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Welcome to 'Pikettyville'? Mapping London's Alpha Territories.

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Introduction: 'The city is what society lets it be'

This paper aims to do two things. First, it considers the influence of the burgeoning global 'super-rich' on contemporary socio-spatialisation processes in London in the light of a contemporary re-reading of Pahl's classic volume, *Whose City*? (Pahl, 1975). Second, it explores if a turn to 'big data' – in the form of commercial geodemographic classifications – can offer any additional sociological insights.

The original essay – 'Whose City?' - is a slight piece, essentially an extended review of *People and Plans* by Gans (1968), but it contains an initial observation that startles the contemporary reader:

> Intellectuals scorn the neatness and order of skilled-manual-worker or lower-middle-class housing in new towns or spec-built estates, and deplore huge, 'inhuman' blocks of flats. But at the same time they feel angry or guilty about overcrowding and poverty in *Notting Hill* or *Sparkbrook* (Pahl, 1975: 1987, our emphasis).

Of all the places he might have chosen in London, as an example of an area of deprivation, Notting Hill seems a very surprising choice today. Yet in the 1960s it was a neighbourhood that epitomised many of the worst aspects of urban poverty. [1] The subsequent fortunes of these two places have, obviously, diverged widely. Many of the issues and social problems identified in the classic study of the Sparkbrook neighbourhood in Birmingham by Rex and Moore (1967) still pertain today, and the area stubbornly remains in the top one per cent of the most deprived places in England. Notting Hill on the other hand, has become one of the most coveted postcodes in the country. At the beginning of 2016, for example, the average price of a terraced house in Notting Hill was £3.8 million whilst in Sparkbrook it was just £135,000.

Notting Hill is just one of a number of neighbourhoods in London that have been transformed in recent years by dramatic changes in the global distribution of wealth. It is not just neighbourhoods such as Notting Hill that have 'come up' that are subject to change, even in 'traditionally elite' neighbourhoods (Webber and Burrows, 2016) what we might think of now as the 'merely wealthy' are being challenged by the raw money power of the global 'super-rich' (Atkinson *et al*., 2016a). This phenomenon is not just an extension to, or intensification of, 'super-gentrification' processes (Butler and Lees, 2006); rather it is an 'upward' colonisation by capital that can perhaps best be characterised as the emergence of a *plutocratic city* in which raw money-power increasingly dictates the social, political and symbolic landscapes of the urban (Atkinson *et al*., 2016a; 2016b), in which even the most established wealthy neighbourhoods of London's West End (Wilkins, 2013) are subject to fundamental change. Peter York (2013; 2015), cultural critic and long-time resident of these areas, has recently observed that even in Mayfair – perhaps the most established of elite London communities - the people who now own property are very different to a generation ago

> The super-rich…come from absolutely everywhere to live, work and trade in twenty-first-century Mayfair. As *house buyers*, they particularly come from Western Europe, Eastern Europe and the Middle East…They're usually often absentees…non-doms…The tiny clutch of Brits in at that level are really non-doms too, defined by their tax status and time spent in their various houses and offices around the world (York, 2013: 46-47, emphasis in original).

These changes highlight how urban social and economic formations reflect epochal changes - as Pahl states in his essay: 'The city is essentially a social entity – the product of a particular society at a particular time…The city is what society lets it be' (Pahl, 195: 194). This simple dictum thus suggests that in order to better understand the contemporary urban condition we would be well advised to take account of broader global social processes, in particular the dramatic changes in global wealth inequality witnessed over the last few years (Koh *et al*., 2016).

Piketty and Pahl

The scale of these changes has been dramatic at the global level. For example, Oxfam (2016) document that in 2010 the wealthiest 388 people on the planet possessed as much wealth as the poorest half of the world's population. By 2012 this figure was 159, in 2014 it was 80, and in 2015 it was estimated to be just 62. The most recent annual World Wealth Report (2015) produced by Capgemini and RBC Wealth Management for the financial services sector calculates that in 2014 there were some 14.6 million, of what they term, High Net Worth Individuals (HNWIs) – each with $1m or more of investable assets on the planet; a figure significantly greater than the 8.6 million reported in 2008 at the time of the global financial crisis. Other data nuance the scale and socio-spatial distribution of such patterns of inequality, but the overarching message could not be clearer: global wealth is now very highly concentrated indeed and likely to become even more so.

The cumulative narrative of such reports have recently taken on a new significance as the causal roots of such processes have become clearer following the publication of Piketty's (2014) monumental study of *Capital in the Twenty First Century*. Few academic texts in the history of the social sciences have so rapidly received such academic and popular acclaim as this work (Savage, 2014). The analytic, conceptual, political and empirical controversies that have accompanied its publication have not detracted from its main message: that those with money capital and wealth will almost always do better than those seeking an income from work. For Piketty, if ‘r’ is the rate of return on capital (very broadly defined) and ‘g’ is the rate of economic growth, then during periods where r > g economic inequality inevitably increases as growth in income derived from capital outperforms income derived from other sources, such as salaries and wages. For most of the history of capitalism r has indeed been greater than g, except for a brief period in the middle of the twentieth century. Between about 1930 and the late 1970s g > r but only because of what now look to be some unusual circumstances, an ‘historical blip’ even: two World Wars, the Great Depression, the establishment of redistributive welfare states, the growth of the negotiating power of trade unions, and a few decades of rapid economic growth. Since the 1980s the relation r > g has once again asserted itself at a global level with the rate of growth of capital, where dividends are re-invested, greatly exceeding the growth of incomes. For Piketty, unless action is taken or unless the wealthy spend their returns on capital rather than saving it and passing in on to their children, we will see a return to the kind of conditions found in the nineteenth century in which the most affluent people in the world are the offspring of the existing super-elite; the rich and their descendants will get richer and, even if economic growth is sustained, concentrations of wealth and ever-greater levels of social inequality will continue apace.

From this perspective the development of much of the contemporary empirical social sciences occurred within the period of this ‘historical blip’ (Savage, 2010) in which levels of social inequality – for the most part at least – were lessening. The tone of the essays collected together in Pahl’s (1975) *Whose City?* – all originally written from 1965 onwards – reflect these conditions. Although Pahl is clear at the very outset of the second edition of the book that the simple answer to his question was ‘quite evidently the capitalists' (Pahl, 1975: 1), much of what concerns him elsewhere in the essays is the question of the extent and efficacy of social policy and urban planning in ameliorating the gross social inequalities that might have otherwise resulted from such patterns of ownership and control if they were not mediated by non-market forces. Central to managing the interplay between patterns of capitalist ownership, market forces and a largely reformist welfare state were, what he termed, 'urban managers' – planners, local government officials, developers, estate agents and so on – unified only to the extent that they were able to influence the allocation of urban resources and thus mediate recursive relations between what he terms, on some occasions, 'spatial patterns and social processes' and, on others, 'urban processes and social structure'. Writing just ahead of what is now often interpreted as the final death throes of the economic long wave of Fordism, *Whose City?* could easily be interpreted as one of the final empirical analyses of the kind of urban spatialisation in the UK that pertained just prior to the unleashing of global neoliberalism from the mid-1970s onwards.

The myriad impacts of neoliberalism on the urban form have, of course, been extensively documented (Peck *et al*., 2013), and the combined influence of processes of global marketization, deregulation, privatization, individualisation, regeneration and gentrification have become the frequent hallmarks of urban life under such conditions. These contexts, in which markets are privileged in myriad guises, has also been the bedrock upon which, in Piketty's terms, the historical relation of r > g has been so successfully reinstated. Urban and national governments have sought to court and boost the fortunes of capital and both patterns of wealth and investment have chased these opportunities relentlessly. If Pahl's *Whose City?* 'bookends' the beginning of this historical reinstatement, as manifest in the urban form, then Florida's (2009) (deliberate?) play on this title – *Who's Your City?* – is a sorry support at the other end, with its indulgent guidance to global elites about where best to physically relocate, with no or little consideration of how these actions impact upon the wider urban fabric. For the very rich and some of the middle-classes cities in which capital has been privileged have opened the way for demographic shifts predicated on the realization of massive tax and accumulated advantages in the property market. As Short (2016) argues, for the mobile rich 'their' city is, in fact, pretty much any urban area that offers the right ingredients of under-valorized housing, loose fiscal regimes, personal safety, and bundles of established and new cultural infrastructure that help to underwrite any possible risks to their investments. As Short (2016) shows, many nations have crafted their immigration policies in order to compete with each other for what Ley (2010) has labeled 'millionaire migrants'.

Under the regimes of the 1960s and 1970s described by Pahl, 'capital' was the dominant force in understanding urban dynamics, but it was a form of capital the bearers of which remained very much 'of' the cities' (or at least the nations) in which they invested. Urban capital was predominantly under the control of individual and/or institutional actors with some interests – commercial, civic, aesthetic, political, cultural and so on – in the urban fabric and the municipal resources that they enjoyed alongside other citizens. To the extent that class conflicts and/or struggles over collective consumption existed, as articulated paradigmatically by Castells (1977), the assumption was that the geographical reach of such strife – on all sides – was, for the most part, relatively circumscribed.

Under contemporary conditions this is no longer true of course. Processes of globalization, ideologies of neoliberalism and dramatic technological change have entwined in complex ways with huge consequences for spatial relations between the ownership and control of capital and its urban manifestation. Untethered capital now sloshes across the globe via ever more complex conduits of digital financial systems, 'parking' itself only episodically in order to gain advantageous returns on investment in a manner relatively unfettered by considerations of spatial belonging or social or (even) patrician obligation. The geography of cities such as London (our case exemplar here) are being fundamentally altered by investment decisions made in Hong Kong, Singapore, China, Malaysia, Russia, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, India and so on.

But what of the investors themselves? Where are they? Do they live in the places where the investment decisions are located? What sorts of attachment to place do they have? Is home where their heart is, or a site among many others picked, perhaps by advisers, for their investment potential? Perhaps most importantly, what are the consequences for the places where they choose to locate their money and/or their households? The intensification of the global spatial de-coupling of the location of capital investment from the location of those making the investments particularly interests us here (Paris, 2016)? Where do the global 'super-rich' reside and with what consequences?

Placing the Global Super-Rich

Contemporary academic interest in elites (Birtchnell and Caletrio, 2013; Savage and Williams, 2008) and the 'super-rich' in particular (Hay, 2013; Hay and Beaverstock, 2016) has only recently begun to match more popular cultural and journalist interest (Frank, 2007; Freeland, 2012;

Rothkopf, 2008) in their fortunes and actions. Accompanying the growth in academic interest in the super-rich has come a number of well-publicized publications from the commercial sector that are also widely utilized in the extant social scientific literature in order to provide some crude estimates of the extent and distribution of the extremely wealthy across the globe (see Beaverstock and Faulconbridge, 2013; Beaverstock and Hay, 2016; Koh et *al*., 2016). As we have already noted, one of the most popular of these, the annual *World Wealth Reports* (Capgemini and RBC Wealth Management, 2015), calculates that in 2014 there were some 14.6 million HNWIs distributed around the globe. Of these 14.6 million: 90 per cent held assets of between $1m and $5m; 9 per cent held assets of between $5m and $30m; and just 1 per cent (some 133,300) held assets of $30m or more (the, so called, Ultra High Net-Worth Individuals (UHNWIs)). The geographical distribution of this population of 14.6 million individuals is, unsurprisingly, highly concentrated: 4,351,000 in the USA; 2,452,000 in Japan; 1,141,000 in Germany; 890,000 in China; and an estimated 550,000 (up from 527,000 in 2013) in the UK; with France, Switzerland, Canada, Australia, Italy, the Netherlands and South Korea following in order of HNWI population size.

This paper is primarily concerned with the distribution of super-rich residents in urban environments in the UK, London in particular. This is not just a parochial focus however. The annual 'rich-lists' produced by *The Sunday Times* – based upon an impressive range of investigative journalism – are helpful in identifying particular individuals and families within the UK who possess huge amounts of wealth (and are thus an important sub-set of the very wealthiest UHNWIs). The *Sunday Times Magazine* (2014) included for the first time a supplementary 'super-rich' list and suggested that, as of 2014, there were 104 individuals with wealth of more than £1 billion resident in the UK, worth a total of £301 billion. Of these four possessed wealth of £10 billion or more: Sri and Gopi Hinduja were the wealthiest with an estimated £11.9 billion, followed by Alisher Usmanov with £10.65 million, Lakshmi Mittal and his family with £10.25 billion, and Len Blavatnik with £10 billion. This data also reveals that not only does the UK now have more £ billionaires per capita than any other country in the world, but that London is now far and away the city with the greatest number of sterling billionaires resident globally – some 72 (compared to Moscow with 48, New York with 43, San Francisco with 42, Los Angeles with 38 and Hong Kong with 34).

Data such as this are very helpful if we are interested in general global patterns of wealth or in the fortunes of particular individuals. However, if we are interested in the influence that the very wealthy individuals have on urban form we clearly need some form of intermediate conceptualisation of them as a socio-spatial phenomenon and a more granular mapping of their locations within specific urban systems. One way forward in this regard might be to rework 'upwards' (Burrows, 2016) recent empirical work on the middle classes in relation to what has come to be termed the 'spatialisation of class' (Parker *et al*., 2007; Savage *et al*., 2005).

Parker *et al*. (2007: 904) observe that one might expect that that this notion of social class as an increasingly spatialised phenomena would derive from a sociological lineage that begins with the Chicago school of urban ecology (Park *et al.* 1925) and then tracks through the aforementioned urban sociology of Rex and Moore (1967) and other work by Pahl (1970), on 'housing classes'. However, this is not so. It is, in fact, yet another manifestation of the influence of Bourdieu (1984) on contemporary social class analysis; his concepts of 'capital', 'habitus' and 'field' are used as a means of interpreting the preferences, tastes, strategies and actions of various fractions of the metropolitan middle classes. This 'turn' to Bourdieu has been especially evident in the work of analysts such as Bridge, Butler and their colleagues (Bacqué *et al*., 2015; Bridge, 2006; Butler with Robson 2003), but especially Savage *et al.* (2005). In a much quoted articulation of the thesis Savage *et al.* (2005: 207) write that:

> One's residence is a crucial, possibly the crucial identifier of who you are. The sorting processes by which people chose to live in certain places and others leave is at the heart of contemporary battles over social distinction. Rather than seeing wider social identities as arising out of the field of employment it would be more promising to examine their relationship to residential location.

For Savage *et al.* (2005: 9) this relates to the observation that people are 'comfortable' when there is a correspondence between 'habitus' and 'field':

> [O]therwise people feel ill at ease and seek to move – socially and spatially – so that their discomfort is relieved…mobility is driven as people, with their relatively fixed habitus, both move between fields…and move to places within fields where they feel more comfortable.

Such 'choices' about where to live appear to be strongly associated with all manner of other socio-cultural variables and, as such, the approach is part of a broader move to develop 'cultural class analysis' (Bennett *et al*., 2008); a form of analysis that takes patterns of cultural distinction, tastes, values and so on seriously without seeing them simply as epiphenomena of class positioning within the social relations of production. Such an approach has much to offer analytically, and techniques such as multiple correspondence analysis (MCA) demonstrate time and time again that – in an abstract conceptual space – cultural tastes and preferences often cluster together closely and correspond to clear social class differences (Bennett *et al*., 2008). However, accessing appropriate data allowing anything approaching a precise and more concrete *spatial* mapping of such 'cultural classes' is much harder to come by. Even mega-scale web 2.0 enabled surveys (Savage *et al*., 2013; 2015) are unable to offer anything more than a very crude 'mapping' (Cunningham and Savage, 2015) and although census statistics are of some use in this aspiration 'to map', the ten-year periodicity of the data and the crudity of the categories used often means that 'small populations' such as the upper echelons of the contemporary global bourgeoisie (to put it in very stark terms) become lost in plain sight. Other specialized data sources have also been explored (Hennig and Dorling, 2012), but even here only 'city' level differences are ascertainable.

So what of the possibilities afforded by methodological innovations resulting from the supposed turn to 'big data' (Burrows, 2016)? Are the super-rich able to circumnavigate the algorithmic gaze of, for example, the commercial geodemographics industry? It would seem not and, although far from perfect, such data – originating from 'commercial sociology' (Burrows and Gane, 2006) rather than from the state or the academy - provides us with a reasonably nuanced sense of the geographies of the global super-rich in the UK and, indeed, in many other countries as well (Burrows, 2016).

Understanding Geodemographic Classifications

ACORN, Mosaic and a number of other such systems attribute a geodemographic classification to every residential address in the UK using a diverse set of spatially referenced data sourced from commercial and official sources. Initially these systems classified people on the basis of the attributes of the postcode in which they lived, using a mix of census statistics for census output areas and other data sources aggregated at the more detailed level of the *unit postcode* (Harris *et al*., 2005). [2] However, from 2006 vendors of these systems have released variants of their classifications which attribute different classification codes to different *households or individuals* within a single postcode where known person or household level data suggest a person or household's character would be better described by a different classification than the one attributed to the postcode in which they live.

The Mosaic classification, promoted by Experian, [3] uses over 400 different data values held against almost 49 million adults in the UK to optimize the classification which it attributes to each one. Some of these attributes are held at the person or household level, others at the postcode or higher spatial level. There is not always a one-to-one correspondence between a person and an address however, as some people are 'associated' with more than one residence – students, people with two or more homes, or overseas owners of a property visited only occasionally are all examples. The Mosaic classification used in this paper, is the one which was originally released in 2008, but is based on data from 2010, and the spatial level at which it is used here is the *unit postcode*. It classifies each postcode into one of 67 different 'types', whilst the ACORN system classifies them into 62. The statistical procedures that each uses to cluster and then classify each address are proprietary and this is one of the main reasons why such systems have sometimes not proved popular with academics. Not only that but the veracity of the classifications are not primarily driven by social scientific sensibilities; they 'work' only in the sense that they identify highly nuanced socio-economic and cultural differences between different postcodes that have proven 'useful' to a wide range of commercial, public sector, and political bodies (Uprichard *et al*., 2009). [4]

For ACORN, addresses most likely to be associated with the very wealthiest people in the UK are grouped together under the heading of 'Lavish Lifestyles', which are further differentiated into 3 sub-groups: 'Exclusive Enclaves'; 'Metropolitan Money'; and 'Large House Luxury'. The Mosaic system on the other hand, groups the very wealthy together under the auspices of the 'Alpha Territory' of which there are considered to be four distinct types: 'Global Power Brokers'; 'Voices of Authority'; 'Business Class'; and 'Serious Money'. Although such labels may also not always be to the taste of social scientific sensibilities the descriptions of the statistical clusters upon which they are based have often been found to correspond extremely well with more ethnographic descriptions of the neighbourhoods they seek to describe (Butler with Robson, 2003; Parker *et al*., 2007; Savage *et al*., 2005).

The 'Alpha Territory'

The 'Alpha Territory' (AT) as a whole is described in the Mosaic documentation as *groups of people with substantial wealth who live in the most sought after neighbourhoods in the UK*. However, as we have noted, the group is internally differentiated into four quite distinct clusters. 'Global Power Brokers' (GPBs) are described as *wealthy and ambitious high flyers living predominantly in the very best urban flats.* 'Voices of Authority' (VoA) are described *as influential 'thought leaders' living predominantly in comfortable and spacious city homes.* Members of the 'Business Class' (BC) are described *as business leaders, often approaching* *retirement and living in large family homes in the most prestigious residential suburbs*. Finally, 'Serious Money' (SeMo) is described as *families with considerable wealth living predominantly in large, exclusive detached houses in outer suburban areas and with large amounts of disposable income*.

In addition to these top-level summary descriptions of the distinctive features of each of these wealthy geodemographic types Experian provides a plethora of other measures that distinguishes each Mosaic type from the others. [5] Each of these geodemographic (ideal) types thus attempt to describe the specificities of particular socio-economic, cultural, generational, political, and perhaps even affective territorial fields. Thus rather than having to rely upon measures based upon the spatial overlaying of a range of more or less appropriate variables – average house prices, average incomes, property types, demographics and so on – a geodemographic approach allows us to conceptualize and measure territories as possessing particular amalgams of a wide range of measures which, in combination, often possess a range of emergent properties not otherwise readily decipherable (Burrows and Gane, 2006); they could then be thought of as attempts to operationalize the granular socio-spatial 'compounds' that result from the variable historical and political interplay of the elemental exigencies of affective, cultural, economic, environmental and social life.

The 550,000 HNWIs resident in the UK identified in the latest *World Wealth Report* are, we contend, highly likely to live within neighbourhoods with postcodes located within this overall 'Alpha Territory' in the Mosaic schema; however they are most likely to be concentrated in areas dominated by 'Global Power Brokers'. Across the UK as a whole, in 2010, we can locate some 1,759,984 adults associated with addresses in the 'Alpha Territory' but, within this, only 144,553 identified as 'Global Power Brokers'. If we are interested in the geodemographics of the 'super-rich' then postcodes associated with these 144,553 might be thought of as offering us the most intense concentrations of such people, whilst a focus on the 'Alpha Territory' as a whole will provide us with a broader indication of where such people are most likely to reside.

We might attempt to describe what this data reveals by starting at the level of the UK as a whole and then progressively drilling down towards ever more proximate levels of analysis. Table 1 shows the distribution of all 4 AT types across the different countries and regions of the UK. A number of patterns are immediately evident. First, those classified as the AT as a whole are very unevenly distributed; they are not far short of being three times more likely to be found in Greater London than they are in the UK as a whole and they are almost one and a half-times more likely to be found in the rest of the South East. This disproportionate preponderance of the AT in Greater London and the rest of the South East can perhaps best be visualized via a cartogram – see Figure 1 - in which each spatial unit has been redrawn to reflect its proportionate AT population.[6] It is clear that the South East in general, London in particular and core areas of west and north London specifically are the zones that dominate the purview of the most wealthy individuals in the UK with large swathes of the rest of the nation, for all intents and purposes, invisible. Second, the spatial distributions of the four types identified within the AT are also markedly different. The GPBs are overwhelmingly resident within Greater London (over 95 per cent of them). Almost one-half of all those classified as VoA are also based in Greater London. Those classified as members of the BC and SeMo types are more widely distributed across the UK but, again, are more likely to be based in London or, even more likely, in the rest of the South East.

- Table 1 About Here –

- Figure 1 About Here –

Given our focus here we might next examine the spatial distribution of the AT population within Greater London. Our data suggests that we will find some 641,777 such adults (36.5 per cent of the total for the UK), of these: 137,727 are classified as GPBs (95. 3 per cent of the total in the UK); 278,825 as VoA (47.1 per cent); 157,540 as BC (21.7 per cent); and 67,685 as SeMo (22.8 per cent). Again, and not surprisingly, the distribution of this population within Greater London is anything but even, as shown in Table 2. Those classified as GPBs have a strong preference to be resident in a small cluster of postcode areas: SW (37.5 per cent); W (37.4 per cent); and NW (19 per cent). Those classified as VoA, on the other hand, are more widely distributed but with particular concentrations in N, KT (Kingston) and HA (Harrow). Those classified as BC are particularly well represented in KT but also with a strong presence in HA and CR (Croydon). Finally, SeMo also has a strong preference for KT but also for the SW and a smaller presence in W. [7]

- Table 2 About Here –

Moving to an even more detailed level of analysis – that of postcode districts – we can examine the numbers and concentrations of our most wealthy and most London-centric AT type, the GPBs; the territories in which they leave their residential mark are surely at the very heart of 'Pikettyville' – a city characterized by large numbers of new zones for those benefitting from global ‘patrimonial capitalism’. To talk of ‘Pikettyville’ is then to conjure up an image of an urban system that has become hardwired to adopting, channeling and inviting excesses of social and economic capital in search of a space in which the rich not only find safe haven but are also privileged by the kind of property and income tax regimes and wider economic climate that allows them to thrive on their capital investments, while the wider city experiences some of the most challenging economic conditions since the early twentieth century (Atkinson *et al*., 2016b).

Table 3 shows the postcode districts in central London where the greatest numbers of the GPBs can be found. Within these ‘top ten’ areas some 84,171 adults classified as GPBs can be associated with these addresses. This figure represents over 61 per cent of all those classified as GPBs in Greater London. These then are the very core territories of the London ‘super-rich’. Well over 10,000 adults can be found in each of Belgravia (14,018), Chelsea (13,112), Hampstead (12,029) and Kensington (11,568). However, the greatest concentrations can be found in Kensington (58.0 per cent of its population), Chelsea (56.6 per cent) and South Kensington (50.9 per cent). In these three core areas of the Alpha Territory over one-half of the adult populations are some of the wealthiest people on the planet.

- Table 3 About Here –

Below this level of analysis individual postcodes belonging to the different types can also be mapped in order to show the Mosaic type that predominates on a street-by-street basis. This not only allows for the visualization of the complex ecology of elite-wealth in relation to other cultural class spatialisations but also for the precise mapping of streets and other residential developments in which the 'super-rich' overwhelmingly reside; spaces of both ultimate global caché and rare positional goods: Kensington Palace Gardens; Egerton Crescent; The Bishops Avenue; Cadogan Square; Prince Consort Road; Drayton Gardens; St James's Place; Eaton Square; Lancaster Gate; Blenheim Crescent; Elgin Crescent; Hyde Park Gardens; and the rest.

We can illustrate this by returning to where we began – Notting Hill. Figure 2 shows a detailed mapping of unit postcodes in the area. The neighborhood is now dominated by those classified as GPBs (the light dots) with a small smattering of SeMo (the dark dots). This is not to say that households from other geodemographic types do not also reside here. But it does mean that they are nowhere within a majority within any of the postcodes shown on the map.

- Figure 2 About Here -

Concluding Discussion

Mapping the 'Alpha Territory' in London is, at best, a pragmatic exercise. We have used data originally constructed for the needs of the commercial sector because we can find no other viable alternative within the academy that would facilitate such a detailed socio-spatial analysis of the 'super-rich'. However, the classification used is clearly not ideal and so is probably best thought of as, what Blumer (1954: 7) defines as, a *sensitizing conceptualisation* in that it provides us with 'a general sense of reference and guidance in approaching empirical instances…[and]…merely suggest[s] directions along which to look'. So we might now have a better idea of where the 'super-rich' reside but we still need a much better analytic understanding of their role and functioning in contemporary urban life. There are a number of different considerations that might inform the development of - to keep using the language of Blumer – a more *definitive conceptualisation* of the specificities of life in a plutocratic city.

First, and most importantly, ato repeat Pahl (1975: 1), it is still 'quite evidently the capitalists' who own our cities. However, today that influence is ever more *emphatic*. Pahl's earlier prognoses about the urban as a space for capital remains not only intact but is now much more aggressively pursued (Atkinson *et al*., 2016a; 1016b). If the city of the 1970s was largely a product of struggles between local capital and labour, often over issues of 'collective consumption', today the balance of power has changed decisively as the city becomes a site of active plunder by global capital (Merrifield, 2014); by no means all of it legitimate (Platt, 2015; Transparency International, 2015).

Second, as the number of HNWIs increases in the UK – there were 441,000 in 2011 compared to the 550,00 in 2014 – we need to better understand what the drivers of their neighbourhood choices are, and what the implications of these are for existing residences. The poor, the working classes, the lower middle classes and the middle classes (Butler and Lees, 2006) have each, in succession, experienced displacement in London. A truly plutocratic city, we might suggest, is one in which such displacement begins to impinge upon the 'merely wealthy' – the upper middle classes – as well. We can certainly find potentially prefigurative instances where conflicts between the established 'merely wealthy' and 'super-rich' 'incomers' are becoming manifest. For example, in a recent study of

Highgate in North London – an affluent neighbourhood hitherto dominated by the VoA geodemographic type – we discovered that 'super-rich' households moving to the area had little interest in the community, the history or the aesthetics of the place; they moved there because that was where they could find the type of house that met their exacting specifications. This led to conflicts. They were:

> …generally impatient of instruments of local authority control…the requirement to respect a historical aesthetic is experienced as an onerous and unreasonable restriction on individual freedom…Following on from this is conflict over the importance of the natural environment, over trees, which can easily obstruct proposed property extensions, gardens, which have modest recreational value for many incomers, and the sightlines between houses…The third source of conflict is the attitude towards the local community itself…the reluctance of many developers to acknowledge their identity publicly and to consult with representatives of the local community estranges...[them]…from established elites and entrenches conflicts (Webber and Burrows, 2015: 12-13)

Third, as Peter York explains, it is not just the super-rich as *house buyers* that are the issue. He points out, by way of example, how the built environment in Mayfair has been slowly transformed by, what he terms, the 'money men' who surround them; many properties have been quietly *repurposed* to support the financial needs of the über-wealthy.

> The other overlapping *players*…are people who work in…[the]…huge but secretive finance sector. Mayfair is the world's 'second City' of hedge funds, private equity firms and 'family offices'. But unlike the Square Mile…the Mayfair City is discreet…Mayfair has been utterly transformed on a rather quiet basis over the last fifteen years. Little companies have floors in anonymous, upgraded blocks. Some work behind hollowed-out Georgian facades with built-out, built-on backs, 40 foot rooms where you least expect them (York, 2013: 47-49, emphasis in original).

York (2013: 49-50) is, justifiably, critical of the lack of attention that the social sciences have, hitherto, paid to this new financial infrastructure developing in the heart of the West End. Private equity houses are businesses that acquire other businesses – often very big businesses, and we know something about them at least (Gospel *et al*., 2014). Family offices, however, are more mysterious entities. York, again, explains:

> If you're really rich, you warrant an office...The global rich, increasingly, live in Mayfair…The people who look after their money – some of them astonishingly rich too – work there…Mayfair and St James's are absolutely humming with very superior *butler* types – many of them well-bred Brits…We've become very good at looking after the rich…*enabling* away, smoothing the path. They're earning a very fair whack – as family-office men…but they're not…the principals, the owners, the definably super-rich themselves. They're *super-help*. The driving force is somewhere else, usually somewhere offshore (York, 2013: 52-54, emphasis in original)

What would Pahl make of such developments in London today? Whose city is it now? The global excesses of wealth, focused upon such a small fragment of the global population, now find spatial expression in many of the neighbourhoods of central London. This combination of privileging capital over prevailing incomes and economic growth appears to mark a new epoch in London, and other global cities, and a malaise from which dissent and social anger is increasing. Piketty's (2014) measured proposals for significant taxes on wealth appear to be one of the few, increasingly popular, means by which ownership of the city might begin to swing more firmly in line with the wider majority of its residents and a more democratic, less plutocratic, urbanism restored. But, of course, to echo Pahl: '[t]he city is what society lets it be.'

Notes in the Text

1. An excellent account of the changing fortunes of Notting Hill is provided in the BBC2 TV series *The Secret History of Our Streets*.

2. The postcode is structured hierarchically, supporting four levels of geographic unit: *Areas* (for example, PO) of which there are currently 124; *Districts* (for example PO15) of which there are currently 3,114; *Sectors* (for example PO15 5) of which there are currently 12,381; and *Unit* Postcodes (for example PO15 5RR) of which there are currently approximately 1.75 million that are 'live'.

3. Experian plc is a FTSE 100 company.

4. Harris *et al*. (2005: 147-184) provide a detailed technical account of how such classifications are built. Space precludes a full consideration of other objections made against the use of geodemographic classifications in academic social research, but Webber *et al.* (2015) provides responses to a number.

5. Full details can be found via the following URLs. On the AT as a whole see: http://goo.gl/sKClat. For GPBs: http://goo.gl/fHuRcc. For VoA: http://goo.gl/H8YFQA. For BC: http://goo.gl/YPr82C. For SeMo: http://goo.gl/1L4eyM.

6. Thanks to David Rhodes for producing this.

7. A list of all postcode areas and a map can be found here: http://www.postcodes-uk.com/postcode-areas.

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Table 1: 'Alpha Territory' Distribution by Government Office Region								
GOR	**GPBs (%)**	**VoA (%)**	**BC (%)**	**SeMo (%)**	**All AT (%)**	**Non AT (%)**	**Ratio AT/ Non-AT**	**All (%)**
North	1.7	2.5	0.9	4.5	2.1	4.1	51.2	4.0
Yorks Humber	0.0	3.6	4.1	5.6	3.9	9.2	42.4	9.0
North West	0.0	4.2	7.1	15.0	6.9	11.2	61.6	11.1
West Midlands	0.0	3.7	6.9	7.7	5.4	8.7	62.1	8.6
East Midlands	0.0	1.9	2.9	2.7	2.3	6.3	36.5	6.1
East Anglia	0.0	2.3	1.0	0.6	1.3	4.2	31.0	4.1
South West	0.9	4.5	3.7	4.2	3.8	10.0	38.0	9.8
South East	0.2	16.9	36.7	19.9	24.2	17.0	142.4	17.3
Greater London	95.3	47.1	21.7	22.8	36.5	13.1	278.6	14.0
Scotland	1.8	8.4	10.1	15.0	9.7	8.5	114.1	8.6
Wales	0.2	3.7	3.5	0.8	2.8	4.6	60.9	4.5
N Ireland	0.0	1.2	1.3	1.3	1.2	3.0	40.0	3.0
Total	*100.0*	*100.0*	*100.0*	*100.0*	*100.0*	*100.0*	*100.0*	*100.0*
N.	*144,553*	*592,294*	*725,768*	*297,369*	*1,759,984*	*46,781,838*		*48,541,822*
Base: Adults with a permanent address in postcode districts within the UK								
Source: Analysis of Mosaic data, 2010								

Table 2 'Alpha Territory' Distribution Across Greater London by Postcode Area								
Postcode Area	**GPBs (%)**	**VoA (%)**	**BC (%)**	**SeMo (%)**	**All AT (%)**	**Non AT (%)**	**Ratio AT/ Non-AT**	**All (%)**
BR (Bromley)	0.0	6.6	11.2	1.6	5.8	3.1	187.1	3.4
CR (Croydon)	0.0	3.7	11.6	1.8	4.6	4.3	107.0	4.3
DA (Dartford)	0.0	0.7	2.5	0.1	0.9	5.1	17.6	4.7
E (East)	0.3	2.9	0.3	0.3	1.4	10.3	13.6	9.5
EC (East City)	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.4	25.0	0.4
EN (Enfield)	0.0	4.4	4.7	4.5	3.5	3.8	92.1	3.8
HA (Harrow)	0.0	9.7	13.0	4.7	7.9	4.6	171.7	4.9
IG (Ilford)	0.0	4.2	4.5	4.5	3.4	3.4	100.0	3.4
KT (Kingston upon Thames)	0.2	11.7	27.4	25.4	14.5	5.3	273.6	6.2
N (North)	3.7	15.7	4.9	10.0	9.8	8.7	112.6	8.8
NW (North West)	19.0	7.5	2.4	10.9	9.1	6.0	151.7	6.3
RM (Romford)	0.0	0.7	3.8	0.3	1.3	6.0	21.7	5.5
SE (South East)	0.7	4.4	0.6	2.1	2.5	11.7	21.4	10.8
SM (Sutton)	0.0	2.8	6.7	0.4	2.9	2.4	120.8	2.5
SW (South West)	37.5	9.2	0.9	24.1	14.8	10.0	148.0	10.5
TW (Twickenham)	0.3	7.8	3.5	2.2	4.5	4.5	100.0	4.5
UB (Southall)	0.0	1.4	1.7	0.6	1.1	4.0	27.5	3.7
W (West)	37.4	6.7	0.4	6.5	11.7	5.9	198.3	6.5
WC (West City)	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.4	25.0	0.4
Total	*100.0*	*100.0*	*100.0*	*100.0*	*100.0*	*100.0*	*100.0*	*100.0*
N.	*137,727*	*278,825*	*157,540*	*67,685*	*641,777*	*6,148,065*		*6,789,842*
Base: Adults with a permanent address in postcode districts within Greater London								
Source: Analysis of Mosaic data, 2010								

Table 3 London Post Code Districts with the Largest Number of Adults Classified as 'Global Power Brokers'			
Rank		Number of Global Power Brokers	Concentration
1	London SW1 Belgravia	14,018	29.6%
2	London SW3 Chelsea	13,112	56.6%
3	London NW3 Hampstead	12,029	26.9%
4	London W8 Kensington	11,568	58.0%
5	London W2 Paddington	9,493	20.7%
6	London SW7 South Kensington	9,066	50.9%
7	London W11 Notting Hill	8,916	30.9%
8	London W1 West End	6,806	26.5%
9	London NW8 St Johns Wood	6,555	22.7%
10	London W14 West Kensington	4,637	14.7%
	Base: Adults with a permanent address in postcode districts within Greater London		
	Source: Analysis of Mosaic data, 2010		

Figure 1

A Cartogram Showing the Spatial Distribution of the Alpha Territory

Figure 2

The Postcode Locations of Global Power Brokers in Notting Hill