



department for
**culture, media
and sport**

Understanding the relationship between taste and value in culture and sport

Research Study Conducted for DCMS
By Andrew Miles and Alice Sullivan

Our aim is to improve the quality of life for all through cultural and sporting activities, support the pursuit of excellence, and champion the tourism, creative and leisure industries.

1. Introduction

The purpose of the ESRC's Placement Fellowship scheme is to sponsor knowledge exchange between social science researchers and partner organisations, such as government departments. It recognises the particular value of providing opportunities for academic researchers to take on the role of embedded intermediaries between different knowledge and research cultures, working on areas of focused interest to the partnering agency.

In the case of this Fellowship, the call stated that the DCMS wished to work with a high calibre researcher on the topic of 'tastes' in culture and sport activities, as in work on Cultural Capital and Social Exclusion project (Bennett et. al. 2009), using the Taking Part dataset and other relevant sources. The Department was interested to understand how this concept can be related to value - in particular how expressions of taste relate to the value individuals place on engaging in certain activities. Individuals were expected to bring a practical, policy-oriented flavour to their research considering how the concept of taste can play into policy development around widening participation and improving the quality of the experience.

In the event, the DCMS decided to appoint two Fellows with complementary research interests in this field.¹ A decision was also taken to re-direct the substantive research focus of the Fellowship from cultural tastes to cultural participation. The reason for this was that the Taking Part dataset does not include items on tastes that could provide the required basis for the analysis suggested in the original call. Nevertheless, one of the outcomes of our work is a set of recommendations designed to inform the DCMS's data strategy in this and other regards.

We decided to address the issue of cultural participation from two very different perspectives, both substantively and methodologically. In each case, however, our work was principally designed to provide a reflection on the Taking Part survey and what it shows us about cultural engagement in contemporary Britain. Alice Sullivan's main focus was on the relatively novel (in UK research) analytical technique of Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA), which she applied directly to the Taking Part data to cast light on the clustering of participation. Andrew Miles's work took a more indirect approach, using qualitative material from other studies to address the meanings attached to participation and how cultural engagement is negotiated in the context of everyday lives.

Although these were largely separate projects, in this report we attempt to draw together their key themes and findings. First, we discuss the principal

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axes of patterning in the Taking Part data revealed by MCA. We then consider the types of explanation for these patterns that are offered by personal narratives of participation. In advance of this analysis, we present a brief outline of the methodologies employed and their wider significance for understanding participation, and before that, the conceptual frame informing our work. Following the main analytical section, we discuss the implications of our findings for the development of the Taking Part survey and the DCMS's data strategy more generally.

2. Research issues

Our respective research projects over the six-month period of the Fellowship shared a common intellectual interest in the work of the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. For Bourdieu, the intergenerational transmission of lifestyles was central to social reproduction. The ruling elite defined themselves in relation to a distinctive and exclusive set of cultural tastes and practices (Bourdieu 1984). The intergenerational transmission of these tastes and practices was fundamental to the production of social class differentials in educational and subsequent occupational attainment (Bourdieu and Passeron 1990).

Bourdieu's account of a society where the ruling elite participated in high culture and the masses participated in popular culture has been challenged by the cultural omnivore thesis (Peterson and Kern 1996). According to this account, the cultural elite is no longer defined in opposition to popular culture, but rather by its broad-ranging tastes. A great deal of empirical evidence has amassed in support of this characterisation of the cultural divide. But this does not negate the importance of the intergenerational transmission of lifestyles. Consumption of 'legitimate' culture is still the preserve of a small minority, regardless of the wider tastes of that minority (Warde et. al. 2007). Hence, the division between omnivores and univores may still both be an expression of, and serve to reproduce, social and economic inequality.

Despite theoretical claims that lifestyles have become individualised and decoupled from social structures (Bauman 1991; Featherstone 1991; Lash 1994), empirical evidence continues to demonstrate the persistent social stratification of lifestyles. *'Hardly any aspect of human experience – the clothes one wears, the number of siblings one has, the diseases one is likely to contract, the music to which one listens, the chances that one will serve in the armed forces or fall prey to violent crime – is uncorrelated with some dimension of social rank'* (DiMaggio 1994: 458). Evidence suggests that cultural differentiation is based more strongly on education and social status rather than income and occupational class (Van Eijck and Bargeman 2004; Chan and Goldthorpe 2007). However, the drawing of a sharp distinction between social class and social status can itself be queried (Le Roux et. Al 2008).

These theoretical concerns are reflected in the UK policy arena by government's concern to democratise participation in culture and sport. Those who do not take part in the high or 'legitimate' cultural and sporting activities

funded by the DCMS and its Non-departmental public bodies are deemed to be socially excluded. Accordingly, one of the DCMS's core Strategic Objectives (DSO1) through to 2011 is 'Opportunity: to encourage more widespread enjoyment of culture, media and sport'. Policy interventions are thus directed at initiatives that will increase the rate of popular participation as measured by the Taking Part survey.

3. Methods

The Taking Part Survey is an annual survey on participation, originally based on a representative sample of 29,000 people in England and Wales.² It is produced in line with National Statistics protocols to ensure 'quality assurance' and fits a model that prioritises large-scale quantitative data and traditional, variable-led statistical analysis in social and economic research.

This approach can be powerful, but also has limitations, especially when used with cross-sectional data, and a set of variables which have been selected for the purpose of assessing performance against government targets, rather than for social research purposes. In contrast, our combined approach to mapping and understanding participation is reflective of a new recognition of the importance of 'visual' and the 'descriptive' methods in the social sciences (see Savage 2009). Here the concern is to display the pattern of social regularities and to attempt to unravel it with reference to the way networks between individuals and groups form and re-shape social spaces.

More generally, the methods we employ here are offered as an illustration of the need for a mixed-method approach to understanding participation. Our intention is to show how diverse methodological approaches can help to unpack and therefore maximise the value of other, more established approaches. Stemming from this, our broader purpose is to make the case for government to adopt a more open, eclectic stance on the use of evidence, which would enable it to engage with a wider range of audiences.

3.1 Multiple Correspondence Analysis

The Taking Part dataset is the richest available source of data regarding participation in culture, sport and leisure in England. For this project, the 2007-08 dataset was used because it contains information on childhood participation and parental encouragement, alongside adult participation.

Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA) is a form of data analysis that has a long tradition within the sociology of culture, and was most famously used by Bourdieu, for example in *Distinction: a social critique of the judgement of taste* (1984). More recently, MCA has been used by Gayo-Cal et. al. (2006), Le Roux et. al. (2008) and Bennett et. al. (2009), to analyse British data on cultural participation and tastes.

MCA has advantages and disadvantages compared to standard regression techniques. A clear disadvantage of MCA is that it does not allow for an

² These numbers have now been reduced to 14,000.

analysis which partials out certain effects in order to disentangle the relationships between variables (Chan and Goldthorpe 2007). As such, although some proponents of MCA within the French tradition reject other techniques, deriding regression analyses as 'Anglo-Saxon' (Le Roux and Rouanet 2004), it seems clear that MCA and regression analyses are in fact complementary tools.

MCA is particularly suited to the analysis of detailed data on lifestyles, such as the Taking Part dataset. This is because whereas regression techniques demand that one variable, or a scale derived from a set of variables, is treated as a dependent variable, and a range of other variables are treated as independent variables, MCA makes no such distinction between variables in terms of their status. As such, it has the following advantages:

- It allows an examination of detailed patterns of variables – for example, participation and non-participation in a wide range of activities.
- It allows us to focus on the 'big picture', avoiding the common pit-fall associated with regression analysis of focussing only on whether a particular effect is statistically significant, rather than on the main patterns in the data.
- Because MCA is a geometric technique, and its output is geometric rather than numerical, the presentation of results from MCA is visually appealing.
- Although it is in fact a quantitative technique, it has great potential as a way of communicating with audiences who are uncomfortable with the numerical presentation of quantitative analysis.

Rather than modelling the data according to a preconceived theoretical model, MCA can be seen as an inductive, data-driven technique, allowing patterns in the data to reveal themselves (Benzecri 1973). Of course, the danger of this is that theoretical models are read into the data, without being subject to hypothesis testing. This is potentially problematic, and it therefore makes sense to combine MCA with other statistical techniques which are more suited to hypothesis-testing. In the case of the Taking Part data, a good deal of research has already been carried out using standard techniques, and the proposed research using MCA will build on and complement this existing research.³

³ Correspondence Analysis is often referred to as a special version of Principal Components Analysis (PCA) (Blasius and Greenacre 2006). The percentage inertia explained by axes takes the place of the percentage variance of PCA. Unlike factor analysis, correspondence analysis is a nonparametric technique which makes no distributional assumptions (Wuggenig 2007). It also has the advantage of being particularly suited to the analysis of categorical variables. Active points are the category values of the variables used to compute the dimensions used to plot the correspondence map. Supplementary points do not contribute to the construction of the social space, but are superimposed on this space.

3.2 Narratives of Participation

The principal value of qualitative data is the detailed perspectives they can afford on the meanings that are brought to personal and social lives and the often complex interactions that inform them. Narratives of participation therefore allow us to unpick the 'indicator' method of representing and measuring cultural engagement, by revealing understandings of what engagement and participation entail and by locating them in a dynamic, relational way to the everyday experiences and life processes which generate and link different kinds of cultural and social (in)activity.

The importance of just this kind of perspective is recognised by Bourdieu (1984: 506) in *Distinction*, where he observes that, '*When endeavouring to grasp systems of tastes a survey by closed questionnaire is never more than second best...It leaves out almost everything to do with the modalities of practices*'. It was on the basis of this remark that the designers of the Cultural Capital and Social Exclusion project referred to above followed up their survey with an extensive programme series of interviews.

As no equivalent set of complementary interviews has yet been undertaken in connection with the Taking Part survey, two separate collections of qualitative material from in-depth interviews on participation were drawn on for the Fellowship project work. One comes from a sub-sample of the 1958 Birth Cohort Study (also known as National Child Development Study or NCDS), which was still being undertaken during the period of the Fellowship and which eventually amounted to 170 90-minute interviews.⁴ The second source of qualitative material is another set of 90 minute in-depth interviews but with a representative sample of 102 users and non-users of Manchester's high cultural institutions, recruited equally from four area types in and around the city.⁵

While the NCDS interviews, drawn from a nationally representative study, offer longitudinal insights into the role of subjective, generational and lifecycle processes in mediating people's involvement in social and cultural activities, a particular benefit of the Manchester case-study is the contextual purchase it affords in examining the territorial and community cultural dimensions of engagement. Due to the parameters imposed by the period and schedule of the Fellowship, the numbers of narratives subjected to detailed analysis was restricted to 50 texts, 25 from each collection.

4. Findings

⁴ The interviews for this study were collected by a joint CRESC/CLS team as part of an ESRC-funded project entitled 'Social Participation and Identity: combining quantitative longitudinal data with a qualitative investigation of a sub-sample of the 1958 Cohort Study' (RES-503-25-0001, PI Jane Elliott).

⁵ These interviews were collected as part of a study of engagement with the local cultural sector led by Miles and funded by the Higher Education Innovation Fund. Cultural 'users' and 'non-users' were identified with the help of the arts development agency Arts About Manchester using its own e-bulletin to identify those interested in the arts and the marketing organisation CACI's mailing lists to identify households declaring a lack of interest in arts attendance and participation.

In this section we report on and attempt to draw together the findings from our respective researches. Using MCA to establish and frame the key patterns and relationships in the Taking Part data, we then discuss how qualitative data on participation from the Manchester case study and from the National Child Development Study might illuminate and increase our understanding of the processes underlying them.

4.1 Drawing a picture of participation in culture and sport

The MCA carried out on the Taking Part data focused on three questions:

1. How do participation and non-participation in particular activities cluster together, and how are these patterns of participation structured according to demographic factors, such as education, sex and age?
2. How does children's participation map on the patterns of parental participation in culture and sport?
3. How do patterns of participation in culture and sport map on to patterns of well-being, health and social ties?

4.1.1 Participation and non-participation

The analysis reported in Figure 1 reflects participation and non-participation in a broad range of leisure activities. This is based on responses to a general question on free time activities: *"I would now like to ask you about the things you do in any free time you have. Please look at this list and tell me the number next to each of the things you do in your free time"*. This is somewhat different from the subsequent questions, which ask specifically about activities in the last 12 months.

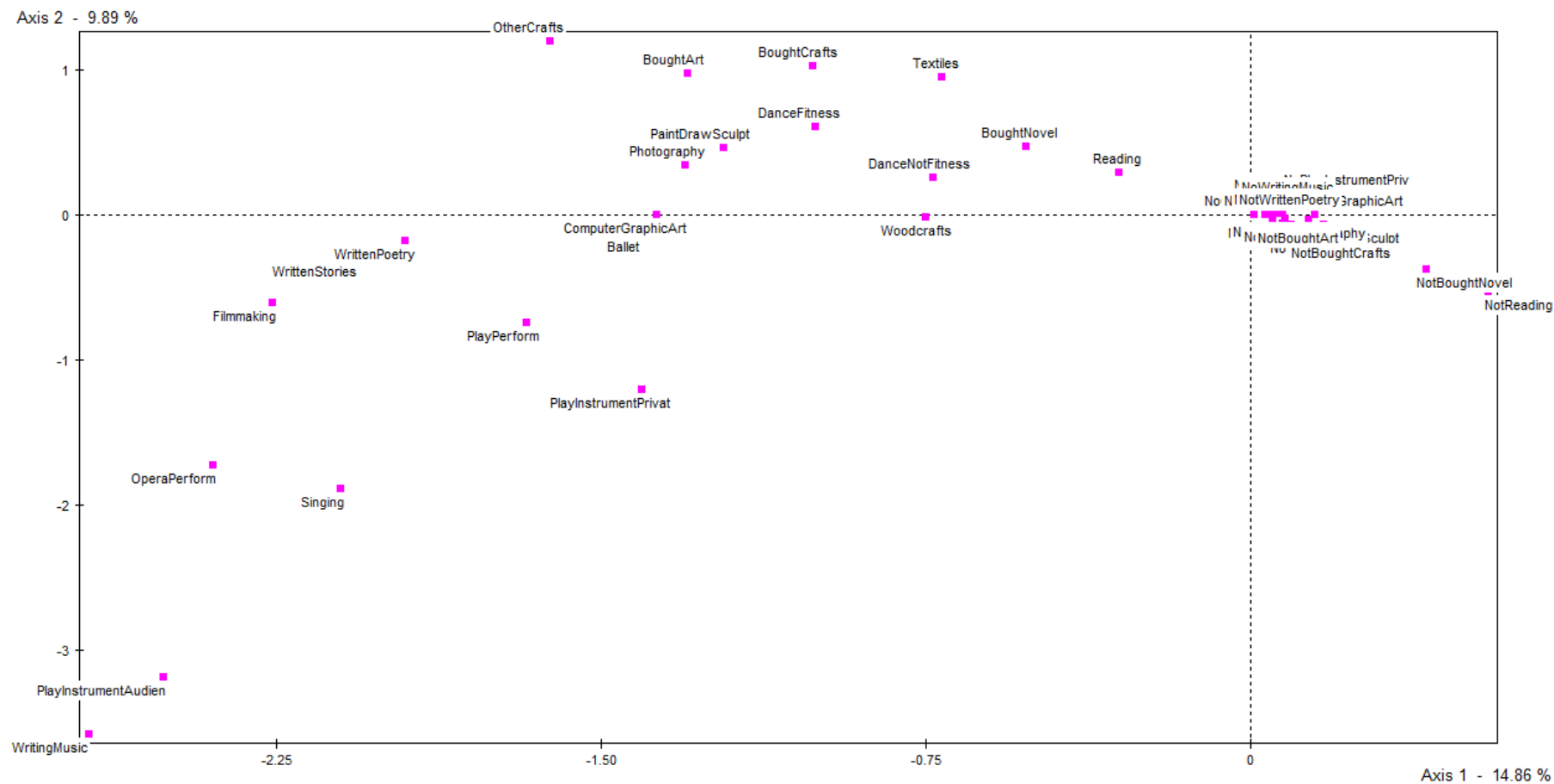
The first axis in Figure 1 clearly reflects activity on the right versus inactivity on the left. The only exceptions to this are gambling and puzzles, which are in the lower left quadrant. Higher levels of education are aligned with activity, and lower levels with inactivity. The second axis is strongly aligned with age, with younger people (under 45s) clustering in the top half of the space. The activities in the top right quadrant include computer games and pubs and clubs, while the inactivities in the top left quadrant include not gardening and not reading. The activities in the bottom right quadrant, which is associated with the 45-64 age group, include home related activities (gardening, DIY, shopping) as well as relatively 'high-brow' pursuits (arts and crafts, museums and galleries, reading, academic study, theatre and concerts), and community oriented activities (voluntary work, attending clubs, religious activities). The female category is also located in this quadrant, while the male category is in the corresponding negative quadrant characterised by inactivity on the same dimensions, but the gender categories are fairly close to the origin, suggesting that it would be wrong to over-interpret this distinction. The oldest age groups (65 and over) are aligned with inactivities including no computer games and no internet and email.

Figure 1: Free time activities



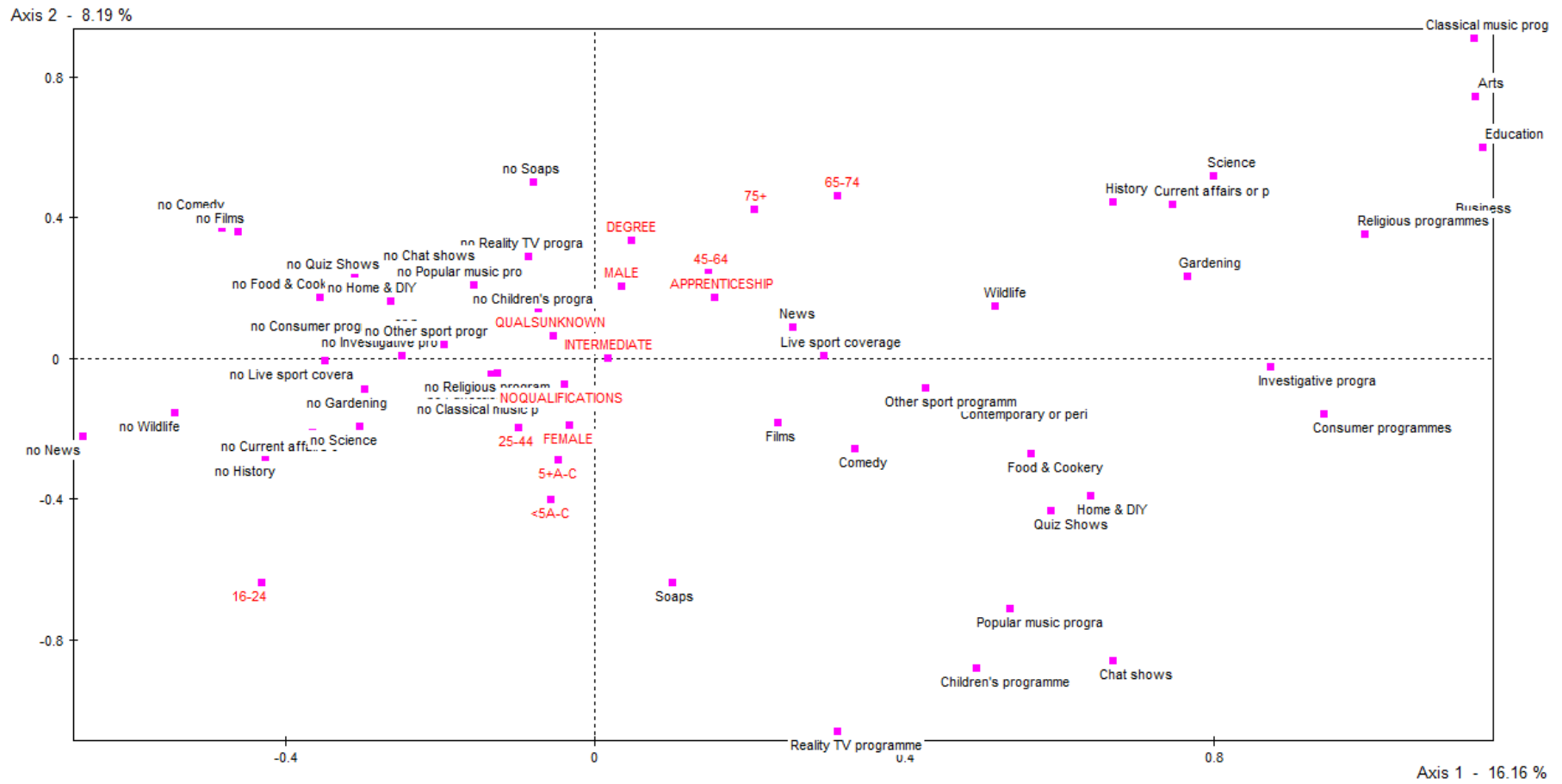
In the case of arts participation (Figure 2), the first axis again reflects participation versus non-participation. However, in this case, the non-participation variables cluster strongly around the origin, reflecting the fact that non-participation is the norm. Only not buying novels and not reading are decisively to the left of the origin. The second axis appears to reflect performance (in the lower half of the space) versus private engagement (in the upper half).

Figure 2: Arts Participation in the last 12 months



Turning to TV viewing (Figure 3), the first axis clearly reflects viewing versus not viewing. The second axis appears to reflect a high-brow/ low-brow dimension, with classical music programmes, arts, science and current affairs in the top right quadrant, which is aligned with the older age groups. Reality TV and soaps are in the bottom right quadrant. The younger age groups are aligned with the bottom left quadrant, which includes no news and no current affairs. The male gender is aligned with high-brow participation (such as watching the news) while the female gender is aligned with high-brow non participation (such as not watching the news).

Figure 3: TV Viewing

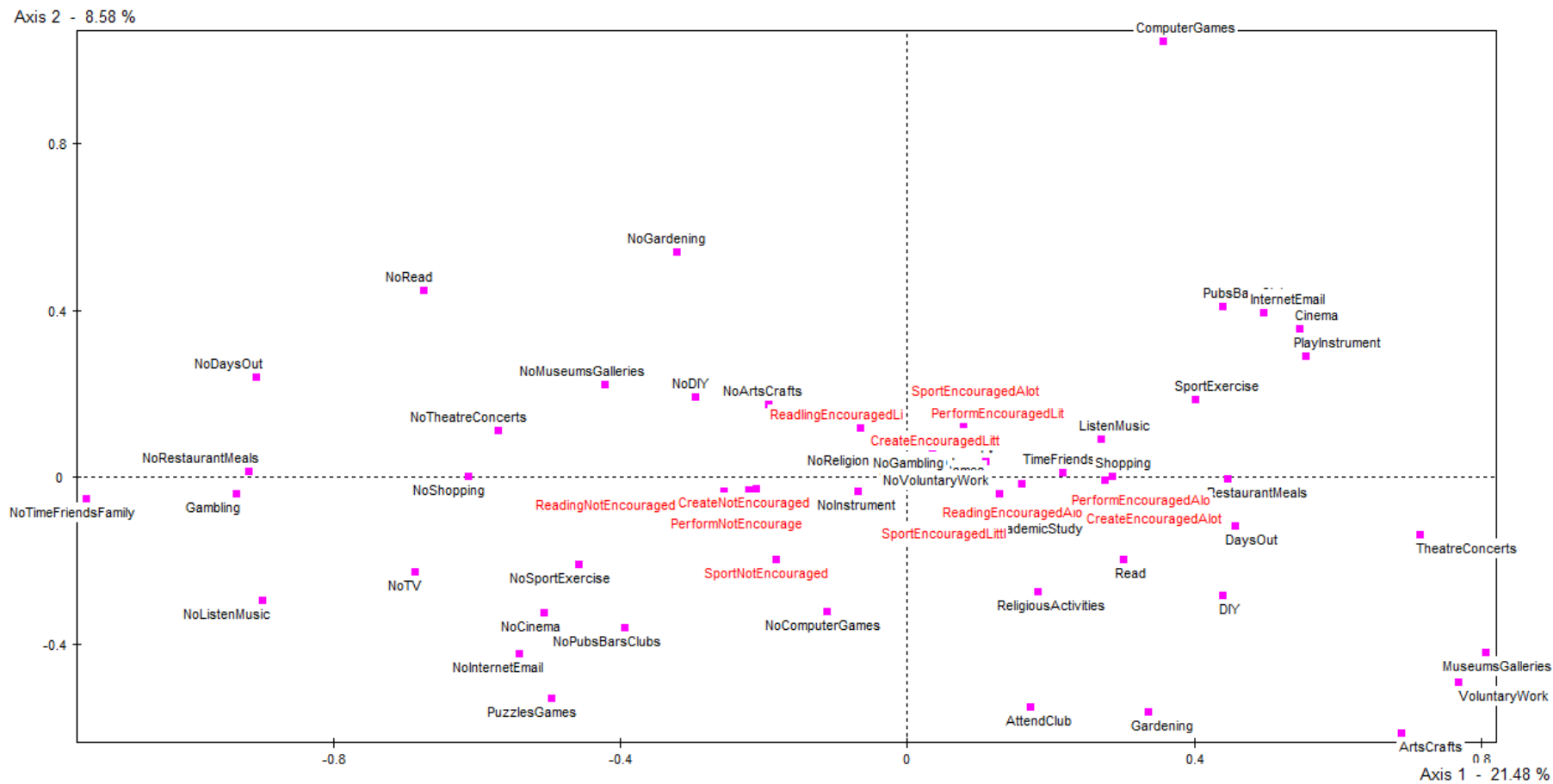


4.1.2 Intergenerational transmission

Parental encouragement and being taken to cultural sites during childhood are clearly structured according to the level of encouragement and participation rather than the type, so for example, parents who encourage reading are also more likely to encourage sports. The participants' educational level clearly maps on to the level of encouragement and participation in childhood. People with no qualifications are less likely to have been encouraged, not just in reading and the arts, but also in sport (these patterns are shown in supplementary analyses, available on request). Although we do not have data on the parents' educational level, it is fair to assume that the patterns shown are driven by highly educated parents tending to encourage their children more, and these children going on to have high levels of educational attainment themselves. This analysis cannot address the question of whether this high level of educational attainment is partly driven by cultural participation and encouragement in childhood. Encouragement in childhood is also linked to adult participation.

The analysis in Figure 4 treats parental encouragement as a supplementary variable. Encouragement is clearly aligned with activity in general. Encouragement in sport is located in the top right quadrant alongside sports participation, and encouragement in reading is located in the bottom right quadrant alongside participation in reading.

Figure 4: Parental encouragement and adult activity

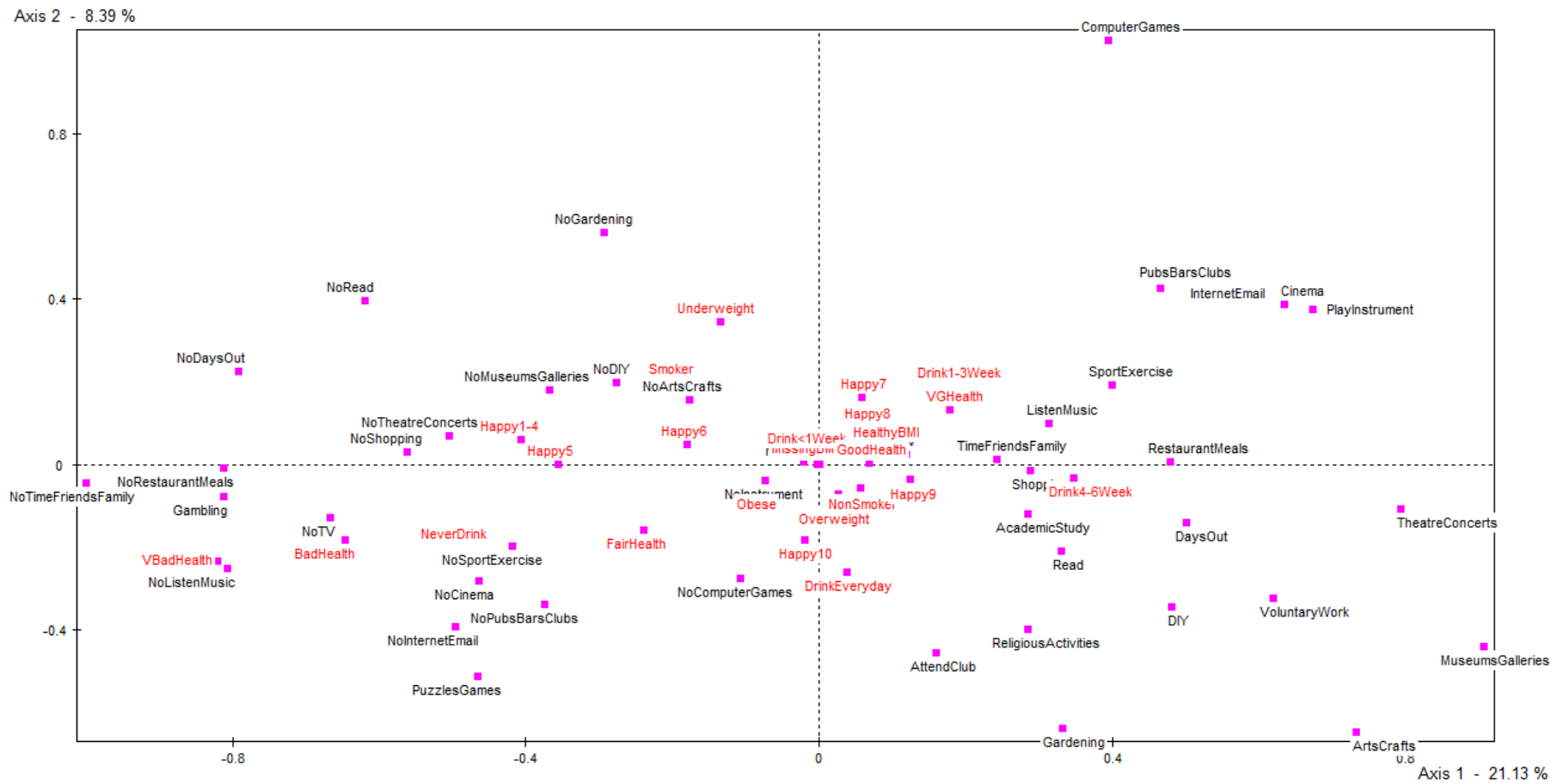


4.1.3 Participation and wellbeing

Figure 5 treats variables related to health and wellbeing as supplementary categories, in order to examine how they map on to free time activities. Poor health, unhappiness, smoking and abstaining from alcohol are all on the left hand side of the space, linked to non-participation in activities. Drinking, good health, happiness, non-smoking and healthy BMI are all on the right hand side of the space, linked to participation.

So, subjective well-being is linked to non-smoking and a healthy BMI, but also to regular alcohol consumption. Age and educational qualifications map on to this field, as the young and highly educated are happier and healthier. The place of regular alcohol consumption in this map may be surprising, but this is likely to reflect the importance of alcohol to sociability within English culture, as well as the fact that, in some cases, giving up alcohol may be a response to poor health. Also, among British women, heavy drinking is associated with high educational levels and being active in the labour market (Roberts and Ketende 2008). In effect, drinking may not be part of a healthy lifestyle, but, in England, it is part of the lifestyle of healthy and happy people. Unhappiness, smoking and being teetotal are linked with inactivity in the field of free time activities, but the high-brow/ low-brow dimension does not appear to map onto the aspects of well-being captured here.

Figure 5: Participation and wellbeing



4.2 Exploring the Meanings and Dynamic of Participation

The maps of tastes and engagement produced by MCA on the Taking Part data confirm that contemporary lifestyles are strongly demarcated around both the fact and the nature of participation. With respect to the DCMS sectors, the clustering of particular types of activity and inactivity shows quite clearly that *not* taking part in high-brow cultural activities and, for females in particular, sport is the norm. In-depth accounts of the way people spend their free time in the context of their wider circumstances and everyday lives enables us to understand better the apparent opposition between engagement and disengagement and also its significance.

4.2.1 Perspectives on participation and non-participation

(a) Positive Participation

Interviews with those who rarely or never interact with traditional or mainstream culture show that most are, nevertheless, positively engaged in informal social and cultural arrangements of their own. Largely focused on friends, relationships and ostensibly 'mundane' day-to-day activities, these can in fact be quite rich and involved.

The example of Lisa, a young single mother living in a social housing development in South Manchester, provides a case in point. Her interests revolve around her daughter, partner and family. She is particularly fond of shopping and cooking but also enjoys going for coffee, watching TV, reading, playing video games, walking and swimming, going out to county pubs for a meal at the weekend, and playing the odd game of pool or darts.

Here she describes how she schedules her free time during a typical week.

So [Monday to Wednesday after work] I come back...Do window shopping first, and then pick my daughter up from nursery, go to the local park, bring her back and watch the telly, do her tea, bed, watch the telly... And Thursdays, when I get my money [laughs], love it, go to Tesco do my food shopping, and I go into [town] and think, ooh... what shall I treat myself to this week. I normally go in to every single clothes shop, and then start out at the end and work my way up and then go back to the end again and think I'll have that one. So I do that, go and have a coffee somewhere and then go and pick my daughter up from nursery, go back to Tesco do a bit more food shopping...Saturdays, it depends on what my daughter wants to do, park or swimming or whatever she wants to do, take her wherever... Hmm, don't get back till late on Saturdays. Sundays normally a relaxing day. Just go to the park, take her on the swings and the slides, maybe go up and see my mum...

Although Lisa's interests might be considered as everyday and unremarkable, the technical detail in these arrangements and her animation in recounting them suggest otherwise. Rather, the prosaic nature of her routine masks an intensity of engagement that is revealed again when she refers to the link

between her interests in food shopping, cookery and her taste in TV programmes.

I love going food shopping. I love it. I'd love to go into Tescos and think right I haven't got a budget, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom. I love food shopping. I love that....I love going round and thinking, you know--,... I think its 'cause I watch Gordon Ramsey, I think ooh what can--, what can I make tonight, you know. I think... ooh I'll have that, I'll...and I love doing all weird concoctions.

Examples such as this suggest that the 'deficit' model of participation, which views non-participants in legitimate culture as an isolated and excluded minority, is misplaced. In raising the issue about what is to count as 'participation', they also provoke further questions about the relative value (and respective valuation) of particular type of activities. The fact that MCA on the Taking Part data indicates that it is participation *per se* that matters for health and well-being rather than participation in high rather than low culture (Figure 5 above) suggests that there is nothing intrinsically more valuable about certain types of activity.

(b) Ghostly Participation

As well as suggesting forms of meaningful and valuable participation which do not count for cultural policy purposes, the narratives reveal relationships with formal cultural participation that are missed in survey data such as those collected for Taking Part. This results from the way people self-identify themselves with respect to 'culture' or 'the arts' and also the way in which they choose, or are forced, to participate.

In the first instance, it turned out that a number of interviewees categorised as 'non users' of legitimate culture according to arts marketing data were actually quite actively engaged in arts and cultural practices. Secondly, because their engagement was largely personal, privatised, and divorced from any mainstream institutional context, it was hidden from view.

Maria, for example, works part-time in a local supermarket and is a prolific painter. She is also a fan of classical and operatic music, but her passion is worked out through reading, watching documentaries and listening to CDs rather than attending concerts. Having failed to get onto a university arts course when younger, Maria feels alienated from what she sees as a socially closed arts establishment.

I've always done art as a hobby because I never wanted to let go. I've always been--, haven't been able to express my feelings a lot, so I've always done a lot of it in art... I've actually now considered taking it up full time and doing it as a job but it's just knowing what steps to take and where to turn to and who to talk to...

Although she doesn't self-identify as an 'arts participant', Maria's identity as an artist is central to the way in which she presents her role and relationships in the community.

I do everything from--, I try and do portraits, I haven't done a portrait for a long time and I had an old boy on the street, it was his birthday... and I'm trying to do a painting now of him...I can draw any kind of face, it's getting the character of the face, it's the character that has to shine through the paint and people don't understand it...

I mean, there are people, there's like Ray and Carol across the road, Ray's working down in London at the moment. He has a lot of interest in art which he didn't realise that he had and so it's good because we can sit--, we sit down outside sometimes and have a little meeting and, and we tend to sit there and he'll say, "Oh, I went into so and so gallery down London." And I'm like, "Oh great, did you like it?" "Yeah." And then we have a discussion...

Hidden or 'ghostly' participants were found in a range of activities, such as playing in bands and mixing music, but painting and visual art was a particularly common theme. Richard, a young financial services worker, is another with serious artistic ambition who is nevertheless isolated from 'the arts'.

The things that I probably enjoy most in a week is probably seeing my girlfriend, going out to town and I get well into my painting as well, I paint a lot. I forgot to mention that I do it three times a week...

Museums...to be honest I wouldn't really go out of my way to go to museums but if I'm with my girlfriend and we've got time to kill then we'll go in and have a look around and like just like be amazed at how some things can be perceived as art...

I probably see myself, because of my art, see myself starting my own mini business...I've put a certain amount of money aside to get leaflets printed, get my internet site set up, things like that so I feel like I can do loads of art when I want cause what ideally I'd like is that to be my career

Michael, a former factory worker now living on disability benefit due to industrial injury, had recently taken up watercolours when he was interviewed. His interest is more incidental than either Maria's or Richard's but no less independent of the mainstream arts world. It also provides an example of how, as in a number of cases, the archetypal 'low' or popular activity – TV viewing – can provide a means of access to legitimate culture.

I just like started painting...Well, I've always fancied doing it but I just never had the time. I was scared to do it in case, you know, you'd be crap and stuff like that, but I'm not bothered now, if it's crap I just screw it up and put in the bin. Just put the best ones I do, we put on the wall. Joan's dad's got a few. He keeps saying, "We'll sell them, some might make money." But it's just something to do, innit?

[Q. Why did you choose watercolour?] ...*Because it's cheaper than oils. Also, it was on telly once, I was watching... we've got Sky in now...so I was watching something on there, there was something on there about watercolours and I thought, "Oh, that looks easy enough," so I just bought a few. I started with the cheap ones you can buy, now I go to the proper art shop and buy from there so...*

[Q. You said you've been the Lowry, what did you see at the Lowry?] *There was some artist on, we didn't go specially for that, it was just that we went down there--, Catherine, my daughter, was there doing a thing for school and... while we were there, there was an exhibition on for some artists so I went around and a look at them. Couldn't tell you who it was...*

(c) Passing Participation

As well as revealing hidden or ghostly participation in mainstream culture the narratives also show how the majority of 'non participants' in fact have some kind of relationship with it. They might be lapsed users or feel that their interest has been satisfied. They may harbour a curiosity about or an unrealised ambition to attend a cultural venue or event. They may actually visit museums, galleries or the theatre occasionally but as incidental, uncommitted consumers looking for general entertainment, a distraction for children at weekends and holidays, or just 'something to do'.

Asif is in his 30s and works as an administrator. He is separated from his wife and lives with his two children at his mother's. His own leisure interests are focused on playing sport and socialising with his mates but at the weekend he will quite often 'hit' a museum as part of day out with his children.

Week days I normally go out Friday nights but not--, not every Friday, every other Friday or we hit town with mates or... Saturday kids, you know, we go out, go out for a meal on Saturday. Sunday is just chilling day...But that can change, Saturday or on Sunday I might take the kids out so--,...Normally take them to Parrs Wood [an entertainment centre] or sometimes we hit the museum ...

Beryl, a retired care worker living in east Manchester, no longer visits the city's cultural venues because she feels she's seen all they have to offer.

[Q: And do you ever--, do you ever take in things like museums or galleries] *Oh we do not--, not an awful lot for the simple reason that when we have done them in Manchester--,*

...When you--, I think when I've seen it--, I've seen it, if you get what I mean....You know like--, you know the art gallery, which is a fantastic place true enough...And the museum--, my son was very big into museums... I've been to two or three times with him--,...'Cause he was only young boy himself, more than me ...So, I would doubt I would go back in them now, simply because I've seem 'em

These two examples highlight the way in which, for many people, mainstream cultural engagement is a possible but normally peripheral concern. While few people view traditional cultural forms in a negative light, rarely is it accorded a particular status of relevance or desirability, let alone the kind of reverence often associated with 'high' art. More likely, it is the subject of incidental or intermittent interest and subject to the pragmatic considerations imposed by everyday life and shaped by the life course.

4.2.2 Structures and forces shaping participation

(a) The life course

The importance of life-course effects on participation was suggested by the MCA in Figure 1 above, which indicates a clustering of taste and participation types by age group. But this masks the interactions of age with cohort, period and other effects that are frozen in the snapshot of cross-sectional data. In contrast, the participation and life history narratives from the Manchester and NCDS studies allow us to explore the way participation choices and decisions are influenced by the dynamics of the life course.

What is particularly clear in these accounts is the way family formation and relationship status structure participation. This is especially, though by no means exclusively, the case for women. In almost every case, having children re-focuses and privatises interests, reducing time and energy for independent or new pursuits.

Penny, for example, was an active participant, involved in music, sport and drama, before she became a mother but her cultural life is 'very different now to what it used to be'. Asked if her interests have changed over time, she replies:

I wouldn't say broader, unfortunately...well it depends if you call going to the zoo or going on a--, on a train ride is broader or more refined really [laughs]. I think I definitely had more interests as a sixth former and university, I mean that's--, that's a huge influence isn't it, and soon as you--, soon as you start a family I think it sort of goes with the territory doesn't it really, you have to change and do...I mean it's just--, you can go to the theatre with the child when they're a bit older and we--, we just do as much as we can really, that interests all--, the whole family.

Conversely, a prominent theme among the NCDS cohort members interviewed, many of whom had children who were in the process of leaving home, was the space this left in their lives. For some this was seen as an opportunity to resume old interests or try out new ones but for others it created a void and a sense of uncertainty.

Your life gets very much taken over I think by kids, you know. Well, ours did anyway. So I think there has been--, the last couple of years since we've been losing them, they've been [laughs] disappearing and getting rid of them, hmmm, I think probably, you know, we've done more and hence we bought the caravan so we now get away for weekends and this sort of thing [Peter: Teacher, Sussex]

I suppose the thing is you're sort of swept along with things really [when the children leave] and so really for this last year we have just sort of not--, you know, I think purposefully just not got so involved right away, 'cause it's just nice just to not do that for a while... You know, 'cause people come up with various ideas but then you think, well, you know, we'll just leave it a little bit, [laughs] and make sure that you don't sort of go headlong into something and then decide it's not for you. [Joan: Nurse, Lancashire]

(b) Work, leisure and transmission

Another very prominent theme in the interviews which is not reflected in the Taking part data is the importance of work in structuring leisure. The separation of work and leisure and the way in which culture has come to the fore as an interest for both academics and policymakers in post-industrial Britain have tended to divert attention from the world of work. However, the narratives confirm very clearly that work continues to 'get under the skin of life'.

In eighteen of the twenty-five NCDS interviews sampled, people's account of the way they spend their spare time either begins with or is strongly informed by their working life and the way this constrains, shapes, or more rarely facilitates, their leisure time. Shift work has a particularly negative effect.

I don't do much in me spare time actually...I start work at three in the afternoon, I'm usually in work 'til half-two in the morning/three o'clock in the morning... I come home, have me tea, stay up about an hour, I usually go to bed, don't know, about four/half four/five. Get up ten/11 o'clock. So to be honest there's nothing you can do, it's that life...[Stan, Refuse Worker, Manchester]

Working patterns and the time spent at work plays a major part in socialisation and cultural transmission. Referring back to the role of parents in sponsoring engagement (MCA Figure 4 above), few of the cultural 'non users' interviewed received encouragement at home and in most cases this is explained by reference to work and economic necessity. Paul, for example, a factory worker in his early thirties, recounts his experience as follows:

[Q: So, when you were growing up, were you encouraged to take up any particular, kind of activities?] *Not really. I mean I remember going to, you know, play football...and all I got off my dad was abuse, you know, "What did you do that for, that were crap"...*

[Q: What kinds of things did your mum and dad do, in terms of their leisure activities, interests?] *My dad not--, not really a lot, you know--. Sit in front of the telly, smoking cigarettes and drinking Newcastle brown ale...my mum was too busy with--, with her working...she was a cleaner, a cook and a--, a shop assistant as well*

[Q: Did she have time for any activities?] *No not really, no, 'cause when she wasn't working she was cooking and when she wasn't cooking she was washing and ironing and all that kind of stuff...I think her leisure activities was carrying 20 shopping baskets away home, you know--, her way home from the...supermarket.*

Sheila, also in her thirties and from the same type of white working class background, tells a similar story.

[Q: Were you encouraged to do anything as a child which you continue with?] *No, well ...I mean my mum was very much--, my mum's worked probably since she was about 11 years of age, you know and I think early on in life she'd be going on about going to university and then when it coming close to the school end it was like, "You need to get a job" kind of thing, you know, and she was more encouraging me to work. Because my mum doesn't have that many interests, in all honestly...she never took us swimming, I don't think she's ever been to a cinema in her life, and things like that.... All I can, kind of, remember is my mum at work all the time, all the time. And I think that's why I'm the opposite, because I don't want Megan to remember me not being around all the time. So at least like when she comes in--, because there are things you can be doing that are free, you know, pen and paper. And you can be making things...*

(c) Class and community

Sheila's determination to break out of this cycle on behalf of her daughter stems in part from the fact that she did eventually go onto to university, where she developed a set of interests, in part connected with the subject of her degree, which includes art and culture. Other narratives confirm the importance of higher education in broadening cultural horizons and in some cases making up for a lack of parental socialisation. However, they also indicate how those without access to such mechanisms of mobility are subject to the boundaries imposed by community cultures and peer group pressures.

Jemma, for example, is a young women from an ethnically mixed and socially deprived part of Manchester whose main interests are shopping and clubbing. She feels she would simply be ridiculed if she expressed an interest in culture.

...because, like, none of my other friends are into, like, going to museums and stuff like that, so...you just wouldn't do it..... Yeah, I think if I told my friend I wanted to go to a museum they'd probably just laugh at me.

Sheila herself feels a similar pressure to fit in, or in her particular case not to stand out. Her own social networks are based in South Manchester but in the working-class community in which she lives, she is unwilling to reveal her interests to neighbours.

..there's someone up the road and if I was walking down the road with her I would not be talking about going to an art gallery because she'd just be like, "You what?" She really would. I don't mean that nastily either, you know, but she'd just be thinking, "Who do you think you are?" 'cause that's--, there's still a lot of people like that round here unfortunately, you know. And I'm not saying I'm better either, you know, I just try different little things, that's all really. But there is a lot of that.

(g) Culture and regeneration

The focus provided by the Manchester interviews in particular highlights the need to understand the role of spatiality in mediating participation. Once more, this is something that the Taking Part data are unable to illuminate. Others have drawn attention to the role played by the intersection of culture and place in enabling people construct a sense of identity and belonging (e.g. Savage et. al. 2005) and the Manchester narratives cast further light on this process, showing up the partial and contradictory effects of regeneration processes in particular.

There is, amongst local people, great ambivalence about the regeneration of the city centre, a feeling of loss of ownership and criticism of redevelopment aesthetics combined with a grudging pride in the city's rising profile. It seems that many white working class Mancunians rarely visit the city centre. They tend to be more focused on their own communities or, in the case of those living in the eastern suburbs, to look further eastwards.

In these outerlying areas of east Manchester, people feel passed over by regeneration. There is resentment at the loss of amenities and a feeling that their communities have been culturally denuded by the re-allocation of resources towards the city centre and the population flux caused by social housing. The resulting sense of cultural disorientation is well expressed by Frank, a former train driver.

Well some of the people living here now, some are a bit rough. Because they pulled houses down, they're just housing them here, there and everywhere. And the worst offenders are the private landlords, because I don't think they bother where they get the money from as long as they get it.... But the general area has gone down ... We've got a park over there, yeah, well I go in there because I play bowls... But other than that we've got nothing. No picture houses. We used to have two picture houses just across the road. They're both gone. We had one a bit lower down, that went just after I went in the Army in 1959. And then we had one, two, three, four more lower down towards Manchester. All within five, ten minutes from here...

[Q: Manchester, is it a place that you think is changing, the city?] *It's completely changed...In every way, shape and form...all of the new buildings they're putting up, I don't like them. I don't think there's anything nice about them...Too many clubs, far too many clubs now. I wouldn't go down there at night. I'll stay away from it...They're supposed to be modernising it, but I think they're ruining it. And that--, what's the other building? That one on Corporation Street. Bit of a museum it's supposed to be...Urbis. I think that's an eyesore...*

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Participation and value

All nations exhibit inequalities in participation in 'high culture' of the sort that is subsidised by the state (Ultee et. Al. 1993). This means that cultural policy

entails a redistribution of resources upwards, towards those who are already most privileged. This is particularly so in Britain, where the funding for cultural projects comes partly from the National Lottery, meaning that the money comes disproportionately from the working classes (Matheson and Summerfield eds. 2000)⁶. Nevertheless, policymakers have expressed great hopes regarding the socially transformative power of cultural policy. In Britain under New Labour, this has been expressed in terms of tackling 'social exclusion' (Bennett and Silva 2006), which can be interpreted as a euphemistic term for inequality.

Part of the problem here is that many of those who count as being excluded on the basis of their lack of participation in high culture don't themselves to be so. In this sense the 'deficit' model of culture employed by government is unhelpful, as what matters for health and well-being appears to be participation *per se*, rather than a particular set of tastes and practices. It could be argued, therefore, that the intergenerational transmission of cultural tastes and participation is not necessarily problematic, and that what matters is that different cultures should be equally valued. Raymond Williams (1989), for example, derides the 'fussiness' which leads to the decision to call certain things culture, and then separates them from ordinary people and ordinary work.

However, Bourdieu stresses the pivotal role of high culture in the intergenerational transmission of wider inequalities and social power, arguing that policy should be directed towards giving everyone the capacities to understand and enjoy 'high culture'. In the light of the omnivore/univore debate, and more recent analyses of the patterns of cultural participation, the picture seems to be more complex. Rather than a ruling elite which is steeped in high culture, and a working class with its own cultural forms, we see that high cultural forms are often a minority taste even among elite social groups and popular tastes are common across social classes. Yet social stratification is still relevant, as more highly educated people are more omnivorous in their tastes, while some disadvantaged groups appear to be characterised by non-engagement and dislikes (Bennett et. al. 2009). This suggests that the role for policy can now be seen in terms of promoting omnivorousness and tackling disengagement.

Given the powerful role of the family in transmitting tastes and participation during childhood, and of community cultures in maintaining and reinforcing them, how can policy intervene?

- Education and the curriculum

It seems clear that education (both schooling and adult education) has a key role to play in promoting cultural participation in its broadest sense, and this is an area in which education policy and cultural policy need to operate hand-in-hand in order to have an effect. If activities which are heavily promoted at

⁶ See also <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/xsdataset.asp?vlnk=1448&Pos=3&ColRank=2&Rank=448>.

school, such as sports, are not continued by the majority of people (especially women and the working class) once they have left school, this suggests a serious problem with the curriculum, although it may also reflect other issues, such as a lack of facilities.

Similarly, we can question whether schools promote the sort of reading that is likely to be continued into adult life, or provide most students with the tools they would need in order to be able to access literary novels or serious factual works. In other cases, such as knowledge about food and cooking, the solution seems relatively straightforward – putting cooking back in the curriculum would give those students who do not learn these skills at home a chance. So policy clearly has the capacity to encourage participation in particular cultural activities, even if it is never likely to eradicate inequalities in lifestyles. Yet we know little about the impact of the curriculum on participation in culture and sport through the life course.

- Life course transitions

In respect of the life course itself, policy needs to be more sensitive to the structuring effects of life-stage, with family formation and age having been shown to be powerful forces determining and shaping engagement (see also Bennett et. al. 2009 and Scherger 2009). Here, there are both obstacles to be overcome, such as the sometimes isolating and privatising effects of parenting, and opportunities to be grasped, as in the case of ‘empty-nesters’ recently released from such responsibilities. A better understanding of the shifting dynamics of the life course makes it possible to target and adapt opportunities for formal participation to the circumstances of key life transitions and to formulate ways of intercepting and re-integrating ‘passing’ participants.

- Employment and regeneration

Alongside and integrated with reform of education and the curriculum, the policy arenas in which interventions by government are perhaps likely to achieve most in terms of undermining the cycle of transmission in cultural (dis)engagement concern employment and regeneration. Addressing the antagonistic effects of particular working patterns on the availability and use of leisure time care could have important intergenerational effects on young people’s participation. Halting the displacement of locally-based facilities and restoring meaningful cultural focal points to disadvantaged communities should be a central concern of regeneration policy. In these contexts sustainable projects and amenities are needed which can articulate local identities, draw out hidden and curious participants, and links them to the cultural resources in city centres and other local areas.

5.2 Data strategies and research design

Many of the questions which interest policymakers regarding culture, media and sport cannot readily be answered using the available data sources. The

main source of data is the Taking Part dataset. The content of this dataset is driven primarily by performance targets regarding levels of participation in the English population rather than by research questions regarding the reasons behind particular forms of participation and non-participation, and the consequences of participation and non-participation.

One issue to address here is to understand the range of policy-relevant questions in which culture is implicated, and to recognise the extent to which policy areas which fall outside the direct remit of DCMS may need to be informed by evidence on the relationships between aspects of culture and other areas of life. Participation in culture, media and sports has been implicated in almost every area of policy, including educational attainment and equity, social mobility, health, social capital, and well-being.

In order to develop understanding in this area, there is a need for consideration of the items included, and how they contribute to understanding. The Taking Part survey reflects a particular view of what constitutes culture, and omits some aspects of culture which are central to everyday life, such as food and cooking practices. Consideration should also be given to the enormous changes taking place in how we consume culture, and how survey data can be developed to interrogate these trends. For example, television viewing has become more fragmented, with multiple channels; and the internet and e-commerce have had a dramatic impact on the music industry and on book publishing and news media. The consequences of these phenomena for levels of and inequalities in access to culture remain to be seen.

Data on participation needs to be supplemented with data on people's tastes, knowledge and cultural self-concepts. Survey items in some of these areas have been developed by the Cultural Capital and Social Exclusion project, and by other surveys. There is scope both to draw on this work and to develop it with specific policy questions in mind.

Cross-sectional data is inadequate to answer questions regarding the causes and effects of particular patterns of participation and non-participation. Longitudinal data, and especially cohort study data, has several advantages:

- It allows us to distinguish between ageing effects and cohort effects:
For example, to what extent is the pattern of cultural participation of older people due to their age, and to what extent is it due to their generation? How does people's participation change as they get older?
- It allows us to look at long term consequences of earlier experiences or events:
For example, the impact of early participation and non-participation on later participation, and on other outcomes, such as health and well-being, including much later in life.
- It allows us to examine the direction of causality:

For example, poor health may cause non-participation, but non-participation may also cause poor health. Longitudinal data allows us to examine the temporal ordering of these relationships.

- It allows us to control for earlier characteristics:
In order to examine the effects of participation on other outcomes, it is crucial to control for factors such as social class and education – but cultural participation is itself implicated in educational attainment and social mobility.
- It allows us to model change:
What are the factors leading to an increase or decrease in participation?
- It allows us to study interventions:
Longitudinal data can be combined with policy interventions in order to evaluate their effects. For example, interventions in schooling and the curriculum may affect lifestyles later in life, including areas such as sports and cultural participation, reading habits, cooking and eating habits. Longitudinal data would allow us to assess these sorts of long-term effects.
- It allows us to examine important life course transitions:
Key transitions in cultural and leisure participation would be likely to include leaving school or education, entry to and exit from the labour market, family formation and childbearing, children leaving home and retirement, old age and failing health.

One obvious way to enhance the data resources available for understanding participation in culture and sport would be to introduce a longitudinal element into the Taking Part data. By tracking the same individuals over time, this would provide many of the advantages of longitudinal analysis, such as understanding change in people's participation.

It would also be possible to vary the questions asked to the Taking Part participants year-on-year in. Although establishing levels of participation, especially in activities funded by DCMS, is clearly important, these are unlikely to fluctuate greatly from one year to the next, and additional annual sweeps including the same questions may have diminishing returns in terms of addressing explanatory rather than purely descriptive questions. By asking some questions biannually rather than annually, space could be made to experiment with including different questions.

Placing items on cultural and sporting participation within broader multi-purpose surveys has some clear advantages. Large, multi-purpose surveys allow researchers to make connections between cultural variables and a wide range of antecedents and outcomes which may be related to these variables. For example, multi-purpose datasets often include a wide range of items regarding health and wellbeing and educational and work careers. DCMS is already placing items in 'Understanding Society'. It would also be worth

considering placing items within the Millennium Cohort Study (MCS). As a birth cohort study, this dataset allows researchers to take a life course approach to their analyses, which would develop our understanding of the way that participation changes at different life transitions, and the effects of participation and non-participation at each life stage.

Alongside longitudinal quantitative data, qualitative data on participation is required to flesh out and understand the dynamics of engagement. These include dimensions of understanding that it is not possible to measure or infer from the association between variables, or which are might slip through the gaps between the waves of a longitudinal study. Qualitative data can provide important perspectives on the subjective meanings and significance attached to types of participation, for example, revealing information about the intensity of engagement for example, or the social stakes of personal cultural investment. They can also allow reveal much about the process of engagement, such as how decision-making occurs or interests and motivation develops, and how engagement occurs in relation to everyday and life course processes.

As well as the substantive knowledge such data can produce, they can also perform an important control and monitoring function with respect to survey development. By enabling researchers to get behind the meaning attached to variables, they can help us to refine and ask better questions and can also suggest where new or different questioning is required.

An obvious starting point here would be to conduct follow-up interviews with a sub-sample of people surveyed for Taking Part. These might focus on particular social or life course groups in order to try and capture information about particular cultural processes or key transitions. They could also be used to target particular communities or geographical areas, thereby adding a layer of detailed understanding prohibited by the absence of area-level data in Taking Part. If the DCMS were to commission its own panel survey, systematic in-depth interviewing of a sub-sample of respondents should be included within the research design.

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