

Inequality of access to culture for children and young people in London

Culture as a regeneration power bringing the London community together

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KEY WORDS

Cultural inequality, cultural education, accessibility to culture, cultural infrastructure, creative cities, cultural capital, mix of use.

INTRODUCTION

London is one of the richest cities across the globe and concentrates the largest number of wealthy people per capita. Also known as the financial center of the world,¹ London is a mecca for the uber rich, with 42,5% of the capital's wealth owned by the top 10%.² This makes London a city of extremes, where while the privileged have access to more and the best opportunities, the more deprived ones struggle to fulfill their most basic daily needs. These extremes are getting further apart, increasing all different types of inequality.

The wealth gap has been widening over the last decades and it is visible over the different London's boroughs and districts and people's living standards. While richer areas have better infrastructure, better housing conditions, lower crime rates, higher life expectancy,³ other less privileged regions are somehow "forgotten". Sometimes invisible to others and the government, these forgotten regions are also experiencing year by year a decrease on support and investments in some sectors.^{4 5}

Besides its wealth and social conditions, London also stands out for its rich cultural offer and is recognized as being a global art and capital of culture.⁶ The city cultural offer ranges from a great number of museums, galleries, libraries, theatres, pubs, parks and much more. It is also important to mention that a great deal of museums and galleries are public and free of charge, which makes it more accessible to the public. But yet we can also see inequality of access to culture among the struggles the city is trying to overcome⁷, and social inequality plays an important role on it. These disparities can be observed and manifest themselves in multiple ways throughout the city and affect Londoners in different forms.

This essay will focus on cultural inequality in London and its causes and the consequences for Londoners with a focus on children and young people. The objective of this research is to understand the problem and its extent in order to find a way on how architecture can support and contribute to a more balanced access to culture in London which will be in the form of a design proposal.

1. Youssef Cassis, *Capitals of Capital: The Rise and Fall of International Financial Centres 1780 – 2009* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 279-284.

2. "The Distribution of Wealth," Trust for London, accessed December 11, 2021, <https://www.trustforlondon.org.uk/data/wealth-distribution/>.

3. "Overview of London Boroughs," Trust for London, accessed November, 2021, <https://www.trustforlondon.org.uk/data/boroughs/overview-of-london-boroughs/>.

4. "London's cultural offer," London Councils, accessed October 27, 2021, <https://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/our-key-themes/culture-sport-and-tourism/arts-and-culture/cultural-offer>.

5. Lambeth Council. *Lambeth Council's Community Plan 2013–16*. London: Lambeth Council (2013) 23. <https://www.lambeth.gov.uk/sites/default/files/ec-lambeth-councils-community-plan-2013-16.pdf>

6. Summer Haly, "The London Cultural Infrastructure Plan: A call for planners," last modified April 16, 2019, <https://lichfields.uk/blog/2019/april/16/the-london-cultural-infrastructure-plan-a-call-for-planners/>

7. Greater London Authority. *Cultural Infrastructure Plan - A Call To Action*. London: Greater London Authority (2019) 7. https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/cultural_infrastructure_plan_online.pdf

CULTURE IN LONDON

“Culture is the acquired knowledge people use to interpret experiences and generate behavior.”⁸ This acquired knowledge can range from language, perceptions, beliefs and norms of behaviors, for example. The word "culture" comes from the Latin *colere*, which means to cultivate and nurture, to tend to the earth and grow. It shares its etymology with a number of other words related to actively fostering growth.⁹ Every type or way of culture manifestation is than valid if it fosters growth.

In this paper, *culture* will be understood as the different forms human societies express and transmit these acquired knowledges, which can be in form of art, music, religions, dance, rituals, architecture among others. The focus will be on the more traditional institutions and representations of culture present in London, or what Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002) and other sociologists would define as “high culture”. The idea is not to undermine other representations of culture, but to limit it to more traditional forms of culture that are more common in an educational environment and that are also part of children’s formal education.

Considered the world’s cultural and creative capital, London has been struggling to keep the title and to offer to all its citizens the same opportunities regarding access to culture. While other metropolises are investing heavily on their own cultural infrastructure, and attracting first class artists, London has seen the collapse of cultural spaces for both production and consumption over the last decade.¹⁰ A worrying trend which just aggravates the problem of cultural inequality in the city.

8. James Spradley, “Ethnography and Culture” in *Conformity and Conflict: Readings in Cultural Anthropology* (New Jersey: Pearson Education Inc., 2012) 6-12.

9. Cristina De Rossi, anthropologist at Barnet and Southgate College in London to ‘Live Science’ interview by Kim Ann Zimmermann, July 13, 2017. <https://www.livescience.com/21478-what-is-culture-definition-of-culture.html>

10 . Greater London Authority, “*Cultural Infrastructure Plan*”.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The concentration of cultural places in the central-north area of London, while other boroughs further from the center and Inner London experience voids and absence of a cultural infrastructure, is a concern regarding accessibility to culture. This uneven distribution makes the cultural inequality tangible and culture can still be considered a luxury that not everyone has access to in London. Taking culture into account conveys a distinctive picture of where and why class boundaries are most pertinently drawn in contemporary Britain.¹¹

As Bourdieu looked at it, the way that cultural practices are prized, it sustains forms of privilege,¹² which are in form of cultural capital. One of his claims is about the importance of reproduction and inheritance.¹³ While in pre-modern societies the inheritance of property is the most important way of passing on advantage, in modern societies is the reproduction journey associated with schooling and formal education. Parents with cultural capital are able to pass on to their children the cultural forms that predispose them to perform well in the educational system, for example. And these children are then able to turn their cultural capital into credentials, which can then be used to acquire advantage positions for themselves.¹⁴

Surveys shows that only 8% of the London population is benefiting directly from Arts Council's public investments into arts and culture, and the majority of it also happens to be part of the richest slice of the population.¹⁵ This privilege affects primarily children and young adults, especially the ones from less privileged backgrounds. The most common barriers for them to engage in cultural activities are: Not feeling that a place is 'part of who I am', accessibility and the familiarity of an area or other practical barriers as costs.¹⁶ Exposure to culture in an early age has profound impact on their life chances, help them with creating resilience, discipline and character, besides of creating a positive mindset of participation and thus a sense of belonging.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- I. Why is there a disproportioned cultural engagement between low income and high income residents of London?
 - i. How this affects children and young people in London?
- II. Can cultural infrastructure act as a catalyzer towards improving cultural equality?
- III. What combination of functions, uses and programs of a building would enhance access to culture and social cohesion?
 - i. How to increase cultural participation of children and young adults?

11. Tony Bennett et al. *Culture, Class, Distinction*. (London: Routledge, 2008), 2.

12. Pierre Bourdieu. *Distinction*. (London: Routledge, 1984).

13. Bourdieu. *Distinction*, 103-105.

14. Bennett et al, *Culture, Class, Distinction*, 13.

15. The Warwick Commission, *Enriching Britain: Culture, Creativity and Growth*. University of Warwick (2015), 33. https://warwick.ac.uk/research/warwickcommission/futureculture/finalreport/warwick_commission_report_2015.pdf

16. A New Direction & Arts Council England, *Cultural Capital Quantitative Survey - Final Report*. London: Public Perspectives, November 2014, 29.

RESEARCH METHODS

To better understand the cultural inequality in London, its extent and the most adequate way to answer the research questions, it was necessary to first investigate the causes of this phenomenon. Historical and literature review combined with data mining were the starting point. With the initial data analysis it could be observed an asymmetry in the distribution of the cultural infrastructure of London. While investigating this asymmetry, quantitative research through data mining was carried out in order to understand better this asymmetry in numbers. In possession of the data of the cultural infrastructure, the numbers were converted into positions in maps.

Data analysis, cartographic mapping and context-led research were also relevant for the understanding of each place's values, the existing qualities and what would be an adequate response to the problem. In parallel to the context-led research, a typo-morphological research was also conducted. Not to only understand the London cultural infrastructure itself, but also the type of buildings that these cultural institutions function in and see if there were common features among them and so on.

Combining the different previous mentioned methods, areas with clusters and areas with voids of cultural infrastructure were identified and analyzed further during fieldwork. For the fieldwork, a more qualitative analysis took place with the use of heuristic techniques. Photography, videography, drawings, notes and observations were crucial to understand the big picture and the particularities of the deprived and affluent areas. The combination of qualitative analyzes alongside all the cartographic mappings helped to identify suitable places for intervention. Places which could support new developments and had opportunities for enhancement were analyzed further.

Another important method used for the research was interview. Interviewing people that live in the researched areas, that work in the government and in the cultural sector was essential to learn and understand more about the cultural scenario in London. It was one of the most insightful steps of the research to define where and how architecture could help a determined area and enhance the culture accessibility to children and young adults.

After defining possible project locations and the type of intervention, case studies and precedent analysis were also pertinent. It was a relevant way to assist the investigation on cultural buildings with cultural and mixed uses. It helped to identify which functions, uses and programs would contribute to cultural accessibility and enhance cultural engagement from an early age.

CULTURAL INEQUALITY

Cultural inequality is constituted by the inaccessibility or difficulty to participate or engage in any way in cultural events or have access to cultural institutions. This inaccessibility can occur in two distinct levels, one being the direct physical inaccessibility to the buildings, structures and places where culture is either consumed, produced or learned, which will be simply referred to as the *cultural infrastructure*.¹⁷ Therefore, this type of inaccessibility is more frequent for individuals that live in a territory of deprivation and cannot afford to travel to attend and visit these places or cannot afford the fees to use certain facilities.

On another level, cultural inequality has a direct relation to cultural illiteracy and possession of cultural capital. Where people simply were not exposed to or learned about certain types of culture on an early age and grew up with the perception that they do not understand and are not part of this ecology or “community”. The personal interest in culture is then influenced by educational phenomena, social dynamics and economic background. And as Bourdieu’s work is to suggest that culture – understood as a form of capital, as an asset – is central to the constitution of class relationships.¹⁸

Studies published by Skegg in 1997 and Charlesworth in 2000 on groups that generally do not succeed in the education system showed that these groups feel disempowered¹⁹ and internalize a sense of marginalization as a result.²⁰ Young people from a less privileged background are significantly less likely to engage with a range of cultural activities.²¹ This is a problem, since involvement with arts and culture is crucial to the imagination, self-expression and creativity in young people. It is also through this involvement that they develop the skills that fuel the success of the UK’s creative industries, and that will result in the next generation of creative talent across the country²² as it is endorsed by the Arts Council England.

17. Summer Haly, “The London Cultural Infrastructure Plan: A call for planners,” last modified April 16, 2019, <https://lichfields.uk/blog/2019/april/16/the-london-cultural-infrastructure-plan-a-call-for-planners/>

18. Bennett et al, *Culture, Class, Distinction*, 2.

19. Simon Charlesworth. *A Phenomenology of Working-Class Experience*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000)

20. Beverly Skegg. *Formations of Class and Gender. Becoming Respectable*. (London: Sage, 1997).

21. A New Direction, “Cultural Capital Quantitative Survey”.

22. “Children and young people”, Arts Council England, accessed October, 25, 2021. <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/supporting-creativity-and-culture/children-and-young-people>

LONDON'S CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE

With respect to London's cultural infrastructure, the approach used to investigate it and assess the current situation was first through data analysis. As mentioned, London is a culturally rich city, with a lot to offer, so to understand the cultural distribution throughout the city the *Cultural Infrastructure Map* was an important tool. The Mayor of London launched in 2019 a database map where everything that comprises its cultural infrastructure can be found. Their idea was to broaden Londoners understanding of the true richness of hidden creative clusters and help safeguard jobs and talents.²³ However, it could also be seen an unbalanced disposition of it over the 32 different boroughs.

To organize all the data and see how unequal and unbalanced the distribution of the cultural institutions and facilities was, it was catalogued on a table (see figure 1). The cultural infrastructure within the Greater London on the *Map* tool shows from recording studios to theatres, clubs and pubs to community halls.²⁴ For the analysis, the considered cultural places were divided between four categories: Cultural Consumption, Cultural Production, Cultural Education and Cultural Leisure in order to give more insight into the differences among the London's boroughs.

The *Cultural Infrastructure Map* tool portrays all the different types of institutions and cultural places in London, so it was important to frame it and select the ones that were relevant for this research. The selection of institutions and different facilities that were considered for the analysis has to do with the relevance for the topic of cultural accessibility and engagement, especially, for children and young adults, and for this reason other cultural places were left out as pubs, heritage at risk and jewelry design for example. The criteria was: the selected places should have a direct link to children *cultural education*; the activities that are an entry point for children to interact with culture should also be considered²⁵ (*cultural leisure*); and finally places where culture is either produced or consumed²⁶ for being places that stimulate a direct contact with the subject.²⁷

For the *cultural consumption* category are being considered the places where culture is experienced, participated in, showcased, exhibited or sold. In this case, museums, galleries, art centers and outdoor spaces for cultural uses. For the *cultural production* are being contemplated the places where creative work is made. It includes: artists workspaces, makerspace, creative co-working desk space and creative workspaces.

23. Greater London Authority, *Cultural Infrastructure Plan - A Call To Action*, 8.

24. "Cultural Infrastructure Map," Mayor of London, accessed October 10th, 2021, <https://apps.london.gov.uk/cim/index.html>

25. A New Direction, "Cultural Capital Quantitative Survey".

26. Bennett et al, *Culture, Class, Distinction*.

27. Richard Sennett, *The Craftsman* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).

Cultural Infrastructure	Cultural Consumption					Cultural Production					Cultural Education				Cultural Leisure				Final Total
	Commercial / Private galleries	Museums and Public galleries	Art Centres	Outdoor spaces for cultural uses	total	Artists Workspaces	Maker-space	Creative co-working desk space	Creative workspaces	total	Libraries	Archives	Community centers	total	Theatres	Cinemas	Music Venues	total	
Barking and Dagenham	0	1	1	0	2	1	0	0	2	3	6	0	27	33	1	1	4	6	88
Barnet	0	4	1	0	5	1	1	0	0	2	16	8	13	37	3	3	18	24	136
Bexley	0	2	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	12	1	17	30	4	1	7	12	90
Brent	1	1	1	0	3	5	3	1	0	9	8	1	19	28	1	3	4	8	96
Bromley	1	4	0	1	6	0	0	0	0	0	14	0	21	35	4	1	14	19	120
Camden	33	26	1	1	61	5	3	1	1	10	12	103	110	225	24	12	60	96	784
City of London	4	7	1	0	12	1	1	0	1	3	4	49	2	55	5	1	24	30	200
City of Westminster	1	28	1	5	35	5	4	2	3	14	12	154	34	200	52	22	98	172	842
Croydon	0	1	1	0	2	1	1	1	0	3	13	2	12	27	3	3	13	19	102
Ealing	1	0	0	0	1	8	0	1	1	10	13	2	26	41	2	1	15	18	140
Enfield	0	1	1	0	2	0	1	0	0	1	17	2	13	32	4	2	8	14	98
Greenwich	4	7	0	1	12	7	5	1	1	14	11	3	27	41	3	3	16	22	178
Hackney	26	3	1	0	30	41	10	13	21	85	8	9	90	107	12	4	105	121	686
Hammersmith and Fulham	4	2	2	0	8	6	2	3	0	11	5	13	34	52	10	3	14	27	196
Haringey	2	1	2	0	5	9	3	3	8	23	8	6	27	41	8	5	7	20	178
Harrow	1	4	1	0	6	2	0	0	1	3	6	4	11	21	2	1	3	6	72
Havering	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	10	0	22	32	2	1	9	12	92
Hillingdon	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	17	7	27	51	3	2	8	13	132
Hounslow	0	5	2	1	8	4	0	0	0	4	11	7	21	39	6	2	14	22	146
Islington	17	7	0	0	24	6	1	5	6	18	10	34	60	104	15	3	64	82	456
Kensington and Chelsea	25	10	1	0	36	4	1	1	1	7	6	19	18	43	9	5	16	30	232
Kingston-Upon-Thames	0	2	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	1	7	0	14	21	2	1	9	12	72
Lambeth	13	5	2	1	21	20	8	5	4	37	10	28	54	92	18	7	56	81	462
Lewisham	2	1	1	0	4	17	2	0	7	26	13	9	9	31	10	2	25	37	196
Merton	1	3	0	0	4	3	0	0	1	4	7	5	11	23	6	1	6	13	88
Newham	0	1	1	0	2	9	3	0	0	12	10	7	18	35	4	3	9	16	130
Redbridge	0	1	1	0	2	1	0	0	0	1	13	1	7	21	2	3	7	12	72
Richmond-upon-Thames	0	9	2	0	11	0	0	0	0	0	13	4	11	28	8	3	20	31	140
Southwark	20	8	0	3	31	28	10	7	7	52	12	37	30	79	21	6	33	60	444
Sutton	0	3	0	0	3	1	0	0	0	1	8	1	10	19	0	0	10	10	66
Tower Hamlets	24	9	2	1	36	36	7	4	14	61	8	25	42	75	7	7	48	62	468
Waltham Forest	1	4	0	0	5	10	6	1	4	21	10	2	32	44	5	1	21	27	194
Wandsworth	8	0	1	2	11	6	2	1	0	9	11	13	34	58	7	2	16	25	206

Figure 1 - London's cultural infrastructure divided by borough.

Each institution represented in the table on *figure 1* counts as 1, regardless of their size and “importance” to the city scenario. As can be seen, some boroughs are standing out in some categories and also on the overall final score. In *Cultural Consumption*, Camden for example has a high concentration of both private and public galleries and museums, almost twice as many as the second place. Camden is known for its large market in the district of Camden town and for housing the British Museum in Bloomsbury.

Hackney and Tower Hamlets, followed by Southwark, stand out for *Cultural Production*, combining several art related workspaces. In *Cultural Education*, category that comprises Libraries and archives, while Camden and Westminster count with 225 and 200 facilities respectively, Hackney, in third place, with 107 and Islington with 104, other boroughs range around 40. In the *Cultural Leisure* category, as in the final score, we have again Westminster, Camden and Hackney which rank first, second and third respectively on the final rank, while other boroughs as Harrow and Redbridge are far behind in the overall cultural scenario.

To make the data more visual within the urban context, the collected data from the table of *figure 1* was translated into maps. It helped establishing where were the clusters and voids located within the Greater London. In the following maps, *figures 2,3,4,5*, it is possible to identify a pattern and see that the cultural infrastructure is denser in the Inner London region in all the 4 different categories.

For the Cultural Consumption and Leisure, other boroughs next to the Thames also stand out, showing its relevance to the city. It is also possible to notice that the Cultural Leisure map shows a bit more balanced distribution of cinemas and theatres within the Greater London.

This has to do with the fact that as a popular, private and commercial activity (predominantly), they follow the demand. So, populated areas have at least a few screening rooms. It is important to note that surveys shows that movie theatres are one of the most common places where children have access to culture. However, children with an income disadvantage are not usually customers.²⁸

In the Cultural Production map, a tendency of the past years is also starting to be mapped out: the gentrification process in the more central areas. It is affecting the rent prices for artists that are being pushed to more peripheral locations with more affordable rent prices.²⁹ Similar to what happened to Camden, which was famous for its rich cultural production, diversity and history and also known as home of many artists, its uniqueness and vivid streets.³⁰ Artists and creative people are also having difficulty finding space to work, practice and perform. With artist's studios priced out across London, they are also moving out of the capital looking for more affordable prices in new places.³¹

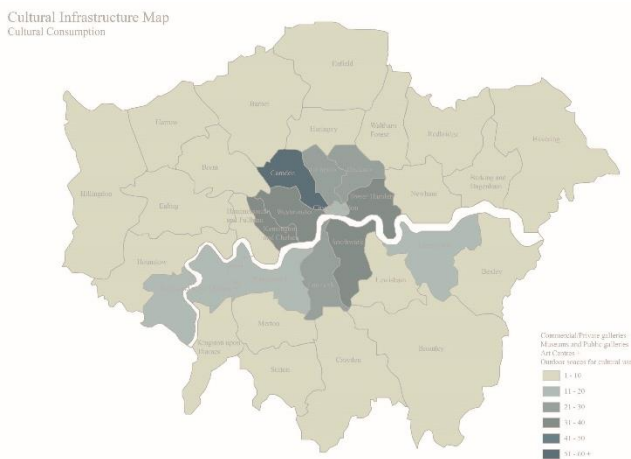


Figure 2 - Cultural Consumption map

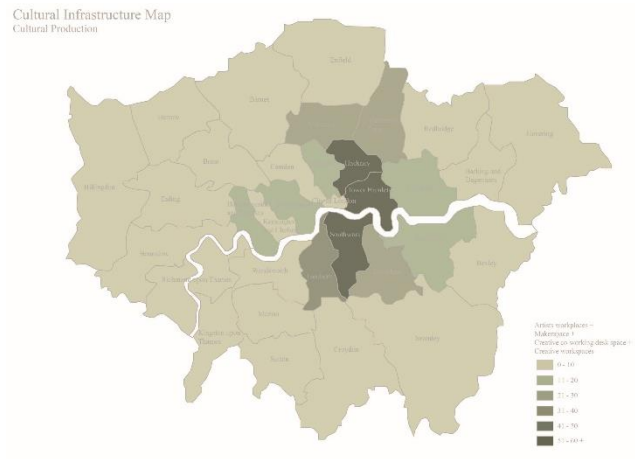


Figure 3 - Cultural Production map

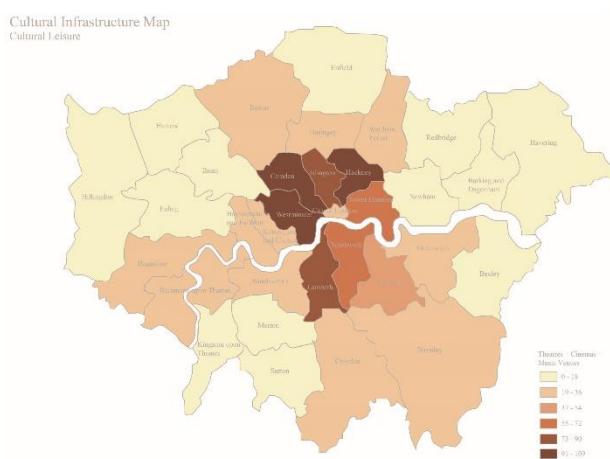


Figure 4 - Cultural Leisure map

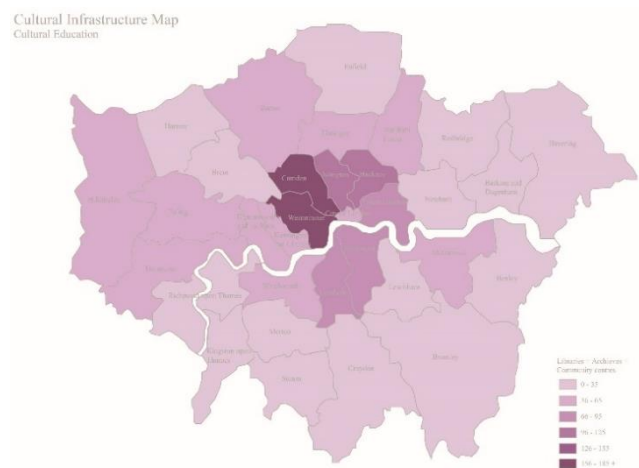


Figure 5 - Cultural Education map

28. A New Direction, "Cultural Capital Quantitative Survey".

29. Haly, "The London Cultural Infrastructure Plan: A call for planners".

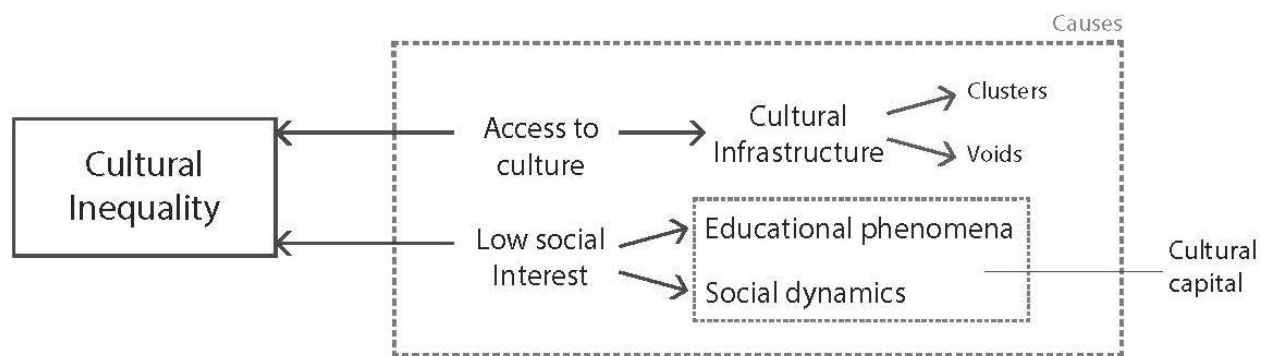
30. Hannah Ewens, "How the Cultural Heart of London Died", last modified January 17, 2017, <https://www.vice.com/en/article/78bnzd/does-anyone-care-that-camden-is-dying>

31. Thamesmead. *A Home for Culture in London's New Town*. London: Peabody (2020) 17. https://www.thamesmeadnow.org.uk/media/3318/thamesmead-cultural-infrastructure-plan_a-home-for-culture.pdf

TERRITORIES OF AFFLUENCE AND TERRITORIES OF DEPRIVATION

The high concentration of the cultural infrastructure is visible in the central areas while the boroughs of Outer London experience voids. It characterizes two distinct types of territories: territories of affluence and territories of deprivation. The difference between both shows the cultural inequality present in the Greater London. The two major causes for cultural inequality in London are: on the urban level, which is more tangible and visible, the access to culture. Getting to, and using the cultural infrastructure. In this situation, distances and paying for transport play a big role here,³² especially considering that London has one of the most expansive public transport of the world.³³

The other cause is on a social level, the personal interest to participate and make use of the cultural infrastructure. This personal interest has to do with educational, social and economic background.³⁴ Reports shows that this disadvantage in cultural engagement has great effect on children and young adults, compromising their development and social skills and affecting their adulthood later on.³⁵



The concept of territories of affluence and territories of deprivation is a result of a combination of theories of different authors. The main ones used here were the Assemblage Theory from the *A Thousand Plateaus* and the Actor-Network theory elaborated on *Reassembling the Social*. In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari describe how in all things strata, segments, and territories, manifest themselves as lines. But there are also lines of deterritorialization and destratification.³⁶ Flows on these lines lead to various phenomena such as slowness, acceleration, and rupture. Together the lines and measurable speeds constitute an assemblage.³⁷

32. A New Direction, "Cultural Capital Quantitative Survey", 31.

33. Deutsche Bank Markets Research, *Mapping the World's Prices 2017*. Deutsche Bank AG/London: May, 2017.

34. Bennett et al, *Culture, Class, Distinction*.

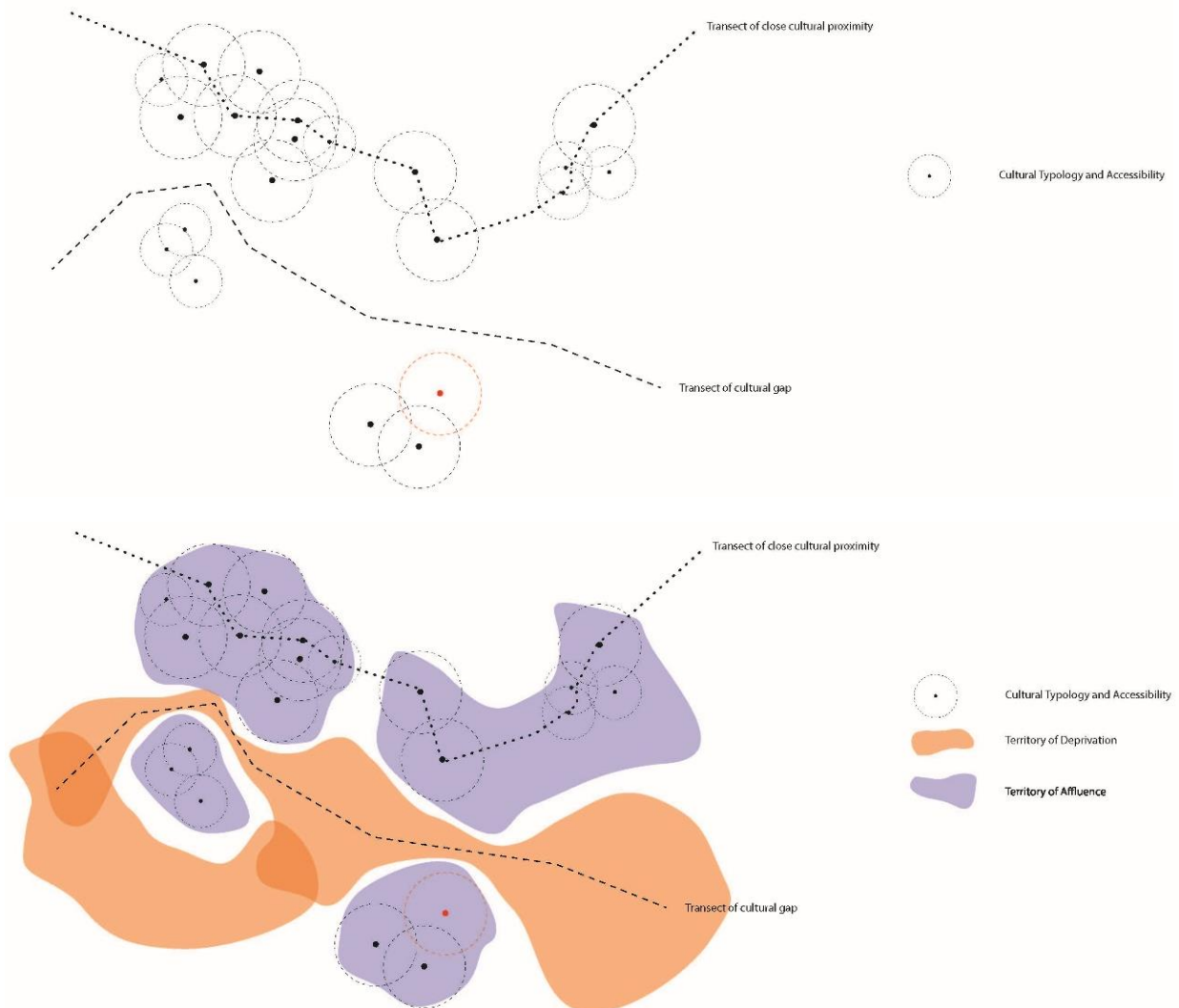
35. A New Direction & Arts Council England. *Disadvantage and cultural engagement – a study in to the lives of young Londoners*. London: Public Perspectives, February 2015.

36. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 3.

37. Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 4.

The Assemblage theory is being used to understand how these lines of deterritorialization and destratification play a role in defining the territories. In the case of this research, the territory of cultural institutions, the territories of affluence and the territories of deprivation. As the name suggests, the territories of deprivation, are zones formed by areas deprived of certain facilities, where large socio-economic disadvantages can be observed. These areas have fluid boundaries, since dynamic conditions draws them.

On the other hand, territories of affluence are formed by areas of large socio-economic advantage. Both, territories of affluence and deprivation, can be defined by a combination of different layers that play a role on that condition. They can be characterized by different layers as income levels, access to education, criminal activities and so on. The territorial borders that constitute those territories are defined as “lines of flight”.³⁸ Due to its not static condition, where changes in the territories can change their “status” from territory of deprivation to a territory of affluence and vice-versa. Those lines of flight can also overlap and in this way create a territorial culmination.



38. Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 24-25.

To recognize these territories and the other important components that draws them, the Actor-Network theory from Latour was used. The theory helped finding the relationships and other interconnections between social and non-social aspects. Since the theory tries to define and describe the relational ties between human and non-human components (actants) within a network or assemblage. And in order to favour neither social nor technological determinism, both components have the same importance and the same capacity to influence or make changes. Assemblage can be defined as network, the sum of the individual components or actants of something (it can be anything at all), while actants can be understood as a point within a network, a node. In the Actor-Network theory all actants have the same importance, being them human or non-human.³⁹

DEFINING TERRITORIES OF AFFLUENCE AND TERRITORIES OF DEPRIVATION

To understand the London cultural network, the assemblage of the territories of affluence and the territories of deprivation, the actants (the cultural institutions), were drawn out in their geographical locations. The institutions are the as nodes, points within the network that integrate the cultural infrastructure. Pin-pointing the institutions was also a way of being more precise about the cultural infrastructure configuration, which could be different throughout the same borough.

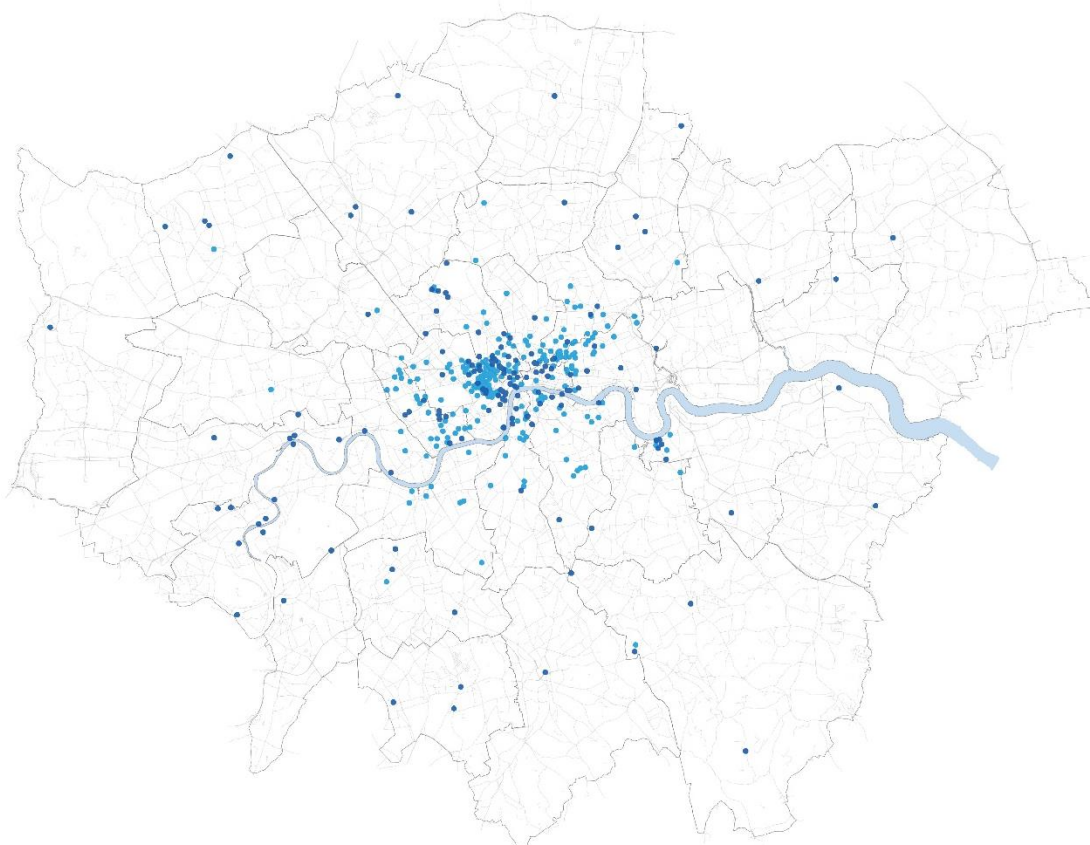


Figure 9 - Cultural Consumption Infrastructure map

39. Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social* (Oxford University Press, 2005), 5.

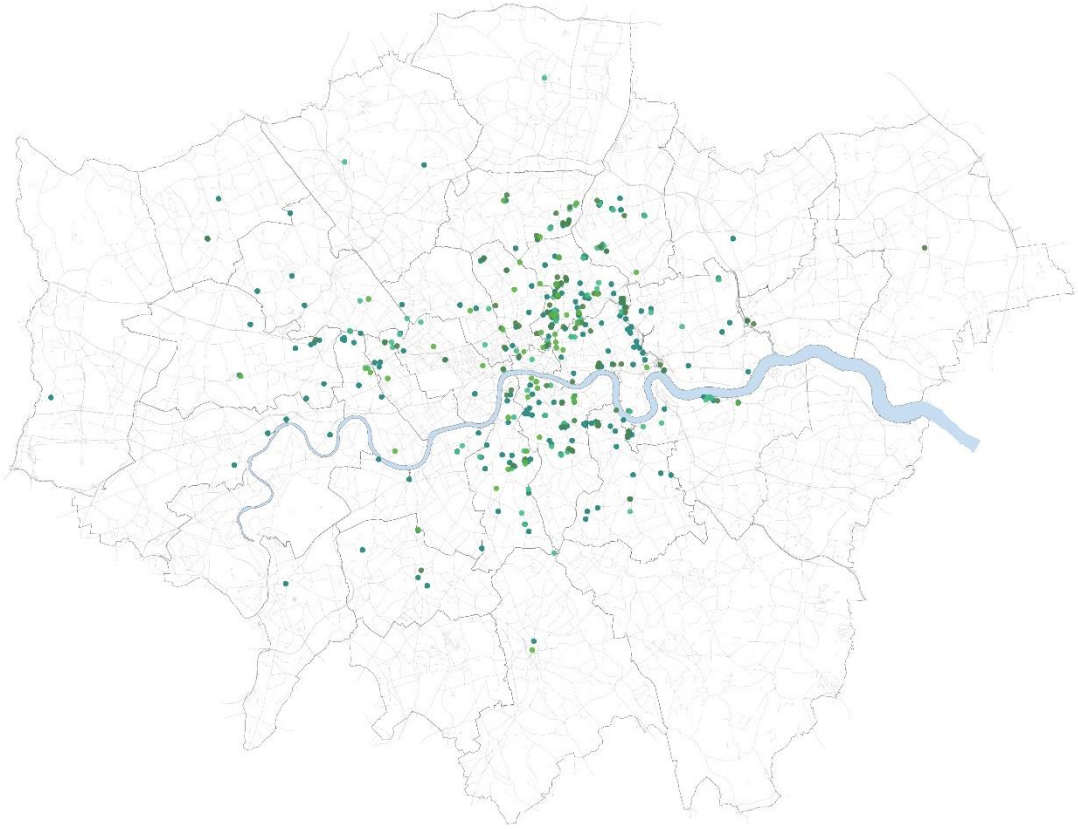


Figure 10 - Cultural Production Infrastructure map

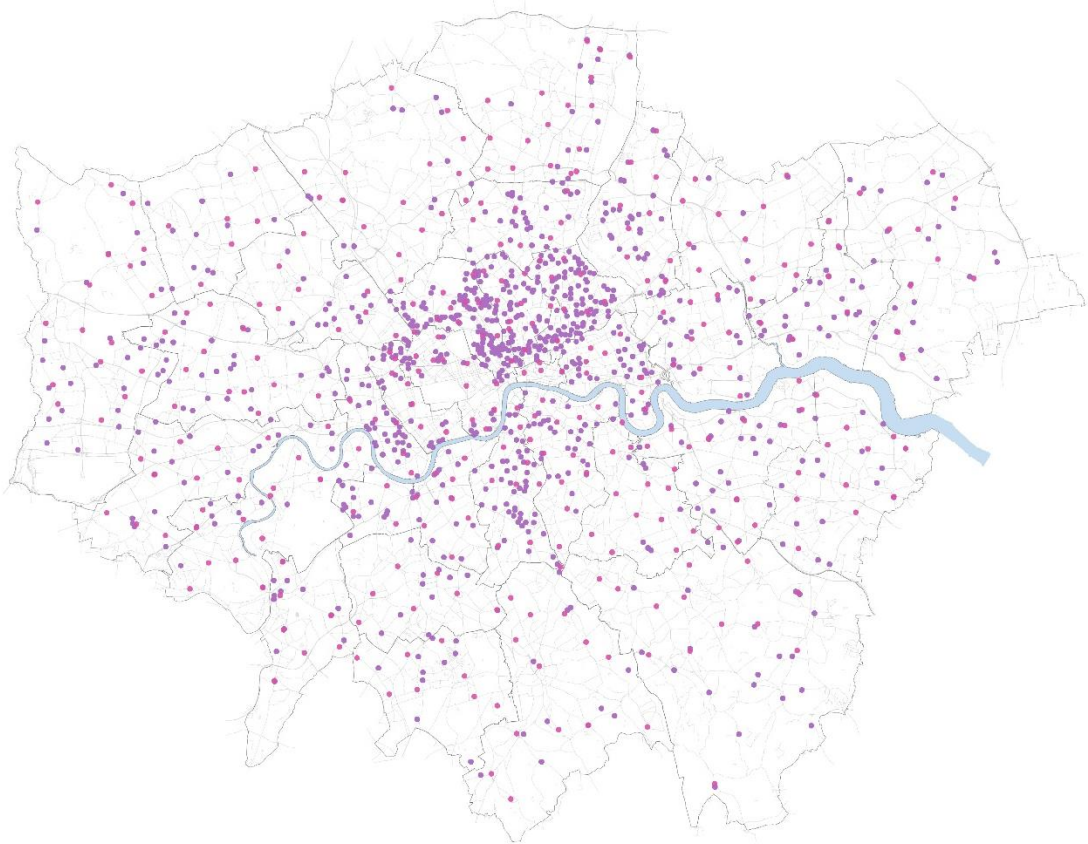


Figure 11 - Cultural Education Infrastructure map

To find where the lines of flights are and to define the territories of affluence and the territories of deprivation, the strategy that was used was to combine all the previous selected cultural institutions that were marked in the maps of London, *figures 9 – 11*, in combination with several different layers in a new map. In this way the territories would be defined by the presence or absences of cultural infrastructure in combination to the other layers.



Figure 12 - Cultural Infrastructure combined with other layers

On top of the cultural institutional map, other layers were added as the assemblage theory recommends in favour of having a more complete and meaningful territorial map. On *figure 12*, all the cultural institutions considered on the research are joined by the educational buildings (yellow dots). Considering accessibility and the cultural engagement for children and young adults the proximity to educational buildings is of high value. It also can be seen that the distribution of the educational institutions is more evened as the libraries (in pink).

Combined with the railway system, the accessibility and main connections within the city is visible and gives some understanding on the city transport configuration. On *figure 13* the public transport system is also added for more insight into accessibility. Back to the map of *figure 12*, the orange stains stand for the demographic density. The lighter orange stands for a demographic density between 2.500 and 5.000 people per square kilometre and the darker orange for a density of 10.000+ people per square kilometre.



Figure 13 - Railway and public transport map

INTERVATION AREA

As already supposed, the higher density of cultural institutions follows the demographic density and the more economic affluent regions of London: the central-north region. The focus of this research step was to find a deprived territory with a high demographic density. And within this area, identify suitable design locations that would enhance accessibility to culture for children and young adults.

The most evened distributed cultural institutions are the libraries, *figure 11*. They are also where kids usually first experience culture, in an educational environment.⁴⁰ Libraries are also one of the most accessible to the community in general, considering they usually offer other activities and most of them are free. Considering these facts, the method used in this stage was to find a demographically dense area within the Inner London region, add a radio of 1,5km and 3km (a walkable distance for children) around them defining the “lines of flight” and thus a deprived territory.

40. A New Direction, “Cultural Capital Quantitative Survey”, 17.

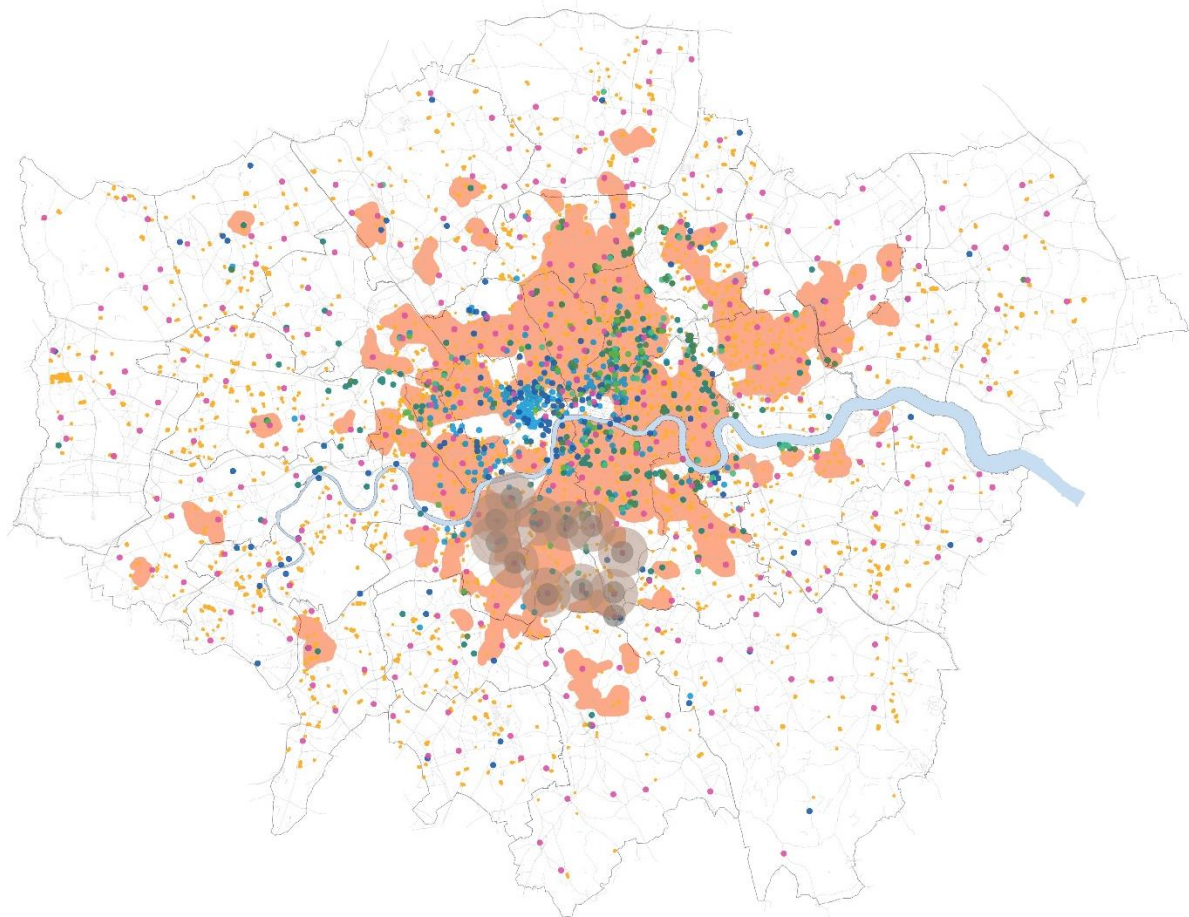


Figure 14 - Addition of library radio

By combining all the mentioned conditions with distances to primary and secondary schools the intervention area that could be defined was in the south of the Borough of Lambeth. Lambeth is the fifth most densely populated borough nationally⁴¹ and one of the most deprived areas of the country (it is the 8th most deprived in London).⁴² On *figure 15*, primary and secondary schools are pin pointed while cultural infrastructure is marked by dots. The darker radios around libraries are for the public ones, but considering public and private libraries it is possible to demark the deprived area. Considering the main roads and the concentration of schools, a transect through the deprived territory is drawn. And through this transect the possible locations for intervention were considered.

41. Lambeth Made. A Children and young people's plan for Lambeth 18-22. London: Lambeth Made (2018) 16.

42. "English indices of deprivation 2015," National statistics, accessed April 16, 2022, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2015>

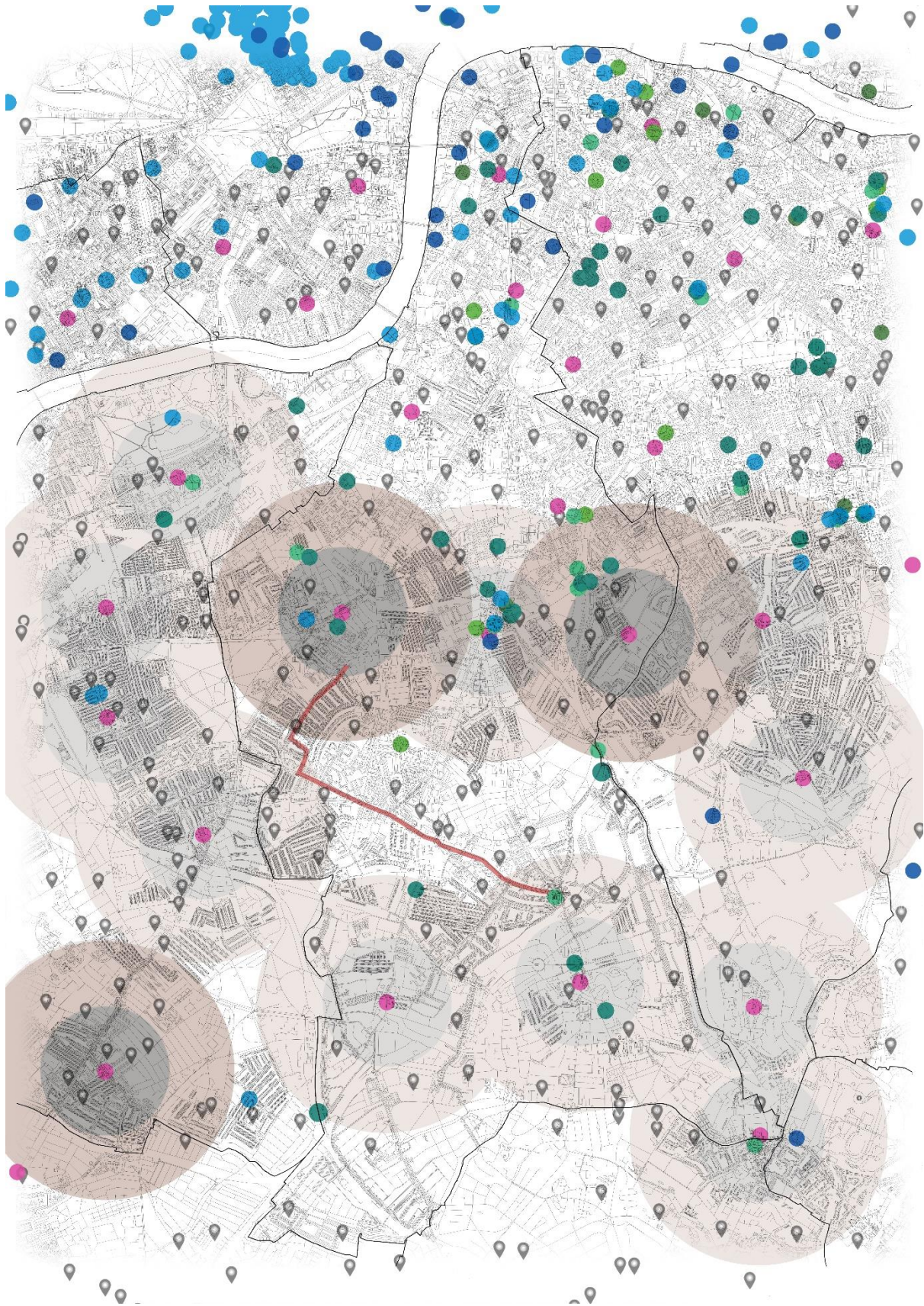


Figure 15 - Cultural infrastructure + School buildings + Library radio + Transect within territory of deprivation

CITIES WITHIN THE CITY

The importance of autonomy and independency of different regions of a city is addressed by Oswald Mathias Ungers and a number of colleagues in *Cities Within the City*. The idea of a polycentric urban system is one of the main topics discussed, as the importance of a balanced distribution of the different building functions that compose a city. It is argued that high dense neighborhoods should have at their disposal all sort of functions that are important for people to keep a good life standard, at a close distance.

Here, this theory is used in combination to the other discussed theories to support the argument of the importance of a more balanced distribution of the cultural infrastructure in dense areas of cities. In this case, the central-south region of the borough of Lambeth, in the Inner London area. Using Ungers theory in combination to the findings made using the other research methods, sustained the relevance of culture and the benefits cultural spaces would bring to a deprived territory.

After understanding the needs of this particular territory of deprivation, in the district of Streatham, and discussing the issue with local residents and government employees of the cultural sector, it was depicted how much a Cultural Center was needed in the area. It is really important that different regions can have autonomy and independency regarding access to cultural facilities, and a Cultural Center would bring that to the region.

Additionally, it is important to mention that on an urban level it is crucial to have this uniformity, but that architecture also plays a big role in accessibility. It is first thought the building and the architecture that children can feel more interested in participate in some activities for example. Research shows that one of the things that makes children dislike libraries for instance is for their school-like atmosphere.⁴³

Another important point regarding access and engagement with cultural activities, is how attractive they are to the audience, especially when considering children. So, in this way the program of the building also plays an important role. The conducted interviews also helped defining what the community of that area appreciates and is currently missing.

43. A New Direction, "Cultural Capital Quantitative Survey", 29.

CONCLUSION

The focus of this essay was on cultural inequality in London, its causes and the consequences it brings to Londoners, especially to children and young adults. The ambition was to understand the problem, its extent, and as a result find how architecture can support and contribute to a more uniform cultural infrastructure and thus access to culture in London. Considering the socioeconomics and educational challenges that are brought and highlighted in a context of inequality and inaccessibility to culture, it is crucial to take into account the responsibility of architectural practices and that a good design can have a positive impact.

It is also necessary to keep in mind that architecture can help, it can facilitate and turn culture more interesting and accessible to children. In possession of the gathered information in this research the conclusion is that the design proposal should adopt a concept centered in engagement and integration to the community. The main goal of the proposal is to achieve that though design, the idea is to facilitate and promote the contact to culture in diverse and different forms.

Taking into account the problems that children face when not in contact with culture from an early age, it is taken into account the type of program that a Cultural Center should offer in order to achieve the goals of promoting engagement and integration with the community. Nourishing the creative minds of children and helping them in their future is possible through bringing cultural activities closer to their daily lives. And this will help especially the ones with a background disadvantage to have better chances in their futures.

With the understanding of the importance of access to cultural production and consumption as a mean to be part of the cultural scenario and thus overcome cultural inequality, the concept for the design proposal will be on promoting cultural engagement through group activities. Creating a hub and a space for encounter, where children and young adults can interact with culture, learn new skills and participate more actively in the community.

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