

Culture, Class and Social Exclusion

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Cultural Capital and Social Distinction

- CRESC – new cultural sociology. Influence of Pierre Bourdieu.
- Cultural tastes and practices central to understandings of power and social division rather than a by-product of economic relations (Bourdieu 1984)
- Cultural Capital and Social Exclusion Survey, *Culture, Class, Distinction* (Bennett et al 2009)
- Main distinction between the (multiply) engaged and the disengaged. High cultural capital associated with ‘omnivorousness’ (Peterson and Kern 1996). But of several types
- Social class remains important but age more so

Investigating 'disengagement'

The deficit model of participation in cultural policy

- Underlying social inclusion agenda of late 90s and early noughties, non participants as a social problem
- DCMS and its NDPBs cast in the role of cultural engineers.

We will argue that being involved with the arts can have a lasting and transforming effect on many people's lives. This is true not just for individuals, but also for neighbourhoods, communities and entire generations, whose sense of identity and purpose can be changed through art. **Arts Council England, *Ambition for the Arts*, 2003**

- A polarizing, classifying narrative - inclusion as exclusion. Marking and marginalising practices (and people) as culturally valueless. Reinforcing middle-class norms.
- Methodological techniques for 'robust' evidence of impacts which confirm a limited view of participation and participants

Everyday participation & ordinary culture

- Non-users of cultural institution often involved in vibrant informal cultural networks defined by ostensibly mundane pursuits and social relationships

Right. Monday...go for a mooch into Altrincham... a bit of browsing, think of what I'm going to buy on Thursday...Do window shopping first, and then pick my daughter up from nursery, go to the local park, bring her back and watch the telly, do her tea, bed, watch the telly... And Thursdays, when I get my money [laughs], love it, go to Tesco do my food shopping, and I go into Altrincham and think, ooh, what shall I--, what shall I treat myself to this week. I normally go in to every single clothes shop, and then start out at the end and work my way up and then go back to the end again and think I'll have that one...Saturdays, it depends on what my daughter wants to do, park or swimming or whatever...Sundays... maybe go up and see my mum and dad.

*I love going food shopping. I love it. I'd love to go into Tescos and think right I haven't got a budget, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom...I love going round and thinking, you know--,...'cause I watch Gordon Ramsey, I think ooh what can--, what can I make tonight, you know. I think ooh, ooh I'll have that, I'll have that and I love doing all weird concoctions. **Female, 20s, part-time cleaner, South Manchester***

Ghostly participation

- Also reveal 'real' cultural participants but under the survey radar because they don't self-identify as such - personal, privatised engagements, divorced from mainstream institutional contexts

I've always done art as a hobby because I never wanted to let go. I've always been--, haven't been able to express my feelings a lot, so I've always done a lot of it in art...

Female, 30s, part-time supermarket worker

*The things that I probably enjoy most in a week is probably seeing my girlfriend, going out to town and I get well into my painting as well, I paint a lot... I forgot to mention that I do it three times a week...to be honest I wouldn't really go out of my way to go to museums but if I'm with my girlfriend and we've got time to kill then we'll go in and have a look around and like just like be amazed at how some things can be perceived as art. **Male, 20s, City Centre***

*I just like started painting... [Q. Why did you choose watercolour?] ...Because it's cheaper than oils. Also, it was on telly once, I was watching...We've got Sky now...[Q. You said you've been to the Lowry, what did you see at the Lowry?] There was some artist on, we didn't go specially for that--, Catherine, my daughter, was there doing a thing for school and... there was an exhibition on for some artists so I went around and took a look at them. Couldn't tell you who it was...**Male, 50s, former industrial worker***

Detachment and Dis-identification

- Formal culture (A) irrelevant. Part of an alien way of life. Not excluded - vibrant vernacular culture. No resentment and no interest (Bennett et al 2009)
- Formal culture is (B) relevant. Interest but distanced from/alienated by the sites and resources of the arts establishment
- Much sector based thinking on 'barriers on participation' focuses on individual level, psychological factors (e.g. Keaney 2008)
- Lacking developed understanding of the structural, spatial, biographical and relational socio-cultural contexts shaping behaviours

- 5-year interdisciplinary research project funded by the AHRC within its communities and creative economy programme
- Focus on meanings, 'stakes' and consequences of everyday participation
- Participation as 'situated' through a place-based studies of 6 contrasting 'cultural ecosystems'
- Based on a range of primarily qualitative methods
- Informed re-use of existing quantitative data, new histories of participation and policy and local mapping work
- Experimental application projects
- Study of the relations of different practice communities to inform future research and policy development
- Four universities and 17 sector partners

Understanding everyday participation

articulating cultural values



Does detachment matter?

- No sense of exclusion and recruitment. Cultural institutions appreciated for their 'existence value'
- Health and well-being associated with participation in general rather than a particular set of cultural practices (Miles and Sullivan 2010)
- BUT: socio-economic advantage and life chances remain strongly correlated with high levels of cultural capital

Arts in the community

- Dance United's *Academy* Project. 'Sentenced to Dance'
- 50% less likely to offend than their peers; measurable increases 'capacity to learn'; 100% higher than expected rates of transfer into ETE
- Art form - mental discipline through bodily control
- Arts environment – performance pressure, professional standards
- Social – cooperation, group identity
- Cultural – middle class dance company
- BUT: the contingency of progress and the problem of 'the intervention'

Conclusions

- From cultural to social policy
 - Issues of socialisation and distinction are fundamentally structural
 - Require inter/transgenerational attention
 - Educational and employment reform
- Democratising culture
 - Recognise popular cultural forms and their value
 - Connect policy and practice with the everyday
 - Rationalise the funding of 'elite' arts
 - Promote omnivorousness

Exploring the class habitus of non-users: detachment and dis-identification from 'legitimate' culture

Q: Do you think of Manchester as a cultural city? *Oh, there's a very diverse cultures, Manchester and you get all walks of life don't you, blacks, Asians, lot of Polish influence now and Czech now, yeah--, yeah, there's quite a lot, like, you know. Male, 30s, Ancoats*

..there's someone up the road and if I was walking down the road with her I would not be talking about going to an art gallery because she'd just be like, "You what?" She really would... she'd just be thinking, "Who do you think you are?" 'cause that's--, there's still a lot of people like that round here unfortunately, you know. And I'm not saying I'm better either, you know. Female, 30s, Levenshulme

the general area has gone down ...We've got a park over there, yeah, well I go in there because I play bowls... But other than that we've got nothing. No picture houses. We used to have two picture houses just across the road. They're both gone...

All of the new buildings they're putting up [in the City Centre], I don't like them...I'll stay away from it...They're supposed to be modernising it, but I think they're ruining it. And that--, what's the other building? That one on Corporation Street. Bit of a museum it's supposed to be...Urbis. I think that's an eyesore. Male, 60s, Gorton

The social life of methods

- Cultural policy evaluation model - limited because tools for evaluating department performance against targets rather than understanding the dynamics of participation
- Effect of cross-sectional, indicator-based approach is to abstract from social, spatial and temporal context
- Yet adherence to positivist social science and consumer segmentation approaches from market research which relegate qualitative methods to an inferior, 'anecdotal' status, is not a neutral choice
- Following Savage (2010) can be seen in terms of the rise of a technical middle class in post-war Britain – underpins emerging technocratic concerns to subject social life to inspection and scrutiny from 1960s onwards
- Triumph of 'transparent modern' over 'partial gentlemanly' social science centrally implicated in the Audit Society and the New Public Management of the 1980s and 90s.
- Reflects changing configuration of the cultural establishment in which the authority of the post-war intellectual aristocracy is vanquished by neo-liberalism (Griffiths et al 2008, Miles and Savage 2012)

Conclusions

- Cultural policy not a socially neutral realm but (an historically) contested arena in which the chosen technologies of validation help to shape social boundaries
- Looking beyond official models and measures of participation - non users detached but not excluded and some are interested in the arts
- For the sector, the value and values of everyday participation are not to be dismissed or written out but explored and understood
- Reassertion of class using perspectives from cultural (esp. Bourdieusian) sociology and mixed methods research important resources for cultural policy studies