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# Speaking sociologically with big data: symphonic social science and the future for big data research

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**Urban cultural capital**

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"L'affaire est entendue, la ville ne s'illustre pas, mais se vit.''

(Paul Ardenne, *Un art contextuel*, 2004: 88)

**Introduction**

This note argues for the value of a new research focus on the dynamics of <u>urban cultural capital</u>. Surprisingly perhaps, given all the discussion of the concept of cultural capital in recent decades, there has been no previous systematic reflection on the urban dimensions of this concept. Here we explain why we think this concept warrants examination, and reflect on how it might valuably inform research agendas both in cultural sociology and urban studies. We exemplify these reflections through studies of the distinctive urban cultural profiles of residents of London (within the UK) and Brussels (within Belgium).

We begin by emphasising in the first section, how classic concepts of cultural capital celebrate distance from urban life, but in the second section we draw on recent studies of the remaking of cultural aesthetic which demonstrate how the urban has become the need for an aesthetically oriented concept of cultural capital. In the third section we pull out four areas in which the intersection between cultural capital and cities is becoming more manifest, and finally, using our research on Brussels and London, we show how the cultural audiences in large cities and their hinterlands appear quite distinct, suggesting that the prominence of the city as a crucible for cultural capital is clear and direct.

Our starting point is the need for a critical analysis of contemporary urban culture. Since the influential arguments of Landry (2006; 2008) and Florida (2003), emphases on urban culture (or creativity) have become difficult to detach from projects of urban boosterism and regeneration, where culture is defined as a positive asset for urban growth and expansion (see more generally, the critique in Yudice 2003). Critical responses to this overblown agenda have therefore tended to see these interests as somehow tainted (see generally, Peck 2007) and prefer more orthodox brands of political economic analysis, or they have taken concerns with the cultural turn away from instrumental framings altogether. Elsewhere (Savage 2010; Hanquinet et al 2012), we have remarked on the problematic dualism this creates, between a culturally sensitive approach to cities which has little to say about urban inequality on the one hand, and a political economic perspective which eschews direct interests in cultural process on the other. However, there is another strategy here, to reflect more seriously on how Pierre Bourdieu's critical analysis of cultural capital might be deployed within a more rigorous form of urban analysis.

Bourdieu's (1984) concept of cultural capital is widely used across the social sciences to register the way that the educationally privileged middle classes are able to reproduce themselves through

mobilising the cultural capital acquired from their families, and deploying it to gain educational attainment and advantaged positions in the labour market. An extensive body of work within cultural sociology has examined how these forms of cultural capital are marked through an appreciation of 'highbrow' cultural forms (such as interests in classical music, attendance at theatre, art galleries and museums, etc), and also how the palette of highbrow culture is currently being redrawn to include a greater variety of practices, such as sport, forms of digital and screen culture, and contemporary music (see e.g. Bryson 1996; Peterson 2004; Bennett et al 2008, Lizardo, Skiles 2008). Yet, this now sophisticated cultural sociology has rarely been used to study urban dynamics.

Hitherto, the most popular use of Bourdieu's thinking within urban sociology has been in studies of gentrification, where the educated middle classes are seen to deploy their cultural capital in projects of urban regeneration in previously 'working class' areas (e.g. Zukin 1979; Ley 2003; Butler and Robson 2003). It is noteworthy (though probably ungenerous) that this work is sometimes read as if it is uncritical towards the middle class gentrifiers (Slater 2007, and see the subsequent debate in *IJURR*). The problem here is largely that in such urban research, the nature of cultural capital itself is not adequately analysed, with the result that the idea of cultural capital is often seen uncritically as 'the culture of the educated middle classes' and the critical edge which the Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital engenders is lost.

To address this concern, it is necessary to analyse the specific role of the aesthetic in Bourdieu's thinking (Hanquinet et al. 2014), and especially its spatial manifestations. As Hanquinet et al. have argued elsewhere, Bourdieu's account of cultural capital takes an essentially modernist form. In his most celebrated work, *Distinction*, Bourdieu identifies cultural capital with the Kantian aesthetic, the way that aesthetic excellence involves abstracting from the workaday world of necessity, which allows the educated classes to appreciate cultural forms 'in themselves'. Highbrow art – associated with high cultural capital in order to be deciphered – is autonomous, disconnected from any concrete preoccupation ('art-for-the-art sake') and draws its strength from abstract forms of representation. It implies distance and detachment from the spectator.

With the rise of postmodernist currents, associated with broader commercialisation of artistic production from the 1980s, the very idea of highbrow art has changed as a new paradigm has come to challenge the principles of distance and detachment and the split between art and life. As others have also argued (DiMaggio & Mukhtar 2004), the composition of cultural capital has been altered accordingly. Yet, little attention has been paid to how cultural capital might be affected by the paradigmatic change and how this is affecting the role of the city in its generation. A starting point is to recognise that the Kantian aesthetic – as a form of ecstasy - was derived from religious practices, organised within monasteries, convents and churches which were quintessentially demarcated from urban space. This was clearly true in the medieval monastic orders, with their emphasis on rural retreat, and even though during the medieval and early modern periods these establishments became prominent within urban life, nonetheless a complex web of architectural and ritualistic devices was deployed to mark the boundaries between the city and the sacred (see Hills 2004). What happened to these symbolic boundaries now that the aesthetic relationship to things is changing? We will argue, in four points, that the Kantian aesthetic which emphasised the distance between cultural value and urban life, is now replaced by an 'emerging cultural capital' which places new forms of cultural hierarchy fundamentally on urban foundations.

1. <u>An 'emerging cultural capital'</u>

Initially it may seem strange to claim that Bourdieu's modernist aesthetic which underlies his account of cultural capital is somehow anti-urban. After all, it is well known that cultural modernism has forged particular links between art and cities, as industrialized cities became one of the privileged sources of inspiration for artists (famously, Berman 1982, more generally, Dennis 2008; Parker 2004; Savage et al 2003). Bourdieu certainly recognises the importance of central urban spaces and, especially of Paris, as provider of cultural resources and opportunities. However, we wish to argue that this modernist aesthetic, with its emphasis on the tension between art and life, embraced the urban only to retain a certain distance from it.

Probably the most exemplary figure of this modernist aesthetic relationship to cities is the flâneur of Benjamin. The flâneur has been described as an attentive observer of urban reality (Gluck 2003), which seems to imply an analytical distance from the subject of attention. This distance is essential to understand the role of cities in the historical formation of cultural capital, whereby cultural intensity did not mean that art and life merged one with another, but rather that the contours of each were revealed through comparison with the other. This became even more apparent in the later idea of 'avant-garde flâneur' who seems to use places – whatever they were - as ways to stimulate their imagination (Gluck 2003). Flâneurs thus walked through cities which they were fundamentally not 'at home' in.

We can also observe how the development of a powerful urban cultural infrastructure – galleries, opera houses, museums, etc. – specifically involved creating a monumental urban architecture which differentiated between the cultural quarters of cities, and their everyday urban surrounds from which they stood as a point of contrast. In numerous cases, such as the Louvre in Paris, the placing of the galleries within a former royal palace marked this separation clearly. In others, such as the Metropolitan Museum in New York, the location of new and modern art galleries close to rural surrounds (Central Park) allowed cultural thresholds to be clearly demarcated. Within this cultural moment, it was the nation, not the city, which became institutionalised as marking the boundaries of cultural fields, and around which cultural establishments were formed. Only insofar as cities were national capitals might they occupy some role as 'bearers' of these national cultural projects (see the discussion of London's role in the modernist high culture of mid-20th century England in Savage 2010).

Even the bohemian lifestyle did not transcend this split between art and life. With their energy and emulsion, cities were a privileged source of inspiration for artists, yet art was still disconnected from it. Cities offered stimulation that could help artistic elevation but art had eventually to be detached from popular and urban forms. Cultural capital was not conditional on urban experience or, even, on urban culture. Cities could be contemplated, observed, described, represented but never *lived* as an elevated aesthetic experience. The Kantian aesthetic, therefore, can be linked to the dominance of the cultural retreat – concrete or symbolic- in which urban space was fundamentally defined as the contaminated world of practical business and human interaction in all it splendour and squalor.

However, it is precisely this relationship to cities, as a means to provide sensory challenges and stimuli to create something on another level – which has been transfigured by the rise of new

aesthetic conceptions. With postmodernism, a more participatory and inclusive vision of cultural artefacts emerged. A fundamental issue here is the reworking of the canonical, away from traditional forms of cultural excellence venerated from earlier periods, towards an insistence on the value of the new. Numerous studies (Bennett et al. 2009; Bellavance 2008; Hanquinet 2013) have demonstrated that 'old' cultural forms, although appreciated as the 'background' of cultural life, do not convey the passion, excitement and intensity of contemporary cultural forms. Similarly, forms of cultural hierarchy have been reworked with an increasing emphasis on pastiche, 'knowingness' and reflexivity. Within this restructuring of cultural capital, younger age groups have usually been found to be very different from older age groups in terms of their cultural orientations. Prieur and Savage (2011; 2012) have recently sought to synthesise these arguments through claiming that we can detect 'emerging' forms of cultural capital, which are more cosmopolitan and which valorise commercial, often Americanised, cultural forms. Here, the embrace is for forms of contemporary music, sport and physical activities, intensive networking using websites.

These trends are symptomatic of a questioning of the divide between art and life or between the cultural and social spheres, the aestheticization of the everyday life (Featherstone 1991) increasingly defines people's relationship to their material environment, because this environment has an aesthetic component and also contains sign-values or images (Lash and Urry 1994). In their cultural consumption, people are increasingly preoccupied by the stylisation of their everyday life. In the establishment of these lifestyles, places, and especially cities, have become central arenas for display and consumption, and have become part of the aesthetic experience itself. Art has become 'relational' (Bourriaud 2001) or 'contextual' (Ardenne 2004) and directly depends on place. This has led to a reconfiguration of cultural capital, which involves more than ever a spatial dimension, and now finds its home in metropolitan centres.

## 2. An urban cultural capital

We have argued that until recent decades, the organisation of cultural capital, with its reliance on the Kantian aesthetic, depended on keeping a certain distance from the urban experience.This differentiation was not necessarily an absolute one, since a key aesthetic modernist repertoire has been to engage in a critical appropriation of popular cultural forms, but it was nonetheless profound. It is only when the Kantian aesthetics became less central that cultural capital started to be linked to the aesthetic experience of city. Cities are now lived and consumed as resources for cultural capital because our aesthetic relationship to things has profoundly changed. It is become all about participation, instead of retreat and introspection.

Our contention is that in recent decades contemporary forms of cultural capital now openly and directly embrace the urban as central to their qualities and characteristics. Or to put this bluntly: claims to cultural distinction increasingly deploy urban spatial referents. How might we substantiate this bold claim and identify how large metropolitan centres are now the fundamental bases of cultural capital in ways which were lacking even 50 years ago?

a: *The increasing dominance of the elite urban university*: The older university model, linked to the monastic ideal, celebrated the scholastic retreat from everyday life. Oxbridge, or the American 'college town' exemplify this ideal. Yet this has now been eclipsed by the increasing dominance of

the metropolitan university. In some cases, as with Oxbridge in England, or Harvard/MIT in the US, traditional universities can retain their elite position by virtue of their location in the hinterlands of large city regions. Elsewhere, we can identify a shift in the prominence of urban universities at the expense of those in more rural locations. We can put this point another way: it is now impossible for a city to claim prominence without having high profile universities. The vitality of urban universities is itself part of the politics of contemporary urban boosterism.

b: *The role of the urban sporting complex*: Contemporary forms of cultural capital mobilise interests in sport and physical exercise much more directly than in previous modes of cultural capital which were based on the abstraction of the intellect from physical and corporeal activity (see e.g. Bennett et al 2009; Prieur and Savage 2011). This itself generates a new urban sensibility, since sporting venues are quintessentially urban, rather than national venues, and hence identify these modes of cultural activity with the urban themselves. This is especially manifest through successive Olympics, but is also profoundly marked through football stadia and the like. These developments have permitted the formation, for instance, of a framework of European cities (Manchester, Barcelona, Milan, etc) which are characterised by successful European football teams, as well as the close overlap between urban style and sporting prowess (where David Beckham's embrace of Manchester, Los Angeles and Paris was emblematic).

c: *The prominence of urban cosmopolitanism*. Emerging forms of cultural capital are less oriented towards a national frame of reference than their predecessors. They are more likely to embrace 'cosmopolitan' interests and musical and artistic forms from a greater variety of locations. However, as demonstrated by Savage et al (2005) and Savage et al (2011), this cosmopolitanism is limited, notably through being focused on cultural production in other large metropolitan centres. It thus generates referential interest in the cultural forms of other large cities and champions a form of elite urban cosmopolitanism. We see this amply demonstrated in the location of designer shops and fashion houses in high profile urban locations which recycle apparently cosmopolitan idioms between select urban destinations.

d: *The hegemony of urban gentrification*. Under the older Kantian aesthetic, cultural capital was fundamentally distinguished from the urban – even though this disconnection could be used productively for cultural innovation, as with modernist currents. Architecturally, areas of highbrow cultural capital within urban locations evoked rural and 'estate' ideals to announce their symbolic separation from the city: consider Bloomsbury in London with its pastoral squares and extensive urban gardens. However, over the past thirty years we can identify a new mode of 'cultured' urban living which is more fully 'at home' within urban space. These are quintessentially, gentrified areas of large cities in which warehouses, areas of previously working class houses, etc are identified as desirable areas. Zukin (2011) has recently identified this as the recovery of interest in the urban 'authentic', and Butler and Robson (2003) has emphasised how these new ethics of urban life are differentiated from what are seen to be more 'staid' and 'respectable' forms of middle class culture.

A further aspect of this development is the interplay between cultural and economic capital which is associated with gentrification. Cultural 'work' in a location raises property prices and allows those with the cultural capital to also achieve economic rewards. This interplay between cultural and economic capital has been identified as increasingly important and a difference from earlier models in which cultural distinction was held to be removed from economic wealth. The politics of urban

location now makes this differentiation much more blurred. A new bohemia (Lloyd 2004) is taking place and reconfigures the relationships between economic and cultural capital, as the presence of artists and artistic dynamism in urban areas tend to give an added-value to them for those who want to embody a specific urban cultural capital.

3. The development of new urban cultural audiences

Within the framework of the Kantian aesthetic, the educated middle classes were fundamentally similar in their cultural orientation regardless of where they lived. They valued canonical forms of nationally venerated cultural excellence, were vested in the values of education, and had a shared set of fundamentally national cultural reference points. Recent cultural sociology, however, has demonstrated powerful cultural divisions between the educated middle classes living in urban and non-urban locations, so that it might be claimed we are seeing the emergence of a new kind of cultural division between cities and countryside.

This represents a striking change in how urban theorists have regarded urban culture. Whereas the eclipse of the urban-rural divide was emphasised extensively in urban theory from the 1970s (e.g. Saunders 1981) because of its insistence on the 'urbanisation of everyday life' (Lefebvre 1977), we possibly now see more telling cultural differences between cities and their hinterlands, *when appropriate and culturally sensitive methods are used to discern them*. A new urban – rural divide is developing in which urban location is an ever more significant feature for those claiming 'emerging cultural capital'.

 Let us demonstrate this point with reference to our research on Brussels and the French-speaking part of Belgium and London.

*Cultural divisions in Brussels and Wallonia*

In the French-speaking part of Belgium, we can demonstrate a territorial divide with regard to cultural participation (Callier & Hanquinet 2012) which cannot only be explained by the geographical location of cultural institutions such as art galleries, museums, theatre, or opera. Cultural enthusiasts don't all live in urban areas which host most of these institutions. In fact, it is possible to define seven types of cultural consumers in the Wallonia-Brussels Federation (using a cluster analysis of tastes and cultural practices, based on a multiple correspondence analysis, for more information see Hanquinet et al. 2012; Callier, Hanquinet 2012): the culturally disengaged, the nostalgic, the fun seekers, the connected, the classical amateurs, the modern amateurs, the culturally voracious[1].

Three groups are particularly culturally 'active'. First, the 'classical amateurs' are big book readers attracted by classical cultural forms and respectful towards high culture. They tend to be educated (57% have higher education) and older. Second, the 'modern amateurs' are characterized by very eclectic 'out-of-home' activities and by moderate attendance at cultural institutions traditionally considered as highbrow (museums, theatres, art galleries, etc.). People aged more than 65 are underrepresented in the cluster, which is more educated than average. Third, the 'culturally voracious' appreciate some (not all) elements of popular culture (comic books, TV series, rock, etc.)

[1] The term is inspired by Sullivan and Katz-Gerro's research (2007).

as well as highbrow culture and hence possess the widest range of cultural resources. They are younger and more educated (66% have higher education) than the two other clusters.

The issue for us is to assess whether there is a particular urban location for these three cultural clusters. The classical amateurs take a distinctive position compared to the two other groups. They live to a lesser extent in big urban areas (less than 50%) developed in and around the cities of Brussels, Liege, and Charleroi. If we look at their distribution in different provinces in the Wallonia-Brussels Federation, non negligeable proportions of Brussels and more importantly of Liege inhabitants can be found in this cluster ; yet, it is also characterised by an overrepresentation of inhabitants of Walloon Brabant, which holds smaller cities and residential areas.

In comparison 70% of culturally voracious reside in big urban areas and even more specifically in Brussels and the province of Liege[2]. The city of Liege is a rather culturally vibrant place with its university, its cultural institutions and its music festivals (e.g. Les Ardentes, Les Transardentes). The modern amateurs also have a preference for big urban areas (59%) and Brussels but much less for the province of Liege. In contrast inhabitants of the Hainaut is overrepresented within that cluster. Hainaut is relatively dense probably due to its intense industrial past. The province has been impacted by the closing of the coal mines and a progressive deindustrialisation, especially cities like Charleroi. The latter is the second most important urban agglomeration in Wallonia, of which unemployment rate is high[3], includes important cultural institutions (e.g. Charleroi Danses) but overall seems to offer not as many cultural and artistic opportunities as in Liege and Brussels. Let us also notice the importance of the fun seekers characterized by popular and young cultural forms (nightclubs, US TV series, popular music, etc.) almost exclusively in this area. These differences in terms of city preferences lead us to think that the culturally voracious characterized by diverse cultural resources are attracted not only to big urban areas but to particular cities that embody and promote a certain type of cultural capital. This is supported by a more-focused analysis on Brussels : Hanquinet et al. (2012) show that the culturally voracious are overrepresented in socially mixed and culturally active neighbourhoods close to the Brussels city-centre.

Liege and Brussels enable higher and more omnivorous cultural participation with their underground culture, their wide range of cultural offers and their critical and creative energy. The modern and, especially, classical amateurs are more spread out over different provinces. We can suggest that such a culturally specific context matters less for the modern and the classical amateurs. For the former the divide seems to concern more an opposition between *any* kind of urban dense areas, on the one hand, and smaller cities and countryside on the other. For the latter the urban in general is less important with more than a third living in non urban areas. This outlines that the urban aspect has a different role in the composition of cultural capital for these three groups, as their aesthetic relationship to cultural objects – illustrated by their cultural profiles – draws on different cultural repertoires.

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[2] Even though the province of Liege has a low population density, it incorporates the most important urban area of Wallonia, Liege and its agglomeration

[3] Just like Liege but Liege is much more contrasted economically. See Renette E. *Analyser au niveau des arrondissements. Entretien*. In Danze, H., Renette, E. (06/01/05). ''Liège et Charleroi, les deux locomotives de l'économie wallonne, n'ont pas encore réussi leur reconversion'', *Le Soir*, p. 15.
http://archives.lesoir.be/developpement-liege-et-charleroi-les-deux-locomotives-d_t-20050106-Z0Q50U.html (consulted on 09/12/12)

In the cultural profile of the other cultural clusters, the urban dimension turns out to be less important. Although a third of them can still be found in Brussels, the connected, whose practices are mainly virtual (internet, games, DVDs, etc.), can be found in every province. This is not very surprising, as their practices are un-contextualised as they are articulated in a virtual world. The argument is similar for the nostalgic characterized by at-home activities (knitting, gardening, etc.). Only the culturally disengaged are significantly located in Brussels. They do not take part in any kind of formal cultural participation (from traditional cultural and leisure activities to virtual participation in internet practices and games) except watching television. We argue that their presence in urban context is not due to cultural motives but rather for economic or social reasons (jobs, networks, etc.).

Summarising, Brussels has a massive over-representation of three cultural 'types', the culturally disengaged, the modern amateurs, and the culturally voracious, but has few 'nostalgic', and 'fun seekers'. We are thus able to detect marked urban-rural divisions which suggest that those with emerging cultural capital (the modern amateurs and the culturally voracious) are drawn to the urban environment. The more traditional highbrow consumers, the classical amateurs, by contrast, are less distinctively centred in Brussels or other big urban areas.


*Cultural division in Britain*

We can find similar patterns in the British case. Although there are some important surveys of cultural taste and participation in the UK (e.g. Bennett et al 2009), it is difficult to find good data sources with adequate sample sizes to break down cultural types geographically. Here the BBC's Great British Class Survey is a valuable resource. This web survey, conducted from January 2011 is able to break down patterns of cultural consumption in unusual detail and the large sample size allows cultural patterns to be mapped. In similar vein to the Belgian pattern, we have also been able to break down cultural engagement into different forms, an especially important cleavage being the 'highbrow' model, and another to more youthful, or 'emerging' forms of cultural capital.

The former was associated with 'highbrow' activities such as attendance at classical music venues, art galleries and museums, stately homes, theatre and so forth. This is the classic Bourdieusian cultural capital which he delineates in *Distinction,* Perhaps counter-intuitively, given that such cultural venues associated with highbrow cultures are often located in major cities, and especially London, Map 1 shows that those areas with high propensities for snob cultural capital include both urban and rural areas of the UK. If anything, the rural areas of East Anglia, South West England, and mid-Wales predominate. In short, there is no clear urban – non urban divide amongst this older and more recognised form of cultural capital. The educated middle classes everywhere seem to appreciate and engage in this kind of activity.

----- Maps 1 and 2 about here ------

By contrast, we are also able to differentiate a form of 'emerging' cultural capital, associated with enthusiasm for sport, contemporary music, and digital communication and games. Our multiple correspondence analysis demonstrates that these kinds of engagement are associated predominantly with the younger well-educated professionals. Map 2 shows that the geography of emerging cultural capital is here focused on the large urban areas, especially London, but including

Manchester, Newcastle, Leeds, Edinburgh, and Glasgow. This form of emerging cultural capital seems much more directly embedded in urban locations, where 'young professionals' are likely to live and socialise. Most rural areas score very lowly on this kind of emerging cultural capital.

The stark urban contours of emerging cultural capital is likely to be associated with large populations of young people, many of them having been educated in large urban universities, in line with the arguments made above. The British case therefore indicates how the rise of emerging cultural capital might be associated with the increasing significance of urban space for cultural capital more generally.

**Conclusion**

In this note we have argued that the contemporary city is being redefined as a fundamental crucible in which emerging cultural capital is being forged. Only by recognising the accelerating interplay between large urban centres and the generation of such 'cosmopolitan cultural capital', can we fully understand the increasing prominence of large metropolitan centres, who stand in increasing tension to their suburban and rural hinterlands. This is a process which is simultaneously cultural, economic, social and political. It marks a remaking of the nature of cultural hierarchy and cultural capital itself, away from the older model of the Kantian aesthetic as elaborated by Bourdieu in *Distinction* which venerate a 'highbrow' aesthetic removed from everyday life, towards 'emerging' forms of cultural capital which valorise activity, engagement and intense forms of contemporary cultural activity.

We need to underscore that we do not see the shift from 'highbrow' to 'emerging' cultural capital as marking the breakdown or erosion of social divisions but their reworking. The Kantian aesthetic was partially abstracted from physical space, and in other ways borrowed from the monastic ideal. Emerging cultural capitals quintessentially located in activity in large urban centres from which it cannot readily be abstracted.

Previous generations of urban scholars pondered over whether the entire 'developed' world was now urban, and argued that it was no longer sociologically useful to differentiate 'urban' from 'rural' space (e.g. Saunders 1981). We have no intention of reprising these debates in their entirety, but if our arguments have any validity, they might suggest the possibility of an increasing cultural divide between city and non-city, and that this is tied up with a remaking of cultural capital itself. It is our view that this focus can valuably inform urban studies in the future. Moreover, the new divide draws on a separation between big urban environment, on the one hand, and middle-sized urban and more rural areas, on the other hand. As city has become a 'state of mind', one needs to be sure that it reflects how heterogeneous, creative and cosmopolitan one is.

Finally, this account is different from the influential 'global cities' paradigm (Sassen 2000). We do not see emerging cultural capital as only necessarily located in large global cities. Indeed, our suggestion is that there has been a loosening of the association between the national capitals and cultural excellence which was marked in the modernist period. Today, emerging cultural capital can be distributed to a larger number of cities, and these might complete with each other in ways which

unsettle the hegemony of national capitals (the role of Manchester as iconic location of new forms of popular music from the 1980s is a case in point).

We conclude that our arguments may help address a major issue in current urban research. Why is it, that in a globalising age with unprecedented ease of communication and mobility, that central urban location appears to becoming more, rather than less important? Whilst respectful of the arguments put forwards by urban economists regarding agglomeration and concentration, we might also wonder whether this is testimony to the emerging force of urban cultural capital and the increasing interplay between culture, power and class which we see being worked out in the modern metropolis.

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Map 1 : the location of highbrow cultural capital (dark colours = higher proportions)
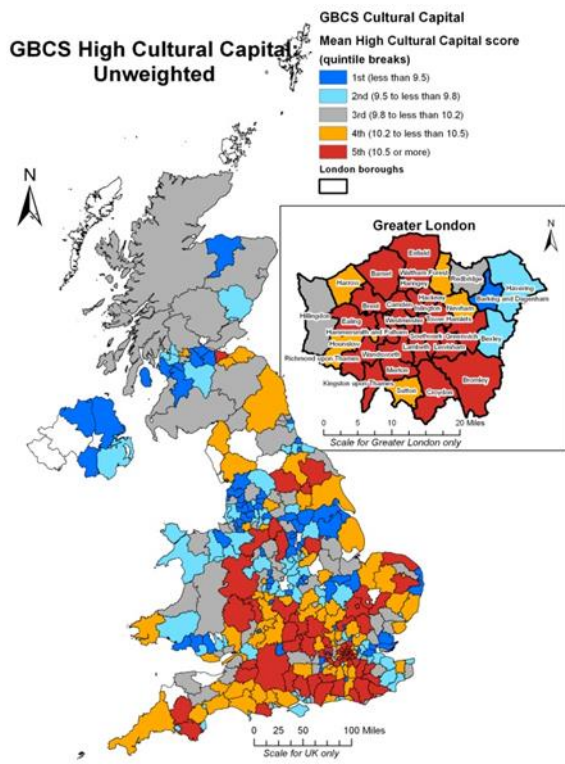


Map 2 : location of emerging cultural capital (dark colours = higher proportions)