Telling tales of participation: exploring the interplay of time and territory in cultural boundary work using participation narratives

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ABSTRACT
Consideration of the “stakes” attached to participation is most clearly associated with the debate around Bourdieu’s [(1984). Distinction: A social critique of the judgement of taste. London: Routledge] concept of cultural capital and the role this plays in processes of domination and social closure. Yet, the preferred method of understanding practice variation in the cultural field – the analysis of cross-sectional survey data focused on established tastes and activities – reveals little of the broader nature, dynamics or significance of participation in people’s daily lives. In this paper, I explore the potential of participation narratives for re-scoping the field of cultural participation. These accounts foreground the multiplicity of participation, its embeddedness in everyday concerns, institutions and relationships, and the interplay of time and space in the demarcation of the field by class and gender. As well as highlighting the limitations of theoretical models that focus on participation through the lens of cultural practices funded by the State, they suggest that articulations of cultural value in policy need to take more account of the personal histories, social relations and local contexts of participation.

KEYWORDS
Everyday participation; cultural capital; age; place; class; gender

Introduction
In this paper, I consider how participation narratives from qualitative in-depth interviews, which are being collected as part of the Understanding everyday participation – articulating cultural values (UEP) project (See Miles & Gibson, 2016, for more detail), reveal deficiencies in current and emergent theories of participation within cultural sociology. Opening up the field of everyday cultural participation to scrutiny, these narratives illuminate how such theoretical limitations might be overcome, whilst also providing perspectives that could be put to work to inform more demand-led, contextually sensitive and therefore democratic policy-making in the cultural sector.

In the first section of the paper, I briefly review how the dominant framing of recent studies of cultural participation and value in sociology follows cultural policy in neglecting the importance of participation in the everyday cultural realm. In the second section of the paper, I set out my approach to developing a broader understanding of everyday cultural
life, using qualitative interviews from the UEP project. In the third section, starting from Warde’s (2011b) model of the “operating principles” of participation, I discuss how participation narratives reveal a rich canvass of participation, extending far beyond activities associated with the established cultural canon, which is shaped by time and space and negotiated through everyday concerns and relationships, whilst remaining powerfully imprinted by class and other forms of social division.

**Policy and theory**

One of the UEP project’s central concerns is to address the decontextualisation of value in cultural policy and the way this works to disregard a whole range of broadly cultural practices which carry meaning and value for people in their everyday lives. Here, the argument goes that the continuing debate about how best to justify the focus on an established canon of “high” cultural arts practices obscures the ways in which notions of “cultural participation” and “cultural value” are constructed and constructing discourses, which do vital boundary work; marking out and marginalising some practices (and, by extension, people and places), as having less worth than others (Miles & Sullivan, 2012).

Recent contributions in the field of cultural policy studies have attempted to break free of sterile and self-referential debates about the intrinsic versus instrumental value of the arts (Belfiore & Bennett, 2008; Gibson, 2008; Gray, 2002; O’Brien, 2014) by taking up more explicitly issues of inequity and social division in the cultural sector (e.g. O’Brien, Laurison, Miles, & Friedman, 2016). Nevertheless, the debate over cultural consumption continues to focus largely on issues of improving access to traditional arts forms as unique repositories of cultural value (Crossick & Kaszynska, 2016; DCMS, 2016; Jancovich, 2015).

In contrast, the social significance of cultural consumption has been at the forefront of recent debates in UK sociology. Here, the pivotal reference is the work of Pierre Bourdieu and the argument of his book Distinction (1984) that command of “legitimate” culture, associated with established art forms consecrated by state institutions, plays the key role in representing and reproducing social and economic advantage in contemporary capitalist societies (Bennett et al., 2009). Subsequent research, examining the contemporary applicability of his conceptual frames beyond France, cast doubt on the notion that “high” culture had a singular, defining role in elite formation, pointing instead to the rise of the “cultural omnivore” (DiMaggio & Mukhtar, 2004; van Eijck & Knulst, 2005; Peterson & Kern, 1996).

For some, the emergence of a seemingly democratic eclecticism calls into question Bourdieu’s representation of cultural life as a highly charged arena of class distinction (Warde, 2011a), whilst for others, the ability of the middle and upper classes to graze on both high and low culture constitutes an expression of cultural distinction in itself. (Holbrook, Weiss, & Habich, 2002; Peterson, 2005; Roose, van Eijck, & Lievens, 2012). A recent third strand to this debate points to the rise of new modes of distinction, in which the high culture system (Warde, 2013) is being replaced by a form of “cosmopolitan” or “emerging” cultural capital among younger, well-educated groups, who combine a reflexive style of engagement in contemporary music, social media, exercise and social life with indifference to the standard items of highbrow culture (Prieur & Savage, 2013; Friedman et al., 2015; Savage et al., 2015).

One of the virtues of the notion of emerging cultural capital is that it brings the domain of “ordinary” consumption and the everyday realm into view. Most work arising from within the Bourdieusian canon mirrors cultural policy in paying scant attention to the
fabric of mass culture, which Bourdieu himself dismissed largely in terms of cultural deprivation and as a foil for the performance of highbrow cultural consumption by members of the elite. Central to subsequent critiques of Bourdieu’s limited account of working-class culture are questions of method. The empirical and analytical approaches employed in Distinction, it is argued, effectively anticipate its findings (Bennett, 2011; Lahire, 2003).

**Methods – participation narratives**

Recent accounts of the “social life” of methods (Law, 2009; Law, Ruppert, & Savage, 2011) reinforce the point that different procedures of data generation and analysis fundamentally shape the ways in which participation is and can be understood. The limitations of national-level quantitative surveys with restricted cultural inventories, which have predominated in the sociology of participation and cultural policy alike, have been well rehearsed (Miles & Sullivan, 2012). However, they are particularly pronounced when it comes to locating cultural engagement in the broader context of everyday life. Accordingly, the UEP project adopts a mixed-methods approach (for more details, see Miles & Gibson, 2016), in order to open the field of participation to view from a number of complementary and contrasting perspectives.

In-depth, semi-structured, interviews are a core component of this approach. These explore the meaning of participation according to its significance within people’s broader networks of practices and relationships, taking account of how this is impacted spatially, by setting and place, and temporally, in respect of age and the life course. In these ways, they consider how the negotiation of cultural capital and value are both fundamentally and dynamically rooted in the everyday realm.

In each of the UEP project’s six case-study locations, the aim is to conduct two waves of interviews with 30 people who, as a group, reflect the general demographic profile of the local population by age, gender, class, ethnicity and religion. The idea of the first wave interviews, which I focus on in this paper, is to draw out what can broadly be thought of as participation narratives. This first interview is divided into five sections, which explore people’s activities, interests and influences in the context of their feelings of belonging and attachment to place, the role of day-to-day responsibilities and how these concerns impact on work, leisure and family time, and their sense of identity. A key component around which this process revolves involves the construction of a personal biography or life history, when interviewees are asked in the form of an open question to “tell us your life story as you see it”.

Crucially, the format of the first interview does not impose or suggest a particular understanding of what it is or means to participate “culturally”. Rather, interviewees are first asked to talk about how they spent their time over the past week and weekend, and how they organise different parts of their daily lives. They are then invited to elaborate: identifying those interests that are the most important to them; the nature and intensity of their engagements; the kinds of activities they are not interested in or would avoid, and what has influenced their development and whether and how these have changed over time.

This particular approach is aligned with the “stripping back” of participation to its understandings, principles and logics implied in Warde’s framing of consumption within practice theory (2005). Thinking about how to analyse the resulting texts, we are interested in the content of stories but also how this is presented, so in the form that personal narratives take and in their interactional contexts as “situated performances” (McAdams, 2008;
Mishler, 1995). By reading and comparing accounts both “vertically” (as whole cases) and “horizontally” (in cross-section by question or particular theme), we can examine their “configurational” as well as episodic dimensions (Elliott, 2005), to distil both the ways in which the dynamics of change are remembered and the types of stories that are being told.

In the next sections, I discuss some of the prominent themes emerging from the UEP interviews. As data collection and coding are still in process, this discussion is based on an analysis of 18 narratives: 6 from each of the project’s first 3 case studies, undertaken in the neighbouring wards of Broughton in East Salford and Cheetham Hill in North Manchester, a suburban village on the outskirts of Aberdeen and the central urban corridor of Gateshead.2

**Principles and patterns of participation**

In his study of omnivorousness within the British managerial elite, Warde (2011b) identifies “plenitude”, “proficiency” and “capability” as the three operating principles which underpin the participation practices of members of this group, marking them out from the rest of the population as a culturally homogenous group. They share a repertoire that encompasses various aspects of popular culture but which includes core items of legitimate culture, such as regularly visiting art galleries and liking classical music. Their competence in discussing items of high culture and the arts underpins a shared ideal about what it is to be cultivated, and is acquired through the greater opportunities for cultural learning provided by their backgrounds and education. Notably, however, Warde found that members of this group were not especially expert, or even particularly interested, in the cultural activities they practised so voraciously, which are “subordinate in subjective importance to family and sociability as well as work” (2011b, p. 482). Observing that participation in the arts is an insignia of belonging to a particular status group rather than a weapon of classification and social judgement, he concludes that culture has largely lost its cutting edge as tool of class distinction (2011a).

Turning to the narratives of the broader cross-section of people included in the UEP interview sample, we can begin by noting that a striking feature of these accounts is that a multiplicity of interests and engagements is not something that is unique to elites. In fact, plenitude is nigh on ubiquitous, featuring amongst all social groups. Sixty different types of current activity in all are mentioned by the 18 interviewees, ranging from 4 to 16 and at an average of 8 per person. Equally, a far more committed sense of engagement is often expressed in discussions of everyday forms of participation, which in turn conveys the possession of considerable skill, expertise and learning; whether it be in baking, making puppets, choreographing dance club moves, propagating seeds or reading Muslim philosophy.

As Warde suggests, family and work concerns usually condition the importance of culture, which acts to furnish and define social life as much as to articulate personal identity. Nevertheless, the wider field of view that locates activities in the context of everyday life also confirms that boundary-marking processes persist, but are being reconfigured by the intersecting effects of time and place. The high culture system, alongside a traditional mode of working-class cultural life, continues to have traction amongst older groups and
in more provincial communities. In regenerated urban settings, these forms are increasingly elided by the cosmopolitan cultural repertoires of mobile younger groups, which, while internally differentiated by gender and the life course, work to mark off the terrain of the cultural city along class lines.

Age, generation and the times of participation

Older participants – cultural omnivores and the traditional working class

While the sample of interviews considered here is too small to consistently register finer grained age-based distinctions (see e.g. McGuire, Norman, & O’Leary, 2005), broad intergenerational and life course differences feature prominently in shaping individual narratives. Here, while talk of a strong preference for traditional art forms is generally quite sparse, there is a clear influence of the high culture system on the discourses of men and women born between 1940 and 1960, which is missing in the narratives of people aged 40 or younger.

Stephen, who lives on the edge of Aberdeen, works as an administrator in the oil industry, and is in his 60s, is in many respects a classic cultural omnivore. Here, he describes some of his activities over the past week:

Sunday, I came back after swimming … did gardening for three hours with the help of a friend, and then I went to archery … On Monday I had a riding lesson out in Inverurie which I go to every so often. Tonight I’ve got fencing, sword fencing, and tomorrow night normally I have contemporary dance … I also do wood carving, I exhibited in Aberdeen Art Gallery, you see these pieces around you? … So art is very important to me, most holidays I take involve art galleries, and for instance I just took off to Slovakia, Bulgaria, Croatia and Austria in the summer … So I do an awful lot of reading, I tend to read a lot about other cultures, last year I was studying Muslim authors from the 9th, 10th, 12th, 15th Century and their interpretation and perception of the crusades about the world …

Stephen’s engagement with legitimate culture is much more personally committed than that of Warde’s managers, and rather than confidence and ease, reflects a sense of social disjuncture. Reading further on into his interview, as part of his life story, he talks about being born into an upper middle-class family, with a mother who danced and acted, but indicates that he was alienated by being sent away to boarding school and found it difficult to mix when he came home. Having not gone to university, he has now reached an occupational ceiling, around which he expresses some feelings of professional and educational underachievement. His strong sense of cultural class identity is thus seemingly deployed to compensate:

[I’m friendly with] the kind of people who are doing well in life professionally and have got money, who are the doctors and the kind of lawyers and my brother in law’s a lawyer, and so yes I am mixing with those kind of people. Yeah, so I do feel it’s middle class and or artistic, I mean the people who painted these, he’s an artist across the river, and my friend’s a musician, so most of my friends are artists and things.

Classed taste boundaries are more recognisable not just as an organising principle but an implicit form of social judgement in the participation narratives of this generation. Elizabeth, a former health professional, who is also culturally omnivorous, goes to the Christmas pantomime in the village because:
… our neighbour, the Minister’s in it and our GP’s in it. It’s quite fun, seeing the locals. And I think it’s very good of them in a community to get up on stage and have people laugh at them a bit.

Counter-posed to Stephen’s highbrow-led omnivourousness amongst the older interviewees is a group that participates in a set of activities that strongly resemble the kind of “traditional” northern working-class culture described by historians such as McKibbin (1984). This revolves around a rich and varied associational culture informed by a strong sense of personal independence and collective sense of social identity. It is evoked by the talk by former industrial workers about club life, bowling and watching football. It also comes through in Joan’s narrative:

On the Saturday was the crafts day, – I’m also in a group called Active Age … You can go cycling and play bowls and stuff, but they do a lot of theatre and trips out and stuff. So on Sunday, the walkers were going to Pickering to do a walk, but if you wanted to, you could just go along for the day, so I did … On Tuesday I had the readers group at the library, which is once a month. We get a book to read, this is our latest one, they’re always weird … Yesterday, I was through at Cramlington, and the East Northumberland Federation of Towns Women’s Guilds were having a day … We had a lunch and we had entertainment. They do sort of handicrafts and setting up a table and doing flower arrangements … I’m a subscriber to four knitting magazines a month, I’m a member of the Knitting and Crochet Guild … .They are building up an archive of old patterns and things … .

Retired from clerical work and married to a former coal miner, Joan has had a dazzling cultural career of multiple, creative engagements. Epitomising Raymond Williams’ famous maxim that “culture is ordinary” (1958), she occasionally attends classical music concerts when the tickets are reasonably priced but is ambivalent about cultural institutions like the Sage Gateshead.

For Joan, retirement brought a freedom to try out new things and to travel regularly, including internationally. It also gave her more time to devote to a considerable portfolio of voluntary work, a form of participation which is prevalent in the narratives of middle-aged and older women. Volunteering is often bound up with cultural participation, because it acts as a mechanism for wider involvement. It can also be experienced as a form of constraint – as Elizabeth’s feelings about her committee work indicate – by those who feel obliged to step forward.

**Younger groups – cosmopolitan culture**

By contrast, younger people’s participation resembles the profile of an “emerging cultural capital” group identified by Prieur and Savage (2013), where involvements are focused on technical, active and embodied practices, emphasising personal development and sociality. Paul, who is in his mid-20s and works in financial services, has a particular interest in the club dance scene, developing and filming his routines online, and in physical culture more generally:

like now with my brother-in-law and my friend … all agreeing that we’re to do this 60-day exercise routine, that is quite important to me now that I stay motivated and I stay competitive, because both of them are in a lot better shape than I am, so I don’t want to fall behind … and be like, oh, because we’re recording our statistics as well, so we are putting them up on show.
Paul lives in a shared house in Salford, which is the focal point of a strong and very active social network:

…it’s kind of like a social hub, that we always have like friends coming over, we do like, erm, house gatherings where everyone comes over and we play like Cluedo, or watch movies, and stuff like that. So yeah, like whenever we have a social gathering it seems to be in this house…So that’s all I really like about this place, is just, erm, there’s so much activity going on especially, erm, with my friends.

Partially contradicting the theory of emerging cultural capital, this type of profile extends beyond urban middle-class groups. Ross, for example, is a storeman in his late 20s, living down the road from the small farm he grew up on. He has a passion for drum and bass music, travels to gigs internationally as part of an online network, grows, forages and cooks his own food, and collects specialist malt whiskies and limited editions of branded training shoes.

Nevertheless, the accounts of young urban professionals in this group do convey a particular kind of lifestyle intensity, where time – real and biographical – race on, and work and play are experienced as mutually conditioning commitments. Gateshead-based Dan releases the pressures of his job in the health service by going to the gym, mountain biking and playing sport, “because it keeps you quite healthy in terms of your mind and your body as well”. Gabby, a graphic designer in her 30s, who is a serious cyclist and runner, foregrounds the importance of work to her sense of self; describing her anxiety that being “a bit married to my job”, means coming home late “when maybe I should be on a run”. Catherine’s interest in crafting developed because it fitted around oil industry working patterns. It also complements her occupational history – her life story reveals that she worked in a toyshop and with robots before becoming a draughtswoman. While joining a knitting group provided female friendship within a male-dominated work environment when she first arrived in Aberdeen from London.

For women within this emergent group of professional service workers who start families, cultural lives can become abruptly remodelled along gendered lines. Anna’s narrative revolves around facilitating her children’s participation, which has had the effect of narrowing down her own:

I’ve sort of taken a back seat with what I really want to so, you know, personally or whatever…when I first started running about five/seven years ago there wasn’t so many, whereas now there’s more women running around here than men now which is a big difference, you know. And I think that’s because it’s women with children. It’s so easy you can literally put your stuff on and go out from your door…So yeah, I think you sort of adjust in that way “cause you can’t – whereas I think dads and guys seem to just carry on regardless”.

In common with a number of female personal stories, the tensions in Anna’s account at this point appear to reflect more deeply rooted issues of confidence, evident in talk about expectations while growing up. Running appears to act as a placeholder for Anna’s self-identity (“As long as I’ve got that little something, you know”), masking an anxiety about whether she could have achieved more in both her work and her music.

Issues of social class feature less explicitly in the discourses of the younger interviewees, where there is more of an emphasis on self-efficacy. This is expressed, when they are asked about their influences and influencers, in a stress on independent and achieved rather than ascribed cultural tastes. Dan’s remarks are representative here:
... actually some of the interests I’ve got, my parents didn’t, aren’t into at all. So, you know, like cycling, neither of my parents are big into this. Art galleries and art, my parents are not particularly into art. So I think that’s more shaped by, I think as you get older – you don’t follow anybody else, you sort of learn what you enjoy.

In fact, while direct background influences on cultural preferences may largely be disavowed, the life stories of the younger metropolitan group do usually betray quite direct links back to family interests and home environment. Dan’s experience notwithstanding, this is almost always the case among those who express a liking for the arts.

Here, there are quite noticeable differences in the way that the relationship between culture and class is handled. Younger middle-class respondents’ affinities with high culture are presented as unremarkable, and when class is brought up directly, they tend to evade and deflect any association between cultural interest and social identity. Gabby, for example, continually bats back the question of whether her interests say anything about her as a person in a way that suggests a knowing but unspoken recognition of cultural class distinction. Asked whether she feels she belongs to a social class, she responds: “I can fit in anywhere”.

Sharon, on the other hand, is openly reflexive about the personal and social stakes associated with her strong interest in the arts, which were the one stable point of reference in her turbulent past. In an echo of the traditional working-class culture referred to in the case of Joan, she comes from a Northumbrian mining community and was encouraged by her grandmother who went on to do a degree in fine art. Sharon responds to the question about identification with her cultural interests by saying, “So it’s everything. It’s everything about me”. Yet, that same engagement with identity through studying drama and performance accentuates an acute sense of an otherwise hidden class injury (Skeggs, 2004) she still feels for being judged because she grew up on a council estate.

**Participation, place and belonging**

Alongside issues of temporality, these narratives illustrate that boundary making through participation is always a fundamentally spatial process, located in the apparently mundane territories of everyday life as much as formally designated arenas of culture. Places then are not merely geographical backdrops to or neutral containers of participation but are, in Bourdieu’s terms, sociocultural force fields in their own right. From within the extensive literature on place and identity (summarised in Cresswell, 2015), it is particularly useful to draw here on Savage, Bagnall, and Longhurst’s (2005) concept of “elective belonging” to understand how incoming middle-class people “claim moral rights over place”, wishing to “announce their identities” through their capacity to move to a place that is congruent with their life story and therefore symbolically as well as functionally important to them; a process in which “the migrant consumer rubs up against dwellers with historical attachments to place” (Savage, 2014, pp. 29–30).

This configuration plays out in struggles for the cultural identities of all three locations referred to in this paper. On the edge of Aberdeen, for example, the power of an integrating “village” imaginary masks fault lines between incomers – public sector professionals and oil industry executives, who take leading roles in village governance – and locals.
rooted in the traditional working-class culture of the former mill community. These are mostly contained by the ways in which social and cultural life is physically as well as socially segmented by institutional membership but symbolic tensions, such as those over the forms of use and appearance of the Village Hall, occasionally spill out over the running over shared assets.

In Salford and Gateshead, the contrasting accounts of younger middle-class and older working-class interviewees indicate powerful intersections of time and space through participation that reinforce generational and class differences and which are integral to the processes of displacement and (dis-) identification that are implicated in the making of “the cultural city” (Miles, 2013). To return to the example of Paul, his move to Salford from a city where he was racially discriminated against was undertaken because it gave him a strong social and participatory network that confirmed his cultural identity. His sense of attachment though is to the idea of Manchester more broadly rather than his specific new locality of Broughton (“I feel I just belong in the city ’cause of the whole, erm, cultural diversity”). The benefit of Broughton is that “it’s very convenient to town”. Otherwise, it currently offers a very different and unwelcome type of diversity that is at odds with Paul’s conception of the cultural city.

Along this road it’s like a lot of families … so it’s generally fine … Yeah, so we see them round and about and say hello and that. But then like you turn round the corner, and all of a sudden like it’s completely different and you see like a lot of, erm, unsavoury characters should I say. … […] my sister … was saying like she thinks that, because they’re regenerating this area, a lot more richer people will start moving in and living in, so, erm, I think, it’s just going to be a nicer place.

From the perspective of older, working-class “dwellers” who comprise the unspecified “other” in Paul’s account, the regeneration of Salford and Manchester is, on the contrary, viewed as a process of cultural erasure in which the forms and assumptions of a different way of life have literally been demolished. Talking about Salford Quays, now the location of The Lowry, Imperial War Museum North, and Media City, Sheila, a careers advisor in her late 40s, laments:

We’re losing our history … I remember Salford Docks, being excited as a girl, seeing the ships in … Young ones today, okay you’ve still got the dock office there, you know, to let people know it was a docks, but no, I think the cranes should remain … a lot of people round here wouldn’t even think of venturing round … because it’s not them … They are very working class … Salford Quays is for the posh.

Michael a retired taxi driver with interests in genealogy and local history extends this theme:

Well it’s the buildings and [mumbles] they’re throwing buildings up now [mumbles]. They putting the old with the new and it don’t mix. They’re opening it for the yuppies now, aren’t they, just taking over. I mean the history’s gone with knocking things down and all what they’re doing … .

This is a type of nostalgia that suggests a rather less fixed and aesthetically limited understanding of place than Savage’s account of the historical attachment of dwellers allows (Paton, 2014). Rather, it flushes out the negotiation of cultural value beyond privatised issues of personal taste and activity preference onto the broader terrain of struggles for public space (Lefebvre, 1991).
Conclusion

Questions of method are central to the way in which issues of cultural participation and its social significance can be understood. In this paper, I have shown how participation narratives from qualitative in-depth interviews illuminate the considerable limitations of current theoretical models in the cultural sociology of participation. Focusing on variations in elite cultural inventories, examined largely through national-level quantitative data sets, these models have neglected the broader terrain and the everyday, situated contexts of participation. In order to evaluate competing claims over the continuing significance of the cultural field in social life following the demise of the high culture system, new methodological repertoires are required.

Participation narratives are one component of a geographically focused mixed-methods approach to reframing cultural participation and value being deployed by the UEP project. The exploratory sample of texts analysed for this paper indicates that cultural plenitude and proficiency are not the preserve of a small elite, and rarely revolve around the traditional arts. Most people are multiply and often intensively engaged in activities which are rooted in family life and sociality, chosen more for their internal goods than their symbolic value. Yet, cultural preference continues to draw boundaries and to reinforce inequalities between (classed and gendered) people. Here, the emergence of a form of cosmopolitan cultural capital is clearly detectable but what the narratives of younger interviewees also reveal is how this is mobilised spatially, in struggles over belonging and identity, which are simultaneously social and intergenerational, for the everyday territories of the cultural city.

Participation narratives can be presented to cultural policy on similar grounds. By opening up, rather than pre-empting, discussion of what constitutes participation, this approach restores context to the notion of cultural value. When targeting members of particular, recalcitrant groups for attention, policy frameworks have tended to abstract the individual from the histories, settings and relations of their practices. In a counter to the reductive and methodologically nationalist character of data sets like the government’s Taking Part Survey, narrative accounts of participation reinstate process and situation to understandings of (dis-)engagement, confirming the socially charged nature of cultural participation and revealing the ways in which activity preferences are impacted by the times and places in which they occur.

Notes

1. Samples were derived using area statistics from the 2011 Census and the National Statistics Socio-economic Classification (NS-SEC). Potential interviewees were recruited via leaflet drop and identified through postcode profiling recruitment. The interviews, which each last between 90 minutes and 2 hours on average, are being transcribed and are in the process of being coded using NVivo qualitative data analysis software.

2. This represents a 25% sample of the number of first wave interviews actually achieved in these areas and was chosen to provide equal numbers of men alongside a balance of broad age groups and social classes. The sample was divided equally into 3 age groups (18–40; 41–60 and the over 60s) and 3 NS-SEC-derived classes (Managerial and professional; Intermediate; Working).
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