Choosing the Right Location for a Film Festival in London

Michela Russo, May 20th, 2020

In the picture: the Electric Cinema on Portobello road, Kensington. Picture taken by a Fousquare user.

The client: Cineteca di Bologna

- Renowned foundation specialized in film restoration and conservation;
- Organizes a film restoration festival every summer in its home town, in Italy, where they present film restorations from all over the world;
- The festival counts nearly 100,000 attendees;
- Most of the guests, speakers and contributors are from the USA and the UK.

What is their need?

The wish to export the festival to another country to present the films a second time and to increase the notoriety of their name and of their event.

Business problem:

- The client wishes to export the festival to a **big city** where the films can be shown in **English**;
- They need **three cinemas** close together, so the guests can switch between the festival's multiple screenings programs which run at the same times slots every day;
- They prefer **independently owned** cinemas, or at least venues of historical significance, to create the right atmosphere for the vintage films presented ;
- The need a **lively** location equipped with enough hotels, restaurants and amenities to accommodate the large number of guests.

Why **London**?

- London is the place: cosmopolitan, English speaking, extremely well connected (by plane, train & ferry);
- Simple to deal with the borough councils directly.

Research guidelines:

- We'll consider only cinemas within the **same borough**;
- Consider boroughs closer to the **centre** first;
- Consider the City of Westminster **last** (too much competition!)
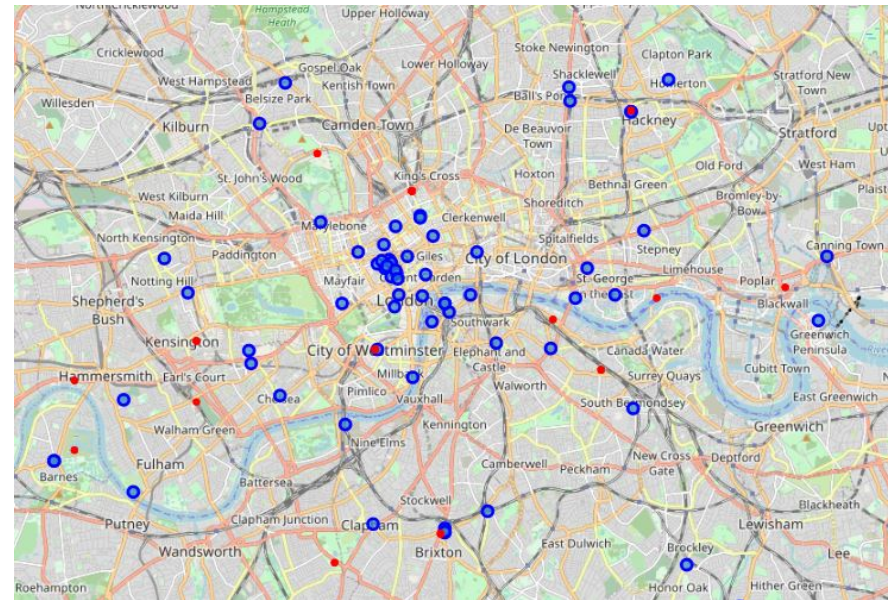
What Data?

- Data sources: Wikipedia, Foursquare
- Issues encountered: coordinates, location vs. borough;
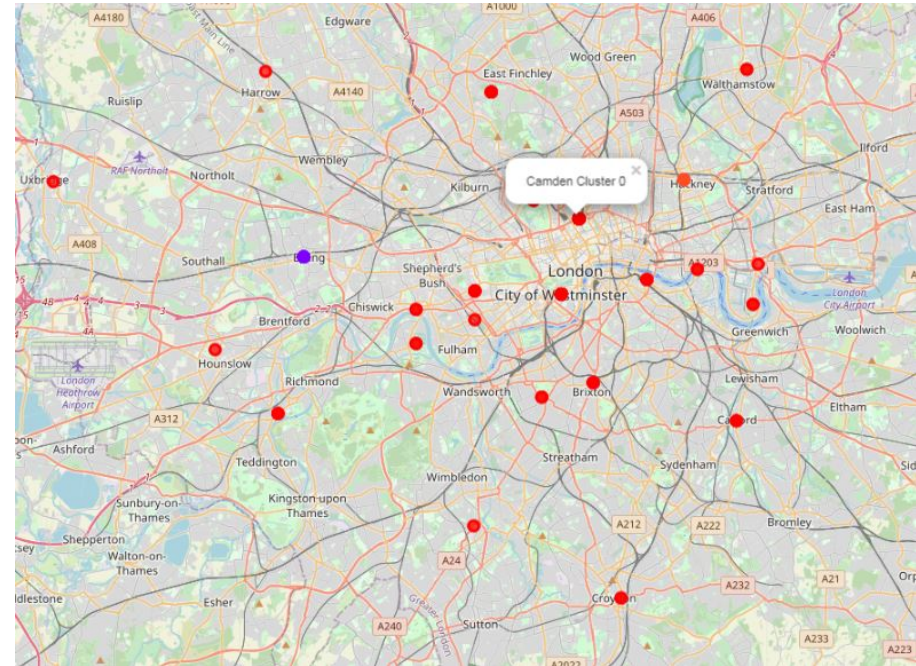- Result: list and count of London cinemas divided by borough.

Considerations: we may be in trouble!

Cinemas of London by Borough
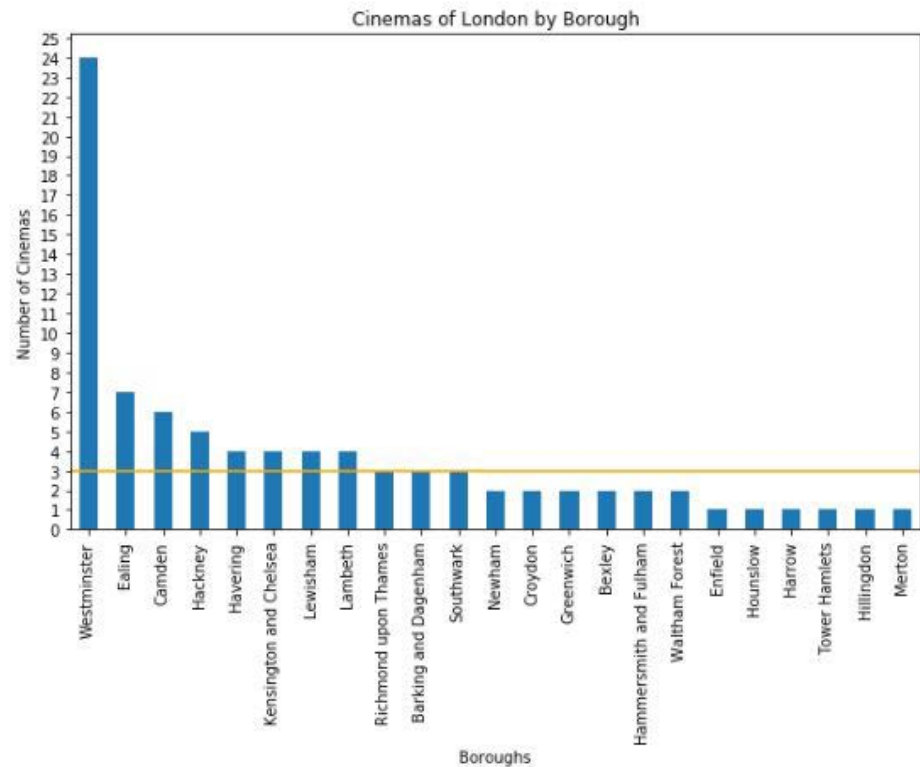
DBSCAN to the rescue!

The algorithm divides the cinemas into ten clusters, easily interpretable at a glance.
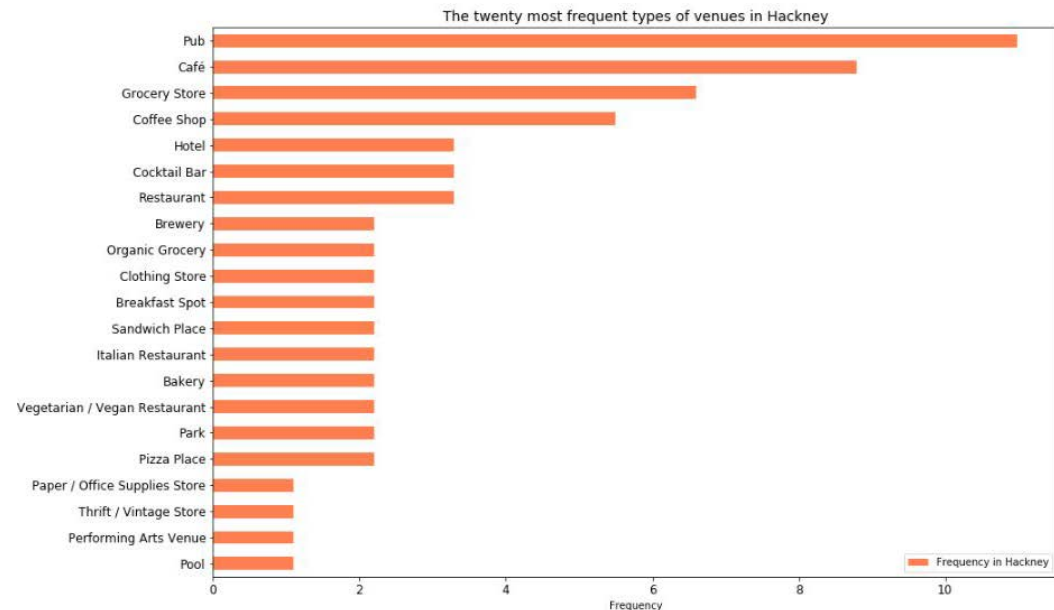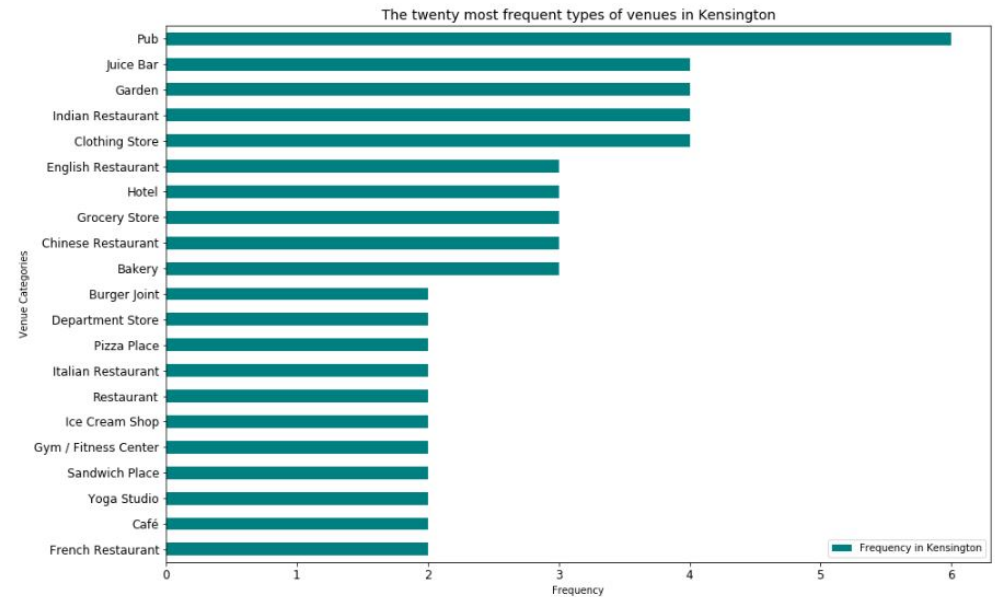
Two clusters certainly meet the requirements:

Borough of Kensington and Chelsea: three independent cinemas.
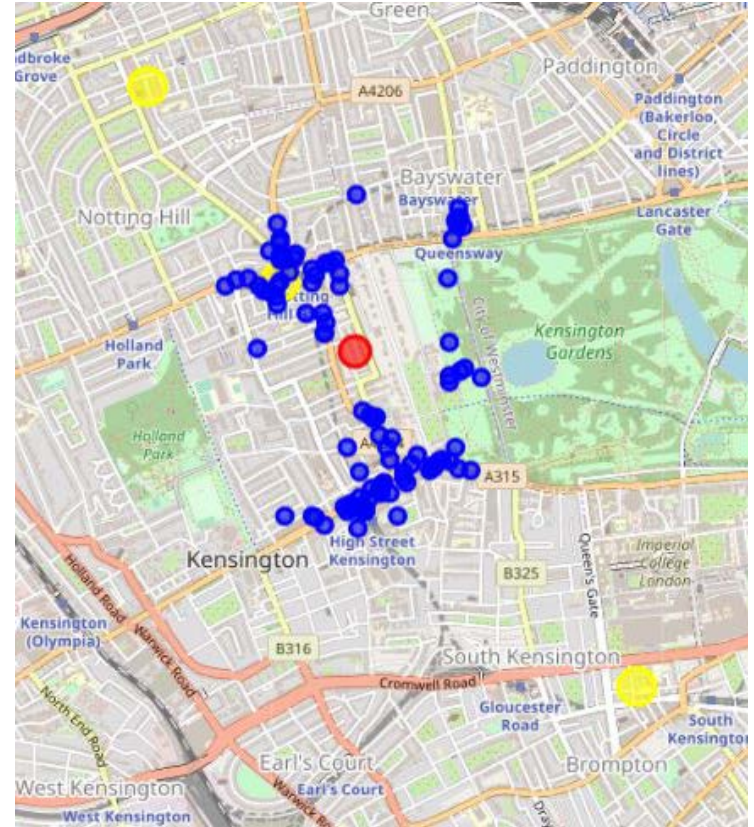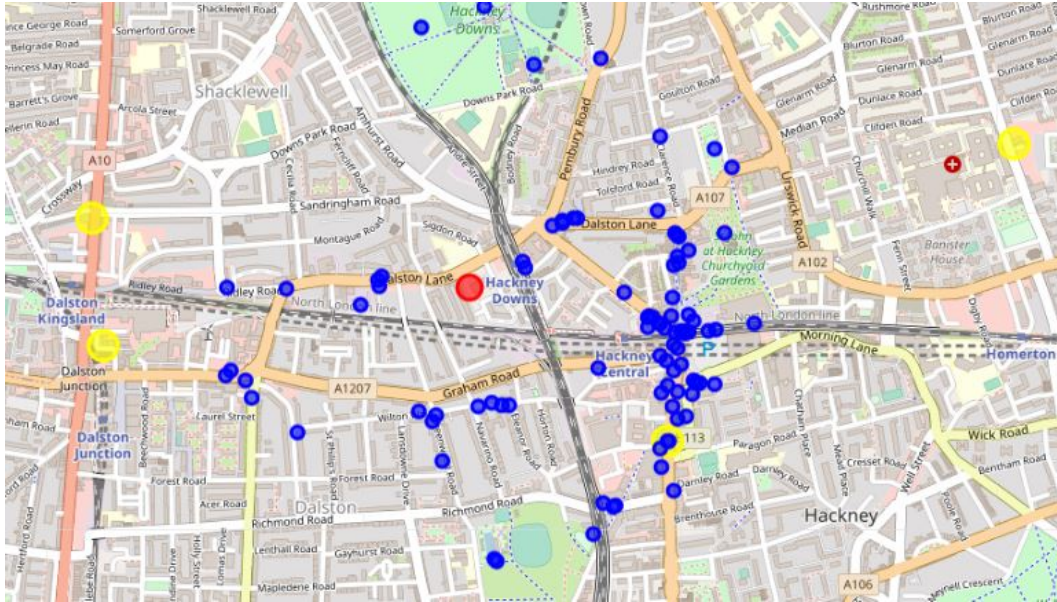
Borough of Hackney: three independent cinemas and Hackney Picturehouse (with screen in the attic!)

The Two Finalists:

- All cinemas in both boroughs have outstanding Foursquare average ratings and tips;

- Both boroughs are equally exciting in terms of variety of venue categories;

- Frequency of the venue categories: Kensington is a little more 'conservative'.

The twenty most frequent types of venues in Kensington

The twenty most frequent types of venues in Hackney

The Two Finalists on the Map

Hackney (left) and Kensington (right). The yellow circles are the cinemas, the blue circles the venues. The red circle is the average distance between the cinemas.

Results and Discussion

Two equally promising boroughs,
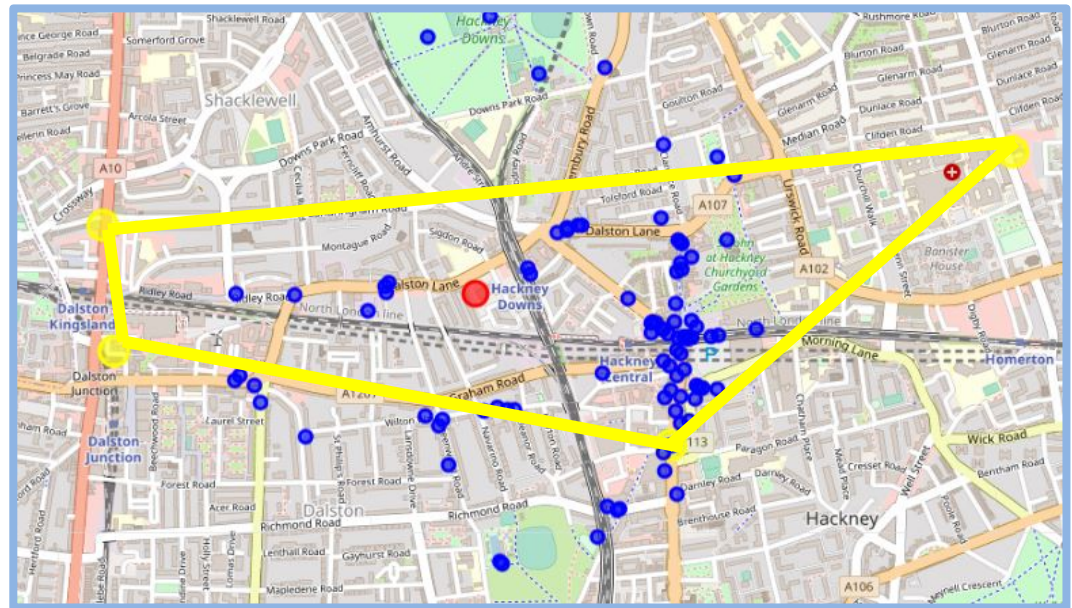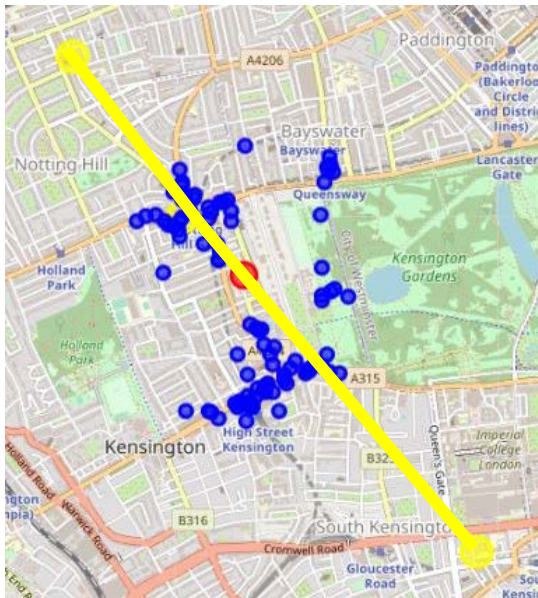with great cinemas and lively neighbourhoods.
A **suggestion**?
Hackney!

Why Hackney?

- East London is the 'it' place to be;
- Venues: the offer covers the whole spectrum;
- The spatial disposition of the cinemas: it makes it nicer to switch cinemas, walk around and get to know the neighbourhood. Lots to do in the area between the cinemas!

Where to go next?

Investigate the **cinemas**: equipment, staff, availability (and potential rivalries).

Investigate the **neighbourhoods**: look for partners!

Get to know the local rules and **laws**.

But, **first of all**, get to know the borough **council**: it should be an ally, an advisor and a partner from the start.

Thank you for listening!