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The Social Stratification of Theatre, Dance and Cinema Attendance

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In current sociological literature the relationship between social inequality and patterns of cultural taste and consumption is the subject of a large and complex debate. In this paper the primary aim is to examine, in the light of empirical results from a research project in which the authors are presently engaged, three main, and rival, positions that have been taken up in this debate, here labelled as the 'homology', the 'individualization' and the 'omnivore–univore' arguments. Elsewhere, we have concentrated on musical consumption in England, and find evidence that is broadly supportive of the omnivore–univore argument. Here we ask whether such findings are confirmed in the case of theatre, dance and cinema attendance. A secondary aim of the paper is to bring to the attention of practitioners in the field of cultural policy and administration the need to address the issues that arise through the use of more powerful methods of data analysis than those often applied in the past. We explain how indicators of theatre, dance and cinema attendance derived from the Arts in England survey of 2001 can be subject to analysis so as to reveal two distinctive patterns of attendance and, in turn, two distinctive types of consumer—who can, it turns out, be regarded as omnivores and univores, even if with some qualification. The former have relatively high rates of attendance at all kinds of the events covered, including musicals and pantomimes as well as plays and ballet, while the latter tend to be cinema-goers only, that is, non-consumers of theatre and dance. A range of measures of social inequality are then introduced into the authors' analyses, including separate measures of social class and social status and also of educational level and income, and it is further shown that, again in conformity with the omnivore–univore argument, these two types of consumer are socially stratified. Omnivores are of generally higher social status than univores and also have usually higher levels of education and higher income than do univores (the latter finding marking the main difference with musical consumption, which was unaffected by income once other stratification variables were controlled). In sum, our results for theatre, dance and cinema attendance lend, overall, further support to the omnivore–univore argument as against its rivals, but also indicate that different

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aspects of social inequality impact on different forms of cultural consumption in varying degrees and probably through largely separate processes.

Keywords: Social Stratification; Cultural Consumption; Performing Arts

Introduction

In current sociological literature the relationship between social inequality and patterns of cultural taste and consumption is the subject of a large and complex debate. This paper starts by outlining the leading positions that have been taken up in this debate, and then presents some illustrative findings from a research programme in which the authors are currently engaged. These findings are used chiefly as the basis for a critical evaluation of the rival positions that have been set out, although they may also be of interest in their own right. In addition, attention is drawn to the methodology on which the paper rests. Although this may appear somewhat daunting, at least to readers who lack a statistical background, it is, we would argue, only by following such an approach that the issues with which we are concerned can be adequately addressed.

In the sociological literature referred to, it is possible to identify three main lines of argument. In their essentials, these arguments can be stated as follows, although each has variant forms.

(1) *The homology argument*: this claims that social stratification—that is, the prevailing structure of inequality within a society—and cultural stratification map onto each other very closely. Individuals in higher social strata are those who prefer and predominantly consume 'high' or 'elite' culture, and individuals in lower social strata are those who prefer and predominantly consume 'popular' or 'mass' culture—with, usually, various intermediate situations being also recognized. In some versions of the argument (e.g. Bourdieu, 1984) it is further claimed that the arrogation of 'distinction' in cultural taste and, conversely, processes of 'aesthetic distancing' are actively used by members of dominant social classes as means of symbolically demonstrating and confirming their superiority.

(2) *The individualization argument*: this seeks in effect to relegate the homology argument to the past. In modern, relatively affluent and highly commercialized societies, it is held that differences in cultural taste and consumption are rapidly losing any clear grounding in social stratification: age, gender, ethnicity or sexuality, for example, all can, and do, serve as alternative social bases of cultural differentiation. And in more radical forms of the argument (e.g. Bauman, 1988; Featherstone, 1987), emphasis is placed on the growing ability of individuals to free themselves from social conditioning and influence of any kind and to choose and form their own distinctive identities and lifestyles—patterns of cultural consumption included.

(3) *The omnivore–univore argument*: this in effect challenges both the homology and individualization arguments (see especially Peterson & Kern, 1996; Peterson & Simkus, 1992). As against the latter, it sees cultural differentiation as still

> mapping closely onto social stratification; but, as against the former, it does not see this mapping as being on 'elite-to-mass' lines. Rather, it claims that the cultural consumption of individuals in higher social strata differs from that of individuals in lower social strata in that it is *greater and much wider in its range*. It comprises not only more 'high-brow' culture, but also more 'middle-brow' and more 'low-brow' culture as well, while the consumption of individuals in lower social strata tends to be largely restricted to more popular cultural forms. Thus, the crucial distinction is not between elite and mass but rather between cultural omnivores and cultural univores.

In other work (Chan & Goldthorpe, 2005), we seek to evaluate these three arguments by analysing data on musical consumption. Far stronger, even if still somewhat qualified, support is found for the omnivore–univore argument than for either the homology or individualization argument, as explained further below. However, it has to be noted that the omnivore–univore argument was initially developed with specific reference to musical consumption (Peterson & Simkus, 1992); and while, in this context, it has in fact received support additional to that of the present authors (see e.g. Coulangeon, 2003; Van Eijck, 2001), its wider application has been rather little studied. The present paper, therefore, aims to examine how well it fares in another domain of cultural consumption, that of theatre, dance and cinema.[1] This differs from music in several ways, but perhaps most obviously for present purposes in that consumption generally requires attendance at some venue and, with the main exception of video film (which is discounted in what follows), there is no equivalent to the home consumption via various media that is of major importance in the domain of music.

Part 1: Data and Concepts

As in the authors' work on musical consumption, data is used from the Arts in England survey which was carried out by the Office for National Statistics on behalf of Arts Council England. The survey was based on a stratified probability sample of individuals aged over 16 and living in private households in England in 2001. In all, 6,042 interviews were completed, representing a response rate of 64 per cent (for further details, see Skelton *et al.*, 2002). However, here attention is restricted to respondents aged 20 to 64.[2] With this limitation, and after deleting all cases with missing values on variables of interest here, there is an effective sample of $N = 3{,}819$.

As regards theatre and cinema attendance, attention is concentrated on the results obtained in the survey from six questions. Respondents were asked whether or not, in the last 12 months, they had attended a performance of a play/drama, a musical, a pantomime, a ballet, some other form of dance (including contemporary dance, African People's dance and South Asian dance), or had seen a film at a cinema (or other venue rather than at home).[3] It should be stressed that interest in these results lies not primarily in the answers given to each question taken separately, but rather in the possibility that the answers to the six questions *taken together* can reveal *patterns* of theatre and cinema consumption and in turn serve to identify

types of consumer in this domain. As will be seen, this interest is reflected in the way in which the data are analysed.

As regards social stratification, we believe it important to do more than treat this through some single classification or scale of an essentially *ad hoc* kind—such as, say, the Market Research Society categories (AB, C1, C2, D) or the old Registrar General's Social Classes. Therefore information collected in the Arts in England survey on respondents' employment and occupation is drawn on in order to allocate them by both *social class* and *social status*, which are viewed, following a long-established tradition in sociology, as *conceptually separate forms of stratification*.[4]

The class structure overall, and likewise individuals' positions within it, are seen as being defined in a quite objective way by economic relations or, more precisely, by relations in labour markets and production units. To allocate individuals by class, the new National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification (NS-SEC) is used—in its seven-category version—which is specifically designed to capture differences in employment relations (Rose & Pevalin, 2003). The categories of the classification are shown in Table 4. In contrast, the status order is seen as reflecting inter-subjective assessments of individuals' social superiority, equality and inferiority as expressed most directly in relations of social intimacy. Such relations, where present among members of different social groupings, imply a basic equality of status and, where absent, a recognition of inequality. To allocate individuals by status, a 31-category occupationally based scale developed by the authors from analyses of patterns of close friendship in contemporary British society is used (Chan & Goldthorpe, 2004). The categories of this scale are shown in rank order, from high to low status, in Table 5. The closer together any two categories in the scale are, the more similar, occupationally, are their members' friends; the further apart they are, the less similar are their members' friends.

In any society, the positions of individuals within the class structure and the status order will tend to be correlated—but not perfectly so. Instances of discrepancy between class and status position are always likely to occur. For example, the authors' own results indicate that in present-day Britain salaried professionals and associate professionals tend to have higher status than do salaried managers, and especially managers in manufacturing, construction or transport, despite holding similar class positions as defined in terms of employment relations; or again that routine wage workers in services, especially personal services, tend to have higher status than even skilled manual workers.[5] Since class and status are only imperfectly correlated, it is possible to ask whether it is the one or the other that exerts the greater influence on individuals' experience and action across different areas of social life. There is, for example, evidence that class is the dominant influence so far as individuals' economic life-chances are concerned—i.e. in determining their degree of economic security and their prospects—and also in shaping their political orientations and affiliations. But, in contrast, the expectation would be that in regard to cultural consumption it is status that will carry the greater weight. This is because differences in status are typically expressed in lifestyles, and cultural consumption is one important aspect of lifestyle through which status 'markers' can

be readily laid down. In order to test whether this expectation holds good, it is of course essential that one should be able to distinguish class and status, conceptually and operationally.

In addition to treating class and status separately, we also draw on information available from the Arts in England Survey on respondents' incomes and on their educational qualifications. The latter are coded to the six National Vocational Qualification levels shown in Table 6 that range from 'no qualifications' to 'degree-level qualification or higher'. In sociological analyses of cultural consumption, income and education are often taken as substitutes or proxies for more direct measures of class or status of the kind to be used in the present study. However, income and education are here considered *along with* such measures of class and status, so that their independent effects, if any, can be established.

Finally, also included in the present analyses is socio-demographic information collected in the Arts in England survey, in particular regarding respondents' sex, age, marital status, family composition and region of residence. Given that the primary concern is with the social stratification of theatre, dance and cinema attendance, these socio-demographic variables are intended to serve primarily as 'controls': that is to say, they are brought into analyses chiefly in order to remove the possibility of any hidden confounding of their effects with those of class, status, income and education on which present interest centres.

Analytical Strategy

In Table 1 we show the percentage of respondents who in the last year had attended a theatre, for performances of the kinds previously indicated, or a cinema.[6] As can be seen, there is some wide variation in the probabilities of attendance, although much on lines that might be expected. Cinema attendance is by far the most frequently reported, while, at the other extreme, going to the theatre for a ballet performance is at a very low level.

As earlier remarked, we wish to treat the data in question primarily as basis for obtaining an understanding of individuals' patterns of theatre and cinema attendance and of the different types of consumer in this cultural domain. To this end, a statistical technique known as latent class analysis is employed, which can be intuitively understood as follows.

Table 1 Percentage of Respondents Who Have Visited a Cinema or a Theatre for Various Kinds of Performance in the Past 12 Months

Ballet	1.9
Other dance	12.7
Pantomime	14.6
Musical	25.4
Play/drama	29.0
Cinema	62.7

There are six questions that serve as indicators of theatre or cinema attendance. Since each question has a two-option (yes/no) answer, there are in fact 2^6 or 64 different possible response sets. The overall pattern of individuals' responses will therefore be complex. But the answers given by respondents to the six questions can be expected to show some degree of association. Thus, for example, those who say that they have been to a play are also likely to report having been to a cinema. Conversely, those who say that they have not been to a ballet are also likely to report that they have not been to other dance events, and so on.[7] What the technique of latent class analysis aims to do is to simplify matters by exploiting this association among the six indicators. It seeks to identify a limited number of discrete classes, or categories, of respondents such that, *conditional on their belonging to one or other of these classes*, individuals' responses on the indicator items become independent of each other—i.e. there is no longer any association between them. Insofar as this can be done, it can be said that it is individuals' membership of the latent classes that is the *source* of the association initially found among their responses, and each latent class can be taken as representing a quite distinctive pattern of response.[8]

Part 2: Results

Latent Class Analysis of Theatre and Cinema Attendance

It turns out in fact that, as is shown in Table 2, a very simple latent class solution can be obtained for our data on theatre and cinema attendance. With the minor technical modification that is noted in Table 2, a model proposing just two latent classes fits the data satisfactorily: that is, just two latent classes prove sufficient to capture virtually all of the association that exists among responses on the six indicator items.[9] Or, one could say, it emerges that underlying the results previously reported in Table 1 on these six different kinds of attendance, a clear, essentially dichotomous, patterning prevails.

On the basis of this solution we can then go on to assign each individual in the sample to one or other of the two latent classes that are identified—that is, to whichever he or she has the highest probability of belonging to, given his or her own set of responses on the six indicator items; in this way the respondents are divided into two types of consumer of theatre, dance and cinema. In Table 3 it is shown, first of all, that this process of assignment does not result in any major change in the relative size of the latent classes from that initially estimated under the model; or, in other words, no

Table 2 Latent Class Models Fitted to Data on Cultural Participation in the Domain of Theatre, Dance and Cinema

Model	Number of classes	G^2	*df*	*p*
1	1	1583.64	57	0.00
2	2	268.16	50	0.00
3	2[a]	53.22	49	0.31

Note: [a]A local dependence term is included in this model to allow for an association between attendance at ballet and other dance events.

Table 3 Estimated Size of the Latent Classes and Conditional Probabilities (Percent) of Attendance under our Preferred Model

	Latent class	
	1	2
Relative size (%), initial	62.5	37.5
Relative size (%), post-assignment	64.2	35.8
Probabilities of attendance (%)		
Ballet	0.1	5.0
Other dance	5.6	24.6
Pantomime	6.7	27.9
Musical	6.9	56.2
Play/drama	6.1	67.1
Cinema	48.0	87.1

great degree of uncertainty appears to arise about the latent class with which particular respondents should be affiliated. Second, the probabilities of individuals reporting each of the six different kinds of attendance considered are shown, given their latent class membership.

What, then, can be discovered about the two types of consumer that are derived from the latent class analysis? Our findings are in fact rather clear cut. As can be seen, latent class 1, which accounts for almost two-thirds of the sample, comprises individuals who have a very low probability—less than 10 per cent—of having attended a theatre in the year before the interview for any of the kinds of performance distinguished, and whose consumption is effectively limited to a fairly modest—48 per cent—probability of having visited a cinema. Latent class 2, in contrast, which accounts for somewhat over one-third of the sample, comprises individuals who have a relatively high probability (i.e. as compared to the overall rates shown in Table 1)[10] of having attended a theatre for each of the kinds of performance covered and of having been to the cinema as well.

These findings would then, so far as they go, appear highly consistent with the omnivore–univore argument initially referred to. The latent Class 2 represents the theatre and cinema omnivores, and latent Class 1 the univores, whose consumption is in fact more or less restricted to the cinema.[11] Certainly, we find no evidence of the kind that might be expected from the homology argument of a cultural elite who, in pursuit of 'distinction', attend the theatre for, say, drama and ballet performances but who at the same time display 'aesthetic distancing' in shunning musicals and pantomime. Members of latent Class 2 have the highest probability of attendance at not only drama and ballet but also all other kinds of theatre performance covered and the cinema. Furthermore, the very fact that the sample divides so readily into just two types of consumer is in itself sufficient to throw serious doubt on the individualization argument. There is no evidence here of the kind of individual diversity in cultural consumption that would, were it present, effectively defy latent class analysis or at all events require that an unmanageably large number of latent classes be distinguished, and ones to which individuals could be assigned only with great uncertainty.

However, one qualification still needs to be entered. The results of our latent class analysis lend support to the omnivore–univore argument only because of our decision, which is obviously somewhat arbitrary, to treat theatre attendance and cinema attendance together. If attention were to be focused on theatre attendance alone, then the typology of consumers suggested would not be that of omnivore versus univore but rather that of omnivore versus virtual non-consumer—or, that is, non-participant in the cultural domain of theatre and dance. We have in fact repeated our analyses excluding the item on cinema attendance, and the results remain on much the same lines as those already reported, except that now latent Class 1, while still amounting to almost two-thirds of the sample, represents non-consumers.[12] This point needs to be kept in mind, even though as we move on to our ultimate concern with the relationship between theatre and cinema attendance and social stratification, latent Class 1 will in fact be referred to as that of univores and latent Class 2 as that of omnivores.

Theatre, Dance and Cinema Attendance and Social Stratification

As already noted, in our work on musical consumption (Chan & Goldthorpe, 2005), we also find, with some qualification, support for the omnivore–univore argument. Our latent class analyses in this case point in fact to three types of musical consumer: univores, whose consumption is largely restricted to pop and rock, and then two kinds of omnivore—'true' omnivores and omnivore listeners. The former have a high probability both of attending musical events and of listening to music across all the genres distinguished, while the latter are omnivorous only in their listening to broadcast or recorded music. Further analysis then reveals that the chances of being an omnivore, and especially a true omnivore, rather than a univore, increase with status, although—following the expectations earlier mentioned—the effects of class are negligible once status is included in the analysis. In addition, it is shown that even when the effects of status (and class) are controlled, the chances of being a musical omnivore rather than a univore still increase fairly steadily with level of educational qualifications, but that, in contrast, these chances do not appear to be affected by income when other stratification variables are controlled. How far, then, are similar results obtained in regard to cultural consumption in the form of theatre and cinema attendance?

To begin with, we may examine the simple two-way relationships that exist between the chances of being in this regard an omnivore or a cinema-only univore (according to the previous analyses) and class and status respectively. In Table 4 we show the distribution of univores (latent Class 1) and omnivores (latent Class 2) within the seven classes of NS-SEC. It is evident that omnivores are most common in the professional and managerial classes, 1 and 2, where they are in fact in a slight majority, while univores dominate in Classes 5, 6 and 7, those of lower supervisory and technical, semi-routine and routine workers.

Table 5 is then analogous to Table 4, but with the 31 categories of our status scale replacing the seven NS-SEC classes. An obvious 'status gradient' exists in the chances of being an omnivore rather than a univore, which can be shown graphically as in

Table 4 Distribution of Univores (U) and Omnivores (O) within NS Social Classes

NS social class	U (%)	O (%)	*N*
1 Higher managerial and professional occupations	43.9	56.2	488
2 Lower managerial and professional occupations	49.4	50.6	1023
3 Intermediate occupations	63.2	36.8	574
4 Small employers and own-account workers	72.7	27.3	275
5 Lower supervisory and technical occupations	77.7	22.3	359
6 Semi-routine occupations	77.1	22.9	620
7 Routine occupations	85.8	14.2	480
	64.2	35.8	3819

Figure 1. Note that among higher professionals, teachers and other professionals in education and general managers and administrators, over 60 per cent are omnivores, while in the six categories of manual workers at the bottom of the status scale over 80 per cent are cinema-only univores.

These results are then consistent with the general idea that it is members of higher social strata who are more likely to be culturally omnivorous, and members of lower strata who are more likely to be univorous. But to test this idea more rigorously against the data on theatre and cinema attendance, it is necessary to move on from merely two-way, or bivariate, analysis to analysis of a multivariate kind. That is to say, it is necessary to relate the chances of an individual being an omnivore rather than a univore to the full range of stratification variables referred to earlier and also to the socio-demographic variables of sex, age, marital status, family composition and region of residence that are introduced as controls. Only if the effects of all these variables are considered simultaneously can we hope to gain some reliable idea of their relative importance.

In Table 6 we report results from a binary logistic regression analysis. Such an analysis is appropriate where the 'dependent' variable—that on which our explanatory interest centres—has just two possible values, '*x*' or 'not *x*': or, in our case, being an omnivore or not being an omnivore, and thus a univore. The β coefficients shown in the second column of the table represent the estimated effects of the variables listed in the first column. A positive coefficient implies that the higher the value of the explanatory variable, the higher the probability of being an omnivore rather than a univore, and a negative coefficient implies the opposite. Coefficients that are starred are statistically significant. That is to say, there is good reason to believe that these variables do have a real effect rather than one that might have been observed simply by statistical accident.[13]

In assessing the results obtained from our regression analysis, we may begin with those relating to the socio-demographic control variables at the top of the table, since these turn out to be methodologically instructive. First, we may note a result that serves to confirm what several other investigators (e.g. O'Hagan, 1999; Quine, 1999) have previously reported: namely, that a highly significant gender effect exists in that women are more likely to be theatre goers than men; or, in our terms, women are more likely than men to be theatre and cinema omnivores rather than

Table 5 Distribution of Univores (U) and Omnivores (O) within Status Categories in Rank Order

Category[a]		Status score[b]	U (%)	O (%)	*N*
HP	Higher professionals	0.5643	35.9	64.1	128
APB	Associate professionals in business	0.5337	48.5	51.5	171
SM	Specialist managers	0.5107	41.8	58.2	182
TPE	Teachers and other professionals in education	0.5017	39.5	60.5	167
GMA	General managers and administrators	0.4114	36.8	63.2	76
API	Associate professionals in industry	0.3116	58.2	41.8	110
SET	Scientists, engineers and technologists	0.3115	55.9	44.1	136
FRC	Filing and record clerks	0.2559	57.1	42.9	56
OMO	Managers and officials, nec[c]	0.2355	33.3	66.7	9
AOA	Administrative officers and assistants	0.2274	55.1	44.9	98
NCC	Numerical clerks and cashiers	0.2238	56.8	43.2	169
APH	Associate professionals in health and welfare	0.2228	44.1	55.9	152
SEC	Secretaries and receptionists	0.1539	61.8	38.2	157
OCW	Other clerical workers	0.1443	70.5	29.5	95
BSR	Buyers and sales representatives	0.1193	62.1	37.9	58
CCW	Childcare workers	0.1097	52.8	47.2	89
MPS	Managers and proprietors in services	−0.0453	62.4	37.7	170
PDM	Plant, depot and site managers	−0.0625	58.1	41.9	86
SW	Sales workers	−0.1151	71.4	28.6	262
HW	Health workers	−0.2121	71.3	28.7	164
PSW	Personal service workers	−0.2261	62.0	38.0	92
PSP	Protective service personnel	−0.2288	78.5	21.5	79
RWS	Routine workers in services	−0.2974	84.1	15.9	208
CW	Catering workers	−0.3261	75.0	25.0	68
SDC	Store and despatch clerks	−0.3353	80.0	20.0	25
SMO	Skilled and related manual workers nec	−0.4072	83.3	16.7	138
TO	Transport operatives	−0.4114	84.4	15.6	109
SMC	Skilled and related manual workers in construction and maintenance	−0.5014	84.5	15.5	116
SMM	Skilled and related manual workers in metal trades	−0.5121	81.0	19.0	121
PMO	Plant and machine operatives	−0.5589	90.3	9.7	207
GL	General labourers	−0.5979	81.0	19.0	121
Overall			64.2	35.8	3819

Notes: [a]For examples of occupations within each category and other details, see Chan and Goldthorpe (2004, Table 2). [b]Status scores relate to the occupational-based status scale earlier mentioned and described in Chan and Goldthorpe (2004). [c]nec: not elsewhere classified.

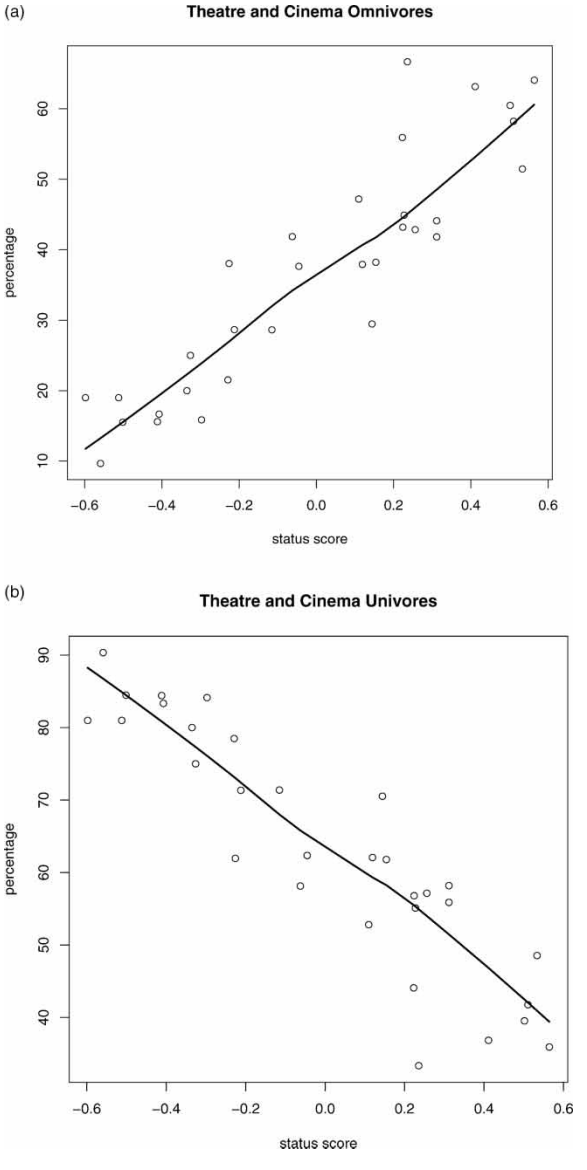

Figure 1 The Proportion of Respondents Being Univores and Omnivores within Status Categories by Status Score

simply cinema-only univores (see note 13). Second, though, the further finding of other investigators that the probability of theatre attendance increases with age cannot be confirmed. What we do find is that having a family that includes children below age 5, as compared with having no children, has a significant negative effect on the chances of being an omnivore. This would then suggest that where positive age effects on theatre attendance do show up in two-way analyses, or indeed in multivariate analyses in which family composition variables are not included, they should

Table 6 Coefficients from Binary Logistic Regression Analysis for Effects of Covariates on the Probability of Being an Omnivore Rather than a Univore

	$\hat{\beta}$	SE
Female[a]	0.615**	0.092
Married[b]	0.148	0.112
Separated	0.188	0.139
Age[c]	0.005	0.004
Child (0–4)[d]	−0.562**	0.113
Child (5–10)	0.070	0.100
Child (11–15)	0.088	0.105
The North[e]	−0.231	0.124
Midlands	−0.207	0.123
South East	0.083	0.135
South West	−0.189	0.153
Income	0.026**	0.005
CSE/others[f]	0.169	0.152
O levels	0.668**	0.128
A levels	1.130**	0.145
Sub-degree	1.027**	0.160
Degree	1.223**	0.151
Class 2[g]	0.078	0.126
Class 3	−0.161	0.160
Class 4	−0.205	0.203
Class 5	−0.134	0.218
Class 6	−0.199	0.195
Class 7	−0.507*	0.230
Status	0.631**	0.179
Constant	−2.118**	0.292

Notes: [a]Male is reference category. [b]Single is the reference category. [c]Centred at age 20. [d]Not having children is the reference category. [e]London is the reference category. [f]No qualifications is the reference category. [g]Class 1 is the reference category. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$.

be very cautiously interpreted, and with the possibility being kept in mind that they may well reflect life-cycle stage rather than generation.

A third result likewise brings out the advantage of multivariate analysis. It can be seen that the coefficients for living in regions outside London, although often negative in sign, in no case achieve significance (though that for the North comes close). Again, then, the implication is that where in two-way analyses living outside London (or the South East) appears to have a negative effect on theatre attendance, this finding could easily mislead. If stratification variables are not simultaneously considered, it could be that what region variables largely pick up is not any specifically geographical effects, such as the location of venues, travelling times, etc., but rather the (concealed) effects of stratification variables, on account of the populations of regions differing in their class and status composition and in their average levels of income and educational attainment.

Now turning to the effects of stratification variables in our own analysis, which is our main focus of interest, the following points stand out. First, it can be seen that when class and status are included in the analysis together, the effect of status is highly significant and positive—i.e. the chances of being an omnivore rather than a univore increase with status—while class effects are for the most part insignificant. Only membership of Class 7, that of routine, largely manual wage workers, has a significant—negative—effect on the chances of being an omnivore. In other words, our results in the domain of theatre, dance and cinema do in this regard largely replicate those obtained in the domain of music, even if in the present case the preponderance of status over class effects is somewhat less marked;[14] and thus our general theoretical expectation that status will be more closely associated with cultural consumption than will class, because such consumption represents an aspect of lifestyle through which status is readily expressed and displayed, is further borne out.

Second, Table 6 reveals that level of educational qualification tends also to have a significant and positive effect, over and above that of status (and class), on the chances of being an omnivore rather than a univore. Thus, in this regard, too, our findings in the case of music are broadly confirmed, although it should be noted that with theatre and cinema attendance, in contrast with musical consumption, the effects of education are not entirely 'monotonic'. That is to say, the effects of having some educational qualifications rather than none on the chance of being an omnivore do not consistently increase with level of qualification. As can be seen, having CSE-level qualifications rather than none has no significant effect, and having tertiary but sub-degree qualifications has a weaker effect than having only A levels.

Third, our regression analysis also shows that even when all other stratification variables are taken into account, a highly significant and positive effect of income on theatre and cinema attendance still remains: the higher an individual's income the more likely he or she is to be an omnivore rather than a univore. This result is then that which is most at variance with what we find in the analysis of musical consumption in which, as earlier noted, income proved to have no significant effect on the probability of being an omnivore rather than a univore, or in fact on the probability of being a true omnivore rather than an omnivore listener.[15]

The results of our regression analysis so far considered indicate, then, which of the range of variables under consideration have generally significant effects on the chances of individuals being theatre and cinema omnivores rather than univores. However, they do not tell us anything about the actual *strength* of the effects that these variables exert, which is a matter of evident interest here and especially in the case of the three stratification variables that have significant effects—status, education and income. To gain relevant information in this regard, it is necessary to exploit the regression model further: that is, by calculating the probabilities that it would predict for being a theatre and cinema omnivore rather than a cinema-only univore for various 'hypothetical' persons that can be constructed by attributing to them certain fixed characteristics and in addition certain variable characteristics specified in terms of variables that are included in the model.

For example, as such a hypothetical person, one can consider, first of all, a 40-year-old woman who has no children, who lives in London and who had an income of £25,000 p.a. as of 2001. Figure 2 shows the predicted probabilities under our regression model of such a woman being an omnivore when we vary her status and educational qualifications, the latter being differentiated as degree-level qualification, O level (or equivalent) and no qualifications. In the figure the gaps that exist between the three lines representing these three levels of educational qualification show the extent of education effects, while the upward slopes of the lines from left to right show the extent of status effects. It can be seen that the probability of this hypothetical woman being an omnivore increases with status at more or less the same fairly constant rate at each educational level—the three lines are close to parallel—with the difference over the full status range being 23–26 percentage points for each educational level alike. This may then be compared with the difference across the status range of about 30 percentage points in the probability of our hypothetical woman being an omnivore if she has a degree as opposed to no educational qualifications or of about 17 percentage points if she has O-level qualifications as opposed to none.[16]

Then, we may change our hypothetical person to a 40-year-old woman who has no children, who lives in London and who has O-level qualifications and, as in Figure 3, show for this woman the predicted probabilities of her being an omnivore when we vary her status and income level, the latter being differentiated as £15,000, £25,000 and £35,000 p.a. as of 2001. It can be seen that at each income level, just as previously at each educational level, the effects of status show up. Moreover, the lines of Figure 3,

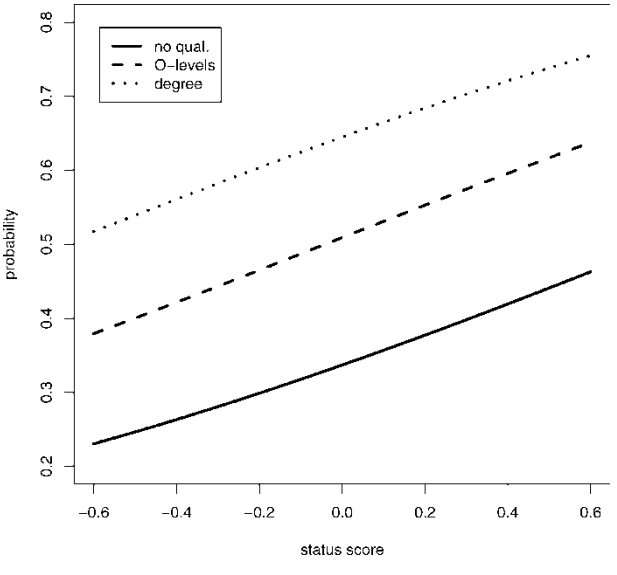

Figure 2 Predicted Probability of Being a Theatre and Cinema Omnivore by Education and Status. Note: Other covariates fixed as follows: 40-year-old female Londoner, with income of £25,000 and no children

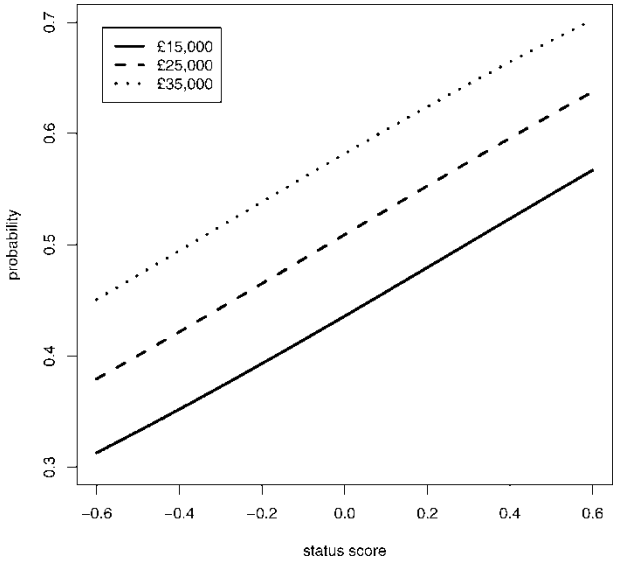

Figure 3 Predicted Probability of being a Theatre and Cinema Omnivore by Income and Status. Note: Other covariates fixed as follows: 40-year-old female Londoner, with O levels and no children

like those of Figure 2, are roughly parallel, suggesting that the status effect is approximately the same at each income level, and vice versa. Over the full status range, the probability of our second hypothetical woman being an omnivore increases by about 25 percentage points, compared to a difference of about 14 percentage points if she earns £35,000 as opposed to £15,000 p.a., or of about 7 percentage points if she earns £25,000 as opposed to £15,000 p.a.

These illustrations—and in fact others that could be provided for further hypothetical persons—do then indicate that the separate effects of status, education and income in relation to theatre and cinema attendance are all fairly marked, but that those of status and education are somewhat stronger than those of income. However, if the comparison is made with musical consumption, it is, as already noted, the relative importance of income effects that chiefly stands out. Further inspection of Figure 2 alongside corresponding graphs for the probabilities of being a musical omnivore or univore (Chan & Goldthorpe, 2005, Figure 2)[17] would suggest that the effects of education on theatre and cinema attendance, while clearly important, tend to be rather less strong, at least relative to those of status, than in the case of musical consumption.

Part 3: Conclusions

Three rival arguments concerning the relationship between social stratification and cultural consumption have been advanced and widely discussed in the sociological literature: what we have labelled as the homology, individualization and omnivore–univore arguments. In previous work on musical consumption in England, we have presented

findings that broadly favour the omnivore–univore argument, while lending little support to its competitors. In the present paper, we turn to the domain of theatre, dance and cinema, and ask how far the results of the analyses of musical consumption can be replicated.

In one respect, it could be said that the case of theatre, dance and cinema provides a yet more straightforward confirmation of the omnivore–univore argument than that of music. Our latent class analyses indicate just two main patterns of attendance, and, in turn, two main types of consumer: those, around one-third of the sample, who do appear omnivorous in having a relatively high probability of attending theatre performances of *all* the kinds considered *and* of going to the cinema; and those, around two-thirds of the sample, who are univorous in being cinema-goers only, if indeed they are consumers in the domain of theatre and cinema at all. That it is these two types of consumer that are empirically identifiable, and only these types, does then in itself serve to call both the homology and the individualization arguments into question. Our latent class analyses fail to reveal a cultural elite who systematically discriminate among different kinds of theatre performance; but at the same time, theatre and cinema attendance clearly cannot be regarded as simply forms of individual expression, devoid of all social patterning. Moreover, when stratification variables are introduced into the analyses the results obtained are generally those that would be expected under the omnivore–univore argument. Higher status, higher educational qualifications and a higher income all increase individuals' chances of being an omnivore rather than a univore. In sum, theatre and cinema attendance, like musical consumption, is quite evidently socially stratified, but on omnivore–univore rather than elite–mass lines.

At the same time, though, some differences from our findings in the domain of music have also to be recognized. To begin with, while status effects do generally dominate class effects on theatre and cinema attendance, as would be expected to be the case, class is not so completely overshadowed as it is in relation to musical consumption. The chances of being a theatre and cinema omnivore significantly decrease for those holding the least advantaged class positions (Class 7), even when status is controlled for. Further, while education is clearly an important influence on theatre and cinema attendance, its effects would appear to be somewhat less consistent and also relatively less strong than they are on musical consumption. And finally, and most notably, income, which appears statistically non-significant in regard to musical omnivorousness, exerts a highly significant and fairly substantial effect on the probability of being a theatre and cinema omnivore, even when other stratification variables are included in the analysis.

As regards further research in this area, two points may be made in the light of the foregoing. First, the fact, revealed by multivariate analysis, that status, education and income, and to a lesser degree class, all have some independent importance in influencing theatre and cinema attendance itself indicates one issue that new research needs to address. The suggestion is that, underlying the statistical results that have been reported, *several different processes* are likely to be at work in shaping individuals' patterns of cultural consumption. That is to say, while our results lend further support to the omnivore–univore argument and again to the idea that the expression of status is

centrally involved in the differentiation of omnivores and univores, it would nonetheless seem likely that omnivorousness is also promoted or inhibited in a number of other ways, about which we need to know more.

For example, in the case of music we have hypothesized that the effect of education on omnivorousness, when considered net of those of status and other stratification variables, might be seen not so much as a further stratification effect but, at least in some substantial part, as reflecting a psychological rather than a social process—one to which proponents of 'empirical aesthetics' have in fact given much attention (Berlyne, 1974; Moles, 1971). According to these authors, the greater an individual's information-processing capacity, for which educational level is a good indicator, the more complex must be the informational stimuli of any cultural activity in which he or she engages if aesthetic pleasure and fulfilment are to follow from it. It is then via this mechanism that one might account for the positive association that exists between educational level and musical omnivorousness insofar as the latter involves a taste for more as well as less complex cultural forms. And this same argument could, we believe, be taken to apply in the case of theatre, dance and cinema, even if the relative importance of education is here somewhat less. At the same time, though, the fact that in this latter domain income, and at least to a limited extent class position, are also of importance in determining omnivorousness, over and above the effects of status and education, would suggest a greater relevance of purely economic resources and constraints than in musical consumption. An explanation of this might be a higher average cost of admission to theatre performances than to musical events, but we know of no reliable evidence on this point. An alternative hypothesis that could be pursued is that theatre visits tend to be more expensive overall because they are conventionally associated with other, more material forms of consumption: a meal out, chocolates, interval ice-creams and drinks, etc. Thus, Quine estimates that 'it is quite possible to spend £200 for an evening out for two based around a theatre visit' (1999, p. 8).

A second point concerning further research arises from the proviso made earlier concerning the linking of theatre and cinema attendance in the analyses: namely, that if we were to focus on theatre alone, then in the light of our results the omnivore–univore contrast would have to give way to the starker one of omnivore versus virtual non-consumer. The important question is thus posed of whether there might be other cultural domains in which it is quite clearly the latter rather than the former contrast that is the more appropriate. Insofar as this should prove to be the case, then a more serious challenge to the omnivore–univore argument would be raised than any that has so far been apparent. Drawing again on the rich data of the Arts in England Survey, we plan to examine this question further, in particular in regard to the visual arts.

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Notes

[1] It may be noted that the omnivore–univore argument, more so than either the homology or individualization arguments, focuses on actual cultural consumption rather than taste per se. The authors follow this emphasis.

[2] The cultural consumption of younger and older age groups has in general distinctive features and raises special problems—in particular in relation to social stratification—and is therefore best considered separately.

[3] Respondents were asked 'to include things like community events but exclude any events that you attended as part of your job, or events produced by a school or 6th form college'.

[4] The classic text here is Weber (1968). In the text below, the distinction made by Weber is essentially followed. See further Chan and Goldthorpe (2004).

[5] As well as being of interest to sociologists, the distinction between class and status has been clearly paralleled in imaginative literature. In novels and plays, from the 19th century onwards, the nouveau riche industrialists and the impoverished aristocrat, entangled in matters of money, honour and the marriage of their children, have been almost stock characters.

[6] Henceforth, for convenience, 'theatre' attendance is taken to include dance—cinema attendance is distinguished for reasons that will become apparent.

[7] To be specific, among those who had been to a play in the past 12 months, 82% had also been to the cinema, while among those who had not been to a play, the rate of cinema attendance was only 55%. Similarly, while all 74 respondents who had been to a ballet performance also went to other types of dance event, only 11% of those who had not been to a ballet attended other dance events.

[8] A useful introduction to latent class analysis is provided by McCutcheon (1987). As the text above indicates, 'class' in this context means simply 'category' and no confusion should arise with 'class' as used elsewhere in the paper in the sense of 'social class'.

[9] There are three pieces of information in Table 2. G^2 tells us the extent to which a model fits the data. All else equal, the smaller the G^2 the better the fit. Degrees of freedom (df) refers to the complexity of the model. Generally, a simpler model is to be preferred to a more complex one. There is, however, usually a tradeoff between model fit (G^2) and model simplicity (df). That is, relatively simple models often do not fit the data well enough. To judge whether a particular model fits (or reproduces) the observed data adequately, the statistic p is used. The convention is that if $p < 0.05$, the model in question is not regarded as sufficiently well fitting, and a more complex model should be considered. Conversely, if $p \geq 0.05$ one need not reject the hypothesis that the model does represent the data adequately. As can be seen, in Table 2, model 3 with $p = 0.31$ meets this latter requirement.

[10] The probability of attending ballet among respondents in latent Class 2 is low at 5%. But this is still higher than the overall rate of 1.9%.

[11] One might of course expect some significant differences between members of latent Classes 1 an 2 in the kinds of film they go to see. Unfortunately, the Arts in England Survey does not contain data that would allow this matter to be investigated. One should, however, recognize the possibility—and this would in fact be the expectation—that a 'fractal', or self-replicating, pattern of results would emerge: i.e. that *within* the domain of cinema, an omnivore–univore difference in consumption would

again occur, with members of latent Class 2 being likely to watch most or all types of film while members of latent Class 1 restrict their consumption to, say, Hollywood blockbusters.

[12] The detailed results are available from the authors on request.

[13] To understand the notion of statistical significance, consider the following example. Suppose one would like to know if women really are more likely than men to belong to the omnivores. One asks the following question: if gender in fact has no effect on latent class membership, what is the probability that one would draw a particular sample which gives an estimated coefficient that is as large as 0.615 (as shown at the top of the second column of Table 6)? This probability depends on the ratio of the coefficient to its standard error (see the third column of Table 6). Roughly, if the ratio is greater than two, then the probability is less than five per cent, which could be considered as fairly strong evidence against the hypothesis of no gender effect. If the ratio is larger, then the probability will be still smaller, suggesting an even stronger reason to believe that gender does have an effect on latent class membership. In the present case, the ratio is 6.7 ($= 0.615/0.092$), and the corresponding probability is actually less than one in a million. Given this, one could be quite confident that women are indeed more active than men in the domain of theatre, dance and cinema.

[14] It might be argued that since class is treated through seven discrete categories but status through a single continuous variable, it is more likely, for this reason alone, that the latter will be found to be significant. To check on this, all of the analyses have been repeated using a five-fold version of NS-SEC together with a four-fold collapse of the status order. In the case of musical consumption, essentially the same result is obtained as before: status effects still generally dominate class effects. In the case of theatre, dance and cinema, however, the effects of status become less marked and in fact more similar to those of class, in that the most clearly significant effects are those of membership of the lowest of the four status categories and of the combined NS-SEC Classes 6 and 7 alike reducing the chances of being an omnivore. These results are available from the authors on request.

[15] It should be added here that income in the Arts in England Survey refers to individual rather than household income. It may not therefore give an exact indication of the economic resources of any particular individual since other individuals in the household may either provide further financial support or have themselves to be supported.

[16] A further difference with the results relating to musical consumption arises here. In the latter case, the effects of status on the predicted probabilities of being a (true) musical omnivore were clearly more marked among graduates than among those with a lower level of educational qualifications.

[17] The most illuminating graph in this regard is that of the upper panel of the figure, which shows the effects of education and status on the probabilities of being a musical univore as opposed to either of the two kinds of omnivore, true omnivores and omnivore listeners, that are distinguished.

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