

# Cultural taste and participation in Britain<sup>1</sup>

Alan Warde, Tony Bennett, Modesto Gayo-Cal, Brigitte LeRoux, Henry Rouanet, Elizabeth Silva, Mike Savage, David Wright

Alan Warde, School of Social Sciences, University of Manchester, Manchester M13 9PL  
[alan.warde@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:alan.warde@manchester.ac.uk)

Sociology of Consumption Working Group ESA 8<sup>th</sup> Conference, Glasgow, September 2007

## Abstract

This paper presents results from a study, *Cultural Consumption and Social Exclusion*, which involved a survey, focus groups and household interviews in Britain in 2003 about cultural tastes and practices. It focuses on the patterning of cultural life<sup>2</sup> across the fields of music, reading, visual arts, television and film, sports, eating out, and leisure. We present a broad overview of the results of the survey, supplemented by two interviews examined in some detail. We explore three major questions. The first of these is to examine how far cultural practices are distinguished from each other so that we can identify systematic cultural cleavages and divisions consistent with the delineation of cultural capital. The second is to consider how far there are systematic 'homologies' between different cultural fields, whether they are organized in similar ways. The third is to investigate how far practices of individuals correspond to the clustering of modalities and emerging cultural divisions in Britain.

## Introduction

The research in which this paper is based was produced in the context of the Cultural Capital and Social Exclusion project, CCSE.<sup>3</sup> The project engages with Pierre Bourdieu's contention that cultural capital, understood as a particular stock of cultural competencies, is an important mechanism in the processes through which relationships of class inequality are organised and reproduced in contemporary societies. The investigation, centred on Britain, takes into account various ways in

<sup>1</sup> . An earlier version of this paper, Bennett T, Savage M, Silva E, Warde A, Gayo-Cal M and Wright D, 'Patterns of British cultural life: mapping taste and participation', by was delivered to the Symposium 'Cultural Analysis: the legacy of Bourdieu' at Milton Keynes, July 2007.

<sup>2</sup> In this paper we use the term cultural life to encompass any aspect of taste, participation and knowledge. Much of our analysis is concerned to distinguish the relative importance of these three separate dimensions of 'cultural life' and readers should note that we attach no significant theoretical meaning to the term itself.

<sup>3</sup> ESRC funded project award no R000239801. The team comprised Tony Bennett (Principal Applicant), Mike Savage, Elizabeth Silva, Alan Warde (Co-Applicants), David Wright and Modesto Gayo-Cal (Research Fellows). The applicants were jointly responsible for the design of the national survey and the focus groups and household interviews that generated the quantitative and qualitative data for the project. Elizabeth Silva, assisted by David Wright, coordinated the analyses of the qualitative data from the focus groups and household interviews. Mike Savage and Alan Warde, assisted by Modesto Gayo-Cal, co-ordinated the analyses of the quantitative data produced by the survey. Tony Bennett was responsible for the overall direction and coordination of the project. The results will be reported at length in *Culture, Capital, Distinction*, Routledge, 2008.

which the notion of cultural capital, enduringly influential in the theoretical literature, has been modified, in particular regarding the different forms that cultural capital takes, and in how it operates in the context of relations of race and ethnicity, to which Bourdieu paid little attention, as well as the intersections of class and gender which, although never entirely neglected by Bourdieu, were never adequately theorized either. Our enquiry was conducted via a rich mix of quantitative and qualitative research methods (see Bennett et al. 2002, Thomson, 2004; Silva, 2005).

We focus here on findings from our survey and on some of our qualitative research material. Concerning the survey our initial challenge is to find a way of extrapolating from the many questions which we asked about cultural taste, participation, and knowledge to provide a platform for our analysis. We use multiple correspondence analysis (MCA), a form of principal components analysis, which allows us to plot people's cultural preferences in Euclidian space. This is the method that Bourdieu himself used in *Distinction* (1984), and remains significant within France, although it has been remarkably under-utilised in Anglophone social science (the most accessible accounts being Greenacre and Blasius 1994; Clausen 1998; LeRoux and Rouanet 2004). MCA has an interesting relationship to Bourdieu's theoretical framework (see generally Weininger 2005). We seek to graphically represent an unusually wide range of cultural tastes and practices so that, by inspecting the resulting figures (and the accompanying statistical information), their clustering and fracturing can be interpreted. It thus provides a visualisation of the organisation of the cultural landscape. Bourdieu himself detects an affinity with his conception of the 'field', which seeks to array a set of practices relationally in a two dimensional space. The method is 'inductive' and 'descriptive' and does not presuppose any particular ordering of practices will be found. Through inspecting the separation (or proximity) of different cultural activities, we are able to infer whether an uneven distribution of cultural capital can be detected from the 'cultural map' itself. Of course, like any map, we need to recognise that it has been constructed in a particular kind of way, and it hence definitely does not 'represent' culture in any kind of 'unmediated' way. Our project's research questions, whilst wide ranging, are not exhaustive, and readers need to be attentive to how we operationalize and define the measures which we use to construct our 'space of lifestyles' (or what we prefer to call our 'cultural map'). Nonetheless, the attraction of this approach is that its inductive character allows us to begin to report on the patterns revealed in our data without pre-judging what the key relationships should be. Concerning the qualitative material we draw from some of the focus group analysis and qualitative interviews, focusing on two individual cases to explore the significance of the clustering of modalities that emerge in the MCA. This further qualifies the sets of practices differentiating the positions of individuals in the cultural space.

Three features of multiple correspondence analysis can be mentioned which further strengthens their appeal, though also alert us to issues we need to be wary of. Firstly, the cultural maps we produce do not smuggle assumptions about the social determinants of taste into them. The maps are constructed purely with respect to the organisation and mutual relationships between aspects of cultural life itself. In this respect they defy the reasoning which animates conventional sociological multivariate methods which are predominantly concerned with assessing the impact of certain 'causal' variables on specified outcomes. The value of this explanatory strategy is the subject of considerable methodological debate within the social sciences (see

accompanying other paper for this symposium discussion), but our analysis here should not be taken to assume any necessary disavowal of ‘variable centred’ approaches which in our view have their place and importance.<sup>4</sup>

A second attractive feature of MCA is that once we have constructed our cultural map, we are able to superimpose social categories onto it, so that we can see whether they are associated with the cultural landscape. The approach involves ‘overlying’ social characteristics onto the space of lifestyle, without changing the co-ordinates of the cultural map itself. It does not, therefore, violate our concern to develop a descriptive map of the cultural space, yet at the same time it allows us to illuminate the cultural landscape in informative ways.

The third attractive feature of MCA is that it is possible to construct cultural maps not only of the mean points of cultural variables, but we can also locate every single individual in our survey uniquely. Through inspecting ‘the cloud of individuals’ we can gain further insights into the organisation of cultural practices by assessing whether similar kinds of people are located closely together. An especially valuable feature of working with the ‘cloud of individuals’ is the potential it gives for linking our qualitative interviews to the cultural map, since we are able to ascertain where our respondents are located, and hence link their survey responses to their testimonies. By doing this we are able to encourage rich dialogue between our quantitative and qualitative data.

We begin by reporting on how we constructed our ‘cultural map’. Some readers may prefer to skip this section as it is, necessarily, preliminary to our analysis, and refer back to it for guidance once the cultural maps themselves have been examined. The second section provides the map of the four key axes differentiating cultural taste and participation, which shows how the first axis differentiates on the basis of engagement and disengagement, whilst the second distinguishes ‘contemporary/commercial’ from ‘established’ cultural tastes. The third axis distinguishes types of likes and dislikes for mediated representations of ‘physical’ pursuits from ‘sensitive’ ones, and the fourth ‘voracious’ from ‘moderate’ cultural users. We discuss differences from the arguments made by Bourdieu in *Distinction*. The third section examines the relationship between the cultural patterns identified and the socio-demographic characteristics of the survey respondents. The fourth section is concerned with how we gain additional insights into the organisation of cultural life by considering how far given individuals fit within the patterns described in the MCA. We use the ‘cloud of individuals’ to explore how far individuals conform or deviate from general patterns. We introduce a couple of cases taken from our qualitative interviews to illustrate the details predicated by the position of individuals on the MCA. This paper serves both as an overture for the sorts of varied and rich material generated by CCSE, and as a summary of key findings, some still preliminary. The conclusion to this paper takes stock by providing a preliminary account of how we see the nature of cultural capital in contemporary Britain.

---

<sup>4</sup> During the course of our work we have conducted numerous forms of ‘orthodox’ multivariate analysis, some of which are reported in *Cultural Trends* and others are still being produced. This has proved valuable in numerous ways, and in general, has produced results which are consistent with the MCA analyses we report here.

## 1. Using multiple correspondence analysis

Like other forms of multivariate analysis, MCA proceeds from a contingency table. More specifically, the columns indicate people's binarised (yes or no) responses to questions, and there is one row for every individual. Given our concerns, it is a deliberate strategy to ensure that these questions cover a diffuse field, so that it becomes an empirical matter to assess how far a pattern can be detected amongst them. It is thus essential that the questions selected for the MCA adequately represent the range of questions included in the questionnaire, otherwise the resulting map will be distorted. It is also essential to balance the questions. If questions of any particular type dominate, then it is possible that the maps itself will be skewed by the results from this one kind of question. The process of arranging a balanced range of questions is an iterative one, requiring us to assess the patterning revealed by a certain kind of question mix, and then adjusting the number and range of questions accordingly.<sup>5</sup>

In this analysis, we have retained 41 questions to construct our cultural map (more formally known in Bourdieu, 1984, as 'the space of lifestyles'), which fall into two distinct types: participation (17 questions) and taste (24 questions). This balance allows us to assess inductively what the relationship between practice (or participation) and taste is. The questions also range across seven cultural subfields as follows

1. Television : 2 questions of participation, and 3 questions of taste = 5
2. Films : 1 questions of participation and 2 questions of taste = 3
3. Reading : 2 questions of participation and 7 questions of taste = 9
4. Music : 5 questions of participation and 7 of taste = 12
5. Visual Art : 4 questions of participation and 2 questions of taste = 6
6. Eating out : 2 questions of participation and 2 questions of taste = 4
7. Sport : 1 question de participation and 2 questions of taste = 3

The reason why some subfields have more questions is due to the nature of the questions we asked in the survey.<sup>6</sup> For music and reading, respondents were asked in turn to assess their liking of various genres of music, so that for each of the genres we work with an independent score for this question.<sup>7</sup> On the other hand, those questions which ask about favourite genres of TV, film, visual art, sport and eating out allow respondents to select their favourites (and least favourite) from a list. Therefore, whilst for music and reading, every respondent will have responded to a question on every genre, for the other subfields, genres will only be mentioned when they are listed as a favourite or least favourite. We use all the genres mentioned in response to

---

<sup>5</sup> The assistance of Brigitte LeRoux, Henry Rouanet and Johs Hjellbrekke has been essential to this endeavour. Readers who are interested in seeing how our work here grew out of our earlier efforts can consult LeRoux et al. 2007, and Gayo-Cal et al. 2006.

<sup>6</sup> For the questionnaire see Thomson 2004, also on <http://www.open.ac.uk/socialsciences/cultural-capital-and-social-exclusion/project-publications.php>

<sup>7</sup> Because these asked for responses on a Likert scale of 1-7 we have simplified these, so that a rating of 1-2 is seen as 'like', 3-5 as indifferent, and 6-7 as dislike.

these so long as they fall (roughly) above 5% of the sample.<sup>8</sup> Those questions asking about the frequency of participating into specific leisure pursuits have also been recoded into three categories (high, low, never). The result is to equalise somewhat the modalities from different cultural subfields. Our MCA includes 168 active modalities covering a wide diversity of cultural subfields, from TV (23 modalities), cinema (20 modalities), reading (25 modalities), music (38 modalities), visual art (23 modalities), eating out (16 modalities) and participation in leisure and sport (21 modalities). Readers should bear in mind the importance of music in our construction of the cultural map.

Using the contingency table, MCA assesses the relationship between the different modalities and identifies the number of axes separating out the responses. These axes operate to separate out responses relationally, vis-à-vis each other, in a way that can permit us to assess whether some stand in opposition to others. Putting it crudely, if everyone who liked ‘westerns’ also liked ‘soap operas’, they would be located in the same position, and if no one liked both then they would be located at diametrically opposite sides of the graph.. It is the focus of this chapter to unravel the organisation of cultural practices and tastes along these four axes in this chapter. Our analyses are produced by the newer version of the Windows driven package, SPAD.<sup>9</sup>

**Table 1 Contribution to total variance of the 7 subfields by participation and taste (percentages).**

Frequency by subfield	TV	Films	Reading	Music	Visual Art	Eating out	Sport	Total
Participation	3.2	1.6	4.0	7.9	6.3	3.2	4.0	30.2
Taste	11.2	12.1	11.2	11.2	9.7	6.4	8.1	69.8
Total	14.4	13.7	15.2	19.1	16.0	9.6	12.1	100.0

Table 1 is a means of checking whether the variance is skewed towards particular kinds of subfield, in which case we would be worried about whether our ‘space of lifestyles’ is comprehensive. In fact we can be reasonably reassured. There are variations between eating out, at one extreme, which contributes the least (10 per cent) and music at the other. Even music, however, comprises less than 20 per cent of the variance. Rather more than two thirds of the variance is attributable to measures of taste, a proportion which is in line with the proportion of modalities in our questionnaire covering the theme of taste.

<sup>8</sup> Where a given response does not obtain 5 per cent of the sample, it is either left out or recoded into a more comprehensive category.

<sup>9</sup> More particularly, we use specific MCA, as developed by Brigitte LeRoux which involves a way of dealing with small categories. From 2006 this method was incorporated into SPAD, which meant it was no longer necessary to use ADADD and EYELID. Passive modalities are those whose frequencies are less than 61 (<4%) and ‘junk’ or ‘others’ or ‘don’t know’ modalities: all in all, 32 passive modalities for 29 questions). The contribution of the indicators of participation and taste in the seven subfields to the total variance described in the constructed space of lifestyles is shown in Table 1.

By interpreting the Eigen values reported for each different axis, we can assess how many values are required to offer an adequate summary of the space of lifestyles that we have constructed. Table 2 indicates that our cultural map is organised along four axes, one of which accounts for around half the complete variance (modified cumulative rate of 48%), the second of which accounts for nearly 23% of the variance, the third of which for 7% and the final one 4%. The total cumulative modified weight of the first four axes is 82%. Once we get to axis 5, little additional variance is explained, and we can therefore be confident that our four axes offer a powerful mapping of cultural taste and participation.

**Table 2 Eigen values, rates of variance and cumulated Benzécri's modified rates<sup>10</sup>**

Rates and values by axes	Axis 1	Axis 2	Axis3	Axis 4	Axis 5	Axis 6
Eigenvalues	0.1641	0.1188	0.0746	0.0633	0.0503	0.0472
Variance rates	5.333	3.860	2.0416	2.056	1.634	1.533
Modified cumulated rates	48.2	70.8	77.6	82.0	-	-

Table 3 indicates the contribution of the active modalities by cultural subfield and according to whether they measure taste or participation, for the four principal axes. Those which contribute more than is expected given their weighting in constructing the cultural map are highlighted in bold. We can see that on the first, primary axis, most (60.4%) of variance is accounted for by measures of participation, indicating that people's actual attendance or non-attendance at various cultural events differentiates most sharply. We can see too, that it is music, the visual arts and reading which is most important to this differentiation.

**Table 3 Contribution of modalities from each cultural subfield to the variations on each axis**

Subfields	Axis 1			Axis 2			Axis 3			Axis 4		
	Partici Pation	Taste	Total	Partici pation	Taste	Total	Partici Pation	Taste	Total	Partici pation	Taste	Total
TV	4.5	2.9	7.4	0.2	6.5	6.7	0.2	<b>22.1</b>	<b>22.3</b>	9.3	3.2	<b>12.5</b>
Film	3.7	2.1	5.8	2.9	<b>10.2</b>	<b>13.1</b>	1.3	<b>18.0</b>	<b>19.2</b>	2.1	4.5	6.6
Literary/reading	9.5	<b>13.5</b>	<b>23.0</b>	2.6	7.0	9.6	0.9	<b>18.3</b>	<b>19.2</b>	6.3	9.0	<b>15.3</b>
Music	<b>14.9</b>	<b>10.3</b>	<b>25.2</b>	<b>19.5</b>	<b>25.9</b>	<b>45.4</b>	2.5	7.5	<b>10.0</b>	<b>10.4</b>	<b>13.0</b>	<b>23.4</b>
V. Art	<b>21.1</b>	2.6	<b>23.7</b>	4.1	4.2	8.2	1.4	6.8	8.2	<b>22.3</b>	10.1	<b>32.4</b>

<sup>10</sup> See Le Roux & Rouanet (2004), p. 200.

Eating	3.6	5.7	9.3	4.0	5.4	9.4	3.4	1.4	4.8	4.4	3.1	7.6
Sport	3.0	2.4	5.4	3.7	3.8	7.6	5.3	<b>11.0</b>	<b>16.3</b>	0.8	1.4	2.2
Total	60.4	39.6	100.0	37.0	63.0	100.0	15.1	84.9	100.0	55.6	44.4	100.0

On the second axis, by contrast, measures of taste discriminate more (63%). We see that musical taste is by far the most powerful differentiating feature, although film also scores relatively highly. The third axis is also based even more strongly on distinctions in taste (84.9%), this time with television, film, reading and sport scoring strongly, and on the fourth and weakest axis, there is a more even pattern between participation and taste, with the visual arts being especially well represented.

We can make some preliminary inferences about homology between subfields by considering the relative contributions of variables from the seven cultural subfields to each axis. All axes have at least two cultural subfields which are over-represented, which indicates that the axes are not simply differentiating on the basis of one field alone. (To put this another way, it is not the case that the first axis is derived from music, the second from visual arts, etc). It is also reassuring that the subfields of music and reading are not closely aligned among the four axes. If they had been, this might suggest that the particular way we asked questions about music and reading, compared to the other subfields, had ‘artefactually’ structured the patterns detected. It follows that there are some homologies between the subfields: on the first axis, for instance, music, reading and the visual arts have some common properties. At the same time, these homologies are far from perfect, and we can readily see that the seven cultural subfields vary significantly in the extent to which they differentiate groups of individuals. Music comes over as easily the most differentiating subfield. It contributes above the mean to all the four axes, and it dominates in axis two. If we just focus on the first two, most important, axes, television, eating and sport, by contrast, are relatively undifferentiated. The inference from this is that in general musical taste and participation are more culturally differentiated than is television viewing, for instance. There is no pure homology between cultural subfields, and we need to be attentive to the different organization of each subfield, an issue which we take up elsewhere (see *Cultural Trends*, 2006).

## 2. The space of lifestyles: a cultural map of Britain in 2003

Having interpreted the axes in general terms, let us now proceed to our cultural maps by inspecting in detail the clustering and separation to be found between various forms of cultural participation and taste on each of the four axes. Figure 1 maps the coordinates of each of the modalities which constitute the space of lifestyles where these modalities contribute significantly (i.e. above the mean) to the first and most important axis. To aid interpretation of the associations across cultural subfields, modalities concerned participation are marked in [black]<sup>11</sup> diamond-shaped symbols, and those to do with taste are in [red] squares. The size of the modality, shown in the

<sup>11</sup> Those using colour printing will be able to distinguish colours.

shape next to the name of the modality, indicates the numbers of people who fall into a given category: thus we can see that more people like soap operas than modern literature. Where a participation question has 0 it means that something is never done, when it has 1 it is occasionally done, and a 2 means it is frequently done. When a taste question has a minus sign this means it is disliked, a positive sign indicates it is liked, and an equal sign indicates neutrality. For number of paintings possessed, number of books read and hours of television watched significant number categories are shown.

A glance at Figure 1 reveals that on the 1<sup>st</sup> axis, most of the likes and forms of participation are on the right hand side, and many dislikes and lack of participation are on the left hand side. Compared to the other axes, in axis one participation has the highest importance. To be more specific, on the left the only positive values are for liking Western films, social sports, fish and chips, and watching more than 5 hours television a day. On the right hand side, there is only one negative value, for disliking eating in fish and chip restaurants. The actual range of tastes and forms of participation which appear on the right hand side are varied. The most extreme right hand location is for attending the opera frequently, followed by eating at French restaurants regularly, going to orchestral concerts, to the theatre, and to rock concerts, and liking impressionist art. These activities are counter-posed most powerfully with eating fish and chips, never eating out at all, having no books, and never going to museums. In short, we see that the most significant division holds apart those who take part in the forms of cultural activity that are represented in this axis and those who do not. At this point we must immediately reinforce our emphasis that we only measure participation in terms of the variables we used to construct the map, and it can only be understood in these terms.

--- Figure 1 about here -----

Look next at Figure 2 which highlights those modalities which are separated on the 2<sup>nd</sup> (top – bottom) axis. Some of them are the same as appeared in Figure 1, which means that they contribute disproportionately to both axes. We see now the heavy preponderance of variables indicating that it is taste which is differentiating on this axis, marked by [red] squares.

What kinds of likes are pulled apart here? At the top of the graph are concentrated frequent participation at the cinema and the pub, also to night clubs and rock concerts, but never to orchestral concerts. We can see that musical taste contributes a lot to this section of the space. Prevalent tastes here include strong liking for urban, heavy metal and rock music, and dislikes of classical, musicals and country and western. A liking for modern art and a dislike of landscapes register. So too does a liking for horror movies and comedy programmes on TV. Science fiction is popular reading material.

---- Figure 2 about here -----

On the bottom of Figure 2 we see musical tastes prominently represented, but this time towards more established forms: liking classical music, country and western music, and musical films. These are associated also with liking racquet sports, news programmes on television, drama, going to French restaurants, and nature television, and there is also a strong dislike for many of the musical tastes recorded at the top of Figure 2. A series of cultural practices, ranging from going to opera, orchestral

concerts, theatres, stately homes, art galleries, and musicals are also linked to these tastes. This lower part of axis 2 picks out most of the established, traditional forms of culture that we asked about in our survey and indicates that there does appear to be a cultural separation between what we might see as traditional from contemporary cultural forms, especially in the domain of music. This separation between culturally established forms and newer, more commercial forms of culture may be evidence of a change in the modus operandi, or the content, of cultural capital, an issue which we explore further below.

Figure 3 examines those modalities which contribute above the mean on the third axis (top-bottom). We can see that several of these modalities also appear on previous figures, where their location on the 1<sup>st</sup> (left-right) axis is very similar. It is their location on the top-down axis that is most important for us to focus on here because this is where the 3<sup>rd</sup> axis shows differences. Even more than axis 2 we can see the taste questions predominate in axis 3, and we also see that there is a large predominance of likes in both parts of the Figure. We know, then, that this third axis is differentiating between different types of likes and dislikes, not between likes on the one hand, and dislikes on the other. The top of Figure 1 highlights a liking for romance films, followed by soap operas, portrait paintings, and TV drama. On the other hand, we see a dislike for landscapes, nature television, sport, club sports, war films and the news. We see almost a mirror image at the bottom of figure 3. We see in figure 3 a separation between what might be seen as liking to view 'physical' or 'rough' practices and tastes, at the bottom, and more 'sensitive' or home-based ones at the top.

---- Figure 3 about here -

Finally, Figure 4 presents the fourth axis. The inclusion of both taste ([red] squares) and participation ([black] diamonds) modalities in a more balanced way indicates that it is structured both by active practices and likes/dislikes, though the former predominates. It is identified most strongly through involvements in visual arts and music. In the lower half of the graph we see the heavy involvement – heavier than on axis 1 – in attendance at opera, art galleries, museums and orchestral concerts, combined with the most restricted possible television watching (less than an hour during the week or at the weekend). Positive tastes are also in evidence for modern and renaissance art, modern literature and world music. These features concentrate towards the bottom of the graph towards the right. Closer to the horizontal axis are heavy engagement in cinema, night clubs, and liking for classical music and jazz and dislike of country and western music and romantic fiction. This appears to sketch a dimension of enthusiasm for culturally established performances and for some more intellectually distinguished and legitimate cultural forms. This pattern of engagement might correspond to a voracious form of 'highbrow' orientation to cultural engagement. The northern half of the graph captures more moderate levels of participation – going sometimes, but not very frequently, to museums, theatres, night clubs and concerts – and a fair number of expressions of relative indifference to musical genres like classical, country and western and urban, with positive preference for landscape art and dislike of impressionism. If the first axis distinguishes participators from non participators, this fourth axis describes a contrast between 'moderate' engagement including some legitimate activities on one hand, and an

enthusiastic and intensive involvement with them, on the other hand, which we label ‘voracious’ (see Katz-Gerro and Sullivan, 2007).

----- Figure 4 about here -

What general conclusions can we draw at this stage of our analysis? We highlight three points. Firstly, we can see that the four figures do allow us to pull out certain homologies between the subfields. We can see, for instance, on the 1<sup>st</sup> axis, that those who like Impressionist painting also like opera and French restaurants. Those who most appreciate modern art, also tend to like science fiction books and heavy metal music. Some areas of subfields seem less likely to yield distinctions: types of TV programmes, for instance, (though not the amount of time spent watching TV) are rarely an element of a distinctive cultural clustering, and nor are genres of film very often. Given that Bourdieu himself says relatively little about these media, and that these forms of media have become increasingly important, we can draw the conclusion that this subfield is not marked so clearly by differentiation and discrimination as music, in particular. This confirms the role that these media play in providing some points of cultural convergence for groups whose tastes might, in other aspects, be sharply divergent. More generally, we need to be careful not to focus simply on those modalities which are clearly separated, and recognize that a large number of variables are located at the centre of the map, indicating that they do not imply exclusion vis-à-vis other practices. Because these variables are not labeled in Figures 1 to 4, Table 4 lists these variables.

Table 4 **Variables which do not contribute to any axis**

Favorite TV programme: police drama, films
Least favourite TV programme: game shows, cookery programmes
Favourite films: documentary
Least favourite film: drama
Liking: who dunnit books
Not liking: religious books
Never going to the opera
Not liking: eating out in Italian restaurants
Favourite sports to play – racket sports
Favourite sports to watch – car racing
Least favourite sports to watch – car racing, racquet, social, football

(NB, this table omits neutral modalities, e.g. neutral towards jazz)

We can see from Table 4 that there are indeed aspects of cultural life that do not carry any ‘baggage’, meaning that other aspects of cultural life seem unrelated to them. The fact that one does not like eating in Italian restaurants, for instance, seems to say very little else about your cultural likes and engagements. In some cases, such as whether favourite TV programmes are films, this may be because it is the ‘type’ of film which is significant. But we can also see several other examples, some forms of ‘high’ culture, including liking documentary films, performance art, and renaissance art. In short, we need to recognize that many items are weakly marked

*Secondly*, what do we make of the fact that the prime division, on our first axis, relates to issues of participation? This is somewhat different from what Bourdieu found in *Distinction*, where he was able to find certain kinds of consumption, taste and leisure practice on both sides of the first axis. Indeed, it is this which allows him to differentiate between high and popular culture. Our findings initially seem in line with recent research on social capital and participation, which points to a strong trend in recent years for some groups in the population to become ‘disengaged’ (Hall 1999; Warde et al. 2002; Li et al. 2003), and for others to become multiply engaged, as a form of cultural omnivorousness or voraciousness. The fact that high amounts of television watching is one of the few positive activities to be found on the left of Figure 1 could be taken to lend support to the arguments of Putnam (2000) that television watching is conducive to social ‘disengagement’. However, for the moment the forms of engagement which those located on the left of Figure 1 participate in are more opaque. In part this may reflect the relative absence of home-based and informal activities included in the MCA. Photography, video games, board games, gardening, DIY, car maintenance, gambling, art and craft activities, radio, and computer games are not included in our survey, all activities which tend to be home-based and relatively inexpensive, although these have not been shown by previous research to be disproportionately supported by those with few educational qualifications or by the working class. Most of the forms of cultural participation on the right of this axis are located outside the home and then share one or other of three further characteristics: they are either strongly associated with established culture (museums, art galleries), or are forms of commercial entertainment that involve admission charges (cinema, rock concerts, musicals), or they are forms of legitimate culture applying admission charges (opera, theatre, stately homes, orchestral concerts).

We can usefully reflect on the three forms of participation which are conducted in the home represented on the first axis: the ownership of paintings; the number of books read in the previous year; and television watching. In the case of paintings, we only asked whether our respondents had originals or limited edition paintings, and the distribution of the ownership of these is, of course, telling. However, not owning such items should not be interpreted as a sign of a household that lacks visual decorations *tout court*. An earlier Australian study exploring ownership of a wider range of visual items in the home showed only relatively minor class variations in relation to the rock music, nature and art posters (Bennett et al. 1999: 51; also Halle 1993). Our focus group with unskilled and semi-skilled workers also provides one example of a rich visual environment linked to a family interest in photography:

Ann: I’ve got a lot of art in my house ...

Lyn: She’s got a gallery of her own, she has.

Den: Her walls are covered

**Moderator, Stephanie** : What with? What do you like?

Ann: Pictures. My walls are covered with pictures.

**Stephanie** : Anything in particular? Something that takes your fancy?

Ann: Well, it’s the kids isn’t it? And family. Parents and that. Three walls of my living room are just covered, aren’t they?

Lyn: Yes, honestly, it’s like a gallery.

**Stephanie** : All sorts of photo’s?

Ann: Yes. I think I’ve got hundreds really. The kids at all ages. All framed and hung up. My father’s got quite a good camera. He takes most of them.

The main qualification that needs to be made in relation to numbers of books read in the previous year is that books do not account for the full range of reading practices: there is a more even spread with regard to the readership of magazines while, in relation to newspaper reading, major employers and high level managers are less likely to read a daily newspaper than are all the sections of the working class. There is, of course, a difference regarding cultural capital in the meaning of reading literature and reading newspapers or magazines. This is an issue we take up in the analysis of the literary field (Wright, 2006).

Two main points need to be made in relation to television viewing. The first is that this does not translate into a series of distinctive likes located in the left-hand side of the space simply because, except for soap operas, many of the television genres have a sufficient constituency of support from among all classes so as not to appear strongly differentiated from any others. But, as we also discuss elsewhere (*Cultural Trends*, 2006), such is the popularity of many of these genres that many of those on the left (as well as the right) of axis 1 do watch them. Hence, this cannot be construed as cultural disengagement! More to the point, a case could be made for arguing that those forms of cultural participation are located on the right of the space, while more varied in terms of activities outside the home than those on the left, spend less of their time in cultural pursuits than those located on the left of the space. For in the case of most of these – visiting museums, stately homes, and art galleries, or going to the theatre or opera – participation, even for frequent goers, is an episodic affair, mostly only several times a year, which, with television viewing rates of less than an hour on weekdays, leaves a good deal of cultural catch-up time to match the amount of time involved in cultural activities by those on the left of the space, who notch up 35 television viewing hours a week! To argue otherwise is to capitulate to a long history of those discourses that have – in face of the overwhelming evidence of active working-class involvement in the popular visual entertainments, from the magic lantern, through cinema and into television – sought to ‘de-culture’ television viewing by casting it in the mould of a mind-numbing, distracted inattentiveness (Crary, 19xx Hanson, xxxx). In short, we need to be careful when extrapolating from the MCA axes.

*Thirdly*, looking at the second axis, it is interesting that it functions in a rather different way to Bourdieu’s second axis. In his case, the second axis distinguishes avant-garde ‘intellectual’ culture from more established, expensive and lavish (‘industrialist’) forms of culture. We too find a clustering of established taste, but rather than this being contrasted with avant garde, intellectual activities, it is instead contrasted with popular, commercial forms of activity, especially associated with music. We again need to be cautious at this stage at extrapolating from our MCA. In *Distinction*, Bourdieu’s analysis uses many specific, named, artists and art works, which allows for more discrimination than our MCA permits. But we should at the very least not assume that the kind of account of cultural capital which focuses on the ‘Kantian aesthetic’ is necessarily one that applies in the contemporary British context. Similarly, we can also see the role of two more axes, one of which distinguishes predominantly ‘physical’ pursuits from ‘sensitive’ activities, and the other distinguishes the culturally ‘voracious’ from the ‘moderate’ consumption. We should not make too much of these differences from Bourdieu, since his space of lifestyles was constructed using different indicators. Nonetheless, our data suggest significant

differences in the organization of British contemporary cultural life from that identified by Bourdieu and we need to think freshly about the patterns we have uncovered in greater detail.

### **3. Social groups and the space of lifestyle**

The space of lifestyles is constructed entirely on the basis of the relative positioning of the cultural modalities. MCA also permits the data to be examined from the point of view of the distribution of individuals along any axes or across the space of lifestyles. Each individual can be identified by a coordinate on each axis, and thus the distribution of members of different social groups can be plotted. The so-called supplementary variables for socio-demographic characteristics can be superimposed upon the space of lifestyle, indicating where the mean point of each group is positioned. This process can be presented visually on a graph. The statistical procedure lying behind it is a calculation of the within and between variance for social categories on each axis. We have measures for age, class, education, gender, ethnicity. The variance is expressed as  $\eta^2$ . A second way to describe group patterns is to inspect the so-called cloud of individuals. MCA graphs are constructed from a matrix comprised of cultural items and individual responses. The coordinates of individuals can be plotted on the same axes that were constructed in the cloud of modalities to give a visual display of the location of individuals in the space of lifestyles. The resultant graphs record the central points and ellipses for respondents with particular characteristics in common. These can be interpreted to identify social bases of participation and taste.

A range of factors, all of which are associated with material and educational assets, account for the variation between degrees of cultural engagement and disengagement which structure the first axis. Respondents' educational qualifications are the most strongly associated with level of cultural engagement ( $\eta^2 = .39$ ). However, a measure of social class is only a little weaker than education. 12 occupational classes are monotonically positioned along the axis ( $\eta^2 = .26$ ) (see Figure 5) and for our three class model  $\eta^2 = .23$ . It is also the case that other measures of inherited cultural capital, a measure itself highly associated with an individual's class of origin, determine where along that axis an individual will be located. Recall that this first axis is one characterised more by participation than by taste. We can then deduce that class differences are particularly relevant to understanding cultural participation - attendance at concerts, art galleries, museums, stately homes etc.. Respondent's class, education and class of origin strongly condition the attributes of cultural consumption which load most heavily onto the first, and most important, axis of the space of lifestyles.

Social class characteristics, therefore, remain highly associated with patterns of cultural participation, demonstrating clearly that class remains a central factor in the structuring of contemporary cultural practice in Britain. Class matters. Whatever social advantage might arise from heavy engagement in cultural activities will accrue to those who are highly educated, who occupy higher social class positions and who have backgrounds within higher social classes. Higher social class is associated with regular attendance at theatre, museums, art galleries, stately homes, opera, cinema, musicals and rock concerts. It also entails owning paintings and reading books. Belonging to the lowest social classes tends to be associated with never doing these

things. Tastes are less defined by class, and there are fewer direct oppositions, though: higher class means a dislike for fish and chip cafes (and a preference for French restaurants), lower class liking best fish and chips; and tastes in literature, for biographies and for modern literature diametrically opposed; and so are attitudes towards rock music, with the higher classes liking it, the lower ones disliking it. Our first question is thus answered. The axis which most powerfully indicates the structure of cultural consumption in Britain is one which is directly associated with class position. Which is not to say, as we will now see, that other social factors are unimportant, only that they are less important.

Other socio-demographic factors are primarily responsible for affecting cultural consumption on the second and third axes. Variance on axis 2 is primarily a function of age. With the sample partitioned into seven age categories, the eta-2 value for the partition was .50. On this axis no educational or class variable had an eta-2 value greater than .10. Much of the dispersion of the cultural items (modalities) can plausibly be attributed to the differences of taste between different cohorts of the population. Figure 6 represents graphically this association in the cloud of individuals.

The variance in taste exhibited by the third axis is strongly conditioned by gender (eta-2= 0.43). Items to the north in Figure 3 are ones with which women are most likely to engage, including TV dramas, self-help books, soap operas, romantic fiction. Male preferences lie to the south, and favour watching sport on TV and westerns. Note that this axis is mostly an axis of taste. Figure 7, a graph of the cloud of individuals along Axis 3, shows the degree of separation between men and women on that axis.

Variation along the fourth axis, which captured intense cultural enthusiasm, is not so strongly identified by socio-demographic characteristics so far introduced into our analysis. Inspection of the coordinates of the socio-demographic variables on Axis 4 shows minor effects for youthfulness(eta-2 = .05) and no others. The pattern of the cultural modalities was one which distinguished omnivorousness from voraciousness. Figures 8 captures one element of that distinction, showing that parents having higher education is an important characteristic of those with a voracious orientation. Figure 9, showing a supplementary variable for the occupations of those in the professional classes (NS-SeC3 and 4), suggest that cultural intermediaries are most likely to be voracious. Higher education teachers, artists and the old professions lie in the south-east corner of the graph, while those in IT and business professions are in the north east.

Thus, we can assert that, as suggested by a number of theories, plural social bases do underpin differentiation in cultural practice in the UK. Age and gender, sources of variation not much attended to in earlier attempts to explain the relationship between stratification and culture, do indeed have structuring effects. However, they are somewhat less powerful than those of education and class. Most variation on the primary axis was attributable to characteristics which have, for sociological purposes, been considered as responsible for inter-generational reproduction of privilege. Social class, especially if interpreted as based upon a package of assets which include cultural capital (Savage et al 2005), continues to structure cultural participation and taste. [ In Incidentally, our data do not suggest that ethnicity is so important a basis of cultural structuration, though this may be the consequence of the particular questions

that we asked and the relatively small numbers of respondents identifying as non-white and non-British.

#### 4 The individual and cultural life in social space

Focusing on the mean points of variables representing cultural participation and taste, does not allow one to assess how much individual variation there is around those mean points. In this respect we face a similar problem to that found in conventional multivariate analysis which deals with reified variables, and does not recognise the extent of individual variance. In this section we use the ‘cloud of individuals’ to explore how far individuals, placed on our geometrical cultural map (or ‘space of lifestyles’) conform or deviate from general patterns. We introduce a couple of cases taken from our qualitative interviews to illustrate the details predicated by the position of individuals on the MCA and analyse these in relation to our findings concerning the salient axes in our cultural map.

We selected two individuals positioned in different quadrants of the map. We use two maps. One explores axes 1 and 2 (figure 5) where music, visual arts and reading are the most significant subfields to this differentiation on the MCA. The other explores axes 1 and 3 (figure 6) where the variables differentiating the most are television, film, reading and engagement with social sports. How do these differentiations bear on the case of the individuals?

Joe Smith, represented by number 902, appears in the top left quadrant of our ‘cloud of individuals’ in figure 5.<sup>12</sup> This area assembles individuals who tend to dislike most of the items we included in the survey and tend not to participate much in cultural life as we have defined it. They are also younger, with middle level of education and in occupational jobs around the ‘intermediate’ scale or lower supervisory ones. We find that the cultural capital of individuals in this quadrant is middle to low. In the bottom right quadrant, number 1190 in figure 5, is Jenny Hammett. This area of the map concentrates individuals with higher levels of education, in higher occupations, older and generally with high cultural capital. [This superimposition of categories to the ‘cloud of individuals’ is preliminary as modalities have not yet been incorporated into this iteration of the ‘cloud’ mapping]. In figure 6 Joe (number 902) and Jenny (number 1190) are both located in the lower half of the map but quite far from each other. How do these quadrants, corresponding to the clustering of modalities and cultural divisions that we explored in the previous sections, reflect the individual practices of Joe and Jenny? The cases’ descriptions combine a detailed reading of their individual responses (in 2003) to the SPSS files and the qualitative interviews (in 2004) which sought to broaden and deepen the knowledge of their cultural engagements, personal profile and relationships.

[Figure 10 – ‘cloud of individuals’ axes 1 and 2 - about here]

[Figure 11 – ‘cloud of individuals’ axes 1 and 3 - about here]

---

<sup>12</sup> Other numbers on the maps refer to individuals interviewed not considered in this analysis.

## Joe Smith

Joe is 31 years old, has been married for three years, has a 9 month old son and lives in a small detached house with a small garden in a new part of a village near Oxford, England, just off the main road. He is born and bred locally. His wife, Edie, who said not to be 'local' in origin, was born and grew up in another village 8 miles away! Joe's parents live two doors up the road, his sister lives three doors down the road, and in his words they are 'a very, very close family.' He is a site foreman trained as an electrician, and he enjoys having a supervisory job position and the freedom and control that this brings to him.

The house has video recorder, DVD, satellite television, no computer, but mobile phones. He watches about three hours a day of television on weekdays and about 6 hours on weekends. His favourites are ITV, Sky sports and all sports channels. He usually watches television by himself. Sports are his preferred programmes but the second favourites are nature or history documentaries. The nature documentaries identify with this country life, but it is the action which captures his attention: 'I like to see the predators of the world... the lions catch their prey ...' He most dislikes cookery and home decoration programmes.

In the film area he mostly watches war movies or action and adventure thrillers. He least likes horror movies because 'it's just make-believe and just rubbish'. He might watch a film directed by Spielberg, but probably not a film by Hitchcock or Bergman. He has not heard of any of the other three film directors we ask about in our survey: the Spanish director Pedro Almodovar, New Zealander Jane Campion, or the Tamil film maker Mani Rathnam. His favourite film is 'Saving Private Ryan', with Tom Hanks, he says. 'It's the war thing, true to life... it did happen, it's an event...'

He reads daily the tabloid *The Sun*, 'flicking through, mainly for the sports...' He does not like reading and dislikes all the 7 categories of literary genres we asked about. From a list of 6 books, including Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*, Cookson's *The solace of sin*, Angelou's *I know why the caged birds sing*, Rowling's *Harry Potter and the chamber of secrets*, or Grisham's *The Firm*, he has not heard of any. The only book Joe ever read is *Bravo Two Zero* by Andy McNab, an SAS soldier's account of the 1991 Gulf War. 'It kept me interested for a while. (...) I read it on holiday, because I was bored' but enjoyed it. He does not read magazines.

He is more interested in music. His musical tastes place at the highest 'rock and pop/chart' music. In a scale of 1 to 7, where 7 is the least liked, he places 'modern jazz' and 'classic'. He has not heard of three musical pieces listed: 'Einstein on the beach' (Philip Glass), 'Symphony No. 5' (Mahler) and 'Kind of Blue' ((Miles Davis). He has not listened but had heard of 'Four Seasons' (Vivaldi) and listened but not liked 'Oops I did it again' (Britney Spears), 'Chicago' (Sinatra), 'Wonderwall' (Oasis) or 'Stan' (Eminem). He says he likes Oasis, 'my sort of age era', and MPeople, more recently.

About styles of art, he likes 'landscapes' the most and 'modern art' the least. He has seen and liked works by Van Gogh only, from our list of 7 painters. He has seen but not liked Picasso, and has not heard of Frida Kahlo, Turner, Tracey Emin, Warhol or Lowry. He doesn't enjoy art and classical music because, he says, 'I don't know nothing about them. But as for finding out, to know more about them I probably wouldn't because I like all the other stuff, - it's all I can take on. It is on the back seat sort of thing.' 'I've no interest in paintings or nothing. Do nothing for me.' In Joe's world taste does not classify: 'I think everyone has sort of got their own opinion'. 'I think it's just a preference of what people like...'

When eating out, he prefers going to pubs, wine bars or hotels because the atmosphere is 'more laid back' ... 'you can go up and get a drink, not dictated to what time you can have

it...'. His second favourite are Chinese or Thai restaurants. He dislikes vegetarian restaurants because he likes to eat meat.

His favourite sport is football because of the team spirit. He has a good social life engaged with the local team. He likes the least gymnastics. For his own leisure he prefers to do 'something useful'. He used to swim competitively when younger but found it difficult to combine it with work. He also used to cycle ride, but 'now we've got the little boy upstairs, it's time... I don't have enough time in the day!'. He likes to collect old steam trains, enjoying the history of them, 'how it all started and moved on'.

His style of dress was 'casual', in tracksuit bottoms and a t-shirt. But for going out he likes to be 'smart', in jeans and a shirt, and 'to look good'. He enjoys having his dinner on trays in front of the telly in the front room, and says this is typical. His sense of style and appearance for the home involves an attitude of '... keeping the home clean – But if anyone comes round, they takes us as they find us.'

### *Jenny Hammett*<sup>13</sup>

Jenny is 47 years old, lives in South Lanarkshire, East of Glasgow, Scotland. She is white, married and has 4 daughters (22, 14 and twins 11), 3 living at home. She first met her husband, Curie, while at university. Her first job brought them to the village where they now live. The location was chosen also because it was 'a good place to raise a family'. But they had moved away, because of Curie's jobs, for 3 years in France and 2 years in Cumbria, having returned to the area for the last 8 years. The house is modern, semi-detached, in an affluent and large suburban estate. Jenny started working life as a full-time librarian but since having children has held a number of part-time jobs: as a librarian, in a housing association, and various temporary academic support jobs.

She works part time in a 'managerial or professional occupation', coded as 'arts officers, producers and directors'. Currently she is working as a university creative writing tutor. She is a published writer of short stories and poetry. She has also held a writer's grant from the Arts Council. She highly values her flexible working life and feels in control over her position in life. Finding time to write is 'a real luxury' and she enjoys having this privilege.

Her home has video recorder, personal computer, cable TV, mobile phone and the internet. The television programmes she likes the most are 'soaps' and 'news and current affairs'. She explains her taste for 'soaps' in relation to her writer's tastes: a liking for the characters, the plot, the drama. 'Eastenders' and the Scottish soap opera 'River City' are her favourite ones. She also regularly watches the 'One o'clock news'. She dislikes 'reality TV' for being 'a bit humiliating'.

She likes 'horror films' the least. She might watch a film directed by Hitchcock or Almodovar. She would make a point of watching a film by Spielberg, but would probably not watch one directed by Bergman. She hasn't heard of either Campion or Rathnam. Two are her favourite films, both about 'states of mind and how you perceive reality': 'The Matrix' and

<sup>13</sup> Jenny Hammett's case is extensively analysed in Silva, E.B., 2006, comparing the particular profiles emerging from individuals in the quantitative and the qualitative data, and analysing the cultural 'elective affinities' between partners living together. This description is reproduced almost fully from that paper.

'Twelve Monkeys'. She also loves Ken Loach, in particular 'Sweet Sixteen', because of the 'social realism'.

She firmly states her taste for 'modern literature' and 'science fiction'. Her favourite writers are contemporary Scottish writers: 'people like Ann Donovan who was shortlisted for the Orange prize, although there's David Mitchell who's not Scottish but was shortlisted for the Booker a couple of times'. She cites the poetry of John Donne, likes DH Lawrence, and James Kelman, and says it is difficult to choose one favourite because she is 'interested in this and that at different times', 'different authors will satisfy a different need'. Perhaps, 'I'll be my own favourite', she concludes. She read lots of short stories, and literary magazines, including regularly reading the *Chapman Literary Quarterly*. Her own writing could be classed as 'almost science fiction'. She likes the least whodunits, romances, religious books and self-help books. From the list offered she has read *Pride and Prejudice*. She has heard of all the books on the list but is not likely to read any others.

The music genre she likes the most is 'rock' and the least are 'country and western', 'modern jazz', 'electronic', 'heavy metal' and 'urban'. She has heard of all the musical pieces listed, has listened to and likes the ones by Oasis, Eminem, Vivaldi and Sinatra, has listened to but did not like Britney Spears. Her list of liked bands, singers and genres is varied. It encompassed her younger tastes which still remain, while she actively listens to her daughters' CDs. The list includes Red Hot Chilli Peppers, Manic Street Preachers, Travis, Joni Mitchell, Sheryl Crow, Radiohead and U2. Low on her taste are 'country and western', 'jazz', 'electronic', 'heavy metal' and 'urban'. She contests the view of 'country and western' being attached to a working-class taste remarking that her two sisters and brother like it.

About styles of art, she likes 'impressionism'. She has seen works by five painters listed except Emin and Kahlo, but has heard of Emin. She has seen but hasn't liked Lowry's work.

When eating out she goes to a French or Italian restaurant. She grew up with 'a limited cuisine' and likes 'good sauces', fresh vegetables and red wine. When cooking she would 'deglaze a pan with wine', one of the habits picked up from living in France. Last on her list is going to a 'pizza house' because she doesn't like bread, which she attributes to, perhaps, a physical cause.

She doesn't do any physical exercise except for a short walk to break up her day, as she spends most of it writing. But she has had fleeting interest in Pilates and Scottish country dancing, and has enjoyed both. She has not taken counselling, acupuncture or homeopathy. Her favourite exercise is keep fit classes, and she dislikes the most watching 'wrestling' on TV. Her style of dress is 'casual'. Clothes are for 'keeping warm', 'like in jeans and a jumper'. She has not interested in fashion, though 'it is nice to dress up sometimes'.

Her children go to the local school and have always done so, including when living in France. Some play musical instruments, have done, or still do dancing, badminton, martial arts or horse riding. Extra-school activities have basically been left up to the children to choose to their interests, but money has been a limitation to what can be engaged with. If interest waned, the children would stop the activity. She professes a trust in them wanting to do well in school and in the activities of their choice.

Joe Smith's position, derived from the survey data, in the top left quadrant of figure 5 and the bottom left of figure 6, is corroborated and reinforced by the qualitative data. He is coherently positioned amongst the group who, on the left space of our axis one

of the MCA, tends to dislike the cultural items we asked about, participating little in the sort of cultural life we delineated, preferring the more local and family or friendship orientated activities. His likes, mainly sports (playing football and watching it), long hours of television watching and going to the pub, are more commercially orientated. He has little engagement with established forms of culture, a division shown by the second axis of the MCA.

Joe is a skilled working-class man inclined to 'traditional' practices of masculinity, and more engaged in commercial culture, shown by his position in figure 6. While he puts his baby into bed, as he did while his wife was being interviewed, and acknowledges that having the baby has put pressures on his time for engaging in 'cycle riding', which he enjoyed, he never cooks, prefers to eat off a tray watching the telly and is unconcerned about his personal taste for sports television not being shared by his wife. His taste for war stories, nature documentaries, his train collection, and being after 'the real thing', away from 'make-beliefs' fits perfectly with the gendered profile emerging from axis three of the MCA. But there are items of his liking that escape that classification, like a liking for nature television.

Jenny Hammett's position in the bottom right quadrant of the cultural map in both figures 5 and 6 is derived from the survey data and appears validated in face of the richer profile we achieved from her on the basis of the qualitative interview. She likes and participates in the key items which typify the corner of the map she is in, in the first axis of the MCA. She has a professional occupation, has university education, eats in French restaurants, goes to art galleries, musical concerts, likes impressionist art, and so on. Her tastes, though combine contemporary and established cultural engagements (second axis), and she is positioned, in respect to the third axis, near the shifting point between what we defined as 'physical' versus 'sensitive' pursuits. This means that, unlike for Joe, we do not identify a clearly gendered position for Jenny.

The consistency of Jenny's placement actually depends on her position on the MCA being matched consistently by engagement with her writing activities – and a high coherence of 'elective affinities' within the fields of literature and her professional interests. To illustrate: the knowledge that she is a published writer was only captured in the interview. Also, Jenny, who read only 6 books in the previous year, reads short stories and literary magazines, items of cultural engagement the survey questionnaire was not designed to capture, a point we further consider below.

On the basis of these responses, together with her participation in other activities (going to the cinema, attending events, visiting places, etc.) Jenny has the potential to be classified as an 'omnivore' in the study, with a 'voracious' appetite for culture. The concept of the 'omnivore' indicates a taste for many different types of cultural item. Petersen and Kern (1996) seek to explain why superior classes do not limit their tastes to the legitimate domains. Jenny presents both undistinguished and legitimate tastes. Recent studies have suggested that there are several different types of omnivore (Bellavance, 2004; Ollivier, 2007) and in Warde et al's (2007) terms she would be a cultural professional type as a result of her producer role and specialist tastes in the literary field. From the qualitative interview material we learn about Jenny's professional and creative job, wide and solid knowledge of cultural items, active participation in all fields to a high degree, and that her taste for culture is wide including both highly legitimate forms and some more popular ones. We learn of

Jenny's geographical mobility, of her being a published writer, her engagement with music across generations in connection to her daughters' tastes and of her relaxed attitude to her children's schooling that exhibits high confidence in transmission of cultural capital and social position.

From our detailed exploration of Joe's and Jenny's engagements in cultural and social life we are able to further assess how much individual variation can be expected to exist around the mean points with which multivariate analyses operate, and indeed upon which also the MCA depends on. One of the frequent objections to Bourdieu's account of the habitus is that it tends to homogenise social groups and be inattentive to individual variations. A close consideration of individual taste shows that, in Bernard Lahire's (2002) terms, 'consonance' across fields can be limited. For instance, as we remarked above, Joe likes 'nature' television programmes, associated with the likes of those with higher cultural capital. Jenny likes soap operas and an array of music genres not associated with 'established' tastes. Jenny, despite being generally well read, had only read one of the books on our list. These dissonant tastes remind us that individuals may diverge in some or many details from the aggregate and probabilistic patterns revealed by an MCA analysis, the complexity of individual subjects being better apprehended in biographical methods. However, it is considerably more relevant that the individual cases of Joe and Jenny have a strong fit with the modalities predicated in the MCA analyses.

Regarding the design of the instruments for research to generate knowledge about cultural engagement, including analytical ones, the imperiousness of classifications emerging from surveys – surveys mostly 'force' respondents to choose among specified items - can be dissolved in other interactions not simply by different and more detailed responses but also by the content and feelings expressed in the very judgement of social positions made by individuals. It is significant that when Joe realises that his engagement with culture, as it was being defined by the conversation, is 'thin', he defends himself by saying that he '[liked] the other stuff', maybe his football, beer, train collection, and so on, despite not liking the ones we were asking about. On the other hand, Jenny says that she is 'interested in this and that at different times'. Here 'interest' replaces 'likes' as she takes a more instrumental view of culture as a resource. Also significant is how a category is differently interpreted; dressing 'smart' for Joe consists of wearing jeans and a shirt, and dressing 'casual' for Jenny is wearing jeans and a jumper.

The cases reinforce our concern to recognize and work with complexity. The exploration of the 'cloud of individuals' offers a valuable approach to this and positions in the 'cloud' are clearly linked to social class and possession of cultural capital. While we picked up cases at opposite quadrants of the 'cloud', we are aware that the centre of the space is where far the greater number of individuals are located. We propose to further examine this central space in future work, for which the detailed qualitative interviews are a valuable resource.

## **Conclusions**

We have shown clear evidence of the patterning and differentiation of cultural life. Preferences concentrate together into meaningful patterns; cultural tastes are not randomly distributed, each individual to his or her own taste. But only some items

contribute to those differential patterns, choice of TV programme and of film are not strongly marked. Second there are homologies between sub-fields. Those whose favourite eating out place is the French restaurant like Impressionism, classical music and modern literature. Those who like horror films and watching sport on TV dislike Indian restaurants and listening to classical music. has an eccentric pattern, in ways which indicate powerful tensions at work. What gives these homologies coherence is not entirely clear; we remain agnostic for the moment about the origin and nature of the dispositions that lead these to these tastes concentrating in certain sections of the population. Third, the patterns can be described along four axes of inertia, which together constitute a map of cultural tastes and practices in the UK. The four axes are characterised by oppositions between: engagement and disengagement in cultural participation; established versus contemporary commercial tastes; physical versus sensitive tastes; and moderate versus voracious engagement. This does not easily reduce to – it is indeed much more complex than – a distinction between high and popular, or legitimate and vulgar culture. There are of course some indications of the existence and persistence of what might be called legitimate culture, and preferences for it concentrate in different parts of the maps. Axes 1 and 4 indicate this. However, the prime tension we have detected does not differentiate ‘intellectual’ from ‘popular’ culture, but distinguishes forms of participation from non-participation, and to some degree what might have been thought of as popular culture (especially with respect to music) is now located on the same part of axis 1 as more ‘established’ cultural forms. Fourth, there are clear associations between the cultural patterns revealed and underlying features of the social structure and distribution of resources. Items on Axis 1, as indicated by the superimposition of supplementary socio-demographic variables, is organised in parallel with the distribution of educational qualifications, class position and income. It is, in Bourdieu’s terms, associated with the total volume of capital of the population. Axis 2 is structured by age, Axis 3 by gender, and Axis 4 by class and cultural origin, or the inheritance of cultural capital. This fourth axis is less important than was the case for France in the 1960s as reported by Bourdieu (1984). Fifth, these descriptions of distances between the central points of cultural modalities and the mean coordinates of particular social groups conceal much dispersion of actual individuals. Inspection of ‘the cloud of individuals’ shows, for example, that occupational classes, and men and women, are widely dispersed across the space of lifestyle – though that dispersion is neither total nor random. There is much overlap of preferences across adjacent classes and age groups, but not much at the extremes. Whether one thinks of classes and generations as integrated by the cultural preferences that they do share, or differentiated by the ones that they contest is an intriguing matter of interpretation. Sixth, the patterns of distribution and concentration of preferences conceal much within individual variation; that is to say, from the perspective of individual respondents, portfolios of tastes will very often include items far distant from that which might be anticipated on the basis of their own personal location (coordinates) in the cloud of individuals, as was the case for instance with Jenny’s liking of soap operas and Joe’s of nature programmes on TV. Individuals, as always in sociological analysis, are more complex than is implied by aggregate analysis, hence the enormous value of being able to use interviews as well as answers to the survey to understand cultural taste and participation. Individuals embrace often unanticipated items in their portfolios. Seventh, describing that complexity is controversial. It could, following Lahire, be called dissonance. In a critique of the concept of habitus (200X), and with a desire to properly characterise individuals as part of the task of micro-sociology (2002), Lahire (2005) points out that

relatively few individuals have consistent cultural preferences within definable taste cultures. That is to say, assuming that items can be identified in terms of their degree of legitimacy, most people's cultural portfolios contain items from different parts of the cultural hierarchy. He uses this evidence to dismiss Bourdieu's account of the founding of patterns of cultural consumption in class habitus. Note that this does not entail jettisoning a notion of legitimate culture, nor the concept of cultural capital, but it does suggest that primary socialization and its perpetuation through class-based dispositions is an inadequate explanation of the distribution of preferences. While Lahire interprets the discrepancy as evidence of individualisation, an alternative explanation, namely the omnivorousness thesis associated initially with Peterson, suggests that having a dissonant profile is something that will concentrate in a particular social group. Tastes which span the boundaries of the cultural hierarchy are particularly prevalent among higher status individuals, such that an omnivorousness disposition might be seen as itself a modality of distinction. Eclecticism is cool. Distinguishing between the validity of these alternative accounts is something else that interview data is good for.

In sum, two phenomena appear relevant from this analysis. (1) Some items are liked and done widely by everyone and have no discriminating effect. (2) Other items quite clearly distinguish the educated middle-class from the working class. Both these phenomena are well recognised in the literature and there is absolutely no contradiction between them (see Holbrook et al, 2002 for a demonstration). Establishing whether these facts render the concept of cultural capital useful or not remains for further exploration. In part it requires other sorts of evidence: it is important to investigate the probability of some of the markers of distinction being recognised by, and for, different groups in the population. Do people in positions of power (including employers, state officials, educators, and so on) pick up from a relatively small proportion among all the myriad signs of cultural affiliation, which everybody displays, whether some individuals deserve more respect or better treatment than others? It seems that this is the case. Knowledge and participation of high culture, embodied characteristics and cultural omnivorousness, or cosmopolitanism, are several indications involved. One does not need to display all of these characteristics but only some relevant combinations. Whether the relevant items are now ones that can reasonably be encompassed by the concept of legitimacy (or of high culture) is much less clear. There is a good case to be made that an omnivorous disposition is what is required rather than a familiarity with an established classical canon. If young people have a different set of tastes to their elders, then what passes as legitimate will probably be in the process of changing – one of the consequences, and perhaps reasons why, heavy metal and rock music are preferences of the privileged status of the under 40s. The question of the role of cultural capital in contemporary society is not yet answered.



Figure 2: Axis 1 and 2, with variables contributing to axis 2 indicated

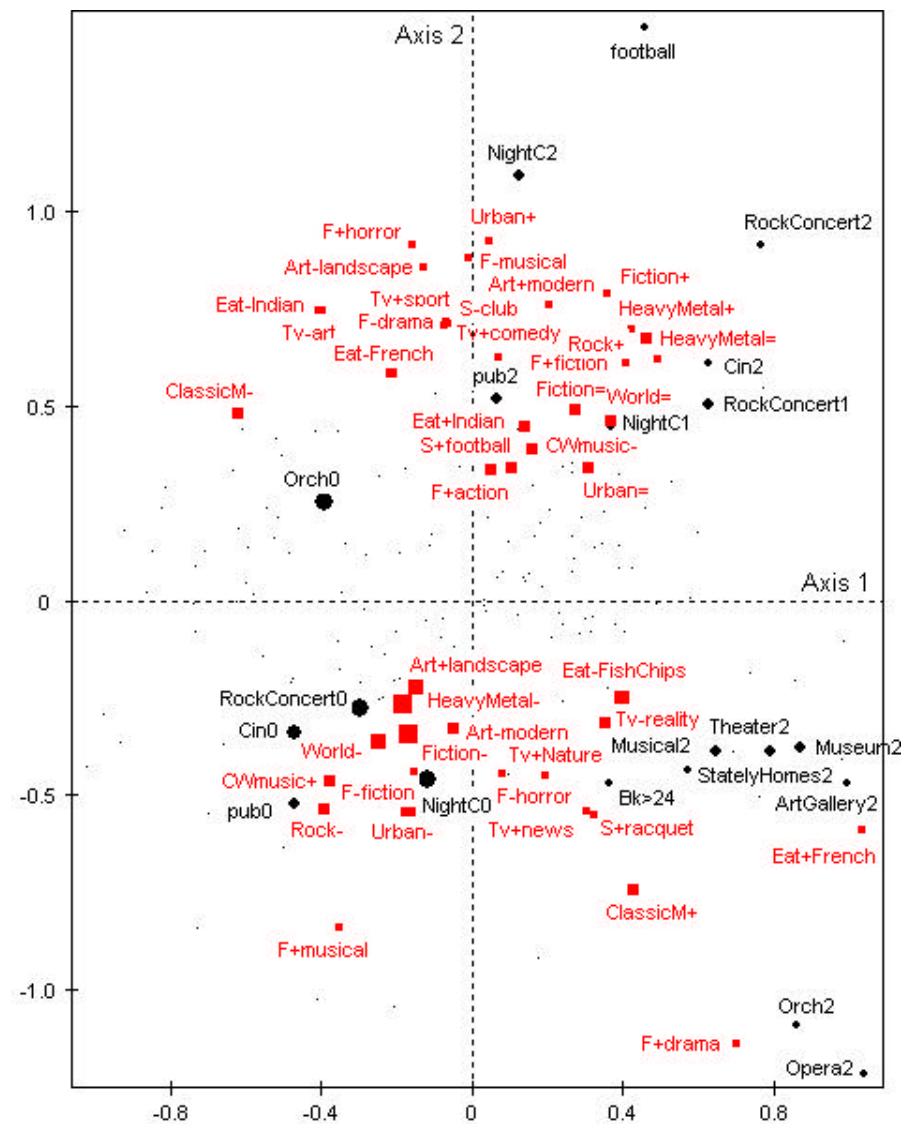


Figure 3: Axis 1 and 3, with variables contributing to axis 3 indicated

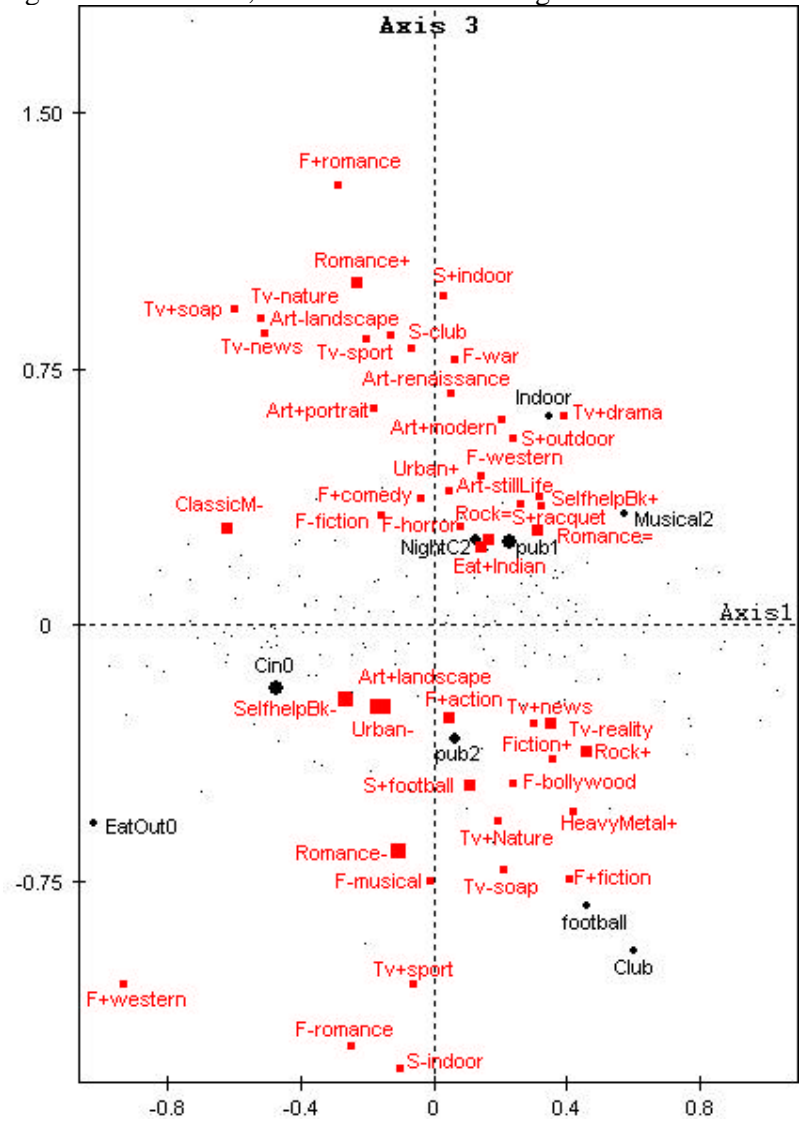


Figure 4: Axis 1 and 4, with variables contributing to axis 4 indicated

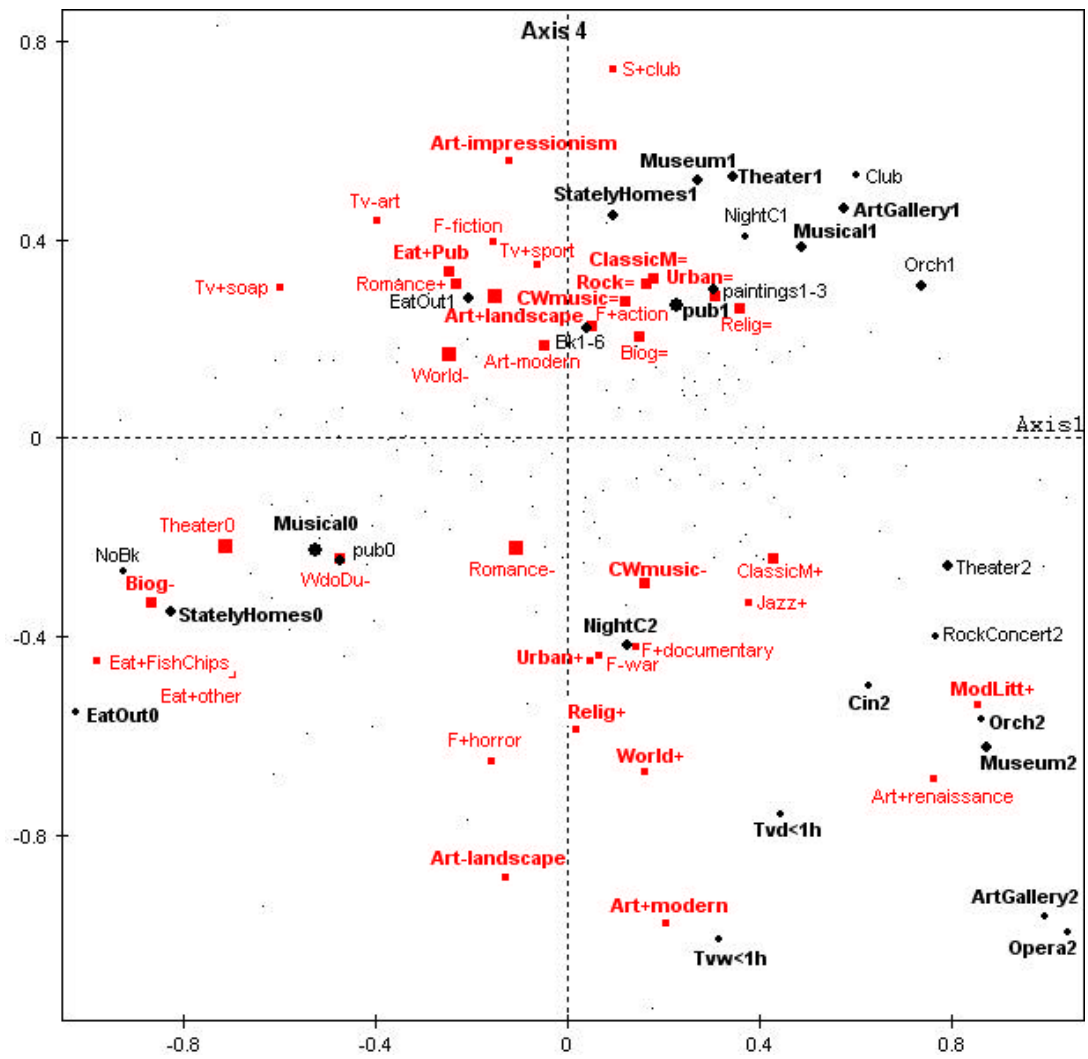


Fig 10: 'Cloud of individuals' axes 1 and 2

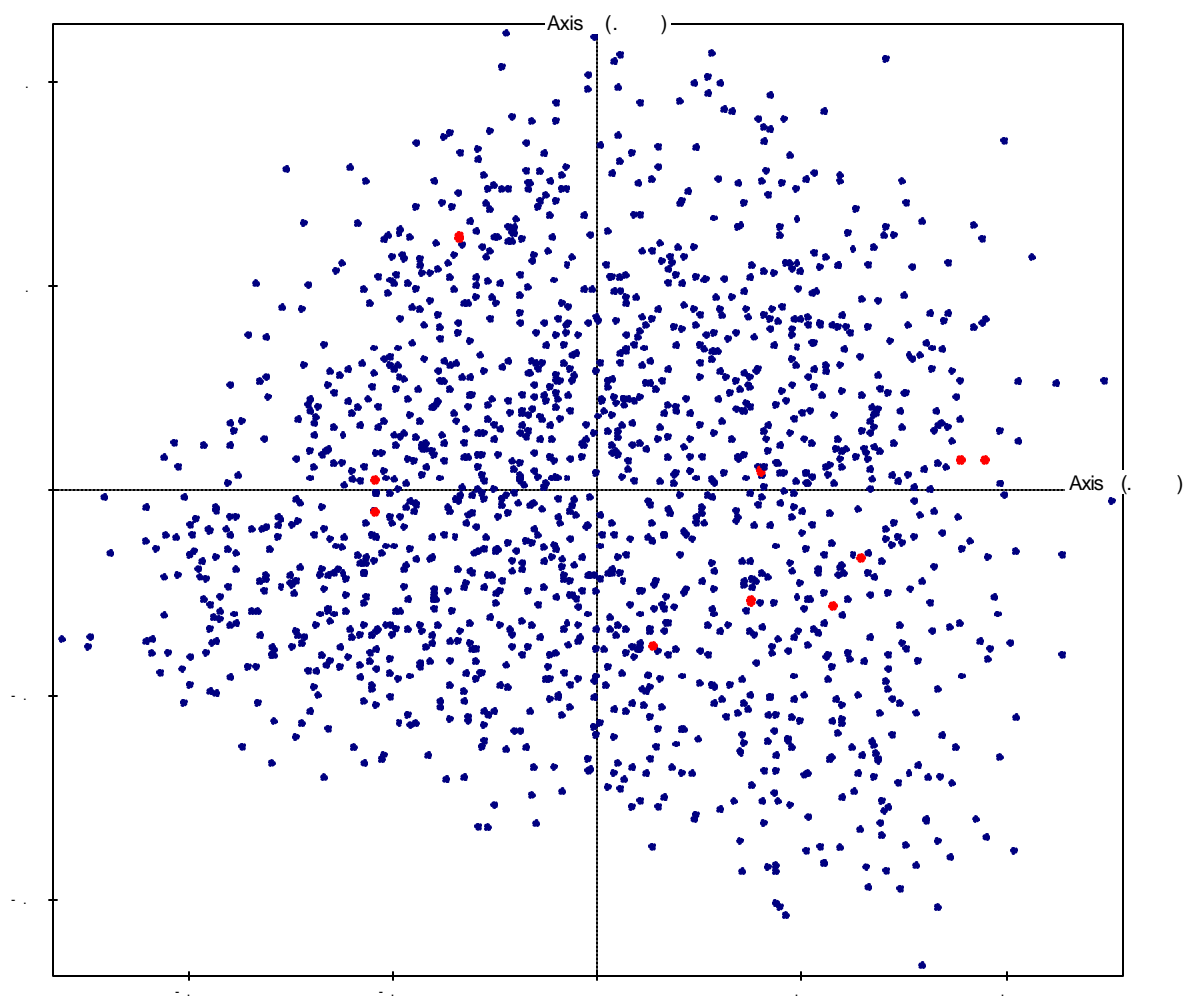
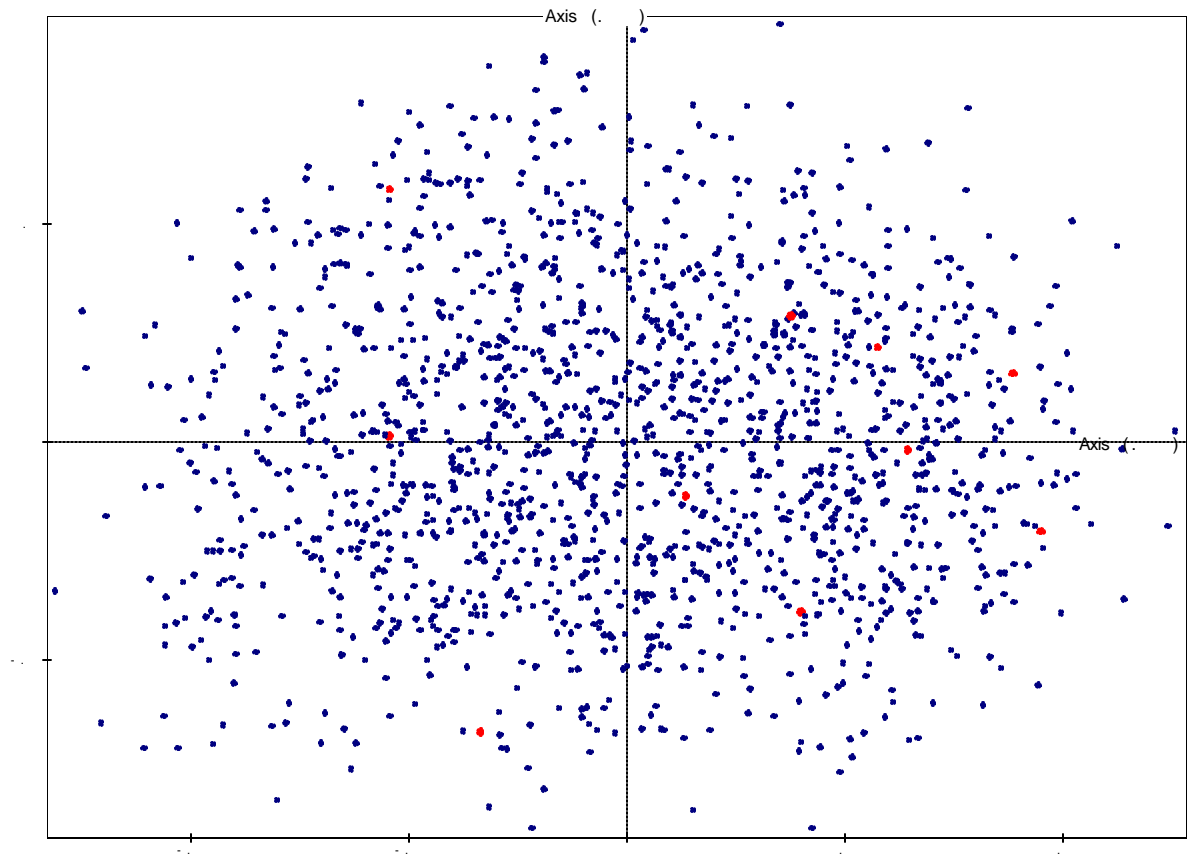
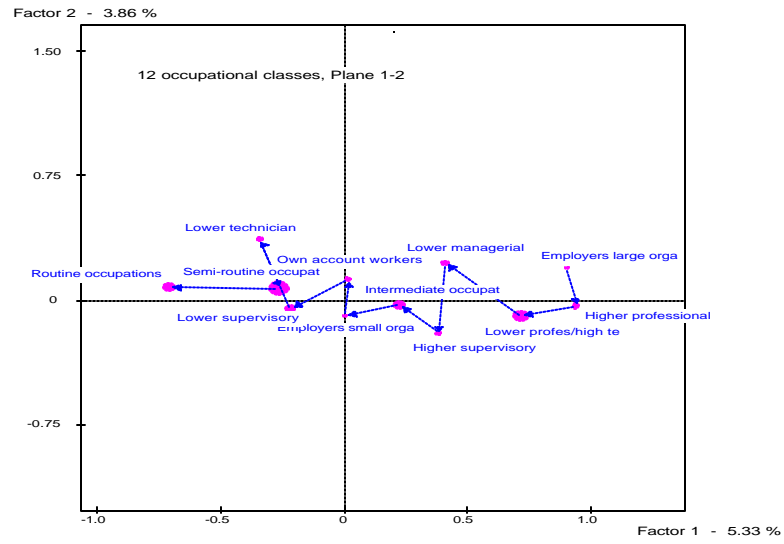


Fig 11: 'Cloud of individuals' axes 1 and 3



**12 Occupational Classes, Plane 1-2**



**Figure5**

Figure: Deviation and concentration ellipses for age groups in plane 1-3

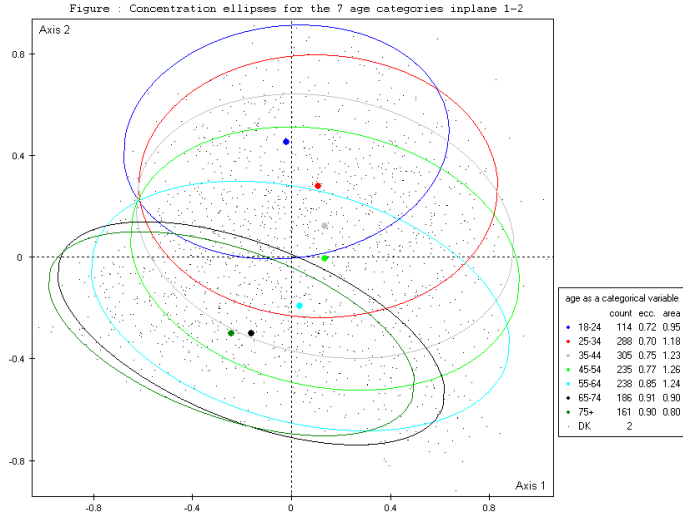


Figure6

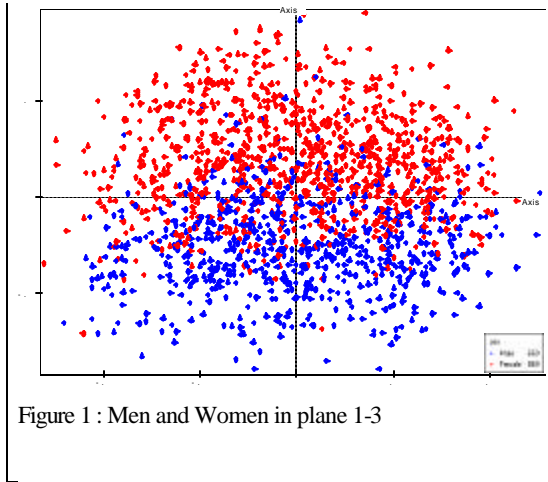


Figure 1 : Men and Women in plane 1-3

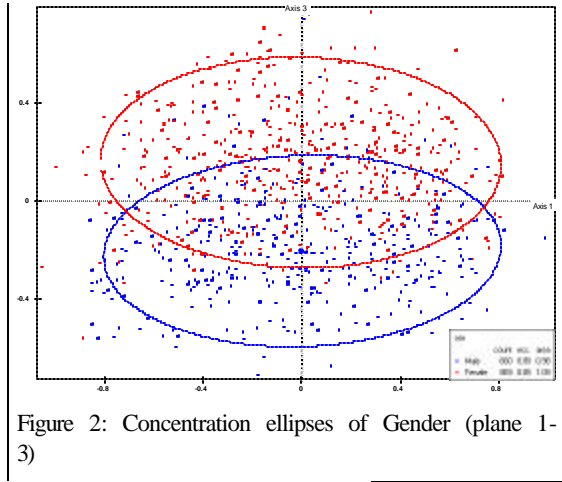


Figure 2: Concentration ellipses of Gender (plane 1-3)

Figure: Deviation and concentration ellipses for gender in plane 1-3

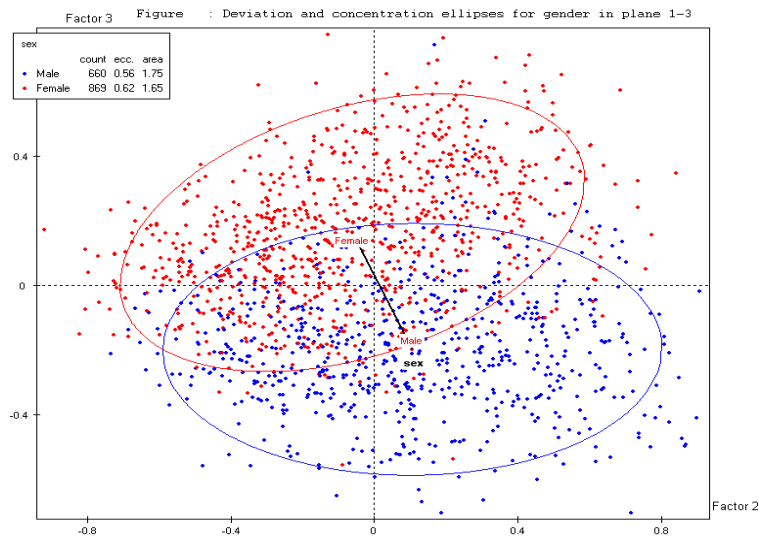
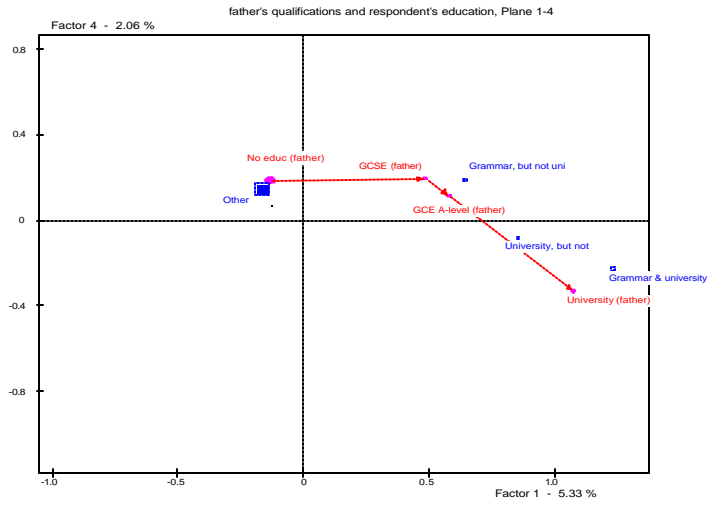
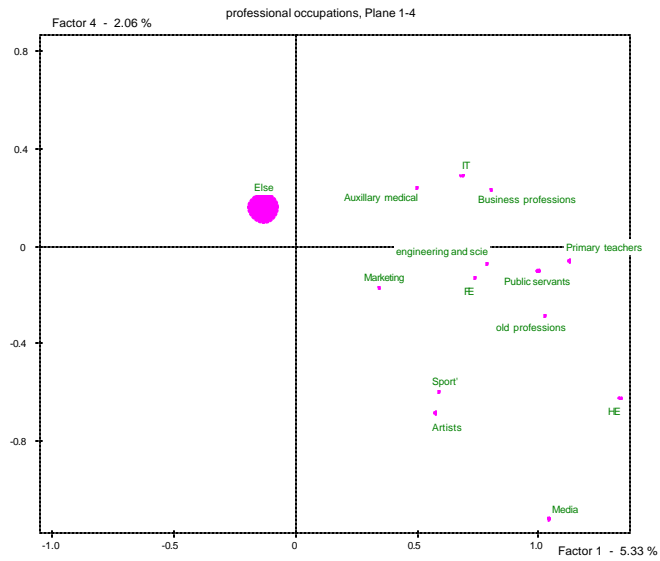


Figure7

**Father's highest qualification and respondent's educational experience, Plane 1-4**



**Grouped Professional Occupations, Plane 1-4**



**Figures 8 and 9**

## References

- Bellavance, G., Myrtille, V. and Ratte, M. (2004) Les goûts des autres: un analyse des répertoires culturels de nouvelles elites omnivores, *Sociologie et Sociétés*, 36, 27-58.
- Bennett, T., Savage, M., Silva, E. and Warde, A. (2002) *Cultural Capital and Social Exclusion. A critical investigation*. Research proposal submitted to the ESRC.
- Bourdieu, P. (1984) *Distinction*. London: Routledge.
- Clausen, S. (1998) *Applied Correspondence Analysis: An introduction*, London: Sage
- Crary
- Cultural Trends* - Double Special issue (2006) 'Culture, Taste and Social Divisions in Contemporary Britain', Vol 15 (2/3), June/September. Co-edited by Tony Bennett and Elizabeth B Silva.
- Gayo-Cal M., Savage, M. and Warde, A. (2006) 'A cultural map of the United Kingdom, 2003', *Cultural Trends*, 15(2-3), 215-39.
- Greenacre, M. and Blasius, J. (1994) *Correspondence Analysis in the Social Sciences*, London: Academic Press.
- Hall, P.A. (1999) 'Social Capital in Britain', *British Journal of Political Science*, 29: 417-61.
- Halle, D. (1993). *Inside Culture. Art and Class in the American Home*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.
- Hanson
- Katz-Gerro, T. and Sullivan, O. (2007)
- Lahire, B. (2002) *Portraits Sociologique: Dispositions et variations individuelles*, Paris: Armand Colin.
- Lahire, B. (2003)
- Lahire, Bernard. 2005. *La culture des individus*. Paris: La Découverte.
- Lahire, B. (2007) 'The individual and the mixing of genres: cultural dissonance and self-distinction', forthcoming, *Poetics*
- Lahire, Bernard. 2007 forthcoming, *Poetics*
- Le Roux, B. and Rouanet, H. (2004) *Geometric Data Analysis: From Correspondence Analysis to Structured Data Analysis*, Dordrecht: Kluwer.
- LeRoux, B., Rouanet, H., Savage, M. and Warde, A. (2007) 'Cultures of class: Britain in 2003', CRESC, University of Manchester Working Paper.

- Li, Y., Savage, M. and Pickles, A. (2003) 'Social capital and social exclusion in England and Wales', *British Journal of Sociology*, 54 (4): 497-526.
- Ollivier, Michèle (2007) 'Models of Openness to Cultural Diversity: Humanist, Populist, Practical and Indifferent Omnivores', forthcoming, *Poetics*.
- Peterson Richard A. and R. Kern. 1996. "Changing Highbrow Taste: From Snob to Omnivore". *American Sociological Review*. 61(5):900-907.
- Putnam, R. (2000) *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, New York: Simon & Scuster.
- Savage, M. (2000) *Class Analysis and Social Transformation*, Milton Keynes: Open University Press.
- Savage, M (2003) 'A new paradigm for class analysis', *British Journal of the Sociology of Education*,
- Silva, E.B. (2005) *Household Study: Technical Report*. CCSE document, available at [www.open.ac.uk/socialsciences/sociology/research/ccse/](http://www.open.ac.uk/socialsciences/sociology/research/ccse/)
- Silva, E. B. (2006) 'Homologies of social space and elective affinities: researching cultural capital' in *Sociology*, 40(6): 1171-1189.
- Skeggs, B. (2004) *Class, Self, Culture*, London: Routledge.
- Thomson. K. (2004) *Cultural Capital and Social Exclusion. Technical Report*. London: National Centre for Social Research.
- Warde, A. et al. 2002,
- Warde, Alan, Wright, David and Gayo-Cal, Modesto (2007) 'Understanding cultural omnivorousness or the myth of the cultural omnivore' *Cultural Sociology*, 1(2): 143-164.
- Weininger, E., (2005), 'Foundations of Pierre Bourdieu's class analysis' in E.O. Wright (ed), *Approaches to Class analysis*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Wright, D. (2006) 'Cultural Capital and the Literary Field', *Cultural Trends*, Vol. 15 (2/3):pp. 123-140.