Diagram map or choropleth map?
Which method should be used?

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The paper is about cartographic presentation forms.

The diagram method and the choropleth method – these are methods which differ in the character of data (absolute or relative data used to presentation).

What cartographic literature says about it? Cartographers think that the choropleth map needs relative data. What about digram method? They do not write about it as often as about the choropleth method. Generally they think that the diagram map needs absolute data. Is it really true? Is really not possible to use relative data to the diagram map? Is not it the logical solution? The literature (books, articles and other) does not say this.

What the cartographic practice says about it? The last question will be answered on the base of a kind of experiment. The experiment was a part of my PhD dissertation. It taken twice: in November'98 and in May'99. I asked 220 persons – geography students form two Polish universities about diagram map and choropleth map. The first time – before cartographic course, and the second time – after cartographic course.

They were given eight maps (choropleth and diagram maps). They had to propose topics to four of them and to choose the best topic (from topics which I proposed) to four maps.

This experiment was an attempt to verify, if we are respecting the theory of cartography. What topics students propose to the choropleth maps and to the diagram maps before the cartographic course? What topics students propose to the choropleth maps and to the diagram maps after the cartographic course? Are there any differences in students thinking?

In the paper I would like to think about theory of cartography. Cartographic rules should be logical and clear for everyone. What is about presented rule? Is it really claer? I do not think so. There are some maps in atlases, in which this rule is not accepted. Are these maps really not correct?