

# Student Engagement at the University of Manchester Students' Union:

Amalie Andersen Werenskiold BA (Hons) Sociology & Philosophy



The Students' Union at the University of Manchester is the largest students' union in the country and works to maintain student welfare for their almost 40,000 members. The union works hard

to enhance student life and experience; however, they need student participation to know how to continue to flourish each year. As this can be lacking among students, it became the focus of my research.

## Objectives

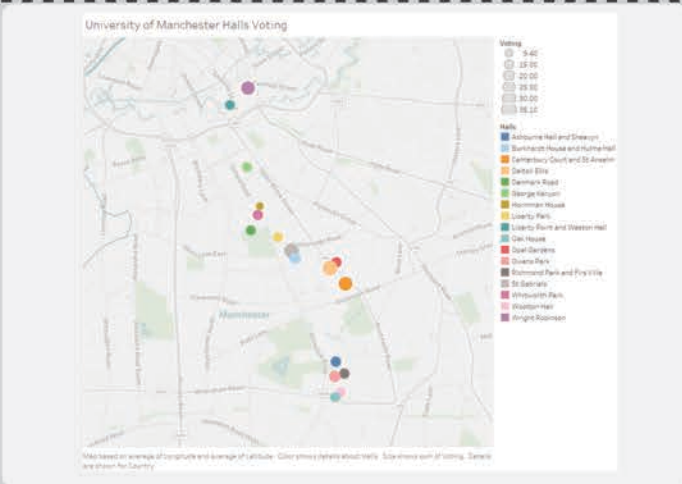
As stated, during my internship my emphasis was on student engagement. This led into two main projects; a written report of student engagement with voting in the SU Exec elections and a report on representation of RA/JCR committee members. This poster will only focus on voting in the Students' Union elections.

The main goal of my research was to understand what type of student typically does not engage with the SU and write up recommendations on ways to enhance the participation of these specific social groups of students.

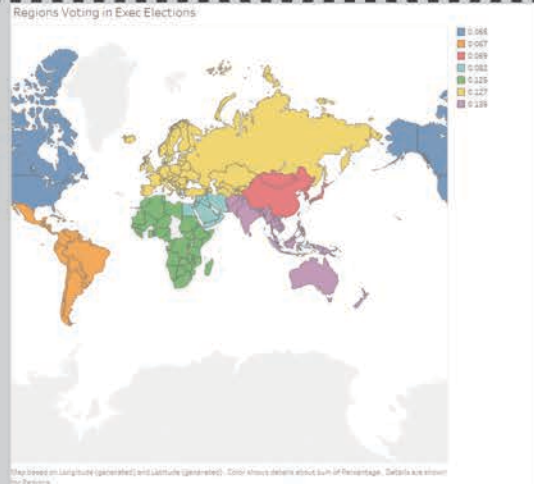
## Methods

The Students' Union is allocated all its data from a data sharing agreement with the university. From this my supervisor downloaded data and created a data set in Microsoft Access and Excel (later on in the internship I was taught how to do this as well), with demographics including; gender, age, study level, fee status, nationalities, student halls, student engagement (being a student rep, voting, RA/JCR committee member). I then used Excel to clean my data and SPSS to compute different types of analysis, such as crosstabs and logistic regression. I also used the data program Tableau to create a visual representation of my research by geographically plotting points on a map.

I was slightly limited by the data sharing agreement between UoM and the SU, as there are issues with the data they receive. Though, a lot of effort went into weighting and cleaning the data, this could potentially make the data less accurate.



The map shows the geographic location of the halls which is coded by colour. The larger sized dots are the halls that voted more than the smaller sized dots.



A map that shows the voting habits of students from their respective regions

## Results and Conclusions

The research has shown that there are certain types of students that apply themselves more within the Students' Union Exec elections. In a broad overview these students are mostly: female undergraduates, home or EU students under the age of 20. If the students are staying in halls they are more likely to vote if they stay in Victoria Park halls, rather than Fallowfield and City campus halls. Students that also engage with

the Students' Union in other ways, such as being a student rep or RA/JCR committee member, are more likely to vote than students that do not occupy these roles, which shows that active participation in the Students' Union increases voting engagement. Overall there was a disparity of participation amongst students and voting in the Exec elections with only 11% of students voting.