

Participation Narratives

Using in-depth interviews to explore cultural practices in time and place

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Cultural Capital – what, when, where?

- Decline of the high culture system
- Rise of the cultural omnivore (Petersen and Kern 1996) - cultural democracy or a new form of distinction?
- Elite consumption defined by ‘plenitude, proficiency and capability’ (Warde, 2007, 2014)
- New ‘emerging’ form of cosmopolitan cultural capital (Priour and Savage 2013)
- Implicated in the ‘end of place’ (Thrift 1994)

Participation narratives

- 30 people in each location interviewed twice for 90 mins-2 hours
- Wave 1: Belonging, day-to-day activities, life histories, influences on tastes and activities, identities
- Wave 2: Change, friendship, geographies and economies of participation
- Preliminary examination - 20 Wave 1 interviews from Manchester/Salford, Aberdeen and Gateshead – 25% sample of Interviews achieved split by gender, age and occupational class

The ubiquity of plenitude – at home

- TV
 - a bit
 - documentaries
 - the rugby)
 - Gogglebox, Eastenders, The Good Wife, The Mentalist, The Big Bang Theory, How I Met Your Mother...
 - NCIS, Endeavour, Mystery, Period Drama, Countryfile...
- Friends round from work
- iPlayer – film, documentary
- Sitting in the garden, barbecues
- Puppet making
- Knitting group (via Facebook)
- Facebook
- Etsy shop (online craft)
- Film making
- Twitter
- Pinterest
- YouTube
- Cooking
- Gardening
- Read paper
- TV (not daytime)
- Visiting relatives
- Skype
- Scrabble (Internet)
- Facebook
- Crossword puzzles
- Sewing (Cross stich)
- Having family round to eat
- Sitting outside/in the garden
- Listening to the radio
- Making cards
- Garden
- DIY
- Cooking
- Baking (for Church teas)

The ubiquity of plenitude - out and about

- Salsa
- Line dancing
- Walking around the village
- Hill walking (a lot)
- Pubs
- Restaurants
- Swimming
- Gym
- Golf
- Cycling
- Late night shopping
- Theatre (occasional as part of work club)
- Race Night (occasional)
- Ceramics (classes, club, formerly a business)
- Cross country skiing (used to)
- Canoeing (planning)
- Jazzercise
- Running
- Classical music concert
- Heritage
- Church
- (women's) Guild
- Walking
- Skiing (general/downhill)
- Sailing
- Flying
- Gym
- Dancing
- Food shopping
- Reflexology
- Shopping (Glasgow/Edinburgh)
- Cinema
 - Grand Bucharest Hotel
 - Frozen

Older Groups

- High-brow/cultural omnivores
- Traditional working-class culture
- Explicit recognition of cultural class distinction
- Retirement as freedom and constraint

I raised money for various charities. Sunday--, then I came back after swimming and started gardening, 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 and yes. ..

(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.

Stephen (AB) - administrator – 60s

On the Saturday was the crafts day, and then on Sunday--, 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, so they invite different guilds to go. We are North Durham, so we went along. We had a lunch and we had entertainment. They do sort of handcrafts and setting up a table and doing flower arrangements. That was yesterday. Now on Saturday, with Active Age, I'm going to Cumberland Show, which is like a county show. And then next week is the AGM for the Towns Women's Guild at Cardiff, which is Tuesday till Thursday.

...Now I'm a subscriber to four knitting magazines a month, I'm a member of the Knitting and Crochet Guild and next month I'm going to derby for their AGM, and I was there last year. They are building up an archive of old patterns and things that they come upon that have been knitted or crocheted and are an example of things.

...I started to do things myself when I retired. I hadn't been anywhere abroad much at all, so for the first few years I went everywhere, just for a week... Italy, Croatia, Austria ...Then I went to America and that was with a group called Just Us

.... Of course, everybody thinks I'm eccentric, you know, who I knock about with round here, but when I go on these things, I meet lots of people who are like myself and want to do all these things, you know.

Joan (GH) – retired clerical worker – 70s

Younger groups

- Focus on active/embodied and technical activities, outdoor and social life
- Achieved/independent rather than ascribed tastes
- Emphasis on personal development and sociality
- Unspoken recognition of cultural class distinctions
- Importance of work and occupational cultures
- Sensitivity to life stage and adjusting to conflicting life-course 'times'

initially my parents, because I think you sort of look to what your parents do, like my dad was quite a keen sportsman so that's probably why I sort of--, so my dad played football till quite an old age, locally, and he was very keen at that, so that's why I started to play quite a bit of football when I was younger. And then... I don't know because 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 sort of learn--, you don't follow anybody else, you sort of learn what you enjoy

Dan (GH) – health professional – 30s

...Well since I've reached a turning point in my life now, it's a bit different than like maybe two, three weeks ago. [Coughs] 'Cause like I said, like now with my brother-in-law and my friend Anton 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. 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.

And the fact that like, you know, as I was describing before, 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, because it's like, it's quite big. 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.

Paul (BR) – Customer Services – 20s

- Q: Do you feel that you belong to a social class?
- A: No, I feel I can fit in anywhere....
- Q:So the next one is, how far do your cultural interests reflect the type of person you are?
- A: [Pause] I don't know [laughs], that's quite hard.
- Q: So I guess what does cultural interests mean for you and has that kind of had an impact on, or not, on the way you see yourself?
- A: [Pause] I still feel like I can't answer that. I'm not quite sure.
- Q: I guess it's just however you want to answer. There's no wrong or right answer if that makes sense so I guess just whatever feels natural for you to say.
- A: So what do you mean when you say cultural interests?
- Q: That's what we are looking to see what you kind of define as a cultural interest for you. It's just for you basically.
- A: [Pause].
- Q: It's okay, just basically you don't need to kind of over think it really, just whatever comes first to you, if that makes sense. Shall I say it again? [Both talking at once].
- A: Yeah.
- Q: You could say anything honestly, like I say, there's absolutely there's no such thing as a right or wrong answer. So this is it again, so how far do your cultural interests reflect the kind of person you are?
- A: Reflect the kind of person I am? What type of person am I for one? I don't know

So as long as I've got something for me as in I've got to have that little bit of exercise, that little bit of switch off. And whatever that maybe but that changes 'cause like, a couple of years ago I was really into my running so I did a lot of running. Since we've got the dog and I love walking the dog, so it does change. As long as I've got that little something, you know.

...I mean, 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 whereas if you've got to make the effort to go to a class or go swimming or whatever, you've actually got to physically make that effort. So when you can just literally do it from your door whether that's on a bike or running, then that's ideal, you know. 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, they don't seem to--, whereas mothers and women you do

Anna (GH) – consultant – 40s

Narratives of place

- Regeneration and displacement in the shadow of the cultural city

I don't think living in Broughton as a whole has much to do about my sense of belonging, 'cause its just more of like oh I live here and I feel It's very convenient to town. But I feel like I just belong in the city 'cause of the whole, erm, cultural diversity

...Along this road it's like a lot of families, you know, who've got kids and stuff, so it's generally fine, we don't have any trouble with neighbours and that. 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--, I think with all the developments that are happening it's just going to be a nicer place.

Paul (BR) – customer relations – 20s

We're losing our history, there's got to be some history to show younger ones. 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. You know, it's all very well, you know, Salford Quays, but a lot of people round here wouldn't even think of venturing round Salford Quays, because it's not them. They are very working class, they wouldn't go to Salford Quays. Salford Quays is for the posh.

Sheila (BR) – careers adviser – 40s

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...The [outsiders 1:51:47] is putting their money, they don't know, they're not thinking about the history, they're not connected with the country, with the town.

Michael (BR) – retired taxi driver – 70s

Narratives of place

- A village community spirit in the city without a soul

Well Peterculter's the last of Aberdeen's city, so it's the very outskirts of the city. I mean if you cross the bridge over the water there's a sign, Aberdeenshire... You can get the bus into town, it's about 40 minutes into the heart of Aberdeen, or I can walk ten minutes up the hill and go in the woods and go foraging... there's a sense of community in Peterculter, obviously there's a lot of elderly people that have stayed here all their life...it's got a nice balance to it.

Craig – storeman – 20s

I would say it's a bit soulless, I think it's lost its soul somehow... got all these people, but they don't know who they are, where they are, what they're here for. And it's got no soul because the people are here just want to have a drink because they're on the oil or whatever, they're out. Or they just want to shop to take their mind off things. So it's all about like spending money, and just it's very greedy, but then they've got all this money, but it looks like it does and it's got no culture, and it's got no soul. Yeah, that's how I feel about Aberdeen

Lisa – homemaker – 30s

Summary

- Several models of cultural practice and practitioner
- Strong generational life-course timing dimension
- No 'end to geography' – cultural formation strongly implicated in the dynamics of place
- Suggestions of an emerging cultural capital group among young professionals and service workers (Savage et al 2013)
- Plenitude, proficiency but convertability unclear – part individualistic, part social connection
- What are the mechanisms for obtaining cultural profit? (Warde 2013)