

Social Status and Cultural Consumption

Sociology of Post Industrial Societies

MT 2014

Week 8

E. STATUS HONOR. In contrast to classes, *Stände* (*status groups*) are normally groups. They are, however, often of an amorphous kind. In contrast to the purely economically determined "class situation," we wish to designate as *status situation* every typical component of the life of men that is determined by a specific, positive or negative, social estimation of *honor*. This honor may be connected with any quality shared by a plurality, and, of course, it can be knit to a class situation: class distinctions are linked in the most varied ways with status distinctions. Property as such is not always recognized as a status qualification, but in the long run it is, and with extraordinary regularity. In the subsistence economy of neighborhood associations, it is often simply the richest who is the "chieftain." However, this often is only an honorific preference. For example, in the so-called pure modern democracy, that is, one devoid of any expressly ordered status privileges for individuals, it may be that only the families coming under approximately the same tax class **dance with one another**. This example is reported of certain smaller Swiss cities. But status honor need not necessarily be linked with a class situation. On the contrary, it normally stands in sharp opposition to the pretensions of sheer property.

Max Weber: Class, Status and Party



“Nor can I do better, in conclusion, than impress upon you the study of Greek literature, which not only elevates above the vulgar herd, but leads not infrequently to positions of considerable emolument.”

Thomas Gaisford, 1779-1855, Dean of Christchurch, *Christmas Day Sermon in the Cathedral*

“Watering places may be divided into two classes, (1) those in which is a circle of visiting, to which presentable people find access; (2) those without any circle of visiting or society whatever. This is an important distinction and great effects flow from the operation of either condition...Some desire to be private, some are inadmissible. Both these classes choose a town without a circle: to others, visiting and morning calls, added to a sojourn by the seaside, render the place very desirable.”

George Roberts, 1851, *Social History of the Southern Counties of England*, pp 559.

“Suburban ladies and their daughters, with nothing to do in their large, many-servanted villas after the head of the household had left by the morning train, went through elaborate rituals of calling on each other and leaving their visiting cards. Only families of the same social standing were visited: for a new comer to leave her cards without first being visited and accepted was to invite a polite but firm rebuff, and every new family was scrutinized and its antecedents checked before the ladies of the suburb pronounced it respectable. On the other hand, the suburban ladies avoided like the plague calling on the ladies of county society, out of fear of the same rebuff and of being accused of social climbing by their peers.”

Harold Perkin, *The Age of the Railway*, pp 263



Emily Thornberry MP 

@EmilyThornberry

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329 RETWEETS 81 FAVORITES







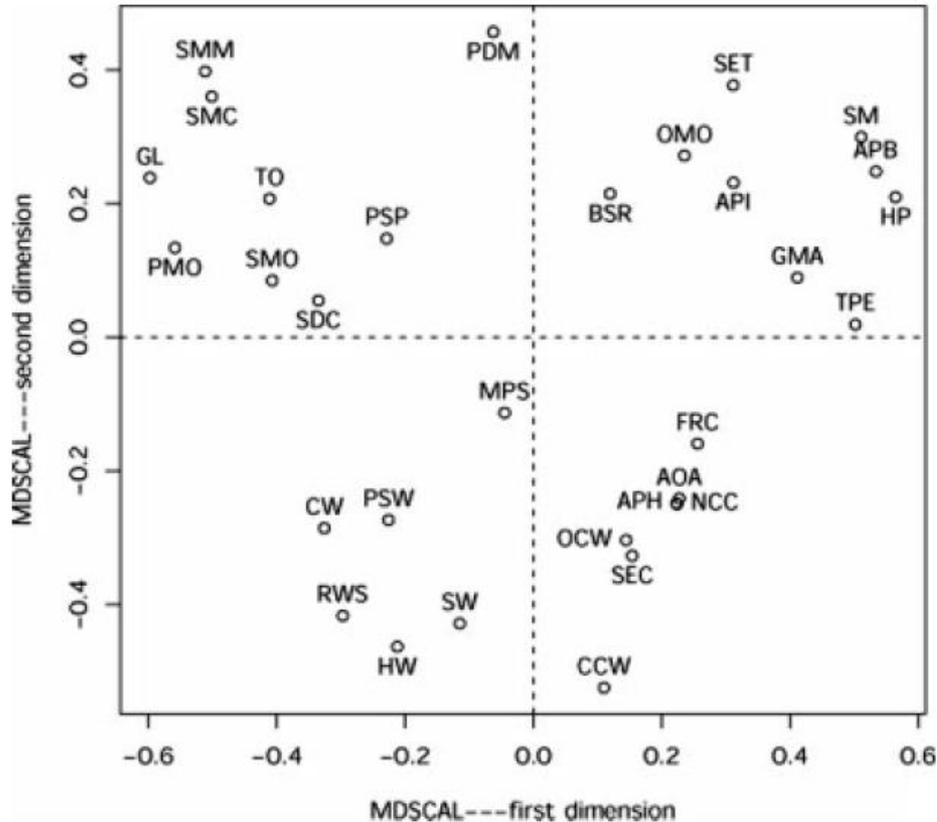


Table 2 The 31 occupational categories ranked by status score and representative occupations within each category

Code	Representative occupations
1	HP Chartered accountants, clergy, medical practitioners, solicitors
2	APB Journalists, investment analysts, insurance brokers, designers
3	SM Company treasurers, financial managers, computer systems managers, personnel managers
4	TPE College lecturers, education officers and inspectors, school teachers
5	GMA Bank and building society managers, general managers in industry, national and local government officers
6	API Computer analysts and programmers, quantity surveyors, vocational and industrial trainers
7	SET Civil and structural engineers, clinical biochemists, industrial chemists, planning engineers, software engineers
8	FRC Conveyancing clerks, computer clerks, library assistants
9	OMO Security managers, cleaning managers
10	AOA Clerical officers in national and local government
11	NCC Accounts assistants, bank clerks
12	APH Community workers, nurses, occupational therapists, youth workers
13	SEC Personal assistants, receptionists, secretaries, word processor operators
14	OCW General assistants, commercial and clerical assistants
15	BSR Buyers and purchasing officers, technical sales representatives, wholesale representatives
16	CCW Educational assistants, nursery nurses
17	MPS Catering managers, hoteliers, publicans, shopkeepers and managers
18	PDM Clerks of works, farm managers, maintenance managers, transport managers, works managers
19	SW Cash desk and check-out operators, sales and shop assistants, window dressers
20	HW Ambulance staff, dental nurses, nursing auxiliaries
21	PSW Caretakers and housekeepers, hairdressers and beauticians, travel attendants, undertakers
22	PSP Fire service and police officers, security guards
23	RWS Car park attendants, cleaners, counter-hands, couriers and messengers, hotel porters, postal workers
24	CW Bar staff, chefs, cooks, waiters and waitresses
25	SDC Despatch and production control clerks, storekeepers
26	SMO Gardeners and groundsmen, printers, textile workers, woodworkers
27	TO Bus and coach drivers, lorry and van drivers, taxi drivers
28	SMC Bricklayers, electricians, painters and decorators, plasterers, roofers, telephone repairmen
29	SMM Fitters, setters, setter-operators, sheet metal workers, turners, welders
30	PMO Assemblers, canners, fillers and packers, food processors, moulders and extruders, routine inspectors and testers
31	GL Agricultural workers, factory labourers, goods porters, refuse collectors

Chan and Goldthorpe (2004)

‘Is there a status order in contemporary British society? Evidence from the occupational structure of friendship’

ESR, 20,5.

“Our first question...is to assess whether we can detect cultural capital in contemporary Britain, and if so, to delineate what form it takes.”

“Our second question... is whether different cultural fields....are structured along similar principles, and if so, what is the nature of the similarities between them?”

Our third question is to what extent we can see a process whereby established middle-class groups are advantaged by the organization of cultural forms, and how similar processes inform the ordering and reproduction of the relations between genders and ethnic groups.”

Bennett et al. (2009) *Culture, Class, Distinction*, pp 12-14

Table 5.1 Liking/disliking of musical genres (percentages by row)

<i>Genre</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>Have not heard of</i>	<i>n</i>
Rock	15	12	13	10	9	9	29	4	1561
Modern jazz	5	7	14	12	13	16	32	1	1563
World music	6	7	10	13	14	14	34	3	1562
Classical, incl. opera	16	13	13	14	10	11	23	0	1563
Country and western	13	13	13	14	12	12	24	1	1562
Electronic	6	6	8	7	9	13	45	7	1557
Heavy metal	4	7	6	7	7	12	55	3	1563
Urban, incl. hip hop, R&B	10	9	11	11	11	12	31	5	1559

Notes

- (a) Liking of musical genres on a scale where 1 = like it very much indeed and 7 = do not like it at all.
- (b) Don't knows are excluded from total numbers.

Table 5.2 Knowledge of and taste for musical works (percentages by row)

<i>Musical work</i>	<i>Listened and liked</i>	<i>Listened, don't like</i>	<i>Not listened, have heard of</i>	<i>Have not heard of</i>	<i>n</i>
<i>Wonderwall</i> , Oasis	47	14	13	27	1560
<i>Stan</i> , Eminem	31	18	16	35	1563
<i>Four Seasons</i> , Vivaldi	56	6	18	21	1562
<i>Einstein on Beach</i> , Glass	3	3	11	84	1563
<i>Symphony no. 5</i> , Mahler	19	6	21	53	1560
<i>Kind of Blue</i> , Miles Davis	13	3	14	69	1561
<i>Oops, I Did It Again</i> , Britney Spears	26	39	12	22	1560
<i>Chicago</i> , Sinatra	65	17	10	8	1560

Notes

- (a) Percentages may not add up to 100 because of rounding.
- (b) Don't knows are excluded from total numbers.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Imla_5awDFg

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V4WGsMplGxU>

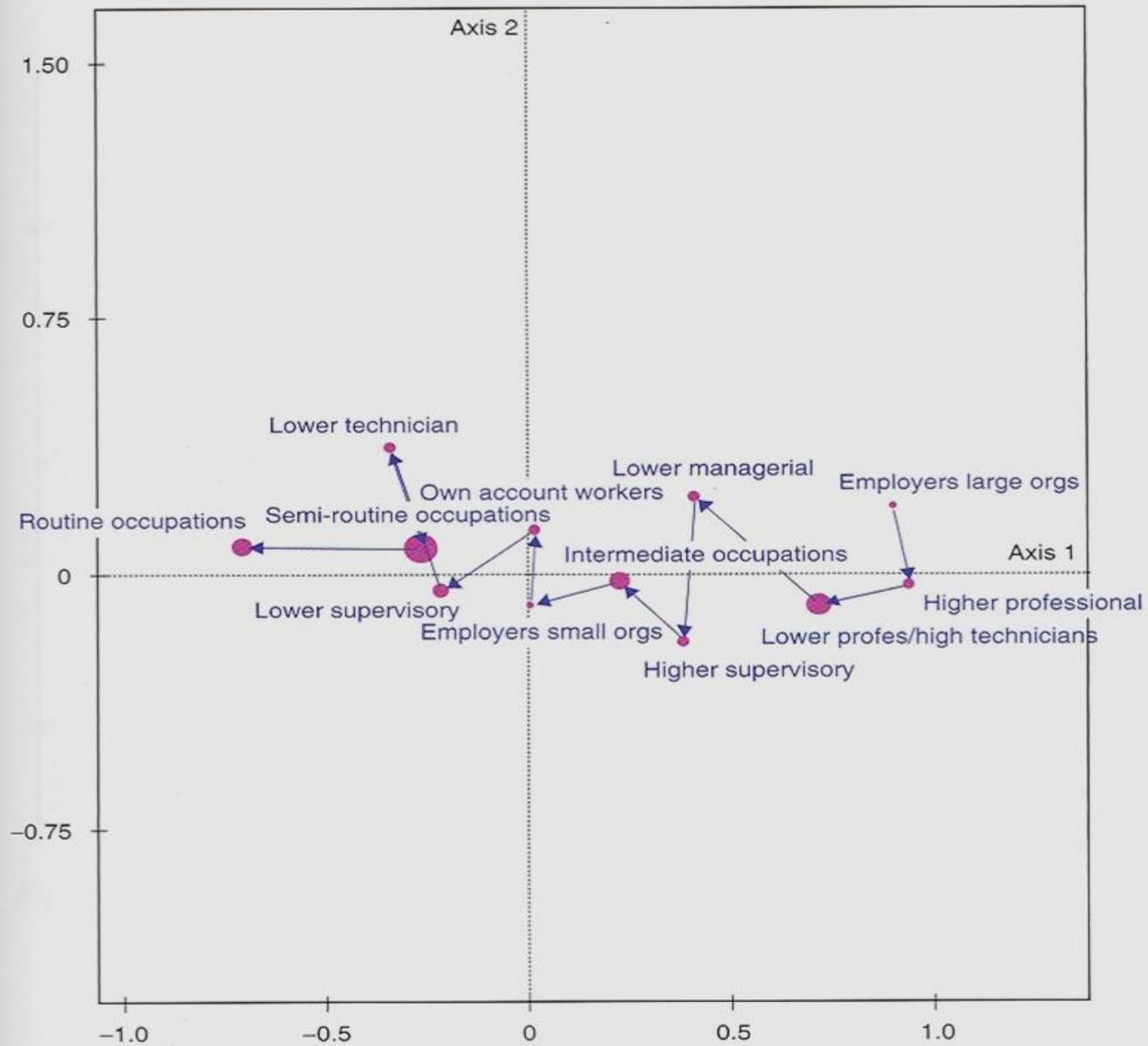


Figure 3.5 Multiple correspondence analysis: 12 occupational classes, axes 1–2.

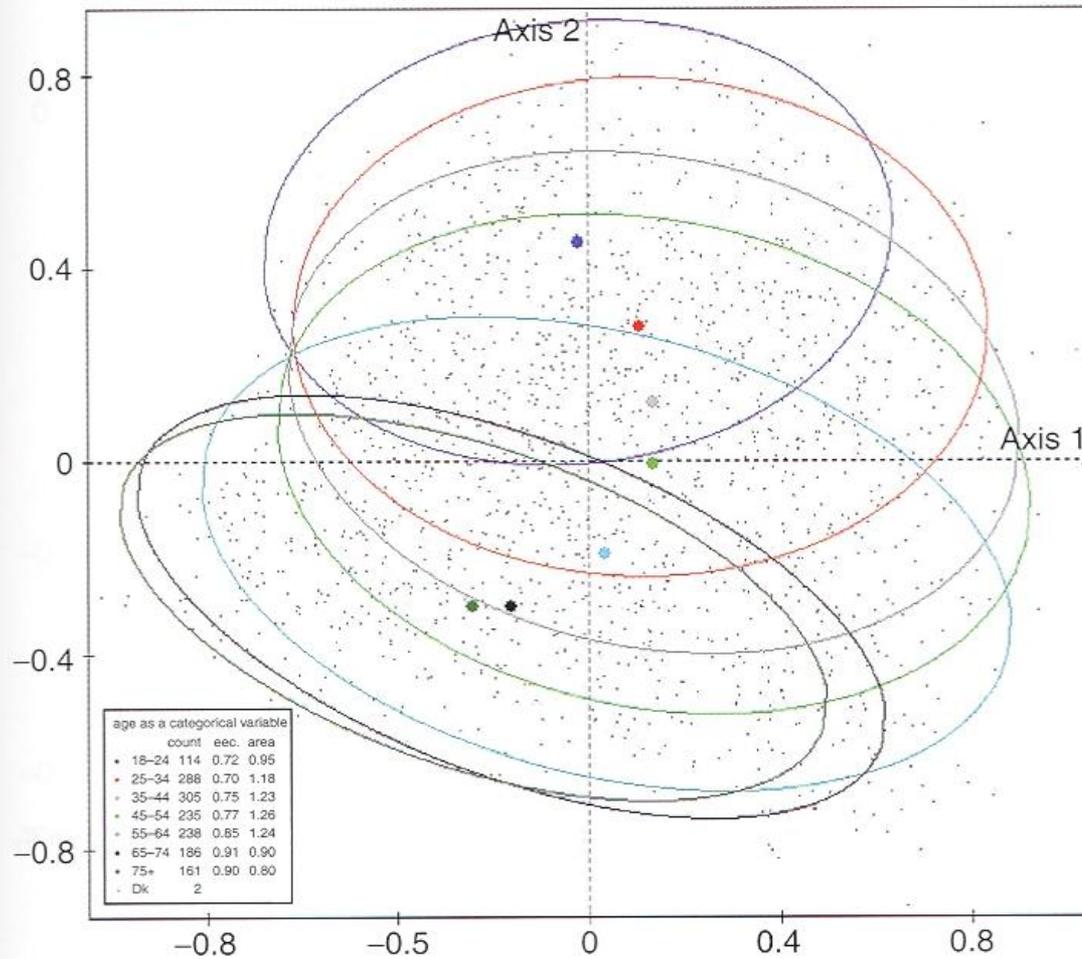


Figure 3.6 Deviation and concentration ellipses for age groups in axes 1-2.

Omnivores and univores:

Non-participants (or TV watchers)

But isn't popular culture the default setting ?

Limitations of taste questions.

Most cultural consumption is inconspicuous and unostentatious so how does the signalling of distinction work?

Do you know the musical or artistic tastes of the person sitting next to you?

Is preferring Bach to the Beatles really going to give you any advantages?
(NB this is a different question from: Do advantaged people prefer Bach to the Beatles?)

Should cultural tastes be part of a sensible model of social class?