

### The Old New Politics of Class

### **Professor Mike Savage**

Professor of Sociology, LSE

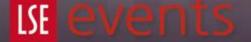
### **Professor Bev Skeggs**

Head of the Department of Sociology, Goldsmiths

### **Professor John Hills**

Chair, LSE

Suggested hashtag for Twitter users: #LSEclass



















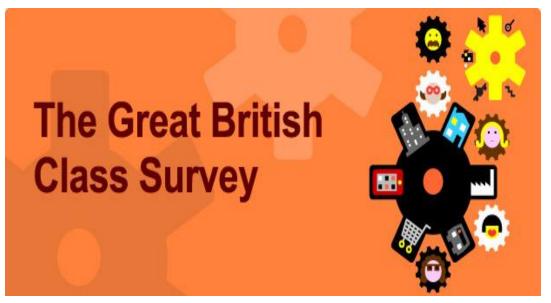




### The old new politics of class

Mike Savage

### Reflections on...





With Fiona Devine, Niall Cunningham, Mark Taylor, Johs Hjellbrekke, Brigitte Le Roux, Sam Friedman, Andrew Miles, Daniel Laurison, Paul Wakeling With Jane Elliott,
Andrew Miles and
Sam Parsons

NCDS Social Participation & Identity Project

### Life Trajectories

Date: 13-1-10







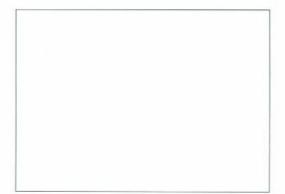














If you had to represent your life through a diagram, which of these would it be?

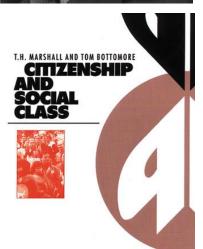
### Plan

1. Class politics and the 'problematic of the proletariat'

- 2. Rethinking class, Bourdieu, and the GBCS
  - 1. The politics of selective reflexivity
  - 2. Dissecting the corporate elite

3. NCDS life stories and cultures of class domination

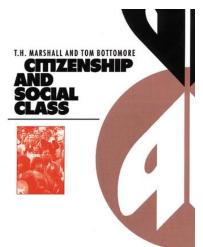
# 1: THE QUESTION OF CLASS POLITICS AND THE 'PROBLEMATIC OF THE PROLETARIAT'





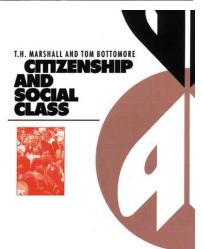
### T H Marshall 1949

The question' said (economist Alfred Marshall) 'is not whether all men will ultimately be equal - that they certainly will not - but whether progress may not go on steadily, if slowly, till.... every man is a gentleman.....





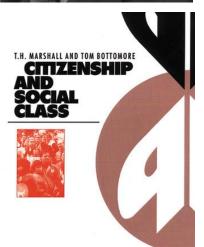
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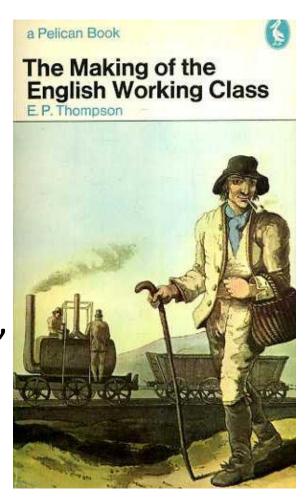
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### E P Thompson 1963



Working people should not be seen only as the lost myriads of eternity. They had also nourished, for fifty years, and with incomparable fortitude, the Liberty Tree. We may thank them for these years of heroic culture.



## The 'problematic of the proletariat'

'(Marxist theory of class) thereby secures a onedimensional social world, simply organized around the opposition between two blocs (and one of the major questions is then that of the boundary between these two blocs, with all the associated, endlessly debated, questions of the "labor aristocracy," the "embourgeoisement" of the working class, etc.'.

Pierre Bourdieu 1985

### Class and political identification 1983-84

	Con	Labour	Alliance	Other
Managers	61	23	11	2
Owners	69	17	11	2
Prof/ intermediate	52	25	18	2
Junior non- man	50	23	18	0
Skilled manual	29	52	11	1
Semi/ unskilled	25	54	12	3
Managers – unskilled	+36	-31	-1	-1

### Class and political identification 2011-12

	Con	Labour	Lib Dem	Other
Managers	40	32	6	6
Owners	33	30	4	16
Prof/ intermediate	29	38	10	10
Junior non- man	31	26	8	10
Skilled manual	24	40	3	12
Semi/ unskilled	17	41	4	8
Managers – unskilled	+23	-9	+2	-2



## 2: THE GREAT BRITISH CLASS SURVEY

### Bourdieu.....?

Sidesteps the centrality of the middle –
working class divisions into a multidimensional interest in the potential of
different capitals to accumulate, convert, and
transmit advantage.

Brings questions of culture and symbolic domination firmly back into view

	Elite	Establish ed middle class	New affluent workers	Technical middle class	Tradition al working class	Emergent service workers	Precariat
Household income	1	2	4	3	6	5	7
Household savings	1	3	5	2	4	6	7
House value	1	2	4	3	5	7	6
Social contact score	2	3	6	1	4	5	7
Social contact number	3	1	2	7	5	4	6
Highbrow cultural capital	1	2	6	5	3	4	7
Emerging cultural capital	4	3	2	5	7	1	6

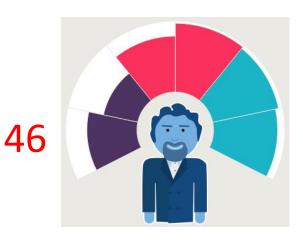


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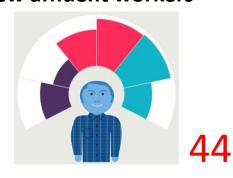


57

Established m c



**New affluent workers** 





**Technical mc** 

52

Traditional w c



**Emerging service workers** 



**Precariat** 



50

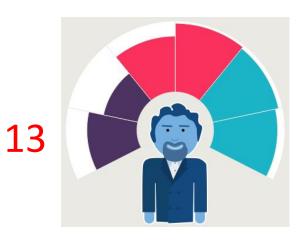
32

### % ethnic min



4

### Established m c



**New affluent workers** 



Technical mc

9

11

Traditional w c



**Emerging service workers** 



Precariat



13

9

21

### % female

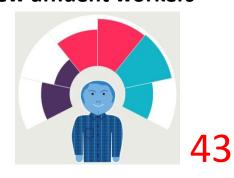


50

### Established m c



**New affluent workers** 



Technical mc

59

Traditional w c

62



**Emerging service workers** 



55

**Precariat** 

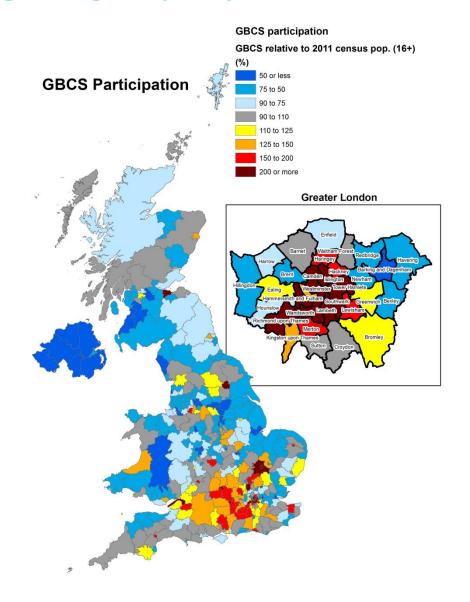
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### The GBCS sample skew...

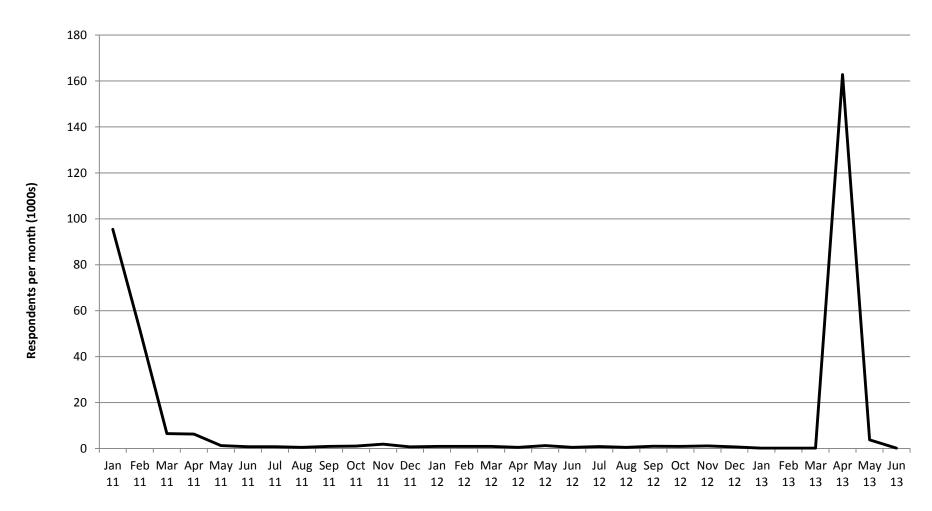
 The web sample is highly clearly skewed towards the middle and upper classes.....

 BUT the sample skew is itself interesting for the debate on 'dis-identification' and should not be dismissed simply as a 'problem'

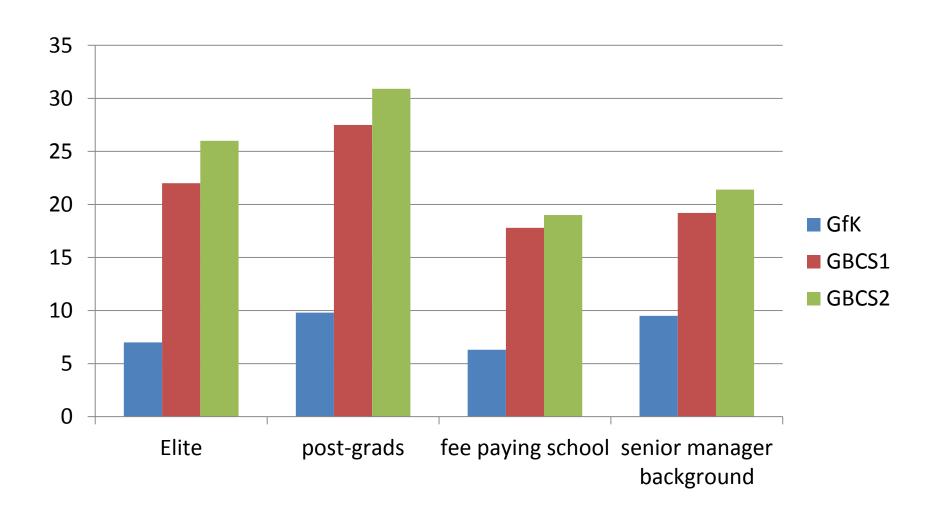
## The geography of the GBCS



## GBCS response times: Long-term distribution: 2 spikes



### Elite reflexivity



### The social space and the genesis of groups

'this work of categorization, i.e., of making explicit and of classification, is performed incessantly, at every moment of ordinary existence, in the struggles in which agents clash over the meaning of the social world and of their position within it, the meaning of their social identity, through all the forms of benediction or malediction, eulogy, praise, congratulations, compliments, or insults, reproaches, criticisms, accusations, slanders, etc'.





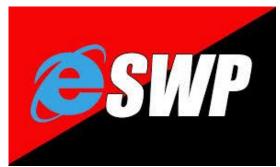
Satirical takes on the class calculator – 'a knowing mode of cultural capital'



The festivities marked the establishment by the Hijackers of the <a href="Emergent Service Workers Party">Emergent</a>, borrowed from a term used in the recent Great British Class Survey. I discovered last week that I belonged to this class, so I'm happy that I now have a suitably tongue-in-cheek flag to wave. To quote from the survey: "This new class has low economic capital but has high levels of 'emerging' cultural capital and high social capital. This group are young and often found in urban areas." The internet is arguably essential to 'my' class, just as home-owning is to the established middle-classes. How else could my friends work their part-time, temporary service jobs, and run pop-up galleries, host blogs and write music in what they once thought of as their





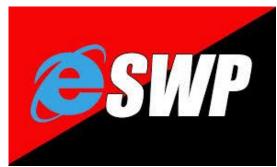




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## Stigma and the creation of 'abject' categories





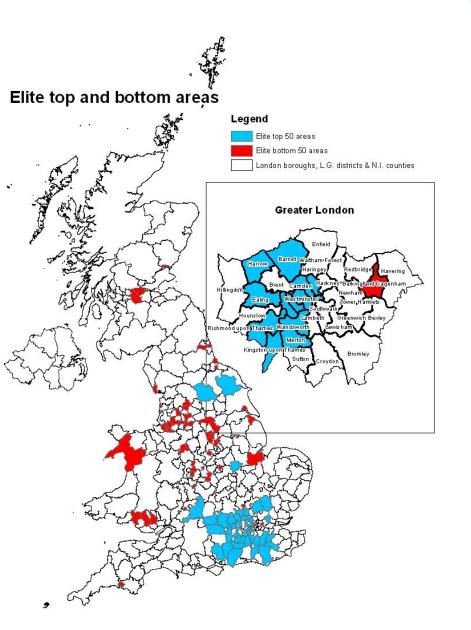
### The politics of classification

 How do we turn the telescope back towards those at the top?

## Occupational profile of elite

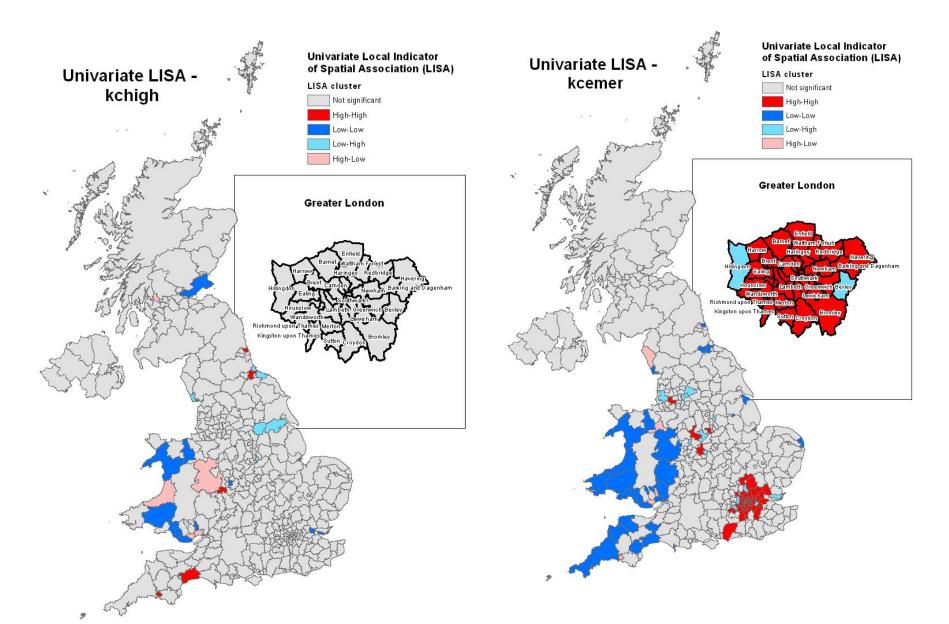
	% of occupation in elite	N=
CEOs	60.5	4953
Management consultants	37.8	2544
Financial manager	44.5	1167
Marketing/sales manager	48.5	899
HR managers	35.5	536
Medical practitioners	38.3	1991
HE teachers	36.7	996
Barristers	45.1	532
All	21.8	150,184

## 'A metropolitan elite'

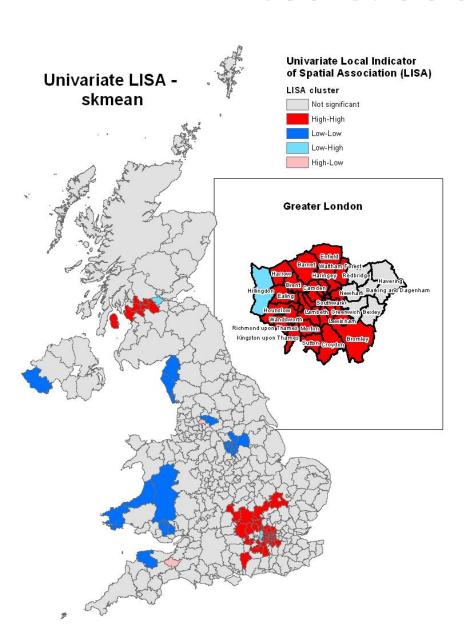


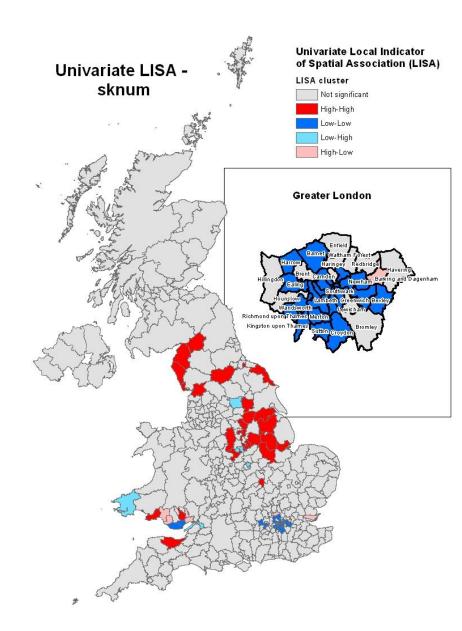


## Elites & 'emerging' culture



### Elites & social networks

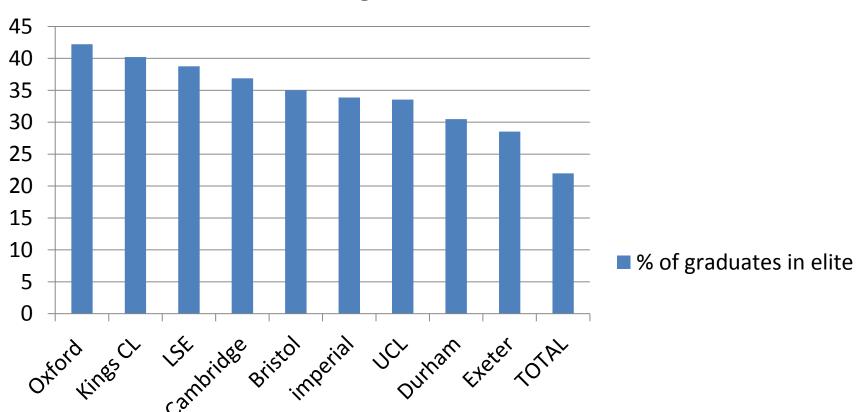


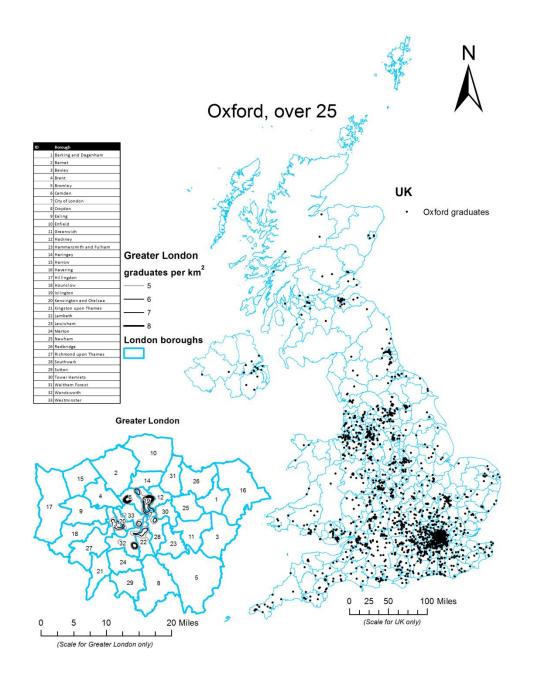


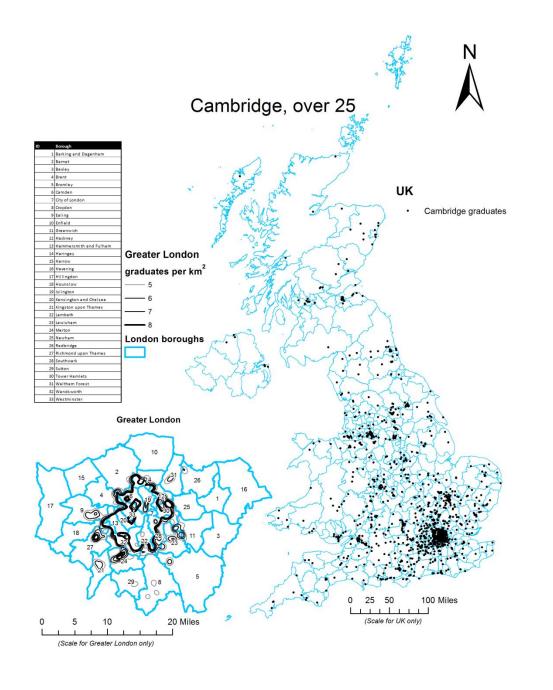
### Universities and elite recruitment

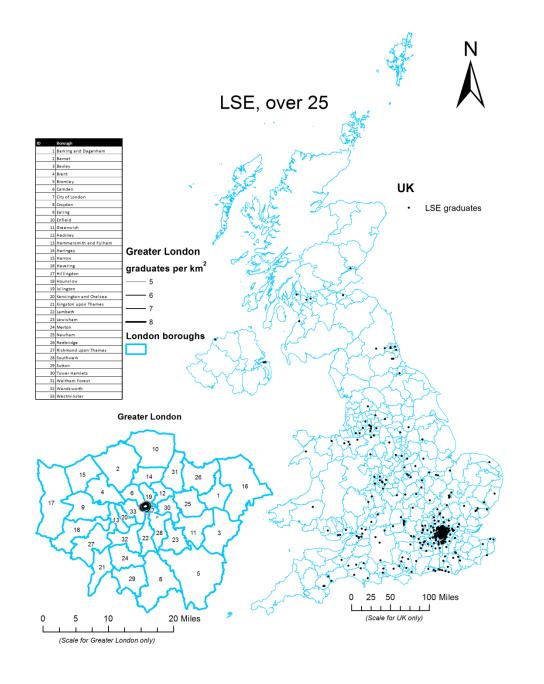
NB – based on provisional data

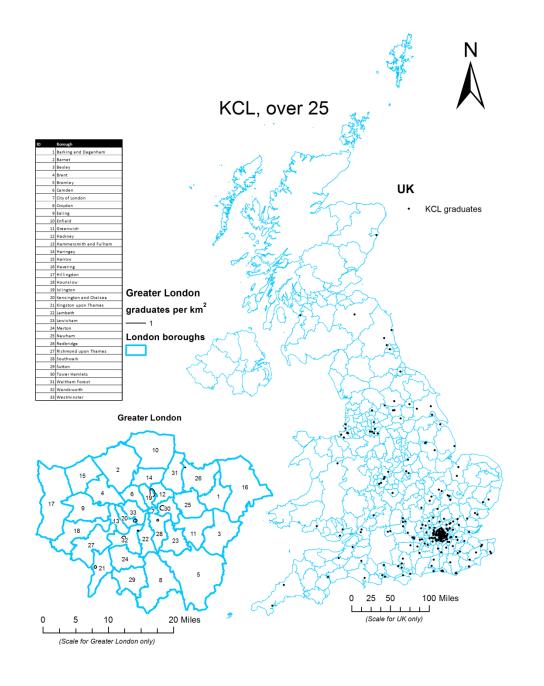


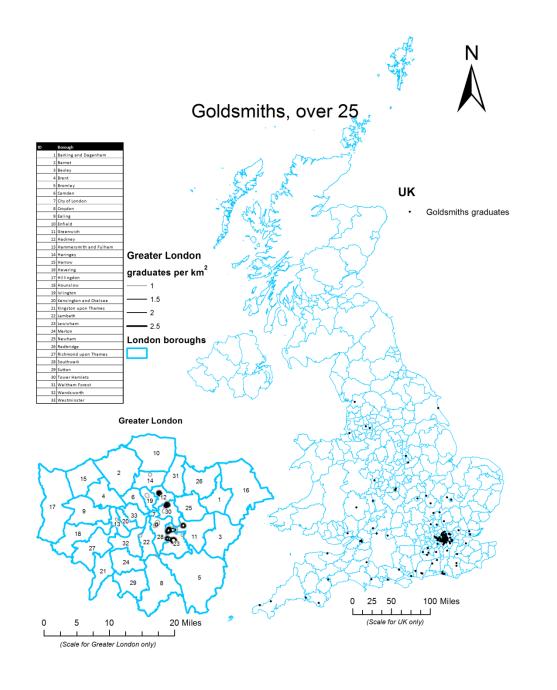


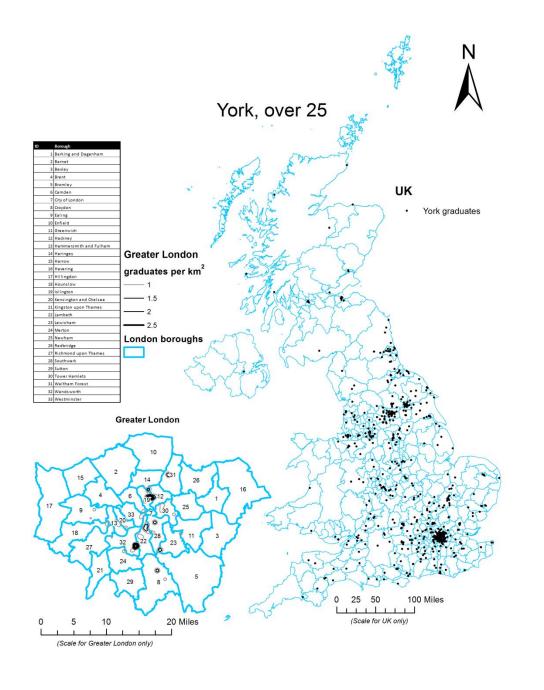


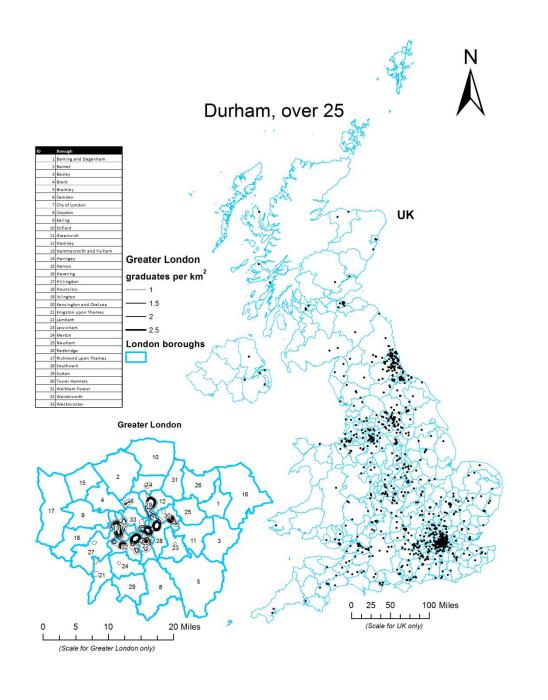


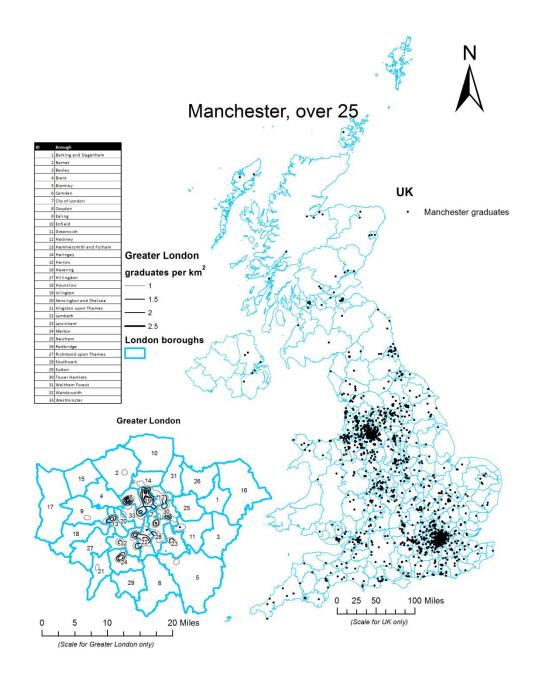


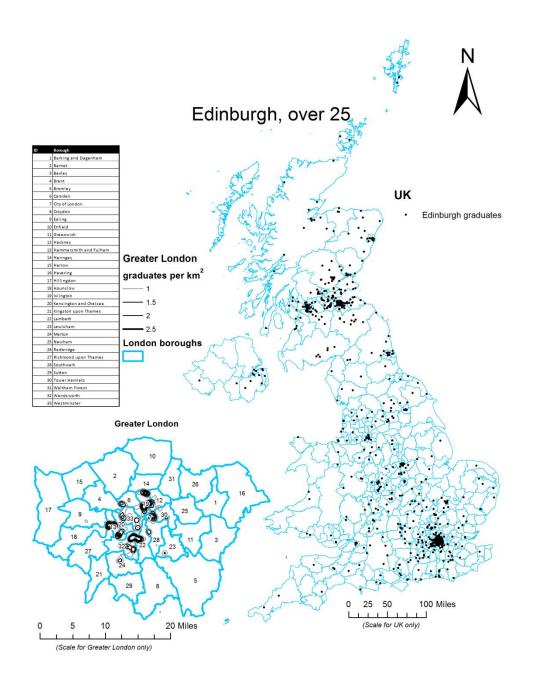












### Implications....

 The GBCS suggests the power of a 'voracious' and reflexive corporate elite, attuned to methodological novelty, for which London is a magnetic force and which is subject to (partial?) elite reproduction

 And within this framing, how are other voices heard?



# 3. THE NCDS AND CULTURES OF CLASS DOMINATION

NCDS Social Participation & Identity Project  Life Trajectories  Project specific serial number:				
	2		*	
**	6	7	*	

If you had to represent your life through a diagram, which of these would it be?

# Elite modesty.....

'A lot of people would probably say, 'Cor, someone in your position you're . . . , you've got to be a bit like that', it depends what you're after in life, doesn't it, to some extent? I've got a good job, good income and yet I'm still jealous of people that are earning a tenth of what I've got that are happily married with two kids, you know, or a . . . I haven't got that side of life'.

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# Narratives of the 'precariat'

	Male	Female
Occupations	Administrative officer;	Bookkeeper;
	archivist; electrician;	administrator; catering
	decorator; road sweeper;	assistant; civil servant;
	no occupation	courier; account
		executive; supervisor; no
		occupation (2)
Net pay per	Under £5; £5-7.50 (2);	Under £5 (2); £5-7.50;
hour	£10-12.50; missing (2)	£7.50-10; £10-12.50; Over
		£20.
Highest	None (2); NVQ1; NVQ2;	None; NVQ1 (3); NVQ2 (5).
educational	NVQ3 (2)	
qualifications		
Housing	Owns outright; owns with	Own outright (5); own
tenure	mortgage (3); rent (2)	with mortgage (3); rent.

# Telling an 'abject' story

- 13 of the 15 offer accounts of their lives which articulate dealing with 'trauma' which is known to be shaming
  - Unemployment
  - Dealing with criminality and living in disreputable area
  - Ill health and inability to work
  - Severe family/ relationship abuse
- Most of these accounts mobilise motifs of the 'sequestration' of shame through placing it into a narrative

# The appeal of class identity

- definitely working class I think.
- Working class, [actually] somebody who actually goes to work
- I just class myself as a working class, get on with anybody, if I like them....
- Working class ain't it? [laughs] I'll never grow out of working class, I won't be middle class.
- I would say working middle..... I see myself as a working hard person, trying to provide for a family, because I come from a working background..... I would say that I'm--, definitely I'm working class, down to earth if I'm honest.

#### Conclusions

- Focus on outlying classes and move away from 'the problematic of the proletariat'
- Need to develop a new understanding of elites not as 'gentlemanly' status groups, but an expert, knowing and corporate class, fully implicated in 'Knowing Capitalism'.
- Need to recognise the significance of <u>cultural</u> <u>politics</u> for class analysis, where the stakes of engagement and visibility itself is central.

# And finally....

 I am delighted to be involved – with colleagues from many Departments – in developing LSE initiative for <u>an international</u> <u>centre on inequalities</u>

Watch this space!



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