

## **Chapter 25**

### **Changes in Social Inequality, 2001-2011**

Danny Dorling

#### **Abstract**

This chapter will ascertain the extent to which the 2011 Census can be used to assess how social and spatial inequalities across the United Kingdom have risen or fallen since 2001. It is illustrated by cartograms that show how census data can be visualized. These cartograms are a small selection drawn from *People and Places: A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Atlas of the UK* by Dorling and Thomas (2016). The chapter illustrates how it is now possible to visualize census data and change between censuses to see the extent to which the population are becoming more concentrated in particular areas and which groups of people are concentrating where.

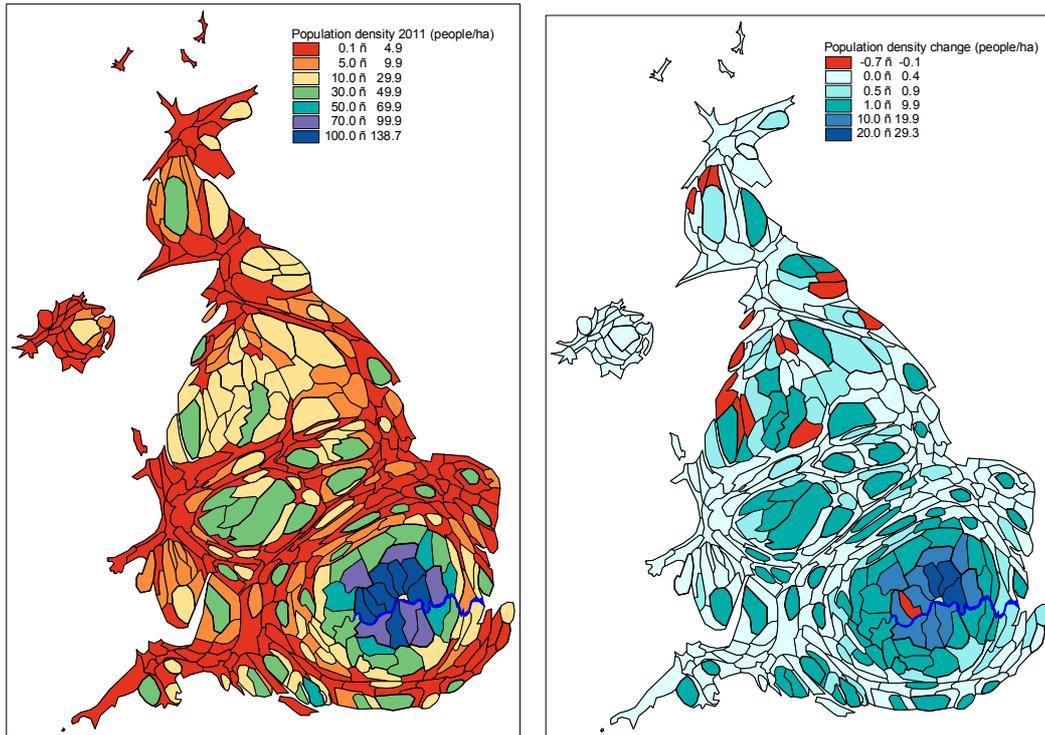
#### **25.1 Introduction**

Social inequality has many meanings and many key aspects of social inequality cannot be studied through a population census that does not ask people about their income or wealth. However, the censuses do ask questions that make it possible to draw some general conclusions as to the direction of travel within UK society. In this chapter, we use census data to demonstrate that social and geographical polarization continued to grow in the 2000s. The chapter reveals that the south of England continued to prosper far more than the north, Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland. This represents a continuation and possibly an acceleration of earlier trends.

The two maps of local authorities in the North and the South (Figures 25.1 and 25.2) provide a key to all the cartograms used in this chapter. Each local authority district is drawn here with its area proportional to its population. The cartograms have been drawn to ensure that every local authority district remains contiguous with its actual neighbours. The colours used in these first two maps are simply chosen so differentiate between the areas. The boundaries of major cities have a slightly thicker black outline.







a. Population density

b. Density change

**Figure 25.3** Population density in 2011 and change, 2001-2011

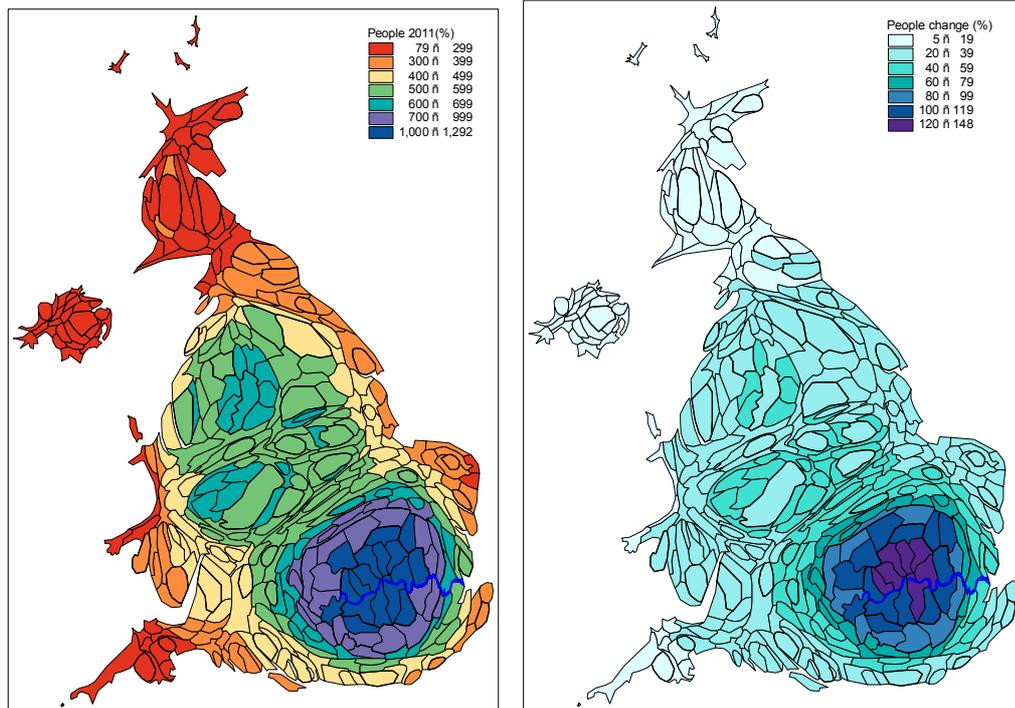
Figure 25.3b shows density change between 2001 and 2011 and makes it clear that most people in the UK have not experienced this rise. Some 68% saw a fall or no noticeable rise in population density where they lived. In contrast, 5% of the population in 2011 lived in areas that had seen an additional 10 people or more resident per hectare since 2001. That is an extra one person for every 1,000 m<sup>2</sup> in their localities. A large detached house with a large garden covers an area of that size, so it is as if one more person has arrived in such a house in each place. Of course, in the densely populated parts of the UK, there are very few such houses and many terraced houses or blocks of flats and so, in reality, it is simply an extra person arriving, net, in one of the many properties that cover a space of 1,000 m<sup>2</sup> in these districts.

All of the districts of very rapid population growth were in London. They are the areas coloured blue in Figure 25.3b and most of them are in Inner London. The sole exception is Kensington and Chelsea where the population

actually fell even as many more rooms were added to properties there through extensive basement extensions and similar building work.

The censuses allow us to measure the change in the number of rooms in a district as well as people (Tunstall, 2015). Social inequality has increased even when simply measured by the increase in population where there already were the most people in most of the UK. Already overcrowded areas became, in general, more overcrowded. Further analysis of the census reveals that already overcrowded areas became more overcrowded within those properties in which people were already most crammed; they saw the greatest rise in densities. Elsewhere, even within London boroughs, other houses acquired more rooms and/or fewer people to occupy those rooms, so that overall, the living space was shared less and less efficiently.

Population potential is a measure of how near someone is to everyone else. It can be calculated for a single state such as the UK, or for any point on the planet taking into account everyone else on the planet. It is measured as the sum of all people in every other district when each group of people are divided by how far away they are from the centre of their district, with distance here measured in metres. The population of the district for which potential is being calculated is not included, but every other district in the UK is. A low population potential is a measure of the remoteness of that district. The place with the highest population potential in the UK in 2011 was the City of London with a surrounding pressure of 1,292 people per metre away from its centre, 149 people per metre higher than the measure recorded in 2001. Population potential has risen the most where it was highest to begin with. That is, because population growth was concentrated in London in the 2000s, it is almost exclusively within London that people have experienced the arrival of large numbers of additional people, far more than have left. Migration is the key reason for this rise.



a. Population potential

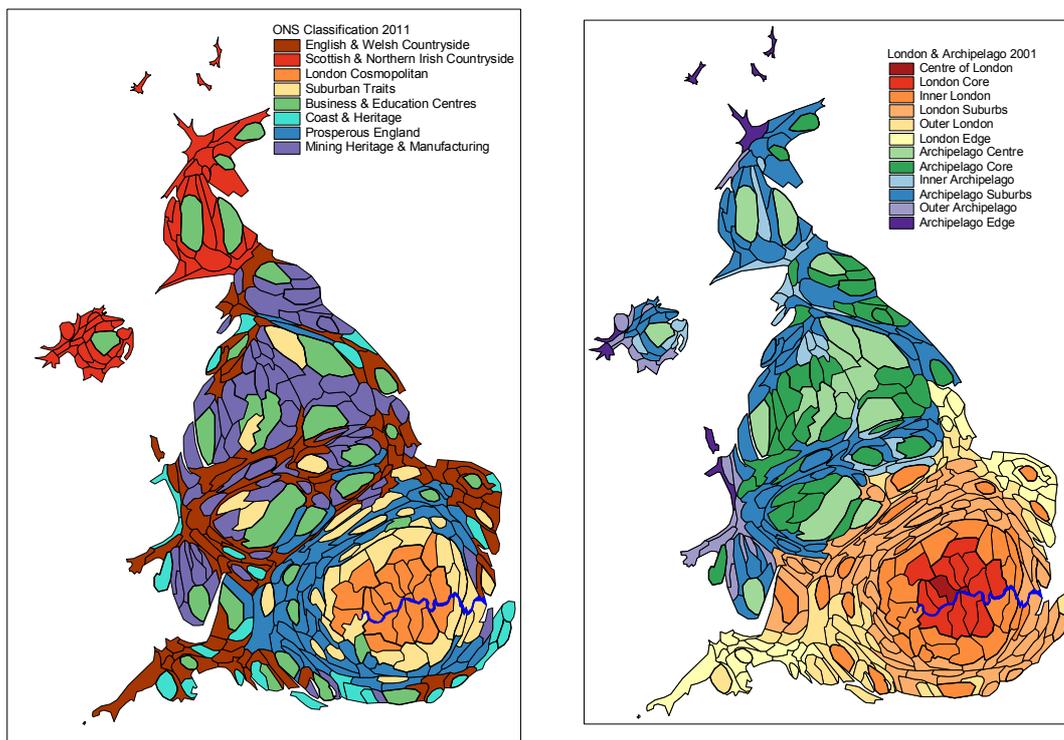
b. Change in potential

**Figure 25.4** Population potential in 2011 and change, 2001-11

It would have been possible for population density to have become more polarised and population potential to have become less polarised had the northern cities of England and Cardiff, Belfast, Edinburgh and Glasgow grown more quickly than London; then, the population potential across the UK would have become more evenly distributed despite the populations of cities still growing more quickly than rural areas. The opposite happened. Planning controls meant that it was mainly in the cities that any growth occurred, but that growth was far higher within London than elsewhere. Thus, if you wish to place a business within a certain number of miles of a very large market, the nearer you place it to London, the larger that market will be and this became even more the case in 2011 as compared to 2001. Social inequality in terms of remoteness and centrality also rose between the 2001 and 2011 Censuses.

### 25.3 Area classifications

Following the release of the 2011 Census, the Office for National Statistics' (ONS) produced its own classification of areas based upon the data collected. This is shown in the first of the pair of maps in Figure 25.5. There are 77 local authority districts labelled by the ONS as 'Mining Heritage and Manufacturing' centres. On average in these places, representing just 0.3% of the population, were affluent enough to qualify for inhabitants to pay inheritance tax upon their deaths in 2011; that proportion rose to 0.4% in 2012 and 0.5% in 2013 (Dorling and Thomas, 2016). Slightly better off are the 53 areas labelled 'Scottish and Northern Irish Countryside', in which the respective proportions were 0.6% in 2011, 0.7% in 2012 and 0.9% in 2013; less than one person in every one hundred had been dying with enough wealth to qualify to pay inheritance tax. This is an example of how it is possible to combine census and tax data to show just how few people are very rich within the ONS 2011 Census classification areas.



a. ONS classification

b. London and the Archipelago classification

**Figure 25.5** ONS and London and the Archipelago classifications of local authority districts

The second area classification in Figure 25.5 is one that Bethan Thomas and I first produced shortly after 2001 following the release of data from that census. In that classification, six groups of places in the south of England are *London Areas* and the rest of the UK is divided into six other areas, mainly because of their differing levels of remoteness and all described as parts of an *Archipelago*. Thus, in the rest of this chapter when the discussion is about the London Areas what is meant is what you might think of as southern England. The reason for using the term 'London' is that London has come to so dominate areas in the south of England. It is distance from London that tends to determine, above any other factor anyone has been able to measure, whether an area in the south of England appears to perform poorly or well economically. House prices depend most on distance from London, salaries, average levels of qualifications and excuses for giving ever greater remuneration become most far-fetched the further into the centre of London you travel.

In contrast, once outside the six 'London' areas, the UK becomes split up into an archipelago of economic islands of mild prosperity – the successful university cities of the periphery – the old centres of industry. And then, the further you are from any of those mildly prosperous archipelago islands, the worse many economic conditions appear to become. House prices fall, salaries and wages are lower, and more people are existing on benefits, average qualifications are lower and the vilification of people for not being able to do or get a job (and calling them scroungers) grows. What Owen Jones termed "*the demonization of the working class*" in his 2012 book, *Chavs*, is mainly a demonization of the working class of the remoter parts of the North, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

The division into 12 regions shown above in the second cartogram in Figure 25.5 was produced because, when Bethan Thomas and I finished our analysis of the 2001 Census, we came to the conclusion that the 2001 Census had revealed the United Kingdom to be dividing very quickly and very abruptly. It is a good basis for the study of changes since 2001 as it was defined in 2001 and so, unlike the ONS 2011 classification, it was not partly defined by what you might also want to use it to measure.

The first six of 12 regions all had London in their titles: *London Centre*, *London Core*, *Inner London*, *London Suburbs*, *Outer London*, and *London Edge*. None of the last three of these regions actually included any area that was or is formally part of London, but London was included in their titles because distance to London had such a dominant effect on their fortunes in the years between 1991 and 2001. Thus, all of the south of England was labelled *The London Areas*, stretching as far north as Lincolnshire and as far west as Cornwall.

Census (and other) migration data can be studied to reveal that Londoners retire to Lincolnshire and holiday in Cornwall. The most affluent had their second homes in such places. The poorest of southerners might one day end their days in the cheaper parts of the great metropolis' outer edges. The index of deprivation that was published in September 2015 revealed poverty rates rising around the periphery of the south of England, especially along the east coast. This was presumably because families with very little were being pushed out of areas that had become too expensive in the south or could not move to places like east London anymore to try their luck. East London had gentrified.

For several decades there has been a distinct lack of much migration out of the south of England across the outer border of the London Areas – in a northerly direction across what had been the old North/South divide. Occasionally a reporter from a southern newspaper would venture out of their southern comfort zone and do a little tour of the North. Politicians mostly only headed out of these areas when they needed votes. The affluent youth of the south might venture north for a few years to be university students. However, in recent years it has been Reading, Bristol, and Exeter universities that have grown most in student numbers. For decade after decade, far more northerners moved south than southerners ever crossed north and west. And then, since 2001, migration from abroad also began to become more and more concentrated in London and the South.

The remaining six regions of the UK that Bethan Thomas and I identified following the release of the 2001 Census, we termed the *Archipelago*. These were those places centred on a string of urban centres all well over an hour and a half commuting time from London by the fastest form of travel. The largest of these is centred on what is now called the *Northern Powerhouse* of Manchester,

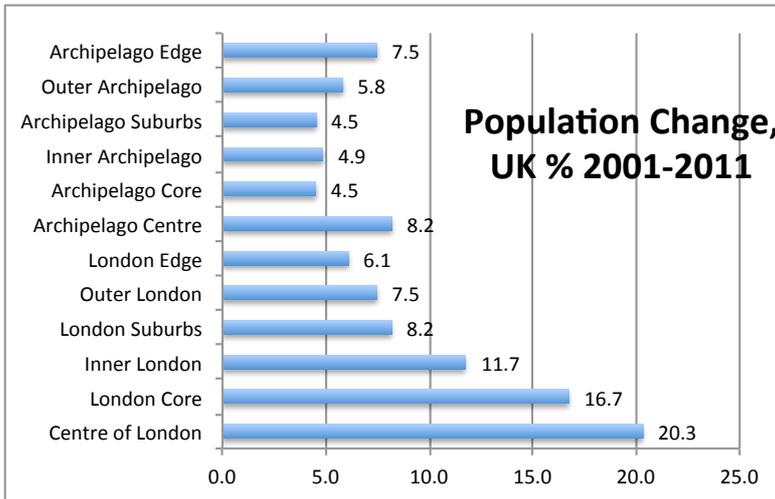
connected by old railway lines through to Leeds and Sheffield. Less well connected again are the islands of Cardiff, Birmingham, Liverpool, Newcastle, Belfast, Glasgow and Edinburgh. These are all highpoints in the sea of peripheral places. Around many of these places is what we called the *Archipelago Core* – economically lower-lying land but still part of this string of islands. Then there was the *Inner Archipelago* that you can see defined in Figure 25.5b – places a little less well connected again; then the large mass of *Archipelago Suburbs* – places from which you might commute to a peripheral centre; and then there is the beginnings of the *Outer Archipelago*; and finally the most isolated places of all, the *Archipelago Edge*. These are areas that were most often left behind in the past, and that appear behind the times now.

*London and the Archipelago* was how Bethan and I summed up the new human geography that the 2001 Census had revealed. It did not matter where a place was in the South, or what people did there. Irrespective of all that, in the 1990s it would prosper just because it was in the South. Living in the new expanded London Areas became more prosperous but less easy, more overcrowded and more stressful.

#### **25.4 Rising social inequality**

The most basic demographic change is in the numbers of people living in each part of the UK and this has been highlighted in the cartograms above. By 2011, it was clear that the greatest population increases since 2001 had been in the Centre of London (+20.3%), followed by London Core (+16.7%), and what we called Inner London (+11.7%); all these places having between two and almost five times faster population increases than those seen in both the Core and the Suburbs of the Archipelago (+4.5%). The outer regions of the Archipelago and the Edge did not see such slower population growth, with the Edge experiencing the national average rise of 7.5%, the same change as in what we termed the new Outer London (the area just outside of the Greater London Authority). It is possible that the start of a counterurbanisation is taking place with very remote areas seeing a slight revival in their populations. This is only visible on a graph (Figure 25.6). The Archipelago Centre may well buck the trend because universities there were continuing to expand, but even given that expansion in

student numbers, the rise in population was small compared to that experienced within the three most central London regions. Table 25.1 shows the number of people living in each region and how that changed between the censuses.



**Figure 25.6** Population change (%) by region in the UK, 2001-2011

**Table 25.1** Population by region, 2001 and 2011, absolute and relative change

Region	2001	2011	Increase	% increase
1 Centre of London	188,000	227,000	39,000	20.3
2 London Core	2,841,000	3,316,000	475,000	16.7
3 Inner London	6,973,000	7,792,000	819,000	11.7
4 London Suburbs	9,902,000	10,711,000	809,000	8.2
5 Outer London	4,603,000	4,946,000	343,000	7.5
6 London Edge	3,760,000	3,989,000	229,000	6.1
7 Archipelago Centre	6,903,000	7,468,000	565,000	8.2
8 Archipelago Core	7,778,000	8,129,000	351,000	4.5
9 Inner Archipelago	2,346,000	2,460,000	114,000	4.9
10 Archipelago Suburbs	11,217,000	11,725,000	508,000	4.5
11 Outer Archipelago	1,722,000	1,822,000	100,000	5.8
12 Archipelago Edge	556,000	598,000	42,000	7.5
UK	58,789,000	63,182,000	4,393,000	7.5

The population change that has occurred in each of our 12 regions can be broken down in many ways. It is possible to look at the change in people working in each part of the country by this regional classification, the qualifications they have, the kinds of jobs they have, where they come from and what kinds of

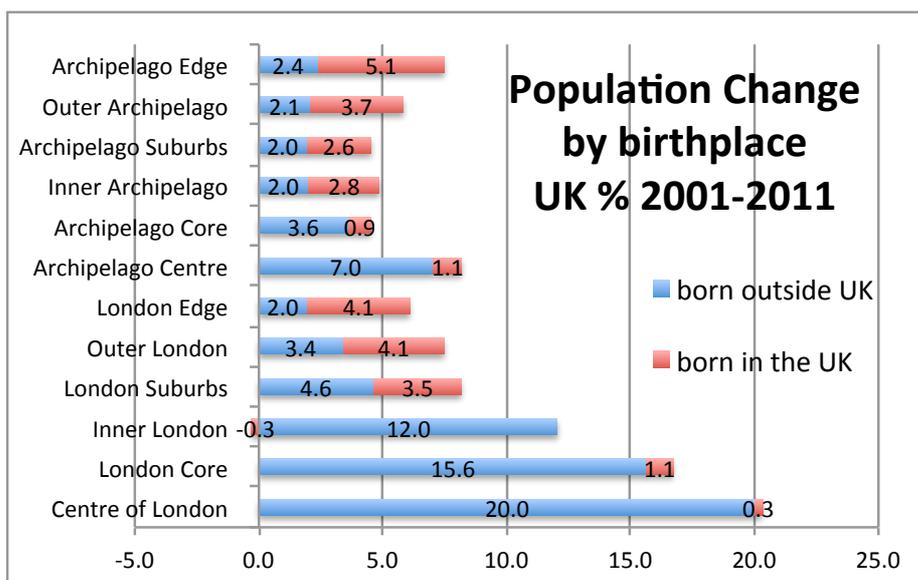
families they form, if any. Increasing numbers of young people in the London Areas have to delay forming families because the cost of housing there has risen so much and we can begin to see the implications of that in all kinds of other trends.

There are advantages to viewing the UK as split between two groups of six regions. Within this new classification, areas are viewed differently from the stereotypical idea of where they are and hence how the population within them might normally be expected to behave given the traditional regional typology. Take, for example, the district of Nuneaton in Warwickshire. This area is normally viewed as a former textile and manufacturing centre in the Midlands of England, but those are industries that largely disappeared from the area decades ago. Nuneaton is now largely a dormitory town for surrounding areas to which people commute for office work. It is still home to some electronics and other light industries, but not that many. Politically, from the general elections of 1935 through to 1983, Nuneaton was a safe Labour seat; but in both 2010 and 2015, its voters returned a Conservative MP, doubling his majority in the most recent election.

According to the regional classification used here, Nuneaton has been part of what Bethan and I have called 'London Suburbs' since at least 2001. Thought of that way, there is nothing special about Nuneaton. People behave in that district much more like people in the other areas we have labelled as London suburbs, partly because, increasingly, they are similar people and these are becoming more similar places: *"Nuneaton has not one but two shopping centres in its centre. If it's not market day, then both can look a little forlorn. The main shopping area, which includes the Abbeygate centre, boasts a number of betting shops, moneylenders, and no fewer than 22 charity shops. Inside the Myton Hospices shop, Marian Ferris reckoned coach parties from as far away as Bath came to savour the unique consumer experience of Nuneaton's abundance of charity shops. There were plans, she said, for Marks and Spencer to return to the town. "That will lift spirits. And they say Primark is coming here too. That will really lift Nuneaton"* (Anthony, 2015).

In September 2015, the Deputy Governor of the Bank of England linked increased immigration, which is part of the reason for the rapid rises in people in ethnic minority groups in some parts of London (and the centre of the Archipelago), to the growth in low wage groups there. He said: *“Perhaps easier immigration has made low-skilled labour easier to come by...”* (Milliken, 2015). Census analysis reveals that a majority of the London population growth that has occurred in recent years is due to an increase in people living in the south of England who were not born in the UK. In 2001, there were 4.9 million people living in the UK who were not born in the UK. That number grew to 8 million by 2011. Of the net increase of 3.1 million non-UK born people living in the UK by 2011, 2 million was of a rise in the non-UK born population within the six London Areas. That contrasts with a 0.7 million increase in the UK-born population of the London Areas over that same decade.

Only at the London Edge and in what we here call Outer London (which – remember – is outside traditional London) has the bulk of the increase in population been of people born in the UK (Figure 25.7). Even in the London Suburbs, a majority of population increase has been due to a greater increase in the non-UK born population. In Nuneaton, the UK born population rose by 2,630 between the censuses (from 114,127 to 116,757); the non-UK born population is still very small but rose by 3,480 (from 5,015 to 8,495).

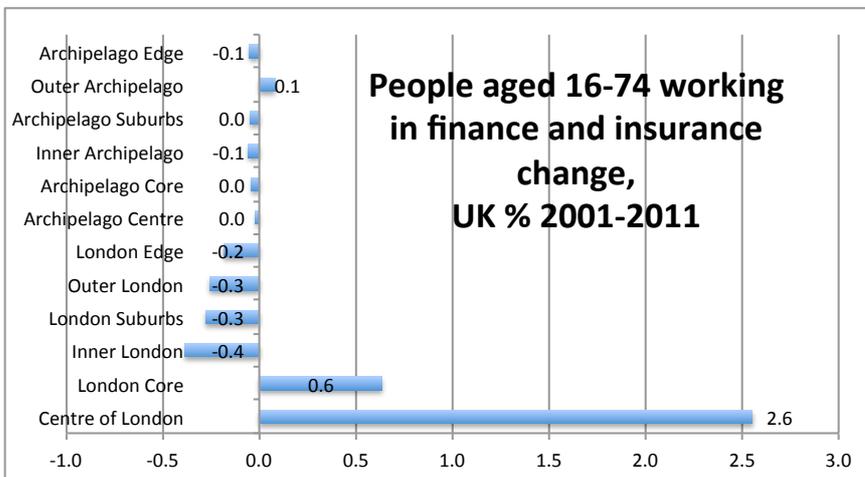


**Figure 25.7** Population change (%) by region and birthplace in the UK 2001-2011

Further out from the London suburbs, you find that the rising UK born population are mostly of elderly people moving away from London, but managing to still remain in the South, if only on its edge. It is true that even on the edge of the Archipelago there has been an increase in non-UK born that is considerable. But proportionally it is eight times smaller than the increase in non-UK born in the Centre of London. The statistics in the graph shown in Figure 25.7 are of the increase in population of each group as a proportion of the total population of both groups combined (in others words, all people) in 2001. The only area to see a reduction in either group is Inner London, where the UK born population fell fractionally.

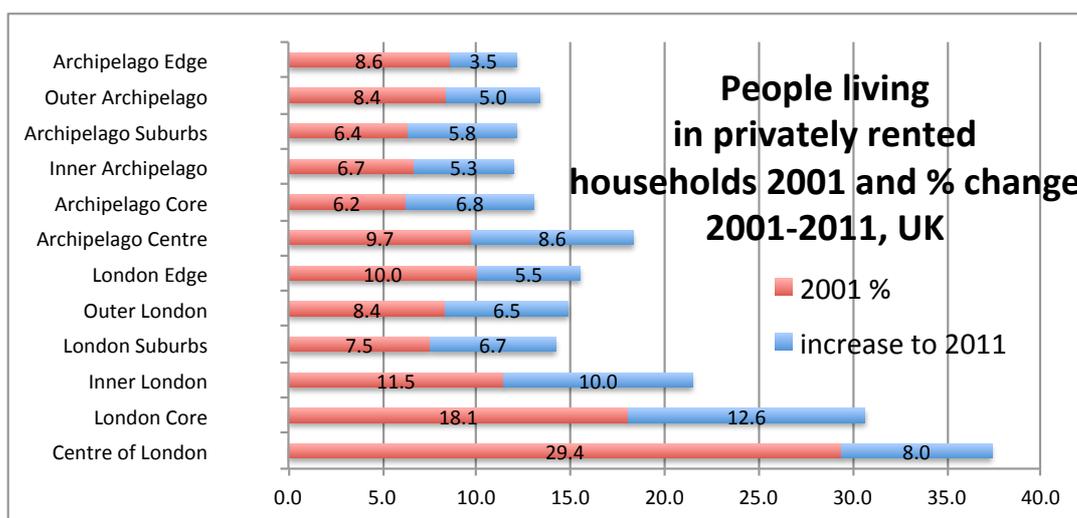
### 25.6 A concentration of bankers and landlords

To determine where the ‘haves’ might be, look first at the finance and Insurance sector (Figure 25.8). Between 2001 and 2011, it was in the Centre of London that those jobs became more common. To be exact it was in the very heart of London that the proportion of people holding those jobs was increasingly likely to be sleeping on census day, Sunday 27 March 2011. The rise of 2.6% and 0.6% in the heart of the capital is what now underpins the huge differences between average salaries and wages seen in these parts of London and those enjoyed or just survived on elsewhere. The census shows us the changes that underlie so much more.



**Figure 25.8** Change in share (%) of the entire population working in finance and insurance by region in the UK, 2001-2011

Take, for example, those who have to pay rent to private landlords (Figure 25.9). The number of people who had a private landlord almost doubled in what we define as Inner London to become more than a fifth of all residents by 2011; and there was a 70% increase in London’s Core (a 12.6% 2001-2011 increase on the 18.1% 2001 share). In the Core, an additional eighth of the population were renting just ten years on from 2001. In contrast, the rise in private renting on the Archipelago Edge was the slowest in the UK, but still a rise of over 40%.



**Figure 25.9** Change in share (%) of the entire population renting privately by region in the UK, 2001-2011

By just concentrating on the increase in private renting alone, the very different patterns and new diverging trends within London and the Archipelago become clear. And these changes are reinforcing all the other changes that more detailed census analysis can reveal. More people are becoming very wealthy in the South, partly because a small group of the wealthy can now collect rent from a much larger group who have no choice but to pay it, rent

which is on average a far greater monthly amount and greater proportion of their incomes than was the case in 2001.

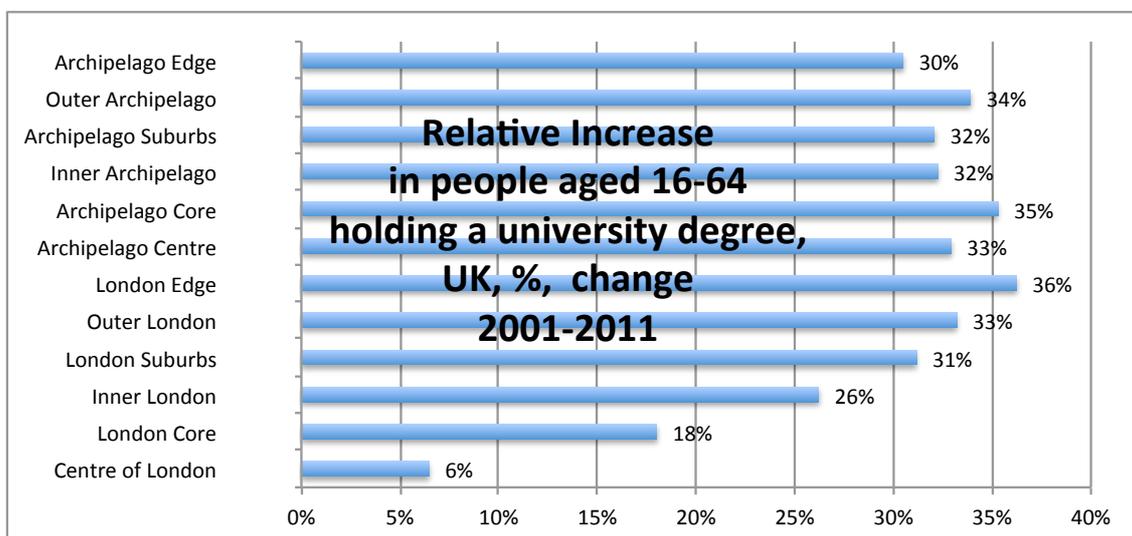
## **25.7 Conclusion**

Just a tiny number of examples have been given in this chapter of how the census can be used to reveal that social inequality in the UK is growing, especially as shown through the changing fortunes of people living in different areas. It is vital to realise that this does not mean that all is becoming better in the South. Rents are rising faster than incomes in the South. Traffic jams become longer as more people commute from more densely packed areas and as they have to change jobs more often and look further afield for work, especially better paid work. Government ministers tell the average and the poor to decide whether they can still afford to live in London, and, by implication, get out if they cannot do so: *“Housing Minister Brandon Lewis today said Londoners had to make a ‘judgement call’ about whether they could afford to live in the capital”* (Crerar, 2015).

In 2001, we could not have predicted that things would change so quickly that a minister would be telling people that they would have to leave our largest city, their city, if they could not afford to stay. We could not see the economic crash of 2008 coming, or the subsequent referendum in Scotland over whether to leave the UK when – had just 5.5% of people voted differently – they would have left. Whether all the constituent parts of the UK stay attached in the next ten years is far from certain, just as we have no idea if the population will vote to leave the European Union. Scotland may still leave the UK. The census reveals that Northern Ireland has suffered greatly economically in the 2000s. The centres of the Archipelago have experienced deeper cuts to services than they or anywhere else in the UK have ever suffered before. The bail-out of the banks has saved the wealth of the centre of London, but at what cost. So much can happen in a decade, but it takes a census to show us the net effect.

If we do not look back at past censuses and compare them with the last one, it becomes easy to think it was always like this. Social inequalities of all kinds are growing within the UK. The censuses can only reveal some of these

because so few questions are asked in the census and income and wealth has never been ascertained. However, some things are not polarising as quickly as others and are even becoming less polarised. The final graph in this chapter shows one of these. After decade upon decade of a rising concentration of graduates in London, the rate at which that concentration is growing is declining. London still has the most graduates but, partly due to saturation in its centre and partly because such a concentration of very affluent people require more poorly-paid 'servants' to look after them, and perhaps partly because of social progress elsewhere (Dorling, 2010), the census measure of the concentration of graduates is finally no longer accelerating, as Figure 25.10 indicates.



**Figure 25.10** Relative increase in people aged 16-64 holding a university degree by region, percentage rise 2001-2011

Figure 25.10 shows that a third of all the graduates working or living across almost the entire Archipelago in 2011 were not there in 2001. The same is true of London Edge, Outer London and the London Suburbs; but in Inner London, the rise in graduates during the 2000s was of just a quarter more than its 2001 total, in London Core it is less than a fifth more, and in the Centre of London, graduate growth was less than one extra graduate arriving by 2011 for every fifteen already there in 2001.

Sometimes censuses foretell the future. In 1991, the only area to have a majority of working age people not in a marriage was London. By 2011, what had been common in London was common everywhere. In 2001, the centre of London was being taken over by finance, increasing at a rate that appeared unsustainable, and so it proved to be, although in the very heart of the capital there are still more bankers in 2011 than there were in 2001 (Figure 25.8). For the first time in parts of London, it became evident by 2011 that there were absolute falls in the UK born population (Figure 25.7). However, since 2011, the only traditional region to see a rise in the UK born-population was London, and that was due to the births of children to immigrants in the capital. Other data, not shown here, suggests that most of those newly born children will be living in a household paying rent to a private landlord.

At current rates of increase, by 2031, a majority of people living in the Inner London will have a private landlord (Figure 25.9) and by then there will be over 70 million people living in the UK (Table 25.1). Most of that increase will be in the capital – again if current trends continue – which is not impossible as London is currently the least densely populated mega-city on the planet (compare Figure 25.3 to data for other very large cities). If current growth in population potential is part of a longer-term trend (Figure 25.4), then that is making old typologies of areas redundant (Figure 25.5). Social inequality and polarisation will continue to rise, the winners and the dreamers will move to the centre from all over the world, and the losers will drop out to the periphery. All these predictions could be as wrong as they might now appear sensible, but they do tell us to 'watch this space'.

All it would take would be another financial disaster, or for the Thames Barrier to fail and London to flood, or confidence in the London housing market to fall, or for the population to vote to leave the EU, or the Labour Party to become a normal left wing European party again and promote equality in practice rather than just rhetoric, or one of 101 other possible scenarios and what now looks like a long-term trend may well cease overnight. So much is possible. However, we may never really know what has happened in the near future. Should the economic situation worsen, Members of Parliament may not vote for the 2021 Census Act when it is laid before the House of Commons in

2019. We may not get to draw these pictures again for some time if no census is held in the near future. The 2010 Government tried to cancel the 2011 Census and failed. Of course, a 2021 Census is promised – but events, dear boys and girls), events.

**Acknowledgements** – I am extremely grateful to Bethan Thomas for drawing all the maps used in this chapter and for all her help and support over the two decades we have worked together. John Stillwell and David Dorling very kindly commented on earlier drafts of this chapter. John also introduced me to migration data and David taught me how to program a computer just under four decades ago.

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