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Social Stratification and Cultural Consumption:
Visual Arts in England

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1 Introduction

In the current sociological literature that treats the relationship between social stratification and cultural taste and consumption, it is possible to identify three main—and rival—lines of argument, each, though, with its variant forms. For convenience, we will refer to (i) the homology argument; (ii) the individualisation argument; and (iii) the omnivore–univore argument. In this paper, we begin by briefly outlining these three positions. Then we proceed to evaluate these arguments with recent survey data on cultural consumption of the visual arts.

1.1 The homology argument

In its simplest form this argument claims no more than that social stratification and cultural stratification map closely on to each other. 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 also being recognised. A recent restatement of the argument on these lines is provided by Gans (1999). However, more elaborate versions of the homology argument exist, and notably that developed by Bourdieu (1984).

As best we can understand the essentials of Bourdieu's position, they are as follows (cf. Jenkins, 2002; Weininger, 2005). On Bourdieu's own account (1984, p.xii), *Distinction* starts out from 'an endeavour to rethink Max Weber's opposition between class and *Stand*'. Bourdieu agrees with Weber (1968, p.932) that status position—position within a generally recognised hierarchy of social superiority and inferiority—is expressed by 'above all else a specific *style of life*'. But he then rejects Weber's view of the class position of individuals or groups as being analytically and empirically separable from their status position in that class position is determined purely by *economic* relations—i.e. relations in labour markets and production units. For Bourdieu, class and status are not to be understood as different forms of social stratification that can be linked, as Weber puts it, 'in the most varied ways'. Rather, status has to be seen as the symbolic aspect or dimension of the class structure, which is not itself reducible to economic relations alone.

Thus, it is not possible for Bourdieu to accept that the relationship between class and status—and thus lifestyle—is, at least to some degree, a contingent one. A necessary correspondence, or homology, has to be recognised. This homology is crucially mediated, Bourdieu claims, by the *habitus* of different classes. That is, by the socially constituted 'system of disposi-

tions' into which the members of a class are socialised and that arises out of specific 'class conditions'. The class *habitus* produces a 'semantic' unity in practices across all domains of consumption, cultural consumption included; and thus, within and integral to the class structure, there are created the internally coherent but sharply contrasting lifestyles that are expressed by the status order. In turn, then, rivalry and competition within this order are not to be seen as separate from class divisions and conflict, let alone as serving, perhaps, to inhibit class-based action (cf. Weber, 1968, p.930). To the contrary, the status order is the field of symbolic struggle between classes, in which those involved seek to 'classify' themselves and others as same or different, included or excluded, and in which members of the dominant class use 'symbolic violence' in order to confirm the superiority of their own lifestyle by arrogating to it those cultural forms that are generally recognised as 'canonical', 'legitimate', or otherwise 'distinguished'. It is in fact in this last respect, as Weininger (2005, p.95) has observed, that 'the full significance of Bourdieu's attempt to yoke together "class" and "status" becomes apparent'.[1]

1.2 The individualisation argument

The individualisation argument may be regarded, if not as a more or less direct contradiction of the homology argument, then at all events as an attempt to restrict the validity of that argument to the past. What essentially is held is that, in the economically advanced societies of the present day, differences in cultural taste and consumption and indeed in lifestyles generally are losing their grounding in social stratification, however this may be understood, and are becoming more a matter of individual 'self-realisation'.

In weaker versions of the argument the suggestion is that other structural bases, such as age, gender, ethnicity or sexuality, are now at least as important as class or status in conditioning lifestyles, and that individuals are in this way given a much greater range of choice as regards the collectivities, real or imagined, with which they will subjectively align themselves

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[1]The one way in which, so far as we can see, Bourdieu might allow for the possibility of a discrepancy between status and class—of the kind to which Weber frequently refers—is where, within what he deems to be the same class, Bourdieu acknowledges that differences in the relative importance of cultural as opposed to economic capital lead to some 'class fractions' having lifestyles of greater 'distinction' than others. For example, within the dominant class academics and 'artistic producers' appear in this sense to be recognised as having superior status to industrial and commercial employers, with professionals falling somewhere in-between. However, if this interpretation of Bourdieu is accepted, it would then represent a much more substantial concession to the Weberian position than Bourdieu seems ready to acknowledge.

and, in turn, greater possibilities for forming—or recreating—their own identities (e.g. Giddens, 1991; Beck, 1992). However, in stronger versions, often developed under postmodernist influences, lifestyles are seen as now lacking any kind of structural grounding or indeed unifying logic. Through their lifestyles, and primarily their patterns of consumption and demonstrations of taste, individuals are increasingly able to 'construct' their own selves more or less at will (e.g. Featherstone, 1987; Bauman, 1988). Here, then, the contrast with Bourdieu's position is striking. The emphasis shifts dramatically, as Warde (1997, p.8) has put it, 'from *habitus* to freedom'. Instead of being permanently marked by their initial class socialisation and restricted to a limited set of predefined lifestyles, individuals not only can but *have* to choose—to 'pick-and-mix'—from the vast array of possibilities that the highly commercialised 'consumer societies' of today make available to them: lifestyle becomes a 'life project'.

1.3   The omnivore–univore argument

The first point to note about this argument is that it relates more specifically to cultural consumption than to lifestyles in general. In its substance, it can perhaps be traced back to the findings of empirical research as early as that of Wilensky (1964) who reported that in the US highly educated persons had rarely any strong aversion to 'mass' culture and indeed often enjoyed it at least in some forms. However, in its present-day terms the argument would appear to originate with Peterson and Simkus (1992). The broad hypothesis that is advanced is that in modern societies the homology argument is outmoded, not because cultural consumption has lost all grounding in social stratification, but because a new relationship is emerging. Rather than cultural stratification mapping straightforwardly onto social stratification, the cultural consumption of individuals in higher social strata differs from that of individuals in lower strata chiefly in that it is greater *and much wider in its range*—comprising not only more 'high-brow' culture but in fact more 'middle-brow' and more 'low-brow' culture as well. Thus, the crucial contrast is not that of 'snob versus slob' but that of cultural omnivore versus cultural univore.

1.4   Previous research

In two previous papers, Chan and Goldthorpe (2005b,c) have examined the validity of the above arguments with data on cultural consumption in the domains of music and of theatre, dance and cinema. Their analyses produce no evidence of a 'dominant class' or social elite whose members typically

consume high culture while at the same time displaying 'aesthetic distance' from mass, or popular, culture. Instead, on the one hand, many individuals within more advantaged social strata—amounting at least to substantial minorities—are not in fact frequent consumers of high culture, while, on the other hand, those who are show no marked tendency to reject more popular forms. Thus, their findings are inconsistent with the homology argument. As regards the individualisation argument, Chan and Goldthorpe (2005b,c) show that well-defined patterns of cultural consumption do in fact persist. They identify a limited number of types of cultural consumer who in turn prove to be socially differentiated in fairly systematic ways.

Finally, regarding the omnivore–univore argument, Chan and Goldthorpe (2005b,c) do indeed find an omnivorous type of consumer, with demonstrated tastes for *both* high *and* popular cultural forms; and at the same time a univorous type with tastes apparently limited to only more popular genres. And they further find that omnivores do tend to be socially advantaged over univores, in particular in having generally higher social status and higher levels of educational attainment. The omnivore–univore argument is thus broadly supported. None the less, there are several indications that it may require qualification and refinement. First, although omnivores are disproportionately drawn from more advantaged social strata, this is not necessarily to say that they are the prevailing—or even majority—type *within* these strata. Second, in particular cultural domains other types of consumer than omnivores and univores may need to be distinguished. For example, in the case of music, they find consumers who, though omnivorous in their listening to music through various media, have only a very low frequency of attendance at live musical events ('omnivore–listeners'). And thirdly, the possibility arises that in some respects not only univores but, further, virtual *non*-consumers should be recognised. For example, in the case of theatre, dance and cinema, the individuals they identify as univores are those whose consumption is largely limited to cinema and who, therefore, under a narrower definition of this domain, restricting it to live performances, would have to be counted as more or less culturally inactive.

In the present paper, we pursue this line of inquiry into a third cultural domain, that of the visual arts. Or, to be rather more precise, we consider cultural consumption in this domain in so far as it occurs in public settings—museums, galleries, festivals etc—rather than in the home. On this account, the analyses we present may be regarded as incomplete. As several authors have shown (e.g. Laumann and House, 1970; Halle, 1993), much of value can be learnt about the social stratification of taste and consumption in the visual arts from the detailed examination of the design features and décor of individuals' homes, of the pictures and other artefacts that they

contain, and of the significance that occupants attach to these aspects of their domestic environment. However, it remains the case that, except perhaps for a very small minority—with large homes and larger bank balances—extensive and varied consumption of the visual arts cannot be achieved on a purely domestic basis and does indeed necessitate visits to appropriate institutions and events.[2]

As in the work of Chan and Goldthorpe (2005b,c), we aim to treat issues of the stratification of cultural consumption on the basis of a more differentiated understanding of social stratification than has usually been adopted in research in this field. Most importantly, following an essentially Weberian approach, we distinguish between—and apply separate measures of—class and status, which we regard as qualitatively different forms of stratification. In other words, we are unconvinced by attempts, such as that of Bourdieu (1984), to transcend the class–status distinction theoretically, and also dissatisfied by its *de facto* elision as occurs with the use of indices or scales of 'socioeconomic' status. Still following Weber, the general expectation that we hold is that cultural consumption, as an aspect of lifestyle, will be more strongly associated with status than with class.[3]

2 Data

We draw on data from the Arts in England Survey carried out in 2001 by the Social Survey Division of the UK Office for National Statistics on behalf of Arts Council England. This survey is well suited to our purposes in that it is focused on obtaining factual information on the nature and extent of individuals' participation in cultural events and activities—or, that is, on their actual cultural consumption—rather than on eliciting expressions of their cultural taste. Face-to-face interviews were carried out with a stratified probability sample of individuals aged over 16 and living in private households. Interviews were completed with 6,042 respondents, giving a response rate of 64% (for details, see Skelton *et al.*, 2002).

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[2]Domestic consumption may of course also occur through art books containing reproductions and—increasingly, we would suppose—through the downloading of images available electronically. However, our expectation would be that, rather than serving as a substitute for visits to museums, galleries, festivals etc., such consumption will be highly correlated with the frequency of such visits (cf. Halle, 1993).

[3]In contrast, we would expect class to be more strongly associated than status with individuals' economic life chances—such as their risks of long-term or recurrent unemployment or their long-term earnings prospects—and also with their political choices, at least in so far as these are made along a left-right spectrum. And in these respects Chan and Goldthorpe (2005a) have reported empirical results supporting our position.

As regards cultural consumption in the domain of the visual arts, we concentrate on the responses obtained to five questions. These asked whether in the last twelve months respondents had visited (1) a museum or art gallery,[4] (2) an exhibition or collection of art, photography or sculpture, (3) a craft exhibition (excluding 'craft markets') or (4) had attended any event including video or electronic art or (5) a cultural festival.[5]

The Arts in England Survey is also well suited to our purposes in that it obtained information on a wide range of respondents' socio-demographic characteristics. Respondents were coded to the National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification (NS-SEC) which is in effect a new instantiation of the Goldthorpe class schema (Rose and Pevalin, 2003); and from the detailed occupational codings that are available respondents can also be allocated to the 31 categories of the social status scale developed by Chan and Goldthorpe (2004). In addition, information is available on what could be regarded as two other stratification variables, income and educational qualifications (the latter being coded to the six official National Vocational Qualifications levels); and on a range of attributes that are chiefly of interest to us as control variables, including sex, age, marital status, family composition and region of residence (see Table 6 below). In what follows we restrict our coverage to respondents aged 20 to 64 ($N = 4,249$) since preliminary analyses pointed clearly to the desirability of treating separately issues of the cultural consumption of both younger and older age-groups. After deleting cases with missing values on variables of key interest to us, the analytical sample size becomes 3,819.

3 Results

We begin by showing in Table 1 the proportions of respondents to the Arts in England Survey who had engaged in each of the five activities that we

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[4]This question is not, we recognise, in all respects ideally formulated, at least from our point of view. It would have been preferable if a distinction had been made between visits to 'art' museums and museums of other kinds, such as natural history, local or regional, folk or industrial museums—even though the latter do generally display objects of visual interest.

[5]We include attendance at cultural festivals as an indicator of visual arts consumption because although such festivals typically cover a range of domains, the visual arts (including crafts) tend to figure prominently. Thus, for example, in a survey of 349 festivals, Rolfe (1992, p.16) report that 42% has visual arts formally included in their programme. It seems likely that visual arts would be involved, at least informally, in most other cultural festivals. But to check our findings, we have repeated our analysis without this indicator. The results we obtained are very similar to those reported below. Details are available on request.

picked out above. Overall, it may be said, the level of participation does not appear especially high. At the same time, though, it can be seen that there is some rather wide variation in respondents' involvement from one activity to another. Thus, over a twelve-month period, less than one in ten respondents had attended an event involving video or electronic art while almost two in five had visited a museum or art gallery.

Table 1: Percentage of respondents who have visited various visual arts events in the past 12 months.

Event involving video or electronic art	7.7
Cultural festival	11.0
Craft exhibition	18.5
Exhibition or collection of art, photography or sculpture	21.0
Museum or art gallery	38.7

3.1   Latent class analysis

In order to move on from data in the form of Table 1 to try to establish patterns of consumption within the visual arts, and in turn of types of consumer, we turn to latent class analysis. The binary responses to the five questions represented in Table 1 can be taken as our indicators of consumption in this domain, and can be understood as forming a five-way contingency table, with 32 (i.e. 2^5) cells, within which some degree of association among responses is likely to exist. Latent class analysis, which is in effect the categorical counterpart of factor analysis for continuous variables, aims to capture this association by identifying a small number of discrete latent classes—or categories—such that, conditional on membership of these classes, responses will be statistically independent of each other; or, in other words, membership of the latent classes can be taken as accounting for the observed association.[6]

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[6]For an introduction to latent class analysis, see McCutcheon (1987), and for more advanced applications, Hagenaars and McCutcheon (2002). Briefly, if there are three observed categorical variables A, B, C with I, J and K categories respectively, a latent class model with T classes can be expressed as follows:

$$\pi_{ijk}^{ABC} = \sum_{t=1}^{T} \pi_t^X \pi_{it}^{\bar{A}X} \pi_{jt}^{\bar{B}X} \pi_{kt}^{\bar{C}X},$$

where π_t^X is the probability that a person belongs to latent class t, $\pi_{it}^{\bar{A}X}$ is the probability that this person is found at level i of A given membership in latent class t, and so on.

Table 2: Latent class measurement models fitted
to data on cultural participation in the visual arts.

# classes	G^2	df	p	BIC
1	1826.45	26	0.000	1612.01
2	121.45	20	0.000	-43.50
3	21.52	14	0.089	-93.95

As can be seen from Table 2, the results of our latent class modelling are fairly straightforward. A model postulating just three latent classes fits the data adequately. In Table 3 we then show the estimated relative size of the latent classes under this model and the estimated probabilities, conditional on latent class membership, of participation in each of the five activities that serve as our indicators.

Table 3: Estimated size of the latent classes and the conditional probabilities of cultural participation in visual arts events under a model postulating three latent classes.

	1	2	3
relative size	0.586	0.344	0.070
Video or electronic art	0.092	0.252	0.632
Cultural festival	0.040	0.120	0.644
Craft exhibition	0.035	0.067	0.478
Exhibition	0.004	0.416	0.922
Museum/art gallery	0.071	0.809	0.966

From the results here reported, we can already draw some implications for the arguments that we noted at the outset. First, the fact that, as shown in Table 2, we obtain a relatively simple latent class solution must in itself tell against the individualisation argument. That is to say, consumption in the visual arts—just as in music and in theatre, dance and cinema—would appear not to display a bewildering degree of individual diversity but rather to fall into a limited number of rather strong patterns, leaving aside, for the moment, the question of the social correlates of this patterning.

Secondly, when we turn to the substantive findings of Table 3, difficulties clearly emerge for the homology argument also. To begin with, it can be seen that, again as in the cases of music and of theatre, dance and cinema, no latent class is apparent that could readily be equated with a social class or elite that sharply discriminates in its cultural consumption as between high and more popular forms. Further, though, the largest latent class

distinguished—latent class 1 with a relative size of 59%—cannot be regarded as representing a category of mass consumers. Rather, membership of this latent class is associated with having only a very low probability of taking part in *any* of the activities that we cover. Or, in other words, it represents a category of those who are essentially 'inactives', so far at least as the public consumption of the visual arts is concerned—comparable to the category of non-consumers that, as we earlier noted, would be shown up if live theatre and dance were to be considered as a domain separate from that of cinema.

Thirdly, then, our findings do not consort so well with the omnivore–univore argument as those reported in Chan and Goldthorpe (2005b,c) concerning music or theatre. We do, to be sure, identify a latent class—i.e. latent class 3—which, though having a relative size of only 7%, can be regarded as that of omnivores in the visual arts. However, the 'inactives' of latent class 1 cannot then be taken as univores to be set in contrast with these omnivores in the same way as, say, we can set pop-and-rock univores against omnivores in the domain of music. Furthermore, the remaining latent class—i.e. latent class 2—which has a relative size of 34% creates obvious problems for any supposed omnivore–univore dichotomy. Its members differ from the omnivores of latent class 3 in having generally lower levels of participation across the several activities that we consider—and in being virtual non-attenders at craft exhibitions and cultural festivals which might be thought of as the more popular events represented. But at the same time they are clearly more than just univores. As well as having a fairly high probability of visiting museums and galleries, they also visit, even if at a lower rate, other exhibitions of art, photography or sculpture and exhibitions that include video or electronic art. Instead, then, of being either omnivores or univores, members of latent class 2 might be described as 'paucivores' in the visual arts: that is to say, they consume not all or just one form of what is on offer but, rather, modest amounts within a somewhat limited range of possibilities.[7]

However, to take further the issues raised above, we need to consider the social correlates of membership in the latent classes that we have distinguished: i.e. we need to introduce covariates of interest into our analysis. To this end, we first calculate, on the basis of the latent class model that we accept, the conditional probability of respondents belonging to each of our three latent classes, given the responses they made on the five indicators of consumption in the visual arts. We then assign all respondents with a particular response pattern to that latent class to which they have the highest, or modal, conditional probability of belonging.[8] Some degree of error is here

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[7]We thank our colleague Paolo Crivelli for suggesting the term 'paucivore' to us.

[8]Thus, suppose there are three observed categorical variables A, B and C, the condi-

likely to arise. And the relative sizes of the latent classes after individuals have been thus modally assigned to them might differ from the relative sizes originally estimated. However, in the present case it turns out that the extent of this misclassification is quite small at 12%. The relative size of latent class 1, which we label as that of inactives (I), changes only from 59 to 58%, that of latent class 2, the paucivores (P), increases from 34 to 37% while that of latent class 3, the omnivores (O), falls from 7 to 5%.[9]

On this basis, we are able to move on from thinking about patterns of consumption in the visual arts to thinking about types of consumer; and in turn we can investigate the relationship between these types of consumer and a range of other variables, whether through simple bivariate or more powerful multivariate methods.

3.2 Bivariate analyses

Before undertaking more elaborate multivariate analyses, it is of some interest to examine how the three types of consumer in the visual arts that we have identified are distributed by class and status. In Table 4 we give results by class which we operationalise through NS-SEC. With both inactives and the paucivores clear class gradients show up. In the former case there is a steady increase from 35% in Class 1 to 78% in Class 7, and in the latter a corresponding decrease from 57% to 21%. At the same time, though, it should be noted that inactives represent a clear majority—over 60%—in all classes except those of the professional and managerial salariat, Classes 1 and 2, and that even in these classes inactives form a far from negligible minority. With omnivores, however, the class gradient is less strong and consistent, and it is in fact only in the difference between Classes 1 and 2 and the rest that any confidence could be placed.

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tional probability that someone belongs to latent class t given that this person is at level i of A, level j of B and level k of C is given by the following expression:

$$\pi_{ijkt}^{ABC\bar{X}} = \frac{\pi_t^X \pi_{it}^{\bar{A}X} \pi_{jt}^{\bar{B}X} \pi_{kt}^{\bar{C}X}}{\sum_{t=1}^{T} \pi_t^X \pi_{it}^{\bar{A}X} \pi_{jt}^{\bar{B}X} \pi_{kt}^{\bar{C}X}}.$$

[9]The percentage of cases misclassified is calculated as: $100 \times \sum_j [(1 - \hat{\pi}_j) \cdot \frac{n_j}{N}]$, where n_j is the number of respondents giving response pattern j, $\hat{\pi}_j$ is the estimated modal latent class probability given response pattern j, and N is the total sample size. For further applications, and discussion, of the method of modal assignment, see Hogan *et al.* (1993) and, specifically in the field of cultural consumption, Van Rees *et al.* (1999). An alternative approach to introducing covariates is to combine a latent class model directly with a regression model (see e.g. Yamaguchi, 2000; Bandeen-Roche *et al.*, 1997; Dayton and Macready, 1988; Formann, 1992)

Table 4: Distribution of latent class membership within social class.

social class	I	P	O	n
1	35.0	57.4	7.6	488
2	42.5	47.9	9.6	1023
3	61.5	35.9	2.6	574
4	61.8	33.5	4.7	275
5	70.8	27.6	1.7	359
6	74.8	24.0	1.1	620
7	77.9	21.3	0.8	480
overall	58.2	37.1	4.7	3819

Turning next to the results by status, which we operationalise through the scale developed by Chan and Goldthorpe (2004), we present these in two versions: in tabular form in Table 5 and then in graphical form in the panels of Figure 1 in which we also show non-parametric regression lines (Cleveland, 1979). With inactives and paucivores, clear gradients are again found, the proportion of the former rather steadily falling with status while the proportion of latter rises. In some lower status groups, inactives amount to around 80% or more of all respondents included, although it should also be noted that in all but two of the higher status groups—i.e. Higher professionals and Teachers and other professionals in education—inactives still amount to over 30%. In the case of omnivores a rising gradient with status is also apparent, even if less steep than for paucivores and with a wider spread of points around the regression line. Among higher status groups, Teachers and other professionals in education have an unusually high proportion of omnivores at 19%, while Associate professionals in business—who include commercial artists, graphic and other designers and photographers—have 12%.[10]

There is then some indication here that the types of consumer that we have distinguished in the visual arts are differentiated by both class and status. But as earlier noted it is our theoretical expectation that in so far as and in whatever way cultural consumption is socially stratified, it will, as

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[10]Other investigators (see e.g. DiMaggio and Useem, 1978; Bourdieu, 1984) have also remarked on the tendency for teachers to have unusually high levels of cultural consumption and especially perhaps in the visual arts. This might be put down, at least in part, to their visiting museums, galleries etc in the course of their work—and the same could be argued in the case commercial artists, designers etc. However, as regards our own findings, it should be noted that in the Arts in England Survey respondents were explicitly asked not to count such visits when undertaken in connection with their employment.

Table 5: Distribution of latent class membership within occupational categories.

occ. cat.	status score	I	P	O	n
HP	0.5643	28.1	63.3	8.6	128
APB	0.5337	33.9	53.8	12.3	171
SM	0.5107	36.3	55.5	8.2	182
TPE	0.5017	23.4	57.5	19.2	167
GMA	0.4114	43.4	50.0	6.6	76
API	0.3116	54.5	42.7	2.7	110
SET	0.3115	41.9	52.2	5.9	136
FRC	0.2559	53.6	41.1	5.4	56
OMO	0.2355	66.7	33.3	0.0	9
AOA	0.2274	48.0	44.9	7.1	98
NCC	0.2238	65.1	32.5	2.4	169
APH	0.2228	42.1	51.3	6.6	152
SEC	0.1539	53.5	43.3	3.2	157
OCW	0.1443	64.2	28.4	7.4	95
BSR	0.1193	41.4	50.0	8.6	58
CCW	0.1097	55.1	41.6	3.4	89
MPS	-0.0453	54.1	37.1	8.8	170
PDM	-0.0625	45.3	47.7	7.0	86
SW	-0.1151	68.7	29.8	1.5	262
HW	-0.2121	72.0	25.0	3.0	164
PSW	-0.2261	64.1	34.8	1.1	92
PSP	-0.2288	63.3	35.4	1.3	79
RWS	-0.2974	83.7	16.3	0.0	208
CW	-0.3261	72.1	23.5	4.4	68
SDC	-0.3353	76.0	24.0	0.0	25
SMO	-0.4072	70.3	29.0	0.7	138
TO	-0.4114	77.1	22.0	0.9	109
SMC	-0.5014	77.6	22.4	0.0	116
SMM	-0.5121	69.4	28.9	1.6	121
PMO	-0.5589	83.6	16.4	0.0	207
GL	-0.5979	73.6	24.8	1.7	121
overall		58.2	37.1	4.7	3819

Note: [a] For examples of occupations within each category and other details, see Chan and Goldthorpe (2004).

Visual Arts–––Inactives

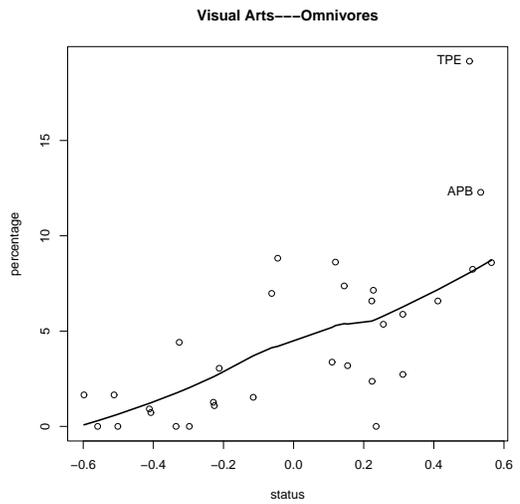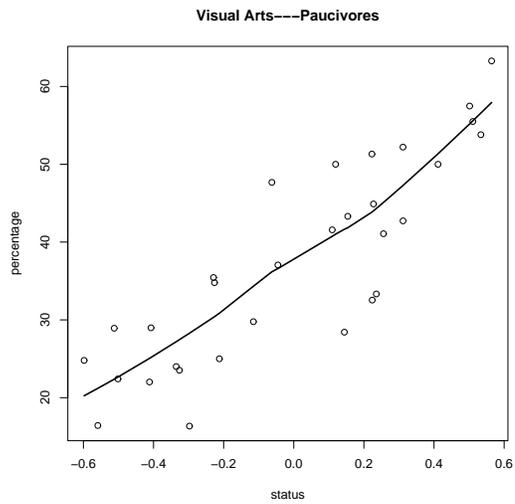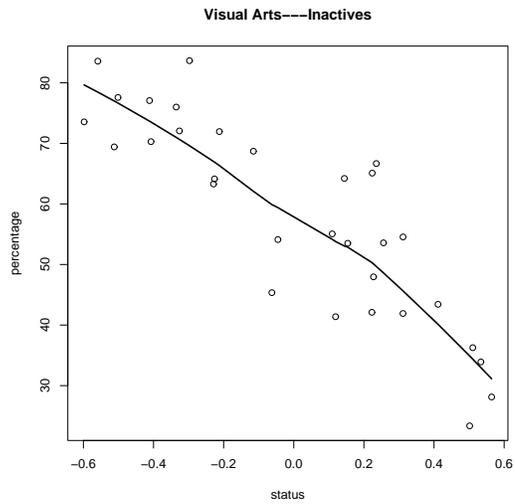Visual Arts–––Paucivores

Visual Arts–––Omnivores

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Figure 1: Proportion of respondents belonging to the three latent classes in the visual arts by social status.

an aspect of lifestyle, prove to be more strongly associated with status than with class. To test this hypothesis, and to address the arguments that we outlined at the start, multivariate analyses are obviously required.

3.3   Multivariate analyses

Descriptive statistics of the covariates that we include in our multivariate analyses are given in Table 6. As can be seen, these covariates are of two main kinds. First, there are broadly demographic variables that we introduce primarily as controls: i.e. for our present purposes, we wish to abstract from any effects that variables of this kind may have. Secondly, there are variables relating to social stratification on which our attention focuses: i.e. these are the 'explanatory' variables of main interest to us in regard to the chances of individuals conforming to one or other of the three types of cultural consumer in the visual arts that we have identified. Here, in addition to the measures of class and status to which we have already referred, we include the measures of individuals' income and educational qualifications that, as earlier noted, are available from the data-set of the Arts in England Survey.

We fit multinomial logit models with individuals' assignment to the three latent classes of inactives, paucivores and omnivores as the dependent variable. In Table 7 we first show effects on the chances of being a paucivore and an omnivore in relation to the reference category of inactive, and then effects on the chances of being an omnivore in relation to the reference category of paucivore.

As regards the first two contrasts, it can be seen that the effects of a number demographic variables are of significance. The chances of being a paucivore or an omnivore increase with age (as also, we know, do the chances of being a musical omnivore); but they decrease for parents with young children (as also do the chances of being a theatre, dance and cinema omnivore). In addition, regional effects show up more generally than in other cultural domains, and especially in that, in comparison with Londoners, those living in the North, Midlands or South-East are less likely to be paucivores than inactives. But, on the other hand, there is no gender effect in the visual arts, unlike in the case of theatre, cinema and dance where women are significantly more likely to be omnivores than are men (see further Chan and Goldthorpe, 2005b,c).

Turning then to our main concern with the nature and extent of the social stratification of consumption in the visual arts, we may note one finding from Table 7 of immediate interest. Consistently with our theoretical expectations—and with results in other cultural domains—this stratification is more apparent on the basis of status than of class. Status exerts

Table 6: Descriptive statistics of covariates.

	N	%
female[a]	2110	55.3
Single (reference category)	700	18.3
Married or cohabiting	2473	64.8
Separated, divorced or widowed	646	16.9
children 0–4[b]	651	17.1
children 5–10[b]	779	20.4
children 11–15[b]	623	16.3
London (reference category)	493	12.9
The North	1141	29.9
Midlands and East Anglia	1150	30.1
South East	617	16.2
South West	418	11.0
no qualifications (reference category)	865	22.7
CSE, etc.	508	13.3
O-levels	889	23.3
A-levels	518	13.6
post-secondary qualifications	347	9.1
degree	692	18.1
Class 1—higher managerial & professional occupations (ref.cat.)	488	12.8
Class 2—lower managerial & professional occupations	1023	26.8
Class 3—intermediate occupations	574	15.0
Class 4—small employers and own-account workers	275	7.2
Class 5—lower supervisory & technical occupations	359	9.4
Class 6—semi-routine occupations	620	16.2
Class 7—routine occupations	480	12.6

	mean	s.d.	min.	max.
age	42.1	11.8	20	64
annual income[c]	15573	10863	260	37700
status	-0.001	0.365	-0.598	0.564

Note:

[a] Male is reference category.

[b] Not having children in the respective age ranges are the reference categories.

[c] The income variable in the Arts Council data set is originally coded in terms of 32 income brackets of variable width. In our analysis, we have assigned respondents to the midpoint of the income bracket to which they belong.

Table 7: Multinomial logit model: latent class in the domain of visual arts as the dependent variable.

	P vs I		O vs I		O vs P	
	$\hat{\beta}$	s.e.	$\hat{\beta}$	s.e.	$\hat{\beta}$	s.e.
female	0.079	(0.090)	0.223	(0.192)	0.144	(0.188)
married	0.037	(0.111)	−0.200	(0.239)	−0.237	(0.234)
separated	−0.050	(0.138)	0.180	(0.295)	0.230	(0.290)
age	0.022**	(0.004)	0.026**	(0.009)	0.003	(0.009)
child (0–4)	−0.235*	(0.111)	−0.639*	(0.285)	−0.404	(0.283)
child (5–10)	0.161	(0.100)	0.260	(0.232)	0.099	(0.229)
child (11–15)	−0.078	(0.106)	0.039	(0.252)	0.117	(0.250)
The North	−0.366**	(0.124)	−0.089	(0.253)	0.277	(0.245)
Midlands	−0.390**	(0.123)	−0.880**	(0.279)	−0.490	(0.272)
South East	−0.483**	(0.138)	−0.150	(0.270)	0.334	(0.262)
South West	−0.297	(0.152)	−0.174	(0.321)	0.123	(0.313)
income	0.010*	(0.005)	0.006	(0.009)	−0.004	(0.009)
CSE/others	0.525**	(0.138)	1.220*	(0.499)	0.694	(0.506)
O-levels	0.631**	(0.123)	1.072*	(0.462)	0.441	(0.467)
A-levels	1.068**	(0.142)	1.849**	(0.471)	0.782	(0.475)
sub-degree	1.194**	(0.157)	2.219**	(0.469)	1.025*	(0.470)
degree	1.652**	(0.153)	3.260**	(0.450)	1.608**	(0.450)
class 2	0.040	(0.133)	0.613*	(0.241)	0.573*	(0.229)
class 3	−0.225	(0.164)	−0.396	(0.376)	−0.171	(0.370)
class 4	−0.059	(0.205)	0.699	(0.411)	0.759	(0.402)
class 5	−0.089	(0.217)	0.073	(0.554)	0.162	(0.551)
class 6	−0.253	(0.198)	−0.480	(0.514)	−0.227	(0.511)
class 7	−0.227	(0.224)	−0.325	(0.646)	−0.098	(0.645)
status	0.684**	(0.180)	1.229**	(0.402)	0.544	(0.397)
constant	−1.923**	(0.293)	−5.461**	(0.688)	−3.538**	(0.678)

Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$.

a significant—positive—effect on the chances of being either a paucivore or an omnivore rather than an inactive, whereas the effects of class are not significant. Again in line with previous results, education is also important. Level of qualifications has significant positive, and in fact close to monotonic, effects on the chances of being a paucivore or omnivore. However, income turns out to have a (just) significant effect only in the paucivore–inactive contrast and not in the omnivore–inactive contrast.[11]

As regards the third, omnivore–paucivore, contrast on which we report in Table 7, none of the demographic variables has a significant effect; and further the effects of the stratification variables also appear more limited. In particular, it may be noted that, despite what was seen in the third panel of Figure 1, the chances of being an omnivore rather than a paucivore do not now, in a multivariate context, significantly increase with status; and there is also no income effect. So far as class is concerned, just one significant effect shows up. The lower-level professionals and managers of Class 2 would appear *more* likely to be omnivores than their higher-level counterparts in Class 1—a finding that can perhaps be related to the degree of concentration in Class 2 of teachers and the associate professionals who in the third panel of Figure 1 show up as having especially strong omnivorous tendencies. Only in the case of educational qualifications do we obtain a somewhat more systematic result. Graduates and others with tertiary level qualifications—though not those with lower level qualifications—are significantly more likely than those with no qualifications to be omnivores rather than paucivores.

Finally in this section we may examine some predicted probabilities of membership in the three latent classes of inactives, paucivores and univores under our multinomial logit model, and in this way form an idea of the relative strengths of different effects—in particular of those of status and education that most often show up as significant. For this purpose, we need to consider a hypothetical person defined in terms of other relevant variables. We take the case of a 40-year old childless woman living in London and with an income of £25,000 p.a. (as of 2001). In Figure 2 we then show the predicted probabilities under our model of such a person being inactive or a paucivore or a omnivore at varying levels of status and education.

From the first panel of the figure, it is apparent that the probability of our hypothetical woman being inactive is very strongly influenced by the educational level that we attribute to her—falling by around 40 percentage points as between 'no qualifications' and 'degree'. At the same time, the

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[11]Income was earlier found to have little effect in regard to the different types of musical consumer that we identified but had a clear, positive effect on the chances of being an omnivore in the case of theatre, dance and cinema rather than a cinema-only univore.
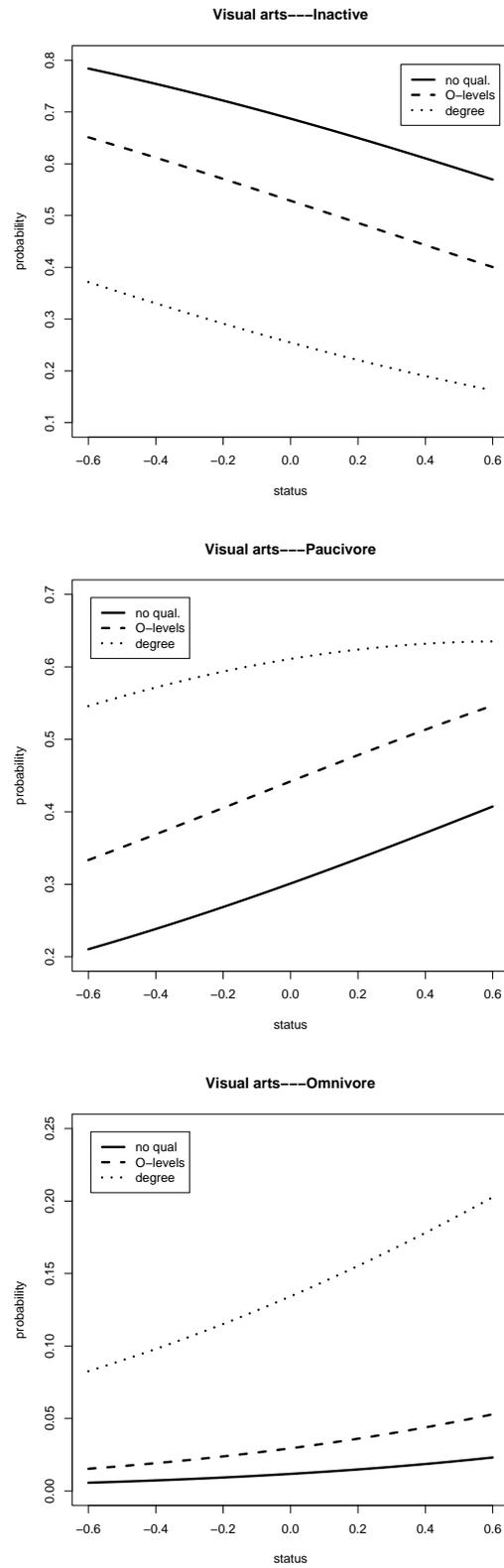
Figure 2: Predicted probabilities of latent class membership in the visual arts by education and social status.

Note: Other covariates fixed as follows: Forty years old female Londoner, with income of £25,000 and no children.

probability of her being inactive also declines with her status, in a more or less linear fashion and at roughly the same rate for each of the three status levels considered, with the difference over the whole status range amounting to some 20–25 percentage points. From the second panel, it can then be seen that the obverse of this situation holds—other than in one respect—as regards the probability of our hypothetical woman being a paucivore: i.e. roughly corresponding increases occur in this probability with both educational level and status. However, the status effect for graduates is clearly less pronounced than for those with lower level qualifications, the difference over the whole status range being in this case less than 10 percentage points. Finally, from the third panel it emerges that, consistently with the results reported in Table 7, the probability of our hypothetical woman being an omnivore is not greatly affected by her status nor by her having O-level rather than no qualifications, but that this probability does increase if she has a degree. Further though, it is indicated that this increase tends to be greater, the higher her status—despite the fact that the coefficient for status in Table 7 itself fails to reach significance.[12]

In sum, in the visual arts, as in the two other cultural domains previously studied by Chan and Goldthorpe (2005b,c), the social stratification of consumption is primarily grounded in status and education. However, while in theatre, dance and cinema the effects of status and educational level on patterns of consumption are of roughly similar magnitude and in music those of education only slightly greater, in the visual arts educational level is clearly the more important factor—and not only in the contrasts between paucivores or omnivores, on the one hand, and inactives, on the other, but further in that between paucivores and omnivores themselves.

4 Discussion and conclusions

Having carried out similar analyses in the domain of the visual arts to those on which Chan and Goldthorpe (2005b,c) have previously reported in music and in theatre, dance and cinema, what further can we now say about the three arguments on the social stratification of cultural consumption that we outlined at the start?

As regards the individualisation argument, we have already observed that this is immediately called into question by the results of our latent class anal-

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[12]The interaction effects suggested between educational level and status in the second and third panels of Figure 2 might be found surprising in that no interaction effects are included in our multinomial logit model. However, while the model is linear in the logit, it is not linear in probability.

ysis: i.e. by the fact that cultural consumption in the visual arts, rather than displaying wide individual diversity, is simply yet strongly patterned—to a similar extent in fact, if not always on the same lines, as in the other domains previously examined (Chan and Goldthorpe, 2005b,c). To this we can now add that the patterning revealed does have social basis, and primarily, as in the other domains, in status and education. Specifically, the individuals we label as inactives, or non-consumers, are significantly more likely to be of lower status and to have lower level educational qualifications than those we label as either paucivores or omnivores. While we would not wish to overstate the strength of this relationship, its presence is sufficient to show that even in supposedly 'postmodern' societies, cultural consumption is still far from being a pure expression individual taste and choice.

The homology argument also appeared to be undermined by our latent class analysis. On the one hand, no highly discriminating elite of consumers in the visual arts is revealed, nor, on the other hand, a category of mass consumers. Rather, our largest latent class is that of individuals who are virtual non-consumers in this domain. Further to this, we can now say the following.

First, even if our omnivores in the visual arts were to be thought of a some kind of cultural elite, they still could not be regarded as also forming a *social* elite—as the homology argument would require. As we have seen, omnivores are not significantly different from the far more numerous paucivores in their social status; and although they are more likely to have tertiary-level educational qualifications, in social class terms they would in fact appear to be concentrated more in the *lower* than in the upper levels of the salariat. Secondly, even if our inactives are regarded as in some sense an excluded category so far as the visual arts are concerned, they are still far from being a homogenous and disprivileged 'mass'. As noted, inactives constitute substantial minorities even within higher status groups and more advantaged classes; and conversely, then, the latent class of inactives is quite heterogeneous in its social composition. For example, almost a seventh of all inactives come from the seven highest ranking groups that we distinguish in our status ordering and over a quarter from Classes 1 and 2.[13]

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[13]These findings also point to the inadequacy of the concept of 'social exclusion' as applied in much discussion of social differences in cultural consumption and of related policy issues in present-day Britain, and especially under New Labour influence (for an excellent review, see Selwood, 2002). In general, just who are to be counted as the 'socially excluded', and by what criteria, remain issues that have received no satisfactory answer (Goldthorpe, 2002); but it is in any event clear that, as regards cultural consumption, those individuals who are non-consumers or univores in any domain are far too numerous and socially diverse to be usefully brought together under this description.

Our results would thus lead us to underwrite the critique of the homology argument advanced by Halle (1993, pp.7–9) to the effect that it seriously exaggerates the extent to which, in contemporary societies at least, members of higher social strata, however understood, consume 'high' culture, and at the same time the importance of such consumption for entry into, and social acceptance within, such strata.

Finally, in the case of the omnivore–univore argument—which was largely supported by analyses of cultural consumption in music and in theatre, dance and cinema (Chan and Goldthorpe, 2005b,c)—difficulties were again raised by the nature of the latent classes of consumer apparent in the visual arts. For although omnivores here too show up, by far the largest latent classes are those of inactives and paucivores, and it is thus the contrast between these two latter types of consumer, and not that between omnivores and univores, that is the salient feature.

Moreover, our multivariate analyses then indicate that it is in the contrast between inactives, on the one hand, and paucivores, together with omnivores, on the other, that the social stratification of cultural consumption is most obviously expressed, in particular in terms of status and education. In contrast, differences between paucivores and omnivores are limited. The latter do not have higher status and cannot in fact be regarded as being in any general sense socially superior. Rather, the fact that omnivores tend to be somewhat more advantaged in their educational attainments but somewhat less well placed economically[14] would lend support to the idea suggested by previous authors (e.g. DiMaggio and Useem, 1978; Halle, 1993, pp.196–199), that distinctive cultural consumption, and perhaps in the visual arts especially, is a means of establishing and maintaining status that is favoured by occupational groupings *within* generally more advantaged classes, such as lower-level professionals, whose balance of cultural and economic resources is better suited to this strategy than to one based upon distinctive material consumption.[15] In sum, while in the other domains previously studied, it can

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[14]Although Table 7 shows that income has no significant effect on the chance of being an omnivore rather than a paucivore, we base this judgement on our finding that being in Class 2 rather than Class 1 does increase this chance. Membership of the NS-SEC classes has been shown to be a good predictor of economic security, stability and prospects (Goldthorpe and McKnight, 2005), and might in turn be taken as a useful proxy for 'permanent' income. And it may be recalled that even with class in the analysis, a positive effect for income is found on the chance of being a paucivore rather than an inactive but not on that of being an omnivore rather than an inactive.

[15]Some parallel might be thought to exist here with Bourdieu's argument (1984, ch.3 esp) that within the 'dominant class' there exist 'class fractions' differentiated primarily by the inverse relationship between their economic and cultural capital—with, at one extreme, commercial and industrial employers and, at the other, teachers and artistic producers.

be said that the division between omnivores and univores does at all events mark an illuminating advance on that between elite and mass, in the case of the visual arts neither of these divisions would seem appropriate given the types of consumer that we have identified and what we have learnt about their social stratification.

The advantages are then readily apparent of testing arguments concerning cultural consumption and its social bases across a variety of domains—as the Arts in England Survey enables us to do. But, in following this strategy, we cannot then avoid further questions as to why analyses in different domains should yield different results; and in the present case, the question specifically of why the omnivore–univore argument should prove less applicable to cultural consumption in the visual arts than elsewhere.

Without claiming to have, for the present at least, a complete answer to this question, we can make two points of relevance that are in fact foreshadowed in what we have already written. First, in the visual arts there would not appear to be popular genres analogous, say, to those of pop and rock in music or to those that are found in cinema;[16] or, at all events, there would not appear to be such genres that have either an extensive institutional basis or wide dissemination through the media. One may suppose that in the Arts in England Survey, the questions on attendance at craft exhibitions and at cultural festivals were included to try to capture participation in the visual arts occurring outside of the more established settings of museums and galleries. Yet, as Table 3 reveals, these two forms of consumption turn out in fact to be those that are most exclusively confined to the small minority of omnivores.[17] Thus, within lower social strata, in place, as it were,

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However, our position differs in that we do not find it helpful to regard teachers as part of a 'dominant class' and, in particular (cf. Halle, 1993, p.196), we do not see how their attempts to use their cultural capital (or, as we would prefer to say, cultural resources) in order to enhance their status are likely, even if successful, to lead in turn to significant economic or political power. Underlying this difference is, of course, our rejection of Bourdieu's attempt (see further Chan and Goldthorpe, 2005b) to overcome Weber's distinction between class and status and in effect to 'yoke together' (Weininger, 2005) these two (in our view, qualitatively quite different) forms of stratification into a single order.

[16]'Pop art' does not, of course, represent such a popular genre. Although reflecting—in part—a reaction against critiques of mass culture and the assumption that an appreciation of 'high' art goes together with social superiority, pop art had itself no popular—for example, folk—roots. It was, rather, the product of *avant garde*, technically sophisticated, professional artists, whose stance towards the products of mass society and culture *as subject matter* remained that of 'the inflexibly ironic spectator' (Hughes, 1991, p.344) and whose hopes for mass sales, in so far as they existed, were never realised.

[17]Caution may, however, be needed in generalising in this respect from the English case. In England, following major debates in the inter-war years, the distinction between the 'fine arts' and the 'applied arts' became institutionalised, at least for purposes of public

of the large latent classes of 'pop-and-rock' or 'cinema-only' univores that show up in music and in theatre, dance and cinema respectively (Chan and Goldthorpe, 2005b,c), in the visual arts by far the largest latent class that is revealed is that of non-consumers or inactives.[18]

Secondly, even within higher social strata, the extent of consumption of the visual arts is easily exaggerated. The visual arts have often been taken as a paradigm case for the homology argument (see e.g. Gans 1999; Bourdieu 1984, pp.272–273; Bourdieu and Darbel 1991), and museums and galleries have been seen as expressing and reinforcing, through their ordering and 'rituals', existing social hierarchies and dominant ideologies (Duncan, 1995; O'Neill, 1992; Fleming, 2002). However, the empirical evidence would clearly indicate that if museums and galleries are to be regarded as in this way 'exclusive', then substantial numbers of those within *higher* as well as lower social strata must be counted among the excluded, or at all events the self-excluded. As we have seen, the inactives—or, that is, virtual non-consumers of the visual arts at least in public contexts—amount to a third or upwards of individuals found in NS-SEC Classes 1 and 2 or in most of the higher groups within our status scale. Moreover, while it is true that those individuals who do have the highest levels of consumption of the visual arts, that is, our omnivores, are very largely drawn from higher social strata, they still constitute only a small minority even within these strata—although without forming any kind of social elite.[19] Thus, in the visual arts the main pattern

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sponsorship and support, with the creation of the Arts Council (1945–6) with a remit clearly separated from that of the Council of Industrial Design (1944). Saler (1999, ch.8 esp.) provides a detailed and insightful account of this development. It is possible that in other national societies interest in crafts, folk art, poster and other commercial art, design etc. has received more official encouragement and is more extensive than in England. If in the Arts in England Survey the kinds of museum to which visits were recorded had been differentiated (cf. note 4 above), it might have emerged that some—e.g. folk or industrial museums—have more popular appeal than others. None the less, it remains the case that we find a latent class of inactives, amounting to almost three-fifths of the population studied, who have a very low probability of visiting museums of *any* description.

[18]However, as noted in the text above (and see further Chan and Goldthorpe, 2005c), if live theatre and dance were to be treated separately from cinema, then in this domain also inactives would represent the largest latent class revealed in our analyses. And in this case too, it may be added, what might be thought of as popular genres—for example, musicals or pantomime—appear in fact to have rather little attraction other than for omnivores.

[19]Our conclusions here are, we would note, largely consistent with those reached by Halle (1993) on the basis of his study of art in the homes of American families of different class backgrounds. Halle reports that even among professionals and managers living in Manhattan, only a minority revealed a taste for high, and especially for more *avant garde* art, such as abstract, primitive or pop art. Moreover, while expected cross-class differences showed up in the ownership of original works or prints as opposed to reproductions, commonalities in taste were notable, as, for example, in a preference for paintings of land-

of consumption, as distinct from non-consumption, that can be identified, and that is followed by a narrow majority of those in higher social strata and by decreasing minorities in lower strata, is that of the individuals we have labelled as paucivores: i.e. a seemingly rather unadventurous pattern that involves a fairly high probability of visiting museums and galleries but a much more modest level of visits to more specialised exhibitions and events. Thus, in the visual arts it is in the contrast between paucivores and inactives, rather than in that between omnivores and univores, that the social stratification of cultural consumption is primarily revealed.

Finally, here, we would recognise that a logical continuation of the study of cultural consumption across different domains, on the lines that we have so far attempted, would be to move on to analyses of such consumption in its totality—and of the nature of its social stratification at this level. In this way, new perspectives on the different theoretical positions that we have examined—and on the omnivore–univore argument in particular—might be gained. It should be noted that whether or not this argument holds good in regard to individuals' total cultural consumption is in fact in some degree independent of its validity in particular domains. Thus, even if the omnivore–univore division appears inapplicable in certain cases, such as that we have considered in the present paper, it could still be found to have relevance when an overview of cultural consumption is taken; or, conversely, even if the division shows up across several different domains, it might still not apply overall—since, for example, a 'universal' omnivorousness could be difficult to sustain, even for members of higher social strata, on account of resource and time constraints. These are issues that we shall in fact take up in forthcoming work.

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scapes and seascapes. 'In the realm of artistic choices', Halle writes, 'the most apparent differences are not between what can be called a dominant and a dominated class, but between one section of the dominant class and everyone else' (1993, p.196).

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