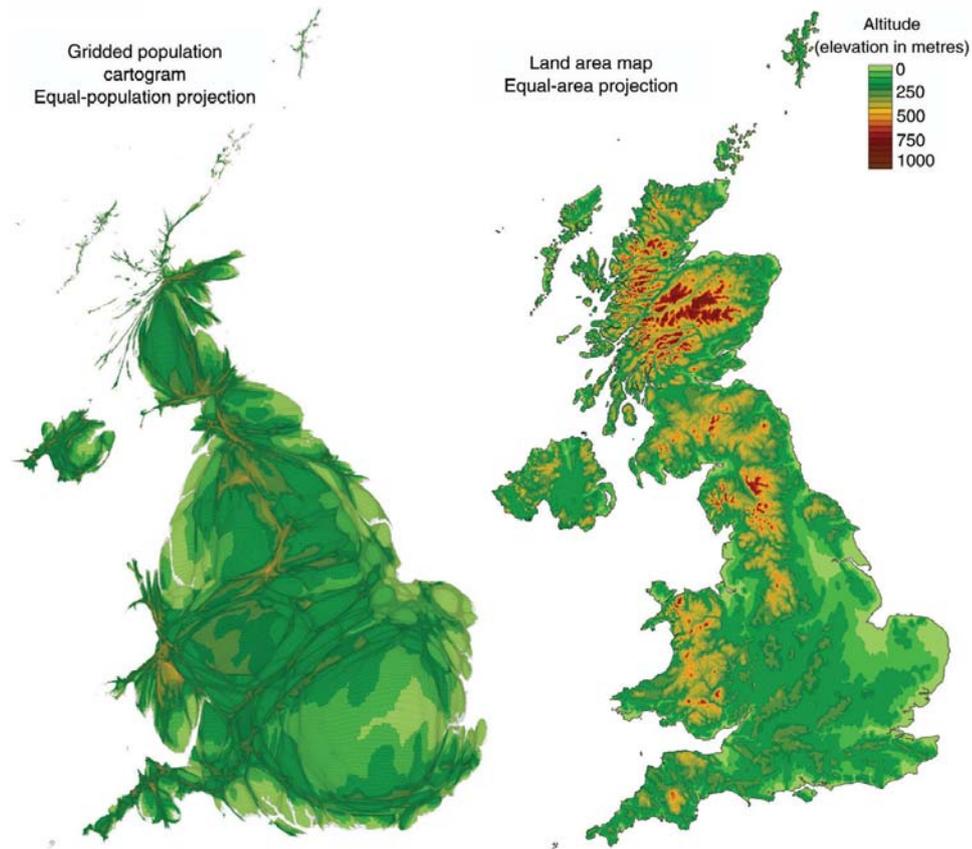


Figure 1.1 Topography: gridded UK population cartogram and UK land area map

Note: The cartogram gives every person the same amount of space. Each faintly drawn grid cell on the cartogram relates to the same amount of space in the physical world. The size of a grid cell reflects the number of people living in that space in relation to the other grid cells.

Source: Population: SEDAC Columbia University (2010); Topography: US Geological Survey (2011).

We begin with a question: From where are you looking at the UK? To start to answer that question we need a simple picture of the UK. The new map used here is one that has never been drawn in any book before. Throughout this book just 85 areas on it will be shaded, but despite this simplicity the new map can be used to unveil a great deal about the human geography of these countries, its people and, first, its 18-year-olds.

You are used to a particular map of the UK. This is the map you grew up with, the one used in most textbooks and which appears on television every evening in the weather reports, the map which shows the UK as it appears from space. However, looking at the UK from space is not the best way to see its population. More people live in London than Scotland, for instance.



The alternative map of the UK, shown with places labelled on it on the left of Figure 1.2, presents a picture which tries to give the people of the UK fairer representation and allows us to see upon it variations within large cities alongside variations between regions and between more rural areas simultaneously. Grid lines are shown drawn faintly on the cartogram; they depict areas of the same size when drawn on a land-area map, but here every 'square' has its area made proportional to its population.

The grid lines in Figure 1.2 coalesce in sparsely populated rural areas. The grid is not shown on the ordinary land area map in Figure 1.1 because its lines would all be too close together to see any individual squares. An ordinary map would have to be thousands of times bigger to show much of the detail about people's lives that the cartogram shows, and it would still distort things from the perspective of most of the population. However, the grid is shown on all of the cartogram-maps that follow to remind you that these are not just diagrams, but maps of real places with the topology (areas that touch each other) preserved.

On the map on the right of Figure 1.2 are shown the 85 constituencies drawn up in 1999 for the European parliamentary elections of that year. Northern Ireland was defined as one large constituency that would return three members of the parliament. At the last minute the UK government chose a different voting system for that election and so these areas were not used in that election. We use them here as they present a way of grouping the population of the UK into large adjacent areas, each containing roughly the same number of people.

While you may not be used to the map shown in Figure 1.2, the names of the areas on that map listed in Table 1.1 should be a little more familiar. These are the labels for the 85 constituencies used in the rest of this book. Most are named after old counties or parts of counties. They were designed to each contain roughly half a million electors (people aged 18 or over) and to combine together those electors who had most in common geographically.

Note these maps are identical to the fold out maps at the end of this book which have been included to allow you to locate places easily without having to turn back to pages 4 and 5 continuously.

Use the list of names in Table 1.1 and the two maps in Figure 1.2 to identify in which constituencies you have lived. If you have difficulty doing this, the full list of which areas make up each constituency is given in the Appendix at the end of this book. Once you have identified your constituency you can see where, on this new map of the UK, you have lived.

Figure 1.1 shows not only each area of the UK drawn roughly in proportion to the size of its population, but also the underlying physical landscape (topography). It also shows the map drawn using a conventional equal-area projection. The disadvantage of using a conventional map is that those areas that are home to most people are obscured in comparison to sparsely populated places which appear most prominent. The advantage of showing a physical topography on both these maps is that it shows that even aspects of



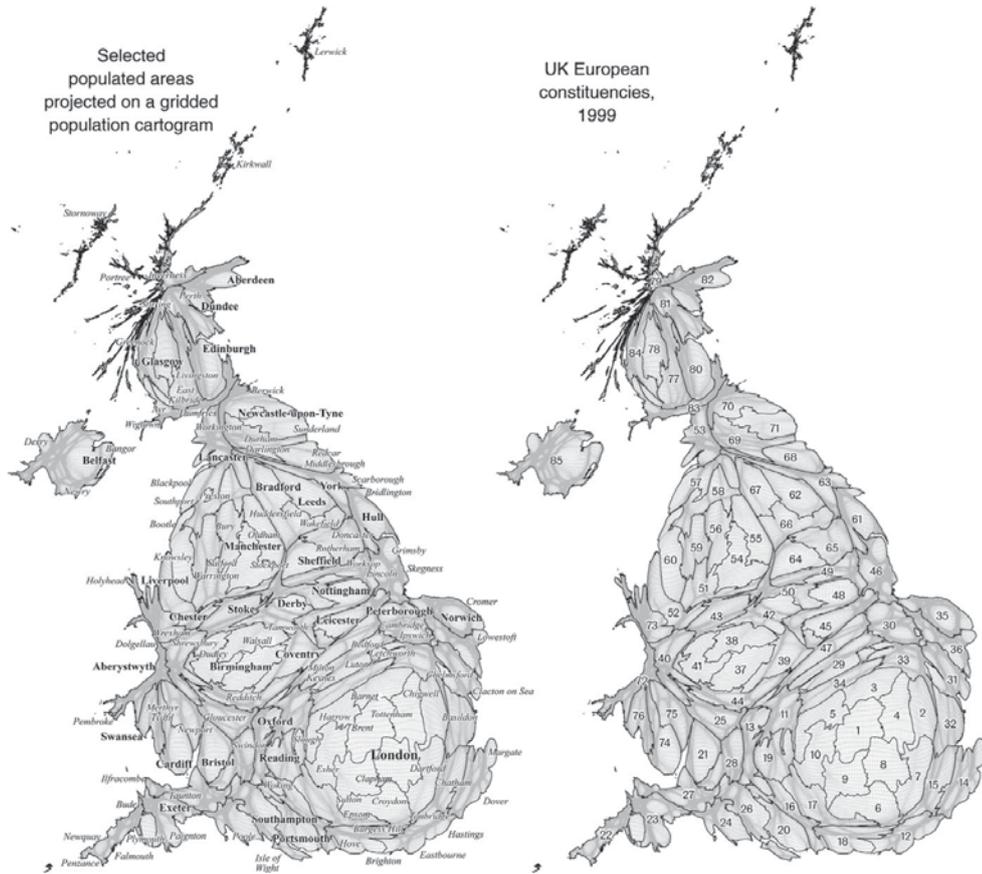


Figure 1.2 Selected population areas and UK European constituencies in 1999

Source: UK European Constituencies obtained from the House of Commons Research Paper 98/102. See Table 1.1, opposite, for the constituency key and page xiv for an enlarged inset of the labelled cartogram.

physical geography can be displayed on a population projection and tell us something new (in this case the altitudes at which people live).

Topography is a familiar depiction: rivers run down mountains; temperature tends to fall as the land rises. In human geography there is no single obvious variable to use to map the basic contours of the social landscape. In the first edition of this book the height on all the maps was drawn in proportion to a child's chances of winning a place to attend university. The result was a little confusing, so here a more detailed but flat equal-population cartogram projection is used. The projection and all the maps included here were created by Ben Hennig (see www.viewsoftheworld.net).

The new map has been created to provide a fairer base to look at the life of a hypothetical university student who turned 18 in the year 2000, and hence (with luck) 30 in the year 2012. Where might that student have come from? Figure 1.3 provides an answer based on how many 15-year-olds attended

Table 1.1 Areas that never existed – UK European constituencies, 1999**London**

- 1 London Central
- 2 London East
- 3 London North
- 4 London North East
- 5 London North West
- 6 London South and Surrey East
- 7 London South East
- 8 London South Inner
- 9 London South West
- 10 London West

South East

- 11 Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire East
- 12 East Sussex and Kent South
- 13 Hampshire North and Oxford
- 14 Kent East
- 15 Kent West
- 16 South Downs West
- 17 Surrey
- 18 Sussex West
- 19 Thames Valley
- 20 Wight and Hampshire South

South West

- 21 Bristol
- 22 Cornwall and West Plymouth
- 23 Devon and East Plymouth
- 24 Dorset and East Devon
- 25 Gloucestershire
- 26 Itchen, Test and Avon
- 27 Somerset and North Devon
- 28 Wiltshire North and Bath

East of England

- 29 Bedfordshire and Milton Keynes
- 30 Cambridgeshire
- 31 Essex North and Suffolk South
- 32 Essex South
- 33 Essex West and Hertfordshire East
- 34 Hertfordshire
- 35 Norfolk
- 36 Suffolk and South West Norfolk

West Midlands

- 37 Birmingham East
- 38 Birmingham West
- 39 Coventry and North Warwickshire
- 40 Herefordshire and Shropshire
- 41 Midlands West
- 42 Staffordshire East and Derby
- 43 Staffordshire West and Congleton
- 44 Worcestershire and South Warwickshire

East Midlands

- 45 Leicester
- 46 Lincolnshire
- 47 Northamptonshire and Blaby
- 48 Nottingham and Leicestershire North West
- 49 Nottinghamshire North and Chesterfield
- 50 Peak District

North West

- 51 Cheshire East
- 52 Cheshire West and Wirral
- 53 Cumbria and Lancashire North
- 54 Greater Manchester Central
- 55 Greater Manchester East
- 56 Greater Manchester West
- 57 Lancashire Central
- 58 Lancashire South
- 59 Merseyside East and Wigan
- 60 Merseyside West

Yorkshire and the Humber

- 61 East Yorkshire and North Lincolnshire
- 62 Leeds
- 63 North Yorkshire
- 64 Sheffield
- 65 Yorkshire South
- 66 Yorkshire South West
- 67 Yorkshire West

North East

- 68 Cleveland and Richmond
- 69 Durham
- 70 Northumbria
- 71 Tyne and Wear

Wales

- 72 Mid and West Wales
- 73 North Wales
- 74 South Wales Central
- 75 South Wales East
- 76 South Wales West

Scotland

- 77 Central Scotland
- 78 Glasgow
- 79 Highlands and Islands
- 80 Lothian
- 81 Mid Scotland and Fife
- 82 North East Scotland
- 83 South of Scotland
- 84 West of Scotland

Northern Ireland

- 85 Ulster (Northern Ireland)

Source: House of Commons Research Paper 98/102 (map on page 49). Available at www.parliament.uk/commons/lib/research/rp98/rp98-102.pdf.

schools in each constituency three years earlier. The Figure records, to the nearest thousand, the number of people within each European constituency area who turned 18 in the year 2000.



Figure 1.3 People aged 18 in 2000

Note: Counts by European Constituency area.

Source: Estimated from school rolls of 15-year-olds in 1997 and 2000 mid-year estimate for Northern Ireland.

Figure 1.3 shows disparities of the order of many thousands in the number of people who turned 18 in each area of Britain in 2000. Part of the pattern will be due to the fact that each constituency was designed to contain roughly half a million voters, not exactly equal numbers of people (there were just over a million voters in the three Northern Ireland seats). To see the degree to which there is actual variation in this population group we need to divide the numbers counted for Figure 1.3 by the total population living in each constituency.

Actual variation can be ascertained by calculating rates. Figure 1.4 shows the 18-year-olds as a proportion of the total population living in each constituency, by

where they were at school when aged 15. The pattern it shows is of low proportions of 18-year-olds living around the south coast, in London and in the centres of some other large cities. The three areas with the lowest proportions were London South Inner, London Central and London South West, followed by Sheffield. What led to less than 1% of the population being aged 18 in these places?



Figure 1.4 Proportion aged 18 in 2000

Source: Estimated from school rolls of 15-year-olds in 1997 and mid-year population estimates for 2000.

Eighteen-year-olds are most likely to come from the more suburban and rural constituencies of the UK. The highest proportions are found in Lancashire South, followed by the West, Centre and Highlands of Scotland then by Cheshire East, Cleveland & Richmond (North Yorkshire) and Yorkshire West. By the time their children are aged 15, a significant proportion of parents have moved their family homes away from the city centres. Later we'll see how many were born in cities and more about this selective migration.

Table 1.2 The two extreme European constituencies compared

London North West				Yorkshire South			
	UCAS	School	%		UCAS	School	%
Harrow East	765	1142	67%	Don Valley	280	1105	25%
Brent East	360	541	67%	Rotherham	215	897	24%
Brent North	590	978	60%	Doncaster Central	250	1165	21%
Hayes & Harlington	265	499	53%	Doncaster North	165	802	21%
Brent South	400	790	51%	Barnsley Central	155	1031	15%
Harrow West	650	1340	49%	Wentworth	185	1324	14%
				Barnsley East and			
Ruislip-Northwood	400	956	42%	Mexborough	165	1396	12%
Uxbridge	280	1156	24%	Rother Valley	140	1240	11%
Total	3710	7402	50%	Total	1555	8960	17%

Note: UCAS = successful applicants; School = number of pupils aged 15.

Source: Estimated from school rolls of 15 year olds in 1997 and mid-year population estimates for 2000.

One reason for the drift of children to the suburbs could perhaps be that some parents are attempting to improve their offspring's life chances by moving house (or flat). For the cohort born in 1982, Figure 1.5 shows the proportion of 18-year-olds who entered higher education from each constituency. It ranges from one-sixth (17%) to half (50%). Although entry from much of Scotland and North Wales is above average, in general higher proportions enter from the suburban and southern constituencies. However, the children with the highest chances of going to university went to school in a city constituency: London North West (50.1% entry), closely followed by more rural Surrey (47.7%).

The constituency where children's chance of going to university was lowest was Yorkshire South (17.4%), where children were almost three times less likely to go to university than in London North West. It is worth noting that the estimate for Northern Ireland is almost certainly an underestimate as it does not include participation of students from Northern Ireland in universities in the Republic of Ireland. What was your chance of going to university? Note that since these statistics were collected most people's chances will have risen, although application to universities in the UK fell in late 2011 as higher fees were announced.

Statistics about people should never be taken at face value. Table 1.2 shows the numbers that were used to calculate the statistics for the most extreme two areas shown in Figure 1.5. The European constituencies of both London North West and Yorkshire South were defined as a combination of eight (1997) UK parliamentary constituencies (see Appendix). Within each European constituency there is a great deal of geographical variation. For instance, taking the extreme two parliamentary constituencies you could claim that children in Harrow East were six times more likely to go to university than children growing up in the Rother Valley. If you wanted to downplay the differences, you

could point out that children in Uxbridge were less likely to go to university than children in the Don Valley. But how reliable are these figures?

Although there may have been 1,156 children aged 15 attending schools in Uxbridge in 1997, more of those children probably lived outside that parliamentary constituency than commuted out of it to go to school. The Universities & Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) figures for entry to university are based on people's home address, not their school's address. We are therefore not strictly comparing like with like, and this is before we start to worry about the migration of children between age 15 and when they apply to university. At the level of the European constituencies such problems are less acute because a far lower proportion of children will cross European constituency boundaries to go to school. Nevertheless, for the data that is presented to you as fact, it always pays to think about where it comes from.



Figure 1.5 Proportion of 18-year-olds going to university in 2000

Source: Successful UCAS under age 21 applicants from National Statistics website and estimated for Scotland and Northern Ireland.

The UCAS data that has been used so far in this chapter is provided on the government's official website for every local government ward in England (www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk). If we knew a reliable count of the population eligible to apply to university from each ward, we could produce statistics that showed even starker geographical differences than those presented so far.

If statistics within one country are difficult to interpret, check and understand, the statistics that compare rates between countries are even more problematic. Figure 1.6 presents participation rates for this cohort when in secondary education for 14 Western European countries. The rate for the UK (highlighted, at 32%) was very low in comparison with most other countries and surprisingly similar to the rate entering universities some four years after this data was collected. Note that this is the 'full-time' participation rate and note when the data was collected.

A large part of the reason for the overall level of university entry in the UK having been low in the recent past was due to a traditionally low level of staying on at school past the compulsory age of 16 (it is rising soon). For instance, in Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany the school leaving age has been 18 for many years. When trying to estimate a child's chances of going to university what matters most is that they grew up in an affluent area like the UK, but one which traditionally has had low participation at age 18. The next most

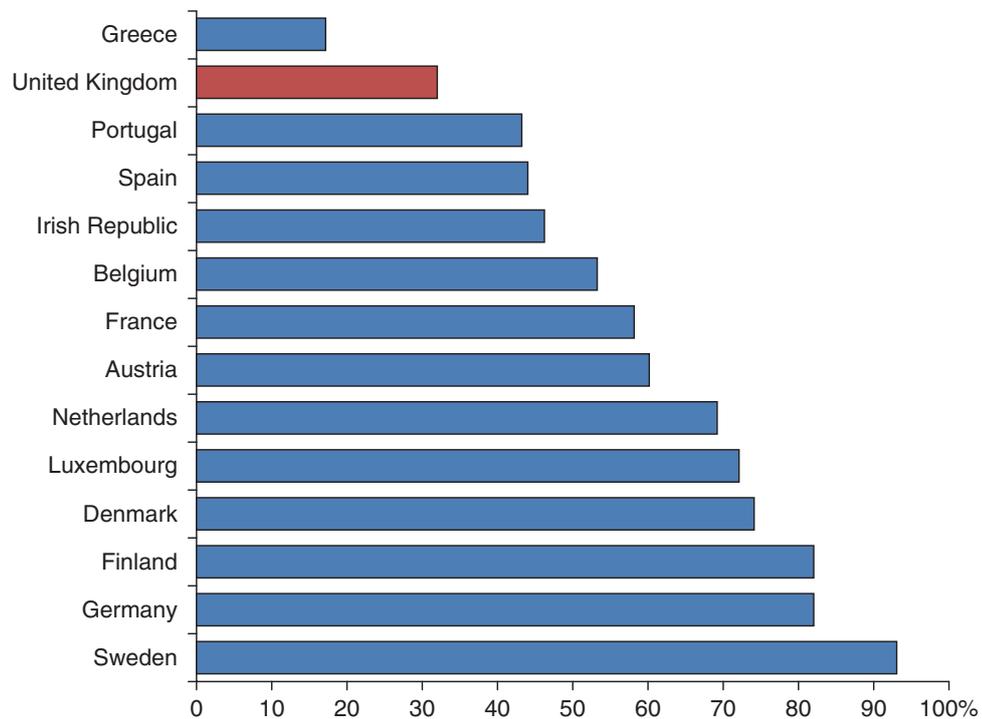


Figure 1.6 Educational participation rates at age 18 in Western Europe

Note: UK highlighted; data for Italy was missing.

Source: Full-time participation in secondary education at age 18 in 1996, *Social Trends 30*.

important factor after that is also geographical: where they grew up within the UK, as rates vary so much by area.

How do we know that location is so important in determining an 18-year-old's chances of going to university? Surely it could just be that children growing up in better-off families are more likely to go and those families are concentrated in particular places? Well, the advantage of counting these things is that we can check these ideas.

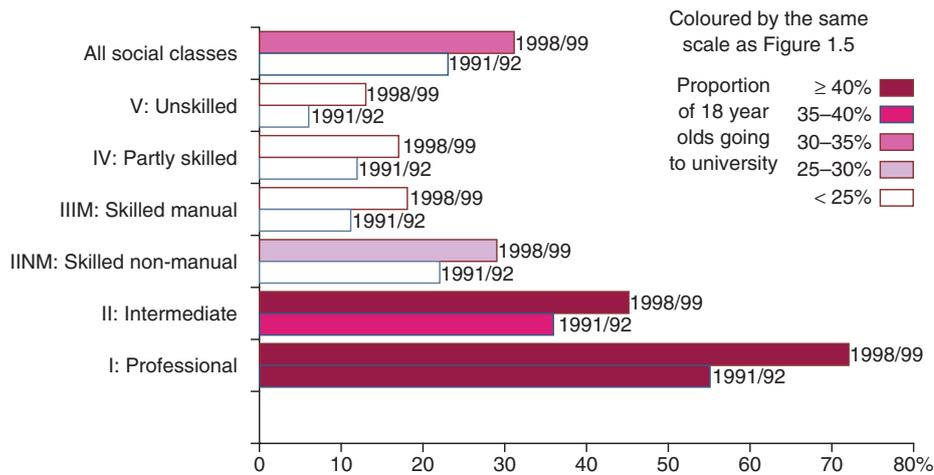


Figure 1.7 People under 21 attending university by social class

Note: The six social classes shown above are based on the occupations of the parents of those young adults whose chances are being depicted.

Source: *Social Trends 30*, data from the National Statistics website (for GB).

Figure 1.7 shows the increasing proportions of students attending university according to the occupations of their parents. The distribution is very uneven, became more uneven during the 1990s, but it (not shown with this data) had become slightly more equitable by 2010. Back at the turn of the millennium, 72% of the children of parents in professional occupations were going to university as compared to 13% of the children of parents in occupations labelled as unskilled. The graph is coloured by the same shades as were used in Figure 1.5. Looking at this graph you might be led to believe that it was these differences that account for the geography of participation shown in Figure 1.5 earlier. How do we go about checking that?

For each European constituency we know the proportion of children (aged 0–15) of parents of different occupations as recorded in the 1991 census. Those children had an average age of between 7 and 8 in 1991 and so are roughly representative of our 18-year-old adults in 2000 – those who are in their early thirties now. The social profile of areas also tends to change only slowly over time. Areas with lots of people in professional occupations in one year tend to have lots of people in those occupations in the next year. Thus the social profile of children by area by the class of their parents can be expected to have been fairly constant since 1991.

So, given that we know the proportion of children in each social class in each area and the proportion of children from each social class who go to university, what would we expect the proportion of children going to universities from any given area to be?

For our two extreme constituencies Table 1.3 presents the proportions of children in each social class using the same labels as in Figure 1.7. More than twice as many 1990s children had parents in social class I (professional) in London North West (9%) when compared to Yorkshire South (4%). More than twice as many children in Yorkshire South (7%) had parents in unskilled occupations as in London North West (3%). The two constituencies look to have had very different social profiles. In a way they did, at the extremes, but in each roughly three-quarters of all children have parents in social classes II, IIINM and IIIM (combined). How might these differing constituency social profiles be expected to result in differing numbers of children going to university from these two places?

The mathematics for a prediction can be very simple. Here we just take the national proportion of children going to university in each social class and multiply that by the proportion of children in that class in each place to produce a prediction of what proportion of children of each class in each place we would expect to have gone to university in the last decade. Thus we would expect 72% of the 9% of children in social class I in London North West to have gone to university: 72% of 9% = 7%. Summing the predicted proportions for London North West suggests that 33% of children there should have gone to university. Doing the same for Yorkshire South suggests 27% should have gone if class alone determined a child's future.

We know that the actual proportions of 18-year-olds going to university from the two extreme constituencies was 50% and 17%, which were 17% higher and 10% lower than we might predict. To put it another way, allowing for the differing social class profiles of these areas only helps to explain 6% (33% - 27%) of the 33% (50% - 17%) variation between them, or about

Table 1.3 Children by social class and predicted university entry rates (percentages)

Children by social class	I	II	IIINM	IIIM	IV	V	Total
London North West	9	34	14	30	9	3	100
Yorkshire South	4	22	9	41	18	7	100
GB % going to University	72	45	29	18	17	13	31
Predicted proportions							
London North West	7	15	4	5	2	0	33
Yorkshire South	3	10	3	7	3	1	27
Actual proportions							
London North West							50
Yorkshire South							17

Source: 1991 Census 10% statistics and *Social Trends 30*, data from the National Statistics website (for GB), 1998/99 (for class labels). NM = Non Manual, M = Manual.

one-sixth of the geographical variation. Although there are very great differences in university entry rates between the chances of children whose parents have different occupations, the distribution of children by social class does not vary that greatly geographically. At least it does not vary that greatly between these areas, which each contain roughly half a million electors. Each of these large areas has its share of children from better-off and worse-off families. For the places where most and least go to university, the differing social profiles of these areas only explain a minor part of the differing levels of university entrance.

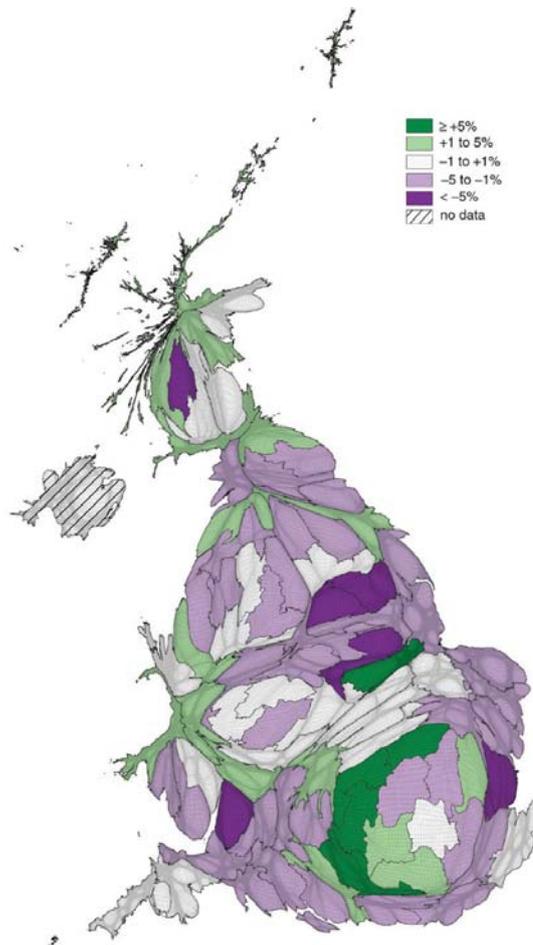


Figure 1.8 Differences between observed and expected university entry rates allowing for the geography of children's social class

Note: Northern Ireland is excluded as no comparable census data was available.

Source: Successful UCCAs under age 21 applicants from National Statistics website.

Figure 1.8 presents the results of subtracting the proportion of children we might have expected to have gone to university in each area from the proportion who actually did go. The largest positive discrepancy was London North West

at 17%. Other areas where more children went than might have been predicted included Surrey (+9%), London West (+8%), London North (+7%) and Leicester (+6%). Areas where fewer go than were predicted to go were headed by Yorkshire South (rounded to -9% on this map), Bristol (-7%), Essex South (-6%), Sheffield (-6%) and Nottinghamshire & Leicestershire North West (-6%). The map is shaded using two colours to highlight the divergence between places where many more and far fewer than the expected proportions went to university. Since the late 1990s geographical divisions in entry chances have reduced slightly, but remain similar. Social class thus still only explained part of the map of university entry for people aged around 30 in 2012.

What could have accounted for the remaining variation between these areas? The answer is likely to be many different things. There are often no simple single explanations to demographic patterns, and this is part of what makes the population of the UK so interesting. Analysing statistics such as these allows new ideas to be generated on the basis of current knowledge, which in turn can be analysed until there is little left to try to explain. For instance, the desire to leave the most remote parts of Scotland, North Wales, Northumberland and North Yorkshire could drive children to try particularly hard to get to university. The school segregation in other areas might influence their children to achieve lower than average marks in their exams (we look at GCSE exam results for this age group by these areas later). There are more university places in the South and centre of England and so more children from areas in this central belt might apply to universities as they are nearer home. There are many possible explanations.

The most important point that this introductory example makes is that it is not possible to reduce something as superficially simple as university entry into a purely social process whereby different social groups experience different chances and those social differences are what the map of university entry rates portrays. There is much more to the map of 18-year-olds' chances of attending university than that.

AN EXERCISE

(6 to 600 players)

You do not need a computer, or even a piece of paper and pen, to draw a map. Human bodies themselves will suffice. Here is a recipe for drawing a map of the geographical origins of a room of students. 'Cooking time' is about 10 minutes, although allow slightly longer when undertaking this exercise with over 100 students.

- 1 Each student needs to decide where they 'come from' (were born), i.e. their home city and suburb. If a student comes from outside the UK, that is fine – they will simply be appended to one of the edges of the map we are about to draw.



- 2 Determine the four corners of your map. Who comes from the furthest North East, North West, South East and South West? These four students need to move to stand at the top right, top left, bottom right and bottom left of the classroom/lecture theatre respectively.
- 3 Now all the other students must begin to sort themselves out in the map of where they come from. Begin by sorting yourselves out from North to South. The further North you come from, the further back in the room you need to be. Ask your neighbours directly in front of and behind you where they are from to work out if you are in the wrong place.
- 4 Now sort yourselves out from East to West. The further East you are from, the further right you should be along the row you are in. Again, by asking your neighbours (either side of you) where they are from, you should be able to work out if you are in the wrong place. Here left and right are as viewed by an observer looking at you from the front of the room.
- 5 Now check with all four of your nearest neighbours (those to your left and right and those in front of and behind you) to find out if they come from further East of you, further West, further South and further North of you respectively. If they don't, you need to move around a little more.
- 6 Finally, all shuffle in towards the centre of the room to end up with just an arm's length between you and your four nearest neighbours. Once you have done this you will have created a map of space in which the area in the room is arranged in proportion to the population of students in your class by their areas of origin.

Having created your own map of the UK, what you next use it for is up to you. If you are undertaking this exercise in an 'old university', your map is likely to include most of the UK as people tend to travel further away from their areas of origin. However, what are the geographical biases in your distribution? Where does the person in the centre of your map come from? Further South or North than most people in the country?

For reference, the central constituency in Figure 1.2 is the Peak District in Derbyshire (area 50). If you are undertaking this exercise in a school, then your map is likely to be of a only very small part of one country – but it is still a map drawn in proportion to you. Does the person in the centre of your map live closest to your school? If not, why not? Next you could begin to look for geographical differences among yourselves. If at university, then sit down if you took a 'gap year' before starting your studies. If at school, sit down if you intend to go to university (or take a gap year). Did more students to the South or North of your particular map of Britain sit down?

You could divide the class into groups depending on where they originate from and then poll those groups to see if there are differences in their attitudes, say, to voting. These polls can be done anonymously on scraps of paper. The point is that even within one room there are likely to be geographical patterns. These are patterns which cannot simply be explained



by the social, economic or political backgrounds, statuses and beliefs of those being counted.

[Note: This game can easily be played for other countries and regions in the world if students have some link to those. If playing this game in the Southern Hemisphere, it is customary to place South towards the back of the room rather than North. An advanced version of the game, designed to simulate the panic that can ensue following epidemic disease outbreak, involves all students forming the original map as described above, but then trying to move to be as far away from their four geographical neighbours as possible while still remaining in the room. This version is best not played with students under age 18 or classes of more than 60 given the consequences.]

Conclusion

To understand the population of the UK you need to understand geographical and historical circumstances as much as social, political and economic processes. It can take a little time to get used to the social landscape of the UK if you have not seen it before. Look again at Figure 1.5 and follow this account of the human life-chance contours it reveals.

The social landscape is lowest, and the ground most fertile for prospective students, in a T-shaped valley which encompasses the northern and western suburbs of London stretching out from there to Oxford in the west and to Surrey in the south. Surrounding that valley is a plain only a little less fertile than the valley itself. From central London it reaches down to the Sussex coast, across the South Downs, up the Thames Valley to Hampshire, then across to Gloucestershire, Somerset, Dorset and Devon. The northern border of the plain stretches from Shropshire, through Herefordshire, Warwickshire, Northamptonshire, Leicestershire, Cambridgeshire, Bedfordshire, Suffolk, ending at the Essex coast. Around the plain are found the foothills of more stony ground where life chances are a little less sure for the children of North East and South East London, Kent, the Hampshire coast, Southampton, Wiltshire, Bristol, Cornwall and most of Wales, the Midlands and the North West of England.

The land of Britain tends to rise as you move northwards, both topographically and in terms of barriers to life chances. There is a particularly noticeable cliff in socioeconomic space as you cross into the north of Nottinghamshire and up to the highlands of Greater Manchester (East), into Sheffield, the rest of South Yorkshire and East Yorkshire. Further north the human geography of the land becomes mountainous again in Tyne & Wear and across most of Scotland, with the highest peak in the UK being Glasgow. Northern Ireland is part of the uplands. There are some dips within the North and West, but these are not extensive enough to form anything approximating the great southern plain and there is no fertile valley in the North. These dips include parts of Mid & West Wales, Cheshire, Central Lancashire, Northumbria, Southern Scotland and Edinburgh.



The human landscape of the UK is not dissimilar to its physical geography. However, even in the North, cities tend to have been built in small valleys whereas in this landscape they can form great mountains. There is no need for water to flow to the sea over a landscape made up of human chances. It is just fortunate from the point of view of engaging the imagination that, if you think of the River Thames running between South East and North West London, the human geography topology is also a plausible set of physical contours, although, had we the space to draw them, we would not draw rivers on the maps in this book but motorways, railways, airports and sea crossings. These are the rivers which carry people over the land. However, drawing these would have complicated the maps further.

Further Reading

Books like this one often tell you that there are many other books you should read. This is true, but usually unhelpful. Almost everyone who reads about further reading then ignores it. Many people are not like you and have already skipped this part. Congratulations, you are a little different, work harder and are more likely to be okay if you persevere. Of those who start off with similar life chances, born around the same time, in the same place and class, it tends to be the ones who persevere a little more who do better. However, those who try hardest but come from the poorer areas and classes tend to have worse chances than those who are a little lazier, but start off a bit more privileged. If you want an interesting place to go to begin reading about these issues and especially about how they influence people living in the UK, then I would suggest you start with the government statistical agencies' on-line publication *Social Trends*: http://data.gov.uk/dataset/social_trends. However, it can be a little dull, so if you want something more lively have a look at the work of the Equality Trust: www.equalitytrust.org.uk or, for the nearest thing to the nemesis of that Trust to be found amongst campaigning websites, visit: www.taxpayersalliance.com.

Key Point Summary

- It is helpful to look at the population of the UK with a map based on that population.
- Life chances can be shown on such a map, such as the chance of going to university.
- Such chances alter over time, across space and are often influenced by social class.

