

Discourses of poverty

- 18-month ESRC-funded project
 - Ian Gregory, Tony McEnery, Laura Paterson (and Andrew Hardie)
- Corpus linguistics + CDA + GIS/GTA
- Source material:
 - 2010-2015 *Guardian* & *Daily Mail* articles
 - News, society, politics, (comment/editorial)
 - NOT sport, femail, holidays, promotions, etc.
- Focus: ***discourses of poverty in the UK media***

Project aims



- To use Geographical Text Analysis (GTA) to investigate which place names in the UK are associated with poverty by the national press.
- To produce maps of the UK to visually represent the locations used by the press within discourses of poverty.
- To compare mass media coverage of locations associated with poverty, unemployment, and welfare receipt to official statistics taken from the UK Census.
- To use Critical Discourse Analysis to interrogate the similarities and differences between the statistical data and the corpus data.
- To demonstrate the viability of combining these different methodological approaches to facilitate the study of UK poverty (and social groups more widely).
- To provide an exemplar analysis in which GTA is used to shed new light on the way poverty is represented in the UK.

Geographical Text Analysis



- Geoparser:
 - Extracts all place names within +/- X words from the node (usually X = 10)
 - Assigns coordinates to each place name mentioned
- Geoparsed data is read into GIS (Geographical Information Systems) – database software that facilitates cartography
- Maps of the place name mentions are produced

all , much of it is not voluntary but forced by extreme [poverty](#) , natural disasters and wars . It would be a better world

them . There was scant material reparation for their sacrifices and so [poverty](#) , deep psychological stress and social displacement imprisoned their communities

sure work was always worthwhile . Recent cuts knock people back into [poverty](#) , with 4,000 cut from families on 17,000 , unless they can

widespread support for the idea of looking more broadly at what causes [poverty](#) , but warned against trying to compress social factors , such as

not let us down , and will be a beacon of Franciscan [poverty](#) and simplicity in a Vatican that still operates like a medieval court

people now forced to rely on food banks for sustenance , key [poverty](#) charities have warned in a report . Welfare changes and mistakes by

The answer , she said , " is partly to do with [poverty](#) in an absolute sense , although all the research shows ... black

government on child poverty and author of the report Delivering on child [poverty](#) : what would it take ? Clare Allan I've taken up

Nottingham because of a book I had found in the library : [Poverty](#) : The Forgotten Englishman , by Ken Coates and Bill Silburn -

million people on zero-hours contracts ; record numbers of people living in [poverty](#) ; and another 60bn in cuts still to be found before 2020

Defining poverty

- ‘What poverty is taken to mean depends on who asks the question, how it is understood, and who responds’ (Chambers 2006:3)
- Implications for research:
 - one must understand how the selection of a particular definitions of poverty will act as a lens
 - one must survey a range of definitions of poverty and make a subjective decision about which to accept
 - one must question the social structures that facilitate non-poor people’s definitions of poverty and restrict the voices of those in poverty

Measuring poverty

- Quantitative measurements:
 - Carstairs scores
 - Indices of Multiple Deprivation
 - Index of Local Conditions
- Proxy measurements
 - Unemployment
 - Social class
- Qualitative measurements
 - Standards of living
 - Emotional impacts

Poverty 'is (re)produced through discourse practices, most of which are enacted by groups with direct access to social, cultural and political power' (Lorenzo-Dus and Marsh 2012:275)

Discourse and Place



- Discourse: language that encodes powerful, social, ideological structures and norms
 - ‘discourse is key to the reproduction and transformation of social identities, social relationships and systems of knowledge and belief (Fairclough 1992: 64)’ (Jones et al. to appear)
- Discourses can be conceptually linked and draw upon each other: Race – Religion – Immigration –Poverty
- But they can also be proximally linked in geographical space
- Repeated discourses can be linked to real-world social/political change (e.g. policy changes)

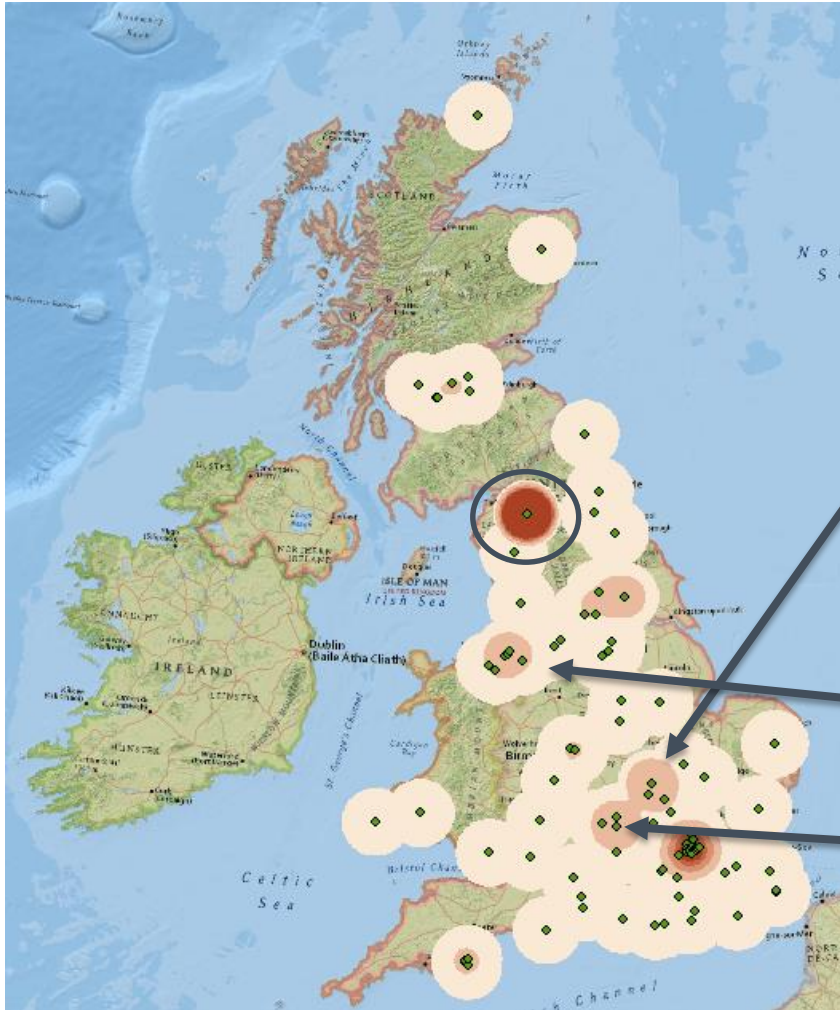
Discourse and Place II



- The location of (the production of) texts and the places they refer to can index powerful strategies
- Naming draws ‘attention to places’ whilst locating that place ‘in wider cultural narratives’ (Cresswell 2004:98)
- Places can be used to create us vs. them dichotomies

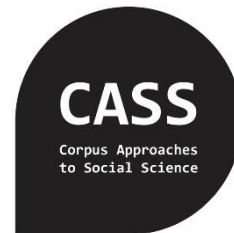
‘Scotland votes no: the union has survived, but the questions for the left are profound’ (Kettle 2014)

The Next Steps



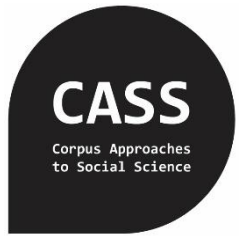
- *Poverty in the Guardian* (news 2010-15)
- Heat spots around Milton Keynes include references to 'England'
- The 'UK' also causes interference
- Heat spots around Liverpool (incl. *Liverpool, Birkenhead, Anfield*) and Oxford (incl. *Oxford, Oxfordshire, Whitney*) seem to be 'real'

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