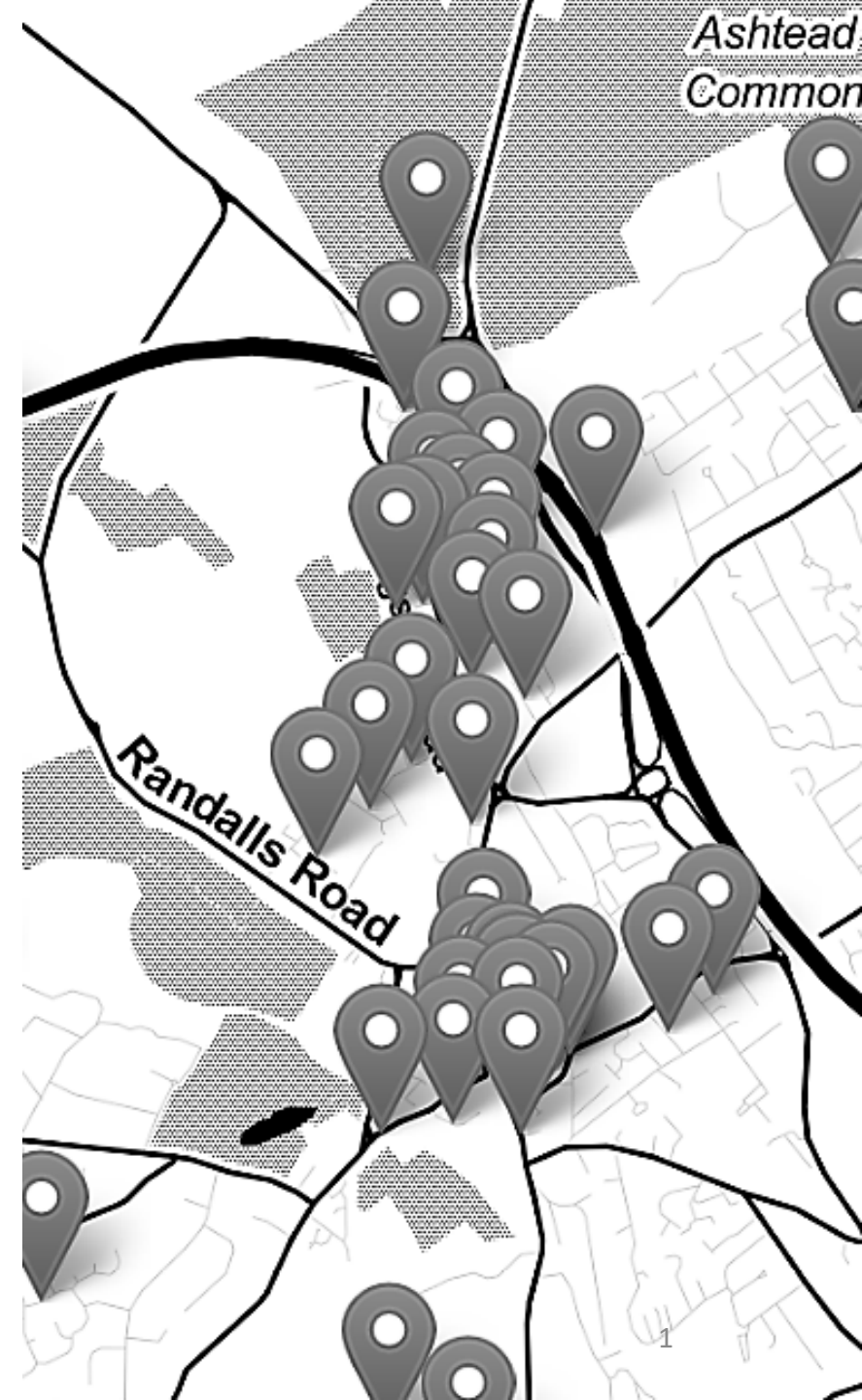


Mapping Crime Data in R:

An Introduction to GIS and
Spatial Data (9th and 10th of March
2026)

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Workshop Content – 9th March 2026

- What is GIS
- Spatial Data vs Non-Spatial Data
- Different types of maps (reference vs thematic)
- Projection Methods and Coordinate Reference Systems
- Spatial Relations (and/or spatial statistics)
 - a) Spatial autocorrelation
 - b) Spatial interpolation
 - c) Hot spot analysis
- Data sources for crime and GIS
- Challenges of Mapping Crime Data



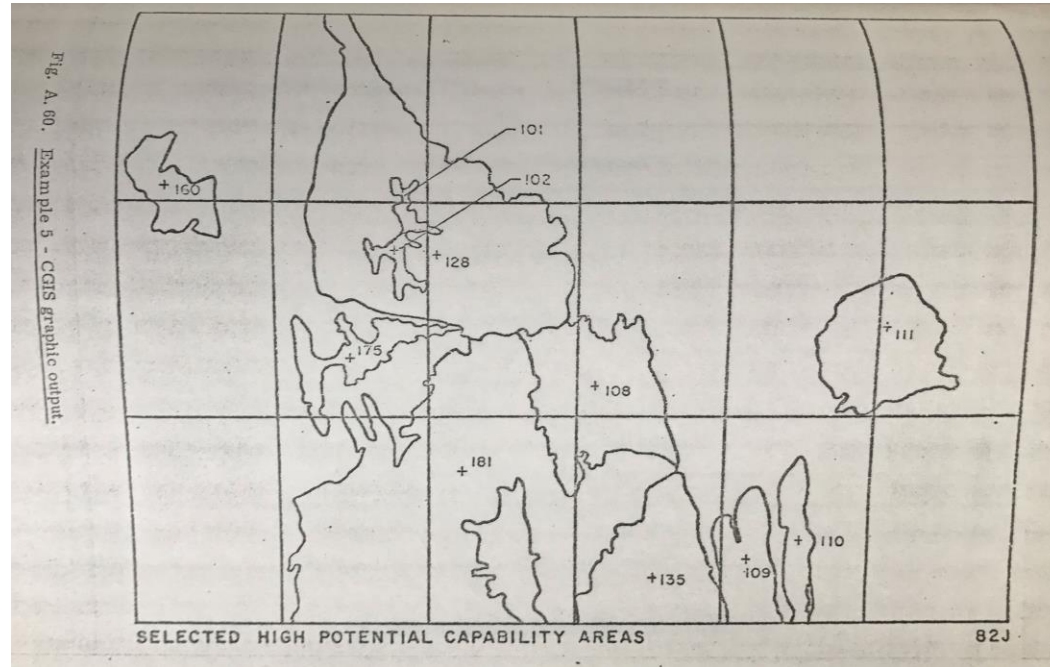
Code Demo – 10th of March 2026

- Topic 1 – Exploring crime data (descriptive + point maps + sf objects)
- Topic 2 – Shapefiles (joining + classification methods + tmap)
- Topic 3 – Census (crime rate + cartogram)
- Topic 4 – Spatial Analysis (spatial interpolation + heatmaps in ggplot2 + Leaflet)
- Additional Topics – ggmap/Google API, time series analysis with rolling averages



What is GIS?

Graphical Information Systems:
“computer system for capturing, storing, checking, and displaying data related to positions on Earth’s surface”



<https://jcheshire.com/resources/roger-tomlinsons-phd-the-first-in-gis/>

City	Score
Cupertino	17.2
Doha	13.5
Dubai,	22.4
Geneva	11.5
Hong Kong	78.3
Luxembourg City	45.3
Mountain View	74.2
San Francisco	12.9
Singapore	56.8
Zurich	45.7



A) interested in identifying the ten cities with the highest average income scores



B) interested in identifying whether these ten cities are geographically clustered

City	Score	Spatial Boundaries
Cupertino	17.2	SW: (28.00, 45.09) NE: (28.09, 45.16)
Doha	13.5	SW: (-60.38, 147.45) NE: (-60.32, 147.52)
Dubai,	22.4	SW: (48.62, 146.83) NE: (48.66, 146.93)
Geneva	11.5	SW: (-81.64, -174.64) NE: (-81.56, -174.58)
Hong Kong	78.3	SW: (69.11, 60.87) NE: (69.18, 60.92)
Luxembourg City	45.3	SW: (37.10, -123.11) NE: (37.19, -123.06)
Mountain View	74.2	SW: (12.87, 132.36) NE: (12.91, 132.46)
San Francisco	12.9	SW: (-47.69, -169.90) NE: (-47.68, -169.87)
Singapore	56.8	SW: (-72.25, -178.46) NE: (-72.23, -178.40)
Zurich	45.7	SW: (-84.93, -163.24) NE: (-84.88, -163.21)

Continued.

- All data in GIS are 'georeferenced' meaning it has both;
 - Attribute (what it is)
 - Location (where it is, a known location)

-

Georeferenced = is a digital map or image that has been tied to a known earth coordinate system.

What software's are available?

- GeoDa
- **ArcGIS**
- FME
- **QGIS**
- R
- ...

What software have/do you use for GIS/Spatial Analysis?




How is GIS used?

1. Identify problems
2. Monitor change
3. Manage and respond to events
4. Perform forecasting
5. Set priorities
6. Understand trends

- Reference: <https://www.esri.com/en-us/what-is-gis/overview#liSwitcher>

Here are just some of the questions that GIS allows us to explore with crime data.

- Where are the most vulnerable communities located?
 - Why do crimes occur in one area and not the other
 - How do offenders travel to the crime location?
 - Where are there more or less stop and search than we would expect in relation to the distribution of crime?
- 

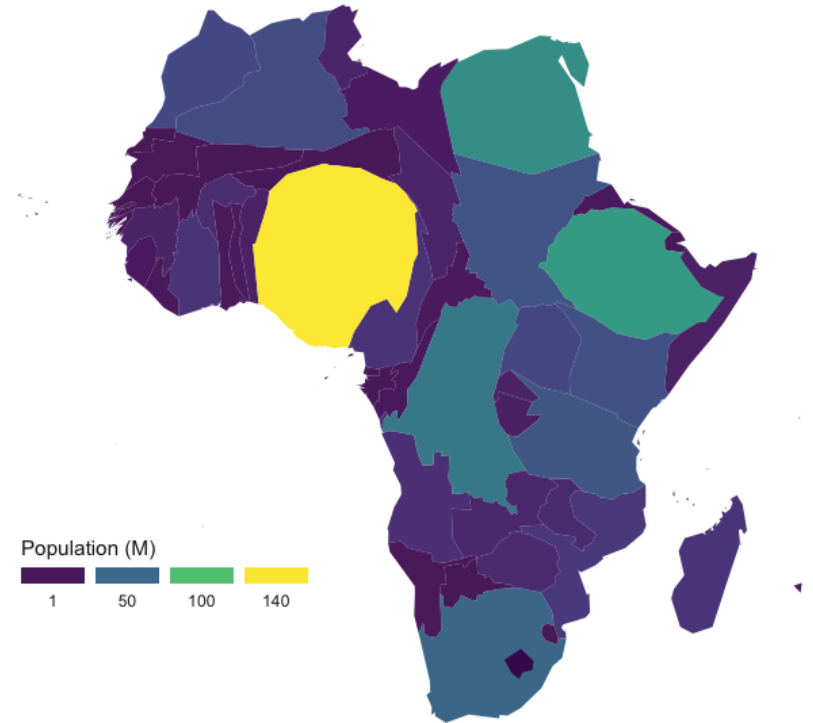
Reference vs Thematic Maps

- Reference Maps: used to communicate location on more static data points
 - To 'pin point' data on a map
 - Descriptive
- Thematic Maps: used to highlight a spatial relationship
 - To 'study a theme' within a map
 - Explanatory

Reference vs Thematic Maps Continued...



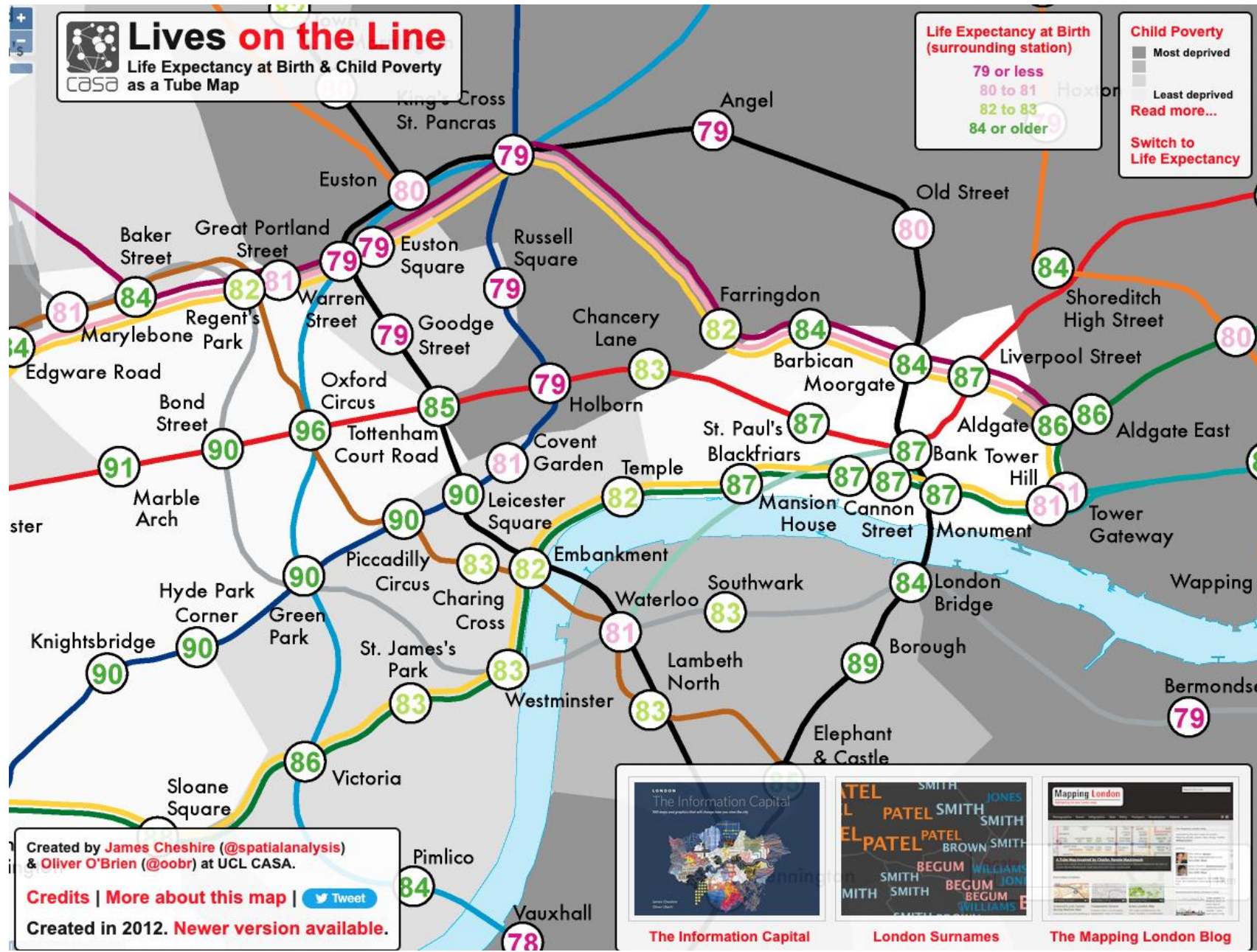
Vs



AI-generated conceptual images created using ChatGPT (OpenAI, DALL·E), 07 January 2024.

Tube Map Example

(source = <https://life.mappinglondon.co.uk/life/>)



Tube Map Example

- How do we class Tube Maps;
- Reference maps because...
 - They show the location of different tube stations, and the location of each tube line
- Thematic maps because...
 - They can be used to predict life expectancy, poverty and median house prices
- Have a go exploring this!!
- https://tubecreature.com/#/livesontheline/current/same/U/*/FFTF/11.469326848406268/-0.1622/51.5142/

Scenario 1: The visualisation of road networks to improve road safety measures are a type of



Scenario 2: The visualisation of the earths surface, showing its elevation, is a type of



Scenario 3: Navigation tools such as Google maps or City-Mapper can be classed as



To sum up

- All though maps falls broadly into two categories, there are ways in which these types of map overlap or share similarities
- Almost every thematic maps is also a reference map, but not every reference map is a thematic map
- The decision is up to you, it is not entirely necessary to define these in your work but it is important to now what type of map you want to make as these can be affected by the data you have

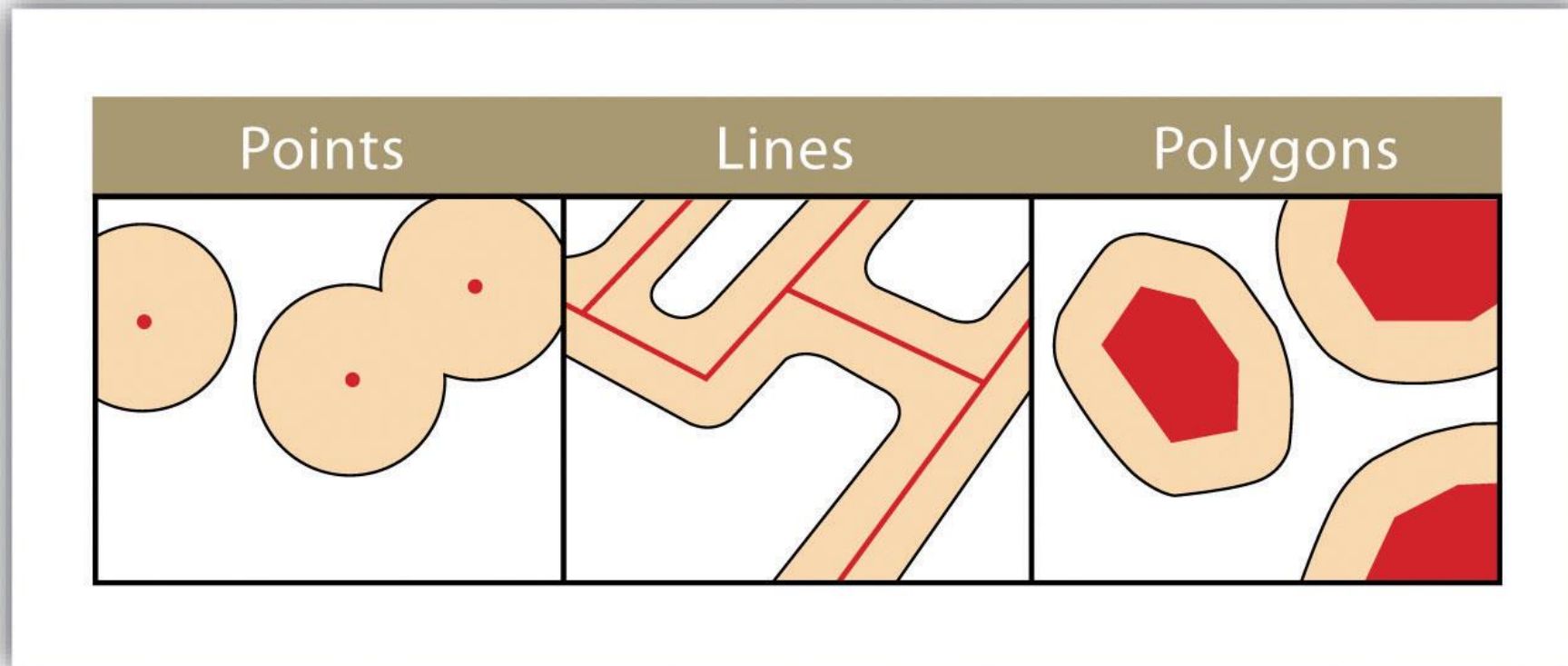
Can you give examples of any other types of map that share qualities of both thematic and reference maps?



What is Spatial Data?

- Spatial data (or geospatial data) is a data frame that contains information about a specific location, which can be analysed to better understand that location.
- GIS enables this spatial data to be processed and analysed.
- Two types: Vector and Raster

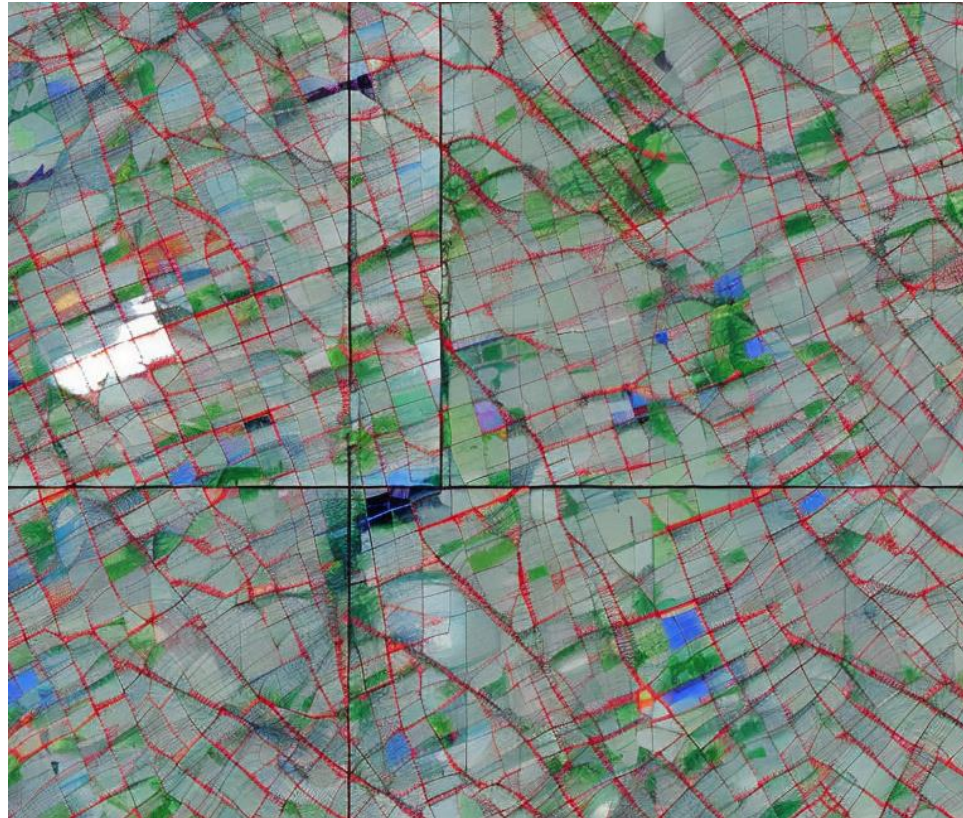
Vector Data



- Image source: https://saylordotorg.github.io/text_essentials-of-geographic-information-systems/s11-geospatial-analysis-i-vector-0.html

Raster Data

- Imagery or satellite data that are formed from a grid of pixels.



GIS Data Management

- GeoTiff files are commonly used for raster data
- Shapefile files are commonly used for vector data. Here's a file extension...

File extension	Content
.dbf	Attribute information
.shp	Feature geometry
.shx	Feature geometry index
.aih	Attribute index
.ain	Attribute index
.prj	Coordinate system information
.sbn	Spatial index file
.sbx	Spatial index file

Managing GIS files in R (vector data)

Key Packages:

- sf (Simple Features): A modern approach to managing spatial data, supporting simple features for R.
- Other common packages: sf, ggplot2, tmap, leaflet, spdep, dplyr, RColorBrewer, janitor, ggspatial, cartogram, zoo

Example Code:

```
library(sf)
shapefile <- st_read("path/to/your/file.shp")

shapefile_transformed <-
st_transform(my_shapefile, crs = 4326)

str(shapefile_transformed)
summary(shapefile_transformed)

Plot(shapefile_transformed)
ggplot(data = shapefile_transformed) +
geom_sf(aes(fill = attribute))
```

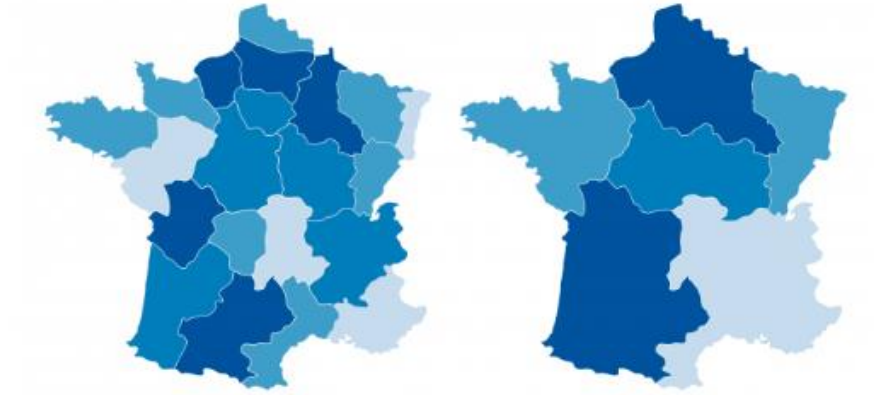
Modifiable Aerial Unit Problem (MAUP)

“MAUP refers to the cartographic representation of data whose attributes are significantly influenced by the spatial scale used”

Two key Aspects:

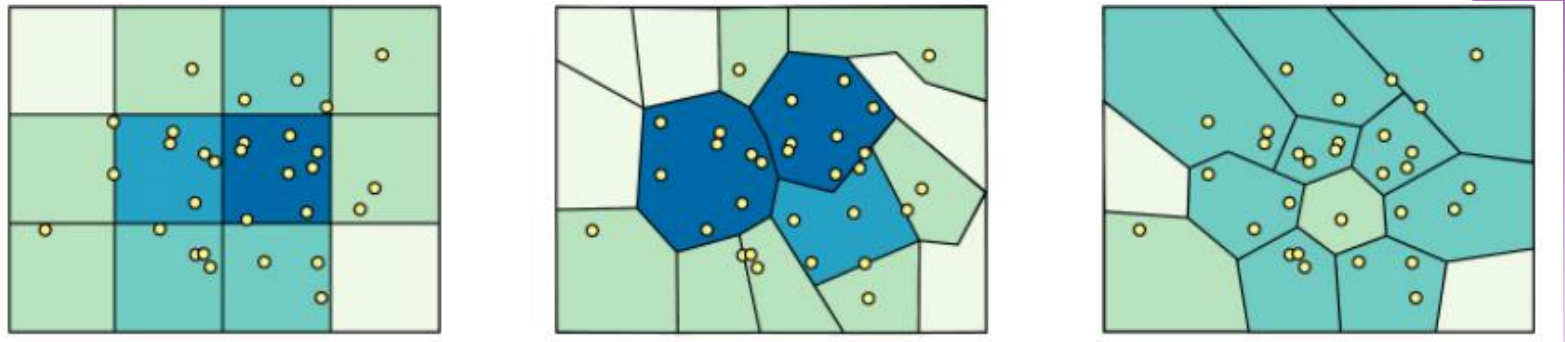
1. Scale Effect: Changing the size of the spatial units (e.g., from neighbourhoods to districts) can alter statistical results, such as means or totals.
2. Zoning Effect: Altering the shape or configuration of spatial units, even if the scale remains constant, can also impact results.

- Scale Effect:



<https://gisgeography.com/maup-modifiable-area-unit-problem/>

- Zone Effect:



http://www.e-education.psu.edu/geog486/l4_p7.html

- **Question:** True or False: The scale effect in MAUP refers to changes in statistical results caused by the size of the geographical units used in the analysis. *he analysis.*

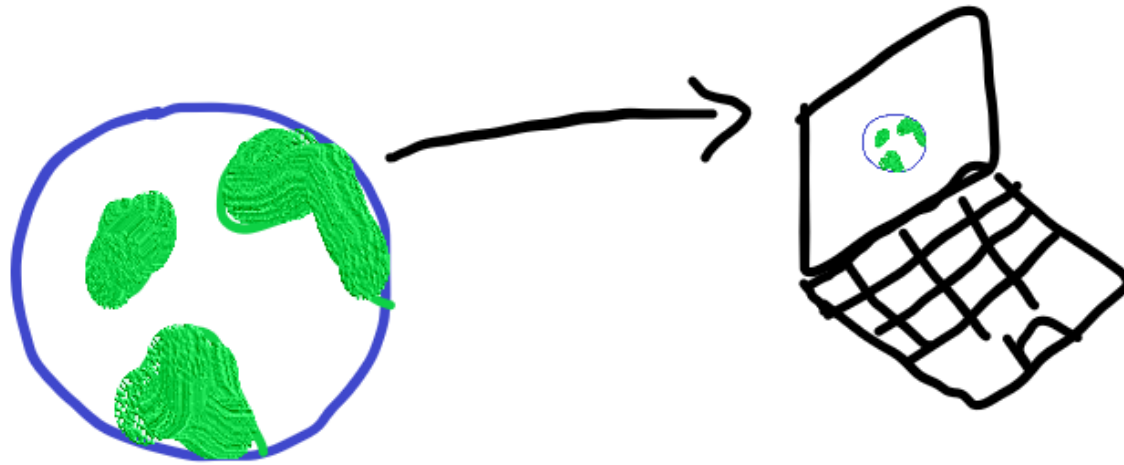
- **Question:** Which of the following best describes the aggregation effect in MAUP? A) It refers to the impact of data collection methods on analysis outcomes.
- B) It describes how the arrangement and shape of spatial units can alter statistical results.
- C) It is the effect of atmospheric conditions on aerial unit measurements.
- D) It denotes the influence of unit size on data storage requirements.

- **Question:** What are some potential implications of ignoring the MAUP in crime spatial analysis? spatial data analysis?

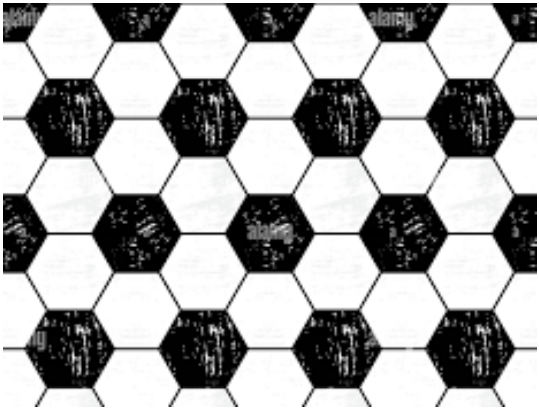
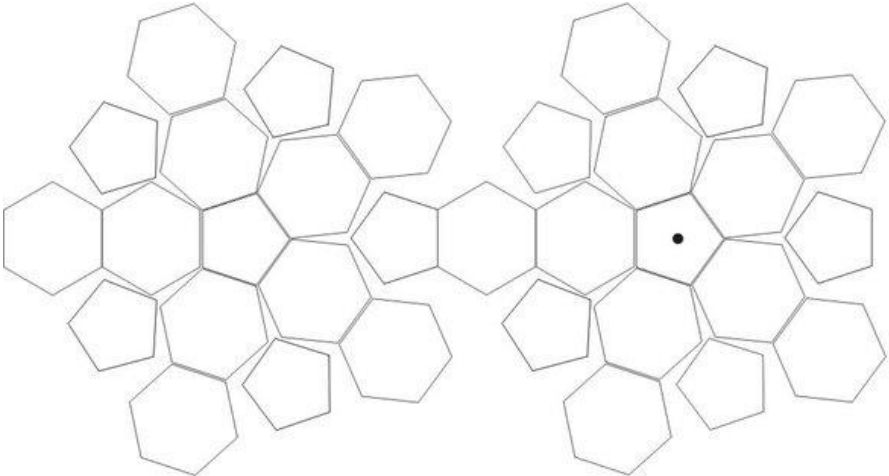
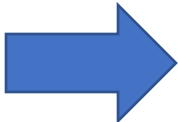


Projection Methods

- Moving from the 3D to the 2D



Football Example

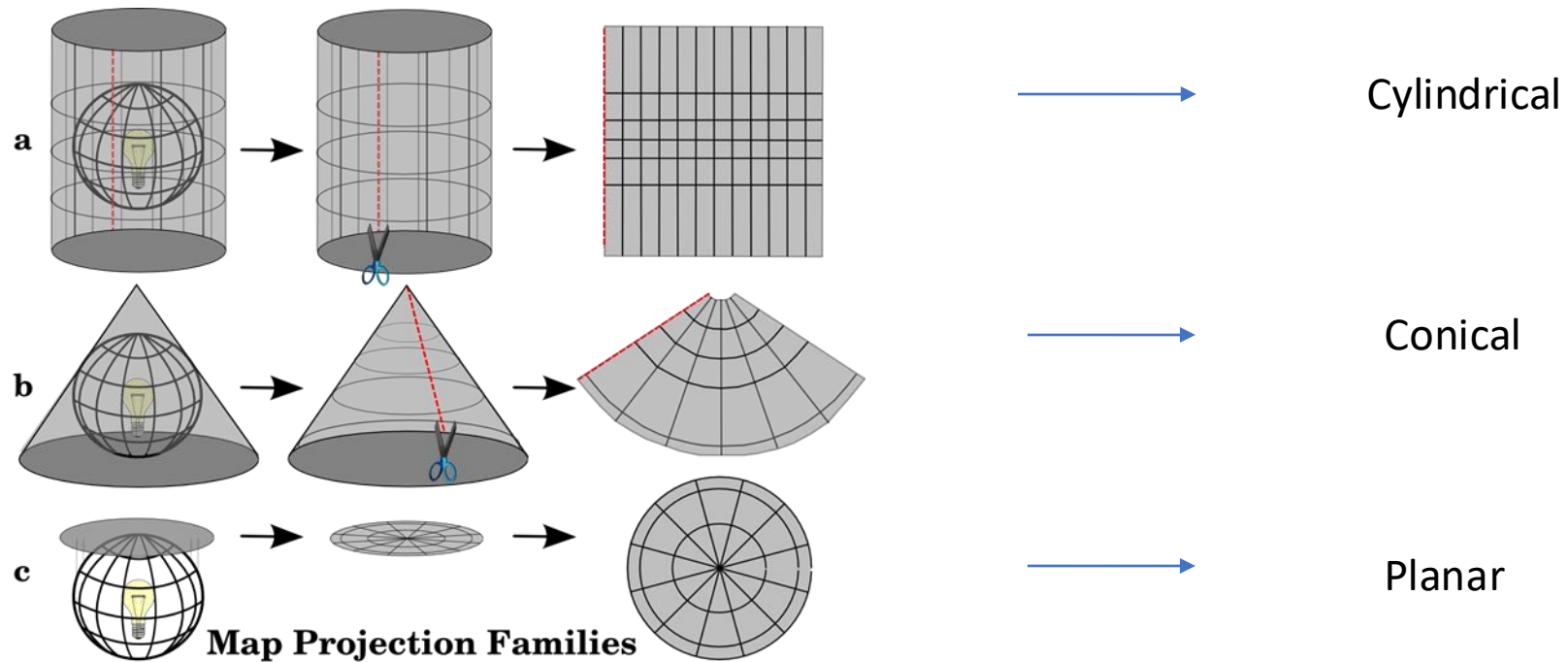


Distortion

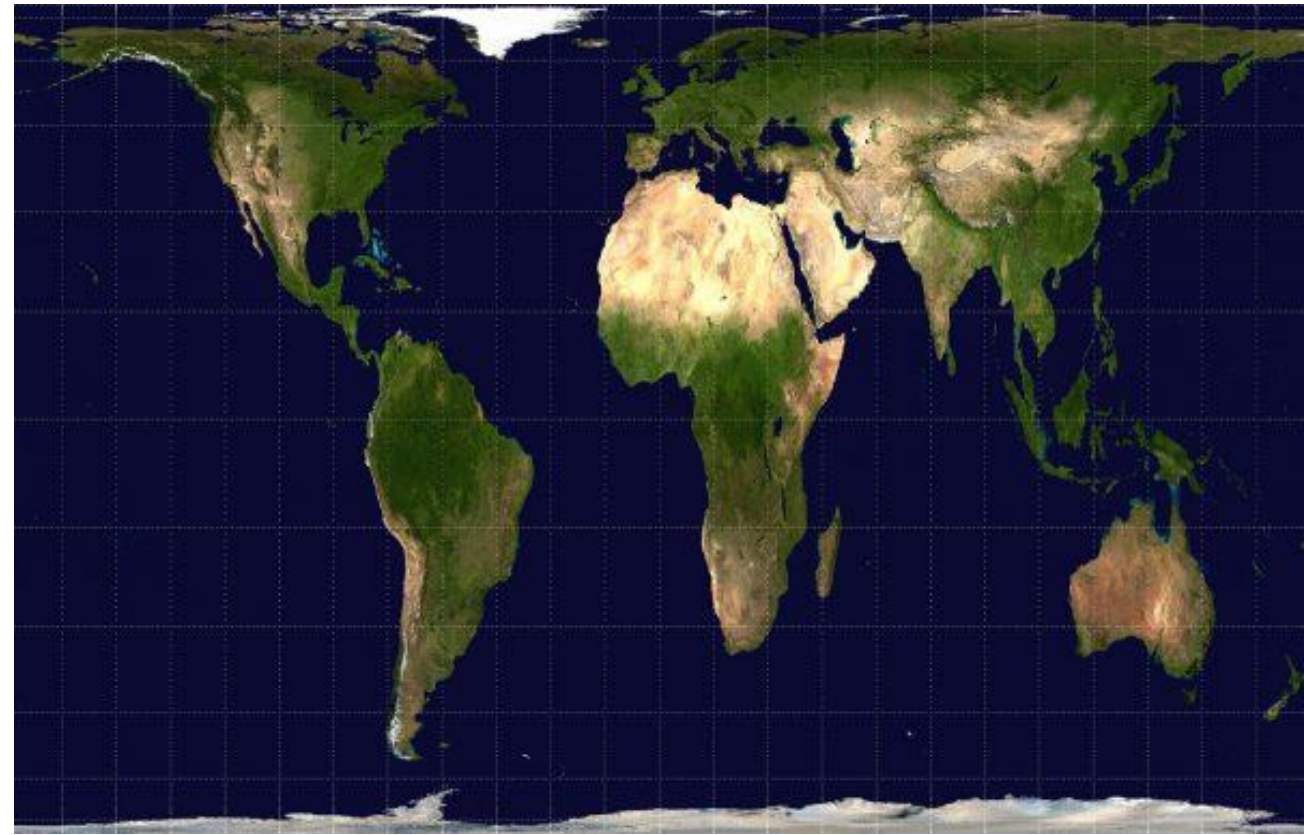
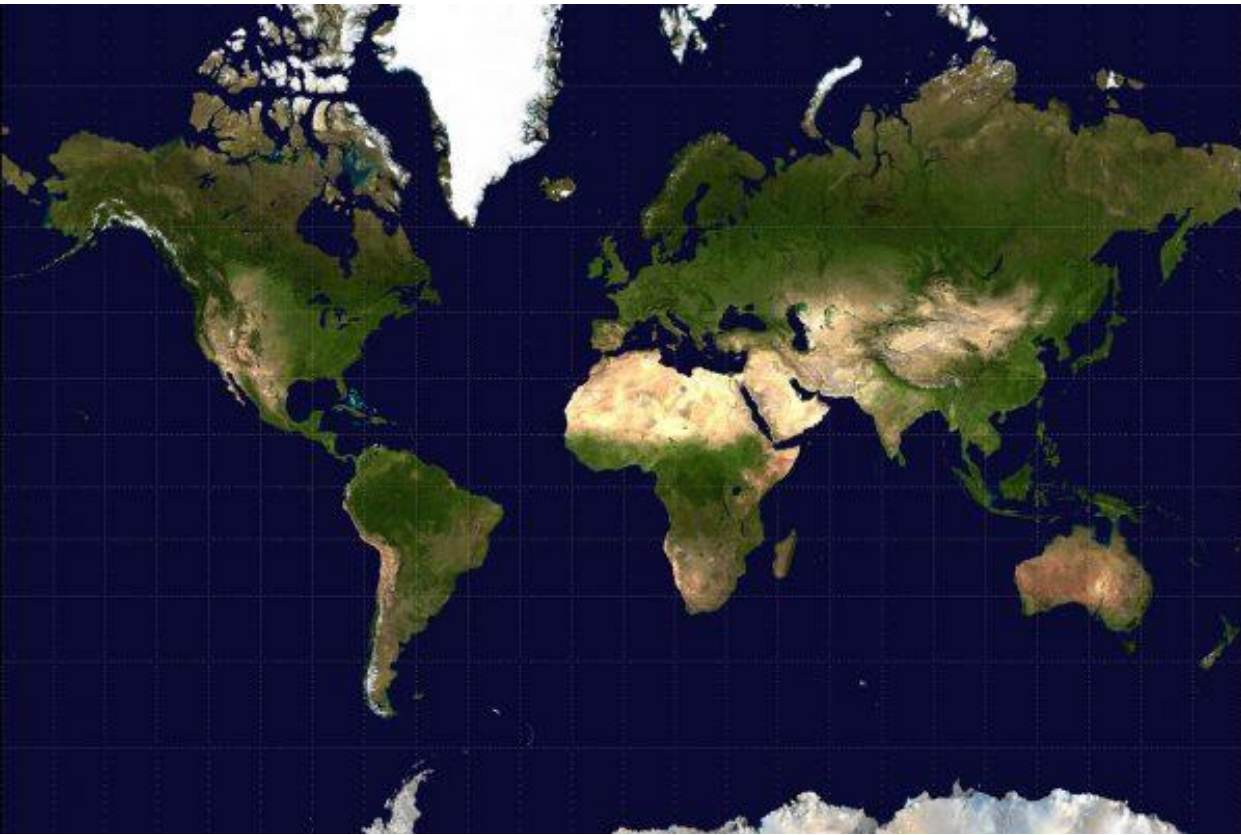
The misrepresentation of...

- > Area
- > Shape
- > Distance
- > Direction of points

Distortion..



Web Mercator vs Gall-Peter Projection



<https://map-projections.net/compare.php?p1=gall-peters&p2=mercator-84&w=0>

So, how do we move from the 3D to the 2D?

Coordinate Reference Systems (CRS)

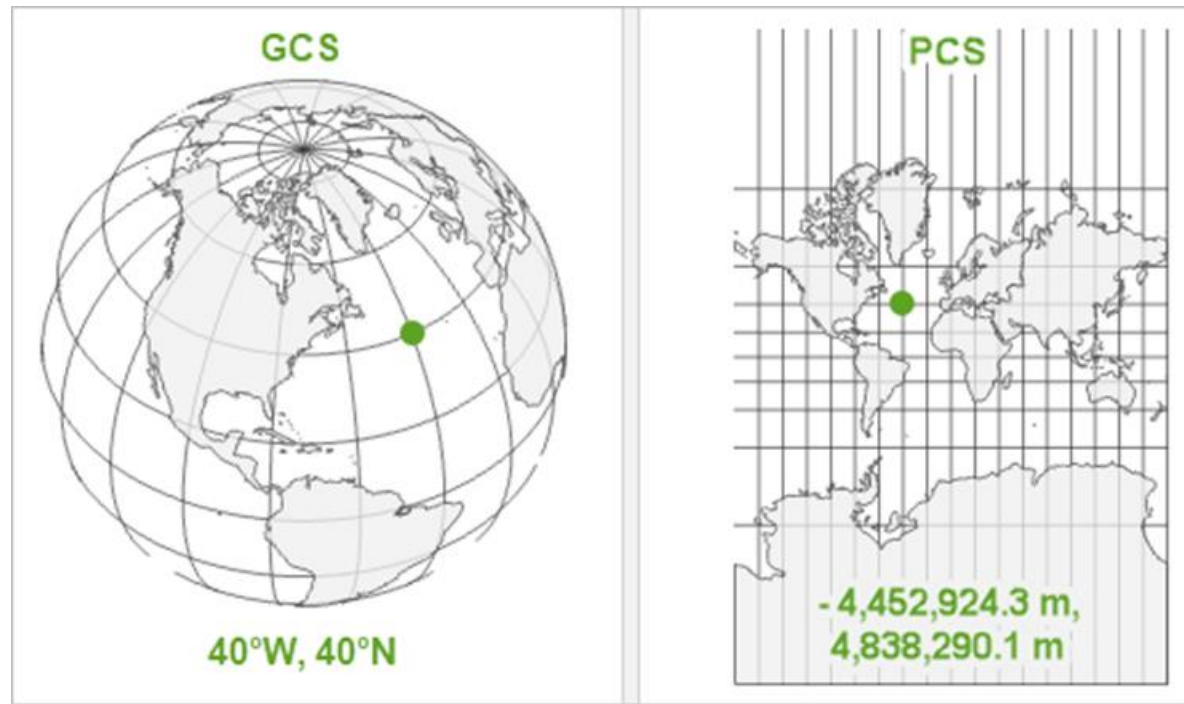
- The move from the 3D to the 2D is done with the help of CRS
- Every place on earth is specified by three numbers (i.e. coordinates)
 - Latitude, longitude and Altitude



CRS continued...

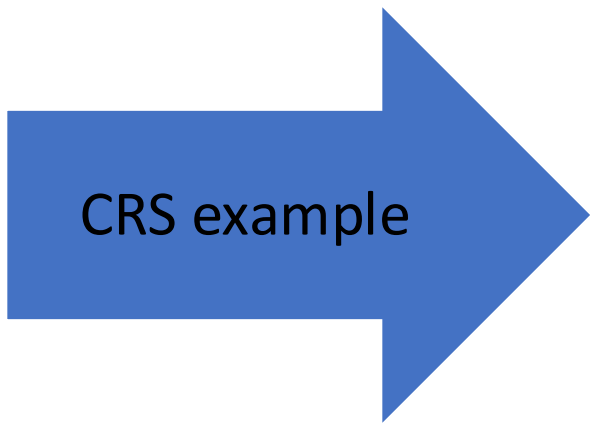
There are two Main CRS:

Geographic Coordinate System vs Projected Coordinate Systems



The 'where'

The 'how'



- Remember that a PCS, is just a GCS that has been projected !

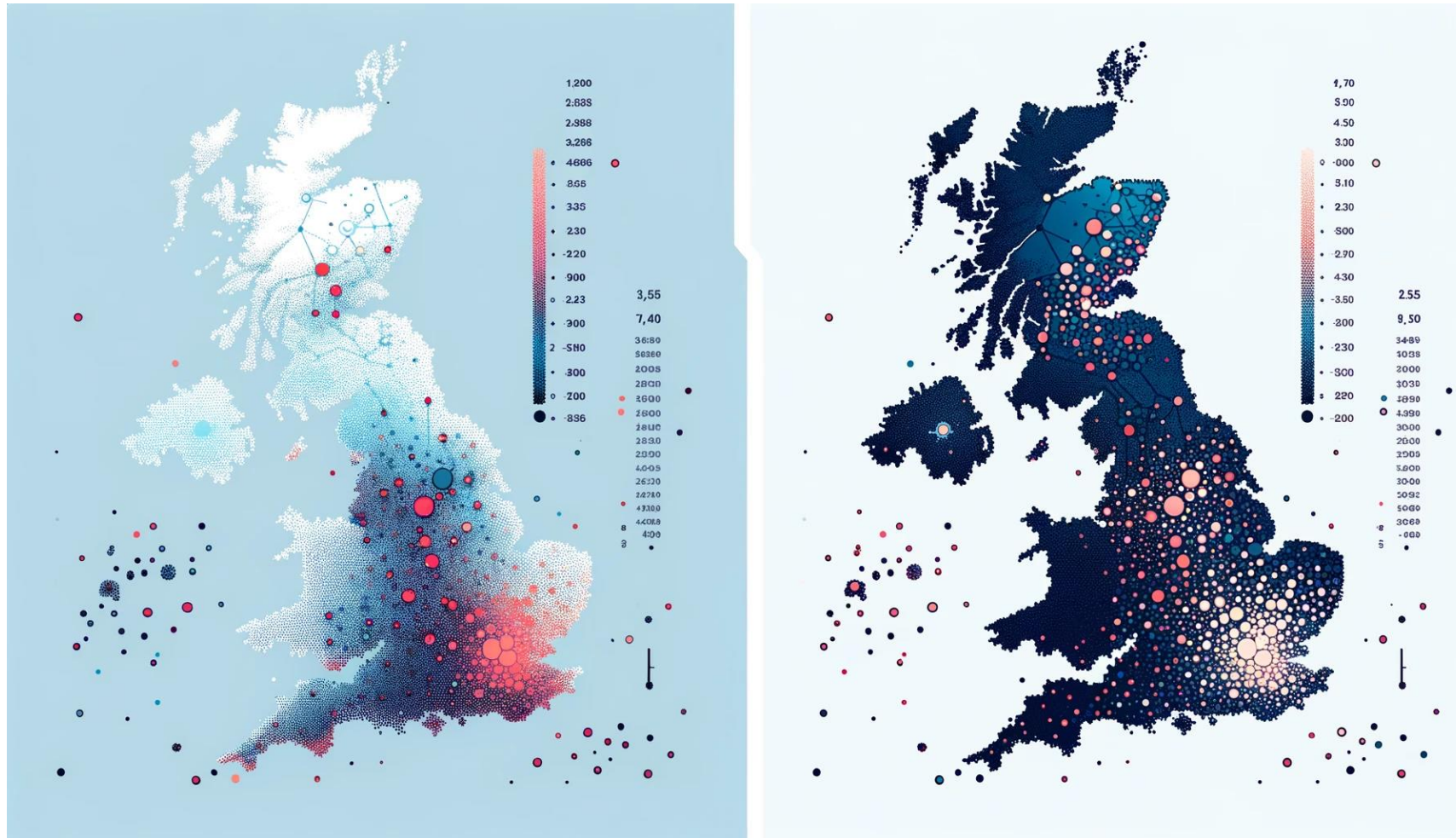
Projected Coordinate System	Fuller (world)	Tell me how to draw the earth on a flat surface!
Projection	Fuller	
WKID	54050	
Authority	Esri	
Linear Unit	Meters (1.0)	
False Easting	0.0	
False Northing	0.0	
Option	0.0	
Geographic Coordinate System	WGS 1984	Tell me where on the earth the data should draw!
WKID	4326	
Authority	EPSG	
Angular Unit	Degree (0.0174532925199433)	
Prime Meridian	Greenwich (0.0)	
Datum	D WGS 1984	
Spheroid	WGS 1984	
Semimajor Axis	6378137.0	
Semiminor Axis	6356752.314245179	
Inverse Flattening	298.257223563	

Spatial Relations and Analysis in GIS

- **Spatial relations** refer to the ways in which different locations, areas, or objects are situated in relation to each other on the Earth's surface.
- **Spatial analysis** refers to studying entities by examining, assessing, evaluating, and modelling spatial data features



a) Point Pattern Analysis



AI-generated image created using ChatGPT (OpenAI, DALL·E), March 2026. Image generated by Nadia Kennar

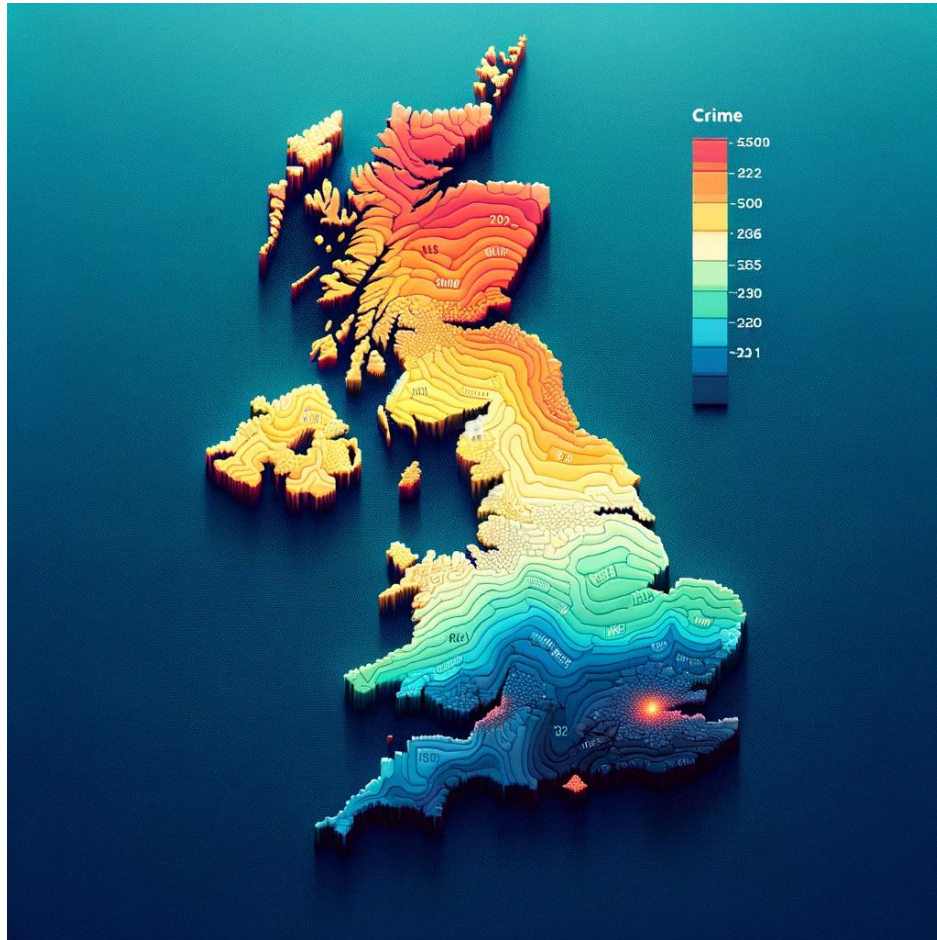
b) Spatial Autocorrelation



This map groups areas with similar crime rates together, using shades of a single color to represent different levels of crime rates, showing patterns of clustering.

AI-generated image created using ChatGPT (OpenAI, DALL·E), March 2026. Image generated by Nadia Kennar

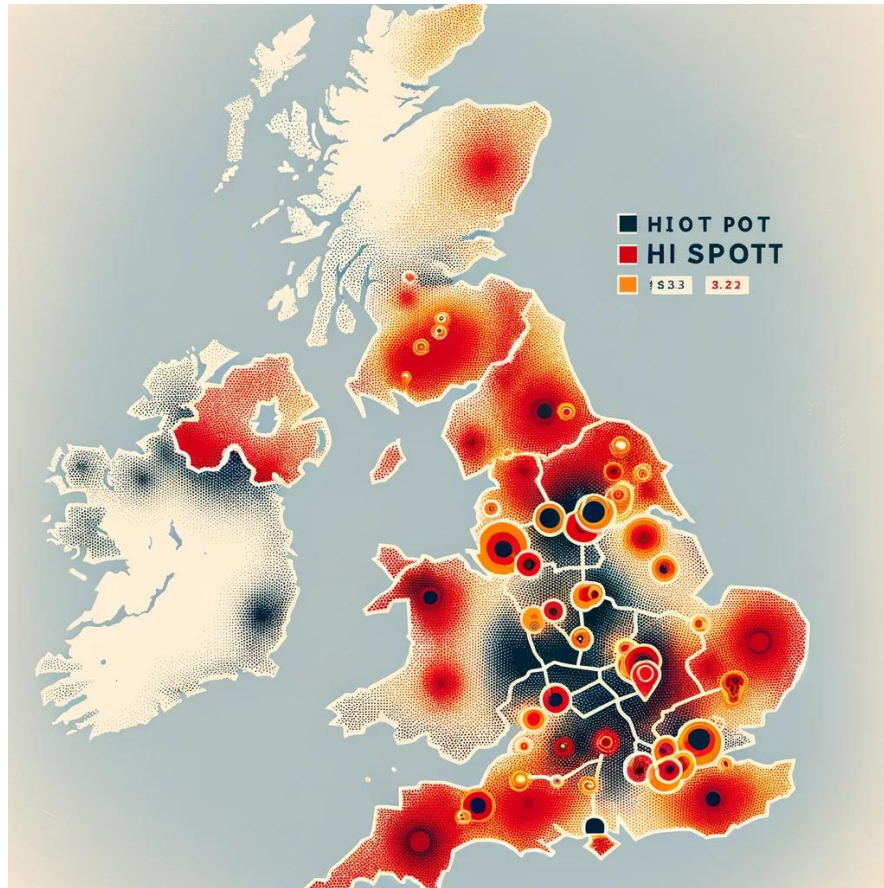
c) Spatial Interpolation



This map uses a gradient of colours to interpolate crime rates between known data points, creating a smooth transition that estimates crime rates in areas with no direct data.

AI-generated image created using ChatGPT (OpenAI, DALL·E), March 2026. Image generated by Nadia Kennar

d) Hot spot analysis



This map highlights areas with significantly higher crime rates in bright colours against a neutral background, indicating geographic concentrations of high crime rates and identifying areas needing immediate attention.

AI-generated image created using ChatGPT (OpenAI, DALL·E), March 2026. Image generated by Nadia Kennar

Data Sources for Crime Data

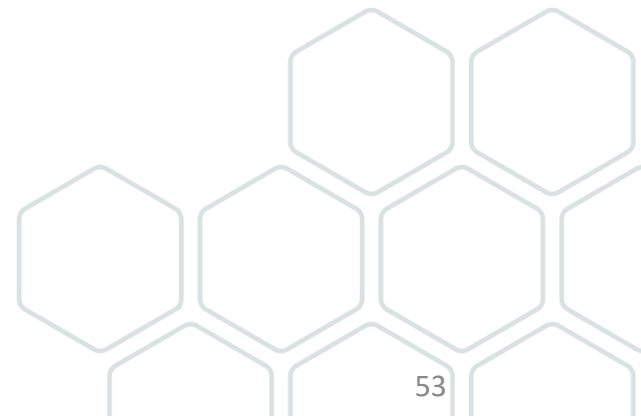
UK	Non-UK	R Packages	Other
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UK Police Data - Provides street-level crime data, outcomes, and information on the location of the front counter. Office for National Statistics (ONS) - Offers crime statistics for England and Wales. Scottish Government Statistics - Publishes crime and justice datasets for Scotland. Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) - Provides crime and justice statistics for Northern Ireland. London Datastore - Contains datasets specific to London, including the Metropolitan Police Service's crime data. UK Home Office - Publishes research and statistics on various aspects of the criminal justice system. Data.gov.uk - A portal for UK government data, including some datasets related to crime and justice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program (USA) - Provides a nationwide view of crime based on the submission of statistics by law enforcement agencies. Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) (USA) - Contains criminal victimization data, law enforcement, prosecution, courts, and corrections data. National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) (USA) - Offers detailed information about crimes reported to law enforcement. European Sourcebook of Crime and Criminal Justice Statistics - Compiles criminal justice data from European countries. INTERPOL's Crime Data - Allows access to international crime statistics. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) - Provides global crime and criminal justice statistics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> crimedata: An R package that provides easy access to cleaned and documented criminal incident data from several U.S. cities. UKpolice: An R package that uses the data.police.uk API to provide access to UK police data. opendatatoronto: Although not specific to crime data, this package can access Toronto's Open Data Portal, which includes crime statistics. crimer: An R package that allows users to access and analyze crime data from the city of Baltimore. rdflib: While not a crime-specific package, rdflib can be used to parse RDF/XML crime data provided by some organizations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other Resources: GIS Data Repositories: Such as Esri's Open Data Hub or Harvard's Geospatial Library, which offer geospatial data that can be used in crime mapping. Social Media and Crowdsourced Data: Platforms like Twitter and Nextdoor, where users may report crime-related incidents. However, this data is unverified and needs careful processing. Academic Institutions: University crime labs and research centers sometimes share datasets for public use. Private Data Vendors: Companies like LexisNexis provide crime reports and analytics services, though they often require a subscription.

What are the main challenges of mapping crime data?

- Geomasking and geoprivacy
- The accuracy of police recorded statistics
 - The grey figure of crime
 - Conceptual issues surrounding its definitions of crime types
 - The impacts of seasonality; how has Covid-19 affected police recorded crime statistics

Can you think of anymore?

What are the main challenges of mapping crime data?



Material for the live code demonstration (10/03/2026)

GitHub:

https://github.com/UKDataServiceOpen/Mapping_Crime_Data_R_2026

References

- <https://www.esri.com/en-us/what-is-gis/overview#liSwitcher>
- <https://blog.ukdataservice.ac.uk/gis-spatial-data/>
- [Dermanis \(2005\) : https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Athanasios-Dermanis/publication/233387161_Coordinates_and_Reference_Systems_in_Greek/links/0912f50a149d9568b7000000/Coordinates-and-Reference-Systems-in-Greek.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Athanasios-Dermanis/publication/233387161_Coordinates_and_Reference_Systems_in_Greek/links/0912f50a149d9568b7000000/Coordinates-and-Reference-Systems-in-Greek.pdf)
- [Luc Anselin \(2009\) : https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-642-03647-7_5](https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-642-03647-7_5)
- [Ratcliffe \(2009\) Spatial and Temporal Challenges: https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-0-387-77650-7_2](https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-0-387-77650-7_2)
- [Bowers \(2001\) Mapping and Analysing Crime Data : https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-0-387-77650-7_2](https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-0-387-77650-7_2)
- <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/161890428.pdf>
- <https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/imports/fileManager/chainey.pdf>
- <https://www.crimrxiv.com/pub/slkb1v54/release/1>
- https://tubecreature.com/#/livesontheline/current/same/U*/FFFTF/11.469326848406268/-0.1622/51.5142/
- <https://www.crimrxiv.com/pub/slkb1v54/release/1>
- <https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/earth-and-planetary-sciences/modifiable-area-unit-problem>
- <https://engaging-data.com/country-centered-map-projections/>
- Images on slide 28, 42, 43, 44 and 45 were generated with the assistance of AI. Source: ChatGPT 4 with Dall-E. Date: 07/01/2024.

Image Reference

- Image 1: Slide 9 - Father of GIS image example: <https://jcheshire.com/resources/roger-tomlinsons-phd-the-first-in-gis/>
- Image 2: Slide 19 – Tube Map example. Source: CrimRxiv (<https://life.mappinglondon.co.uk/life/>). Website content used for educational illustration. Licence: As stated on source website.
- Image 3: Slide 27 and 28 - Vector Data. Image source: https://saylordotorg.github.io/text_essentials-of-geographic-information-systems/s11-geospatial-analysis-i-vector-o.html
- Image 4: Slide 32 – MAUP Scale Effect diagram. Source: GISGeography (<https://gisgeography.com/maup-modifiable-areal-unit-problem/>). Educational diagram. Licence: As stated on source website.
- Image 5: Slide 32 – MAUP Zoning Effect diagram. Source: Penn State e-Education (http://www.e-education.psu.edu/edu/geog486/l4_p7.html). Educational diagram. Licence: As stated on source website.
- Image 6: Slide 40 - Distortion
Image [https://docs.qgis.org/3.40/en/docs/gentle_gis_introduction/coordinate_reference_systems.html#id1:~:text=c\)%20planar%20projections.-,%EF%83%81,-Today%2C%20of%20course](https://docs.qgis.org/3.40/en/docs/gentle_gis_introduction/coordinate_reference_systems.html#id1:~:text=c)%20planar%20projections.-,%EF%83%81,-Today%2C%20of%20course)
- Image 7: Slide 41 - Distortion example image - <https://map-projections.net/compare.php?p1=gall-peters&p2=mercator-84&w=0>
- Image 8: Slide 43 - Coordinate reference systems <https://www.esri.com/arcgis-blog/products/arcgis-pro/mapping/coordinate-systems-difference/#GCS>
- Image 8-13: Slides 18, 38, 46-50 – AI-generated conceptual images created using ChatGPT (OpenAI, DALL-E), 07 January 2024.



Thank You.

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Twitter: @NadiaKennar