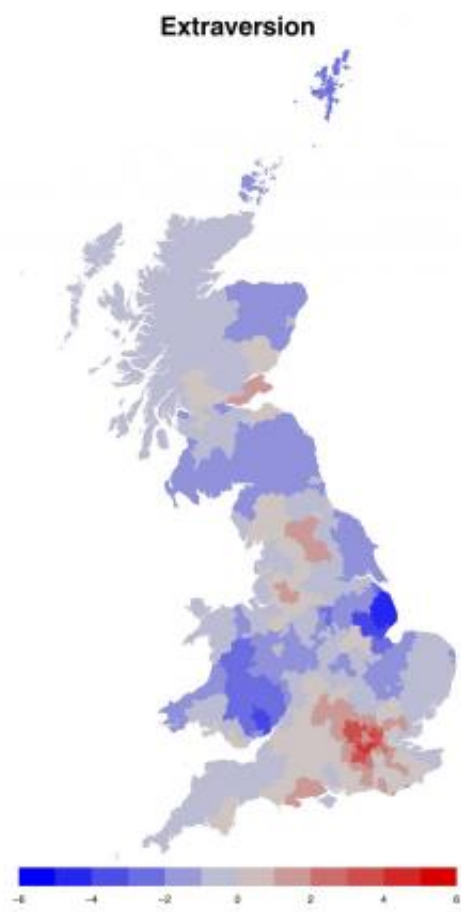


Personality test finds Britain's most extroverted, agreeable and emotionally stable regions

March 24 2015



Credit: University of Cambridge

A survey of almost 400,000 British residents has highlighted significant

differences in personalities between regions. Amongst its findings, it shows Scots to be amongst the friendliest and most co-operative residents, Londoners the most open and Welsh people the least emotionally stable.

Researchers from the University of Cambridge used the data to analyse a sample of just under 400,000 people from England, Wales or Scotland (Northern Ireland was excluded as sample sizes were too small), around two-thirds of whom were female. The results of their study are published today in the journal *PLOS ONE*.

The study is based on data that was gathered as part of the Big Personality Test, an online survey published by the BBC in 2009 as part of a collaboration between the BBC and the scientific community, BBC Lab UK.

"Understanding how personality traits differ by region is more than just 'a bit of fun'," explains Dr Jason Rentfrow from the Department of Psychology at the University of Cambridge and Fellow at Fitzwilliam College. "Geographical differences are associated with a range of economic, social and health outcomes - and hence how important resources are allocated. Although participants in an online test are self-selecting, the demographic characteristics are representative of the British population, so we can develop an accurate snapshot of the psychology of the nation."

The test looked at five [personality traits](#): extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, [emotional stability](#) and openness.

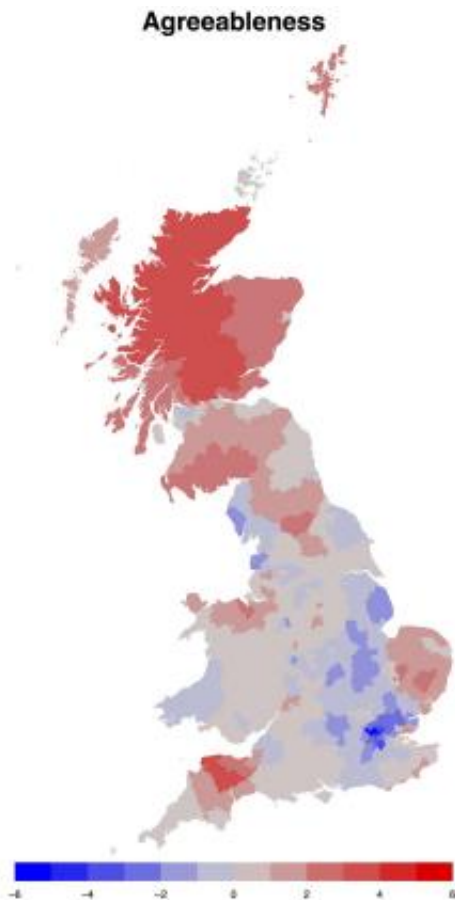
Extraversion

Extroverts tend to be more assertive, energetic, enthusiastic and sociable, and previous research has linked extraversion with physical health and

wellbeing, leadership and occupational performance. Our research found high levels of extraversion concentrated in London as well as Manchester and pockets of the South and South East of England, Yorkshire and Scotland. In contrast, the East Midlands, Wales, Humberside, the North of England and East Scotland showed significantly low levels, suggesting that their [residents](#) tend to be quiet, reserved and introverted.

Agreeableness

Agreeableness reflects traits such as cooperation, friendliness and trust. The study found that 'agreeable' regions tended to have higher proportions of females, married couples and low-income residents as well as lower rates of [violent crime](#).

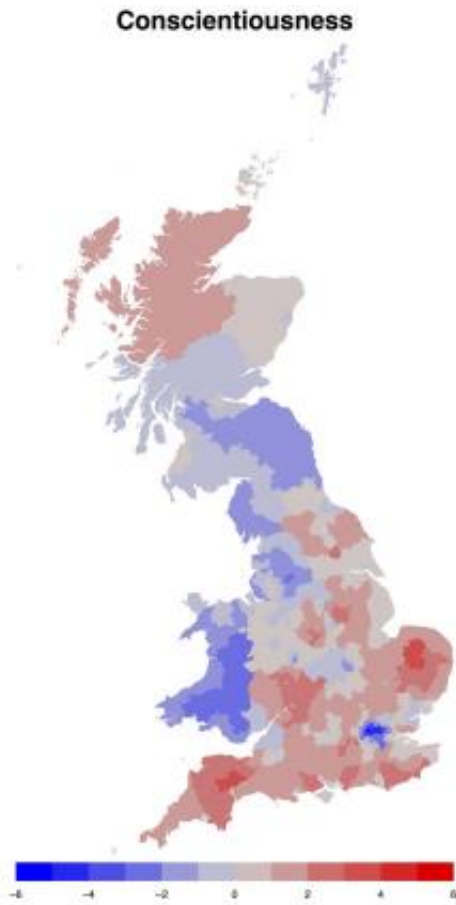


Credit: University of Cambridge

The most agreeable regions were to be found throughout Scotland, as well as in the North, South West and East of England, suggesting that disproportionate numbers of residents of these areas were friendly, trusting, and kind. This contrasted with London and various districts throughout the East of England, which had lower levels of agreeableness, suggesting that comparatively large proportions of residents of these areas were uncooperative, quarrelsome, and irritable.

Conscientiousness

People who are conscientiousness tend to have a stronger sense of duty, responsibility and self-discipline, and research has shown that this trait is linked with career and educational success, longevity and conservatism. According to the study, conscientiousness reflects the degree to which residents of an area are socially conservative, nonviolent, and physically healthy.



Credit: University of Cambridge

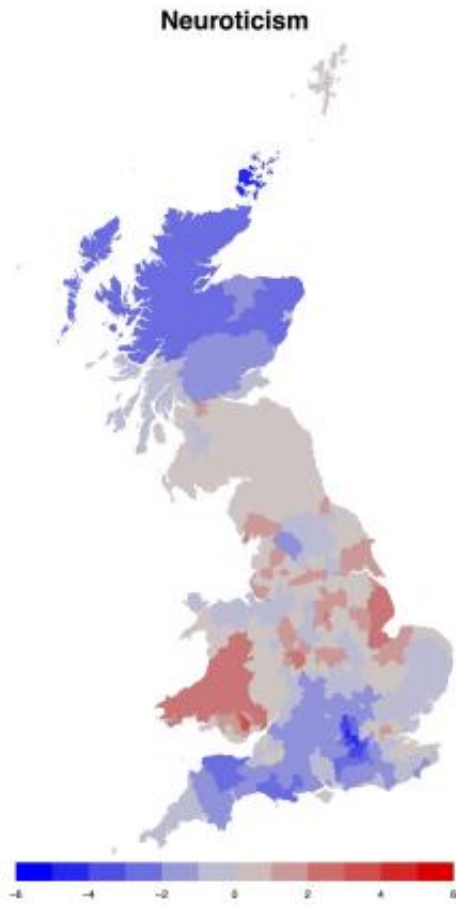
The survey found the most conscientious regions were in Southern England, pockets of the Midlands, and the Scottish Highlands, suggesting that large proportions of residents of these areas were self-disciplined, cautious, and compliant. London, Wales, and parts of the North of England showed significantly lower levels, suggesting that comparatively large proportions of residents of these areas were disorderly, rebellious, and indifferent.

Conscientiousness individuals were more likely to be married, older and on a higher income, with lower rates of deaths from cancer and heart disease.

Emotional Stability

People who are emotionally stable tend to be calm, relaxed, and happy, and several studies have shown that such traits can have a positive impact on relationship satisfaction, psychological wellbeing, career success and longevity. In regions where there are large proportions of emotionally stable individuals, there appear to be large proportions of physically healthy and middle-class residents.

The research found significantly low levels of emotional stability throughout most of Wales and in a number of districts throughout the Midlands. People were more likely to be emotionally stable in the South West and much of Southern England, as well as across most of Scotland, suggesting that residents of these areas tend to be calm, relaxed, and happy. Overall, the survey found that regions with large proportions of people scoring low in emotional stability had more residents who were working class and physically unhealthy.



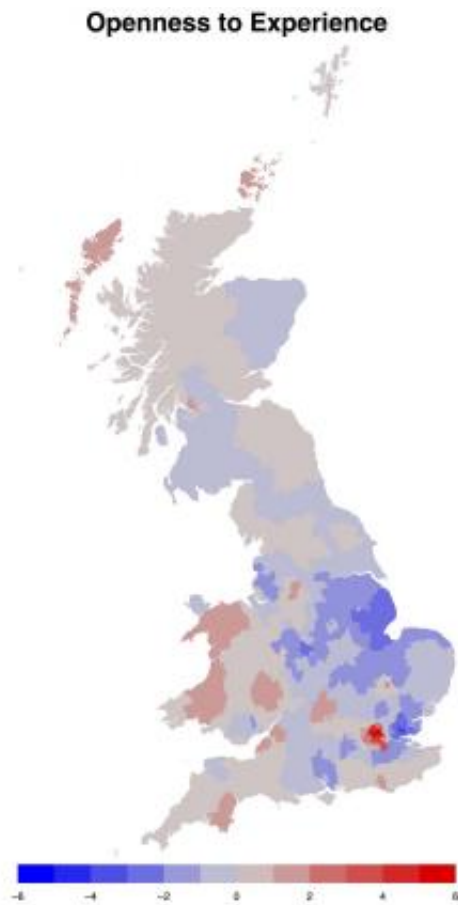
Credit: University of Cambridge

Openness

At an individual level, openness represents creativity, curiosity, imagination, and intellect, and is associated with pursuing a career that involves creativity, living an unconventional lifestyle, earning a college degree and supporting liberal attitudes.

Metropolitan areas tended to show greater Openness appeared mainly in metropolitan areas, with London, Oxford, Cambridge, Brighton, Bristol, Manchester and Glasgow, but also in parts of Wales, indicating that a disproportionate number of residents of these areas were creative,

unconventional, and curious. Significantly low levels of Openness emerged throughout most of the East Midlands and East of England, suggesting that large proportions of residents of these areas were conventional, down-to-earth, and traditional.



Credit: University of Cambridge

According to the study, openness was positively related to residents with university education, income, prevalence of high-status professionals, foreign-born residents, same-sex couples, and rates of violent crime. Overall, the results suggested that regions with large numbers of highly open people were cosmopolitan, economically prosperous, and liberal.

To help the general public find out how they fit within these results, the BBC has produced an iWonder guide called Take the test: Where in Britain would you be happiest? which is available at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/happiestplace>.

The BBC's interactive guide asks people to answer 10 questions about how they see themselves and then matches the answers to the region in Britain that most suits that person - i.e. the district where they would be happiest - according to the published research. The guide also estimates how well-matched participants are to the area they currently live in, the nearest place to where they live that they would be happier, and their worst place to live.

More information: Rentfrow, PJ et al. Regional Personality Differences in Great Britain. *PLOS ONE*; 25 March 2015.

Provided by University of Cambridge

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