Final proofs of: Dorling, D. (2010) Persistent North-South divides, Chapter 2 in N.M. Coe and A. Jones (Eds) The Economic Geography of the UK, London: Sage, pp12-28.

2

PERSISTENT NORTH–SOUTH DIVIDES

Danny Dorling

AIMS

- To describe the extent of the social, economic and political North–South divide to the human geography of Britain as of 2008
- To give some early indications as to how the divide appeared to be sharpening with the advent of the economic crash of 2007–9
- To suggest that we now know enough to be less vague about defining the North–South divide
- To focus on the English North–South divide because it is worth telling longer and separate stories for the other countries of the Isles

In this chapter I assess the current extent of the North–South divide in England and recent trends in the divided human geography of the country. I will argue that the North–South divide has grown in importance since the early 1970s. England, it seems, is a country which is split in two and increasingly at unease with itself and what it is becoming. But how is the human geography of Britain as a whole now best summarised? With colleagues a few years ago I undertook research sponsored by the government department responsible for English cities to create a database of many aspects of their human geography and how they were changing. This State of the Cities Database (SOCD) (see www.socd.communities.gov.uk) comprised 75 indicators at seven different spatial levels and at different points in time for some of the variables (Parkinson and collective, 2006). In this chapter I will try to give a flavour of the information held in the database by focusing on five themes: life expectancy; poverty; education and skills; employment; and wealth. It can be argued that these themes pertain to traditional measures of quality of life as seen through lack of disease, ignorance, idleness, want and

squalor, all reflected through their modern-day equivalents of high life expectancy, good qualifications, low work-related benefit claims, low rates of poverty and reasonable house prices.

It should be noted that four aspects of the database are unique. First, amongst other geographies, it collates data for major cities in England as defined by their built-up urban boundaries. This allows cities to be compared in a way which is not influenced by whether their official administrative boundaries happen to incorporate a great deal of their hinterland or not. Second, the database collects very up-to-date information as well as data from the past to allow comparison using comparable boundaries. This allows changes over time for these consistently defined areas to be calculated and shown. Third, the database spans a very wide range of indicators. This allows many aspects of life in cities to be compared. Fourth, the database, where possible, presents data for over 1,000 'census tracts' within and outside of these cities, which can also be compared over time. So using this data, how can a picture be painted of the state of England's cities as reflected through their populations, and the changes to the fortunes of those populations, over time?

Maps, although out of fashion in much contemporary English geography, are useful here. In this chapter both conventional maps and a Tetris map (population cartogram) of cities are presented. On the conventional map the urban boundary of each city is shown, but many cities of course appear just as specks on the national map. On the Tetris map each city is presented as the collection of tracts which constitute it on a rough population cartogram of the country. The Tetris map is far more useful for visualisation, but it requires a little patience in learning which shapes are which cities (see Figure 2.1).

The chapter is structured to look first at inequalities in life expectancy, then poverty, then in education, employment (just prior to the crash of 2008), and then in wealth (at a similar point in time). A line is suggested where the North–South divide can be said to run, and an argument is made that it is worth drawing the line quite precisely. The chapter concludes to suggest that the divide has deepened in recent years. The initial data coming out after the 2008 crash confirms this, as the North has been most badly hit and least well supported. The 'bail out' was for the South.

Life expectancy – grim up North?

As has been well chronicled, many northern cities in England have felt the full force of deindustrialisation since it took hold in the late 1970s. Manufacturing industry in Britain continues to decline as fast as it ever did – faster even very recently given the downturn that started in 2008 (and see also Chapter 10). But how does this relate to measures such as life expectancy? The people of Stoke, for example, live on average almost 77 years each

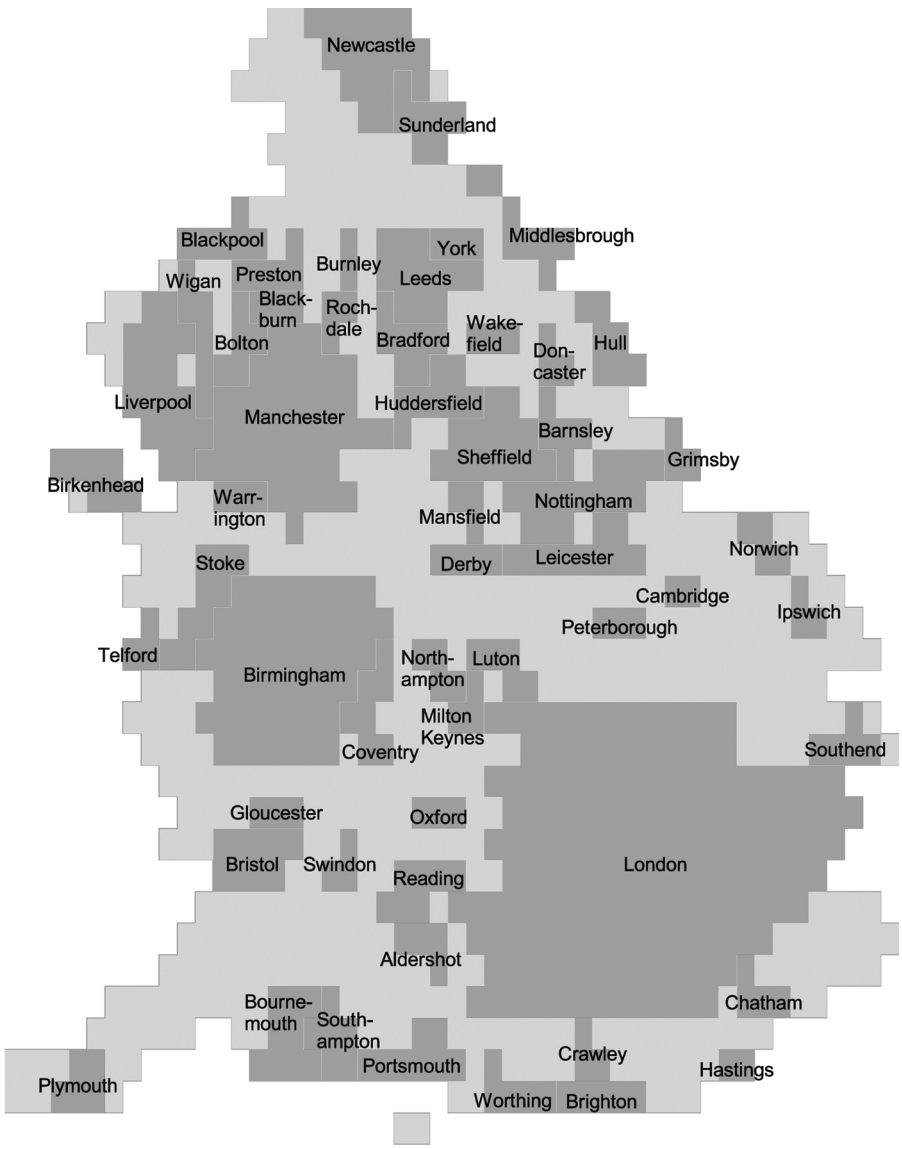

Figure 2.1 The Tetris map of cities in England – a key to their location in population space

(see Table 2.1). This does, however, put the city in the second worse of the five groups shaded in Figure 2.2, which shows the spatial distribution of life expectancy by city from birth for the years 2001 to 2003. Driving from the South through Birmingham to Stoke means driving past people who on average are destined to live two or three fewer years less than the highest averages of almost 80, four years down by the time you hit the cities of the north–west. This is an old pattern of inequality, but one which has strengthened in recent

Table 2.1 Key state of the city indicators, sorted by an overall score (and change measure provided in final column) divided into six leagues

Division	City	Life exp. 2001–2003	2001 per cent of adults with a degree	per cent working age claiming JSA/IS 2003	Percent of poverty by PSE 1999–2001	Average housing price 2003	Average score 2003	Change in score over time
Premiership	Cambridge	79.5	41	5.1	29	244862	82.3	5.6
	Aldershot	79.0	22	3.7	17	238991	81.9	4.6
	Reading	79.6	26	4.7	20	211794	81.5	5.3
	Oxford	79.2	37	6.1	30	255181	80.9	6.7
1st	Crawley	79.6	19	4.8	22	205506	79.8	4.7
	Bournemouth	79.7	17	7.1	21	214296	79.1	5.0
	York*	79.4	23	5.4	25	147513	78.2	5.4
	Worthing	78.8	16	6.4	20	186992	78.0	4.1
	Brighton	78.4	29	9.3	27	212361	77.6	6.8
	Southend	79.0	13	7.5	19	186481	77.6	4.2
	London	78.6	30	10.3	33	283387	77.5	6.7
	Bristol	78.9	23	7.7	25	160708	77.1	4.6
	Southampton	78.8	19	6.9	25	172585	76.9	4.9
	Norwich	79.8	18	7.5	27	138187	76.3	3.9
	Portsmouth	78.8	16	6.6	25	157145	76.2	4.0
	Milton Keynes	78.2	18	6.6	25	161625	76.0	4.2
	Swindon	78.2	15	6.6	22	150689	76.0	4.1
	Gloucester	78.4	16	8.5	22	141690	75.5	3.4
	Warrington*	77.9	17	6.8	23	119668	75.1	4.6
	Northampton	78.2	17	7.8	24	135871	75.1	4.1
	Ipswich	79.0	16	10.1	25	134514	74.7	3.5
	Chatham	77.7	12	7.7	23	142374	74.2	2.8
2nd	Preston*	77.7	17	7.2	26	97038	73.6	3.6
	Derby*	78.1	18	10.5	27	114280	73.1	4.2
	Leeds*	78.2	19	8.9	32	119262	72.8	3.1
	Nottingham	77.5	18	9.8	28	123663	72.7	3.4
	Telford*	77.9	13	9	27	115722	72.6	2.9
	Leicester	78.0	17	11	28	124812	72.6	2.3
	Blackpool*	77.2	13	8.9	24	103656	72.5	2.2

(Continued)

Table 2.1 (Continued)

Division	City	Life exp. 2001–2003	2001 per cent of adults with a degree	per cent working age claiming JSA/IS 2003	Percent of poverty by PSE 1999–2001	Average housing price 2003	Average score 2003	Change in score over time
	Plymouth	78.1	13	9.8	28	118978	72.4	3.5
	Hastings	77.4	15	13.4	25	163128	72.3	3.7
	Luton	77.2	14	9.7	28	143698	72.2	2.0
	Wakefield*	77.5	14	9	28	110407	72.1	3.5
	Peterborough	77.5	14	9.5	28	123089	72.1	2.1
	Coventry*	77.8	16	10.9	28	111165	72.0	3.8
	Huddersfield*	77.2	15	8.7	29	97815	71.6	1.8
3rd	Manchester*	76.7	19	11.6	30	119569	70.9	3.6
	Sheffield*	77.9	16	10.4	33	96328	70.8	3.6
	Wigan*	76.5	12	8.6	27	88946	70.7	2.6
	Birkenhead*	77.9	13	12.2	29	95632	70.6	3.3
	Bolton*	76.8	15	10.4	29	89281	70.4	2.3
	Mansfield*	77.1	9	9.4	28	94749	70.4	2.0
4th	Grimsby*	77.6	10	11.5	28	77898	70.0	2.6
	Doncaster*	77.3	11	10.6	30	82267	69.8	3.0
	Birmingham*	77.4	14	12.8	33	122794	69.7	2.2
	Stoke*	76.9	11	10.3	29	78834	69.7	1.7
	Newcastle*	77.1	16	12.8	34	111220	69.2	4.1
	Barnsley*	77.2	10	10.8	32	79492	68.9	3.0
	Rochdale*	76.4	14	12.2	31	92523	68.8	2.5
	Burnley*	76.8	12	10.7	31	55879	68.7	1.5
	Bradford*	76.9	13	11.5	33	75919	68.6	1.4
	Middlesbrough*	77.1	12	13.1	32	81760	68.4	3.1
5th	Sunderland*	76.6	12	12.4	34	91322	67.8	3.2
	Blackburn*	75.8	14	12.7	30	70969	67.8	1.9
	Hull*	76.6	12	17.1	33	72374	66.0	1.4
6th	Liverpool*	75.7	14	18	36	87607	64.7	2.8

Note: cities in the North of England are marked by an asterix

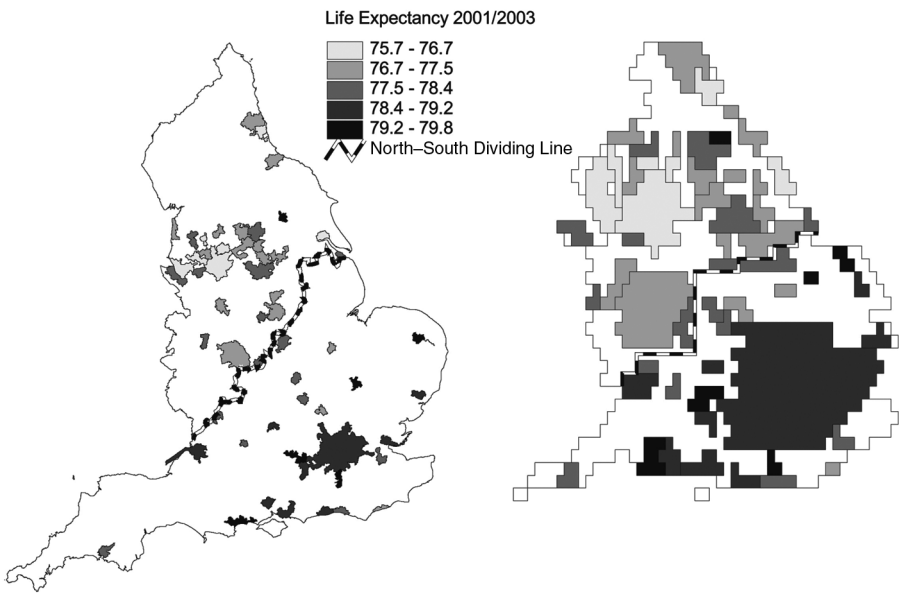

Figure 2.2 Life expectancy from birth 2001–3

decades. The very latest mortality data, for 2006 and 2007, shows inequalities in health across Britain returning to relative levels of inequality last seen in the 1920s and 1930s. At the height of the economic boom, just at the cusp of the crash, the current had returned again to 'brass tacks' inequalities in wealth and health that it had last known in those years and months leading up to the 1929 precursor of 2008 (Dorling and Thomas, 2009).

Figure 2.2 shows very recent estimates, where Local Authority figures for men and women have been aggregated on the basis of the Local Authority populations which best fit the built-up urban areas of each city to produce average life expectancies for all the inhabitants of those cities (both men and women combined). The map shades cities so that those with life expectancies of similar year of age are shaded the same tint. Thus cities are shaded the darkest where residents, on average, currently live for three score years and nineteen (79). The precise calculations used to estimate life expectancy are provided by the country's Office for National Statistics (ONS), and the figures presented on the map above are population-weighted averages of those figures. For these cities, life expectancy in England is highest in Norwich at 79.8 years, and lowest in Liverpool at 75.7 years; there is a clear North-west–South-east gradient to life expectancy.

The only significant anomalies to this gradient in the North are York, with an average life expectancy of 79.4, and Leeds, with 78.2. York sits in a vale of relative affluence in the North of England and so its exception is perhaps of little surprise. The figure for Leeds is partly the result of the Leeds conurbation not being as extensive as, for instance, that of Manchester in population.

Were Leeds to include its neighbour of Bradford with a life expectancy of 76.9, then the map would look quite different. Nevertheless life expectancy tends to rise to the east of the Pennines. The two southern anomalies are Hastings (77.4) and Chatham (77.7), areas also with high rates of poverty for southern England. Hastings and Chatham suffer from particularly bad transport routes to London given their geographical proximity. Them aside, a circle of towns and cities with relatively high life expectancy can be seen to surround London on the population cartogram in Figure 2.2 – broken only to the North–west of the capital where places – too much associated with their more northern neighbours – are not so well incorporated into the centre. But how are these patterns changing?

Poverty – where is it getting worse?

Analysis of changes in measures such as imprisonment rates and child poverty demonstrate a more subtle geography than a simple North–South divide of the more static images. Figure 2.3 shows one particular change, that of the spatial distribution of rises in the rate of poverty by city between 1991 and 2001. Nowhere over this time-period was the rate of poverty recorded as falling when consistently measured.

Because incomes have only been calculated at one point in time by ONS (1998) it is not possible to compare changes over time, especially in income

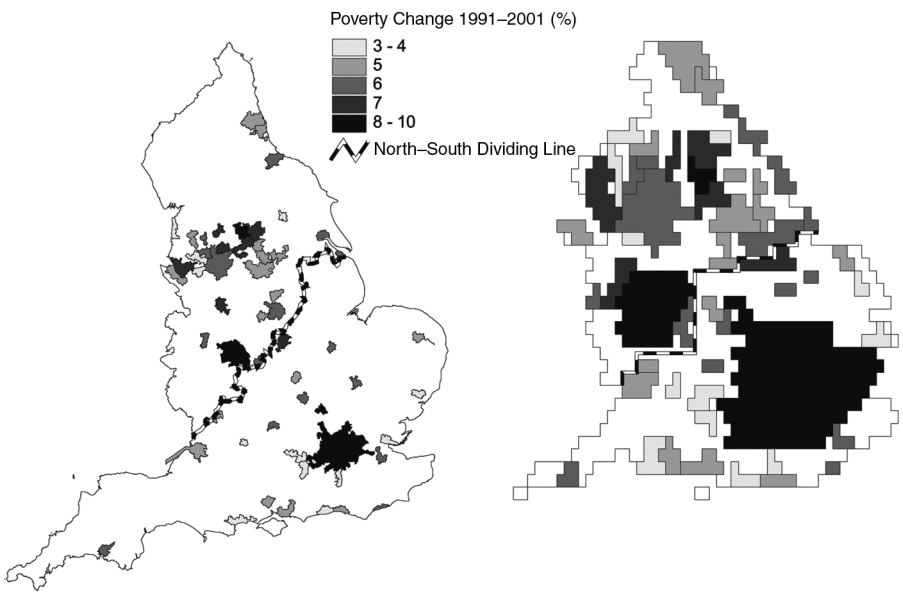

Figure 2.3 Change in rate of poverty by city – initial estimates 1991 to 2001

that has been equivalised for household composition, net of taxes and calculated after taking into accounting housing costs. Furthermore the ONS estimates do not include estimates of the distribution of income in each area, particularly that proportion of the population living below 60 per cent of the medium national income. To allow for an estimate of the changing rates of poverty in each city in the absence of such income data the Figure 2.3 shows the changing proportion of households estimated to be living in poverty according to calculations made following the 1990 Breadline Britain survey and the 1999 Poverty and Social Exclusion Survey (by researchers working with the Joseph Rowntree Foundation). For details of how these figures were calculated for small areas see Dorling and Thomas (2004).

Rates of poverty have increased in all cities since the early 1990s by this measure. That is, a higher proportion of households over time do not have access to the resources that most people think are necessary to live a decent life. Such rates of poverty can and do grow as rates of affluence also rise in cities. The highest increase, of an additional 10 per cent of the population living in poverty over the course of the 1990s, is found in London, followed by a 9 per cent rise in Luton, Birmingham and Bradford. The lowest increases, of an extra 3 per cent of the population living in poverty are found in Aldershot, Swindon, Warrington and York. Estimates of poverty made using techniques similar to these are soon to be incorporated in official government statistics and so this figure gives an impression of how these new statistics should show high and rising rates of poverty even in generally affluent large cities, and especially in the capital, as socio-economic polarisation has risen. One result of both the numbers living in poverty rising and the riches of the wealthy in Britain increasing dramatically is that those in the middle begin to feel quite badly off and increasingly threatened. That sense of insecurity was made far more real when unemployment rapidly rose past two million in early 2009.

Education – where do the skilled travel to?

Educational divides in Britain did not end with the demise of the 11-plus exam. Children are divided at ages 17 and 18, when, according to exam results at these ages, one-third are now drawn to go to university. What is most telling is where they then move on to. For many students from the South, if they have lived in the North it will be for three years spent in places like Durham, or York, Manchester or Leeds, before heading south again upon graduation. Just to make the point clear, Figure 2.4 shows the spatial distribution of the individuals in cities holding a university degree in the year 2003, as a proportion of the total economically active population.

The highest concentrations of the economically active population in England qualified to degree level are observed in Cambridge, Oxford and London, and also York, Warrington, Bristol, Crawley, Norwich and Brighton,

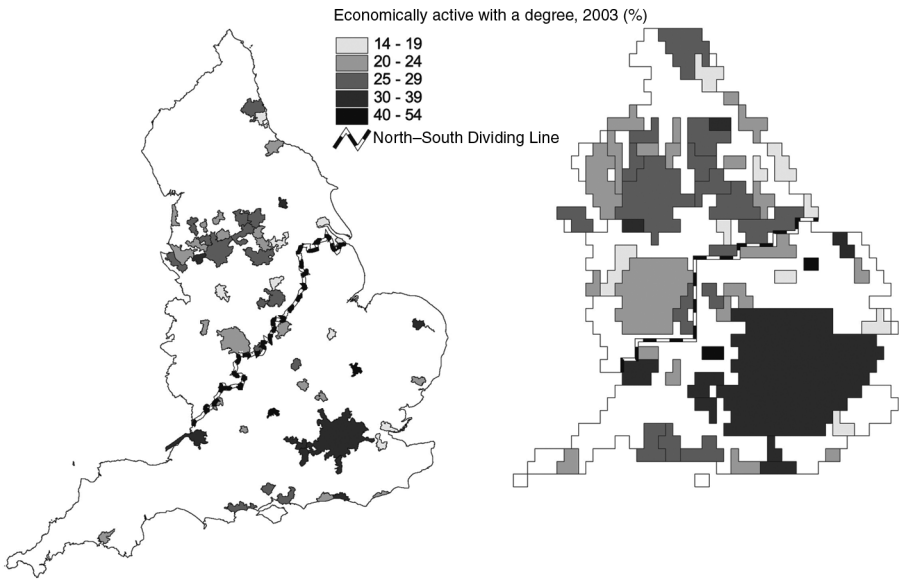

Figure 2.4 Proportion of economically active population with a university degree, 2003

where the proportion of the economically active population with a degree is over 40 per cent. In contrast, the smallest proportions (ranging from 14 per cent to 19 per cent) are observed in Sunderland, Hull, Grimsby, Doncaster, Stoke, Peterborough, Southend and Chatham.

Look at Figure 2.4 again. Now the impression of a clean North–South divide is complicated by a series of colonial outposts. Centred from London they appear at 12 o'clock to the north where York is found; then Norwich at 2 o'clock; Brighton at 6 o'clock; Bristol at 9 o'clock; and Warrington at around 10.30. The country cannot be governed from London alone. Around the periphery outposts are required where those educated to the higher levels can cluster together in safety and mutual understanding up the spokes of their various motorways from the centre. Closer to home, Oxford and Cambridge are both just an hour's drive down newly built 6-or 8-lane roads to the centre of power. However, with a declining manufacturing base in the provinces and increasing reliance on one industry in the capital (finance) it becomes harder to see what all this organisation is for (and see Chapters 3 and 6). For that we need turn to issues of what the English now do: employment.

Employment – and those seeking it

Even in the pre-2008 economic boom times a remarkable number of people of working age in England were unemployed. Their geographical distribution is shown in Figure 2.5. A much higher number cannot work because they are

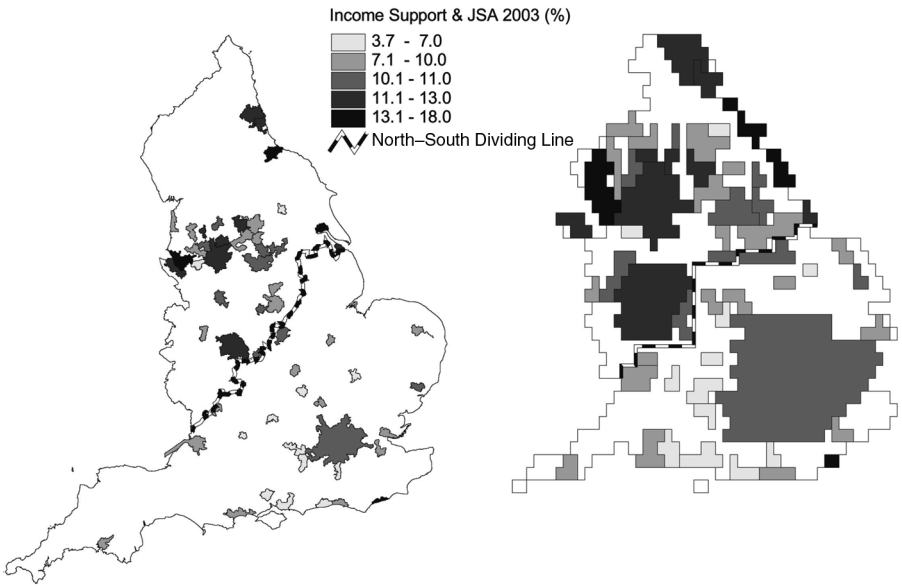

Figure 2.5 Proportion of the working-age population living on Income Support or Job Seekers Allowance (JSA, 2003)

now ill, often suffering from depression. In contrast the geographical distribution of the population living on unemployment benefits is of a constantly changing population. Very few people now live on these benefits for long periods, but many come on and off benefits, repeatedly, through their lives. Figure 2.5 shows the proportions of adults of working age (as estimated by the statistics quango NOMIS) who were claiming Income Support or Job Seekers' Allowance by August 2003.

There are many ways in which lack of work can be measured and many of these are included in the database that this chapter draws on. However, given problems of changing definitions of unemployment over time and of the welfare benefits associated with unemployment and low-paid part-time employment, the combination of the two benefits shown in Figure 2.5 provides one of the longest reliable time series available for small areas.

By the middle of 2003 (the latest date for which my colleagues and I had numerator and denominator data when creating this picture for the British government) some 18 per cent of the working-age population of Liverpool and 17 per cent of that population of Hull were claiming these benefits. The next four cities with the highest claimant rates, all of 13 per cent of their adult populations, were Birmingham, Hastings, Newcastle and Middlesbrough. This partly explains Hastings featuring as an anomaly in the South. Other cities with more than 11 per cent of their working-age populations living on these benefits include: Blackburn, Sunderland, Birkenhead, Rochdale, Manchester, Bradford and Grimsby. The figure for London was 10.3 per cent.

Rates below 6.5 per cent of this population were found only in Aldershot, Reading, Cambridge, Crawley, Oxford, Worthing and our anomalous friend in the North: York.

A high proportion of working-age people in English cities have to rely on benefits to support themselves, mainly because they cannot find suitable work. It should be noted here again that people on disability and other health-related benefits are not included in these maps (nor men aged 60–64 in the numerator), which would both further inflate these numbers and reinforce the patterns shown above. The parliamentary constituency with the highest poverty rates in Britain in recent years recorded up to 41.3 per cent of the population living there aged between ages 25 and 44 relying on benefits, and up to 60.3 per cent of the population aged 45–59 doing so (Thomas and Dorling, 2007: 143 and 178). There had been significant falls in unemployment as formally measured in the years immediately prior to 2003. There have been significant rises in almost all places since 2007. The picture shown here is about as good as it got over the last 30 years.

Many cannot find work, but by 2008 more people than ever were also working in Britain. Both these trends are true because each year there are fewer people in the country who are neither working nor unemployed. Women have been coerced to re-enter the labour market after having children more quickly than the year before. People are encouraged to work longer before retiring, and students to work through their studies: work for longer work longer hours, work harder, and – in practise – work for less. More people in Britain who can afford to try to buy a house do so with far more difficulty than they would have done in recent decades; this despite more of us now working and owning on average more houses per household! We work harder, in greater numbers and for longer, to get by. We are rewarded increasingly unevenly for that work. With the economic crash that hit during 2008 and became so much worse in 2009 it is easy to forget that all was far from well in a country as divided as Britain even before the job market declined. One result is a huge rise in private renting for those whose parents would have taken out a mortgage, with implications for the geography of wealth.

Wealth – and the changing cost of shelter

Figure 2.6 shows the average absolute change in equivalised (for type of home) housing price from 1993 to 2003 using building society records as the source of data for the earlier data, coupled with the 1991 and 2001 census figures on dwelling type. Because the sums of money involved are so large and because cities start off from different bases, it makes more sense to show absolute rather than relative change.

Average housing prices in the ten years 1993–2003 rose by over £200,000 only in London. They rose by more than £150,000 in Oxford, Cambridge, Aldershot, Brighton and Bournemouth; and by more than £100,000 in Reading,

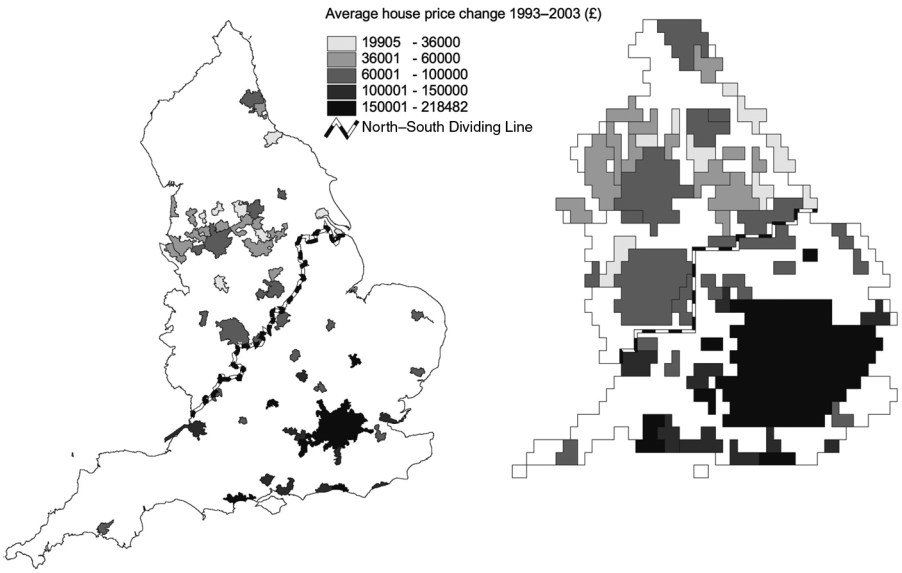

Figure 2.6 Change in average housing price in 1993–2003

Crawley, Worthing, Southend, Milton Keynes, Southampton, Hastings, Bristol and Portsmouth. They rose between only £40,000 and £50,000 in Preston, Sheffield, Birkenhead, Sunderland, Huddersfield, Rochdale, Wigan, Liverpool and Bolton; by between £30,000 and £40,000 in Doncaster, Grimsby, Middlesbrough and Stoke; by between £20,000 and £30,000 in Bradford, Barnsley, Hull and Blackburn; and by just less than £20,000 in Burnley.

Changes in housing prices over time bear very close correspondence to changes in housing wealth. Although the use of the dates 1993 to 2003 above show a period of particularly rapid polarisation in housing prices, that polarisation has been continuing fairly constantly since digital reports of prices were first made (in the early 1980s). Short-term falls in house prices, as occurred in the early 1990s, do little to dent the long-term trend in polarising prices between English cities along, and exacerbating, a North–west to South–east divide (Ridge and Wright, 2008).

Those now living in London are fearful of leaving it as they will not be able to afford to return. Those living in the North cannot move to London until they have no children and so need little space, or have a relative rich enough to finance their move. London, increasingly, only has space for the best and worse-off in Britain (and from abroad). Other than asylum-seekers, the very worse-off are housed still by the state. The very best off are building huge swimming pools under their Westminster and Kensington mansions, palatial home cinemas, underground garages for their multiple cars, and remodelling their interior decorations regularly in those parts of the capital home to the world's super-rich.

As of 2008 these prices began to fall rapidly, but at the time of writing not back to 2003 levels (and see Chapter 8). Prices fell faster in the North where they were not protected by the lack of supply and huge demand for housing which remains in the South. It also became apparent during the early 1990s that rises in negative equity were fastest in the North, where recent buyers had both been less likely to have a deposit and so more likely to have a 100 per cent mortgage, and where the immediate price falls were more acute. As recession/crash/depression hit, the North–South divide described in this chapter swiftly sharpened. During 2008 and 2009 we first began to learn that in the most expensive parts of the South of England housing prices continued to rise where all around them prices were falling – falling fastest further North and West (see Dorling, 2010).

Drawing a line on the map

A useful summary of England's human geography can be created by aggregating the variables described so far to create a very simple overall index of the state of the English cities, combining the five traditional measures of quality of life as seen through lack of disease, ignorance, idleness, want and squalor as reflected through their modern day equivalents of high life expectancy, good qualifications, low work-related benefit claims, low rates of poverty and high house prices. These key state-of-the-city indicators are summarised in Table 2.1. As can be seen, the indicators are sorted by an overall score (and a change-over-time measure is given). This overall index confirms the general impression given by the more than one hundred maps and cartograms contained in the full report on which this chapter draws. The impression is that, in general, English cities are clearly divided between those in the South-east of the country and those situated towards the North-west. And the South-east is increasingly dominated by London.

But where exactly does any dividing line fall? When asked where the North–South divide is, geographers in Britain have a tendency to give vague answers. Although this is understandable, I think we now have enough detailed information on life chances, political views, health and wealth in Britain to be able to say with a little more certainty where the line lies (see Figure 2.7). This is the line that separates upland from lowland Britain, the hills from the most fertile farmland, areas invaded by Vikings from those first colonised by Saxons. Numerous facts of life divide the North from the South – there is a missing year of life expectancy north of this line. Children south of the line are much more likely to attend Russell group universities. For those that do go to University (and they often go to the North to study!), a house price cliff now runs along much of the line, and, on the voting map, the line still often separates red from blue.

By county the North lies above the old counties of Gloucestershire, Warwickshire, Leicestershire and Lincolnshire and 'nips' only into parts of

Figure 2.7 The North–South dividing line

some of those counties. Most of each of those counties, and all the areas of England below them, are in the South. By constituency, the North includes and lies above the new parliamentary constituencies of the Forest of Dean on the north bank of the Severn; includes West and Mid Worcestershire, Redditch, Bromsgrove (and hence all of Birmingham), Meriden, Coventry South and North East, Warwickshire North, Nuneaton, Bosworth, Loughborough, Rushcliffe, Newark, Bassetlaw, Brigg and Goole, Scunthorpe, Cleethorpes, ending at Great Grimsby and the south bank of the Humber. It would be possible to go further and split some of these constituencies in half. It would be possible to identify enclaves and exclaves along the border, but this would suggest too much of a rigid line, and the border does move, especially when a new motorway is built or train line to London improved.

Within the North are places that look and sometimes act (e.g. vote) like the South. Areas around the vale of York and Cheshire are contenders here – but they are still northern. Similarly there are parts of the South, especially within London, that are very unlike much of the rest of the South, but they are still southern. Scotland and Wales are part of the North, despite having managed to eschew the Victorian attempts to label them North and West Britain respectively. In terms of life chances, the only line within another European country that is comparable to England's North–South divide is that which used to separate East and West Germany. This is found not just in terms of relative differences in wealth either side of the line, but most importantly in terms of health, where some of the extremes of Europe are now found within this one divided island of Britain.

Conclusion: deepening divides?

There is little sign of the divide narrowing and many indications that, again in general, it is widening. The same few exceptions to this generalisation have already been mentioned; most notably York ranks within southern cities (7th overall, and the only northern city in the top dozen). All 23 cities at the bottom of Table 2.1 are in the North as defined in the research project this data arose from (by Government Office Region with the West Midlands in the North). The next four are all southern, but those four are socially and/or spatially at the greatest distance from the capital: Hastings, Plymouth, Luton and Peterborough. There is no southern city which, overall on all five indicators, compares badly or even equally to any of the worst-off 20 Northern cities. In general, the better off a city was on these scores in the recent past, the more it had improved in the period to 2003.

A simpler way to put this is to state what it would take for Liverpool, at the bottom of the table, to become like Leeds, midway, and for Leeds to become like Cambridge (at the top). For Liverpool to be like Leeds, its peoples' life expectancy would have to rise by 2.5 years more than that of Leeds in the future, 5 per cent more of its adult population would need to gain a degree, 9 per cent of the working age population would have to come off Income Support or Job Seeker Allowance benefits (and none off such benefits in Leeds), overall poverty would have to fall by 4 per cent and average housing prices rise by £31,650. For Leeds to be like Cambridge, life expectancy in Leeds would have to increase by 1.3 years more than in Cambridge in the near future, an extra 22 per cent of the population would need to gain a degree, 4 per cent fewer people would need to be on work-related benefits, poverty rates would need to fall by 3 per cent and house prices would have to rise by an average of £125,600 per home.

English cities can appear in a series of leagues when the data in Table 2.1 is considered in the round. A 'premier league' of four cities with high average scores from 80.9 to 82.3 is clear (including Oxford and Cambridge), followed

by 18 'first division cities' with scores from 74.2 to 79.8 (from Crawley to Chatham, including London and Bristol). There is a gap and then a 'second division' of 14 cities scoring between 71.6 and 73.6 (from Preston to Huddersfield, including Leeds and Nottingham), followed by a 'third division' from 70.9 to 70.4 (headed by Manchester and down to Bolton), and a 'fourth division' from Grimsby to Middlesbrough, including Birmingham and Newcastle); with Blackburn, Sunderland; and then Hull as a fifth; and then Liverpool following below in division six, an English city in a group of its own (if other cities in the United Kingdom were included outside of England, Liverpool might potentially be joined in a group by Swansea, Glasgow, Belfast and other similar western ports and old industrial centres).

Almost all southern cities are in the premier league or first division of Table 2.1. Less than a half dozen are found in the second division, and none below that. Division two downwards is dominated by cities of the North of England. To borrow from the subtitle of a recent atlas of poverty produced for the United States (Glasmeier 2005), England, as viewed through the lens of its cities, is 'one nation, pulling apart'. Not to state this clearly in conclusion would be unfair to the reader as the patterns are so clear. Given how obvious such a conclusion is from the maps reproduced here, it is imperative that this simple truth is not lost in the study of the nuances of more subtle changes occurring in urban England as revealed by this data.

Further reading

- Baker and Billinge (2004) provide a detailed overview of the different dimensions to the English North–South divide and how it has moved over time.
- Haworth and Hart (2007) offer further insights into issues of well-being and in particular the debates around community and inequalities within regions.
- Take a look at Roberts and McMahon (2007) for a wide-ranging analysis of geographical divisions in relation to crime and social justice divides between and within communities.
- For other excellent accounts on social and geographical inequalities in the UK see Elliot and Atkinson (2007), Irvin (2008) and Wilkinson and Pickett (2009).

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Acknowledgements

A version of this chapter, and Figures 2.1–2.6, were previously published in the French Geography Journal *Geocarrefour*, in 2008 under the title 'London and the English Desert: the grain of truth in a stereotype' (83(2), 87–98). Figure 2.7 is taken from Figure 7.3 in Dorling (2010).