

Advanced GIS

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Sciences Po - Urban School

Session 4

Cartograms & Isochrones

Today's plan

1. Bivariate choropleths tutorial: Feedback, Q&A
2. Coursework discussion
3. Cartograms
4. Isochrones



Session 3 Recap & Tutorial debrief

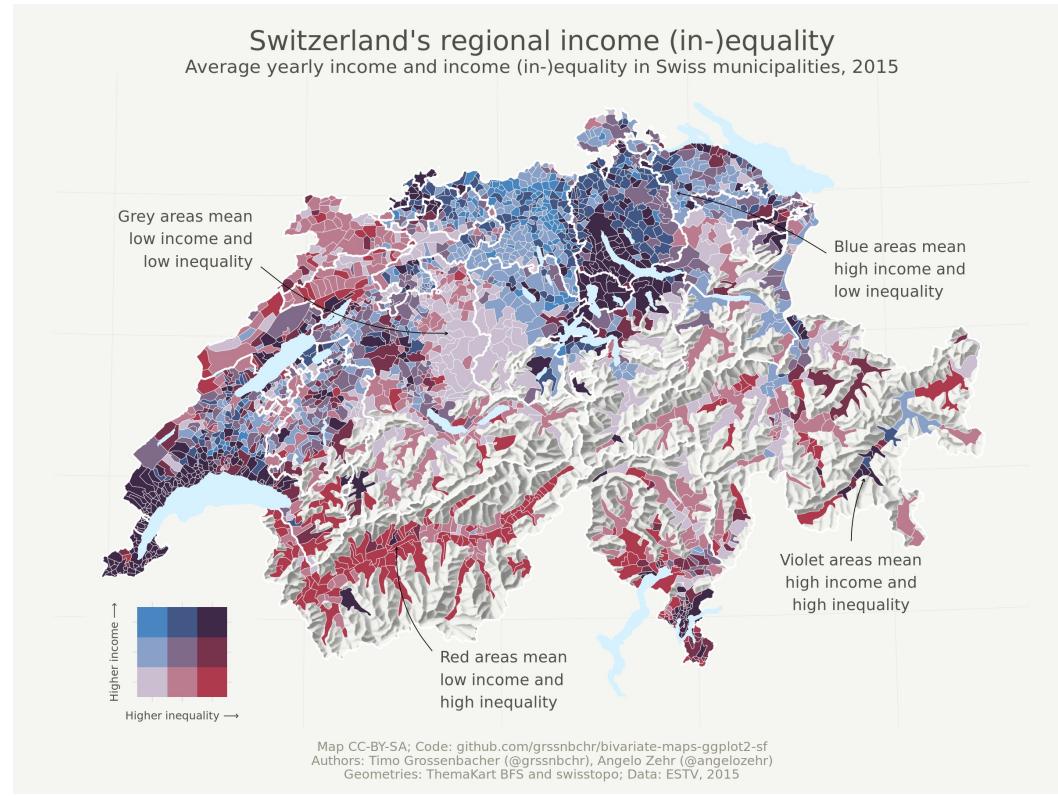


What is a bivariate choropleth map?

Bivariate: simultaneously represents two variables

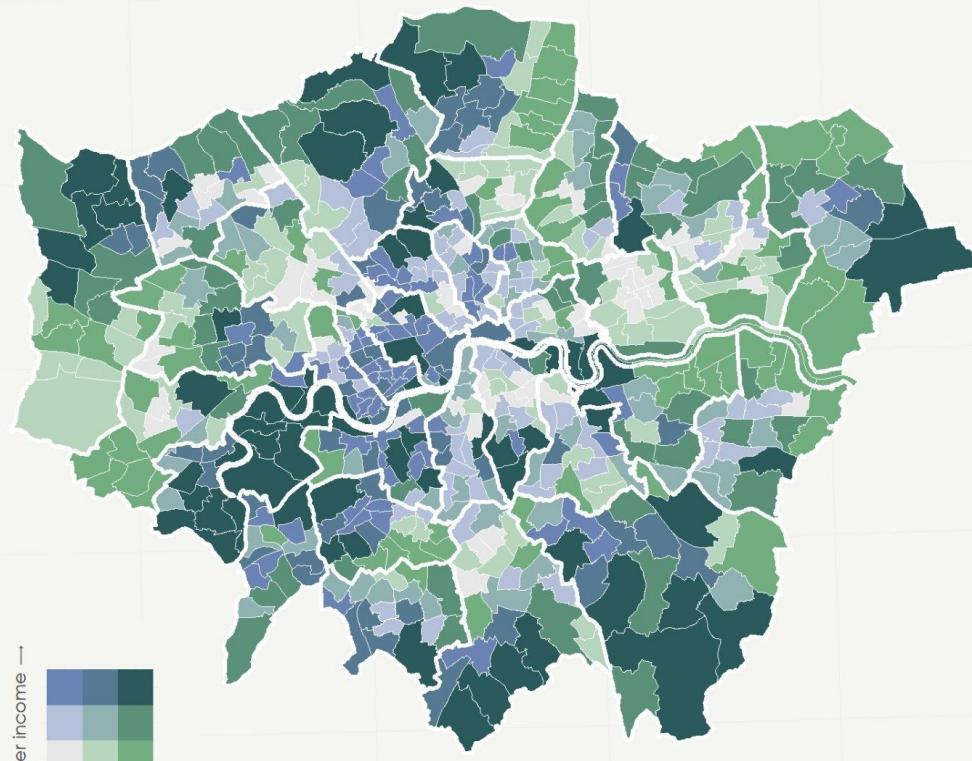
Choropleth: a type of thematic map (map that shows a phenomenon) that represents (colours) data as occurring within bounded areas.

Bivariate choropleth maps use a matrix of carefully chosen complementary colours to simultaneously represent two phenomena and how they relate to each other.

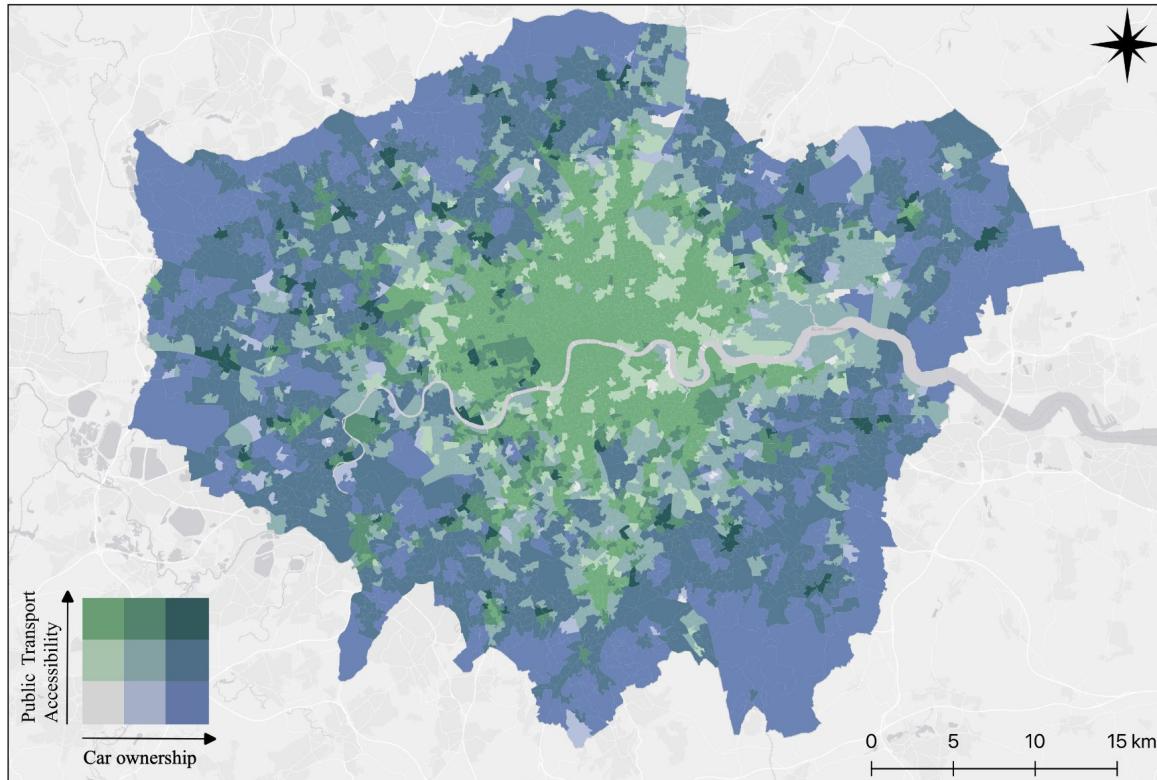


Example

London's vegetation-income distribution
Median household income and greenspace
cover % in Ldn wards, 2014



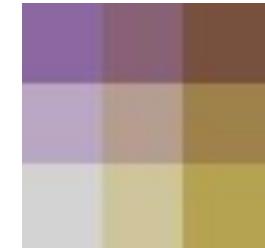
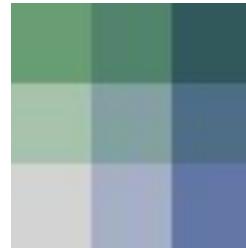
Car ownership and access to public transport in the Greater London Metropolitan Area: an unequal access to mobility



Data Sources: Office for National Statistics, 2011

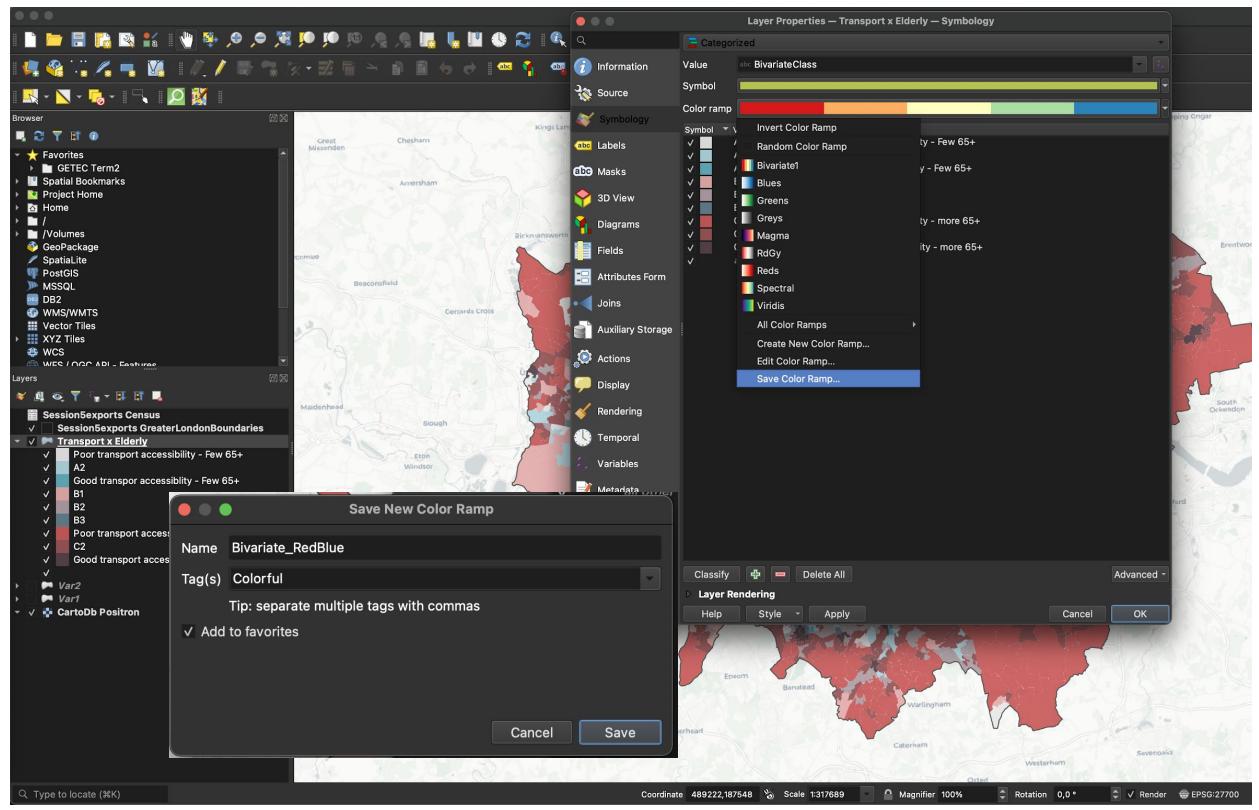
Creating a legend for a bivariate choropleth

You can save this images, created using the QGIS plugin **Bivariate Legend**.



Tips / Remarks

Here is how to save your colour ramp, so that next time you don't have to do it from scratch

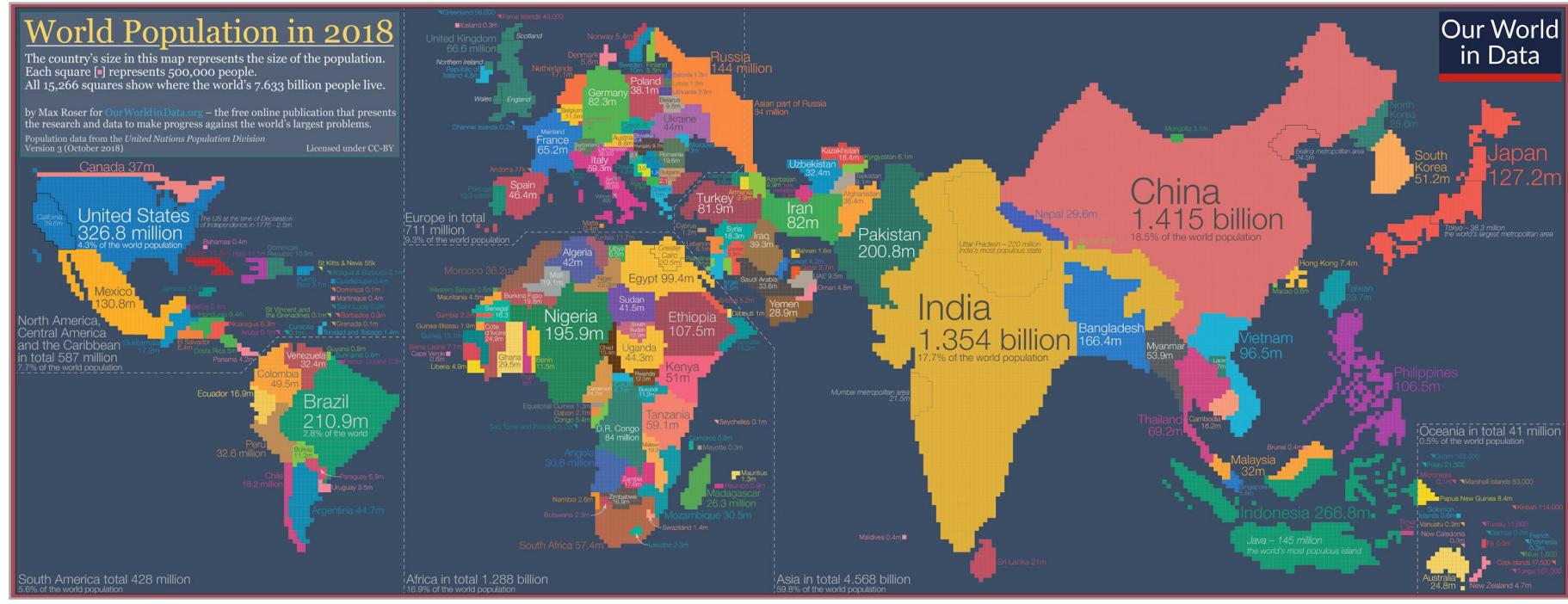


Questions?

Cartograms

What is a cartogram?

You may also see them referred to as "value-area maps" or "anamorphic maps"



What is a cartogram?

US Presidential Election 2020

Results mapped at county level showing the candidate with the largest vote share in each area

Preliminary results*

Biden

78,790,121 votes (50.9%)

306 electoral votes

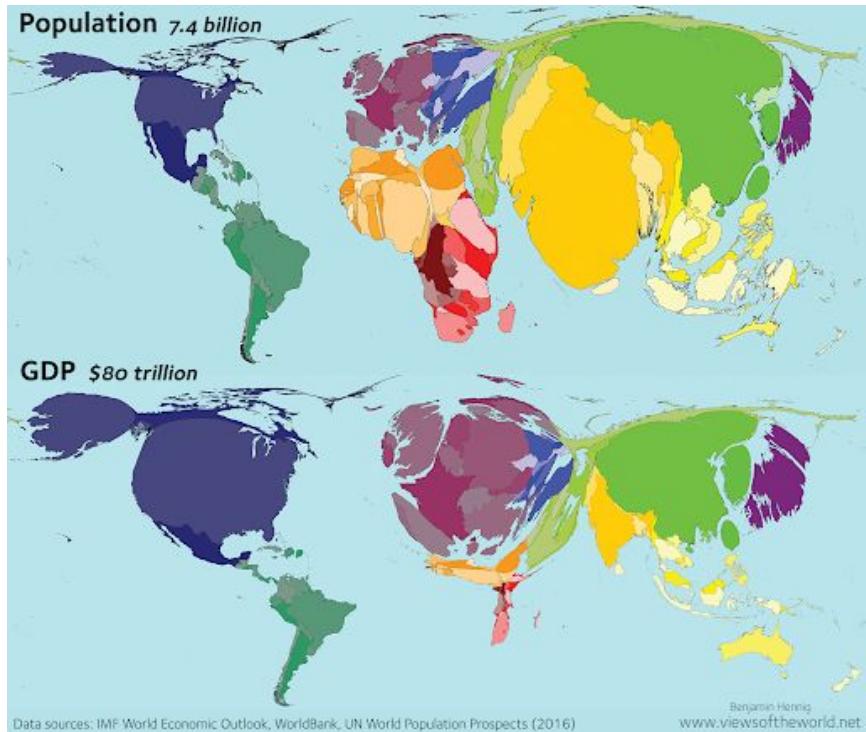
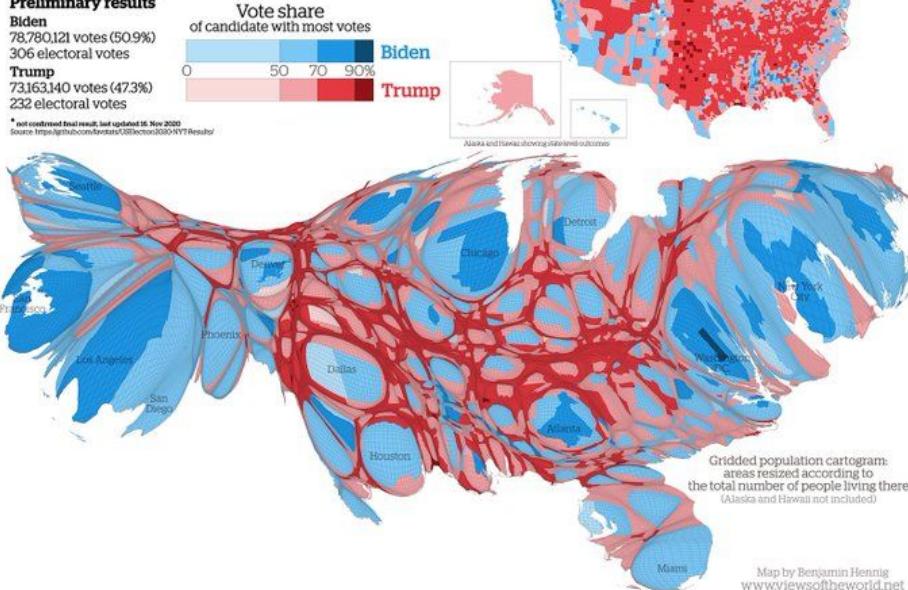
Trump

73,163,140 votes (47.3%)

232 electoral votes

* not confirmed final result, last updated 16 Nov 2020

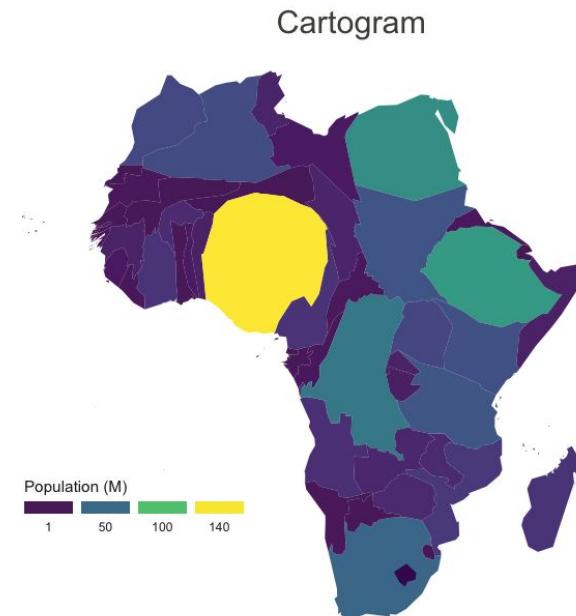
Source: <https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/2020-election-nyt/>



What is a cartogram?

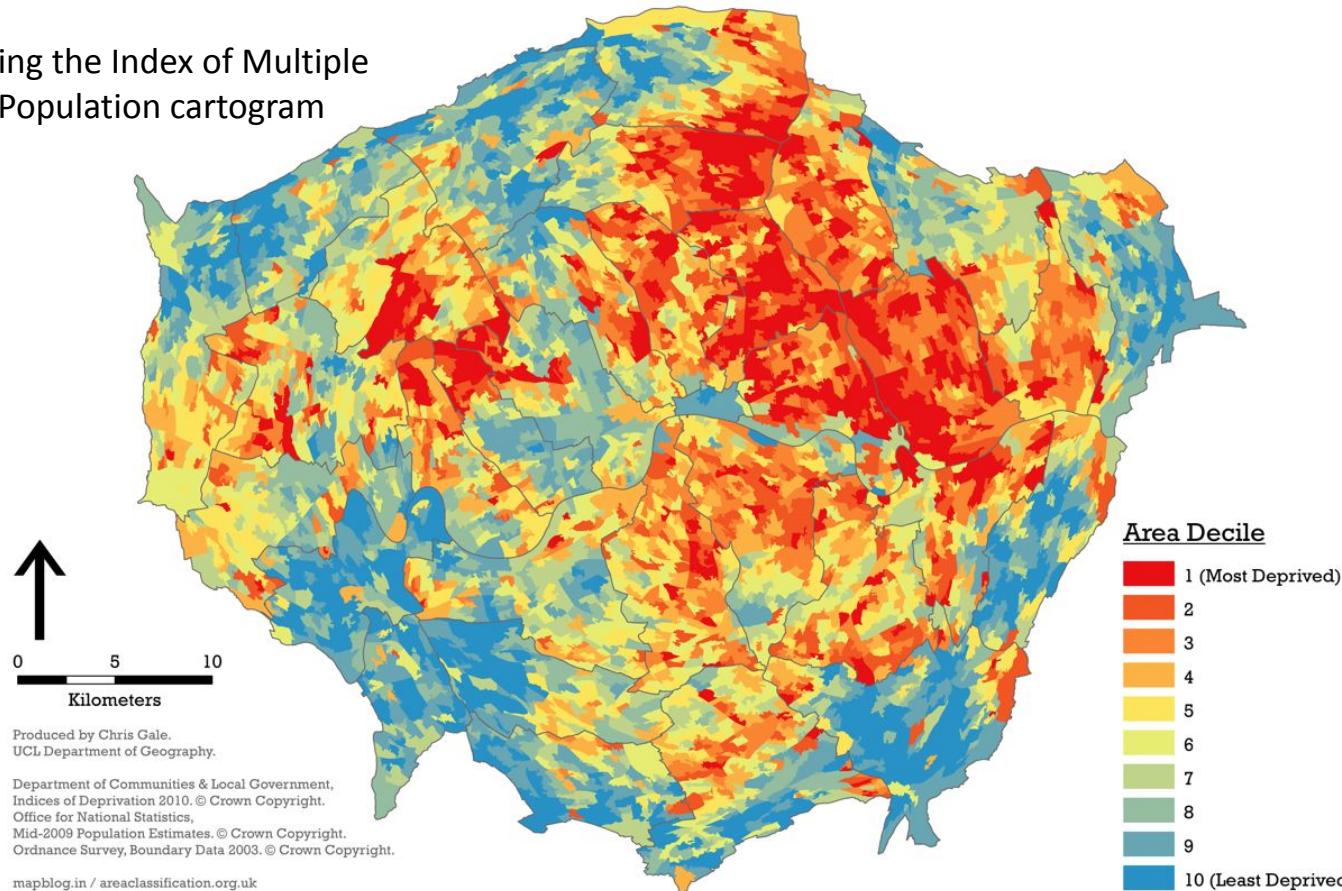
A cartogram is a map in which the geometry of regions is distorted in order to represent an additional variable. The region area will be inflated or deflated according to its value.

Oftentimes, cartograms are **also simultaneously a choropleth map**. Regions are colored according to a numeric variable, which may or may not necessarily be the one you used to build the cartogram. Here: you have the population in African countries, represented by both the size and the colour of each country.



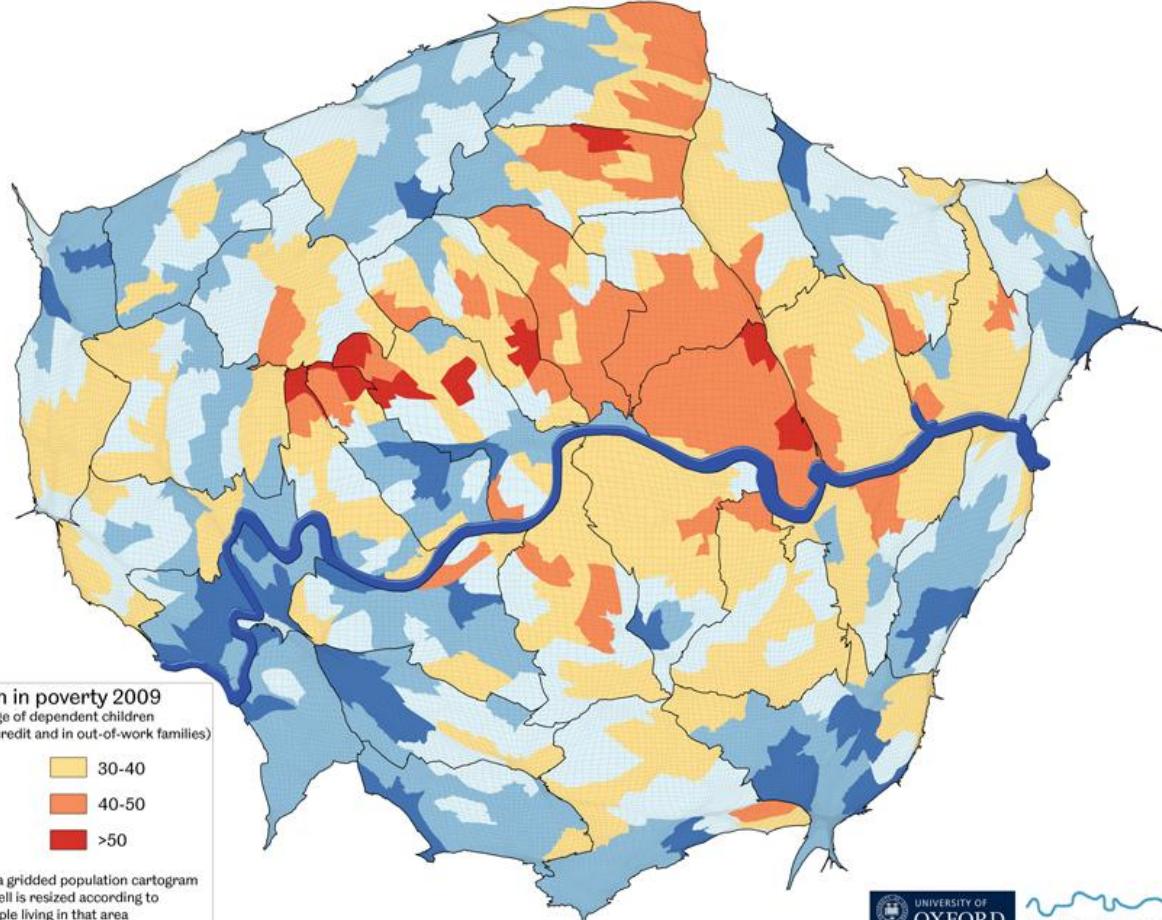
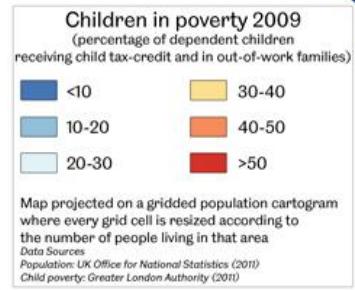
Overall Index of Multiple Deprivation for London in 2010 Cartogram

Choropleth using the Index of Multiple
Deprivation + Population cartogram



Choropleth using children in poverty + population cartogram

In your own time, have a read at this [cartogram-based exploration](#) of inequalities in London. Note how each of the map leads to a next question, linked to the overall theme of inequality.



Source: <http://london.worldmapper.org/analysis/inequality-in-london/>

Why build a cartogram?

Combining choropleth and cartogram techniques is a great way to correct for population size or sample size.

Imagine you display average unemployment rate per region on your choropleth map. A large rural area with 100 inhabitants but 10 unemployed people will look like it has the same unemployment situation than a smaller urban area with 1 million inhabitants but 100,000 job-seekers. This induces a strong bias, because the **two areas are actually very different**. The cartogram aims to reduce this bias by shrinking the size of the rural area and increasing the size of the urban area, to reflect absolute numbers of unemployed people.

Area A - Rural

Population = 100

Unemployed = 10

Unemployment rate = 10%

Area = 100km²

Area B - Urban

Population = 1,000,000

Unemployed = 100,000

Unemployment rate = 10%

Area = 100km²

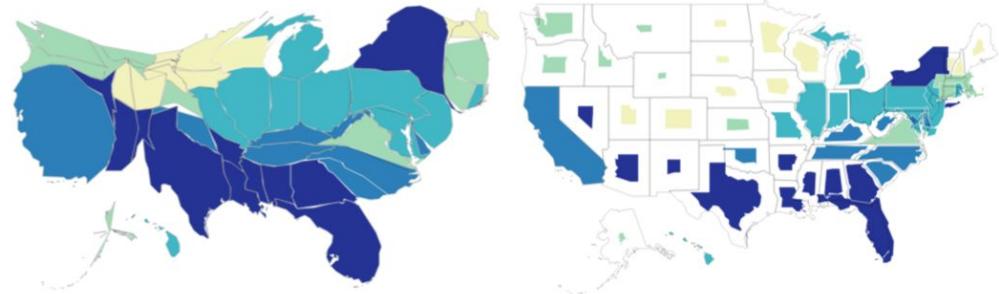
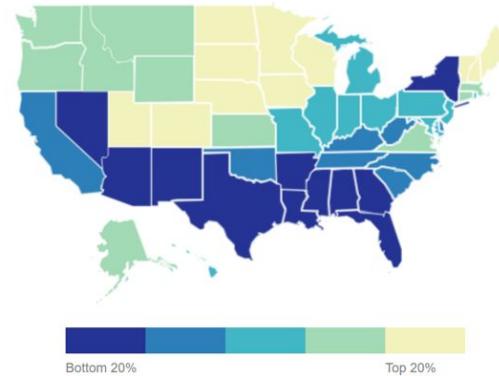
Why build a cartogram?

Combining choropleth and cartogram techniques is a great way to correct for population size or sample size.

In this example:

The social capital index rankings take a whole different meaning when you adjust each US state for the size of its population!

Social Capital Index Rankings

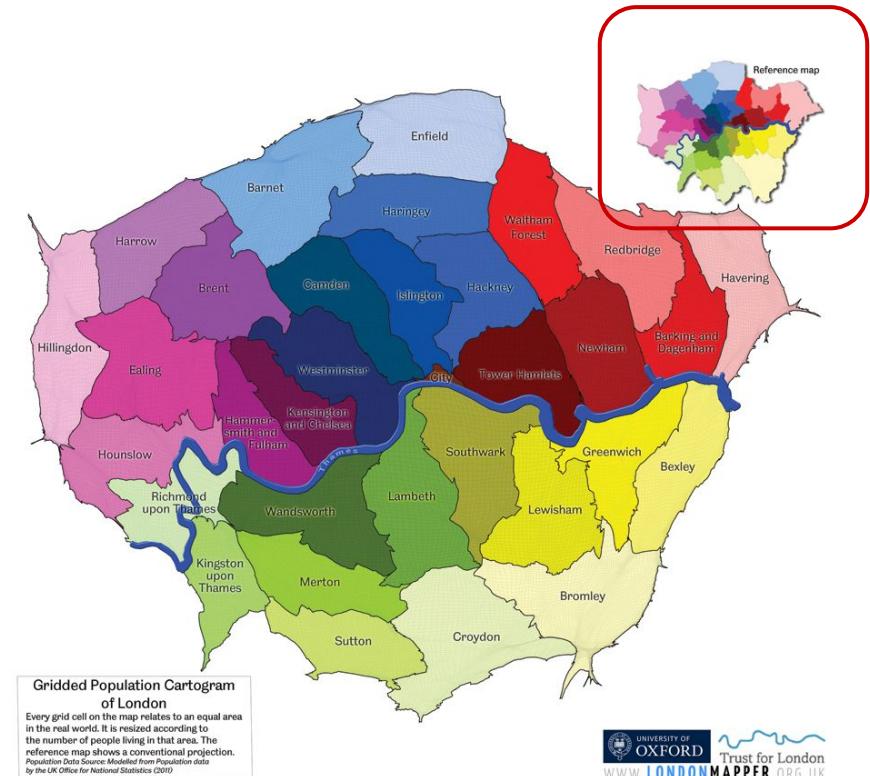


Tips

If you're working at city-level:

- It's a good idea to include a reference map, since not everyone is familiar with the exact boundaries of each of these administrative units.
- Do not use areas that are too small like IRIS or LSOA; instead, use slightly larger areas (boroughs, arrondissement, districts...); you want to be able to pinpoint what is happening within each identifiable area.

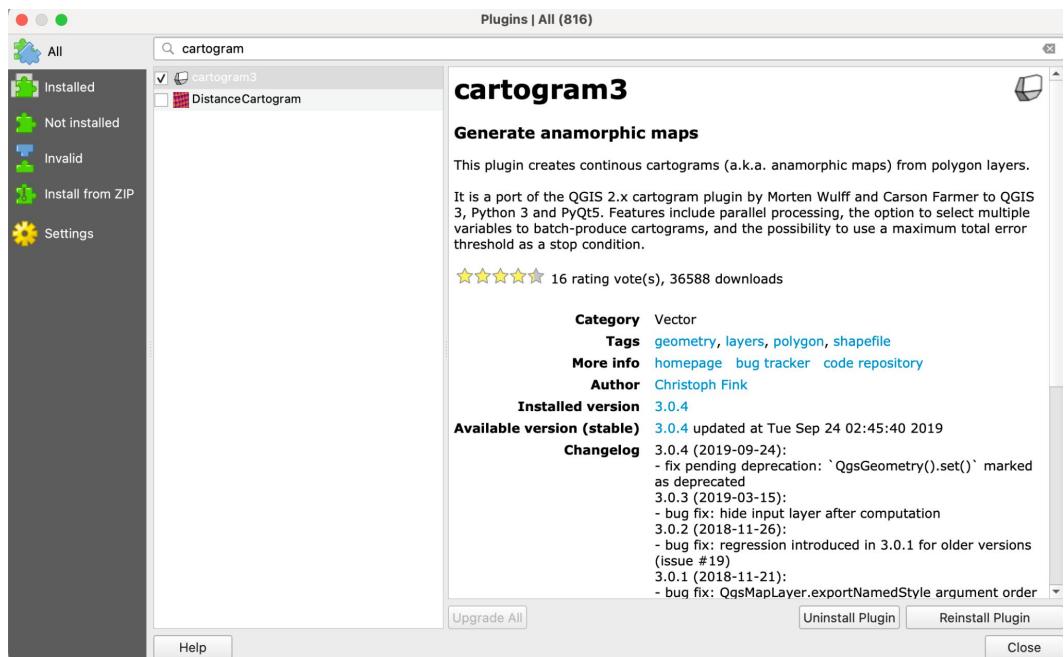
Note: On this map they used a grid and distorted each cell, then superimposed the borough boundaries. The plugin we use in QGIS [works differently](#); it distorts each individual polygon boundary based on the variable you want to use as weight. Therefore, you really need to pay attention to the administrative level you pick for your analysis!



Cartograms in QGIS

To produce cartograms in QGIS, you can install the plugin [cartogram3](#).

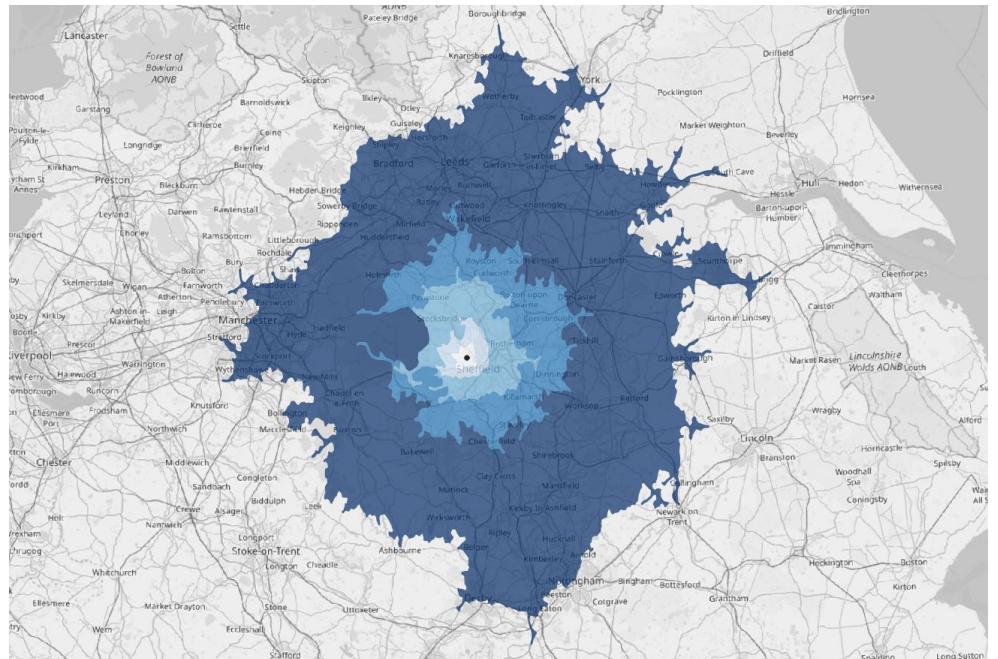
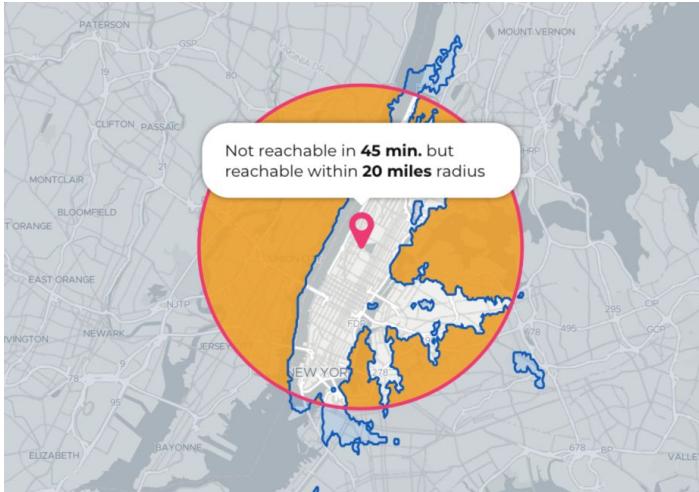
Unfortunately, the plugin is very unstable right now in QGIS 3.15 so we will not be using it for this tutorial - you can check again in a few months as the maintainers may have resolved the ongoing bugs causing it to crash. The slides in annex walk you through the steps required to build a cartogram using this plugin, with an example using the population in China. This could easily be replicated by looking at population by Boroughs in London or by Arrondissements in Paris, for instance.



Isochrones

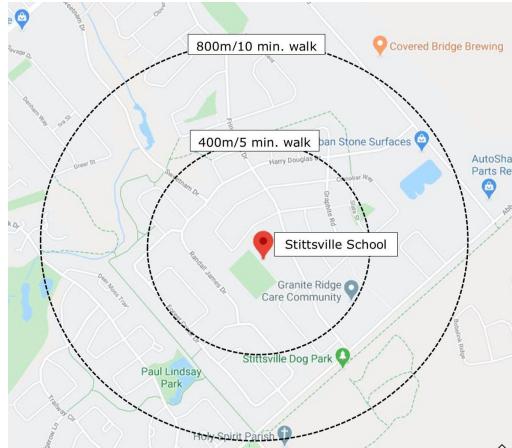
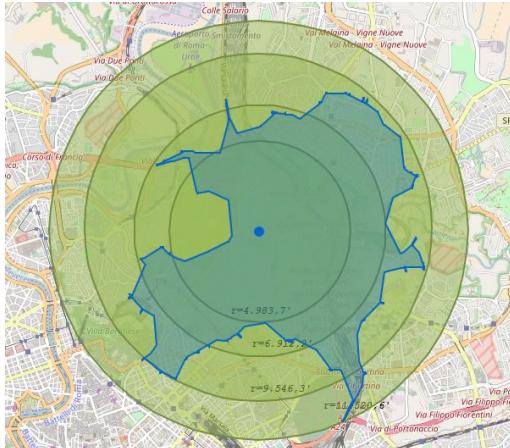
What are isochrones?

Isochrones are lines that connect points at which something occurs/arrives at the same time.



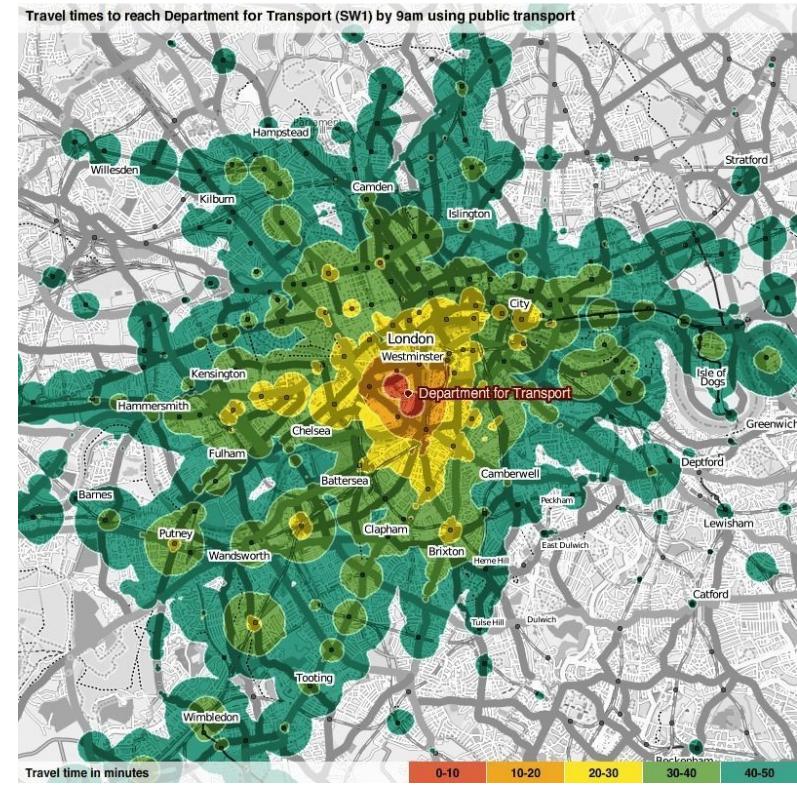
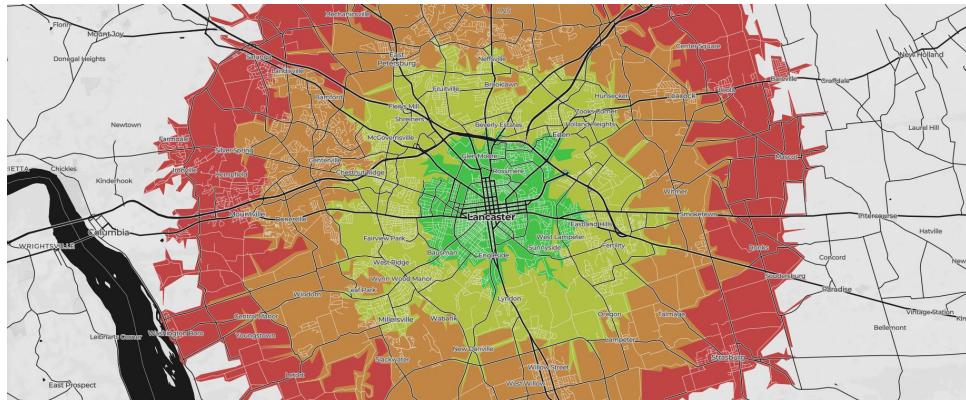
Isochrones & Transport planning

In transport planning, isochrone maps are very useful to define boundaries for areas of equal travel time (areas that can be reached within a given time of walking / driving / cycling / public transport). A rough approach to isochrones can consist in looking at distance as an indicator for walking time.



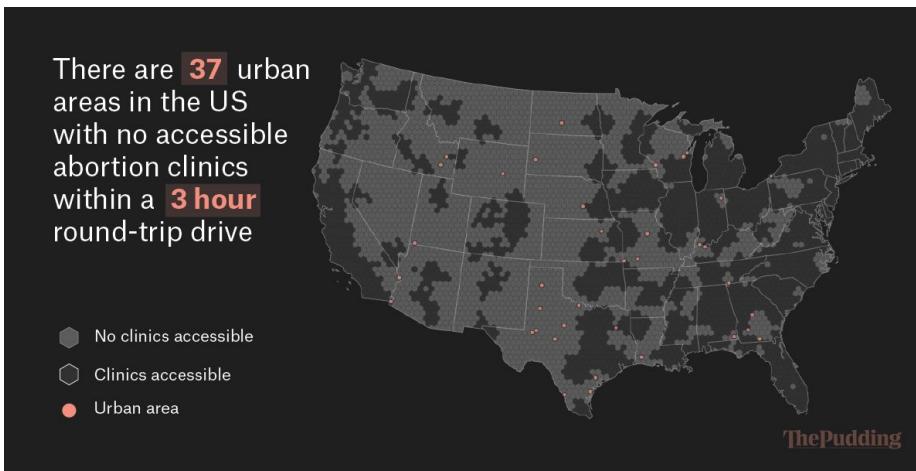
Isochrones & Transport planning

More sophisticated approaches actually take into account the road network. This is for instance the case with the TravelTime plugin in QGIS, which uses OpenStreetMap to compute the isochrones. Other plugins are available (OpenTripPlanner, QNEAT3, ORS Tools, etc)



Isochrones & Service Area

Isochrones can also be used to assess accessibility of public services such as medical facilities, and what it means in terms of public health inequities.



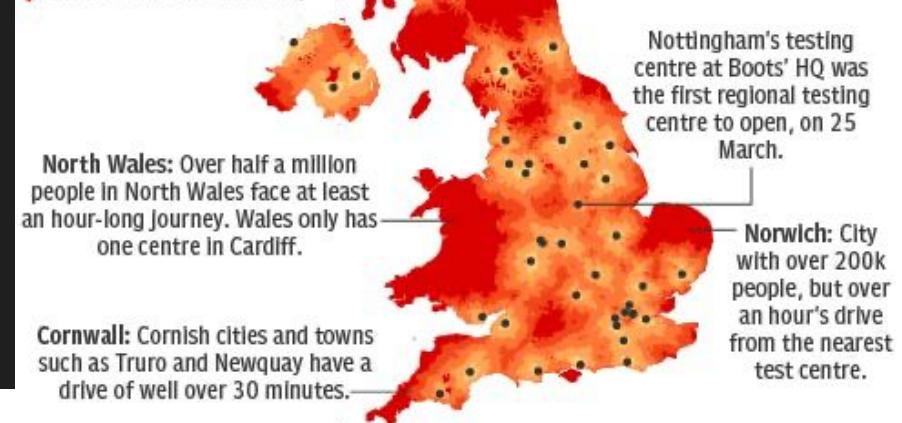
Source: <https://pudding.cool/2017/09/clinics/>

Testing centres

- Regional testing centre

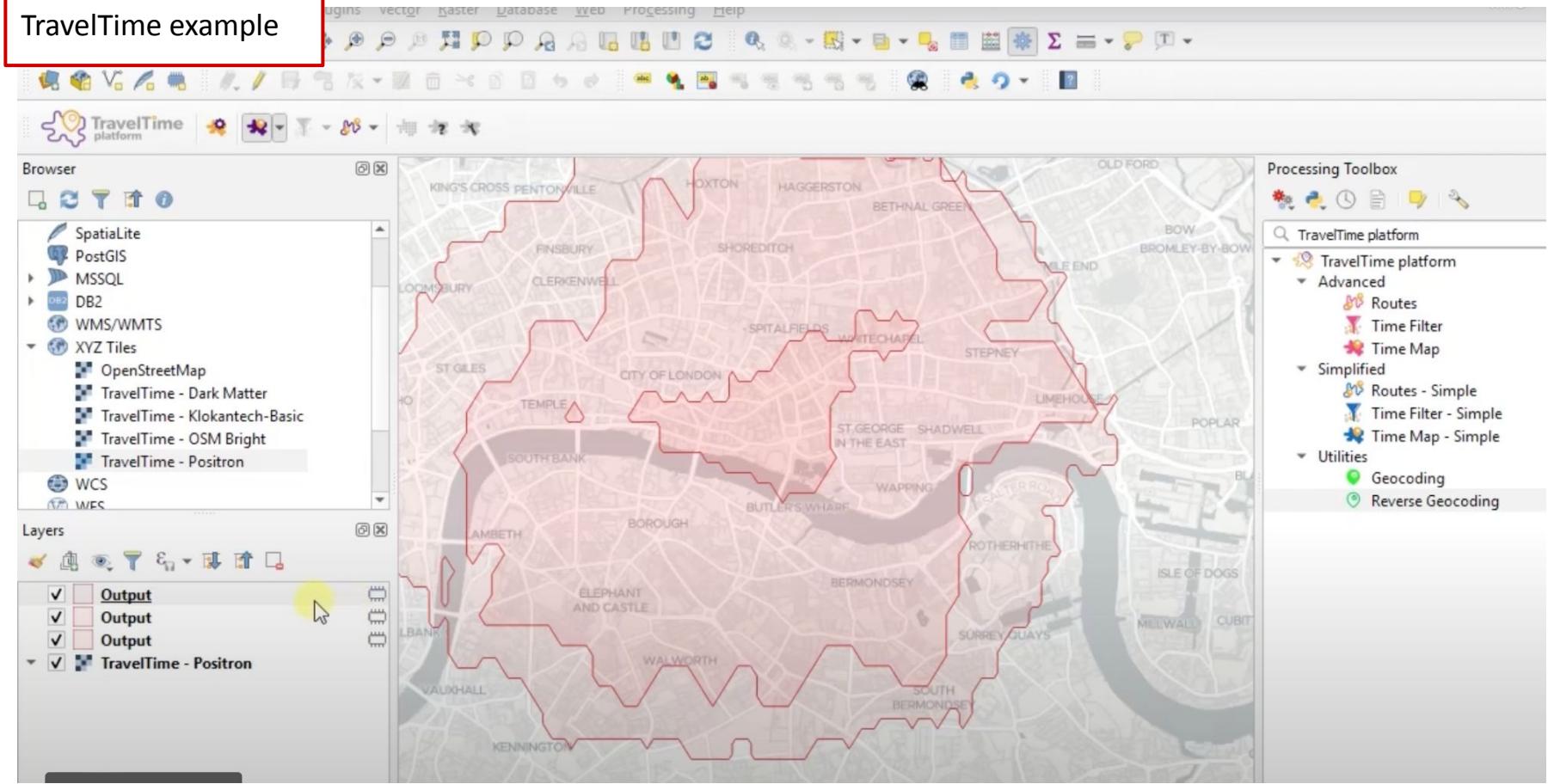
Driving time from testing centre (off-peak times)

- Within 15-minute drive
- Within 30-minute drive
- Within 45-minute drive
- Within 60-minute drive
- Over 60-minute drive away



Source: <https://traveltime.com/case-study/telegraph-traveltime>

TravelTime example



Final Coursework

Final coursework: Policy brief (100%)

Deadline: Monday 4th April, 23.59 Paris time.

If late: -1 point penalty for each day past the deadline.

- Groups of 2-3 students
- 3 pages minimum, 5 pages **maximum**
- **Policy brief** aimed at the Mayor of the European city you're studying (//\ writing style !)
- You may - and are encouraged to - build upon your first term report and push the methodology further. You can also pick a completely different topic and/or study area
- You **must** use at least one of the advanced techniques learnt in the Advanced module, while ensuring it's well suited to answer your research question.

Final coursework: Policy brief (100%)

Proposed outline

- Executive summary (maximum ½ page, bullet points are fine)
- Introduction / Problem / Context
- Data sources in a table
- High-level methodology. Keep it short but use precise terminology
- 2 to 4 maps. Careful, you only have 5 pages maximum in this report so these maps must be very relevant to answering your policy question (*i.e. for a suitability analysis, I don't need every step in your weighted overlay, just the final potential sites you've identified, which you can pair with a map of some key variables in your analysis*)
- Analysis of the findings
- Policy recommendations to decision makers

In this exercise, concision and precision are key! Your analysis must lead to actionable results.

Homework

(Next session in person!)

Homework for 21/02/2022

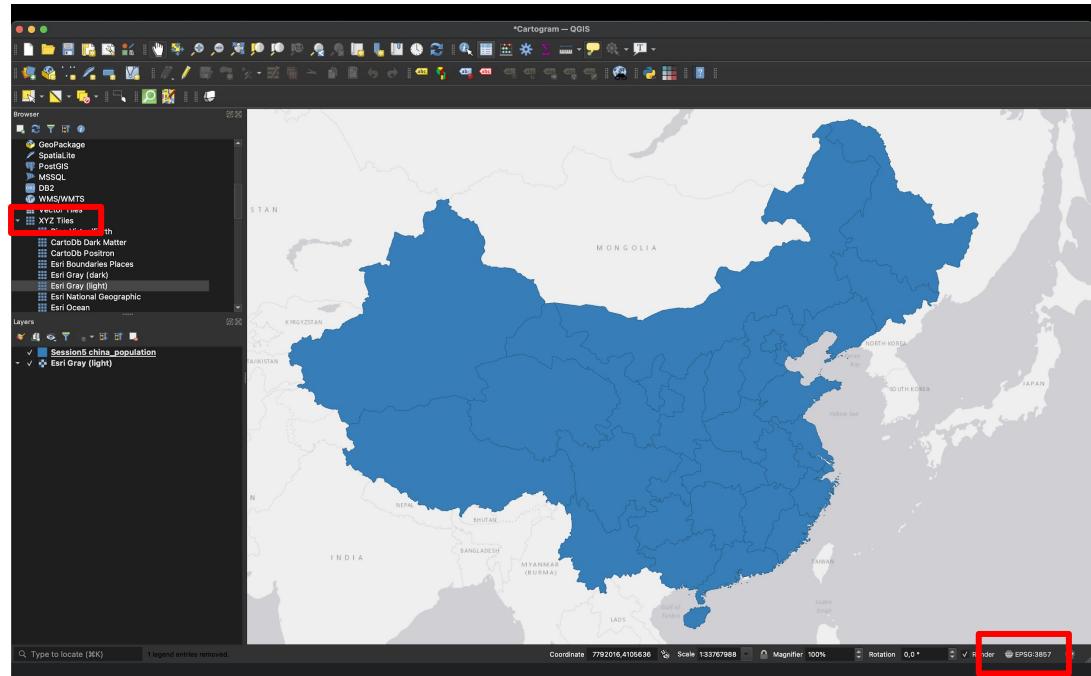
1. Do the [QGIS tutorial](#) on isochrones
2. Use Slack if you have questions (#help).
3. Make sure you start working on your final coursework, we can spend time in person going through some of the challenges you might be facing.

Annex: Cartogram Tutorial

Data

In the Google Drive, you will find a [Cartogram.gpkg geopackage](#) with a `china_population` layer. It contains Chinese province boundaries, their population and their population density.

Add it to your map canvas and use CRS:3857 (pseudo Web Mercator). Then, add a basemap, for instance the Esri Gray (light) layer from your XYZ Tile.

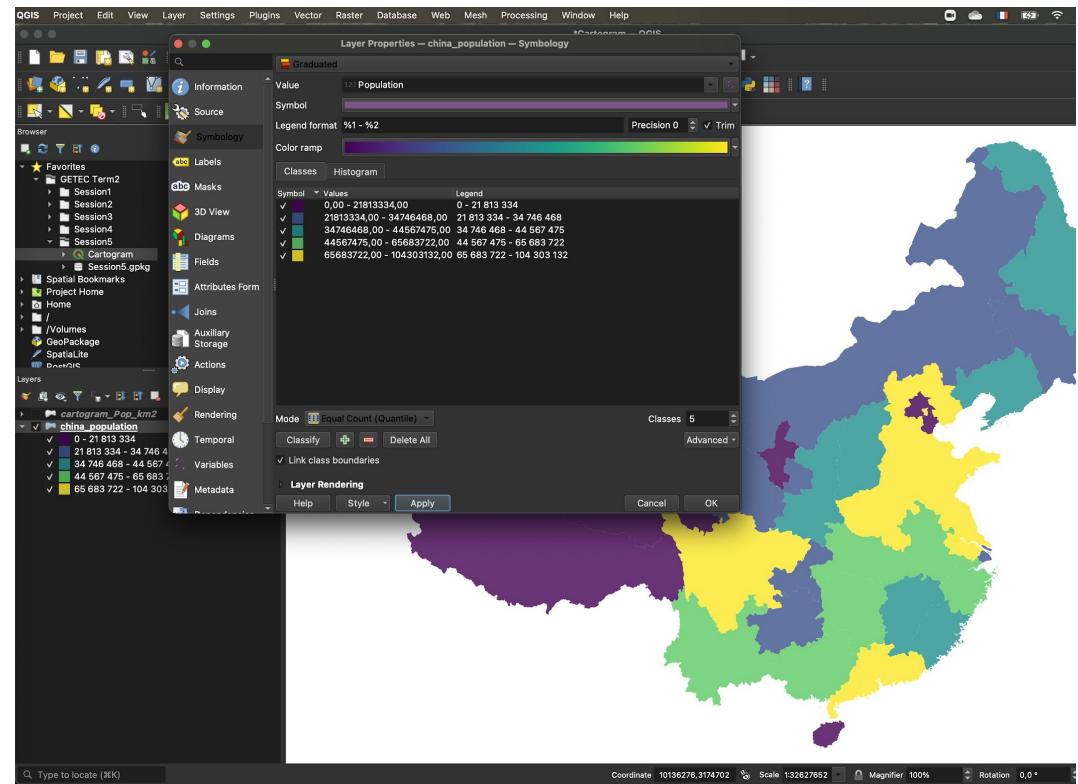


Making a choropleth

Double click your layer and go in your Symbology menu. Use the Graduated style, and select the Population field.

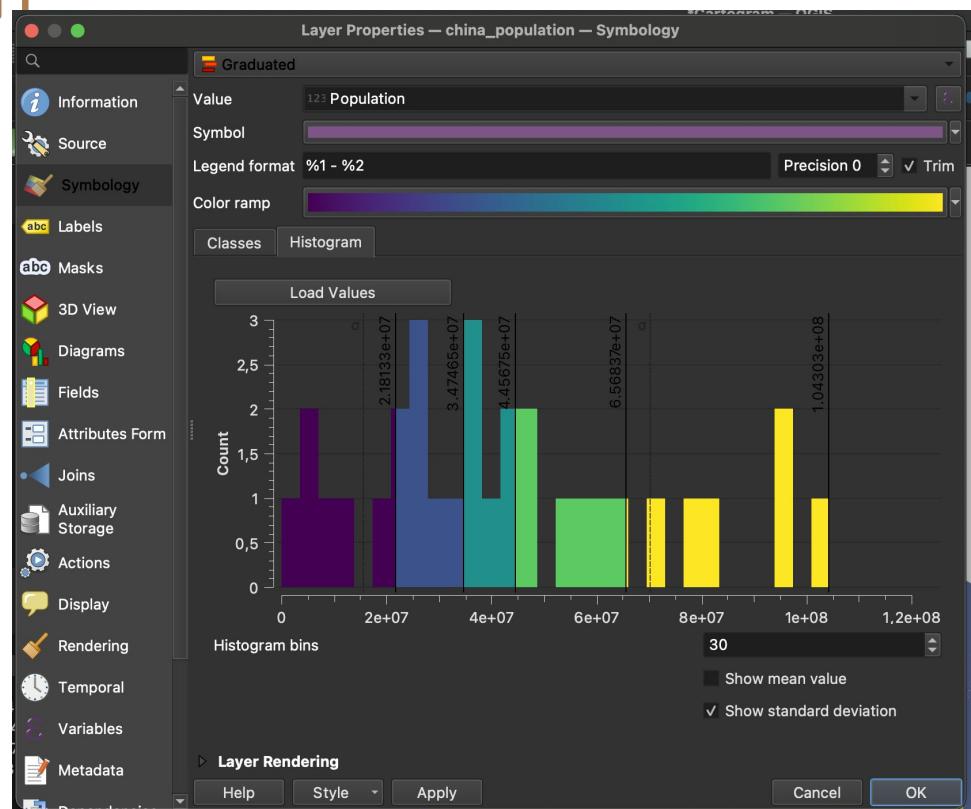
Pick a colour ramp of your choice. I picked Viridis.

You can also click on Symbol to change the opacity of the layer (I made it 80%) and make the stroke colour lighter or transparent.



Making a choropleth

When checking the histogram, we can see that the data is evenly distributed, so we'll stick to quantiles as our classification method, with 5 classes.



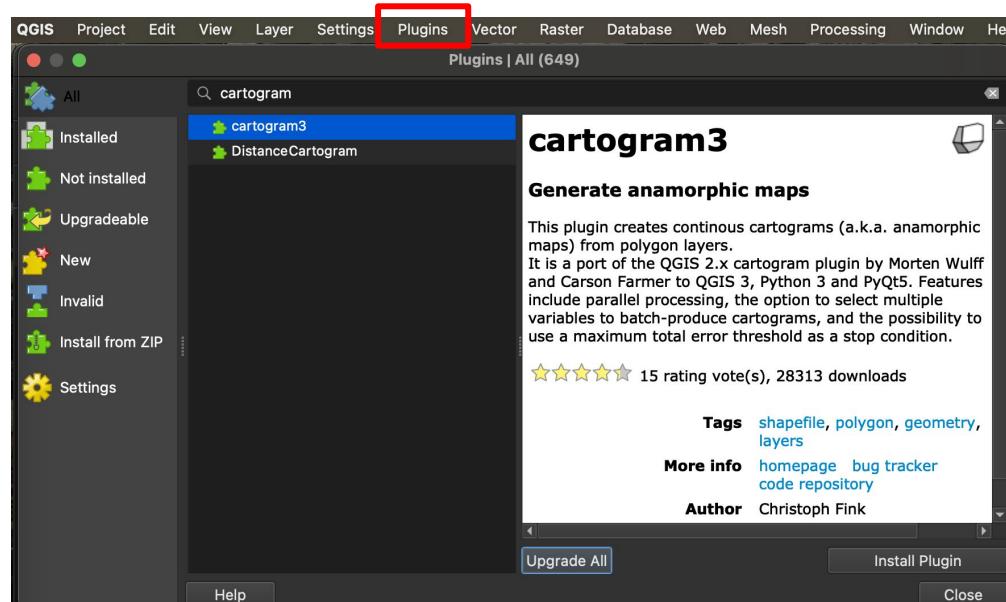
Download the plugin

Now, let's move on to the cartogram!

Install the cartogram3 plugin.

It will be available under your Vector menu.

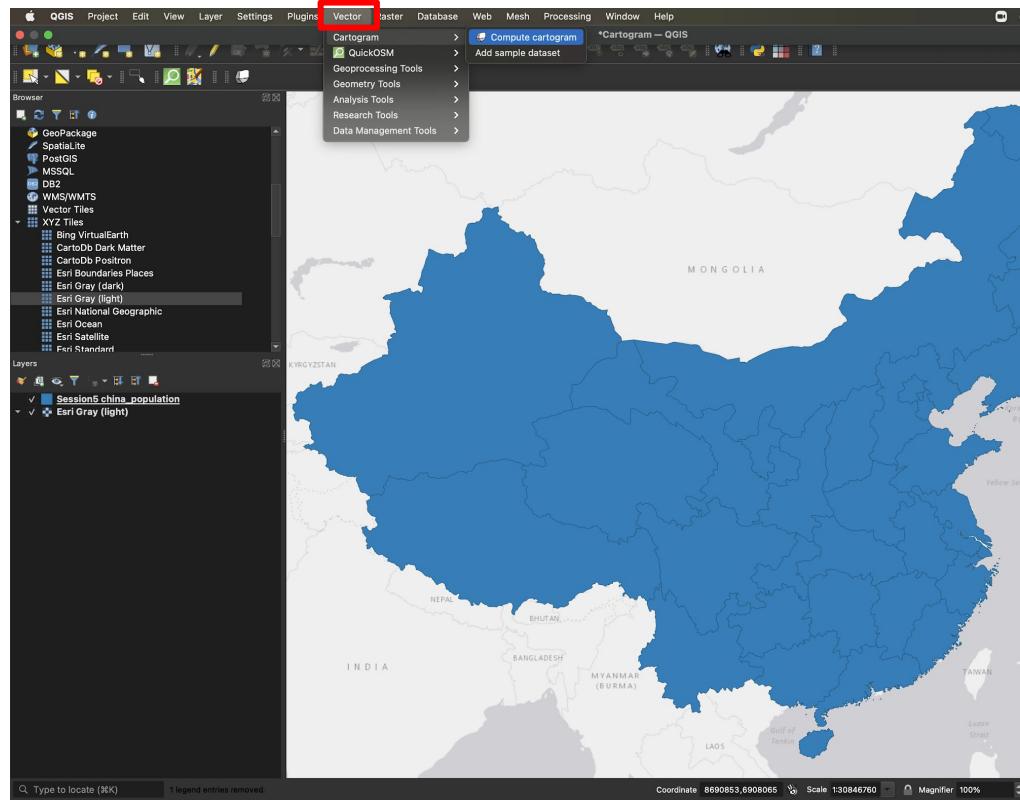
Here is the [GitHub repository](#) of the plugin (the Python code that built this plugin). Please read the README for some context on what the tool does and what kind of data you can feed it.



Open the tool

The tool is now available under your Vector menu.

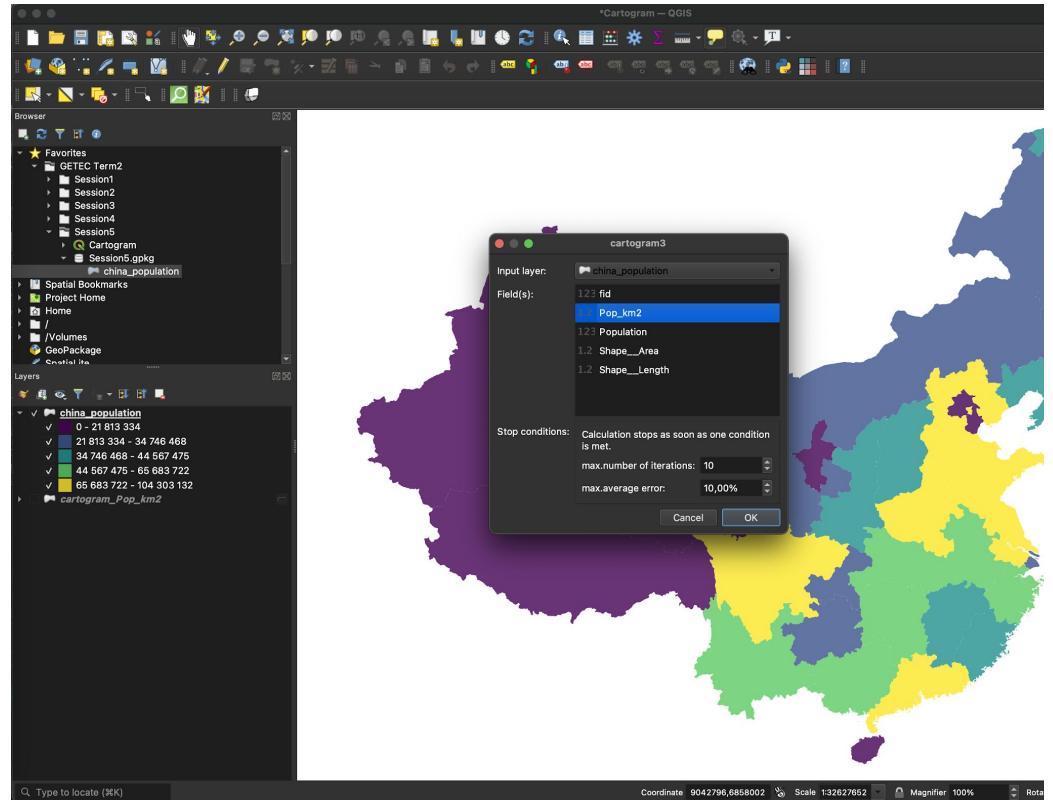
Vector > Cartogram > Compute Cartogram



Run the tool

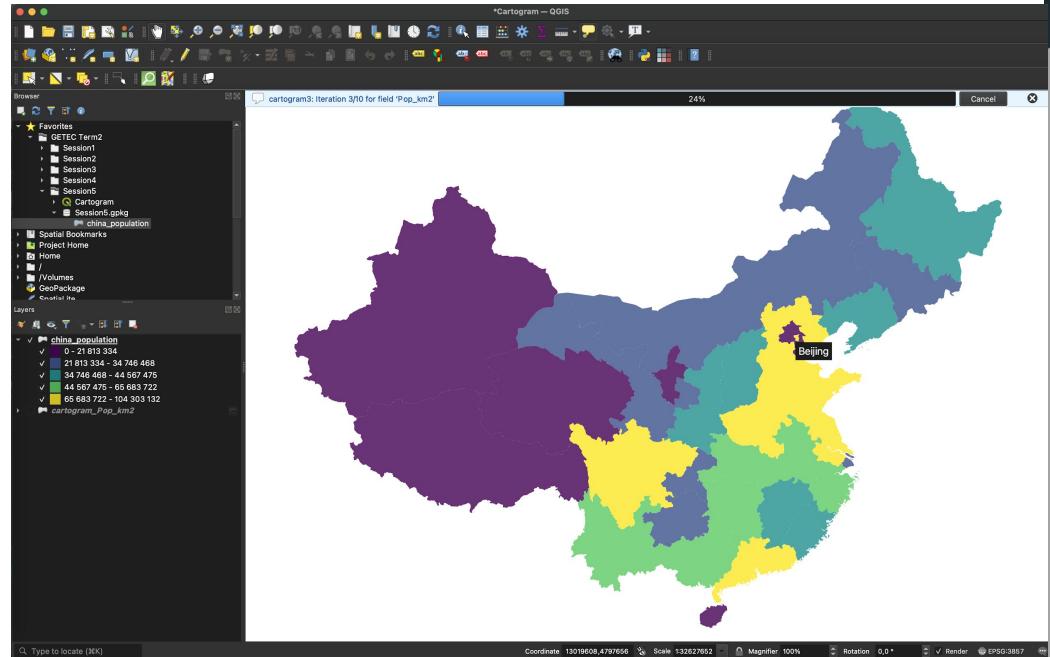
It's really simple!

- Select your layer (china_population)
- Select the numeric field you'd like to use to distort your map; here we will use Population
- Leave the number of iterations as is. The authors of the plugin recommend you don't go below 10 iterations, but you can increase the number if you'd like (it will run slower)
- Leave the max average error to 10%,
- Press OK



Run the tool

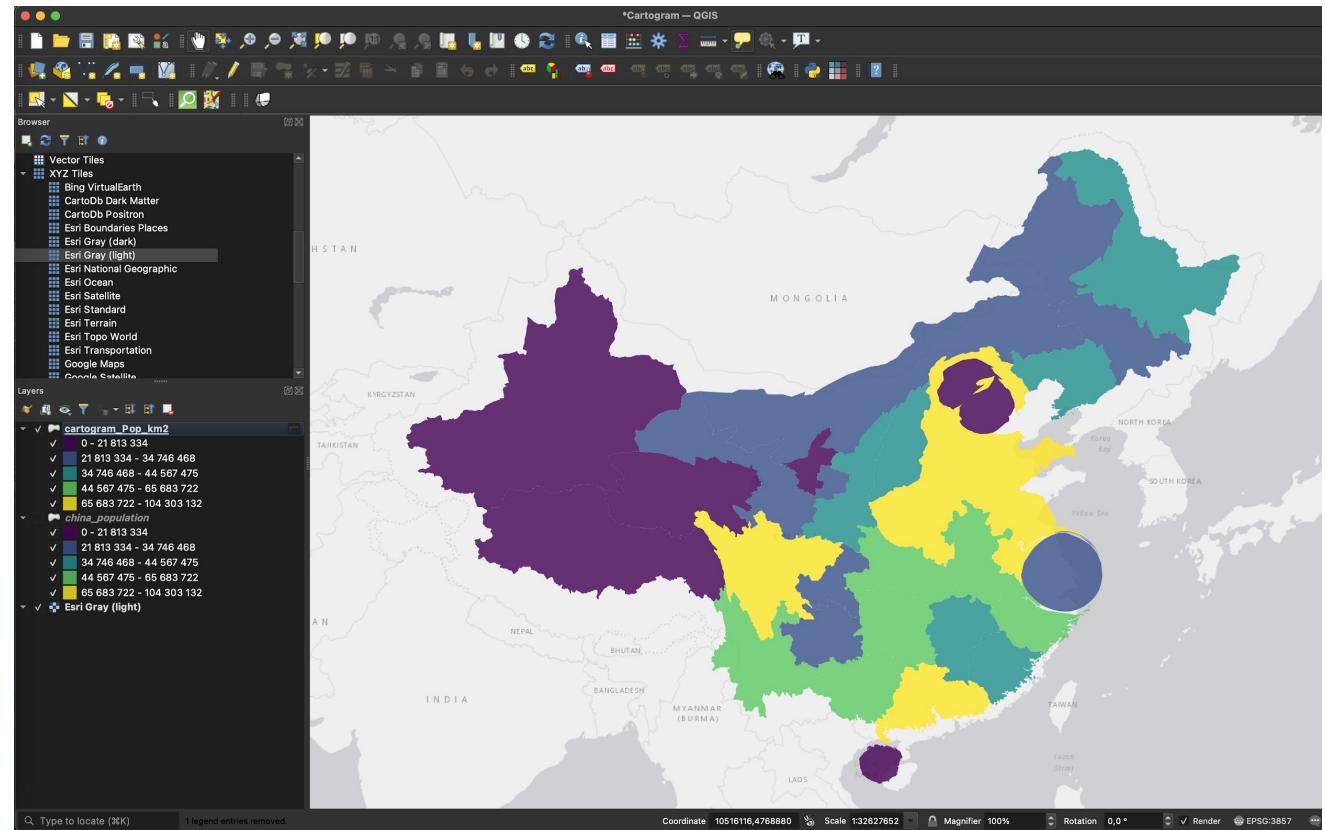
A progress bar appears. It may take a couple minutes to run, leave it to it and wait for the algorithm to complete.



The population density cartogram

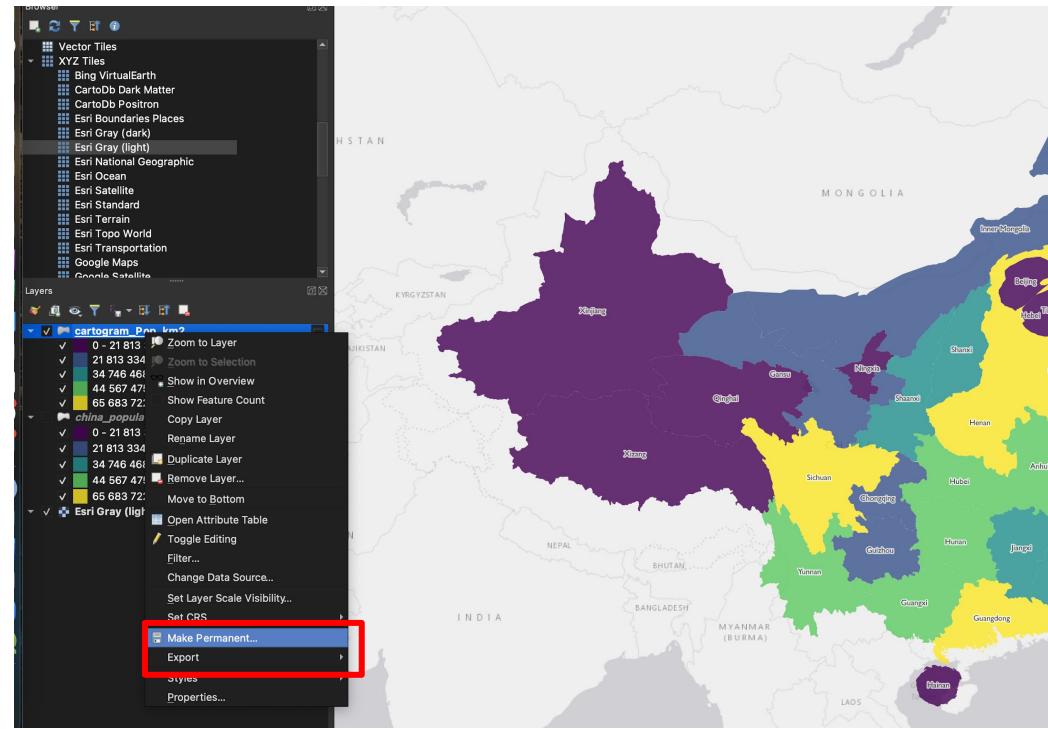
Congratulations!

You have produced your
first cartogram!



The population density cartogram

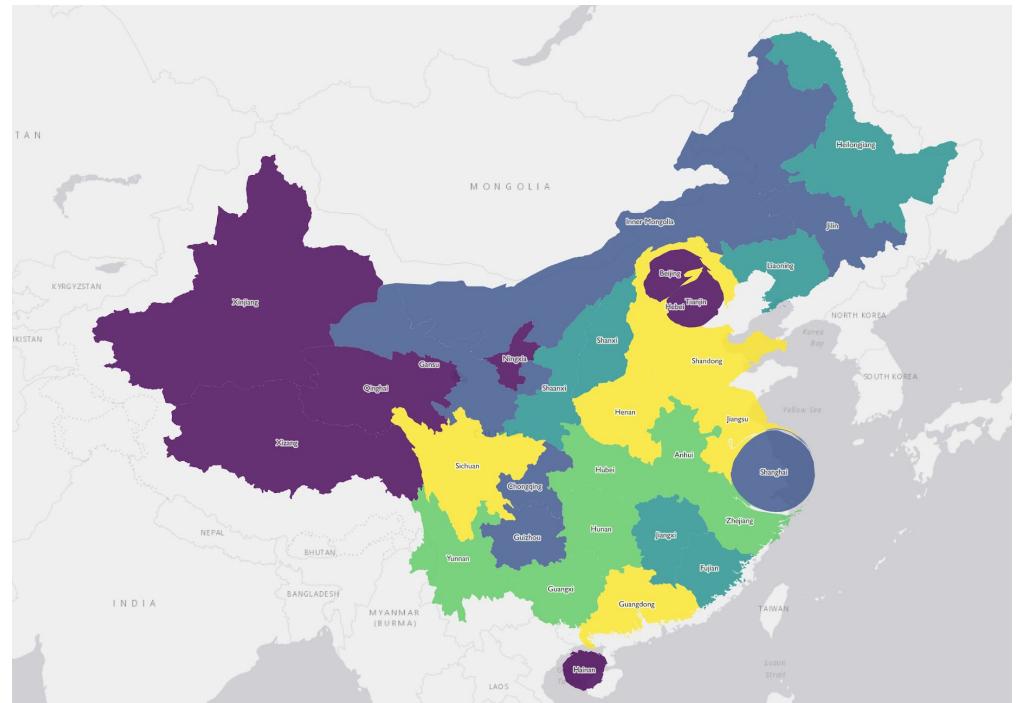
Remember to save the layer (either using **Make Permanent**, or **Export**) or it will be lost next time you open QGIS!



The population density cartogram

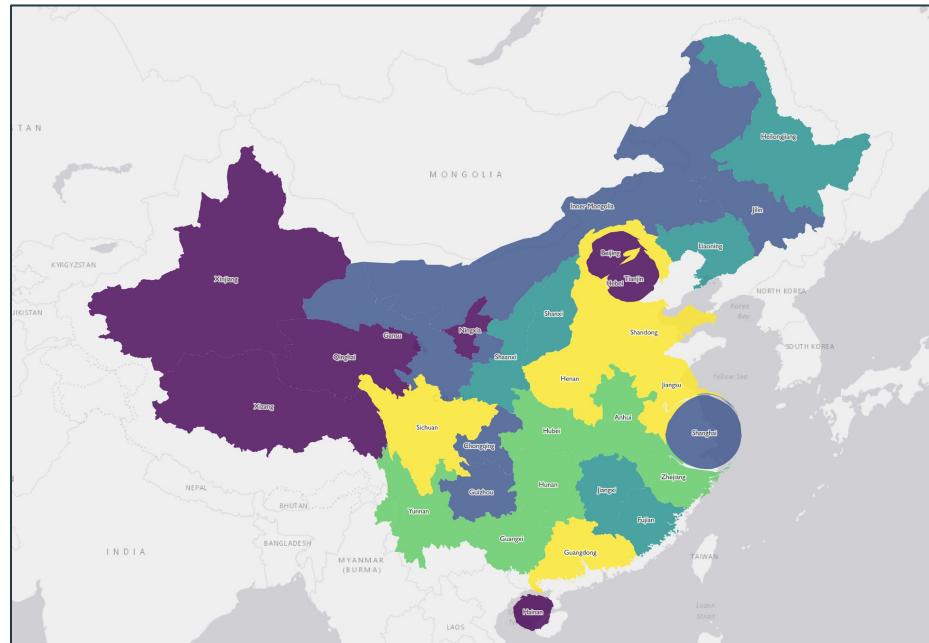
You can add labels to your symbology to complete your map, and use the Print Layout composer to add cartographic elements (legend, north arrow etc) and export it as usual.

Note that because of the distortions induced, basemaps can look a bit weird. The choice of keeping a basemap is up to you. Here, you can argue that our basemap is useful to see how much provinces such as Xinjiang and Heilongjiang shrank compared to the actual borders. Of those provinces.



The population density cartogram

You can now see how combining a **cartogram of population density** with a **choropleth of population density numbers** gives us a finer understanding of population trends across China (look at Shanghai, Beijing, Tianking, Hainan!)



Final remarks

- The cartogram3 tool is slow and probably will take a long time to run if you are using very detailed polygons or a large number of polygons. Bear in mind that there isn't much value in doing cartogram on small geographical units anyway, it is much more powerful used identifiable areas (countries / provinces / regions / boroughs) for your map to be interpretable.
- The plugin can also be a little bit unstable, so be sure to save your project frequently!
- Try it out on other datasets! You just need a polygon layer that does not contain too many features, and a numeric variable to play with.