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All fun and games: How gender and social class are associated with the benefits of social group participation

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All fun and games: How gender and social class are associated with the benefits of social group participation

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Abstract

Cultural participation has largely been measured through high status events and is believed to provide social benefits through participation. However, these past measurement approaches do not account for activities that people may do, nor might they accurately represent cultural participation of lower status groups. To address this, I first show social group patterns in frequency of participation and variety of types of cultural participation, both through cultural activities (chapter 3) and cultural events people attend (chapter 4), using separate secondary analysis of data from the UK-based, *Taking Part* Study of adults aged 16–95 ($N = 10{,}171$). Cluster analysis grouped participants based on their cultural participation, and logistic analysis showed social class and gender differences between participation groups. Second, I explore how social class and gender be associated with the benefits of afterschool participation, using secondary analysis of the *Growing Up in Ireland* study of Irish 13-year-olds ($N = 7{,}525$). Participation frequency was analyzed using negative binomial analysis to show gendered (chapter 5) and social classed (chapter 6) participation differences and subsequent effects on mental health. Effects were found across both gender and social class for specific activity types (group sport, individual sport, creative activities, community activities, and homework clubs) and the variety of activities participated in. Taken together, these studies show how social class and gender are associated with cultural participation, and the relationships this has on mental health gained through participating in social groups.

Keywords: Cultural participation, gender, social class, social groups, group memberships, social behaviour

Declaration

The work in this thesis has not been submitted to any other university or institution of higher education, or for any other academic award. Any contribution made to the research by others, with whom I have worked, is explicitly acknowledged in the thesis. Citations of secondary works have been fully referenced.

Acknowledgements

Several years ago, I heard a (probably untrue) story about a famous Chinese painter who lived very long ago. Although he was very well known and respected, he lived on a remote mountain in a modest house. Every night when he was finished with the day's work, he would clean his brushes, set out a new canvas and bucket of paint, and wander down the hill into the small village below where he would then sell the day's work before wandering into the local drinking establishment where he would stay until the early hours of the morning when he was no longer coherent. He'd go home, stumbling back up the mountain, until he reached the blank canvas and the bucket of paint he had left there earlier. Placing both hands on either side of the bucket, he would lean over and dunk his head into the paint, and smash his head against the canvas, leaving the paint to drip overnight. Then off to bed he would go. When he began work the next morning, he would use whatever had dried on the canvas the night before as inspiration for the day's work. At the end of the day when he finished, he would clean his brushes, set out a new canvas and bucket of paint, and wander down the hill into the small village below to do it all over again.

This story is a great metaphor for the PhD. There's a certain chaotic divine inspiration that comes at the beginning of the work akin to drunken paint head smashing followed by the later hard work that turns chaos into something that I can be proud of. It has taken a lot of faith and hard work to reach this point, but to see the big picture has very much been inspired and supported by numerous people around me without whom I would not have succeeded. To that end, I would like to thank, in no particular order:

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Chapter 1, Overview of the current thesis

Background: Defining culture and cultural participation

The etymology of the word “culture” arises from the same Latin root as “cultivation”, to grow intentionally (Jahoda, 2012). Culture can be more concretely defined as the shared ideas about what is valid and valuable in the world (Smith et al., 2013). By way of extension, and in lieu of an existing operational definition, cultural participation is defined in this thesis as engagement in activities or events that represent a social group’s shared ideas about what is valid and valuable in the world.

Cultural participation can promote benefits to individuals and groups. For instance, research has shown that cultural participation can improve quality of life (Galloway, 2006) increase happiness and other positive emotions (Lamont & Ranaweera, 2019). It can also strengthen personal qualities such as leadership and confidence (Ersing, 2009; Yates & Youniss, 1996) and promote the inclusion of disadvantaged groups into communities (Belfiore, 2002; Le et al., 2015). Additionally cultural participation provides economic benefits (Scott, 2014), providing the groups with material resources.

Despite these benefits, cultural participation has not taken priority in many research agendas. While there has been a significant amount of attention paid to inequality across different social groups in work (e.g., Ryan, 2023), health (e.g., Homan, 2019; Pickett & Wilkinson, 2015), and education (e.g., Alvarado, 2010; Raftery & Hout, 1993), little attention has been paid toward researching these differences in contexts relevant to cultural participation. This may be because cultural participation has been attributed to individual choice rather than social influence (Green, 1990) or social group membership. However, many aspects of behaviour that are perceived as individual choices linked to taste, including food choices (e.g., Nakagawa & Hart, 2019), personal style (e.g., Akdemir, 2018), and music preferences (e.g., Eastman, 2012) have been linked to group norms, and are thus associated with social group membership. Extending this logic, it is likely that group norms and social group membership are associated with cultural participation. At the individual level, viewing cultural participation as an investment in time, energy, and financial investment offers insights into what the individual values. Group-based patterns in cultural participation may also reflect the most cherished values of a given social group. By identifying underlying group patterns and values, researchers can identify factors that facilitate cultural participation as well as potential barriers to cultural participation.

Furthermore, by identifying the group influence in personal choice, this creates future opportunities to learn about the ways people “opt in” to subtle group dynamics without being aware of it, and how this is associated with personal resources such as mental health (chapter 4) and cognitive abilities (Beadleston et al., 2019). These resources can also be important in work, education, and health settings, which opens possibilities to be useful across several contexts, both theoretical and applied. Therefore, research into leisure and cultural participation provides several opportunities to expand knowledge about social groups both through the current thesis, which identifies the association between groups and participation (chapters 2 & 3) and the associated mental health outcomes (chapter 4), as well as future research beyond the current thesis.

Cultural participation is inherently interdisciplinary as seen in the use of activities participation or events attendance used across several disciplines. This may be because participation is a directly observable behaviour rather than as an inferred mental state or process, which can be operationalized for several purposes. However, the use of cultural participation across several research areas is challenging because these research topics remain isolated within themselves. Indeed, there is a need to extensively synthesize relevant literature to find a productive way forward, as well as to identify research gaps and contextual discrepancies that remain unidentified. Thus, one of the goals of this thesis is to synthesize the current interdisciplinary approaches of cultural participation and related topics. In doing so, this thesis offers novel and useful insights into the interaction of individual-level factors and social-factors that are associated with engagement in cultural events and activities, as well as subsequent outcomes of participation.

In general, engaging in cultural participation is associated with several benefits including learning tacit skills (e.g., learning a musical instrument; Barnett & Weber, 2008), cultural and global knowledge (through visiting museums and zoos; Taylor, 2010), cognitive abilities (Beadleston et al., 2019), improved health benefits and development of the self (through participation in multiple afterschool activities (e.g., Sheltzer & Consoli, 2019), as well as providing opportunities for social inclusion with the wider community (Le et al., 2015). This suggests that cultural participation may provide benefits; however, it is not entirely clear if and how group differences in cultural engagement by types may be associated with individual level mental health benefits – which is the focus of the present thesis. Furthermore, previous literature has not assessed if and how group level differences in cultural participation are associated with inequality in accessing the individual level benefits of cultural participation. The present thesis aims to address this gap through extensive literature review and analysis of large-scale publicly available data.

Key definitions and terms

Individual level approach

In this thesis, individual level approaches are defined as perspectives focusing on individual factors that might be associated with participation, such as motivation or personal preference.

Group level approach

In the current thesis, group level approaches are defined as perspectives focusing on group-level or systemic factors that may be associated with participation, such as inequality of resources, social roles and norms.

Cultural participation and cultural engagement

In this thesis, and in the wider literature, cultural participation and cultural engagement refer to a combined approach of ‘activities participation’ and ‘events attendance’ as indicators of cultural participation.

Activities participation

In the present thesis, ‘activities participation’ is defined as participating in an activity that represents the values of a group, which can be done independently, or in a group such as knitting groups, men's sheds, and other community activity groups.

Events attendance

In the present thesis, ‘events attendance’ is defined as the attendance of events in cultural settings that represent the values of a group. This can include events such as music concerts (across genres), attendance at art galleries, and festivals.

Research gaps and contribution

Opportunities of a combined approach to understand group level benefits.

The present thesis offers a combined approach to cultural participation of including both activities and events, which is a novel addition to current scholarship. Although the previous literature has separately considered individual benefits of activity participation, and group differences in event participation, these ideas have not previously been connected to show how those group differences in participation are associated with individual differences in benefits. In past research, there has been little interaction across disciplines, both within and between individual and group level analyses, as evidenced by lack of citation of each other's work.[1] The present thesis is the first to integrate these separate disciplinary findings into a single project, and thus provides a novel comprehensive perspective. While differences in terms and perspectives across disciplines has proved challenging in integrating cultural participation, this also shows the multiplicity of ways that cultural participation can provide benefits, through knowledge, strengthening social connections quality and reach of social networks, and in the development of identities to improve well-being and quality of life across different social groups. In addition, by integrating activities and events as cultural participation, our work provides opportunities for a better cross-disciplinary conceptualization of cultural participation which can contribute to future knowledge and application across several research areas.

Theoretical contributions of the PhD thesis

The context of cultural participation provides unique perspectives both in terms of gender (as female centric) and in terms of social class (as not specifically working class). In contributing to topics that have not previously received much attention, the present thesis contributes by taking unique perspectives to social class and gender research. In particular, critical perspectives on social class argue that research on social class is largely focused on social class in working class contexts, and rarely extends to how social class structures work in other contexts. This oversight implies that social class is only relevant for the working class (Holt & Griffin, 2005). Additionally, past research that does focus on working class contexts is frequently situated in ways that often position working classes as deficient (Day et al., 2014). Both through the focus on class as primarily a working-class issue and the

[1] The exception to this is Csikszentmihalyi (2009)'s theory of Flow, which is often referenced in passing acknowledgement across disciplines, but ironically focuses on cognitive states of activities participation rather than the activities themselves.

narratives constructed, much of the work in social class contexts “others” the working class in demeaning ways. While this is a problem in class-based research more broadly, because of the strong ties between culture and status this problem is particularly endemic to the research around culture and cultural participation. To address this issue, two proactive steps were taken in the present portfolio of work. First, I extended the measurement of cultural participation beyond “elite” definitions, thereby better representing actual cultural engagement. It may be that working class groups are participating in ways that are not being represented, and by doing so I challenge past narratives around working-class deficiency in cultural participation. Second, I explored social class through emphasizing in ways that middle and upper middle-class differentiate from working class groups, moving the focus of social class as a working-class issue and towards other more privileged groups. By taking these actions, the present thesis contributes to social class research by identifying activities and events that are particularly well engaged in by different social class groups, suggesting group values of that activity or event, and therefore, offering new insights into group behaviours.

Similarly, feminist perspectives argue that research is largely focused on masculine-centered contexts (androcentrism) even in gender research (Riley & Evans, 2017). Similar to critiques of social class as a working-class issue, past work that has emphasized women in research often suggests perspectives that women are in need of "fixing" (Ryan, 2023). In contrast, research on cultural participation has historically been considered part of female domains (Collins, 1988), shifting research narratives away from “women in a men’s world” toward one in which traditionally female contexts are equally valued for their own sake. By investigating cultural participation, I am able to value women's contributions without considering their participation through reference to masculine contexts.

Furthermore, past research into cultural participation has focused primarily on either gender or social class. Indeed, in past research, if gender and social class were included in a multivariate study (e.g., Lagaert & Roose, 2018); they were used as separate and unrelated variables, without exploring interactions between the two. Therefore, there remain theoretical gaps for how gender and social class concurrently function together in given contexts. Both the multiple identities approach (discussed above, from social identity perspectives), which can answer specific questions about how the number of identities can affect several outcomes, and intersectionality (a Critical social theory approach), which can answer questions about the ways in which identities interact to create unique contexts or perspectives, is an aspect of identity research where. In particular, intersectionality theory (Crenshaw, 1990) has previously had limited use within psychology and particularly social psychology (Settles et al., 2020), creating an opportunity to bring novel perspectives to the current thesis.

While dominant perspectives in psychology have focused largely on how marginalized, disempowered or minority groups are failing to achieve what's valuable to the powerful group, proactively taking these unique perspectives can provide insight into social psychological dynamics that have not previously been investigated. For instance, cultural participation can be used by middle and managerial classes strategically to reinforce social class dynamics, or gender roles in non-male dominated contexts. The current work is the first to provide an intersectional approach and acknowledges class differences within gender or gender differences within class as influencing social roles. In so doing, this provides a nuanced analysis of both gender and class, as well as the ways they interact to shape behaviour, further developing the literature.

Additionally, group differences showing particularly high (or low) participation across specific types of activities and events can indicate which activities or events the group values. This contributes a unique understanding of the gender and class groups that goes beyond mere description of differences on a pre-determined variable. Instead, these findings may help future researchers to understand what motivates different behaviors within and between these groups based on the values that are identified in the current study.

Contributions by chapter and overall structure of the thesis

The present literature review (chapter 2) is the first work to integrate this interdisciplinary research related to participation in leisure activities and attendance at cultural events. In doing so, this literature review contributes an overview of the current literature which can help identify social class participation patterns that were previously unobserved in empirical research and theory. Chapters 3 and 4 provide empirical exploration of these patterns and address research gaps in the literature to develop a more coherent theory of gender, social class, and the intersections of gender and social class which may be associated with cultural participation. In the final empirical chapters (5 & 6), these cultural participation findings are then extended to show how cultural participation may be associated with mental health. This is an important gap because cultural participation and social groups gained from participation may facilitate a de-medicalized approach to mental health (e.g., Mangin & Garfinkel, 2019), which may particularly support at-risk groups who may not have access to medical diagnosis and treatment, at least until access can be gained. Thus, an additional contribution of this thesis is the potential applied benefits of participation on mental health that are explored in the later empirical chapters (5 & 6).

Overarching research question and objectives

The present thesis explores how group level differences in cultural participation may be associated with unequal access of mental health benefits of cultural participation at an individual level. The specific research question is "*How are gender and social class* *associated with cultural participation and the mental health benefits gained through cultural participation?"*

Chapter 3 aims to investigate patterns of gender and social class in cultural participation through activities, and address research gaps of using activities as cultural participation, and investigate both social class and gender together. This has not been done before. Chapter 4 similarly investigates patterns of gender and social class in cultural participation through events. Here, this research addresses research gaps of measuring events beyond defining culture as "highbrow" or "elite" culture. I also investigate both gender and social class together, which has also not been done before. Finally, I aim to investigate mental health associations with participation in activities, accounting for gender (chapter 5), and social class differences (chapter 6), in order to address the research gap is whether there are gender differences in the benefits gaind through group participation and exercise.

To address these research questions, I investigated differences in participation of activities and events. I explored participation in two different types of cultural outlets: participating in activities and hobbies (activities; chapter 2) and attending cultural events (events; chapter 3). For both chapters, exploratory analysis of secondary data from a UK-based study (English population only) was used to explore gendered and social classed patterns of participation in activity and event types that expanded beyond what has been used in traditional measures. This was done to establish a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of group associations with cultural participation. Following this, I aimed to establish a link between group differences in participation across activities and mental health outcomes, using an Irish sample. Gender was analysed first (chapter 5), with social class analysed separately (chapter 6). Differences in the samples of these different datasets are presented in table 1.

Table 1

Participant differences between datasets used for empirical chapters

	Taking Part Dataset (Chapters 3 & 4)	**Growing up in Ireland Dataset (Chapters 5 & 6)**
N	10,171	7,525
Age	16-95, M = 53.36, SD = 18.58	13
Gender	55% Male	48.9% Male
Social Class	Higher managerial, admin and professional occupations 35.4%	Professional managers 15.7%
	Intermediate occupations 23.9%	Managerial and technical 40%
	Routine and manual occupations 33.7%	Non-manual 18.4%
		Skilled manual 11.8%
		Semi-skilled 7.3%
		Unskilled 1.1%

Methodological Approach

To establish the appropriate use of methodology in this work, I use Edmondson & McManus (2007)'s framework of methodological fit. Methodological fit is defined as the "internal consistency among elements of a research project" (pg. 1155), of which there are 4 key elements — the research question, prior work (incl. theory development), research design, and contribution to literature — which fall on a continuum of maturity from nascent, to intermediate, and then mature. The more nascent a research area, the less prior work has been done. Theory has not yet developed, and more open ended the research questions are needed to identify key constructs and relationships. Here, the goal of research is to identify important patterns that can be used inform intermediate work, which tests these constructs. Thus, the more nascent the research, the more exploratory and/or qualitative methodologies are appropriate. Given that the prior work on cultural participation has not previously integrated activities participation, nor has it included an expanded measurement of events past highbrow events, the work here is primarily nascent, and thus exploratory work is appropriate to find broad patterns of participation across both.

Rationale for exploratory designs in open science contexts

Exploratory analysis was used in each empirical chapter of this thesis. While there has been criticism of exploratory analysis in the Open Science Movement (Nosek et al., 2018; Wagenmakers et al., 2012), there has also been support for data exploration as a reasonable method, provided that researchers explicitly state that their research is at the exploratory stage (McIntosh, 2017). More recently, some researchers argue that one of the sources of non-replication in psychology has been the underdevelopment of underlying theory (Fried, 2020; Szollosi & Donkin, 2021), in which not enough time has been spent on exploring assumptions, relationships, and limits of a theory prior to confirmatory analysis. To improve this, exploratory analysis and other non-confirmatory analysis methods have been encouraged (Scheel et al., 2021). Additionally, Jebb et al. (2017) argues that data exploration and follow-up confirmation analyses contributes to the replication process (because confirmatory analysis necessitates replication), and if the same dataset is analysed twice (such as through split file analysis), these analyses are less likely to be affected by other issues affecting replication such as measurement differences (Flake & Fried, 2020) or contextual differences (Gollwitzer & Schwabe, 2021), increasing internal validity of the replication.

By using exploratory research methods in a way that contributes to replication rather than hinders it, this also provides possible methods that address concerns about pre-registration, such as that pre-registration limits creativity (Kaufman & Glăveanu, 2018), and it is not particularly useful if researchers regularly diverge from the pre-registered plan because they don’t know the characteristics of the data (Szollosi et al., 2020). One method for exploratory data analysis that can be helpful for this is to use graphical methods (Behrens, 1997, ex. Histograms). In doing so, researchers are able to identify characteristics of the data, preventing deviation from the preregistration plan and without increasing the number of analyses.

Importantly, analysing data using inappropriate methods can be an ethical issue if there are known and agreed upon methods that are considered “best practice” (Panter & Sterba, 2011). Additionally, an underpowered study or inappropriately analysed study (ex. use of parametric analyses on non-parametric data) can lead to an inaccurate finding, misrepresenting the result both for scientists and the broader public. To correct this misperception may require additional studies to confirm or reject findings, wasting time and resources. This delays application of the research for public use, also delaying the benefits that may be gained through the research. Therefore, an exploratory analysis, if used appropriately, can improve the quality of replication while also reducing the use of inappropriate analyses.

In each analysis of this thesis, exploratory analysis was explicitly stated as such, and was used to explore data patterns, and qualities of the data that required techniques not commonly used in psychology research. While it is also not uncommon for to be somewhat non-normal (Cain et al., 2017), our data was extremely so because participation data is usually non-normal (Busseri & Rose-Krasnor, 2010), and also showed high zero inflation (up to 99% non-participation) which poses challenges for the underlying statistics of traditional linear approaches. Subsequently, Robust methods, such as negative binomial analyses and polychoric factor analysis, were used where appropriate (see Erceg-Hurn & Mirosevich, 2008). These analyses are not commonly used in psychology. Therefore, in addition to the theoretical contributions of this research, this project contributes the use of Robust statistical methods as a novel approach in the discipline.

Rationale for secondary analysis methods

Secondary analysis can be a useful method for exploratory research. Exploratory analysis can benefit from large data sets which are primarily collected by researchers and can be accessed and used for secondary analysis by a secondary researcher or research team. This provides opportunities for Early Career Researchers, or other diverse researchers who may otherwise not have access to the populations sampled or the resources to compile large datasets and means that different perspectives can be used to identify finings beyond the primary analysis aims (Cheng & Phillips, 2014). Secondary analysis can also be useful for secondary researchers, as the data has already been collected, which reduces the need to design and collect the data themselves. This increases overall research efficiency, as well. However, this reduces the secondary researchers' influence on the variables included and the ways that variables are measured, requiring flexibility that is most appropriate at the exploratory stages of research.

Additionally, secondary data analysis can extend the benefits of data collection for use of the data in multiple projects or across multiple research groups (Cheng & Phillips, 2014). thereby extending the usefulness of the data beyond its primary goals. This is particularly true for samples that are hard to study (Rew et al., 2000), such as where the scale of data collection is beyond the practical abilities of a single researcher, (e.g., a representative sample of an entire country such as England, ex. *Taking Part* dataset, used in chapters 3 & 4, or the *Growing up in Ireland* dataset, used in chapter 5). This also addresses an ethical obligation for making the best use of data collected as possible, in order to respect the time that participants took to provide their information.

Large datasets can be useful in exploratory analysis for increasing statistical power, which can diminish as multiple analyses are used to answer multiple research questions. Additionally, large datasets can result in high powered studies, which can find smaller effects than may otherwise be found (Bradley & Brand, 2013). In this thesis, the large sample sizes that are possible due to secondary analysis additionally facilitates a novel design through use of split file analysis (chapter 5) which separates exploratory and confirmatory analysis stages through novel methods in line with the values of the Open Science Movement. Split file analysis is a process where data is randomly divided into smaller datasets which can be used for separate stages of analysis (Anderson & Magruder, 2017). This approach allows researchers to explore a portion of the dataset allowing for greater specificity in our hypotheses such as by predicting directionality. This avoids significance seeking, or "p-hacking", while still allowing researchers to examine their data and account for unique qualities when making their analysis plan. Because researchers can find and account for unique data characteristics (e.g. Zero-inflation), it is possible to improve accuracy of the pre-analysis plan and prevents deviations from the pre-analysis plan at a later stage (Sarafoglou et al., 2023).

Context of UK and English datasets

While secondary analysis can be useful in exploratory contexts, one important aspect to consider is the cultural and contextual differences in datasets, such as those used in chapters 3 & 4 (England, *Taking Part* dataset) and chapter 5 (Ireland, *Growing Up in Ireland* dataset). When analysing and interpreteing these analyses, it is important to situate both in a cultural context, both in comparison to each other and to global cultures. Cultural context is important when understanding behaviour. Past research has shown that culture can affect both personal values (which influence participating in a behaviour, Roccas & Sagiv, 2010), as well as the meaning behind behaviours (Hammack, 2008), ultimately also both influencing and being influenced by identities (Baumeister & Muraven, 1996). However, research from Arnett (2016) and Rad et al. (2018) has shown that psychologists have a bias towards WEIRD (white, educated, industrialized, rich, and from developed countries) samples, which lack contextual diversity. These issues also intersect with reproducibility aspects of the Open Science movement, for which context dependent effects may not always reproduce in another context, and the ways in which this can both help and hinder theory development (Gollwitzer & Schwabe, 2021).

In the datasets included in this thesis, participants reported themselves as from European industrialized and developed countries with primarily white, educated populations. Attempts to analyse diversity within these samples were made, however sample sizes for non-white populations were too small to analyse alongside our variables of interest (e.g., UK sample was 91.6% white). However, in the present thesis, social class is a primary interest and is discussed at length, allowing us to at least partially address aspects of the WEIRD problem.

With this issue in mind, it is important to recognize that contextual differences may affect some of the findings of our studies. Because gender roles and norms may be contextually situated, these findings may not always replicate exactly across time (Diekman et al., 2004) or other cultural contexts (Cuddy et al., 2015). However, social class effects may transcend cultural differences particularly where there is a hierarchical structure within societies.

Structure of PhD Thesis

The overarching research question is addressed through a literature review chapter (chapter 2) and 3 empirical chapters. Chapters 3 & 4 use exploratory analysis of a large secondary dataset from the UK (England specifically) to explore adult participation across several activities (chapter 3) and events (chapter 4) and aims to link social group memberships (gender and social class) to the variety and frequency of participation, as well as specific types of activities or events. Chapter 5 also uses exploratory analysis of a large secondary dataset of Irish adolescents (13-year-olds), and aims to link activity participation, both in variety and type of activity, to mental health outcomes, both as mental health strengths and difficulties. Based on findings from chapters 3 & 4 that gender and social class group memberships provide *additive* intersectional effects (each contribute separately, Cole, 2009; Crenshaw, 1990) but not *cumulative* intersectional effects (they don't enhance the effects of the other), gender (chapter 5) and social class (chapter 6) are analyzed separately. Additionally, the social class analysis (chapter 6) uses a split file analysis for separating exploratory analysis from later pre-registration of hypothesis and confirmatory analysis stages to be completed post-thesis submission. Finally, the discussion chapter (chapter 7) summarizes the findings and discusses these findings in relation to past literature, future improvements, and future implications of this research.

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Chapter 2, Literature Review: A detailed examination of social class and gender associations with leisure and cultural participation

From times of the European Renaissance and earlier, culture was endowed through aristocratic patronage in which the wealthy ruling classes would subsidize the needs of the creative class (artists, musicians, composers, etc.) in return for great works to be shown publicly in the patron's name (Mulcahy, 2006). In this historical context, artists, musicians, and other creators were selected based on the patron's personal preference and as a public benefit. As such, artists' work was heavily influenced by patron's requests and was created both for the ruling class and by the ruling class as an expression of power, conferring elite status on those cultural artifacts (and their makers and patrons) and thereby diminishing the value of works produced by others. This has arguably affected perceptions of what cultural participation is, and the role it plays in emphasizing elite class rulership.

With the political fall of ruling classes and colonial empires in the 20th century, cultural funding then shifted to public governmental support (Mulcahy, 2006)which have shifted, in theory to eschew *cultural elitism*, defined as "the assumptions that some aesthetic expressions are inherently superior" (Mulcahy, 2006, p. 324) in favour of *cultural democracy*, "which privileges certain forms of cultural programming that are deemed to be a public good." (also Mulcahy, 2006, p. 324), often leading to better election and re-election of the government officials who supported them. However, perceptions of elitism in culture and creative policy have since shifted from cultural democracy in theory toward funding that supports commercialized and economic interests (Seitz, 2003). In practice, many of these policies toward commercialized and economic interests continue to reinforce cultural elitism through funding the types of activities or events that fit the cultural tastes of the policy makers and other privileged citizens over that of the citizens who would most benefit from culture and art as a public good (Stanziola, 2021).

The politics of leisure and cultural participation

Within research, leisure is an under-studied area of social psychology (Walker, 2020), possibly because is perceived as “innocent” (Green, 1990), meaning that it’s a context where there’s more perceived individual social choice than in other contexts (such as work). In many ways, this perception is misleading because it obscures the group-level influences that drive cultural participation in favour of individual choice.

In framing group-level influences as a personal choice, this projects the idea that leisure is inherently apolitical. In this thesis, I argue (and demonstrate) that it is not. Instead, politicization of leisure also exists alongside similar politicization of who is deserving of help and support such as a victim of legal or political situations (Lawther, 2014), healthcare (Jensen & Petersen, 2017), and welfare support (Chunn & Gavigan, 2004), as well as perceived deservingness of elements contributing to an improved quality of life such as rest (Hersey, 2022), and pleasure or material enjoyment (Littler & Williamson, 2017). At the root of such issues are differences in power and inequality, particularly through social class though gender is also relevant as well. In contexts where this is done, those who have greater social status discursively construct identities through conflicts about who is deserving of the privilege to have these things (Littler & Williamson, 2017).

As a response to this, some authors have taken the stance that to participate in leisure activities, such as cultural participation, are a form of everyday resistance (Rose et al., 2018; Shaw, 2001). Everyday resistance is defined as the ways in which people exercise their individual power through banal choices in a way that can undermine larger power structures and oppressive practices in order to achieve a somewhat more livable situation (Rosales & Langhout, 2020).

Relating to leisure, Bourdieu (2002) suggests that cultural participation is a symbol of social status through having resources such as time, energy, money, and transport, as well as immaterial resources such as *cultural capital*, which is defined as accumulated self-improvement, which may also be symbolically demonstrated through higher education degrees or material goods such as books (Bourdieu, 2002, p. 15). From another perspective, cultural participation offers a better quality of life through both social connection and opportunities for self-expression, allowing people to go beyond basic stress recovery through rest and into individual flourishing (ex. Flow; Csikszentmihalyi, 2009).

One particularly salient example of leisure as resistance is the concept of “revenge bedtime procrastination”, in which a person delays going to sleep despite knowing that it will have negative consequences the next day as a way of fitting in leisure time when they wouldn’t otherwise have any (Godoy & Nguyen, 2022). In this context and other similar contexts, leisure is a form of individual resistance to work culture. Arguments of “leisure as resistance” is the resistance of western cultural ideologies in which overwork is prioritized. These ideologies include meritocracy beliefs (the attribution of success to individual effort rather than group memberships) and the associated perceived social mobility (Manstead, 2018), which imply that those who have privilege to participate in leisure activities are therefore more deserving of them due to hard work, both of which are reinforced by perceptions of busyness as a status symbol (Bellezza et al., 2017). These ideologies are further enhanced by the Protestant work ethic (Giorgi & Marsh, 1990), which believes in a morality of hard work (thus leisure is immoral) and can be seen in discourse about deservingness (Littler & Williamson, 2017). What these ideologies emphasize is the value of individual work as a way to improve social status, further deemphasizing the enduring role of social groups in the context of inequality. As a result, leisure (and by extension cultural participation) is a form of exercising individual power through personal choices which resist the prevalent ideologies about work.

Furthermore, because those who have the privilege to culturally participate are also likely to be those who influence policy, some aspects of the policy decisions reinforce inequalities through taste and accessibility. As discussed by Stanziola (2021), policy tends to support cultural activities and events that appeal primarily to wealthier citizens living in large cities, rather than supporting activities and events that appeal to groups who are most likely to benefit from cultural participation, or to fund activities/events in rural areas. As such, cultural policy has a tendency to reinforce cultural inequalities, particularly in countries with wider inequality issues to begin with (Stanziola, 2021). This makes cultural participation especially politicized even within wider politicization of leisure.

Types of leisure

Different types of leisure that can fulfill different purposes — rest and self-improvement. One such conceptualization in the literature is the “serious” leisure versus *casual leisure* as defined by (Stebbins, 2001). *Serious leisure* is defined as stimulating and active participation that requires skill, knowledge, or expertise, whereas *casual leisure* involves passive participation is engagement such as conversing with friends or consuming entertainment and does not require a certain level of expertise to participate. Stebbins (2001) also evidences that these different types of activities have different benefits regarding well-being. Where serious leisure provides longer term benefits such as an enhanced social network (and the additional benefits that come with that), self-enrichment, and both social identity and personal identity benefits (Haggard & Williams, 1991), casual leisure provides short term benefits such as a chance to relax and relief from work and may provide health and wellbeing benefits (Hutchinson & Kleiber, 2005). Although this distinction is not widely recognized in the cultural participation literature, Stebbins’ dichotomization provides a useful structure for the current studies, such that participating in activities is *active participation*, while attending events aligns more closely with *passive participation*.

Attending events more closely aligns with casual leisure than serious leisure. Research into the benefits of event attendance has focused on the social networks gained from attending events and the benefits gained from an expanded support network (social capital), and cultural capital, defined as accumulated knowledge or labor about the culture (Bourdieu, 2002), such as ways to navigate social situations or contextual knowledge about topics important to the group. Capital, both in social and cultural forms, have been associated with positive educational and future life outcomes (Scherger, 2009; Scherger & Savage, 2010).

Types of cultural participation and associated benefits

Different types of cultural participation may also result in different benefits. However, participation in activities has been researched more thoroughly than participation in events, particularly in terms of the individual level benefits conferred, making it difficult to draw comparisons and make connections. As a result, this has created several research gaps which will be addressed in this thesis, such as the way group level analyses of differences in activities participation have been overlooked. By bridging these gaps in the literature, understanding cultural participation has the potential to be useful and applicable in several diverse contexts.

Individual level participation and benefits

At an individual level, research has explored the benefits of youth participation for their academic success, well-being (Psychology, e.g. Eccles et al., 2003) and the benefits to society of engaged youth, particularly in regards to social class (see Mahoney et al., 2009 for the politics of afterschool activities), the role of activities in improving quality of life for aging and disabled populations (Occupational Therapy, e.g. Kaliterna Lipovčan et al., 2018;

Lifshitz-Vahav et al., 2016), and flow states (Csikszentmihalyi, 2009) which refers to a heightened cognitive state during participation of an activity. These benefits of improving quality of live and improved abilities can be seen at all ages, however, the way these benefits are gained and utilized vary across life stages. In early childhood, actively doing hobbies and other activities are perceived by parents as helping children develop physically and intellectually (cognitive abilities, creativity), as well as providing specific skills (i.e., cooking), personal character development and social development (Barnett & Weber, 2008). Participation exposes children to more ideas, helping them learn about the world around them. For example, taking the child to zoos can promote knowledge about eco-friendly practices, while museums teach about local knowledge or other groups and historical perspectives (Taylor, 2010). Early childhood exposure to cultural participation can also influence adult participation (Christin, 2012; Scherger & Savage, 2010), extending the benefits of participation later into life. For these reasons, early childhood participation is seen as an important investment of time and energy by parents and educators (Scherger & Savage, 2010).

Similar benefits of improving abilities and quality of life are also seen in adolescents. For instance, (Sheltzer & Consoli, 2019) show that adolescents enrolled in afterschool music programmes demonstrated increased knowledge, skill levels, identity development, and social skill development. These abilities are useful in college, as skills can be directly applied to earning a degree, and social and identity skills lead to better adjustment in college and later in life (Barber et al., 2001). Participation can also help develop cultural, social, and academic capital, which can help in navigating social spaces, and cultural, social, and academic capital (Vincent & Ball, 2007). As a result, participation is also associated with better academic outcomes during high school (Eccles & Barber, 1999; Fredricks & Eccles, 2006), and future college performance (Barber et al., 2001; Fredricks & Eccles, 2006), setting up adolescents for future life success.

Participation also serves an important developmental role of allowing autonomy as school pedagogy becomes more structured and less focused on self-expression or personal development (Eccles et al., 1993). Instead, cultural participation offers a healthy way for adolescents to remain engaged in learning while still developing autonomy and exploring different identities they may take on as adults (Youniss et al., 1997). In addition to these, participation can also improve and wellbeing through higher positive emotions (Reyes-Martínez et al., 2021), increased self-expression (Van Lith et al., 2013), and increase social networks (Stebbins, 2001) which can provide greater social support (Uchino, 2006) which is much needed at this transitional time.

Adult participation in hobbies and attending cultural events can also provide identity benefits such as learning group knowledge and skills and having a “valued identity”. Participation can offer benefits associated with social connections of new groups and social networks (Stebbins, 2001), social inclusion with both the ingroup and the outgroup in multicultural contexts (Le et al., 2015), and the expression of social identities and social values (e.g., Hosegood, 2009). Adults themselves are less likely to take part until they reach retirement age, when they have more free time to do so (Freund, 2020). This may be because pre-retirement adults are trying to attain life goals, such as building a career, buying a home, having a family, and as building finances for retirement. Because of this, research on adult participation in hobbies and leisure activities tends to be with older adults or disabled populations and aims to improve quality of life. Additionally, cognitive abilities are improved through participation, though participating at this age helps to both maintain abilities and accrue them (Ward et al., 2020). In addition to the social inclusion processes for adolescent development, participation for adults further enhances social inclusion for adults. Liddle et al.

(2013) shows that making things for others allows older people to feel as though they are still contributing to the community, which facilitates social connection and personal wellbeing even when physical abilities may not allow them to be physically active. While social inclusion is itself a positive benefit, it can also lead to other benefits such as enhanced health (Begeny et al., 2021).

Overall, individual level approaches all share the common focus on how participation in activities provides benefits such as learning, social engagement and broader wellbeing. While these benefits may support wellbeing and quality of life in different ways across the lifespan, these benefits are still consistent across different life stages. However, individual-level benefits of cultural participation (primarily through activities participation) have not yet been linked to group-level associations connected with engagement in cultural participation.

Group level participation and benefits

Research into group level participation in afterschool activities in adolescents has shown differences exist across gender, social class, and race (Mahoney et al., 2006; Mahoney & Vest, 2012). Girls tend to participate more, both in the variety of activities and the frequency participated in (Eccles et al., 1990, 2003). Interestingly, despite girls participating more than boys overall, girls undervalue how their participation helps in future careers (Barber et al., 2001). Social class differences show that those from middle class families are more likely to participate in afterschool activities than those from working class families (Fredricks & Eccles, 2006). Adding further to the picture, interview data presented by Lareau (2002), indicates that working class families place greater value on unstructured free time for their children, compared to middle class families who “cultivate” their children through afterschool activities.

Similarly, past research has shown group differences in cultural participation through events attendance in which women tend to attend more than men. However, cultural participation, as defined by events attendance, has primarily been studied through sociological approaches which emphasize differences in social class participation (e.g., DiMaggio & Mukhtar, 2004; Lagaert & Roose, 2018). Specifically, this explores the ways in which (primarily upper class) cultural participation has changed over time, though some have recently extended these arguments into how cultural participation contributes to inequality (ex. Stanziola, 2021)

Barriers to cultural participation

As can be seen above, participation in activities, cultural or otherwise, can provide opportunities and benefits that change over developmental stages. Likewise, material barriers also change according to different developmental stage — children and adolescents rely on their parents both for exposure to activities (Scherger & Savage, 2010) and for support such as transport, time and costs, which may be associated with parental social class. This dependence on others increases again alongside decreases in participation in older adulthood or for those with disabilities, when health issues may further limit public participation (going to events) whereas participation in activities at home (e.g. crafts) is maintained (Liddle et al., 2013). Accessibility issues such as time, transport and cost, are also an issue for other marginalized groups, as rural areas are less likely to have cultural events available than larger cities (Gilmore, 2013), or disabled persons (Liddle et al., 2013) and may be more challenging to attend.

Another key barrier is that of other goals being a higher priority, seen in the decrease in participation as students prepare for college (Hille & Schupp, 2015; Staurowsky et al., 2015), and younger adults' lower participation as they build careers, families, and finances (Freund, 2020). This also changes over the lifespan and suggests other potential priorities would pose to barriers to participation, such as caring for a family member, working extra jobs, or working in competitive jobs or educational programs.

Finally, while both gender and social class can facilitate participation for some, they also pose barriers, through social norms. For example, early childhood exposure to cultural participation can also influence adult participation, and girls are more likely to attend cultural events from a younger age than boys and with higher participation in adulthood (Christin, 2012), and children of higher-class families are also more likely to attend cultural events (Scherger & Savage, 2010). This may limit both the amount of participation and the types of participation that are engaged in, as will be discussed later.

Despite the lack of connection between individual level research about activity participation and group level attendance at events is that some activity researchers have suggested participation in activities as a way to overcome barriers to physically attending cultural events (e.g. Liddle et al., 2013). This highlights the importance of differentiating between activities (active leisure) and events (passive leisure), as one may be an alternative to barriers of the other. However, by differentiating there may be psychological differences in participation that are influenced by physical location, such as the differences in expression between a private individual self and public social identities (e.g., Ho & Sidanius, 2010). Because of this, participation that challenges stereotypical group norms may be easier to participate in through private activities than through public events. Because of this, group norms can both help (if in line with stereotypes) or hinder (if participating challenges stereotypes) participation.

Value of integrating types of cultural participation

Integrating activities participation and events attendance into a holistic perspective of cultural participation can be helpful in identifying patterns that may not have been previously identified. By juxtaposing both activities and events participation literature, which have very similar predictors, outcomes, barriers, and benefits, it becomes much clearer where the gaps remain in the literature — specifically, the ways individual differences may be associated with events attendance and of how group differences may be associated with participation in activities. Identifying the gaps highlight new possible directions for future research, as well as contributing to an overall theory of participation. This is a key contribution of the thesis overall, both through the current literature review chapter and through the parallel designs of chapters 3 & 4 (activities and events participation).

Gender as factor influencing cultural participation

Participating in activities and attending events are historically associated with feminine identities, particularly in the classed context of the social spheres of Victorian times (Collins, 1988). While separate but theoretically equal, Collins' social spheres refers to the gendered roles of responsibility, in which the woman's sphere and associated responsibilities was *in* the home; the man's sphere, providing *for* the home. These roles allowed men structural power in society, while cultural engagement allowed women to exert agency over their own lives and through their relationships with others (dyadic power, Guttentag & Secord, 1983).

Past social responsibilities of social spheres can be directly tied to modern divisions of labor (Hoffman & Hurst, 1990), showing these historical social spheres continue to be influential on participation in modern times. Adult women are more likely to attend events, while high cultural engagement by men is largely dependent on high cultural engagement by his wife (Upright, 2004). Additionally, girls are more likely to be exposed to culture from an early age than boys, which is associated with higher cultural events attendance as adults (Christin, 2012). Research on afterschool activities has shown higher female participation in prosocial activities, arts, homework clubs, and community groups, while adolescent boys tend to participate more in sport (Eccles et al., 2003), maintaining those social sphere divisions. However, stereotypes and definitions of gender are dynamic and have changed over time in part due to the advocacy of women's rights movements for women's equal opportunities in more masculine domains (Diekman & Eagly, 2000). Girls and women are now more likely to participate in stereotypically feminine *and* stereotypically masculine activities (i.e., sports, science), likely because historical advocacy allows women more equality in men's spaces, while men have not advocated for inclusion in traditionally women's spaces (Messner, 2011).

These expanded opportunities for women have led to the cultural "girl power" postfeminist movements of the 1990's, which emphasized that women could "have it all" (Hewlett, 2002; Riley & Evans, 2017). According to Ringrose & Walkerdine (2008), this was shortly followed by social expectations of the modern "Supergirl"– women who do have it all and effortlessly maintain all social responsibilities across domains while also looking perfect as an expression of performed femininity. These changes in gender expectations may mean that women are not participating in culture in the same ways as they were previously observed to. Additionally, measurement of many cultural participation items has been limited to attendance at events such as the ballet or classical music concerts, which particularly fall into traditionally female social spheres, without measurement of events that may be more appealing to men. This may lead to biased measurement and results which reinforce beliefs that women are inherently more drawn to participate in cultural events than men.

Social Class as factor influencing cultural participation

Cultural participation has also been tied to several indicators of social class including income, occupation (Katz-Gerro, 1999), education (Scherger & Savage, 2010) and family affluence (measured as possession of key material goods; van Hek & Kraaykamp, 2013), each indicating that those of higher social class were more likely to attend "highbrow" events (such as ballet and the opera). However, most research on cultural participation and social class has come from sociological perspectives which focus on how cultural capital, defined as accumulated labor that contributes to educational and cultural knowledge resources

(Bourdieu, 2002). This is important for cultural participation in three ways; 1) barriers to cultural participation, 2) intergenerational transmission of patterns in cultural participation, and 3) the purpose of cultural participation to social class, namely the way it creates and establishes boundaries between groups.

Research into the barriers of cultural participation had been a research priority since concerns of declining participation levels from the early 1980's was identified (DiMaggio & Mukhtar, 2004; Peterson, 1992). However, critics have identified several reasons why this may not be so (Stevenson et al., 2017). While this debate is beyond the scope of this thesis, perceived declines in participation have motivated research into barriers of cultural participation. Many of these barriers are a lack of access to resources that support cultural engagement (such as time, money, and childcare) and are linked to social class memberships. Additionally, physical access may be affected by the rural/urban divide and the distance rural people may need to travel in order to access cultural events, although (Gilmore, 2013) argues that local resources in rural areas are not being utilized as well as in urban areas.

Physical access to cultural activities or events can also be affected by less tangible barriers such as *cultural fit*, defined as the feeling of belonging and comfort levels in a cultural space (Lu, 2006). Alongside cultural capital, a lack of cultural fit can deter people from engaging in cultural activities or events and is often learned from parents or caretakers at a young age (Scherger & Savage, 2010), maintaining the intergenerational influence of social groups on cultural participation (Sullivan, 2011). While early socialization in cultural events is a strong predictor of adult participation (Christin, 2012), there are class differences in early socialization in cultural contexts, as well as the ways in which they engage (Becker, 2010), which then predict cultural participation and cultural capital in adult life (Scherger & Savage, 2010).

While there is widespread agreement that social class and cultural participation are linked, there are differing approaches that describe the exact patterns of participation by social class groups. One such approach is that of (Bourdieu, 1987). According to Bourdieu's "distinction", arts culture is used to distinguish the upper classes using "legitimate" "highbrow" culture (i.e., ballet, opera) and a snobbish attitude toward popular culture activities (i.e., film attendance, Lizardo, 2014). Taste, Bourdieu argued, is used to distinguish between social classes and limits social circles to those of similar class statuses. This occurs through covert signaling (Smaldino, 2022) and symbolic group boundaries (demonstrated in de Vries & Reeves, 2021). However, this signaling of exclusivity cannot be too strong and can only be identified by others of similar social class or other groups will lose the illusion of meritocracy (the attribution of success to individual effort rather than group memberships) and the associated perceived social mobility (Manstead, 2018) that is necessary to maintain status structures. This may be why cultural "tastes" are attributed to individual level preference rather than as an expression of a group identity.

A second approach to describing social class patterns of participation is the cultural omnivore hypothesis (Peterson, 1992), in which Peterson argues that class markers of high vs lowbrow activities are no longer markers of social class as much as 'cultural omnivorism', or those who enjoy a wide variety of activities (in contrast to 'univores' who enjoy a singular high-status activity). Peterson's work was a response to the observations of declining participation, in which he argues that cultural participation was not declining, but that greater accessibility to the forms of culture measured led to changing patterns in how culture was consumed. Originally studied in the context of music preferences, a clearer marker of social status was the preference for a variety of music genres over a single or very few genres. This theory then extended into wider cultural participation before cultural participation researchers (DiMaggio & Mukhtar, 2004). However, Peterson's omnivorism work continues to be widely used by researchers well beyond research into music tastes, even with ongoing debates about definition (de Vries & Reeves, 2021) and measurement (Brisson, 2019) of cultural omnivorism.

A third perspective (see Childress et al., 2021) integrates both Bourdieu's cultural capital perspective (i.e., class differences by types of activities) and cultural omnivorism (i.e., class differences in amount and variety of participation). Their argument is that status is expressed through an omnivorism of genres, but exclusivity within those genres through specific, distinct, and likely hard to find objects or artists. For example, these can be seen as preferences between specific composers (ex. Beethoven vs. Rachmaninoff) rather than classical music more broadly, or by liking an artist before they became famous. For an individual to evidence this level depth and breadth of knowledge there is a need for extensive investment, both of time and energy, to develop a working knowledge of a wide variety of genres, and specific and distinct objects within those genres. This perspective offers a way of incorporating both perspectives, including cultural capital perspective and cultural omnivorism, in ways that facilitate a more nuanced examination of class and cultural participation.

While frequency of participation, variety of participation, and the types of participation have been debated in past literature, the core of these debates are also rooted in methodological issues tied to status-based definitions. This creates a circular logic. These debates raise important questions: Given social changes since Bourdieu's first observations, and our deeper investigation across a wider range of activities, is there still the stratification of social class through cultural participation? And if so, how might these patterns reflect the values held by members of specific social classes? The work presented in the present thesis aims to address these research gaps through a broader conceptualization and measurement of cultural participation.

Measuring cultural participation and associated challenges: Offering a way forward

As well as the need to consider the role of structural factors on cultural participation, there are some additional concerns that I seek to overcome in the present research. Namely, in previous research there has been a tendency to offer a narrow view of what behaviours can be considered as cultural participation. Some researchers have defined culture in ways that are conceptually hierarchical, leading to elite forms of culture in which some forms are valued over others. One such example is the distinction between arts and crafts. As Markowitz (1994) discusses, this distinction may be rooted in the status of the maker (cultural artifacts by marginalized groups are usually relegated to “craft”), and the usefulness of the object itself. While practical everyday objects may have aesthetic value (e.g., a beautiful pot is no less valuable because of its utility), these are inherently seen as less valuable than aesthetic objects (art) which is less practical in everyday use but encourages contemplation such as a painting. It is also relevant that the leisure time needed for contemplation is also not equally available to all, thus the value of an object is linked to both status in the maker and status the intended audience. By making the distinctions between Arts and Crafts at all, and assignment of greater social value to “The Arts” over more utilitarian “Crafts”, I strive to get to the root of the issue: The use of narrow definitions of cultural objects inherently reinforces classist social values by excluding and devaluing culture outside of works made by white European men. This distinction, along with others in cultural policy, has historical roots in aristocratic patronage (discussed above), where the definitions and measurements used by researchers to study cultural activities and events have not progressed much beyond historical conceptualizations of culture as primarily for the privileged. One example includes the terminology used to describe types of culture. These terms include “legitimate culture” and “Highbrow” culture (critiqued in Coulangeon, 2005), which is often operationalized and measured by attendance of events such as ballet, opera, or art museum exhibits, while “Low Culture” or “Lowbrow Culture” is described and measured (if at all) as Rock Concerts (e.g., Lagaert & Roose, 2018). These terms are inherently hierarchical and biased.

Some authors recognize the issues in these terms and use the writing mechanics itself to indicate awareness. This may include placing the terms in quotations and including footnotes to explain the authors’ awareness of the issues with the terms (for example Katz-Gerro, 1999). While this is important to note, it does not change the fact that those terms are still used. Alternately, in some research, terms such as “elite” or “elitist” culture is used or refers to those who consume such culture as “snobs”, which shows awareness of the issue. However, it is often still compared to “low culture” events (e.g., Shin & Youn, 2020). As a result, these frameworks have confirmed and perpetuated a perception of culture as being exclusively for the most privileged (Jancovich, 2011).

Another way this uncomfortable issue is perpetuated is through rarely providing other culture events in their measurement (e.g., DiMaggio & Mukhtar, 2004) leading to the biased conclusion that those in privileged social classes participate in culture more. Instead, it may be that those in working classes participate in culture equally, however since the activities in which they participate are not adequately measured, this may be an inaccurate representation which perpetuates differences that may or may not actually exist.

A final characteristic of cultural participation measurement is how it has been defined and measured in research as the events that people attend, but has not accounted for the activities (i.e., hobbies) that people may participate in at home. By including these activities, our work may also better represent the accessibility of participating from home, better representing the ways in which people engage in culture overall.

As a result of both the status-based definitions of cultural participation and the forms of measurement used to test them, research into cultural participation may not be representative of participation patterns across diverse social groups. Related fields have also identified a sampling and reporting bias towards WEIRD (white, educated, industrialized, rich, and from developed countries) samples (Arnett, 2016; Rad et al., 2018). This is particularly true in cultural participation research, where research from primarily European and United States contexts have framed non-participation in culture (which is generally defined and measured as elite forms of culture) as problematic (Stevenson et al., 2017). Additionally, in the research on cultural participation, these issues extend into the measurement and frameworks themselves and may be further exacerbated.

Therefore, it is important to address these issues by conducting research that considers both events and activities in their definition of cultural participation, as well as offering diverse and inclusive measures of behaviours that could be associated with cultural participation. This is important given that similar research is applied by inform national and local, Arts and Culture policies, and related funding decisions at local and national levels, this may currently serve to reproduce and further deepen inequality (Stanziola, 2021). Therefore, researchers have an ethical responsibility to reduce inherent bias in order that their findings do not deepen inequalities and can best serve society.

Selected theoretical frameworks for understanding cultural participation

To address the identified gaps in the literature on cultural participation, a social psychological approach offers me a productive way forward as the sub-discipline attempts to bridge individual-level approaches from other psychology approaches, and the group-level approaches such as often found in sociology. Furthermore, there are two key theoretical frameworks influencing this thesis and associated research: the social identity approach (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner et al., 1987) and critical psychology (e.g. Gough, 2017; Parker, 2007). Both bring distinct benefits to the research.

Social identity approach

The social identity approach is the combined theories of social identity theory (SIT, Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and social categorization theory (SCT, Turner et al., 1987). These theories argue that our personal identities are informed by the ways we see ourselves in relation to the people around us and the groups that we belong to. These groups include social categories such as gender and social class, as well as other more fluid social groups, like knitters, runners, or political activists. Belonging to these groups can influence our attitudes, decisions, and behaviours, and thus are important psychologically. Belonging to these social groups helps our self-esteem, providing motivation to continue to fit in to these groups, and to behave in ways that enable continued belonging to these groups.

According to SIT (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), this occurs when people make sense of the social world and place themselves in it through a series of social comparisons. This happens through categorizing as group members, then identifying with the group, and finally differentiating from others around us. Turner later developed on this in SCT by arguing that as we identify with the group, de-individuation (the temporary loss of personal self) occurs, and we emphasize the characteristics shared with the perceived group (Hornsey, 2008). As we do so, we internalize what we perceive to be the group's beliefs as our own, aligning our personal and social selves, and behave in the ways in line with those beliefs (Spears, 2021). This brings our entire selves more in alignment with the group. As a result, these group identities can therefore have an enormous influence on how we live our lives.

Building on the social identity approach, the body of research termed "the social cure" shows that group memberships and identities have considerable effects on mental and physical health. Original SIT arguments show self-esteem benefits to belonging to a group- that they provide certain protective elements which motivate us to belong to groups in the first place. Modern social cure arguments show the mechanisms of these effects. Simply by being part of a group can provide added psychological resources such as resilience (Haslam et al., 2018) and a sense of belonging, meaning, and purpose, thereby boosting self-esteem (Jetten et al., 2015). Group membership also predicts lower depression long-term (Cruwys et al., 2013), while belonging to multiple groups can enhance these benefits, creating the “more the merrier” effect (Iyer et al., 2009). Therefore, belonging to social groups, particularly multiple groups, can affect more than just our choices but also our quality of life.

Critical psychology and Critical social psychology

Critical psychology is more broadly a part of other critical social theories and has been applied to several sub-disciplines within psychology (e.g., Health (Hepworth, 2006; Rogers, 1996); education (Leonardo, 2004) and community psychology (Thompson, n.d.)), showing its utility across contexts and particularly for applied psychology. Importantly, Critical psychology questions the ideological structures and institutions of psychology itself and is disruptive of the status quo, offering many opportunities to improve theory and practice within psychology as a discipline. However, this tendency to disrupt may also be a part of why it is a less utilized approach compared to other psychology approaches (Austin & Prilleltensky, 2001). This tendency to disrupt is also why it is difficult for psychologists to agree on a concrete definition of Critical social psychology (see Table 1 for examples), however, there are several important issues that are thematically recurring in how Critical psychology, and Critical social psychology more specifically, has been discussed by those who consider themselves Critical psychologists.

These themes suggest that Critical psychologists value addressing social issues particularly those relating to inequality and injustice, and do so by analysing contexts through the socio-historical influences (Billig, 2008; Fox & Prilleltensky, 1997; Spears, 1997; Walsh et al., 2014). This can be used to understand both meaning and behaviour situated within contexts of social power (Gergen, 2001; Prilleltensky & Nelson, 2017). Using this analysis, Critical psychologists deconstruct the underlying assumptions of a given issue to identify actionable solutions that may improve conditions for those who are most vulnerable (Austin & Prilleltensky, 2001). In the current thesis, Critical psychology is used to challenge and deconstruct current paradigms that cultural participation and leisure activities are unimportant and a result of personal choices rather than group influences. The current literature review makes this clear by contextualizing cultural participation through a socio-historical analysis, which identifies the social power dynamics in gender and particularly social class and intersectional contexts, and empirically demonstrates these dynamics in chapters 3 & 4. Later chapters (5 & 6) then offer an applied perspective in which cultural participation may be useful in addressing mental health challenges, in contrast to norms of medicalization in mental health.

Table 1

Example definitions of Critical psychology from Critical psychology textbooks

In text citation	Approach	Example Quote
(Walsh et al., 2014)	Critical history of psychology	"According to [the traditional approach], psychologists regard psychological objects as if they are permanent entities, unaffected by social-historical context, objectively knowable as truths, and equivalent to the natural objects that natural scientists study... In a Critical approach to Psychology's history and philosophy, every aspect of psychologists' activities has a social history. Scholars operating from this orientation believe that one can use the past to examine the discipline's truth-claims in the light of social-historical contingencies." (pg. 14)
(Fox & Prilleltensky, 1997)	Critical psychology	"As used in Critical Psychology: An Introduction, the term describes an approach that challenges many theories and practices common in the field of psychology. The twenty-five chapter authors differ from one another in important ways, yet we share something in common: we evaluate the theories and practices of psychology in terms of how they maintain an unjust and unsatisfying status quo. As we do so, we pay particular attention to the welfare of oppressed and vulnerable individuals and groups." (pg. 4)
(Prilleltensky & Nelson, 2017)	Applied Critical psychology	"Critical psychology is not a special field but rather an approach to the entire field of psychology. This approach attends to the pervasive influence of power in all we do as psychologists; in our roles as therapists, researchers, writers, community consultants, evaluators, teachers, reviewers, supervisors and course and programme developers." (pg. xii)

(Spears, 1997)	Critical social psychology	"It is not easy to define Critical social psychology, and reading the contributions to this volume further demonstrates the difficulty (futility) of this exercise. Perhaps the most interesting feature of the contributions then is not so much what they share in common, but the differences - in the sense of both variability and debate - between them. This heterogeneity in itself is a refreshing sign of life to be contrasted with much of the mainstream, where meta-theoretical debates about method, theory, epistemology and ontology have long since been forgotten or repressed ('agreed' but rarely discussed assumptions of consensus), allowing its practitioners to get on with the daily process of scientific discovery." (pg. 1)
(Gough, 2017)	Critical social psychology	"In the end, there is no one, unified Critical Social Psychology. This handbook emphasises the diversity and debates within the field, and different possibilities for action and social change. It is an interdisciplinary endeavour which borrows from allied disciplines while sitting on the periphery of (social) psychology. Critical social psychologists inhabit liminal spaces where there is not only uncertainty and anxiety but also hope and collaboration." (pg. 14)
(Tuffin, 2004)	Critical social psychology	"Critical social psychology stands apart from attempts to refine universal principles of social life. It regards as naive, attempts to develop universal principles of human social behaviour. While experimentalists seek the refinement of broad themes that will stand the test of time and endure across different cultural and political spectrums, critical social psychologists pursue a more modest research agenda. This agenda respects the importance of multiple truths rather than the blind pursuit of the truth; it seeks not merely to establish differences between groups or statistical relationships between variables, but is interested also in examining the social and psychological meaning of events." (pg. 8)

Note. Unlike other theoretical approaches that have a clear description of what they believe, Critical psychology approaches are consistent largely in that there is no unified perspective of Critical psychology. However some themes do occur, such as questioning paradigms and power dynamics of psychology as a field, and an emphasis on applied work.

Social Identity Theory and Critical Psychology: A combined approach to multiple perspectives

Multiple identities and the conceptual overlap with cultural omnivorism

As mentioned previously, multiple identities have been used by social identity theorists to understand the ways by which different but simultaneous identities are understood, particularly in regards to how having multiple identities can provide multiple resources (i.e. the social cure approach, ex. Wakefield et al., 2019) while lack of support from groups can actively harm (Social Curse, Kellezi et al., 2019), or how multiple social identities can affect cognition and behaviour (ex. Steffens et al., 2016). Interestingly, although the multiple identities approach is a core argument of the social cure and social curse literature, theoretical ways of integrating these multiple identities has not been well described in the literature. This is a gap which leads to criticisms of the Social Identity Approach as a whole (Brown, 2020).

One aspect of this theoretical gap is how the multiple identities literature implies this approach primarily applies to groups that people can opt in and out of. In contrast, identities based on social categories such as race, gender, social class, sexuality and (dis)ability, are not identities to easily opt in or out of (Turner et al., 1987). These identities may become more or less salient in different contexts which can affect behaviour (Petsko et al., 2022), but that does not change membership in the group. However, given the substantial theoretical gaps around types of groups included in multiple identities or how they interact with each other from a Social Identity Perspective, this has not been clarified (and is beyond the scope of this thesis).

Instead, measurement of multiple identities tends to pertain specifically to social groups with greater fluidity in their group memberships. These groups often relate to specific activities of a group — such as knitters, runners, or political activists. In studies of multiple identities, group memberships are often operationalized as the participation in specific activities (ex. Jetten et al., 2022), which have been summed to demonstrate breadth of participation. This way of operationalising multiple identities shares considerable conceptual overlap with the sociological concept of cultural omnivorism (discussed above), which is also measured through participation. Taken together, both of these theories are indicative of the need to adopt a nuanced approach to understand the interplay between group-based identities and participation in cultural activities which has implications for measurement of cultural participation. In chapters 3 (activities) & 4 (events), this issue is addressed through inclusion of both gender and social class as predictors of participation, and are analysed in regards to individual and intersectional influences of both.

Intersectionality

In contrast to the multiple identities approach, intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1990) is a Critical social theory that refers to the ways which identities are multidimensional (such as race, gender, social class, queer, and disability identity dimensions) and the extent that these identities are interconnected. According to this theoretical approach, the subjective experience of one identity is dependent on how other identity dimensions are related and inform one another. This is because the subjective and social constructivist understanding of these identities are related to contextual understandings of historical relationships and social power, both past and present, and depend on the meaning that arises from those contexts. As such, different social categories (e.g., gender, class, race) can show different patterns of behavior both within and between social groups that might be otherwise missed, and these differences may be dependent on different contexts, such as locations (e.g., museums, Taylor, 2010) or activities (Day et al., 2003).

One distinguishing feature of the intersectionality approach over other approaches to multiple identities is the conceptual (and later methodological) distinction of effects and how multiple identities work together. Firstly, there are *similar effects*, in which group members from different intersectional groups may have similar experiences in a given context (e.g., women of all social classes experiencing some forms of gender-based bias, though the type and frequency may differ by contexts). Secondly, Crenshaw describes *additive effects*, which refers to multiple identity effects being combined. For example, being female *and* being working class may lead to separate experiences with both sexism and classism/elitism. Finally, there are *multiplicative effects* such as being a ‘working-class woman’, which is the unique social category of working-class female as distinct from both other members of the working class and other women (Cole, 2009). This may present through particular specific qualities that are prevalent for a particular category, such as the ways working class women’s aggression is socially positioned as the conflict between feminine (and non-aggressive) norms and working-class independence (Day et al., 2003). By conceptualizing identities in this way, it is possible to consider a broader range of experiences of identities while also considering the ways different identities may relate to one another. This facilitates a contextual analysis both of the identities themselves and of the influences of how identity is experienced and expressed, such as through historical perspectives and structural power dynamics (Cole, 2009; Crenshaw, 1990).

In the current thesis, taking the intersectionality approach helps to address a theoretical gap within the cultural participation literature by taking a nuanced approach inclusive of both social class and gender, and the interplay between these identities. This is important, because no identity or social category exists in singularity — every person has a gender and a social class group and many other social categories, and these multiple social categories intersect in ways that influence their personal identity. While this concept has been widely recognized from a theoretical perspective across social psychology (e.g., Turner et al., 2006) the designs of psychology studies have not often included multiple social categories or identities simultaneously (Day et al., 2017; Ryan, 2023). This research gap needs to be addressed, and intersectionality (Cole, 2009; Crenshaw, 1990) provides the theoretical perspective to do so in a meaningful way.

The research issue of focusing on singular social categories, rather than multiple social categories or intersectional approaches, is also problematic in the cultural participation literature. While past studies have shown associations between social class and gender (Bourdieu, 2002; DiMaggio & Mukhtar, 2004), few studies have investigated both gender and social class at the same time. Those that have, have examined both in parallel, but did not analyze the interactions of both together (ex. Katz-Gerro, 1999), or in the case of Lagaert & Roose (2018), where social class was measured through education level rather than work. However, a critical complaint of gender analyses in general is often that it is unidimensional and essentialist, and that the experiences of womanhood are often defined as those experiences of white middle class women (Riley & Evans, 2017). Thus, in order to provide a deeper analysis of gender beyond middle class assumptions, differences of social class are also included in the subsequent analysis of cultural participation (chapters 3 & 4), using the lens of intersectionality (Cole, 2009; Crenshaw, 1990) in analyzing both the individual contributions of social class and gender, as well as the intersections of these identities.

Concluding comments

This chapter has taken a detailed look at social class and gender influences on leisure and cultural participation considering both historical and scholarly perspectives. In drawing these viewpoints together, it is worth summarizing the key perspectives influencing the present thesis. Firstly, despite being considered an “innocent” topic (Green, 1990), participation in culture has historically and politically been associated with particular social groups such as gender and social class. Secondly, and because of this, participation can signify social status and social roles within communities through frequency and variety of participation as well as the types of activities or events engaged in. And thirdly, participation often provides social and psychological benefits, meaning that some social groups may be gaining benefits that are difficult for other to access, reinforcing inequality between groups. Additionally, this issue is complicated by potential bias in some forms of measurement that have previously been used, and methods that do not fully incorporate differences of intersectional groups. I address these significant gaps in the research through the inclusion of a wider range of activities and events, designs that include both gender and social class, and later extend findings into the effects of participation on mental health. In the next chapter, I will begin to address this by exploring gender and social class participation patterns across activities.

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Chapter 3, The things we do: Patterns in gender and social class participation across cultural activities

Participation in culture is often done as a form of leisure. In the introduction chapter, I discussed Stebbins' argument that there are two types of leisure— casual and serious leisure (Stebbins, 1992, 2001). In contrast to casual leisure (discussed later), Serious leisure is defined as engagement in stimulating and active activities that require skill, knowledge, or expertise, which will be discussed in the current chapter.

Past research and social psychology, particularly from the social identity perspective (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner et al., 1987), shows that social groups such as gender and social class can affect individual perceptions thoughts and behaviors. Smith et al. (2013) suggests that culture is the shared ideas about what is valued and valuable about the world. From this, we can glean the values of a group based on what people invest their time and energy into doing. Therefore, cultural participation in activities may illuminate the particular values of a social group that participates in them frequently. This study offers a novel approach to understanding the deeper values of social groups through their cultural participation.

Past research has suggested that both gender and social class maybe influential to the type of participation and the frequency of participation that people engage in. In childhood, girls participate across a wider variety of activities (Eccles et al., 1990). These broad participation patterns may reflect social norms that women are expected to do it all (Ringrose & Walkerdine, 2008). However, social roles have also been linked to the types of activities than men and women participate in Koenig & Eagly (2014). While this has been researched in work and education contexts more broadly (e.g. gender participation differences across

STEM and the humanities, Miller et al., 2018), specific activities people do in their leisure time has not been investigated as thoroughly. This may indicate which activities may be more highly valued for women, or for men, theoretically contributing a greater understanding of gendered values.

Past research around social class participation has shown changes in the patterns identified over time, from Bourdieu (2002)'s elite cultural engagement, which suggests that class is differentiated through higher engagements in "elite" activities or events, to Cultural Omnivorism, hypothesized by Peterson (1992), which suggested that higher levels of social class were made distinctive through broad participation in a variety of types of events (or activities), to Childress et al. (2021), who argued that social class distinctiveness was defined by deep cultural knowledge and experience of unique activities alongside a broad awareness across genres. While these bodies of past work have consistently connected social class to cultural participation (particularly emphasizing higher levels of social class participation), the ways in which social class groups differ are unclear. However, cultural participation may also indicate a symbolic boundary (demonstrated in de Vries & Reeves, 2021) which is communicated through covert signaling (Smaldino et al., 2018). Because of this, understanding the cultural engagement differences between different social class levels can contribute to clearer theoretical knowledge not only about the behaviours and values of different class groups, but also how class itself is created.

However, past research in cultural participation has focused either on gender or social class and has not acknowledged the interaction of these two identity dimensions and the effects that may have on differences in cultural participation. For this, we use Intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1990). The way multiple identities interact is important to consider, because gender experiences differ across social class levels as does experiences of social class differ between genders. These experiences are not unidimensional, and it is important to understand how experiences may differ for participants in order to understand the ways a particular process may manifest. For example, both Crenshaw (1990) and Cole (2009) discuss how overlapping identities can be additive (separately influencing an experience) or multiplicative (elements of both/all identities work together to create a unique experience), those some of these experiences may be similar to people with separate identities but for different reasons. To address any inequalities associated with identities, it is important to clearly understand these differences both between and within groups, for theoretical clarity and future applications. Our work also addresses this research gap.

Additionally, some researchers have noted that by focusing on only one dimension of identity, research in psychology has tended to emphasize the perspectives of some over others (ex. women's experiences defined as largely white middle class women's experiences of gender instead of representing a wide diversity of perspectives or experiences (Riley & Evans, 2017); or perspectives about others (working class as needing to be fixed, (Day et al., 2014). These differences may be emphasized through measurement, by measuring cultural participation through focusing on the "elite" activities, and activities that align with stereotypical male interests.

Furthermore, participation in culture is often done as a form of leisure. In the introduction chapter, I discussed Stebbins' argument that there are two types of leisure—casual and serious leisure (Stebbins, 1992, 2001). In contrast to casual leisure (discussed later), Serious leisure is defined as engagement in stimulating and active activities that require skill, knowledge, or expertise, which will be discussed in the current chapter.

Past research and social psychology, particularly from the social identity perspective (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner et al., 1987), shows that social groups such as gender and social class can affect individual perceptions thoughts and behaviors. Smith et al. (2013) suggests that culture is the shared ideas about what is valued and valuable about the world.

From this, we can glean the values of a group from where people invest their time and energy into doing a behavior, therefore cultural participation in activities may elucidate the particular values of a social group that participates in them frequently. This study offers a novel approach to understanding the deeper values of social groups through their cultural participation.

Past research has suggested that both gender and social class maybe influential to the type of participation and the frequency of participation that people engage in. In childhood, girls participate across a wider variety of activities (Eccles et al., 1990). These broad participation patterns may reflect social norms that women are expected to do it all (Ringrose & Walkerdine, 2008). However, social roles have also been linked to the types of activities than men and women participate in Koenig & Eagly (2014). While this has been researched in work and education contexts more broadly (e.g. gender participation differences across STEM and the humanities, Miller et al., 2018), specific activities people do in their leisure time has not been investigated as thoroughly. This may indicate which activities may be more highly valued for women, or for men, theoretically contributing a greater understanding of gendered values.

The present research aimed to identify patterns between social group membership and cultural engagement through participation in activities. We hypothesize that there will be patterns between social group membership and the activities participated in. Specifically, 1. Are there patterns between gender and activity participation?, and 2. Are there patterns between social class groups and activity participation? We hypothesize that there will be patterns for both social group membership categories. We report on the types of activities people do, which has not previously been explored in other cultural participation research. Additionally, past research has not investigated the combined associations between gender and social class, with cultural participation in adults. The present research addresses this issue by including a wide variety of activities in our measures to measure different types of participation more precisely, and through analyzing gender and social class together. We hope to offer new insights relating to patterns of cultural engagement, with a particular focus on group-based differences related to social class and gender, by adopting this more thorough approach to conceptualizing and measuring cultural participation.

Method

Data collection

The *Taking Part* Dataset is a continuous household survey of adults aged 16 and over conducted in England. The *Taking Part Study* was commissioned by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and three partner organizations (Arts Council England, Historic England and Sport England) as a means to understand patterns of engagement in the arts, museums and galleries, archives, libraries, heritage and sport for the purposes of improving these services for the population (Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 2016). The survey gathers information relating to the frequency of participation, reasons for participation, barriers to participation and attitudes to the sectors, as well as demographic information about the participants. The study began in 2005, but the present research focuses on the data wave collected between 2015–2016. This data is stored in an open-access format and available to download through the UK Data host (www.gov.uk). Data access was requested by the research team and received.

Participants

The 2015-16 sample was an adult sample (N = 10,171), resampling half of the sample from previous waves of the *Taking Part* studies, while the other half was randomly selected through the "small user" Postal Address File, a database of addresses used by the UK postal service to provide an anonymous representative sample. This file contains addresses, and not names, so anonymous random probability sampling was used, and was representative of the sample at a National and Governmental Office Region level (UK Statistics Authority, 2019). Participants completed the adult form of the *Taking Part Survey* in the 2015–2016 data collection wave. Adult participants' ages ranged from 16 to 95 (M = 53.36, SD = 18.53). Participants completed a telephone interview with the researcher(s), who recorded responses quantitatively.

Measures

The *Taking Part* S*urvey* (2015-2016) included 20 questions categories (household details, subjective well-being, socialization, free time activities, walking cycling and sports participation, participation details, barriers to participation, life events, changes to participation, factors affecting participation, internet use, volunteering, charitable giving, community cohesion/belonging, public participation, Olympics, first world war centenary, broadcasting, and demographics) with 3175 measures. For the current purposes, we focus on the following variables of social class, gender, activities participation (screener questions and frequencies Chapter 2), and events attendance (screener questions and frequencies; Chapter 3).

Social Class.

Social class was measured using the National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification **(**NS-SEC), based on Goldthorpe (2007). This measure uses a household reference person (HRP) defined by the household themselves as the person responsible for the accommodation. The classification considers the HRP's working status (full/part time) position as an employee, employer, and/or owning their own business, as well as the size of the company and location within the hierarchy. For this analysis, we used the three category NS-SEC to classify participants into social class categories: 1. higher managerial, admin and professional occupations (upper class, n = 3958, 35.4%), 2. intermediate occupations (middle class, n = 2237, 23.9%), and 3. routine and manual occupations (working-class, n = 3415, 33.7%). Because some participants may not be working, “Never worked and long-term unemployed” (n = 194, 1.9%) was measured but was removed from the dataset due to the diversity of reasons this might be so (e.g., (e.g., students living independently from their parents) which do not relate to social class.

Gender.

Participants self-reported their gender as either male or female. Of the sample, 45.3% of participants reported that they were male (n = 4607). While there was an “other” option available as a non-binary gender option, no participants self-reported as belonging to that category, and there was no missing data.

Cultural participation through activities.

Earlier in this work, we defined cultural participation as the engagement in activities or events that represent a social group’s shared ideas about what is valid and valuable in the world, which can include activities such as creating works of diverse forms of art and attending events such as festivals or performances. We operationalize this by measuring both the activities that participants have engaged in (Chapter 2), and the events that they have attended over the past year (Chapter 3).

For the measurement of Activities, participants completed an initial yes/no checklist of 27 creative activities they participated in during the past 12 months. Example activities included ballet, textile crafts such as embroidery, crocheting or knitting, and wood crafts such as wood turning, carving, or furniture making. For a complete list, see Table 1. For those activities selected, participants were then filtered through to items asking how often they participated. No participation (i.e., Participants screened out through the filter checklist) was indicated as 0. To indicate that lower values indicated lower participation, responses were reverse coded to improve logic (original responses: 1= at least once a week; 2 = Less often than once a week but at least once a month; 3 = Less often than once a week but at least 3 or

4 times a year; 4 = Twice in the last 12 months; 5 = once in the last 12 months). After recoding, responses ranged from 0 (did not do this activity in the last year) to 5 (at least once a week).

Analytical approach

Initial exploratory polychoric factor analysis was used to determine whether there were underlying patterns in the types of activities that participants engaged with. Given the large number of variables used in each study (each type of activity or event), exploratory factor analysis enabled us to identify underlying factors. Polychoric factor analysis was used rather than Pearson correlation-based factor analysis because participation was measured ordinally, therefore polychoric factor analysis, using polychoric correlations which are calculated using the odds ratio (Holgado–Tello et al., 2010), were determined to provide the best statistical method for this data. Factor loadings are then interpreted similarly to non-polychoric EFA.

Parallel analysis was used to determine the number of factors to retain (Hayton et al., 2004; Horn, 1965). This analysis uses random datasets generated with the same sample size and number of variables as the original dataset. Eigenvalues are calculated, and the mean eigenvalues and the 95th percentile of eigenvalues are calculated and compared to the eigenvalues found in the original dataset. The number of original eigenvalues that are higher than the randomly generated eigenvalues indicate how many factors should be retained. Reliabilities of the factors were also checked using McDonald's ω (McDonald, 1999) as opposed to Cronbach's α (Cronbach, 1951). Although Cronbach's α is quite commonly used, several methodologists have recently critiqued the measure, and recommend using McDonald's ω instead (Hayes & Coutts, 2020; McNeish, 2018; Peters, 2018; Revelle & Condon, 2019). We have followed these recommendations.

Following factor analysis, we used two-way ANOVAs to test whether social class, gender, or the interaction of both, were associated with participation. We separately explored *frequency* of participation, using the levels of participation, and the *variety* of participation through the number of types of creative activities, using summed dichotomous participation variables (participation, no participation) for each subscale. Post hoc analyses with Bonferroni adjustments were used to follow up all significant differences. As can be observed from the factor analysis loadings (table 1) some items did not load strongly even on the factors they were most aligned with. For this reason, we weighted the items by factor loading before summing into subscales. These subscales were then used as the outcome variables in each individual ANOVA with social class and gender as the independent variables. Post hoc analyses with Bonferroni adjustments were used to follow up all significant differences for item level analyses.

We then followed up the frequency and variety ANOVAs by factor with individual item analyses using negative binomial regressions. First, we present analyses of each factor's highest loading items, to further describe each factor. Next, we identify notable items in regards to both gender and social class and discuss those also.

Next we used cluster analysis to see whether there are underlying groups or clusters of items based on participation in activities or attendance at events. Two types of cluster analysis were conducted — hierarchical and agglomerative. Although both agglomerative and hierarchical cluster analyses can be used individually, scholars typically recommend using both in stages (see Milligan, 1980), as each type of cluster analysis achieves different results. Specifically, hierarchical cluster analysis determines the number of clusters while agglomerative cluster analysis classifies the data within those clusters. Therefore, hierarchical analyses were used to determine the number of subgroups (i.e., clusters) that were present in the data. Then, agglomerative methods assigned participants into the predetermined number of clusters which were defined during hierarchical clustering.

For the hierarchical cluster analysis, two classification methods were used to add retest validity, confirming a stable cluster structure as recommended by (Aldenderfer & Blashfield, 1984). First, Ward's Method classifies the data by minimizing the variance, which determined the number of clusters. We then retested using Complete Linkage (CLINK) grouping, which clusters data by minimizing dissimilarity. By using two different methods of grouping, we confirmed the number of groups present in the data using retest validity. We used Euclidean distance as the method of calculating the (dis)similarity measure, rather than Pearson's correlation. While Pearson's correlation measures the overall similarity or dissimilarity between responses, Euclidean distance also measures the distance between response patterns (Aldenderfer & Blashfield, 1984). This means that a participant who rarely participates in activities but tries Activity A *once* will not have the same similarity to the cluster as a participant who frequently participates and does Activity A often. As a result, this classification technique allows us to examine patterns of participation based on both type and frequency at the same time. For both Wards and CLINK classification methods, the ideal number of clusters are typically determined using the dendrogram output and the largest jump in coefficients in the agglomeration schedule (Norusis, 2008).

Agglomerative (K-Means) cluster analysis. Next, agglomerative (K-Means) cluster analysis was conducted which categorizes the participants into clusters using the predetermined number of clusters from hierarchical cluster analysis. As with hierarchical analysis, Euclidean distance measures were used to determine the similarity between participants' scores and the cluster centers, determining which group they fit best in.

We used follow-up exploratory descriptive analyses to identify the differentiating characteristics of each cluster. Descriptive statistics were used to identify and describe the nature of differences between groups. This included investigating the variety of types of participation across multiple activities, as well as examining the frequency of participation across types of activities. To investigate variety of types of participation, basic descriptive analyses, such as means, modes, minimums, and maximums, were used to describe the data. We followed up by visually analysing the histograms of individual variables to understand frequency of participation across variables. Logistic regression analyses were then conducted to identify social group associations and differences between activities clusters, using social class and gender.

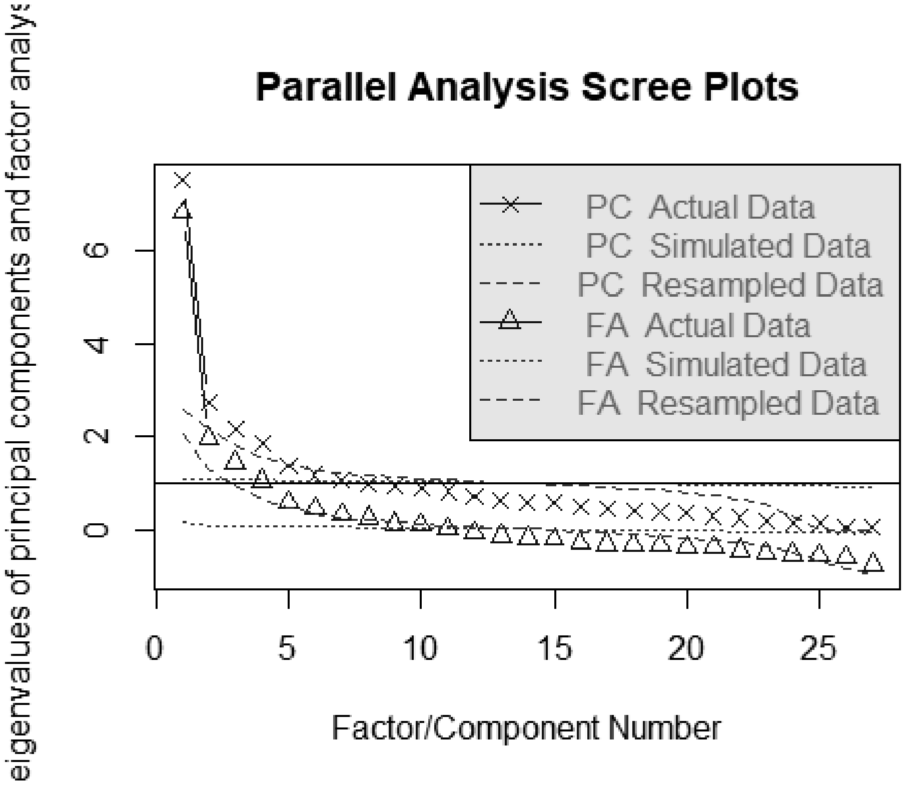
Results

Underlying patterns in activity participation

To facilitate interpretation of individual activities, we sought to see which activities were commonly grouped together using principal components analysis with polychoric correlations. Initial assumptions for principal components analysis were met: The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value (0.724) verified sampling adequacy, exceeding a recommended value of 0.6 (Kaiser & Rice, 1974), and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant ($p < .001$, Bartlett, 1951).

Figure 1

Activities Scree Plot



Note. The scree plot of activities items shows a break at 3 and 5 factors, indicating a possible factor structure of either two or four factors.

Parallel analysis showed 4 components with eigenvalues over the simulated eigenvalues, as shown in the scree plot (see Figure 1). This component structure was extracted and examined and showed theoretical differentiation between the categories of creative pursuits (ω=.539), music (ω=.577), performing (ω=.326), and consuming (ω=.588). See Table 1 for subscale items and loadings. In contrast to ‘true’ factor analysis, we don’t expect participation in activities is related to a latent variable. Thus, we treated each collection of activity variables as an index instead of a (sub)scale (Peters, 2018). This also affects interpretation of ‘reliability’, as these independent behaviours don’t necessarily share a common cause.

Table 1.

Factor Loadings on Activities Scale

Factor	Items	Creative Pursuits	Music	Performing	Consuming
Creative pursuits	Painting, drawing, printmaking or sculpture	**0.56**	-0.12	0.08	0.22
	Learning or practicing circus skills	**0.34**	0.04	0.31	-0.03
	Photography as an artistic activity [f]	**0.59**	0.06	-0.05	0.08
	Making films or videos as an artistic activity [g]	**0.72**	0.17	0.02	-0.16
	Using a computer to create original artworks or animation	**0.76**	-0.01	0.01	-0.02
	Wood crafts such as wood turning, carving or furniture making	**0.33**	0.13	-0.02	-0.05
	Other crafts such as calligraphy, pottery or jewelry making	**0.36**	-0.1	0.13	0.29
	Writing any stories or plays	**0.56**	0.12	0.01	0.18
	Writing any poetry	**0.54**	0.05	0	0.2
	Creating a video or computer game	**0.53**	0.15	0.08	-0.22
Music	Singing to an audience or rehearsing a performance [c]	-0.06	**0.63**	0.34	0.11
	Playing a musical instrument to an audience or rehearsing for a performance	0.05	**0.92**	-0.05	0.04
	Playing a musical instrument for your own pleasure	0.18	**0.73**	-0.1	0.13
	Writing music	0.32	**0.64**	0.04	-0.09
Performing	Ballet	0.07	-0.12	**0.71**	0.07
	Other dance [a]	0.15	-0.26	**0.56**	0.08
	Other dance [b]	0.09	-0.1	**0.53**	0.05
	Rehearsing or performing in play/drama	0.15	0.4	**0.47**	-0.03
	Rehearsing or performing in opera/operetta or musical theatre	-0.14	0.53	**0.65**	-0.02
	Taking part in a carnival [d]	0.3	0.04	**0.36**	-0.01
	Taking part in street arts [e]	0.3	0.2	**0.35**	0.01
Consuming	Textile crafts such as embroidery, crocheting or knitting	0.02	-0.18	0.25	**0.44**
	Buying any original works of art for yourself	0.3	0.06	-0.01	**0.35**
	Buying any original/handmade crafts such as pottery or jewelry for yourself	0.25	-0.17	0.21	**0.45**
	Reading for pleasure [h]	-0.07	0.11	-0.02	**0.86**
	Buying a novel, or book of stories, poetry or plays for yourself	0.06	0.05	-0.01	**0.7**

Read for pleasure as part of a club or group	-0.08	0.11	-0.06	**0.4**
Subscale Reliability (ω)	*0.539*	*0.577*	*0.326*	*0.588*

[a] For fitness
[b] Not for fitness
[c] Not karaoke
[d] E.g. As a musician, dancer or costume maker
[e] An artistic performance that takes place in everyday surroundings like parks, streets or shopping centres
[f] Not family or holiday 'snaps'
[g] Not family or holidays
[h] Not newspapers, magazines or comics

In the appendix, we explore gender and class differences in factor scores, but here focus on looking at specific activities. The analysis of the activities factors (overall) as well as the individual items allows us to gain a summary description of participation patterns by types of activity (what are the characteristics of this factor based on the combination of items that make it up) as well as a more detailed look at the individual items that may stand out, suggesting activities that may hold particular social value (as represented by higher group differences in participation) for gender and social class groups. Although all items were analyzed (and reported with bold typeface indicating significant in table 2 (gender) and 3 (social class)), we report select items for conciseness.

Table 2.

Percent participation and odds ratios of activities items by gender

Factor	Item	Percent participation: Overall	Women	Men	Odds Ratio	Odds ratio SEs
Creative						
	Circus skills	1.0	1.0	1.1	0.64	0.48
	Painting, drawing, printmaking, sculpture	12.6	15.3	9.4	**1.54**	0.13
	Photography	8.1	6.8	9.8	**0.71**	0.17
	Film or videos	1.6	1.0	2.3	**0.39**	0.41
	Computer art or animation	4.6	4.0	5.3	0.74	0.24
	Wood crafts	4.6	1.8	8.1	**0.17**	0.21
	Other crafts (calligraphy, pottery, jewellery making)	4.8	7.0	2.1	**3.00**	0.22
	Writing stories or plays	2.6	2.6	2.7	0.86	0.33
	Writing poetry	3.0	3.3	2.6	1.06	0.28
	Create video or computer game	0.9	0.6	1.4	0.42	0.53
Music						
	Singing for performance	4.1	4.7	3.5	1.15	0.25
	Playing a musical instrument for performance	2.8	1.9	3.9	**0.29**	0.31
	Playing a musical instrument for own pleasure	9.6	7.3	12.3	**0.35**	0.16
	Writing music	1.6	0.7	2.7	**0.61**	0.49
Performing						
	Ballet	0.5	0.8	0.2	**8.70**	1.00
	Dance (for fitness)	4.9	8.2	1.0	**7.65**	0.23
	Dance (not fitness or ballet)	8.0	10.1	5.3	**2.26**	0.17
	Play/Drama	1.4	1.5	1.3	2.04	0.44
	Opera/operetta or Musical Theatre	0.7	0.8	0.7	0.53	0.63
	Participating in Carnival	1.4	1.6	1.1	1.43	1.00
	Street arts	0.6	0.6	0.6	2.68	0.62
Consuming						
	Textile crafts (embroidery, knitting, etc)	15.7	27.9	1.1	**48.60**	0.17
	Buying art	6.7	7.2	6.1	1.13	0.17
	Buying crafts	14.5	20.9	6.9	**3.49**	0.11
	Reading for Pleasure	64.8	71.6	56.5	**1.44**	0.03
	Buying literature	45.0	52.2	36.3	**1.74**	0.05
	Reading for pleasure as part of a club or a group	2.2	3.1	1.1	**2.11**	0.35

Table 3.

Event item by component negative binomial

Item		Factor loading	β	SE	p	Odds Ratio
Fine Art						
Public art display or installation (an art work such as sculpture that is outdoors or in a public place)		0.81				
	Gender		0.646	0.121	0.518	1.08
	Social class		9.53	0.0609	< .001	1.79
	Interaction		0.534	0.0834	0.594	1.05
Exhibition or collection of art, photography or sculpture		0.81				
	Gender		2.33	0.10	< .05	1.26
	Social class		14.6	0.05	< .001	2.05
	Interaction		-0.782	0.0664	0.434	0.949
Classically defined events						
Opera/operetta		0.79				
	Gender		2.29	0.229	< .05	1.69
	Social class		7.98	0.114	< .001	2.48
	Interaction		-1.13	0.149	0.260	0.845
Ballet		0.74				
	Gender		5.12	0.23	< .001	3.24
	Social class		5.96	0.122	< .001	2.07
	Interaction		-0.678	0.147	0.498	0.905
Dance and Ethnic						
African people's dance or South Asian and Chinese dance		0.69				
	Gender		-0.782	0.32	0.434	0.779
	Social class		1.47	0.161	0.142	1.27
	Interaction		1.91	0.222	0.056	1.53
Vaudeville						
Pantomime		0.73				
	Gender		7.08	0.101	< .001	2.04
	Social class		4.9	0.0558	< .001	1.32
	Interaction		-1.83	0.0691	0.068	0.881

Gender differences in activity participation

Gender differences were observed for over half the activities measured, and for each category of item indexes. For creative activities, there were a number of items with higher participation for women (painting/drawing/printmaking/sculpture, and textile crafts category) but also some with higher participation for men (photography, film/video, wood crafts), as well as a number with little evidence for difference. Thus, within these creative pursuits, item level analysis is most appropriate as the specific context of the activity may affect gendered participation. Men were found to be more likely to engage in most musical activities, apart from singing, where there was little difference. With respect to performance activities, women were overall more likely to participate, and this was especially evident for various dance activities. Finally, the activity of consuming had higher participation levels from women. Although there were significant gender patterns across several individual items, a few of these stood out because of the scale of their gender differences. These were “ballet”, “dance (for fitness)” and “wood crafts” from the creative activities factor, “textile crafts” and “buying crafts” from the consuming factor.

An item level analysis of ballet participation for the performance factor showed a significant gender difference where women participated in ballet 8.7 times more frequently than men. There was also a significant social class effect where each increase in class level was also associated with a 3.39 increase in the frequency of participating in ballet. There was no interaction of gender and social class. Additionally, the normalized participation data shows that per 1000 people, we would expect 13 higher managerial (upper class) women, 7 intermediate (middle) class women, and 2 routine and manual labour (working) class women to attend ballet events, compared to 4 higher managerial (upper class) men, 1 intermediate (middle) class men, and 0 routine and manual labour (working) class men.

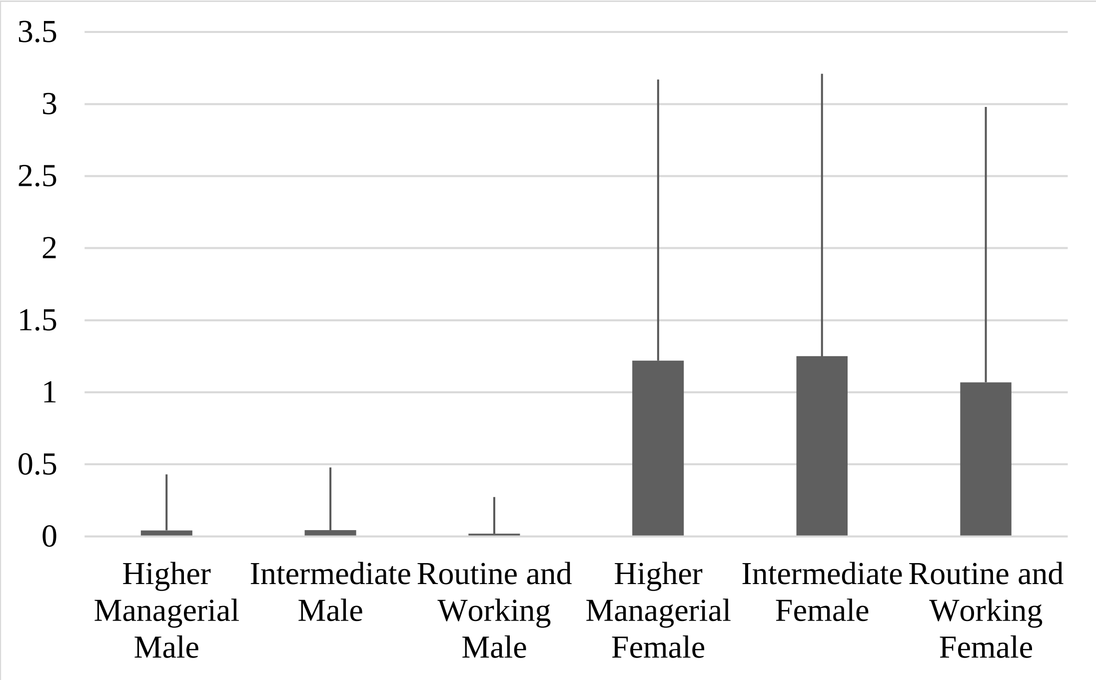
Women danced for fitness 7.65 times more than men and for each increase in class level, frequency of participating in dance (for fitness) increased by 0.99. Normalized participation data shows that per 1000 people, we would expect 102 higher managerial (upper class) women, 80 intermediate (middle) class women, 64 routine and manual labour (working) class women, compared to 9 higher managerial (upper class) men, 14 intermediate (middle) class men, and 7 routine and manual labour (working) class men to participate in dance (for fitness). Interestingly, this is the only activity where normalized data indicates that intermediate (middle) class men are expected to participate more than higher managerial (upper class) men, although analysis does not indicate a significant interaction of gender and class for this activity.

Analysis of the “wood crafts such as wood turning, carving or furniture making” item showed men participated about 5 times more frequently than women and for each increase in class level, frequency of participating in wood crafts increased by 1.04. Per 1000 people, we would expect 90 higher managerial (upper class) men, 81 intermediate (middle) class men, and 79 routine and manual labour (working) class men compared to 19 higher managerial (upper class) women, 23 intermediate (middle) class women 14 routine and manual labour (working) class women, and to participate in wood crafts.

Comparatively, participation in “textile crafts such as embroidery, crocheting or knitting” indicated that women participated 48 times more than men and for each increase in class level, frequency of participating in textile crafts increased by 1.42. This effect is shown in Figure 2. Per 1000 people, we would expect 303 higher managerial (upper class) women, 314 intermediate (middle) class women, and 256 routine and manual labour (working) class women to participate, and 14 higher managerial (upper class) men, 11 intermediate (middle) class men, and 7 routine and manual labour (working) class men to do textile crafts. This activity showed the strongest gender difference found in any analysis.

Figure 2

Frequency of participation in textile crafts such as embroidery, crocheting or knitting, by different groups



Note. Participation by men was low and almost negligible, despite our large overall sample (N = 10,171) indicating the stark lack of men's participation in textile crafts. In contrast, women's mean participation was much higher, and more varied.

Analysis of "buying any original/handmade crafts such as pottery or jewellery for yourself" showed that women bought crafts 3.49 times more than men and for each increase in class level, frequency of participating in buying crafts increased by 1.47. Additionally, the normalized participation data shows that per 1000 people, we would expect 294 higher managerial (upper class) women, 217 intermediate (middle) class women, and 141 routine and manual labour (working) class women to engage in buying any original/handmade crafts such as pottery or jewellery , compared to 94 higher managerial (upper class) men, 85 intermediate (middle) class men, and 39 routine and manual labour (working) class men.

Overall, some activities showed particularly strong gender differences, such as “ballet”, “dance (for fitness)” and “wood crafts” from the creative activities factor, “textile crafts” and “buying crafts”. Overall, women were more likely to participate in performance and consuming activities, while men were more likely to participate in music activities. For creative activities, item level analysis are more appropriate as the direction of effects was specific to the activity measured. Gender differences were observed for over half the activities measured, indicating that gender is broadly associated with participation in activities.

Table 4.

Percent participation and odds ratios of activities items by social class

Item	Overall	Working	Intermediate	Higher/ Managerial	Odds Ratio	Odds ratio SEs
	Percent participation					
Creative						
Circus skills	1.0	0.6	0.8	1.5	1.43	0.25
Painting, drawing, printmaking, sculpture	12.6	10.0	12.6	14.7	**1.16**	0.07
Photography	8.1	4.4	8.1	11.3	**1.60**	0.09
Film or videos	1.6	0.6	1.4	2.2	**1.82**	0.20
Computer art or animation	4.6	2.4	4.4	6.2	**1.55**	0.12
Wood crafts	4.6	4.4	4.5	5.4	1.04	0.10
Other crafts (calligraphy, pottery, jewellery making)	4.8	3.6	5.8	5.6	1.12	0.12
Writing stories or plays	2.6	1.5	2.5	3.0	**1.43**	0.17
Writing poetry	3.0	2.3	3.0	3.5	1.05	0.15
Create video or computer game	0.9	0.4	0.5	1.3	1.54	0.27
Music						
Singing for performance	4.1	1.7	4.5	6.1	**1.66**	0.13
Playing a musical instrument for performance	2.8	1.1	2.6	4.2	**1.62**	0.15
Playing a musical instrument for own pleasure	9.6	5.1	8.4	14.3	**1.46**	0.08
Writing music	1.6	0.6	1.8	1.9	**1.54**	0.20
Performing						
Ballet	0.5	0.1	0.5	0.9	**3.39**	0.53
Dance (for fitness)	4.9	3.7	5.4	5.6	0.99	0.14
Dance (not fitness or ballet)	8.0	6.4	9.3	8.4	**1.24**	0.09
Play/Drama	1.4	0.7	1.1	2.0	**2.10**	0.23
Opera/operetta or Musical Theatre	0.7	0.3	0.8	1.0	1.55	0.32
Participating in Carnival	1.4	1.1	1.1	1.8	1.31	1.43
Street arts	0.6	0.3	0.6	0.9	**2.24**	0.33
Consuming						
Textile crafts (embroidery, knitting, etc)	15.7	14.0	19.6	16.0	**1.42**	0.11
Buying art	6.7	2.8	6.5	11.0	**1.96**	0.08
Buying crafts	14.5	9.4	16.6	19.4	**1.47**	0.06
Reading for Pleasure	64.8	54.7	66.8	75.5	**1.24**	0.02
Buying literature	45.0	34.2	45.9	56.8	**1.43**	0.03

Reading for pleasure as part of a club or a group	2.2	1.0	1.6	3.5	1.36	0.19

Class differences in activity participation

As can be seen in Table 4, a particularly notable finding was that there was not a single activity for which working class participation was even equal to intermediate class participation — the closest being woodcrafts. This social gradient of participation continues across differences between intermediate and higher social classes, with higher participation observed in the higher group for all activities except other crafts, dance (for fitness), dance (not fitness or ballet) and textile crafts. These findings will be discussed in further detail in the discussion chapter.

As with gender, there were significant social class patterns across individual items. For most individual items with significant social class effects, odds ratios ranged between 1 and 2. There were three items with bigger odds ratios. These were participation in a "play/drama", "street art", and "ballet" (discussed in "Gender differences in activity participation", see also Table 5). We discuss "play/drama" and "street art" below.

For each increase in class level, frequency of participating in "rehearsing or performing in play/drama" increased by 2.10, however there was no significant gender difference nor an interaction of social class and gender. The normalized participation data shows that per 1000 people, we would expect 20 higher managerial (upper class) women, 20 higher managerial (upper class) men, 12 intermediate (middle) class women, 10 intermediate (middle) class men, 8 routine and manual labour (working) class women, and 6 routine and manual labour (working) class men to participate in play/drama.

For "taking part in street arts (an artistic performance that takes place in everyday surroundings like parks, streets or shopping centres)" there were no significant gender differences, however each increase in class also led to an increase in frequency of participating in street arts by 2.24 (per change in social class level.) Additionally, the normalized participation data shows that per 1000 people, we would expect 8 higher managerial (upper class) women, 10 higher managerial (upper class) men, 7 intermediate (middle) class women, 3 intermediate (middle) class men, 4 routine and manual labour (working) class women, and 3 routine and manual labour (working) class men to participate in street arts.

Items loading highest by component.

We assess item-level differences across gender and social class differences of activity participation. Although all items were analysed (see tables 10 and 11), we report highly loading items of components to compare findings and explore the validity of item groupings. These results are reported in Table 5 and are discussed below.

Table 5.

Activity item by component negative binomial

	Item		Factor loading	β	SE	p	Odds Ratio
Creative							
	Making films or videos as an artistic activity (not family or holiday 'snaps')		0.72				
		Gender		-2.31	0.41	0.021	0.388
		Social class		3.05	0.197	0.002	1.82
		Interaction		0.44	0.289	0.657	1.14
	Using a computer to create original artwork or animation		0.76				
		Gender		-1.29	0.24	0.198	0.74
		Social class		0.36	0.12	< .001	1.55
		Interaction		0.44	0.17	0.659	1.08
Music							
	Playing a musical instrument to an audience or rehearsing for a performance		0.92				
		Gender		-3.99	0.31	< .001	0.29
		Social class		3.15	0.15	< .01	1.62
		Interaction		1.62	0.22	0.105	1.44
	Playing a musical instrument for your own pleasure		0.73				
		Gender		-6.48	0.16	< .001	0.35
		Social class		4.65	0.08	< .001	1.46
		Interaction		2.99	0.12	< .01	1.42
Performance							
	Ballet		0.71				
		Gender		2.16	1.00	< .05	8.7
		Social class		2.29	0.53	< .05	3.39
		Interaction		-0.13	0.62	0.900	0.93
Consuming							

Reading for pleasure		0.86				
	Gender		11.2	0.03	< .001	1.44
	Social class		12.5	0.02	< .001	1.24
	Interaction		-3.38	0.02	< .001	0.92
Buying books		0.70				
	Gender		10.8	0.05	< .001	1.74
	Social class		13.1	0.03	< .001	1.43
	Interaction		-2.99	0.04	0.003	0.90

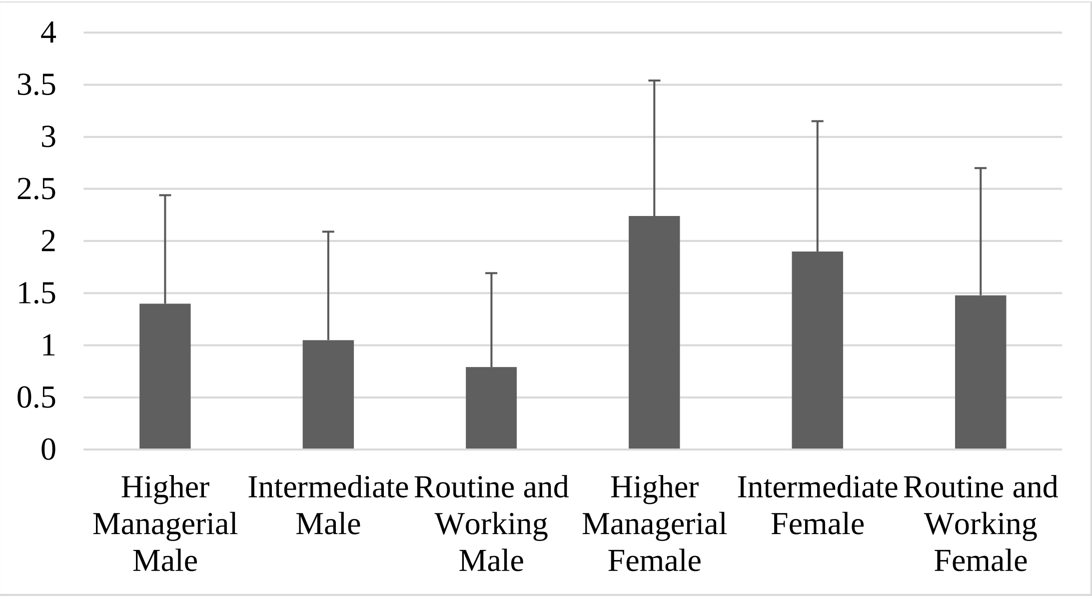
Creative. The items "Making films or videos as an artistic activity (not family or holiday 'snaps')" and "Using a computer to create original artwork or animation" were analyzed using negative binomial regression. Making films or videos showed a significant gender difference with an odds ratio of .39 (p), with more men than women who made film or videos. For each increase in social class level, frequency of participating in making film or videos significantly increased by 1.82. "Using a computer to create original artwork or animation" showed no significant effects for gender, social class, or an interaction between the two.

All analyses (the creative factor, film item, and computer art) showed disparate effects. While the creative factor frequency analysis and analysis of the computer art item both showed no significant gender differences, the film item showed that men participate more frequently. Likewise, both the creative factor and the film item showed significant social class effects, while the computer art item showed no significant effects. However, all analyses showed there were no significant interactions between gender and social class. This disparity in findings may be due to the variety of items included in the creativity factor, which may be highly variable by social context, and the creativity factor may not provide the level of specificity needed to appropriately analyse these items. This may also explain why this was the only factor with no significant gender differences- highly directional effects may nullify other effects included in the factor.

Music. The highly loading items on the music factor were “playing a musical instrument to an audience or rehearsing for a performance” and “playing a musical instrument for your own pleasure”. Men played a musical instrument for performance about 3 times more frequently than women and for each increase in class level, frequency of participating in playing a musical instrument for performance increased by 1.62. This interaction effect is shown in figure 3. Men also played a musical instrument for their own pleasure about 3 times more frequently than women, and for each increase in class level, frequency of playing a musical instrument for their own pleasure increased by 1.46. These interaction effects are also shown in Figure 4.

Figure 3.

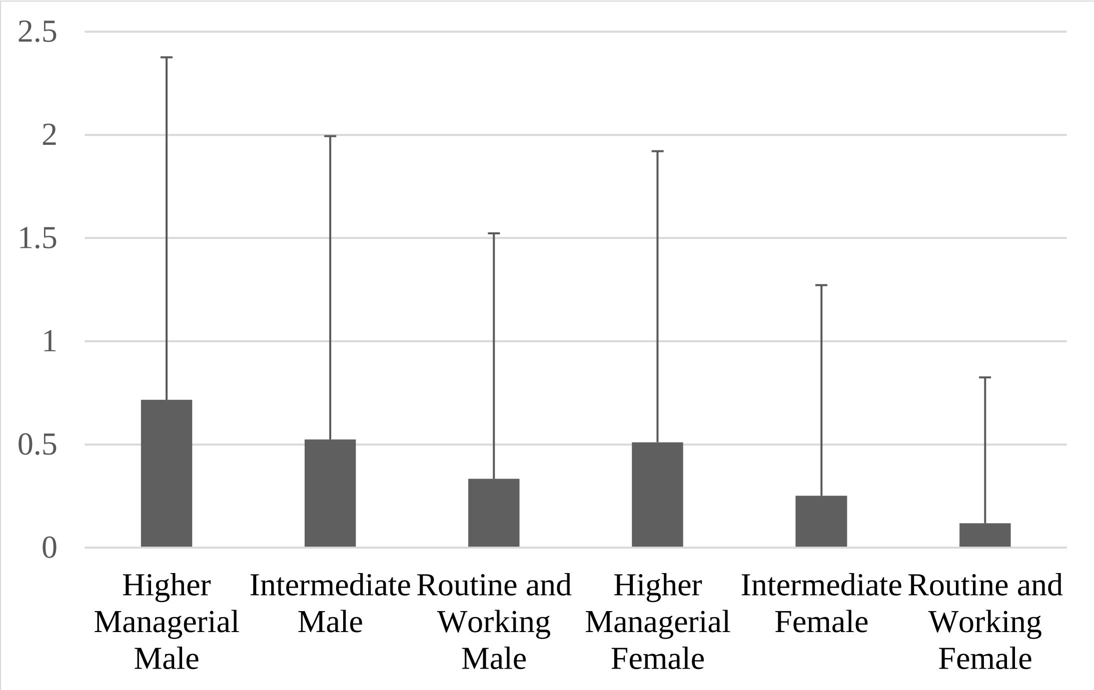
Means of variety of types of consuming activities participated in



Note. Women’s participation in a variety of types of consuming activities shows that higher levels of social class are associated with higher levels of consuming. Working-class women showed no significant differences with managerial (higher) class men, though both groups were significantly higher in variety of consuming activities than other men, for whom decreasing social class levels were associated with decreasing variety of consuming activities.

Figure 4.

Frequency of playing a musical instrument for your own pleasure by different groups



Note. As shown in the bar graph, higher levels of social class were associated with higher levels of participation. Within social class group, men were consistently more frequently engaged in playing a musical instrument for their own pleasure than women.

These item analyses show similar findings to the music factor frequency results. All analyses show that men participate in music more frequently than women, and that participation frequency also increases with social class levels. The music factor showed no significant social class and gender interactions, as did playing an instrument for your own pleasure, however there was a significant interaction between gender and class for playing an instrument for performance. This is similar to patterns found in the performance factor, where there is theoretical overlap. However, our factor analysis did not indicate cross- loading on the performance factor of the factor analysis (-.05).

Performance.

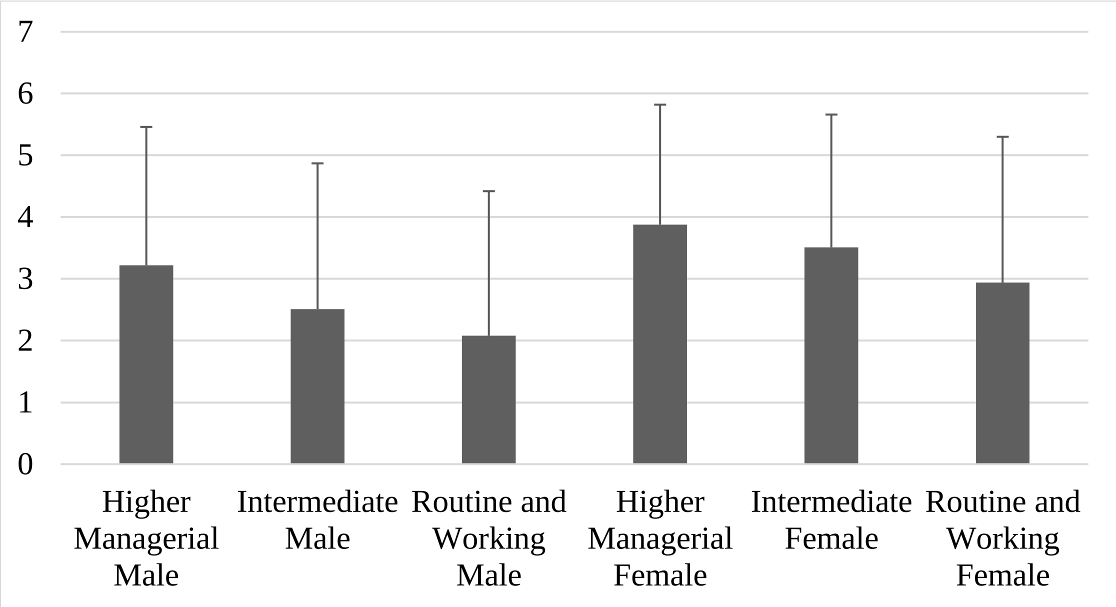
Although the ballet item loaded highly on the performance component, it was also notable for both gender and social class and was reported in the section titled “Gender differences in activity participation”. For brevity, these results will not be repeated.

These results showed similar results to the performance component frequency analysis. Both found that women had higher participation than men, and that frequency increased with levels of social class. Interaction results were mixed however, as the performance factor showed significant interactions of gender and social class showed that all social class levels of women participate in performance activities more frequently than men, but that hierarchical class differences exist within gender. The ballet item showed no significant interactions.

Consuming. An item level analysis of “reading for pleasure” (factor loading .86) and “buying books” showed a significant gender effect, where women read for pleasure 1.44 times more than men and for each increase in class level, frequency of participating in reading for pleasure increased by 1.24 (see figure 5). Additionally, women bought books 1.74 times more frequently than men and for each increase in class level, frequency of participating in buying literature increased by 1.43. There was also a significant interaction of gender and social class on buying literature ($\beta(5) = 0.90$, $SE = 0.04$, $p < .01$, see Figure 6).

Figure 5.

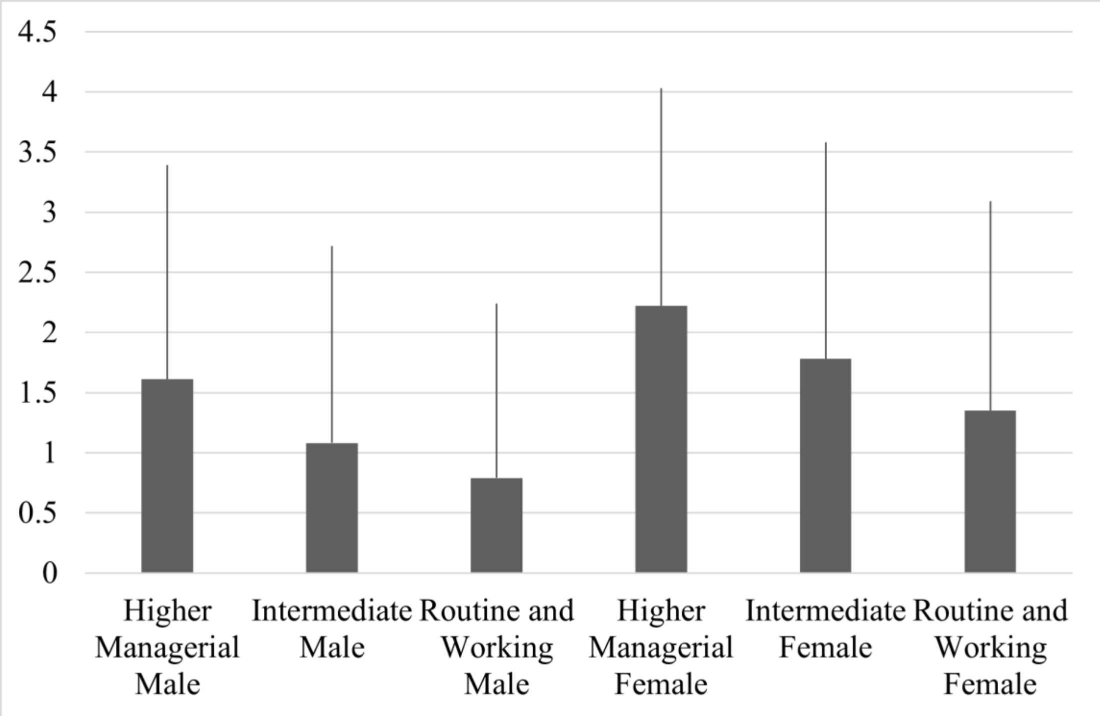
Reading for pleasure participation frequency means



Note. As can be seen by the scale, participation in reading for pleasure was more frequently participated in than other activities. Overall, women participated in reading for pleasure more than men, and both groups participation also increased as social class level increased. Interestingly, participation by managerial (higher) class males and routine and manual (working) class females was quite similar.

Figure 6.

Frequency of participation in buying a novel, or book of stories, poetry or plays for yourself



Note. Women were more likely to buy literature for themselves than men, though within gender groups, higher levels of social class were associated with higher participation in buying literature

Both items showed similar results to the consuming factor frequency analysis, which showed that women participated in consuming activities more frequently than men, and consuming frequency increased with social class level. However, while the consuming factor also showed no significant interactions between gender and social class, reading for pleasure and book buying both showed a significant interaction. These results were similar to the consuming factor's analysis of variety of participation, which also showed significant gender and class interactions. In this interaction, all social class levels of women participated more than all men, with hierarchical class structures within genders.

Cluster analyses of activities participation.

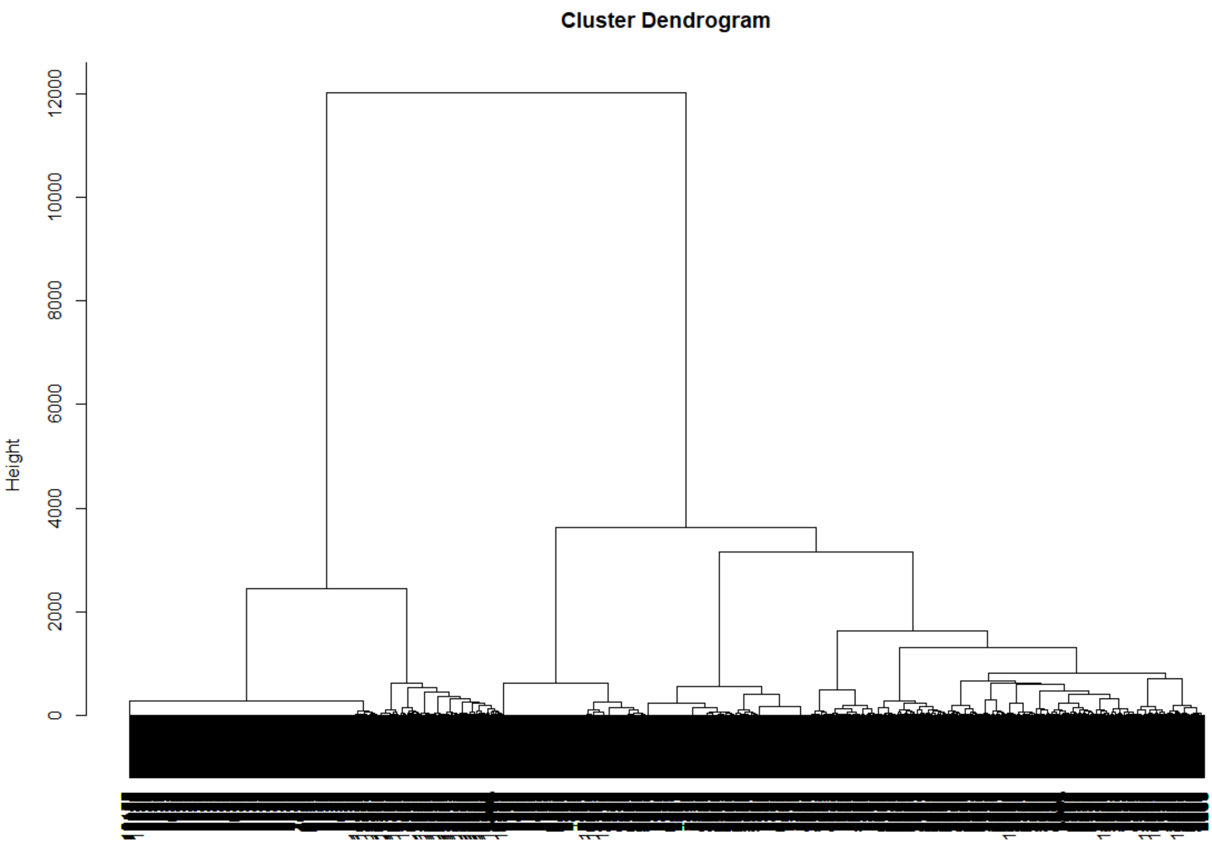
Cluster analysis uses participants' responses across multiple variables to group them based on similar responses, after which cluster differences across other dimensions can be determined. In this analysis, we clustered participants by patterns of engagement across activities in two stages, hierarchical cluster analysis and iterative (K-means) cluster analysis.

Hierarchical cluster analysis, using Ward's method, showed that two clusters were present in the data, using both the agglomerative schedule and the dendrogram produced using Ward's method (figure 7). Analysis was re-run using the CLINK method, which confirmed that two clusters were the ideal number of groups for future analysis.

Next, an iterative K-means cluster analysis using running means was conducted (N = 10,171), needing only 8 iterations (changes to the cluster centre, which represent the cluster prototypicality) to classify the data into clusters. Cluster 1 accounted for approximately 61% of the sample. Cluster 2 accounted for approximately 39% of the sample. To identify the defining characteristics of these cluster groups, exploratory analyses looking at the variety of types and frequency of participation were used in the next analysis.

Figure 7.

Dendrogram of activities clustering using Ward's method



Note. The dendrogram of clustering shows two clear clusters, as seen in the length of the lines before breaking into other clusters.

Exploratory analyses of variety of types and frequency of participation

Variety of types of participation in cultural activities

To explore the variety of types of participation, responses to activities items were dummy coded and then summed. The data file was then split by activities cluster before descriptive analyses were run again to identify characteristics of each cluster. These descriptive statistics are reported in Table 6. Cluster 1 had a minimum of 1 activity and a maximum of 16 activities, meaning that all participants within the cluster reported participating in at least one activity listed in the survey within the past year, and showed a wide range (1-16) of participation variety of types. Both the mode (2) and the mean (M = 3.18, SD = 1.95) indicated that participants in cluster 1 participated in about 2-3 activities over the previous year.

In contrast, cluster 2 had a minimum of 0 activities, and maximum of 14 activities, showing that while there are participants within that cluster that do not participate in cultural activities and others that participate in a high variety of types of activities. However, both the mode (0) and the means (M = 0.87, SD = 1.35) indicate that that participation variety is quite low, about 0-1 types of activities in the year, with the exception of a few people. These few people, however, mean that while these observations are interesting, participation breadth is not the identifying characteristic, or at least not the only identifying characteristic of clustering.

Table 6.

Descriptive statistics by activities cluster

	Overall	**Cluster 1**	**Cluster 2**
Mean (SD)	2.28 (2.07)	3.18 (1.95)	0.87 (1.35)
Mode	2	2	0
Min	0	1	0
Max	16	16	14
Range	16	15	14
Skew (SE)	1.42 (.02)	1.65 (.03)	2.7 (.04)
Kurtosis (SE	3.21 (.05)	3.96 (.06)	12.14 (.08)

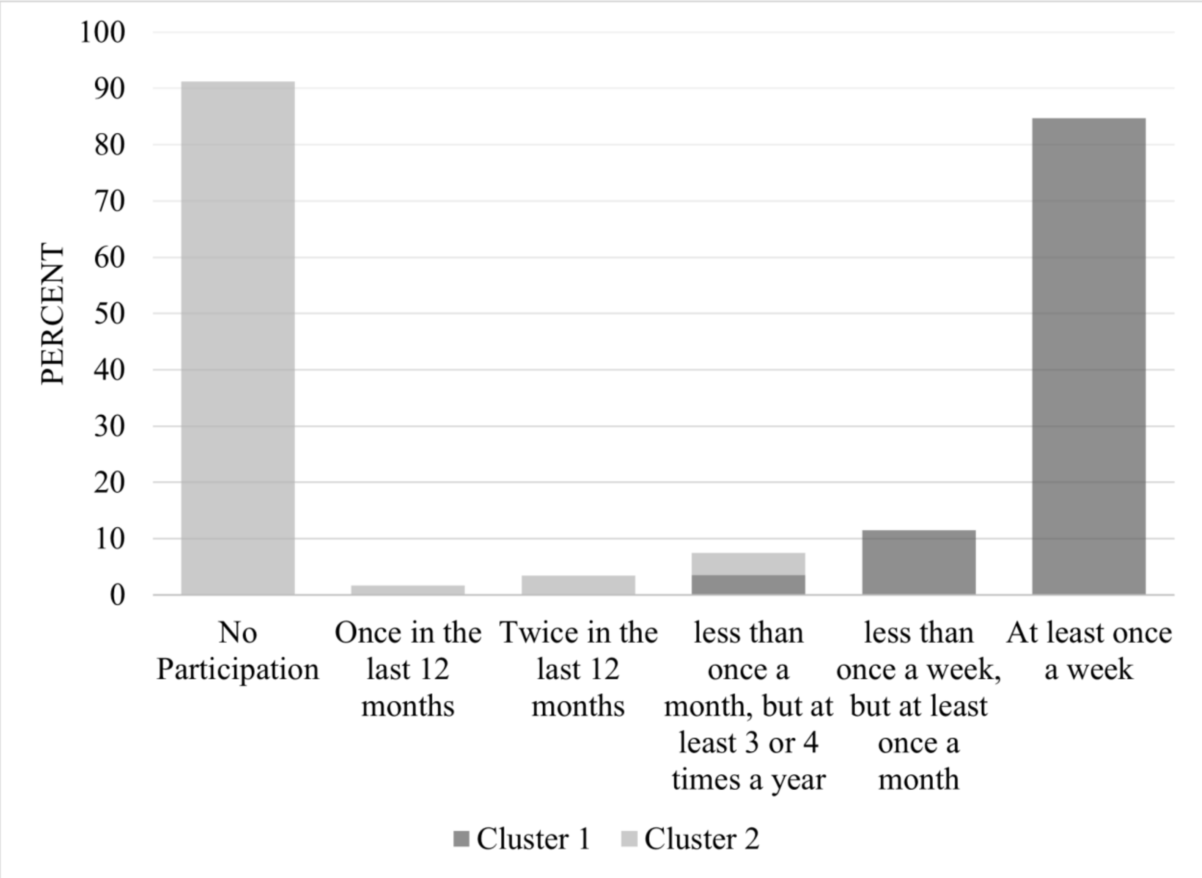
Note. Cluster 1 participants engage in more types of activities than participants in cluster 2, as can be seen in the means, mode, and minimums particularly. However, the maximum and kurtosis indicate that cluster 2 does include a small number of participants who participate quite highly. They may have been clustered this way because the ways in which they participate which may be dissimilar to the participants in cluster 1.

Frequency of participation in cultural activities.

To explore frequency of participation, via frequency by types of activities, data was split by activities cluster before histograms of each type of activity were used for visual interpretation. Because the data is so large, frequency counts were also used to confirm subtle changes in the histograms. Most activities had high non-participation across both groups (78% and higher). This both confirms zero-inflation and indicates that the activities people participate in tend to be niche, in that most other people did not participate in the same activity.

Figure 8.

Frequency of reading for pleasure by activities cluster



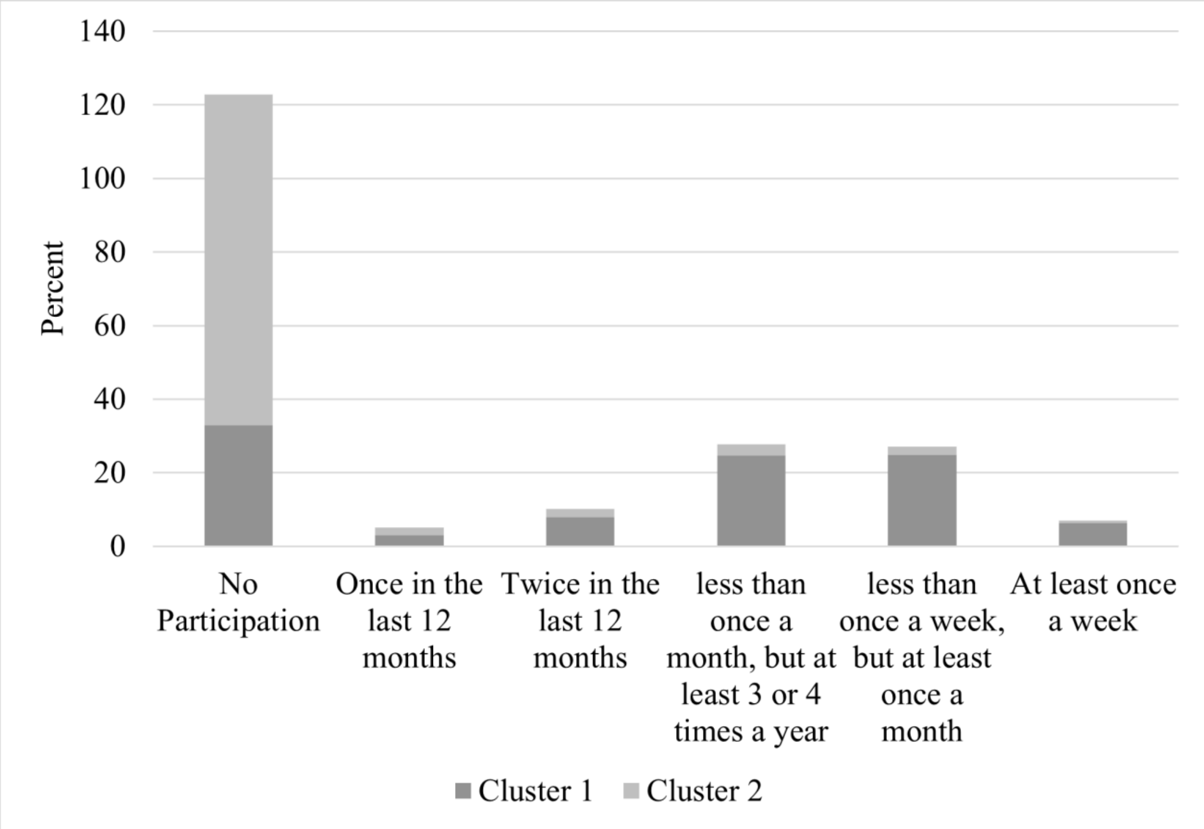
Note. Percent participation by each cluster shows clear differences between groups on frequency of participation in reading for pleasure. In the high participation cluster (cluster 1), participants are most likely to read at least once a week, while participants in the low participation cluster (cluster 2), have not participated in the past year at all.

Notable exceptions to this were reading for pleasure and buying literature. Reading for pleasure had a very low non-participation rate in cluster 1 (0.2%) compared to cluster 2 (91.2%). We would have expected high participation at low frequencies, such as “once in the last year”, with counts decreasing as regular participation increases. This pattern was present in cluster 2 but was not what we found in cluster 1, for which participation was quite high (84% of cluster 1) at the highest frequency measured (“at least once a week”), as shown in figure 8 (above).

Buying literature also had a high non-participation rate in cluster 1 (89.8%) and a low non-participation rate in cluster 2 (33%). Again, cluster 2 had higher participation at low frequencies, which decreased as frequency increased. cluster 1 showed a normal bell-curve. 49.7% of the participants in this cluster participated between “less than once a week, but at least once a month” and “less than once a month but at least 3 to 5 times a year”. See Figure 9. Because of the patterns of participation between the two clusters was on reading for pleasure, cluster 1 was named high participation while cluster 2 was named low participation.

Figure 9.

Frequency of buying literature by activities cluster



Note. Participants in cluster one are more likely to participate at all than participants in cluster two, which has a high non-participation rate. Cluster two participants who do participate are likely to do so at the lowest participation level (once in the last 12 months) and decrease as participation frequency increases. Cluster one participants, however, show a bell-shaped curve of participation frequency for those participating.

Binomial logistic regression analyses of activities.

To understand social group differences between these cluster groups, binary logistic regression analysis was used to understand the effects of social class and gender on the likelihood of being part of the High Participation cluster.

Social class and gender were used as independent variables to predict categorization in activities clusters (High Participation and Low Participation) in model 1. An interaction between social class and gender on activities cluster categories was also tested (model 2). Multicollinearity assumptions were tested prior to analysis (VIF between 1.60 and 1.84, Tolerance 0.545 – 0.623).

Model 1, testing individual effects of social class and gender on activities, showed overall model significance (χ^2 (4) = 676; $p < .001$). There was also significance across all levels of social class and on both genders. Individually, social class is significantly associated with activities cluster at all levels. Higher managerial workers (upper class) workers were 1.56 times more likely to be High Participators than middle/ intermediate (middle) class workers (95% CI [1.331, 1.831]). Intermediate workers were 1.64 times more likely to be High Participators than Routine and Manual Workers (95% CI [.1.415, 1.894]). Gender is also significantly associated with activities cluster, and women were 2.43 times more likely to be High Participators than men (95% CI [2.047, 2.877]). Model 1 correctly classified 88.7% of cases.

Model 2, testing the interaction of social class and gender on activities cluster, showed overall model significance (χ^2 (7) = 676; $p < .001$), however no interactions of social class and gender predicting activities cluster were significant (see Table 7), and the percentage of correctly classified participants, which indicates predictive value of the model, dropped to 26.4%. Overall, this was not shown to be a significant improvement on the previous model (χ^2 (3) = 2.06; $p = .561$), showing that there are no cumulative effects of social class and gender on the likelihood of High or Low Participation.

Social class showed a significant effect on cultural participation at all levels of social class, with the highest social class associated with the highest likelihood of participation. Women were more likely to be in the high participation of activities group than men, however there were no interaction effects between social class and gender.

Table 7.

Binary logistic regression of social categories on activities cluster (Model 2)

	Predictor	Estimate	SE	Z	p	Odds ratio	95% Confidence Interval	
							Lower	Upper
	Intercept	-0.8994	0.0572	-15.7243	< .001	0.407	0.364	0.455
Social class								
	Higher Managerial – Intermediate	-0.4454	0.0814	-5.4684	< .001	0.641	0.546	0.751
	Routine and Working – Intermediate	0.493	0.0744	6.6268	< .001	1.637	1.415	1.894
Gender								
	Male – Female	0.8866	0.0868	10.2131	< .001	2.427	2.047	2.877
Social class x gender								
	(Higher Managerial – Intermediate) x (Male – Female)	-0.1478	0.1156	-1.2792	0.201	0.863	0.688	1.082
	(Routine and Working – Intermediate) x (Male – Female)	-0.1321	0.1113	-1.1868	0.235	0.876	0.704	1.09

Note. Estimates represent the log odds of "Low Participation" vs. "High Participation"

Discussion

This research is the first attempt to pinpoint specific types of activities that differentiate gender and social class groups as a means of gaining greater insight into how group membership is associated with cultural participation. We hypothesized there would be patterns between social group membership (in gender and social class groups) and the activities participated in.

In analyzing the data, we found four dimensions of activity participation —creative pursuits (painting and drawing, writing poetry), music (playing a musical instrument, writing music), performing (play/drama, dance activities), and consuming (reading for pleasure, buying books, buying crafts). We then analyzed gender and social class differences across these components to test our hypotheses and found that women are more engaged in performance and consuming activities. We also found that men engage more than women in music activities. This is also the first study to identify this finding, contrary to past findings, that women participate more in culture more broadly. Participation in performance activities showed an interaction effect of social class for the frequency of participation in which all social class categories of women were higher than all categories of men, while within these gender divides, performance participation frequency followed social class structures. However, contrary to past studies, there were no gender differences in the participation of creative activities. This is the first study to identify those findings.

For all types of activities, higher levels of social class were associated with higher levels of participation. In performance activities, we additionally noticed that higher managerial (upper class) and intermediate (middle) classes showed no significant differences between each other, suggesting similarity between both groups' participation levels. We believe this may be indicative of social class boundaries, where lower participation in performance activities may indicate lower social class status to others. Overall, our findings suggest that there are differences in activity participation across both social class and gender, supporting our hypothesis.

In addition to these broader patterns, analysis of individual items also showed clear indications of gender and social class patterns in activities participation. More than half of the activities measured showed gender differences and spanned all four categories of activity types. Additionally, five items showed particularly large differences. These were ballet, dance (for fitness), wood crafts, textile crafts, and buying crafts, which loaded on the performance and creative activities factors respectively. These activities tended to fit into two larger categories: dance and crafts, which may indicate expressions of deeper group values. Higher male participation in wood crafts may suggest that while the values of specific activities are tied to specific gender roles, crafts may reflect the gender dimension more broadly.

We also found that more than half of the activities had social class-based differences in frequency of participation. Participation in these activities was unequivocally associated with higher levels of social class— there was not a single activity for which working class participation was even equal to intermediate class participation. We also found three activities with notable social class effects— participating in a play/drama, street arts, and ballet, which were all included in the performance category. Performance may reflect upper class values, in addition to female values as discussed above.

After categorizing participants based on their self-reported participation in activities, we found two relevant subgroups— a high participation group and a no participation group. The high participation group was linked to reading for pleasure, which members tended to do most frequently, as well as other activities such as buying books. This suggests that reading may be linked to wider and more frequent participation in other activities. We also found that high participation was associated with women and those from higher social class groups, however there was no significant interaction of gender and social class suggesting the effects are additive rather than cumulative.

Overall, social class and gender were associated with patterns of participation across a range of activities, such that women and those in higher social classes were more likely to participate in a wider range of cultural activities, specifically reading for pleasure and buying books. This supports our hypothesis that there would be social category patterns in the activities people participated in. We are the first to identify that reading for pleasure is a key activity for those who frequently participate in other activities. This finding in particular may be useful to support public policy for reading, such as campus or city-wide book clubs, or funding libraries and library programmes,

The present research extends existing literature (Christin, 2012; Peterson, 1992) offering the first detailed examination of the patterns of cultural participation relating to activity engagement as well as cultural event attendance, contributing to the under researched area of adult activity participation (Raw et al., 2012), and extending broad findings of adolescent engagement (e.g. Eccles et al., 2003) into adult populations. Our findings replicate these studies showing that social class and gender are both important to understanding cultural participation in events (e.g., Lagaert & Roose, 2018), and extend these findings by demonstrating similar gender and social patterns of activities participation. Additionally, higher participation by women across overall frequency and variety of participation lends support to arguments for the “do it all” “Superwoman” identity of the modern women (Ringrose & Walkerdine, 2008). Further research will need to unpack the motivations and perceived benefits (or costs) as a result of these high rates of cultural participation among women.

Finally, while social class has been widely connected to cultural participation (Bourdieu, 2002; Peterson, 1992), and may be a way of forming symbolic boundaries (demonstrated in de Vries & Reeves, 2021), how and where that may occur is still uncertain. However, our findings which showed that participation in performance activities were similar between higher managerial (upper class) and intermediate (middle) classes, suggesting similarity between both groups' participation levels. We believe this may be indicative of social class boundaries, where lower participation in performance activities may indicate lower social class status to others. Alongside other findings that showed an emphasis on social class differences in individual performance activities suggests that performance activities in particular may be especially important in this process, extending the previous literature.

Despite these key contributions, there are limitations with the present research. One limitation of secondary analysis is that datasets are limited to the variables picked for inclusion by the researchers who designed the study. While this dataset is well-designed for the researchers and stakeholders who use it, we would have liked to include additional hobbies such as car racing, building and maintenance. This may have captured more masculine and social classed participation, given the relationship of cars and motorcycles as both symbols of freedom and status symbols for working classes (France et al., 2013).

Additionally, analysis of sport activities would have been useful as they are activities that can be an expression of social groups (Haslam et al., 2020) and is both a gendered and classed activity (Roose, 2015). Although sport items about both participation and event attendance were in the *Taking Part* data, measurement levels were not comparable as sport participation was measured as participation over the past month, while other cultural activities participation was measured over the past year. Inclusion of participation in car and sport activities may have given a clearer picture of overall cultural participation.

Despite these areas for future research, the current work shows promise. Additional future developments could explore the benefits of participation, and whether these benefits are different for different social classes and genders. For example, are women gaining more benefits through participation than men? Or could social class groups benefit in different ways? Or could doing activities cause harm to these groups in other ways, such as exhaustion or overwhelm? Such questions need to be answered before widely assuming that cultural engagement would be beneficial to all.

For researchers studying social class and cultural participation, the finding of performance-related cultural participation as a potential social boundary needs to be confirmed in future research. To study this effect further may answer research questions as to how and why working-class groups are defined and "othered" in comparison to middle- and upper-class groups (Day et al., 2014). In addition to clarifying wider theoretical issues, this line of research may be useful in allocating resources, such as funding large cultural policies intended to improve cultural engagement or projects designed to promote equality and diversity through cultural engagement (ex. funding educational engagement in performance in order to increase students' cultural capital and reduce class divisions).

Future research should also consider contextual differences when replicating or extending these findings. As discussed in the introduction chapter, this data comes from a specifically British context. In other cultural contexts, some findings may not replicate as some activities may not have the same participation levels or may be participated in by different groups. For example, some cultural contexts prohibit women from performing in public, which would affect women's participation in several activities measured in this study, such as singing to an audience or practicing for a performance. Additionally, some cultural differences around gender roles and expectations may affect findings across contexts, though we do expect findings around social class to replicate.

In sum, cultural participation was found to differ by social class and gender groups, albeit these patterns are likely to occur through separate though potentially overlapping social processes. Women participated more than men, although the specific type of activity mattered in determining this. Where there were significant social class differences, higher social class levels participated more and there were no activities where this pattern was reversed.

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Appendices

Analysis 2: ANOVAs of activities.

For each factor, two two-way analyses of variance were used to test whether there were differences between genders and social class levels on the frequency and variety of each factor. Results are reported for all analyses in table A1.

Table A1.

ANOVA analyses of activity factors by gender and social class

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p	η^2
Creative								
	Frequency							
		Gender	0.245	1	0.245	0.0765	0.782	0.00
		Social Class	410.439	2	205.219	64.0273	< .001	0.01
		Gender * Social Class	3.822	2	1.911	0.5962	0.551	0.00
		Residuals	30289.003	9450	3.205			
	Variety							
		Gender	0.0652	1	0.0652	0.285	0.594	0.00
		Social Class	34.4449	2	17.2224	75.287	< .001	0.02
		Gender * Social Class	0.3291	2	0.1646	0.719	0.487	0.00
		Residuals	2161.7435	9450	0.2288			
Music								
	Frequency							
		Gender	141.09	1	141.09	53.506	< .001	0.01

		Social Class	447.34	2	223.67	84.824	< .001	0.02
		Gender * Social Class	2.5	2	1.25	0.473	0.623	0.00
		Residuals	24923.56	9452	2.64			
	Variety							
		Gender	7.26	1	7.26	46.82	< .001	0.01
		Social Class	29.386	2	14.693	94.76	< .001	0.02
		Gender * Social Class	0.203	2	0.102	0.656	0.519	0.00
		Residuals	1465.565	9452	0.155			
Performance								
	Frequency							
		Gender	193.59	1	193.587	221.61	< .001	0.02
		Social Class	35.66	2	17.832	20.41	< .001	0.00
		Gender * Social Class	7.16	2	3.578	4.1	0.017	0.00
		Residuals	8257.77	9453	0.874			
	Variety							
		Gender	11.203	1	11.2033	211	< .001	0.02
		Social Class	2.828	2	1.4139	26.63	< .001	0.01
		Gender * Social Class	0.469	2	0.2346	4.42	0.012	0.00
		Residuals	501.912	9453	0.0531			
Consuming								
	Frequency							
		Gender	7770.6	1	7770.6	841.3	< .001	0.08
		Social Class	5159.1	2	2579.54	279.28	< .001	0.05
		Gender * Social Class	38.7	2	19.33	2.09	0.123	0.00

	Residuals	87274.9	9449	9.24			
Variety							
	Gender	474.71	1	474.708	862.41	< .001	0.08
	Social Class	344.55	2	172.273	312.97	< .001	0.06
	Gender * Social Class	3.46	2	1.728	3.14	0.043	0.00
	Residuals	5201.16	9449	0.55			

Note. While both gender and social class were significant across most types of activities, few interactions of the variables were significant. Additionally, effect sizes were substantially smaller than recommended for interpretation (Cohen, 1988, pp. 79–81), suggesting statistically significant but not practically significant findings (Mohajeri et al., 2020). However, we believe these small effect sizes to be due to high non-participation across types of activities rather than reflective of real-world effects. What these effect sizes do indicate is higher gender effects than social class effects for most activities' participation by frequency and variety.

Creative activities.

A two-way ANOVA testing for gender and social class differences in the frequency of participation in the creative activities showed no significant gender difference between men and women ($F(1, 10170) = 0.08$, $p = 0.782$, $\eta^2 = 0.00$), however there was a significant difference on the main effect of social class ($F(2, 10169) = 64.03$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = 0.01$). Post hoc analysis of social class showed all levels of social class were significantly different (all p's < .001), with higher levels of social class associated with higher frequency of participation in creative activities. Finally, there were no significant interactions of gender and social class together ($F(2, 10169) = 0.60$, $p = 0.551$, $\eta^2 = 0.00$).

An additional two-way ANOVA for creative activities tested gender and social class differences in the variety of types of creative activities. There was no significant gender difference between men and women ($F(1, 10170) = 0.29$, $p = 0.594$, $\eta^2 = 0.00$), however there was also a significant difference on the main effect of social class ($F(2, 10169) = 75.29$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = 0.02$). Post hoc analysis showed all levels of social class were significantly different (all p's < .001). Higher levels of social class were associated with higher variety of participation in creative activities. Finally, there were no significant interactions of gender and social class together ($F(2, 10169) = 0.72$, $p = 0.487$, $\eta^2 = 0.00$).

Between frequency and variety, there were similar patterns in the results. For both frequency and variety, there were non-significant gender differences, significant social class differences (with effects of $\eta^2 = 0.02$), and no significant interaction.

Music.

A two-way ANOVA testing for gender and social class differences in the frequency of participation in music showed a significant gender difference between men and women ($F(1, 10170) = 53.51$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = 0.01$), where men participated in music more frequently than women (Male $M = 0.66$, $SD = 1.92$; Female $M = 0.40$, $SD = 1.42$). There was also a significant difference on the main effect of social class ($F(2, 10169) = 84.82$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = 0.02$). Post hoc analysis of social class showed significant differences between higher managerial workers (upper class) participants and routine and manual labor (working) class participants and between intermediate (middle class) participants and routine and manual labor (working) class participants at the $p < .001$ level, and between higher managerial (upper class) participants and intermediate (middle class) participants at the $p < .05$ level. Higher levels of social class were associated with higher frequency of participation in music. Finally, there were no significant interactions of gender and social class together ($F(2, 10169) = 0.47$, $p = 0.623$, $\eta^2 = 0.00$).

To test gender and social class differences in the variety of types of music activities, an additional two-way ANOVA was used. There was a significant gender difference between men and women ($F(1, 10170) = 46.82$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = 0.01$), where men participated in a wider variety of music activities than women (Men $M = 0.16$, $SD = 0.46$; Women $M = 0.10$, $SD = 0.35$). There were also significant differences on the main effect of social class ($F(2, 10169) = 94.76$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = 0.02$). Post hoc analysis showed all levels of social class were significantly different (all p's < .001) and higher levels of social class were associated with higher variety of participation in music. Finally, there were no significant interactions of gender and social class together ($F(2, 10169) = 0.66$, $p = 0.519$, $\eta^2 = 0.00$).

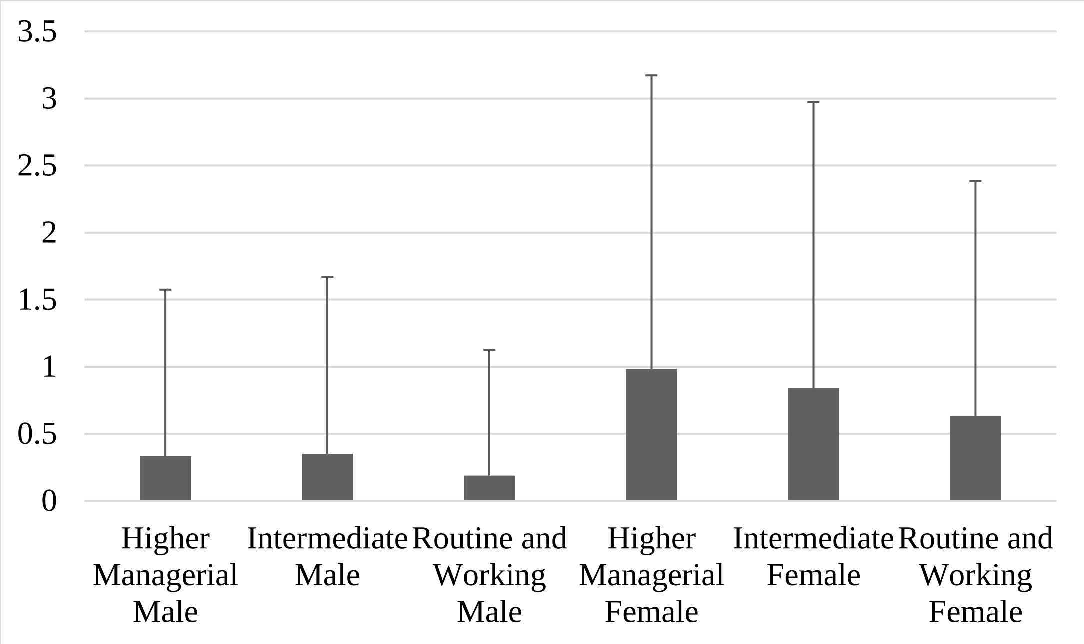
Between frequency and variety, there were similar patterns in the results. For both frequency and variety, there was a significant gender difference where men were higher than women on both (with identical effect sizes of $\eta^2 = 0.01$). There were significant social class differences showing both frequency and variety increased with levels of social class ($\eta^2 = 0.02$, both). Both had no significant interaction.

Performance.

A two-way ANOVA testing for gender and social class differences in the frequency of participation in the performance showed a significant gender difference between men and women ($F(1, 10170) = 221.61$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = 0.02$). Women participated in performance more frequently than men (Men $M = 0.16$, $SD = 0.65$; Women $M = 0.46$, $SD = 1.16$) There were also significant social class effects ($F(2, 10169) = 20.41$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = 0.00$). Post hoc analysis of social class showed no significant difference between higher and higher managerial (upper class) and intermediate (middle) classes (p = .452), however both higher managerial (upper class) and intermediate (middle) classes were significantly more frequent participators of performance activities than routine and manual labor (working) class participants (both p's < .001). Higher levels of social class were associated with higher frequency of participation in performance. Finally, there were significant interactions of gender and social class together ($F(2, 10169) = 4.10$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = 0.00$). Post hoc analysis showed that women of all social classes participated more frequently in performance activities then men of all classes. Within gender, patterns of women's performance frequency participation followed class structure such that higher levels of social class were associated with higher levels of participation frequency. There were no significant differences between men of different social class levels (all p's > .05). See Figure A1.

Figure A1.

Performance activities frequency means by groups

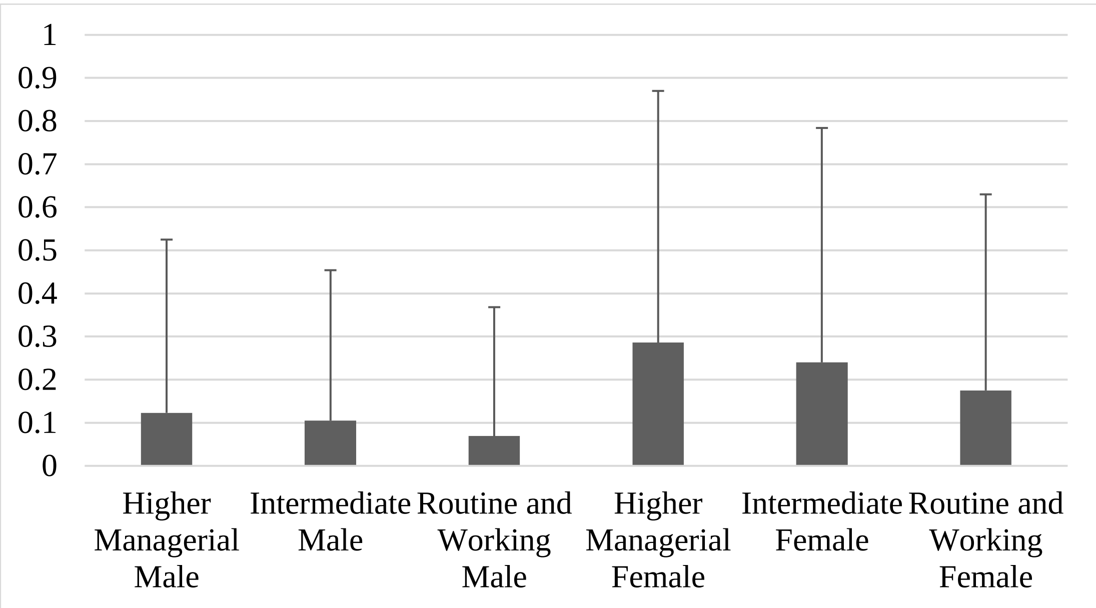


Note. Interaction effects of gender and social class show that while men of all classes are not significantly different in participation, women show a clear pattern of decreasing performance participation frequency as social class levels decline. Standard deviations only reported in the positive direction, as there cannot be less than 0 attendance.

A two-way ANOVA for performance tested gender and social class differences in the variety of types of activities. There was a significant gender difference between men and women (F(1, 10170) = 211.00, p < .001, η² = 0.02). Women participated in in a wider variety of performance activities than men (Men M = 0.05, SD = 0.18; Women M = 0.12, SD = 0.28). There was also a significant difference on the main effect of social class (F(2, 10169) = 26.63, p < .001, η² = 0.01). Post hoc analysis showed no significant difference between higher managerial (upper class) and intermediate (middle) classes (p = .169), however both higher managerial (upper class) classes and intermediate (middle) classes showed significantly more variety of types of participation in performance activities than routine and manual labor (working) class participants (both p's < .001). Higher levels of social class were associated with higher variety of participation in performance. Finally, there were significant interactions of gender and social class together ($F(2, 10169) = 4.42$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = 0.00$). As with the social class and gender interaction effects on variety of performance activities, a significant social class and gender interaction on the number of performance types participated in ($p < .05$) showed that women of all classes participated in more performance activity types then men of all classes. Within gender, there were no significant differences between higher managerial (upper class) and intermediate (middle) class women, who both participate in more types of performance activities than routine and manual labor (working) class women. There were no significant differences between men of different class levels. This is shown in figure A2.

Figure A2.

Means of the variety of types of performance participated in by groups



Note. While men show approximately the same levels of variety of participation in performance activities (with no significant differences between any male groups), women show significant differences between all groups, with higher levels of social status associated with higher participation in a variety of performance type activities.

Between frequency and variety, there were similar patterns in the results. For both frequency and variety, there was a significant gender difference. Women were higher than men on both (with identical effect sizes of $\eta^2 = 0.02$). There were also significant social class differences showing both frequency and variety increased with levels of social class, however effect sizes differed (frequency $\eta^2 = 0.00$, variety $\eta^2 = 0.01$). Both showed a significant interaction with similar patterns: women of all social class levels participated more than men of all social class levels. Within genders, higher participation was associated with higher social class levels.

Consuming.

A two-way ANOVA testing for gender and social class differences in the frequency of participation in consuming showed a significant gender difference between men and women ($F(1, 10170) = 841.30$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = 0.08$). Women participated in consuming more frequently than men (Men $M = 3.18$, $SD = 2.95$; Women $M = 4.94$, $SD = 3.28$) There was also a significant difference on the main effect of social class ($F(2, 10169) = 279.28$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = 0.05$). Post hoc analysis of social class showed all levels of social class were significantly different (all p's < .001). Higher levels of social class were associated with higher frequency of consuming participation. Finally, there were no significant interactions of gender and social class together ($F(2, 10169) = 2.09$, $p = 0.123$, $\eta^2 = 0.00$).

An additional ANOVA tested gender and social class differences in the variety of types of consuming activities. There was a significant gender difference between men and women ($F(1, 10170) = 862.41$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = 0.08$), where women participated in in a wider variety of consuming types than men (Men $M = 0.80$, $SD = 0.72$; Women $M = 1.24$, $SD = 0.80$). There was also a significant difference on the main effect of social class ($F(2, 10169) =$

312.97, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = 0.06$). Post hoc analysis showed all levels of social class were significantly different (all p's < .001), and higher levels of social class were associated with higher variety of consuming types. Finally, there were significant interactions of gender and social class together ($F(2, 10169) = 3.14$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = 0.00$, Figure 4), which showed that higher managerial workers (upper class) and middle-class women consumed in more ways than all class levels of men; however routine and manual labor (working) class women showed no significant differences then higher managerial (upper class) men. Both routine and manual labor (working) class women and higher managerial workers (upper class) class men consumed more than intermediate (middle) classor routine and manual labor (working) class men.

Between frequency and variety, there were some similar and some dissimilar patterns in the results. There were significant gender differences across both frequency and variety, with women participating more than men, and these showed identical effect sizes ($\eta^2 = 0.08$). There were also significant social class differences, with very close effect sizes (frequency $\eta^2 = .05$, variety $\eta^2 = .06$). But where the results of these analyses diverge is in the interactions-frequency showed no significant interaction of social class and gender, while the variety analysis did show significance. These patterns were similar to the interactions in the performance frequency and variety interactions, in that women tended to participate more than men of all social classes and within gender, higher levels of social class were associated with more variety in consuming activities. The exception here was the difference between routine and manual labor (working) class women and higher managerial (upper class) men, who shared similar levels of engagement and were not significantly different.

Chapter 4, Oh the places we will go! Patterns in gender and social class participation across cultural events

As before, cultural participation refers to engagement in activities or events that represent a social group's shared ideas about what is valid and valuable in the world. As also discussed previously, Stebbins (2001) has suggested that leisure activities can be conceptualized as casual or serious leisure. We believe that there is considerable conceptual overlap between leisure activities and cultural participation through attending events. We argue that given the passive consumption of events and the socialization with peers, attendance at events is more closely aligned with casual leisure. Although not studied in the context of event attendance per se, casual leisure may provide health and wellbeing benefits (Hutchinson & Kleiber, 2005). Additionally, other research has more directly linked attendance at cultural events to higher cultural capital through which attendance at cultural events has been linked to educational and other life outcomes (DiMaggio & Mohr, 1985; Dumais & Ward, 2010; Scherger & Savage, 2010).

However, social psychological research such as Tajfel & Turner (1979) and Turner et al. (1987) has shown that the social groups we belong to, such as gender and social class, can influence attitudes and behaviour, such as what events people may chose to attend. As a result, some people may be more likely than others to attend events based on their membership in these groups and gain these resulting benefits, while members of other groups do not. However, cultural participation may also help us better understand the social values of different social groups. Smith et al. (2013)argues that culture is the shared ideas about what is valued and valuable about the world, while Glăveanu (2011) argues that forms of culture reflect the social contexts from which they come. Because some groups participate in some forms of culture more often than others, this would indicate that the activity or event reflects the social values of the participating group. Therefore, we can learn about social groups through the culture they participate in highly.

Specifically, we chose to investigate study explorer gender and social class groups' participation through social roles. In past research, (e.g., Eagly & Wood, 1991), gender roles have been linked to particular behaviors and interests and may also be associated with both the frequency and type of participation (Barber et al., 2001; Eccles et al., 1990). In childhood, girls are more likely to be exposed to cultural events, which is associated with higher cultural event attendance as an adult (Christin, 2012). Adult women also attend a wider variety of events and attend more frequently than men (Christin, 2012; Lagaert & Roose, 2018). This may indicate that such events are more highly valued for women to attend, however these events have largely been measured from a very narrow scope from within social class perspectives.

Social class has also been previously associated with attendance at cultural events, showing that higher levels of social class may be associated with the types of events, such as elite events as described by Bourdieu (2002), and the variety of interests as described by Cultural Omnivorism (Peterson, 1992). While both bodies of research have supported associations between cultural participation and higher levels of social class, most of these past studies have measured events such as ballet and opera attendance. This is also critiqued in (Coulangeon, 2005), who argues against defining "culture" in terms of Bourdieu's "legitimate" ("highbrow") culture, given that past research has identified patterns of eclecticism in tastes instead. Additionally, by focusing on "highbrow events, research may not fully represent events that are valued by middle and working classes. Our study contributes to the wider literature by investigating this issue further, including a wider variety of events in our measurement of cultural participation, while also investigating the frequency and variety of broader participation patterns.

Importantly, this past research has also not analyzed how social class and gender interact. These interactions, analyzed as intersections of these identities may be associated with cultural participation. in addition to those already mentioned, we intend to investigate this as a novel contribution to the literature. We use intersectionality theory (Cole, 2009; Crenshaw, 1990), which argues for a multidimensional approach to identities. This suggests that neither gender nor social class will be considered in isolation, but that the experiences of gender will differ by social class, as will experiences of class differ by gender. This approach allows for a nuanced perspective and is a novel approach to cultural participation literature as it has not been previously used in this research area.

The present research aimed to identify patterns between social group membership and cultural participation through event attendance. We hypothesize that there will be patterns between social group membership and the attendance of cultural events. Specifically, 1. Are there patterns between gender and event attendance?, and 2. Are there patterns between social class groups and event participation? We hypothesize that there will be patterns for both social group membership categories. Typically, past research has not investigated the combined associations between gender and social class, with cultural participation in adults. Additionally, cultural participation has been measured in research through attendance at “highbrow events” rather than considering wider forms of social and cultural participation in society. The present research addresses this issue by including a wide variety of activities and event types in our measures to measure different types of participation more precisely, and through analyzing gender and social class together. By adopting this more thorough approach to conceptualizing and measuring cultural participation, we hope to offer new insights relating to patterns of cultural engagement through event attendance, with a particular focus on differences related to social class and gender.

Methods

The measurement of events items is described below. All other methods are identical to the previous chapter.

Events. For the measurement of events, participants' attendance frequency at cultural institutions or events such as art galleries and museums, music, and dance events was surveyed. Participants completed an initial checklist of 21 events they had attended in over the past 12 months, which included items such as attending a film, pantomime, jazz performance, or ballet (for full list, see Table 1). Participants were then filtered through to items asking how often they attended for each event they had indicated they attended. For those events selected, participants completed additional items asking how often they attended. No attendance (i.e., Participants screened out through the filter checklist) was recorded as 0. To indicate that lower values indicated lower attendance, responses were reverse coded to improve logic of directionality (original coding: 1= at least once a week; 2 = Less often than once a week but at least once a month; 3 = Less often than once a week but at least 3 or 4 times a year; 4 = Twice in the last 12 months; 5 = once in the last 12 months). After recoding, responses ranged from 0 (did not do this activity in the last year) to 5 (at least once a week).

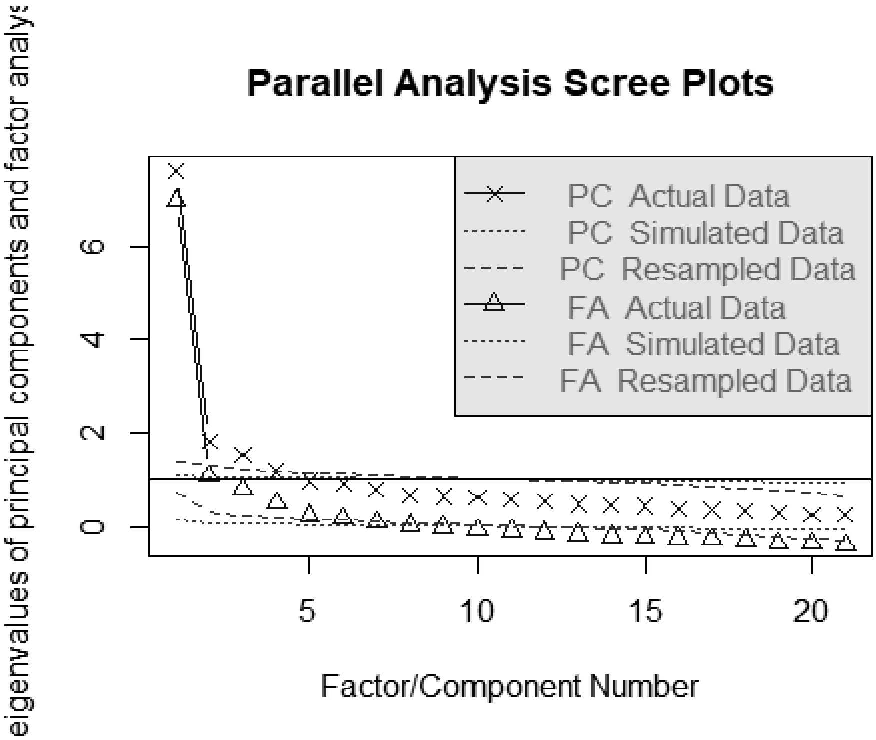
Results

Factor analysis of events.

As with Study 1 (activities), we sought to see which activities were commonly grouped together using principal components analysis with polychoric correlations in order to facilitate interpretation of individual activities. Initial assumptions for analysis were met: The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value (0.724) verified sampling adequacy, exceeding a recommended value of 0.6 (Kaiser & Rice, 1974), and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (Bartlett, 1951) showed significance ($p < .001$).

Figure 1.

Events Scree Plot



Note. The scree plot of activities items shows a break at 3 and 5 factors, indicating a possible component structure of either two or four components.

Parallel analysis showed 4 components with eigenvalues over the simulated eigenvalues, as shown in the scree plot (see Figure 1). This component structure was extracted and examined and showed theoretical differentiation between the categories of fine arts (ω = .672), classically defined events (ω = .644), dance and ethnic celebrations (ω = .398), and vaudeville (film, circus, carnival, and pantomime events; ω =.331). As before, subscale reliabilities were sometimes low (see Table 1). Similar to chapter 1 (activities), we treated each collection of activity variables and activities index instead of a (sub)scale (Peters, 2018). This also influences interpretation of 'reliability', as these independent behaviors do not necessarily share a common cause.

Table 1.

Factor loadings of event items

Component	Items	Fine Arts	Classically Defined	Dance & Ethnic Culture	Vaudeville
Fine Arts	Exhibition or collection of art, photography or sculpture	**0.81**	0.11	-0.05	-0.03
	Craft exhibition [a]	**0.55**	0.07	-0.04	0.09
	Event which included video or electronic art	**0.48**	0.02	0.29	-0.01
	Event connected with books or writing	**0.49**	0.14	0.15	0.02
	Street arts [b]	**0.49**	-0.19	0.33	0.16
	A public art display or installation [c]	**0.81**	0	0.01	0.01
	Jazz performance	**0.36**	0.22	0.19	0.04
	Other live music event	**0.34**	-0.08	0.13	0.21
Classically Defined	Play/drama	0.34	**0.43**	-0.04	0.23
	Musical	0.09	**0.38**	0.02	0.31
	Opera/operetta	0.13	**0.79**	0	-0.07
	Classical music concert	0.3	**0.58**	0	-0.07
	Ballet	-0.1	**0.74**	0.12	0.13
Dance & Ethnic Culture	Culturally specific festival [e]	0.27	-0.07	**0.5**	-0.06
	Contemporary dance	-0.01	0.41	**0.53**	0.17
	African people's dance or South Asian and Chinese dance	0.04	0.08	**0.69**	-0.13
	Other live dance event	0.01	0.1	**0.42**	0.21
Vaudeville	Film at a cinema or other venue	0.22	0.11	0.11	**0.29**
	Circus [d]	-0.03	-0.16	0.27	**0.43**
	Carnival	0.16	-0.17	0.23	**0.31**
	Pantomime	0.02	0.06	-0.13	**0.73**
Subscale Reliability (ω)		*.672*	*0.644*	*0.398*	*0.331*

[a] not crafts market
[b] art in everyday surroundings like parks, streets or shopping centres
[c] an art work such as sculpture that is outdoors or in a public place
[d] not animals
[e] for example Mela, Baisakhi, Navratri

Gender differences in event attendance

Over half of event items showed significantly higher participation by women than men (see Table 2), and none where men had significantly higher participation. Classically defined events showed the highest number of items with gender differences, where the only non-significant event was classical concerts. Vaudeville events were also more likely to be attended by women, with the exception of carnival events. Half of the dance and ethnic events also had higher participation from women. Finally, visual arts events showed the least number of events with gender differences, though all showed women attended more than men. In analysis by categories, this was also consistent across all types of events, both by frequency and variety. Several individual events showed remarkably large gender differences: attendance at craft exhibitions, contemporary dance, ballet and pantomime events.

Table 2.

Percent participation and odds ratios of events items by gender

Event	Percent participation: Overall	Women	Men	Odds Ratio	SEs
Visual Arts					
Art Exhibit	19.0	19.8	18.1	**1.26**	0.10
Craft Exhibition	11.0	14.5	8.3	**2.13**	0.12
Event with video/electronic art	3.2	2.9	3.6	0.69	0.25
Event with books or writing	4.0	4.5	3.4	0.99	0.23
Street art	8.9	9.6	8.0	**1.50**	0.14
Public Art	12.8	13.2	12.2	1.08	0.12
Jazz concert	5.5	5.3	5.8	0.91	0.19
Other live music	29.3	29.7	28.8	0.93	0.07
Classically Defined					
Attending a play/drama	23.2	26.6	19.1	**1.70**	0.08
Musical	20.7	24.4	16.3	**1.66**	0.09
Opera/Operetta	4.4	4.8	3.9	**1.69**	0.23
Classical concert	8.5	9.0	7.9	0.92	0.16
Attending Ballet	4.6	6.4	2.4	**3.24**	0.23
Dance and Ethnic					
Cultural Festival	2.0	3.2	2.8	0.93	0.26
Contemporary Dance	3.0	3.8	2.0	**2.15**	0.26
Cultural Dance	1.8	1.9	1.7	0.78	0.32
Other live dance	5.0	6.1	3.6	**1.80**	0.20
Vaudeville					
Film	51.7	55.1	47.5	**1.19**	0.04
Circus (not animals)	4.1	5.0	3.0	**1.44**	0.18
Carnival Event	10.3	10.7	9.7	0.96	0.11
Pantomime	13.4	16.2	9.9	**2.04**	0.10

Note. Significant differences are indicated in bold.

Women attended “craft exhibition (not crafts market)” more than twice as frequently as men, and for each increase in class level, frequency of attending in a craft exhibition increased by 1.48. The normalized participation data shows that per 1000 people, we would expect 187 higher managerial (upper class) women, 173 intermediate (middle) class women, and 102 routine and manual labour (working) class women to attend craft exhibition events, compared to 115 higher managerial (upper class) men, 82 intermediate (middle) class men, and 53 routine and manual labour (working) class men.

Women attended contemporary dance events more than twice as frequently as men, and for each increase in class level, frequency of attending in a contemporary dance performance increased by 1.57. , the normalized participation data shows that per 1000 people, we would expect 61 higher managerial (upper class) women, 35 intermediate (middle) class women, and 20 routine and manual labour (working) class women to attend contemporary dance events, compared to 27 higher managerial (upper class) men, 21 intermediate (middle) class men, and 9 routine and manual labour (working) class men.

Analysis of the "ballet" item showed that women significantly attended ballet events 3.24 times more frequently than men. For each increase in class level, frequency of attending in a ballet performance increased by 2.07. Again, there was no significant interaction., the normalized participation data shows that per 1000 people, we would expect 103 higher managerial (upper class) women, 70 intermediate (middle) class women, and 28 routine and manual labour (working) class women to attend ballet events, compared to 40 higher managerial (upper class) men, 23 intermediate (middle) class men, and 9 routine and manual labour (working) class men.

Negative binomial regression analysis of the pantomime item showed women attended twice as frequently as men. With each increase in class level, frequency of attending in a pantomime performance increased by 1.32. There was no significant interaction of gender and social class., the normalized participation data shows that per 1000 people, we would expect 192 higher managerial (upper class) women, 167 intermediate (middle) class women, and 141 routine and manual labour (working) class women to attend pantomime events, compared to 124 higher managerial (upper class) men, 94 intermediate (middle) class men, and 74 routine and manual labour (working) class men.

In this gender analysis of individual items, we identified specific events that were remarkable for the scale of their gender effects compared to many of the other items. These indicated a 2:1 gender ratio (women participated more) or higher. Specifically, we identified craft exhibitions, pantomime, contemporary dance, and ballet as events with the largest gender disparities. Similar to the activities analysis, these events tended to fit into two thematic categories: performance (with an emphasis on dance performance) and crafts. However, these did not fit into the components we identified through polychoric factor analysis. Most notably, across all significant items, there were no significant gender differences where men more frequently attended the event than women.

Social class differences in event attendance

Overall higher levels of social class attended events at a significantly higher rate than other class groups, as seen in Table 3. Importantly, all events in both the visual arts and classically defined categories showed class differences of increasing participation across increasing social class levels — all events had a statistically significant class gradient. Dance and ethnic events showed quite similar patterns, although the exception was no difference for cultural dance (African people's dance or South Asian and Chinese dance) events. Vaudeville events also showed a high number of social class differences (half), though there were no differences found for circus or carnival events. There were no events for which working or intermediate class groups attended more than upper class participants. Additionally, social class patterns were also stable across categories of types of events (visual arts, classically defined events, dance and ethnic events, and vaudeville events) for both frequency and variety of attendance, showing significant increases in attendance as social class increased. Similar to the gender observations, there were events that showed remarkable effects of social class. These were attendance at classical music concerts, art exhibits, and opera/operettas.

Additionally, ballet attendance also showed interesting social class effects reported previously.

Table 3.

Percent participation and odds ratios of events items by social class

Event	Percent participation: Overall	Working	Intermediate	Higher/ Managerial	Odds Ratio	SEs
Visual Arts						
Art Exhibit	19.0	8.3	19.4	30.1	**2.05**	0.05
Craft Exhibition	11.0	7.9	13.8	15.1	**1.48**	0.07
Event with video/electronic art	3.2	1.5	2.9	5.0	**1.95**	0.12
Event with books or writing	4.0	1.5	3.6	6.9	**1.94**	0.23
Street art	8.9	6.5	9.1	11.4	**1.38**	0.08
Public Art	12.8	6.6	11.7	20.2	**1.79**	0.06
Jazz concert	5.5	2.3	6.1	8.7	**1.95**	0.09
Other live music	29.3	22.8	30.3	35.7	**1.26**	0.04
Classically Defined						
Attending a play/drama	23.2	12.9	23.2	34.4	**1.85**	0.04
Musical	20.7	13.8	21.7	27.6	**1.48**	0.05
Opera/Operetta	4.4	1.5	3.8	7.9	**2.48**	0.11
Classical concert	8.5	2.9	8.6	14.4	**2.17**	0.08
Attending Ballet	4.6	2.0	5.2	7.2	**2.07**	0.12
Dance and Ethnic						
Cultural Festival	2.0	1.8	2.0	4.8	**1.75**	0.13
Contemporary Dance	3.0	1.5	3.0	4.4	**1.57**	0.14
Cultural Dance	1.8	1.0	2.1	2.3	1.27	0.16
Other live dance	5.0	3.7	5.6	5.8	**1.37**	0.11
Vaudeville						
Film	51.7	38.2	52.0	63.3	**1.33**	0.02
Circus (not animals)	4.1	3.8	3.8	4.1	1.02	0.10
Carnival Event	10.3	9.9	9.6	11.4	1.01	0.06
Pantomime	13.4	11.0	13.8	15.9	**1.32**	0.06

Note. Significant differences are indicated in bold.

Attendance at a "classical music concert" was highest for higher levels of social class, though there were no significant gender or interaction effects. The normalized participation data shows that per 1000 people, we would expect 160 higher managerial (upper class) women, 128 higher managerial (upper class) men, 89 intermediate (middle) class women, 81 intermediate (middle) class men, 30 routine and manual labour (working) class women, and 29 routine and manual labour (working) class men attend a classical concert.

The "public art display or installation (an art work such as sculpture that is outdoors or in a public place)" item showed that while there were no significant gender effects, there was a significant effect of social class where for each increase in social class, frequency of attending in a public art exhibition increased by 1.79. There were no significant interactions. The normalized participation data shows that per 1000 people, we would expect 217 higher managerial (upper class) women, 187 higher managerial (upper class) men, 121 intermediate (middle) class women, 110 intermediate (middle) class men, 66 routine and manual labour (working) class women, and 65 routine and manual labour (working) class men to attend a public art exhibition.

Women significantly attended the opera or operetta 1.69 times more frequently than men, while for each increase in class level, frequency of attending in a opera/operetta performance increased by 2.48. There was not a significant interaction. Per 1000 people, we would expect 89 higher managerial (upper class) women, 68 higher managerial (upper class) men, 45 intermediate (middle) class women, 28 intermediate (middle) class men, 17 routine and manual labour (working) class women, and 14 routine and manual labour (working) class men to attend in a opera/operetta performance.

Overall, we observed that higher participation was significantly associated with higher social class levels across all visual arts events and classically defined events, and many of the dance and ethnic events and vaudeville events. We also identified classical music concerts, art exhibits, opera/operettas, and ballet attendance as events with the largest social class disparities. Taken together, these findings indicate that higher levels of social class is broadly associated with event attendance. An additional and important finding was that across all events, there were no significant effects of social class in which intermediate or working class participants were more likely to attend an event than higher social class levels.

Individual Item analysis by component.

We assess item-level differences across gender and social class differences of event attendance. Although all items were analysed (see tables 10 and 11), we report highly loading items of components to compare findings and explore the validity of item groupings. These results are reported in Table 4 and are discussed below.

Table 4.

Event item by component negative binomial

Item		Factor loading	β	*SE*	*p*	Odds Ratio
Fine Art						
Public art display or installation (an art work such as sculpture that is outdoors or in a public place)		0.81				
	Gender		0.646	0.121	0.518	1.08
	Social class		9.53	0.0609	< .001	1.79
	Interaction		0.534	0.0834	0.594	1.05
Exhibition or collection of art, photography, or sculpture		0.81				
	Gender		2.33	0.10	< .05	1.26
	Social class		14.6	0.05	< .001	2.05
	Interaction		-0.782	0.0664	0.434	0.949
Classically defined events						
Opera/operetta		0.79				
	Gender		2.29	0.229	< .05	1.69
	Social class		7.98	0.114	< .001	2.48
	Interaction		-1.13	0.149	0.260	0.845
Ballet		0.74				
	Gender		5.12	0.23	< .001	3.24
	Social class		5.96	0.122	< .001	2.07
	Interaction		-0.678	0.147	0.498	0.905
Dance and Ethnic						
African people's dance or South Asian and Chinese dance		0.69				
	Gender		-0.782	0.32	0.434	0.779
	Social class		1.47	0.161	0.142	1.27
	Interaction		1.91	0.222	0.056	1.53
Vaudeville						
Pantomime		0.73				
	Gender		7.08	0.101	< .001	2.04
	Social class		4.9	0.0558	< .001	1.32
	Interaction		-1.83	0.0691	0.068	0.881

Fine Arts.

In the Fine Arts component, both the “a public art display or installation (an art work such as sculpture that is outdoors or in a public place)” the “exhibition or collection of art, photography or sculpture" events loaded highly on fine arts. Attendance at "a public art display or installation (an art work such as sculpture that is outdoors or in a public place)" was discussed previously, in the observations relevant to social class, and will not be repeated here. Meanwhile, analysis of the "exhibition or collection of art, photography or sculpture" item showed women significantly attended art exhibitions 1.26 times more frequently than men. For each increase in class level, frequency of attending in an art exhibit significantly increased by 2.05. There were no significant interactions.

The results of individual analyses of attending art exhibits and public art events had similar findings to the fine arts factor frequency analysis. All analyses found significant increases in frequency of attendance by social class levels, and the fine arts factor and attendance at an art exhibit item both found significant. Additionally, there were no significant interactions between gender and social class across any of the analyses. However, the public art item did diverge from these findings with a non-significant gender difference. This may be because public art is more accessible (i.e., viewing a public mural) which can be engaged with in day-to-day situations and may not have the same barriers as other events.

Classically defined events.

Both highly loading items, attendance at ballet events and at "opera/operetta" events, were of interest, but have already been discussed elsewhere. Ballet showed notable gender effects and was discussed in the section titled "Gender differences in event attendance" (see also Table 2), while "opera/operetta" showed notable social class effects and was discussed in the section titled "Social class differences in event attendance". Both items are additionally reported in Table 3.

Both the opera/operetta and ballet attendance analyses showed similar results to the frequency analysis of the classically defined factor. All analysis found that women attend more frequently than men, and that increased attendance frequency was also linked to higher levels of social class. However, results around a possible interaction were less clear. While the classically defined factor analysis showed a significant interaction of gender and social class, neither opera/operetta nor ballet items showed significant interactions.

Dance and ethnic events.

Analysis of the "African people's dance or South Asian and Chinese dance" item. There were no significant gender or social class effects and no significant interaction. Regarding the frequency analysis of the dance and ethnic factor, there were few similarities between the results. While the analysis of the factor showed that women participate more frequently, and that participation frequency increased with social class, the cultural dance item found neither of these to be significant. What both analyses did show was that there was no interaction of gender and social class.

Vaudeville.

Because the pantomime item has already been discussed in the gender section, the results will not be repeated here. However, the frequency analysis of the pantomime item showed complete convergence with the frequency analysis of the overall vaudeville factor. Both analyses showed that women participate significantly more frequently than men, that frequency increased with social class levels, and that there was no significant interaction of gender and social class.

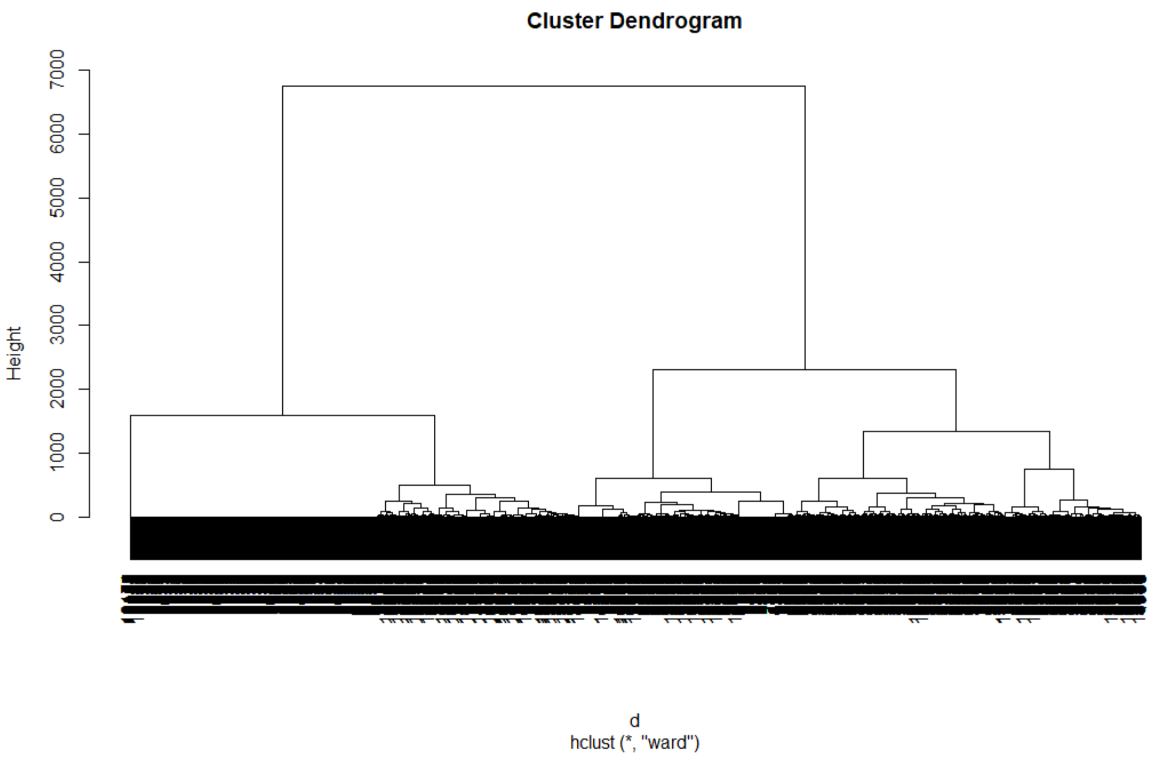
Cluster analyses of events.

Similar to hierarchical clustering for the activities aspect of cultural participation (Chapter 2), Ward's Method determined the number of clusters, using both the agglomeration schedule and a dendrogram were used to interpret how many clusters were present in the sample, and both indicated a two cluster sample (see figure 2). This was confirmed by re-running the analysis using the CLINK method, which also indicated that two clusters were ideal for future analysis.

Next, an iterative K-means cluster analysis using running means was conducted and needed 8 iterations to classify the data into clusters. Cluster 1 accounted for approximately 43% of the sample. Cluster 2 accounted for approximately 57% of the sample. The next set of analyses explore the identifying characteristics of these clusters using variety and frequency of events attendance.

Figure 2.

Dendrogram of events clustering using Ward's method



Note. The dendrogram of clustering shows two clear clusters, as seen in the length of the lines before breaking into other clusters.

Exploratory analyses of variety of types and frequency of events attendance

Variety of events attendance

As with the activities analysis, the data file was split by events cluster before using descriptive analyses to explore characteristics of each cluster. These descriptive analyses are reported in Table 5. Similar to the analysis of activities, cluster 1 also has a minimum of 1 and a maximum of 18, showing that all participants within the cluster attended at least one cultural event in the year prior, with a high range of types of events which they attended (1-18) The mean was surprisingly high (*M* = 4.14, *SD* = 2.67) and the mode (2) demonstrates that while most people attended two events in the year prior, many people attended at least twice that.

In contrast, Cluster 2 had a low minimum (0), but a high range in types of events attended (11). based on the low mean (*M*=1.16, *SD*=1.43) and mode (0), this again shows that much of this cluster attended 0-1 types of cultural events, a small number of people attended up to 11 types of events. Again, this means that while observed differences between clusters on breath of events attendants are notable, they are not the only identifying characteristics of clustering.

Table 5.

Descriptive statistics by events cluster

	Overall	Cluster 1	Cluster 2
Mean (SD)	**2.44 (2.53)**	**4.14 (2.67)**	**1.16 (1.43)**
Mode	**0**	**2**	**0**
Min	**0**	**1**	**0**
Max	**18**	**18**	**11**
Range	**18**	**17**	**11**
Skew (SE)	**1.52 (0.2)**	**1.21 (.04)**	**1.61 (.03)**
Kurtosis (SE	**2.84 (.05)**	**1.66 (.07)**	**3.21 (.06)**

Note. Means denote participation rates by cluster. This means that any score below 0 represents the proportion of the sample that has participated in the past year, while scores above 0 represent that the majority of the sample has participated in the past year and the frequency at which they have done so.

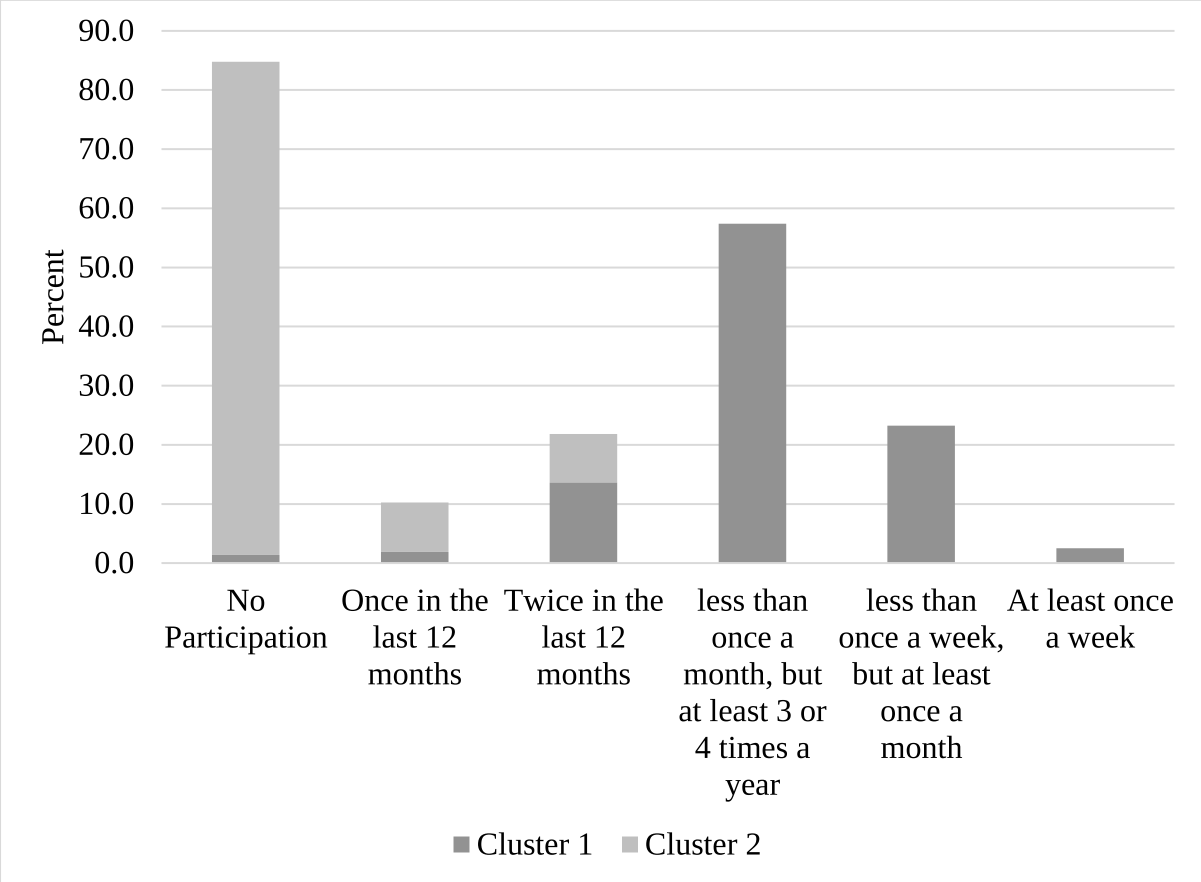
Frequency of events attendance

Because attendance variety of types was not the only identifying characteristic of clustering, attendance frequency was also explored. The same methods were used to explore frequency of participation in events attendance as in the Chapter 2: a split data analysis by events cluster before visual analysis of histograms by type of event, and subsequent a frequency analysis to confirm the subtle differences in the histograms.

Similar to patterns in activities (Chapter 2), most events had high rates (80% +) of non-attendance. However, there were several specific events with higher participant attendance in the last year in cluster 1: "pantomime" (20.5% attendance), "outdoor or public art exhibition" (22.5%), "exhibition or collection of art, photography or sculpture" (32.8%), "musical" (33.9%), "play or drama" (39.2%), "other live music" (not classical, jazz or opera, 45.1%), and most notably, "film at a cinema or other venue" (98.6%). This variety of higher attended events listed is reflective of higher variety of types of attendance at events in cluster 1, demonstrated above.

Figure 3

Frequency of film attendance by event cluster



Note. Participants in cluster 2 (named the low attendance cluster) shows high non-attendance in film events with decreasing frequency for those who do attend. In contrast, cluster 1 (named the high attendance cluster) shows increasing attendance at films as frequency increases, peaking at “less than once a month. but at least 3 or 4 times a year” before decreasing, showing a bell-shaped curve of participation.

Cluster 1 showed a bell-shaped curve for film attendance (see Figure 3). The peak of the bell curve contains 57.4% of cluster 1, indicating many participants attended films “less than once a month, but at least 3 or 4 times a year”. Cluster 2 had no participants that attended films more than twice in the previous year.

Cluster 2 consistently had low rates of attendance across events in the past year, with the highest engagement in “other live music” (17.5%) and “film at a cinema or other venue” (16.6%) in the past year. “Other live music”, the highest attended event in cluster 2, may contain rock/pop, and country music, which were not listed in the survey. In prior music preference research, these styles were linked to lower class music preferences (Peterson, 1992).

Because of the patterns of participation, cluster 1 was named high events attendance, while cluster 2 was named low events attendance.

Binomial logistic regression analyses of events.

As before, binomial logistic regression analysis was used to explore the social categorizations of social class and gender on the likelihood of attending events as a (cluster 1 type) or (cluster two type). Social class and gender were used as Independent Variables to predict categorization in events clusters (high events attendance, low events attendance) in model 1. An interaction between social class and gender on events cluster categories was also tested (model 2). Multicollinearity assumptions were tested prior to analysis (VIF 1.65 -1.99, Tolerance 0.504 – 0.606).

Model 1, testing individual effects of social class and gender on activities, showed overall model significance (χ^2 (4) = 647; p < .001). There was also significance across all levels of social class and on gender. Individually, social class is significantly associated with activities cluster at all levels. Higher managerial workers (upper class) workers were 1.76 times more likely to be high events attenders than intermediate (middle) class workers (95% CI [1.499, 2.073]). Intermediate (middle) class workers were 2.06 times more likely to be high events attenders than routine and manual (working-class) participants (95% CI [.1.782, 2.369]). Gender is also significantly associated with activities cluster, and women were 1.53

times more likely to be high events attenders than men (95% CI [1.293, 1.807]). Model 1 correctly classified 49.3% of cases.

Model 2, testing the interaction of social class and gender on activities cluster, showed overall model significance (χ^2 (7) = 652; $p < .001$) and similar results to model 1, however no interactions of social class and gender predicting activities cluster were significant (see Table 6), and model 2 was not shown to be a significant improvement on the previous statistical model (χ^2 (3) = 4.50; $p = .213$). Because the overall model was significant, but interactions were not, this suggests that the combined effects of gender and social class may have additive effects rather than multiplicative effects.

Table 6.

Binary logistic regression of social categories on events attendance cluster (Model 2)

						95% Confidence Interval	
Predictor	Estimate	*SE*	*Z*	*p*	Odds ratio	Lower	Upper
Intercept	0.1238	0.0519	2.383	0.017	1.132	1.022	1.253
Social class							
Higher Managerial – Intermediate	-0.5302	0.0707	-7.498	< .001	0.588	0.512	0.676
Routine and Working – Intermediate	0.7201	0.0727	9.906	< .001	2.055	1.782	2.369
Never worked and long-term unemployed – Intermediate	1.2535	0.2178	5.756	< .001	3.503	2.286	5.367
Gender							
Male – Female	0.4241	0.0854	4.969	< .001	1.528	1.293	1.807
Social class x gender							
(Higher Managerial – Intermediate) ✻ (Male – Female)	-0.0368	0.1088	-0.338	0.735	0.964	0.779	1.193
(Routine and Working – Intermediate) ✻ (Male – Female)	-0.2118	0.1147	-1.846	0.065	0.809	0.646	1.013
(Never worked and long-term unemployed – Intermediate) ✻ (Male – Female)	-0.2974	0.4174	-0.712	0.476	0.743	0.328	1.683

Note. Estimates represent the log odds of low event attendance vs. high event attendance.

Discussion

In this study, we aimed to identify patterns between social group membership and cultural participation through event attendance and hypothesized that there would be patterns between social group membership and the attendance of cultural events. This analysis indicated four components of events attendance —fine arts (art exhibits, street arts), classically defined events (including opera/operetta, ballet, classical music concerts), dance and ethnic events (cultural dance, contemporary dance, culturally specific festivals), and vaudeville (film, circus, carnival, and pantomime events). We then examined social class and gender differences across types of events attendance, and showed that across all types of events, women attend more than men and higher levels of social class were associated with higher participation.

Unlike analysis of activities (chapter 3), these findings were consistent across different types of event attendance. However, like the analysis of individual activities (chapter 3), analysis of individual events items showed clearer patterns. Half of event items showed significantly higher participation by women than men, and there were no events that men attended more. Classically defined events was most highly attended by women, although more than half of all events in each categories of event types showed women attended significantly more than men. This supports our hypotheses, that there would be gendered patterns in event attendance. Additionally, three events showed particularly notable gender effect sizes—attending craft exhibitions, pantomime, ballet, and contemporary dance. We believe these events reflect values linked to female identities.

Likewise, analysis of individual items showed that for no events was working class participation even close to intermediate class participation. All items in both visual art and classically defined events categories showed significant social class effects, while more than half of the events in both dance and ethnic events and vaudeville events did as well. While these effects show broad patterns of social class participation, also supporting our hypotheses of social class patterns in event attendance. Additionally, some individual events stood out for the size of their effects. These were attendance at classical music concerts, art exhibits, opera/operetta, and ballet. Many of these items were part of the classically defined events category, with art exhibit attendance from the fine arts category. Finally, where there were significant interaction patterns, there was also consistency in staggered effects, where women were higher in attendance than men of the same social class level, but that men tended to show participation similar to women of the social class below them.

Similar to the activities analysis (Chapter 2) we also categorized participants based on their self-reported attendance at events and found two relevant subgroups— a high attendance group and a no attendance group. In the high attending group, film attendance was most notable for its higher participation, although other activities such as attending “other live music”, art exhibits, plays or dramas, and musicals also showed some attendance. This wider variety of events is reflected in both variety of types and frequency analysis. We also found that high attendance was associated with women and higher levels of social class, though again there was no significant interaction of gender and social class, suggesting the effects are additive rather than cumulative. Overall, these findings support our hypothesis that membership of social groups would lead to predictable patterns in cultural participations through events attendance.

Our findings replicate studies showing that social class and gender are both important to understanding cultural engagement through event attendance (e.g., Lagaert & Roose, 2018), and extend these findings by demonstrating similar gender and social patterns of event attendance. These findings are also similar to Eccles et al. (2003)’s work, showing that adolescent girls participate in a wider variety of activities and with more frequency, and further extend these findings to adult event attendance.

Our findings also provide mixed support for theories of social class cultural engagement, such as Bourdieu (2002)'s "highbrow" elitism. While we did find a classically defined events category (with high similarity to "highbrow" events") and that there were social class differences in participation across these events, these higher levels of attendance by higher levels of social class were not limited to these classically defined events. Likewise, our findings initially support Peterson (1992)'s Omnivorism hypothesis by showing associations between higher social class levels and increased event attendance across both depth and breadth. However, our findings suggest that Cultural Omnivorism engagement is not as broad as initially suggested by Peterson.

This work is based on careful analysis of a large, diverse data set, and contributes new knowledge through a data-driven, rather than theory-driven, approach to cultural engagement. This allowed us to identify actual patterns of cultural participation outside of traditional categorization of event attendance as "highbrow" (or "lowbrow") events, thus, providing one possibility to address the issue. We hope that by identifying grouping patterns based on the observed event attendance patterns, cultural participation research can progress without contributing to ongoing narratives of elitism in cultural participation of status and inherent bias such as by naming participation groups based on participation in "highbrow"/ "lowbrow", "legitimate", or "elite" forms of culture.

Our study is the first attempt to pinpoint specific types of events where attendance differentiates groups of gender and social class, as a means of gaining greater insight into how group membership is associated with cultural participation. We found that attending films is a key event for those who frequently attend other events. Deeper research into this finding could explore any cognitive or mental health benefits from watching films, and how these benefits might be different if viewers watched a film in a public setting or through a streaming service such as Netflix or Hulu. This finding may be useful for advertising, as increased film attendance may be a useful place to advertise other public events that may be of interest. In terms of building local communities, investment in local film events may be useful as an event that people tend to engage in already and may facilitate engagement in other local events. As such, it may be useful for policy makers to direct funding and support toward these types of initiatives.

We also found that events part of the ‘classically defined’ categories, particularly different types of performance events, showed that higher levels of social class were most likely to attend and to attend most frequently. Because these events have traditionally been used to measure cultural participation, our new findings support the argument that perceptions of overall cultural participation may have been biased toward the upper class participation and may not have adequately captured participation by other social class groups. Instead, attendance at events such as carnivals or the circus may more accurately reflected attendance at events without such strong undertones of social class. This finding has methodological and theoretical implications for researchers, particularly around measurement of attendance at cultural events and contributing to debates on declining participation rates

Despite these promising contributions, there are limitations with the present research. As with the activities study (Chapter 2), we were limited by the variables contained in the dataset and would ourselves have included additional variables, such as attendance at sport events or car shows, in order to add more activities to represent interests of different groups. Additionally, cross sectional research does not establish a causal link between belonging to a social group and the patterns of participation that we found; however, this is a limitation of identity-focused research more broadly (Brown, 2020).

We are optimistic that this work would be promising in developing future research directions. Given the strong element of social class inherent in events attendance, future directions could ask if all levels of social class benefit from attendance, or does lack of cultural fit create harm for some groups? Similar questions could be asked in relation to gender: Does event attendance provide the same benefits for men as for women? Or does the type of event matter for the benefits that come from attendance (i.e., does attendance at sports games provide different benefits between gender groups, comparable to others measured in the current study)? These are all promising directions for future research.

Future research should also consider contextual differences when replicating or extending these findings, as some cultural contexts may emphasize some events over others. For example, “cultural” festivals may be more heavily emphasized in the cultural contexts that they originate from (i.e., Mela, Baisakhi, Navratri), while some events, such as pantomime (a type of theatre production usually performed around Christmas for children) is more emphasized in British culture. Additionally, as discussed in the introduction chapter, contextual differences around gender roles may affect the applicability of the gender findings, though we do anticipate replication around social class findings.

We conclude that social categories of social class and gender are associated with patterns of events attendance both in terms of the variety of types and frequency of participation in different types of cultural participation events. Those in higher social classes were more likely to attend more cultural events, though this showed a stronger effect for women. Additionally, attendance at films was an event that showed high participation, and may be associated with attendance at other event, making it an important area for future study.

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Appendix

ANOVAs of events.

As with the activities analysis, we followed up with additional ANOVA analysis for the highest loading items in that subscale, exploring whether frequency of events attendance levels show differences across gender, social class, and the interaction of both gender and social class together. Findings for all factors are also reported in table A1.

Table A1.

ANOVA Table of events factors by gender and social class

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p	η^2
Fine Arts						
Frequency						
Gender	73.7	1	73.74	20.54	< .001	0.00
Social Class	2083.5	2	1041.76	290.11	< .001	0.06
Gender * Social Class	18.7	2	9.35	2.61	0.074	0.00
Residuals	33923.4	9447	3.59			
Variety						
Gender	15.61	1	15.606	26.77	< .001	0.00
Social Class	376.29	2	188.144	322.76	< .001	0.06
Gender * Social Class	1.99	2	0.997	1.71	0.181	0.00
Residuals	5506.89	9447	0.583			
Classically defined events						
Frequency						
Gender	117.6	1	117.6	92.03	< .001	0.01
Social Class	717.9	2	358.96	280.92	< .001	0.06
Gender * Social Class	14.5	2	7.24	5.67	0.003	0.00
Residuals	12075.3	9450	1.28			
Variety						
Gender	32.44	1	32.439	130.96	< .001	0.01
Social Class	158.95	2	79.477	320.86	< .001	0.06

		Gender * Social Class	3.55	2	1.775	7.17	< .001	0.00
		Residuals	2340.75	9450	0.248			
Dance and Ethnic								
	Frequency							
		Gender	5.56	1	5.559	30.25	< .001	0.00
		Social Class	14.52	2	7.261	39.51	< .001	0.01
		Gender * Social Class	1.07	2	0.537	2.92	0.054	0.00
		Residuals	1737.05	9452	0.184			
	Variety							
		Gender	1.434	1	1.434	34.01	< .001	0.00
		Social Class	4.005	2	2.0024	47.5	< .001	0.01
		Gender * Social Class	0.569	2	0.2846	6.75	0.001	0.00
		Residuals	398.474	9452	0.0422			
Vaudeville								
	Frequency							
		Gender	48.37	1	48.367	123.07	< .001	0.01
		Social Class	137.25	2	68.623	174.61	< .001	0.04
		Gender * Social Class	1.35	2	0.676	1.72	0.179	0.00
		Residuals	3714.79	9452	0.393			
	Variety							
		Gender	17.154	1	17.1542	137.655	< .001	0.01
		Social Class	24.107	2	12.0535	96.723	< .001	0.02
		Gender * Social Class	0.133	2	0.0665	0.534	0.586	0.00
		Residuals	1177.889	9452	0.1246			

Note. While both gender and social class were significant across most types of events attended, few interactions of the variables were significant. Additionally, effect sizes were substantially smaller than recommended for interpretation (Cohen, 1988, pp. 79–81), suggesting statistically significant but not practically significant findings (Mohajeri et al., 2020). However we believe this to be due to high non-participation across types of events rather than reflective of real-world effects. These effect sizes also indicate higher gender effects than social class effects for most events attendance by frequency and variety.

Fine arts.

A two-way ANOVA testing for gender and social class differences in fine arts attendance frequency showed a significant gender difference between men and women ($F(1, 10170) = 20.54$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = 0.00$), where women attended fine arts events more frequently than men (Men $M = 1.07$, $SD = 1.83$; Women $M = 1.22$, $SD = 2.02$) There was also a significant difference on the main effect of social class ($F(2, 10169) = 290.11$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = 0.06$). Post hoc analysis showed all levels of social class were significantly different (all p's < .001), with higher levels of social class associated with higher frequency of attendance in fine arts. Finally, there were no significant interactions of gender and social class together ($F(2, 10169) = 2.61$, $p = 0.074$, $\eta^2 = 0.00$).

An additional two-way ANOVA tested gender and social class differences in the variety of types of fine arts events. There was a significant gender difference between men and women ($F(1, 10170) = 26.77$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = 0.00$). Women attended a wider variety of finearts events than men (Men $M = 0.48$, $SD = 0.75$; Women $M = 0.55$, $SD = 0.81$). There was also a significant difference on the main effect of social class ($F(2, 10169) = 322.76$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = 0.06$). Post hoc analysis showed all levels of social class were significantly different (all p's < .001), and higher levels of social class were associated with higher variety of fine arts attendance. Finally, there were no significant interactions of gender and social class together ($F(2, 10169) = 1.71$, $p = 0.181$, $\eta^2 = 0.00$).

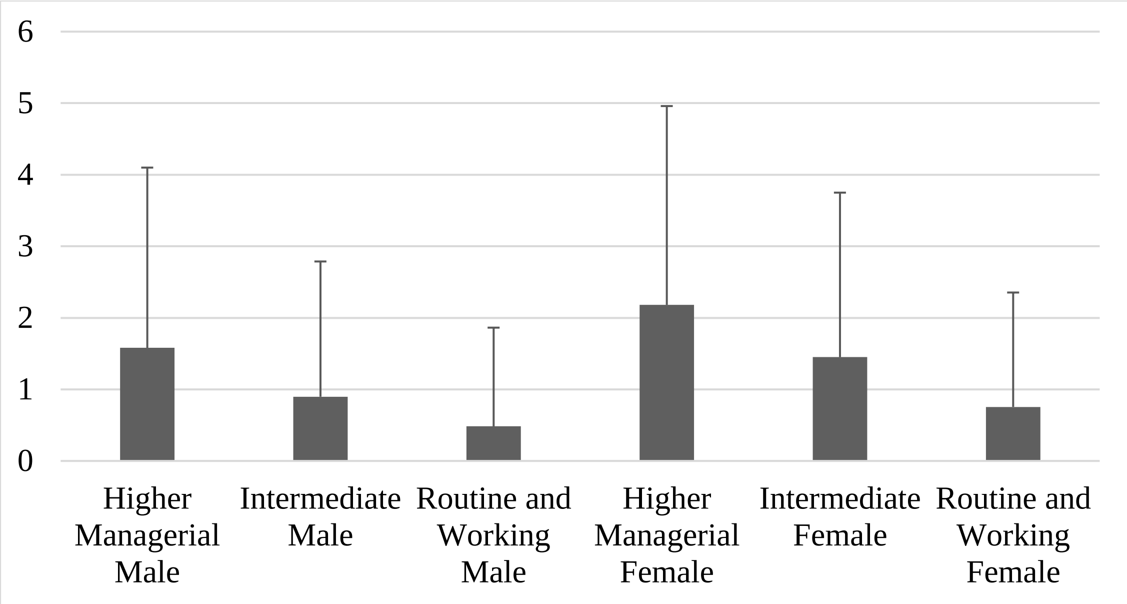
Between frequency and variety, there were similar patterns in the results. For both frequency and variety of fine arts events, there was a significant gender difference. Women were higher than men on both (although effect sizes were low on both, $\eta^2 = 0.00$). There were also significant social class differences showing both attendance frequency and variety increased with levels of social class ($\eta^2 = 0.06$, both). Both had no significant interaction.

Classically defined events.

A two-way ANOVA testing for gender and social class differences in the frequency of attendance in the classically defined events showed that women attended classically defined events significantly more frequently than men ($F(1, 10170) = 92.03$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = 0.01$; Men $M = 0.48$, $SD = 1.08$; Women $M = 0.68$, $SD = 1.21$) There was also a significant difference on the main effect of social class ($F(2, 10169) = 280.92$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = 0.06$), with post hoc analysis showing that higher levels of social class were significantly associated with higher frequency of attendance at classically defined events (all p’s < .001). Finally, there were significant interactions of gender and social class together ($F(2, 10169) = 5.67$, $p < 0.01$, $\eta^2 = 0.00$). This interaction showed staggered effects (see Figure A1). While higher managerial workers (upper class) women were significantly higher than all other gendered and social class categories, higher managerial workers (upper class) men and intermediate (middle) class women showed similar levels of attendance and no significant differences between groups. Intermediate (middle) class men also showed similar levels of attendance to routine and manual labour (working) class women and there was no significant differences between groups. Routine and manual labour (working) class men also showed similar levels of attendance at classically defined events as routine and manual labour (working) class women with no significant differences between groups. Across social class categories, women were typically more frequent attenders of classically defined events than men of the same class.

Figure A1

Classically defined events attendance frequency means by groups

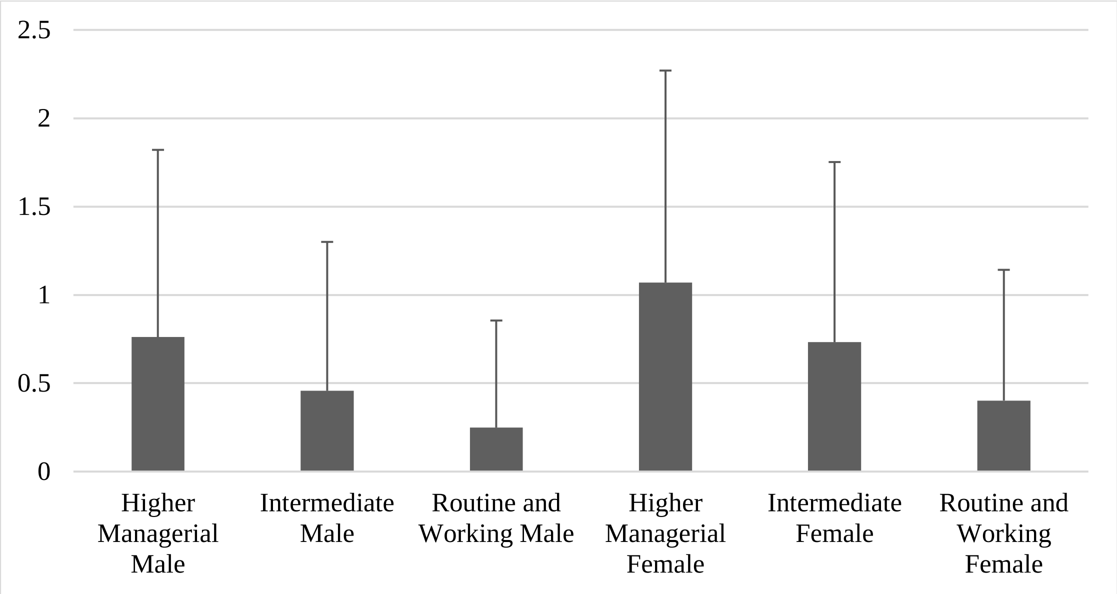


Note. Frequency of attendance at classically defined events showed staggered interaction effects. Managerial (higher) class females showed the highest frequency of attendance, while managerial (higher) class males and intermediate (middle) class females showed similar attendance patterns. Likewise, intermediate (middle) class males and routine (working) class females also showed similar attendance patterns. Routine (working) class males attended classically defined events least frequently of all groups.

Variety of types of attendance at classically defined events was also explored through a two-way ANOVA, which tested gender and social class differences. Women significantly attended a wider variety of classically defined events than men (F (1, 10170) = 130.96, p < .001, η^2 = 0.01; Men M = 0.24, SD = 0.46; Women M = 0.34, SD = 0.54). There was also a significant difference on the main effect of social class (F(2, 10169) = 320.86, p < .001, η^2 = 0.06). Post hoc analysis showed all levels of social class were significantly different (all p's < .001). Higher levels of social class were associated with higher variety of attendance in types of classically defined events. Finally, there were significant interactions of gender and social class together (F (2, 10169) = 7.17, p < .001, η^2 = 0.00). This interaction showed similar staggered effects as the frequency analysis (see Figure A2). Here, however, routine and manual labour (working) class men were significantly lower variety of attendance than their routine and manual labour (working) class female counterparts.

Figure A2

Means of the variety of types of classically defined events attendance means by groups



Note. Similar to frequency of attendance at classically defined events, attendance at a variety of classically defined events showed staggered interaction effects. Managerial (higher) class females showed the highest variety of attendance, while managerial (higher) class males and intermediate (middle) class females showed similar attendance patterns. Likewise, intermediate (middle) class males and routine (working) class females also showed similar attendance patterns. Routine (working) class males attended the least variety of classically defined events.

Between frequency and variety, there were similar patterns in the results. For both frequency and variety, there was a significant gender difference, where women were higher than men on both frequency and variety of attending classically defined events (with identical effect sizes, $\eta^2 = 0.01$). There were also significant social class differences showing both frequency and variety increased with levels of social class ($\eta^2 = 0.06$, both). Finally, both showed significant interactions of social class and gender. These effects were staggered, in such a way that higher managerial (upper class) women had the highest scores, then intermediate (middle class) women and higher managerial (upper class) men (who showed no significant differences), then routine and manual labor (working) class women and intermediate (middle class) men (again, so significant differences), and finally routine and manual labor (working) class men (no significant differences from routine and manual labor (working) class women on frequency, but were significantly lower on variety).

Dance and ethnic events.

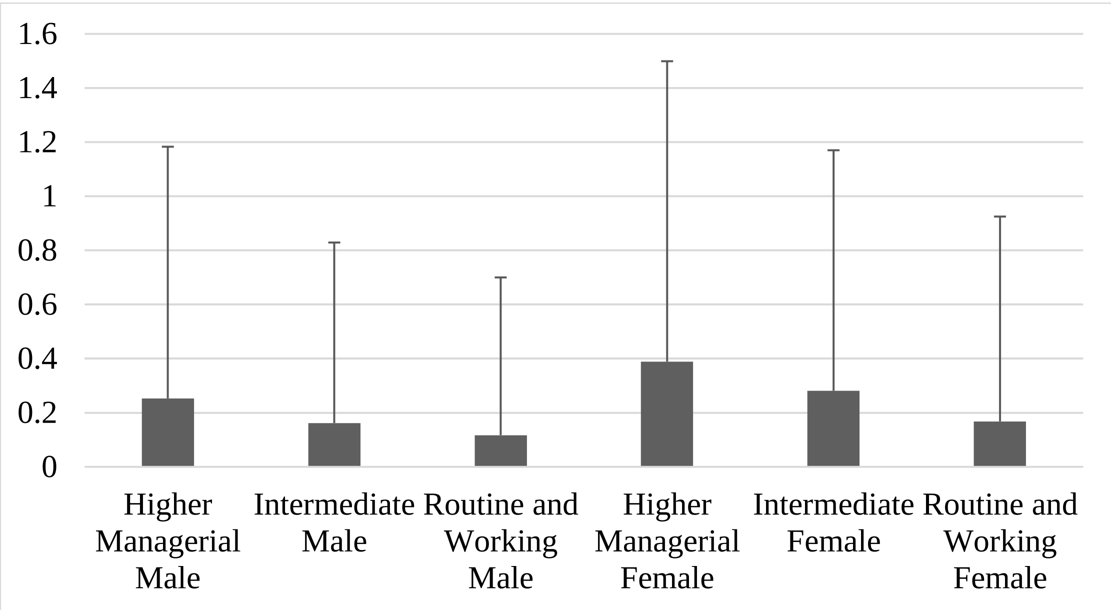
A two-way ANOVA testing for gender and social class differences in the frequency of attendance at dance and ethnic events showed a significant gender difference between men and women ($F(1, 10170) = 30.25$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = 0.00$). Women attended dance and ethnic events more frequently than men (Men $M = 0.09$, $SD = 0.38$; Women $M = 0.14$, $SD = 0.47$) There was also a significant difference on the main effect of social class ($F(2, 10169) = 39.51$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = 0.01$). Post hoc analysis of social class showed all levels of social class were significantly different (all p’s < .001). Higher levels of social class were associated with higher frequency of attendance in dance and ethnic events. Finally, there were no significant interactions of gender and social class together ($F(2, 10169) = 2.92$, $p = 0.054$, $\eta^2 = 0.00$).

Variety of types of attendance at dance and ethnic events was also explored through a two-way ANOVA, which tested gender and social class differences in attendance. There was a significant gender difference between men and women ($F(1, 10170) = 34.01$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 =$

0.00), where women attended a wider variety of dance and ethnic events than men (Men M = 0.05, SD = 0.19; Women M = 0.07, SD = 0.22). There was also a significant difference on the main effect of social class ($F(2, 10169) = 47.50$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = 0.01$). Post hoc analysis showed all levels of social class were significantly different (all p's < .001). Higher levels of social class were associated with higher variety of dance and ethnic event attendance. Finally, there were significant interactions of gender and social class together ($F(2, 10169) = 6.75$, $p < 0.01$, $\eta^2 = 0.00$). Similar to classically defined events, significant interactions were found with staggered gender and social class effects (p < .01, see Figure A3), where managerial women attended the highest variety and dance and ethnic events, and there were no significant differences between managerial men and middle-class women, or between middle-class men and routine and manual labour (working) class women. There were significant differences between routine and manual labour (working) class women and men.

Figure A3

Means of variety of dance and ethnic events attended by groups



Note. Similar to both interactions found for classically defined events, there was a staggered effect of gender and social class in the variety of the types of dance and ethnic events attended. Managerial (higher) class females participated the most, managerial (higher) class males and intermediate (middle) class females participated the next highest, intermediate (middle) class males and routine and manual labor (working) class females participated the next highest, and routine and manual labor (working) class males participated the least. Unlike classically defined events interactions, there were no significant differences between routine and manual labor (working) class men and women.

Between frequency and variety, there were some similar and some dissimilar patterns in the results. For both frequency and variety, there was a significant gender difference on attending dance and ethnic events. Women were higher than men on both (although effect sizes were low on both, $\eta^2 = 0.00$). There were also significant social class differences showing both frequency and variety increased with levels of social class ($\eta^2 = 0.01$, both). However, these results of these analyses diverge in the interactions- frequency showed no significant interaction of social class and gender, while the variety analysis did show significance similar to the staggared effects of of classically defined events interactions. Here, there were significant differences between routine and manual labour (working) class women and men.

Vaudeville.

A two-way ANOVA testing for gender and social class differences in the frequency of participation in vaudeville events showed a significant gender difference between men and women ($F(1, 10170) = 123.07$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = 0.01$). Women attended vaudeville events more frequently than men (Men $M = 0.52$, $SD = 0.60$; Women $M = 0.66$, $SD = 0.67$) There was also a significant difference on the main effect of social class ($F(2, 10169) = 174.61$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = 0.04$). Post hoc analysis of social class showed all levels of social class were significantly different (all p's < .001). Higher levels of social class were associated with higher frequency of vaudeville attendance. Finally, there were no significant interactions of gender and social class together (F(2, 10169) = 1.72, p = 0.179, η^2 = 0.00).

An additional two-way ANOVA for vaudeville tested gender and social class differences in the variety of types of activities. There was a significant gender difference between men and women (F(1, 10170) = 137.66, p < .001, η^2 = 0.01). Women attended a wider variety of vaudeville events than men (Men M = 0.25, SD = 0.32; Women M = 0.33, SD = 0.38). There was also a significant difference on the main effect of social class (F(2, 10169) = 96.72, p < .001, η^2 = 0.02). Post hoc analysis showed all levels of social class were significantly different (all p's < .001). Higher levels of social class were associated with higher variety of vaudeville attendance. Finally, there were no significant interactions of gender and social class together (F(2, 10169) = 0.53, p = 0.586, η^2 = 0.00).

Between frequency and variety, there were similar results patterns. For both frequency and variety, there was a significant gender difference, where women were higher than men on both frequency and variety of attending vaudeville events (with identical effect sizes, η^2 = 0.01). There were also significant social class differences showing both frequency and variety increased with levels of social class. These effect sizes varied slightly (frequency η^2 = 0.04, variety η^2 = 0.02), however both were still quite close and very low. Finally, neither showed significant interactions of social class and gender.

Chapter 5, Cultivating better mental health: Gender differences in afterschool participation, and effects on mental health.

While adult participation in leisure activities and events are important, participation for adolescents can provide several benefits at a crucial time in their lives. Peer groups formed from afterschool participation are particularly influential to adolescent attitudes and behaviour (Palmonari et al., 1990). Developmentally, social changes during adolescence mean adolescents need more autonomy, even while school pedagogy concurrently becomes more structured and less focused on self-expression or personal development (Eccles et al., 1993). Instead, afterschool activities offer a healthy way for adolescents to remain engaged in learning while still allowing a way to explore different identities and develop autonomy.

Furthermore, these activities provide social groups, but are also a form of self-expression which serves to socialize adolescents into social identities they may (and usually do) take on as adults (Youniss et al., 1997), filling important developmental needs as new, more “adult” roles are being learned. These new roles are key, because they set up later opportunities and the ability to successfully navigate life as an adult through both social skills and tacit skills (e.g., Sheltzer & Consoli, 2019). These can be useful for better academic outcomes (Fredricks & Eccles, 2006), and success later in life, leading to participation in afterschool activities being encouraged by some families for this reason (Barber et al., 2001). In addition to developmental and academic benefits, participation can also improve mental health and well-being through higher positive emotions (Reyes-Martínez et al., 2021) and increased self-expression (Van Lith et al., 2013) and increase social networks (Stebbins, 2001) which can provide greater social support (Uchino, 2006).

However, while participating in afterschool activities is important, participation in both sport (Staurowsky et al., 2015), and creative activities (Hille & Schupp, 2015) begins to drop off around age 14. This is particularly true for girls in sport, and is seen internationally including in the United States, (Staurowsky et al., 2015); and Ireland, (Lunn et al., 2013). This comes when school classes become more difficult and university becomes a higher priority, but also means adolescents are missing out on the social, developmental, academic, and mental health benefits of participation when these benefits are particularly needed given the increased likelihood of mental illness that occurs during adolescence (Patalay & Fitzsimons, 2018).

Mental health

In recent history, mental health has been addressed through the medical model of mental health in which mental illness is medicalized through diagnosis (e.g., depression, anxiety) and treated through prescribed medications as a way to fix what is perceived to be dysfunctional either for the person or the people around them[2], problematizing mental illness. However, recent approaches include considering positive mental health and often take a strengths-based approach (e.g., Climie & Mastoras, 2015), in which mental health can be enhanced by developing upon what is already working such as hope, gratitude, and curiosity to develop life satisfaction and resilience. In doing so, this can empower (patients) and can improve quality of life.

[2] Importantly, definitions of mental illness are often culturally contextual, and heavily influenced by societal norms and power dynamics (e.g., the historical institutionalization of women with non-stereotypical behaviors, Geller, 1985). Thus, definitions of mental health and mental illness can change over time.

While these concepts may appear to be opposite ends of a singular mental health spectrum, Westerhof & Keyes (2010) show that positive mental health and negative mental illness are actually two distinct dimensions of mental health, in which a person with low mental health (e.g., depression) can also have high positive mental wellbeing (e.g., resilience), or a person with low mental illness can also have low mental wellbeing, resulting in a general dissatisfaction in life. As such, the umbrella term of mental health includes both mental wellbeing (positive mental health) and mental illness (negative mental health), which are separate, though related concepts.

In spite of the differences between mental health challenges and wellbeing, however, positive mental health and wellbeing has not been as well researched as mental ill health, particularly in the adolescent literature (Patalay & Fitzsimons, 2018). Given that mental health challenges in adolescence can have lasting impact later in life (Moffitt & Caspi, 2001), it is also important to understand and develop on wellbeing to support resilience. In this chapter, I address this knowledge gap by including both mental wellbeing (as strengths) and mental ill-health (as difficulties) in our study below.

Mental illness and gender

Gender differences across mental health issues are unclear, due to differences in how symptoms present and are recognized by adults and accessing diagnosis and support. Boys[3] are more likely to externalize symptoms (Angold & Costello, 1995) or "act out", which is more likely to get diagnosed by adults as showing mental illness behavioural symptoms from an earlier age, and to present more disruptively (Patalay & Fitzsimons, 2018). This disruptive

[3] Although the terms "boys" and "girls" are used throughout, this refers to an adolescent population.

behaviour may be why boys are more encouraged to seek diagnoses and also more likely to access support services once diagnosed (Cabiya et al., 2006).

Meanwhile, girls are more likely to internalize poor mental health symptoms such as lower self-esteem (Moksnes & Espnes, 2012) and self-criticism (Bluth et al., 2017), leading to anxiety and depression (Nolen-Hoeksema, 2001). These symptoms are more difficult for adults to recognize, and some gender differences in diagnosis may be due to social gender norms (Eagly & Wood, 1991), where boys are expected to be more tough and masculine, and girls expected to be quieter and perfect, effortlessly so (Oldfield et al., 2016).

These norms put pressure on the adolescents on how they manage and express their mental health, affecting emotional awareness and expression. For example, parents are more likely to discuss emotions, particularly sadness, with daughters than sons (Fivush, 1991), perpetuating stereotypes that girls are allowed to be more emotional than boys. This only applies to certain emotions though, as girls are more likely to supress anger (Cox et al., 2000), because anger is considered aggressive, and is stereotypically more masculine. This comfort with discussing some emotions, particularly sadness or other symptoms of depression and anxiety, may also be why girls are more likely to self-report (Wille et al., 2008), though some evidence suggests girls may still be under-reporting their experiences (Moksnes & Espnes, 2012). Unfortunately, this changes with age, as Cox et al. (2000) found when girls reached adolescence, they were less likely to show assertive behaviours, including self-advocacy. However, girls may be navigating this loss of self-advocacy is through social support, as Oldfield et al. (2016) found that in girls, peer supports were able to help as friends may speak to a teacher on their behalf for serious issues. This highlights the importance of peer relationships in adolescence as both direct peer support and more indirect access to formal support seeking.

These benefits gained through social support benefits are also gendered, further complicating the ways differences in mental health diagnosis. According to Newman et al. (2007), girls tend to have more close friendships with more emotional reciprocity expected. This can be both good and bad — girls have more social support but are more prone to experience distress through their friends' experiences. Alternatively, boys tend to have fewer close friendships which are less oriented toward emotional support and are more focused around shared activities (ex. groups formed through afterschool participation). This may protect them from their friends' distress, but they also have less support for their own challenges.

As can be clearly seen, determining gender differences in mental health can be quite complex, and is both enhanced and managed through social roles and social support of others.

Deprescribing movement/ movement away from medical models of mental health

Within clinical psychiatry and psychology, concerns have been raised by practitioners who are questioning the role of medicalization in helping patients (Mangin & Garfinkel, 2019). The Deprescription Movement has included concerns such as the role of drug companies as influencing overprescription (Dew et al., 2015), as well as inappropriate prescription of drugs as potentially causing dangerous drug interaction effects (Opondo et al., 2012). While practitioners question medicalization practices, many still recognize the value of medical support for severe mental illness so this approach is largely aimed at reducing the level of medication necessary in mild or moderate cases of mental illness through behavioural and lifestyle changes (Donaghy, 2007).

Additionally, several barriers exist that prevent access to clinical support, such as prohibitive costs. Mental health stigma remains a prevalent problem that prevents access to support, both by the adolescents themselves (Thoits, 2016) and by their parents or caregivers upon whom the adolescent remains dependent for access to care (Corrigan & Miller, 2004).

However, even if the young person is unable to seek or access clinical support for mental illness, it is often still necessary to provide some level of care and support. In this context, non-medical approaches to mental health can be useful for parents and those in applied settings, such as in schools or other settings that work with adolescents until appropriate support can be accessed.

To address this issue, researchers have explored several options including increased exercise (Donaghy, 2007; Glenister, 1996) and social support (Uchino, 2006) as beneficial to mental health. Furthermore, participation in culture can itself be treatment to mental health through expressions of identity (Asher BlackDeer, 2023). Because of this, cultural participation may be an important but undervalued resource for supporting adolescent mental health. In this chapter, I examine this concept, by exploring adolescent cultural participation through afterschool activities, including sport, and the effects on mental health.

Exercise as providing mental health benefits.

Previous research has shown causal evidence that exercise can provide benefits for mental health (Glenister, 1996). This may occur through multiple pathways using biological, psychological, and social mechanisms. Biologically, exercise can help directly such as by building self-regulation and impacting cognitive function (Belcher et al., 2021), but also facilitate indirect effects through improving sleep (Youngstedt & Kline, 2006), and better nutrition habits (Dortch et al., 2014) which has been linked to better mental health outcomes (Owen & Corfe, 2017). Psychologically, Eime et al. (2013) shows sport participation in adolescents is related to outcomes such as fewer suicide attempts and reduced anxiety, as well as indirect effects such as improved confidence, self-esteem, and resilience, and increased social skills (i.e., showing respect to others, resolving conflicts). In addition, participation in sports and particularly team sports have multiple social pathways that can be beneficial for mental health (Umberson & Montez, 2010). One such benefit is how social groups facilitate healthy behaviours, both directly (providing information and resources). Another is through indirectly pathways, such as influential group norms (i.e., taking care of one's health is seen as important for the team). These healthy behaviors can provide additional benefits for mental health but are encouraged by the group's social norms and through tacit social support.

However, while exercise provides mental health benefits, studies on adolescent participation in sport show participation begins to drop off between primary and secondary school. For girls, Staurowsky et al. (2015) reports this begins around age 14, where 1 in 10 were likely to drop out of sports altogether, while those doing multiple sports were likely to drop one or more. However Lunn et al. (2013) found in Ireland there to be no significant differences between genders. Stereotypical gender differences in sport participation was also associated with the frequency of participation, with boys typically being more involved in sports than girls (Chalabaev et al., 2013). This means that girls may be missing out on benefits of exercise because of the gender roles around women in sport.

Differences exist, too, on the types of sports they are involved in. Girls, for example, are seen as doing "expressive" sports, such as dance or gymnastics, while boys are stereotyped as participating in more aggressive sports, such as football or rugby (Messner, 2011).

Social groups as providing mental health benefits.

Another approach to deprescribing in mental health is through encouraging participation in groups. This line of research argues that the benefits of social support and inclusion in groups can improve health. Much of this research uses the Social Identity Approach — the combination of Social Identity Theory (SIT, Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and Self-Categorization Theory (SCT, Turner et al., 1987) which emphasizes the relationship to social groups (ex. Gender, afterschool activities), and social contexts, and argues that social groups influence how we think, feel, and act.

Within the Social Identity Approach, “Social Cure” research further explores the psychological benefits of group membership and how groups can affect physical and mental health (Wakefield et al., 2019). Group membership can improve self-esteem through increased sense of belonging, meaning and purpose (Jetten et al., 2015) and also provide protective factors such as resilience (Haslam et al., 2018) and social support. These benefits are enhanced through group membership in multiple groups— in “the more the merrier effect” (Iyer et al., 2009). This may be because of the increased social support gained through inclusion in groups, which has been associated with better health outcomes (Uchino, 2006). These psychological group benefits have been shown to protect against depression, reduce depressive symptoms in those experiencing it, and predicts lower long-term depression (Cruwys et al., 2013), showing the importance of group memberships to improving mental health outcomes.

However, despite findings in adults that increased social group membership bring mental health benefits, some concerns have been expressed about positive youth development with regards to excessive participation in afterschool activity groups. This idea, called the Overscheduling Hypothesis, suggests that (primarily middle and upper class) parental pressure on adolescent achievement pushes the adolescents to participate at a level that is detrimental to their development and potentially their mental health. Interestingly, according to Mahoney et al. (2006), the Overscheduling Hypothesis originated from media imagination rather than empirical observation, and while some scientific studies have been used to support it, those studies were either not designed nor intended to address this issue (i.e., Lareau, 2002), or are not directly tied to participation (i.e. Luthar & Latendresse, 2005a, 2005b).

Therefore, these conflicting perspectives of the Overscheduling hypothesis and the "more the merrier" effect raise an important research question: How is participation in afterschool activities associated with mental health in adolescents? In this chapter, I will also address this important research gap.

Gendered activity participation

Girls tend to participate more, both in the variety of activities and the frequency participated in (Eccles et al., 1990, 2003). Interestingly, despite girls participating more than boys overall, girls undervalue how their participation helps in future careers (Barber et al., 2001), suggesting there may be motivational differences for participation.

Similar to the association of gender roles in adult participation, adolescent participation may be associated with stereotypes and gender roles associated with different types of afterschool participation. However, in addition to self-stereotyping affecting participation choices, parents' stereotypes of gender roles also influence how they support their children's participation (Christin, 2012). According to Eccles et al. (1990), parents' gender role stereotypes also affect their perceptions and attitudes of their own child's ability. This then affects how they encourage the child in the activity, influencing the child's actual ability, self-perceptions, and interest in the activity. Specifically, past studies have found that boys are more likely to be involved in sport activities, which has been likened to gender role stereotypes (Chalabaev et al., 2013), while girls show higher involvement in in prosocial activities, performing arts, and school involvement activities (Eccles & Barber, 1999).

Furthermore, these different types of activities may provide different benefits because they provide different contexts in which to learn social skills. For example, participation in community groups have been shown to help develop interpersonal skills such as leadership and teamwork while participation in creative and fine arts activities help develop self-knowledge (Hansen et al., 2003). Because these activities may provide different skills, these skills may be used to manage mental health differently as well.

Present study and hypotheses

In addition to finding gender differences in cultural participation in chapter 3 of this thesis, prior research has also shown differences in participation, such as that girls are more likely to participate in a wider variety of groups and in different types of activities than boys. However, given that cultural participation in chapter 3 (activities) was limited to creative cultural participation, this study confirms and further extends cultural participation to include sport and community volunteer groups. Are there patterns between gender and cultural participation through afterschool activities? If so, we hope to identify them. We hypothesize that 1.) there will be gender patterns of participation in afterschool activities.

Secondly, differences in mental health benefits may also be affected by types of activities. For example, types of creative therapy are often used to improve mental health, and prior research has also linked exercise to better mental health outcomes. Therefore, there may also be differences in mental health benefits across the types of activities that adolescents participate in. This has not been previously explored. Furthermore, we also explore potential gender differences in these effects. Is the type of activity associated with differences in mental health, both as a) strengths and b) difficulties? And c.) are there differences by gender? We hypothesis that there will be differences by participation type in 2a.) mental health strengths, and 2b.) difficulties, across types of activities, and that c.) some of these differ by gender.

Thirdly, while past research has found mental health benefits from social group memberships (Jetten et al., 2015) and exercise benefits (Glenister, 1996) in adult populations, it is unclear how these variables work together. This remains a research gap in the literature. Additionally, there may be differences in these effects by gender. Therefore we ask; how much of the mental health benefits of participation are from group memberships and how much are from exercise? And are these findings different between boys and girls? We hypothesize that the effects of both group membership and exercise effects on 3a.) mental strengths, and 3b.) difficulties, will be different by gender.

Finally, mental health has been operationalized as both positive wellbeing and negative mental illness (Westerhof & Keyes, 2010). However, past research has primarily studied mental health as mental illness and has paid limited attention to mental health as wellbeing and quality of life. This is a research gap we additionally aim to address by operationalising mental health as both strengths (positive mental health) and difficulties (negative mental health) across all hypotheses, adding an additional dimension to the contribution of this work.

Methods

Analysis plan

Although social class and gender were studied from an intersectional perspective in earlier empirical chapters (chapters 3 & 4), gender and social class were studied separately as social class and gender were found to have additive (not multiplicative) intersectional effects on participation. After initial data screening using histograms, gender differences on participation, both by types and the number of activities, were used to test hypothesis 1 — that there will be gender patterns of participation in afterschool activities. Exploratory descriptive analysis was performed, then confirmed using visual graphical analysis of binary participation (participation / no participation) and negative binomial regression analyses of participation frequency, to test hypothesis 1. Hypothesis 2 states that that there will be differences by frequency of participation per each activity type in 2a. mental health strengths, and 2b.) mental health difficulties, across types of activities, and that 2c.) some of these differ by gender. To test these hypotheses, separate negative binomial regression analyses were used for each type of activity. Separate analyses were also used for each mental health outcome variable — both for strengths and for difficulties for a total of eight negative binomial regressions (four activity types x two mental health outcomes). Gender and participation type were both used as independent variables. Following this, an analysis of the number of types of groups was used to test hypothesis 3 (the effects of both group membership and exercise effects on 3a.) mental strengths, and 3b.) difficulties, will be different by gender). Again, negative binomial regression analyses were used. Separate analyses were used for strengths and difficulties, with gender as the independent variable and number of group membership types and time spent in hard exercise as covariates.

Data, Ethics and Recruitment

The present study uses data from the *Growing up in Ireland* study, a national longitudinal study of Irish children, their parents, and their educators about the children's lives. This is a multi-cohort study, and we use data from the child cohort born in 1998. Researchers selected a representative sample of schools and from within these schools, a random sample with a maximum of 40 students per school were invited to participate in the study. The current paper uses the parent data from the second wave of data collection (2011/2012), when the young people were 13 years old (N = 7,525, 48.9% male, 51.1% female), and uses a cross sectional design.

For the *Growing up in Ireland* study, an independent research ethics board, convened by the Irish Health Research board, gave recommendations regarding ethics, recruitment, and consent. This study followed these recommendations. Data was collected by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, carried out by Irish Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) and Trinity College Dublin. We requested access to data, which was granted by the Irish Social Science Data Archive (ISSDA).

Measures

Gender

The young person's gender was reported by their parent or caregiver, and 51.1% of the sample was female (*n* = 3,843). There were no non-binary options available to participants, and there was no missing data for this item.

Frequency of participation by activity type

Frequency of participation in each activity type was measured seperately as how frequently the young person participated in the following activities: A.) physical activity with a coach or instructor, B.) dance, drama, or music lessons, C.) homework clubs and D.) groups such as guides/scouts, youth clubs, community or church groups. Response options included no participation (0), less than once a week (1), one to three times a week (2), and four or more times a week (3).

Number of participation groups by activity type

Number of types of participation groups was measured as the number of types of activities that young people reported participating in. The types of activities were the same as those used in the frequency of participation measure, however participation was summed, such that no participation = 0, while participation in all types of groups = 4, creating five levels of participation. Taking the aggregate scores of activity participation in this way demonstrates the breadth of afterschool participation groups (Beadleston et al., 2019; Busseri & Rose-Krasnor, 2010).

Mental ill-health and mental well-being

Mental health was measured using the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (Goodman, 1997), a behavioural measure completed by the adolescent's primary caregiver, which is internationally used in clinical and other service settings (Vostanis, 2006). The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire can be used as two subscales: Strengths, using the

Prosocial subscale, and Difficulties, using the Emotional Symptoms, Conduct Problems, Hyperactivity/inattention, and Peer Relationship Problems subscales (Palmieri & Smith, 2007). Strengths and Difficulties were used to represent both aspects of mental health — mental well-being and mental illness. The overall scale consists of 25 items, with 5 items per subscale. Participants responded to a statement with one of three options: not true, somewhat true, and certainly true. These were coded as not true= 0, somewhat true=1, and certainly true=2 unless items were reversed. 5 items were reversed overall; one item in the Conduct Problems Scale ("I usually do as I am told", two items in the Hyperactivity Scale (ex. "I finish the work I am doing"), and two items in Peer problems scale (ex. "Other people my age generally like me"). Scores can range from 0-10 on each of the 5 subscales, which were amalgamated before we received the data. Because the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire was compiled prior to sharing the data by the ISSDA, reliabilities were unable to be calculated. Previous reliabilities for the *Growing up in Ireland* wave 1 data are given overall but not separated by Strengths and Difficulties. Those reliabilities were α=.72 at age 9 and α=.73 at age 13 (Thornton et al., 2016).

Exercise

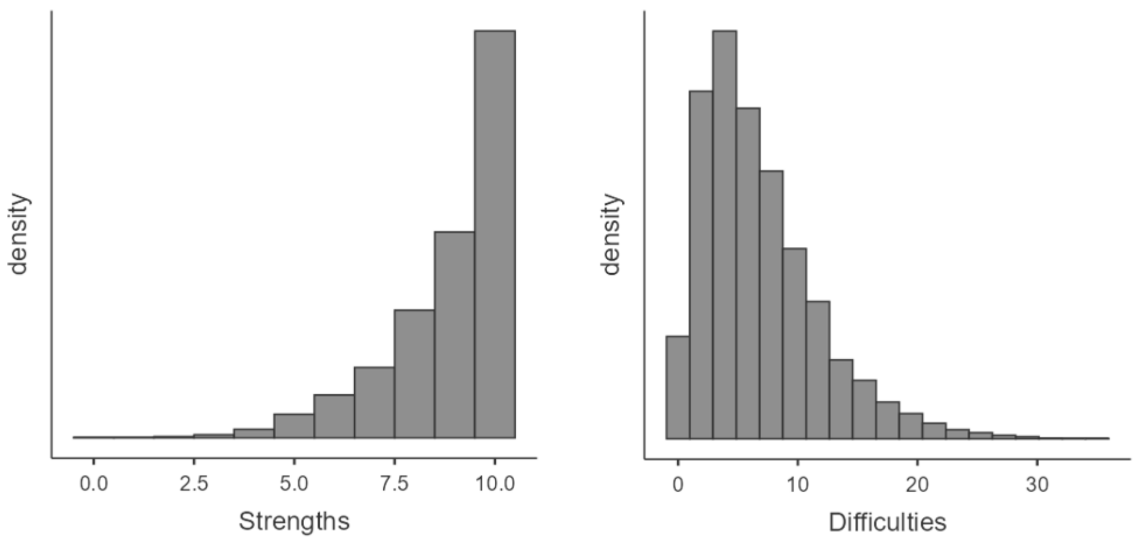
To account for the benefits of exercising on mental health, hard exercise was included as a control variable. Participants reported how many times over the previous 14 days they had exercised enough to breathe hard or increase their heartrate, including time spent in physical education classes. Response options ranged from none (0), 1 to 2 days (1), 3-5 days (2), 6-8 days (3), and 9 or more (4).

Results

Initial data cleaning indicated a negative skew for strengths and a positive skew for difficulties, as shown in figure 1, and this non-normal data was also reflected in the Q-Q plots for both. In context, this is encouraging because it indicates that the majority of adolescents in the sample have high strengths scores and low difficulties scores, suggesting good overall mental health. Negative binomial analyses was seen as appropriate for both outcomes, due to the shape of the distribution, and that the data are counts of strengths and difficulties (strengths were reverse scored for analysis).

Figure 1.

Positive and negative skew found in strengths and difficulties outcomes.

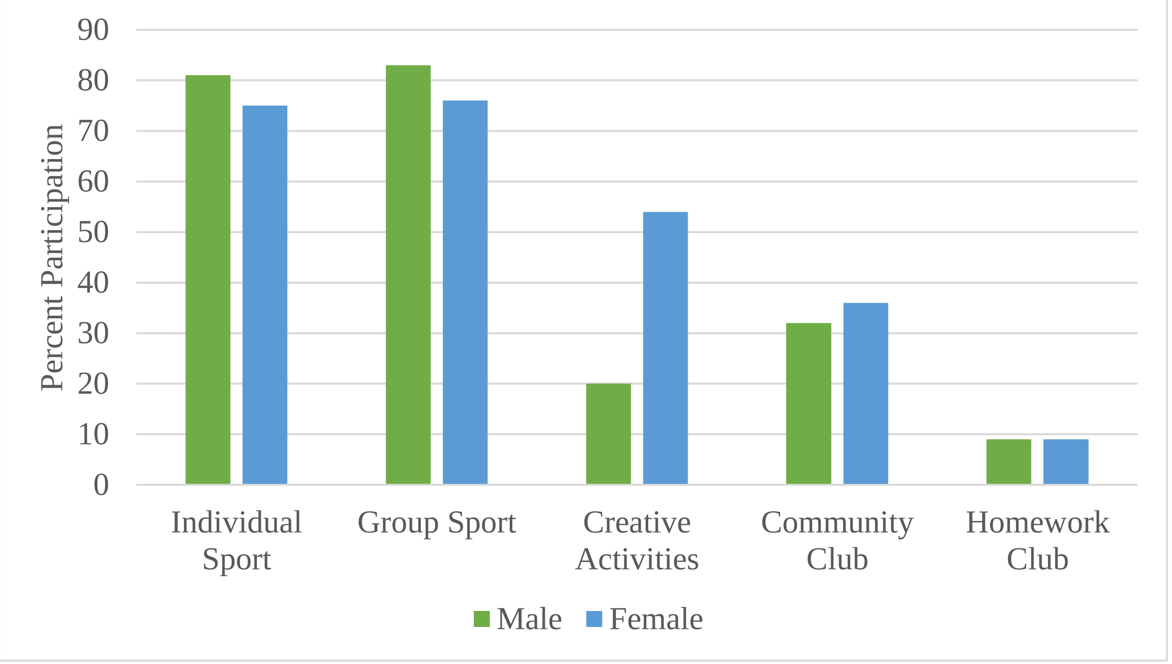


Participation differences by gender

In order to test hypothesis 1, initial visual interpretation of histograms of binary participation outcomes (figure 2) showed that while there did appear to be gender differences across most activities (with the exception of homework clubs) the largest difference was in creative activities where girls were more than twice as likely to participate as boys. Girls were also observed to be higher in participation than boys in community club participation, however boys were more likely to participate in both individual and group sport than girls.

Figure 2.

Gender differences in participation across types of activities.



Gender differences in the frequency of participation for each activity type used negative binomial regression analysis. These analyses used gender as the predictor and frequency of participation as the outcome, with separate analyses for each type of activity. As can be seen in table 1, individual sport, group sport, and creative activities showed gender differences in participation, while community clubs and homework clubs did not. Both individual sport and group sport have higher overall participation by boys. Boys participate 20.1% more frequently than girls in individual sport, and 14.5% more frequently than girls in group sport. On the other hand, girls participate more than twice as frequently in creative activities than boys. This is interesting to note, given that gender gaps in sport participation are highly researched (i.e., Staurowsky et al., 2015), however the gender gap in creative activities has been less acknowledged in past research on gender.

Table 1.

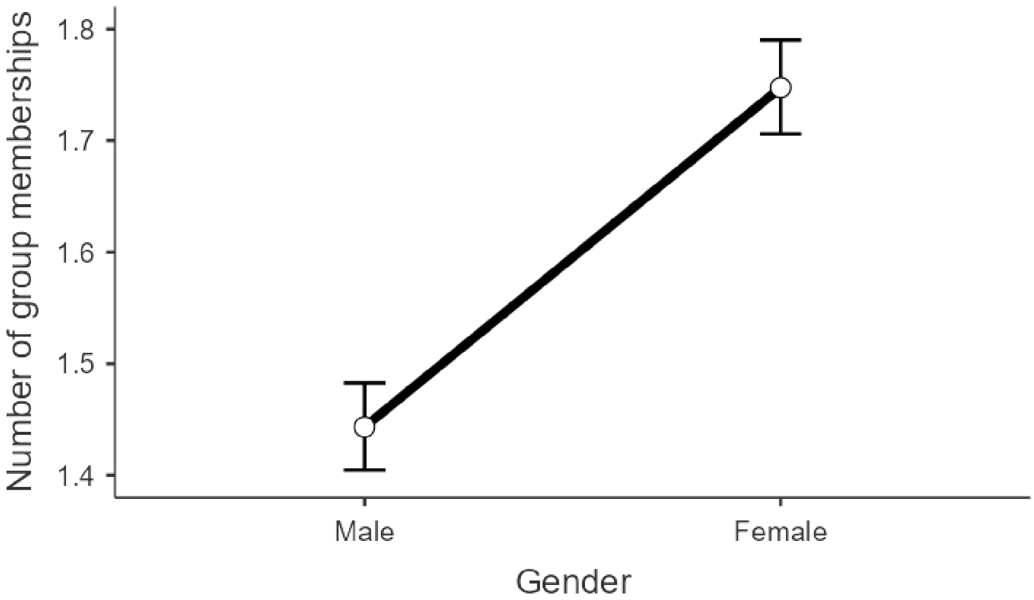
Gender differences in participation by type of activity.

Names	Effect	Estimate	SE	Odds Ratio (OR)	95% Odds Ratio Confidence Interval Lower	Upper	z	p
Individual Sport	(Intercept)	0.414	0.00945	1.513	1.486	1.542	43.9	< .001
	Female - Male	-0.225	0.01889	0.799	0.77	0.829	-11.9	< .001
Group Sport	(Intercept)	0.542	0.00885	1.72	1.69	1.75	61.28	< .001
	Female - Male	-0.156	0.0177	0.855	0.826	0.885	-8.83	< .001
Creative Activities	(Intercept)	-0.468	0.0181	0.626	0.604	0.649	-25.8	< .001
	Female - Male	0.989	0.0363	2.689	2.505	2.888	27.3	< .001
Community Clubs	(Intercept)	-0.5259	0.0195	0.591	0.569	0.614	-26.94	< .001
	Female - Male	0.0663	0.039	1.069	0.99	1.154	1.7	0.089
Homework Club	(Intercept)	-1.5758	0.0503	0.207	0.188	0.228	-31.329	< .001
	Female - Male	-0.0667	0.1006	0.935	0.768	1.139	-0.663	0.507

Gender differences across the number of types of participation were also tested to confirm initial differences, using negative binomial analysis. Consistent with the analysis of participation differences by variety of participation, gender was used as the independent variable and mental health strengths and difficulties were (seperately) analysed as the outcomes, with number of groups (summed binary participation) as a covariate. Negative binomial analysis showed girls participated in 21% greater variety of types of activities than boys (β= .02, p < .001, 95% CI [1.17, 1.26]), which can be seen in figure 3.

Figure 3.

Gender differences by the number of group types participated in.



Note. Values displayed are fitted to a negative binomial model and are not raw means.

Mental health benefits by types of groups

Because mental health benefits may vary by activity type, analyses by types of activities were also explored to address hypothesis 2, that that there will be differences in 2a.) mental health strengths, and 2b.) difficulties, across types of activities, and that these will differ by gender. Mental health strengths were analysed seperately from difficulties, as before. Due to the distribution shape of the outcomes and their count nature, negative binomial analyses were again used to analyse the data. Because the strengths outcome had a positive skew, strengths was reversed prior to statistical analysis for better fit using negative binomials, while the original strengths variable was used to produce figures for easier interpretation of effects' directionality. Where analyses used the reversed strengths measure, this has been noted.

Strengths

Effects of participation by activity type on mental health strengths was analysed using negative binomial analyses. A separate model was fitted for each activity. Strengths was the model outcome, with gender and activity type as predictors, and a gender by activity interaction term. Prior to analysis, strengths was reverse-coded as skew was in the opposite direction appropriate for negative binomial analysis. These results can be seen in table 2.

Girls were consistently higher in strengths than boys in each model, with estimates varying between 24.2-27.8% after controlling for frequency of participation in each activity type. Participation in activities by type showed increases in strengths for all activities except homework clubs. Creative activities showed the highest effects, with improvement on strengths scores by 4.8% per increase in participation. Community clubs' participation increased by 4.5% per increase in participation, individual sport increased by 3.9%, and group sport increased by 2.8%. There were no significant interactions of gender and activity type on strengths, indicating that activity type-specific benefits of participation are the same for both boys and girls.

Table 2.

Gender differences of mental health strengths by types of activities.

Activity Type	Effect	Estimate	SE	Odds Ratio	95% Odds Ratio CI		p
					Lower	Upper	
Individual Sport							
	(Intercept)	0.1482	0.0154	1.16	1.125	1.195	< .001
	Female - Male	-0.3259	0.0308	0.722	0.68	0.767	< .001
	Individual Sport	-0.0396	0.0146	0.961	0.934	0.989	0.007
	Individual Sport ✻ Female - Male	-0.0505	0.0292	0.951	0.898	1.006	0.084
Group Sport							
	(Intercept)	0.1513	0.0153	1.163	1.129	1.199	< .001
	Female - Male	-0.3189	0.0306	0.727	0.685	0.772	< .001
	Group Sport	-0.0288	0.0142	0.972	0.945	0.999	0.043
	Group Sport ✻ Female - Male	-0.0259	0.0284	0.974	0.922	1.03	0.363
Creative Activities							
	(Intercept)	0.1473	0.0161	1.159	1.123	1.196	< .001
	Female - Male	-0.2774	0.0322	0.758	0.711	0.807	< .001
	Creative	-0.0494	0.0164	0.952	0.922	0.982	0.003
	Female - Male ✻ Creative	0.03	0.0327	1.03	0.967	1.098	0.359
Community Clubs							
	(Intercept)	0.15261	0.0152	1.165	1.131	1.2	< .001
	Female - Male	-0.30838	0.0304	0.735	0.692	0.78	< .001
	Community Clubs	-0.04558	0.0165	0.955	0.925	0.986	0.006
	Female - Male ✻ Community Clubs	0.00379	0.033	1.004	0.942	1.07	0.909
Homework Club							
	(Intercept)	0.1536	0.0152	1.166	1.132	1.201	< .001
	Female - Male	-0.3103	0.0304	0.733	0.691	0.778	< .001
	Homework Club	-7.91e–4	0.0198	0.999	0.961	1.039	0.968
	Female - Male ✻ Homework Club	0.0313	0.0395	1.032	0.955	1.115	0.428

**Note*. Because the strengths measure was reversed, odds ratios should be interpreted in the opposite direction (ex. >1 indicates a decrease, while <1 indicates an increase).

Difficulties

A parallel analysis of mental health difficulties, using negative binomial analyses, was used (Table 3). Each analysis showed gender differences in the frequency of participation for each activity type except creativity, and boys had 6.6-9% higher difficulties than girls. Participation effects were seen for homework clubs, where each increase in frequency of participation increased difficulties scores by 6.5%. Individual sport, group sport, and creative activities however, reduced difficulties scores by 4.6%, 10.6%, and 5.3% (respectively) per increase in participation. Group sport showed the largest effect of participation. There were also interaction effects between gender and participation in group sport and creative activities, which are discussed below. There were no participation effects for community clubs.

Table 3.

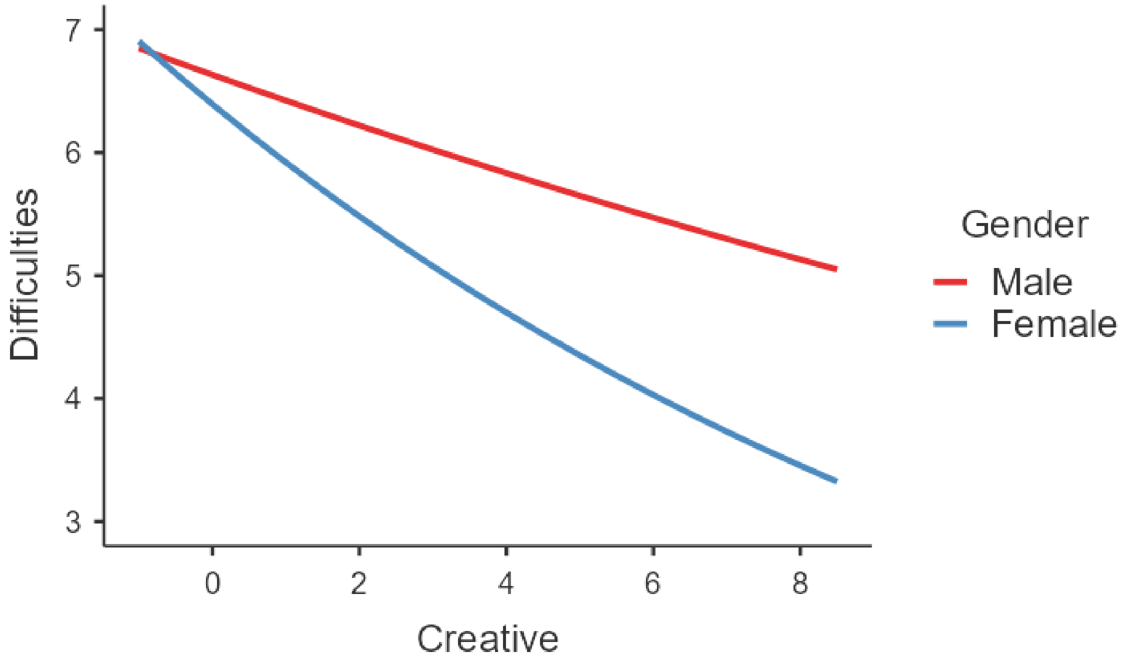
Gender differences of mental health difficulties by types of activities.

Activity Type	Effect	Estimate	SE	Odds Ratio	95% Odds Ratio CI Lower	95% Odds Ratio CI Upper	p
Individual Sport							
	(Intercept)	1.86821	0.00911	6.477	6.362	6.593	< .001
	Female - Male	-0.08423	0.01822	0.919	0.887	0.953	< .001
	Individual Sport	-0.04723	0.00859	0.954	0.938	0.97	< .001
	Female - Male ✻ Individual Sport	0.00793	0.01719	1.008	0.976	1.042	0.644
Group Sport							
	(Intercept)	1.8641	0.00896	6.45	6.338	6.564	< .001
	Female - Male	-0.0938	0.01793	0.91	0.879	0.943	< .001
	Group Sport	-0.1125	0.00835	0.894	0.879	0.908	< .001
	Female - Male ✻ Group Sport	0.0427	0.01671	1.044	1.011	1.077	0.011
Creative							
	(Intercept)	1.8736	0.00949	6.511	6.392	6.633	< .001
	Female - Male	-0.0368	0.01898	0.964	0.929	1	0.053
	Creative	-0.0545	0.00959	0.947	0.93	0.964	< .001
	Female - Male ✻ Creative	-0.0449	0.01918	0.956	0.922	0.992	0.019
Community Clubs							
	(Intercept)	1.8688	0.00901	6.481	6.368	6.596	< .001
	Female - Male	-0.0685	0.01802	0.934	0.901	0.967	< .001
	Community Clubs	-5.18e−4	0.00956	0.999	0.981	1.018	0.957
	Female - Male ✻ Community Clubs	-0.0282	0.01912	0.972	0.937	1.009	0.141
Homework Club							
	(Intercept)	1.8675	0.00899	6.472	6.359	6.588	< .001
	Female - Male	-0.0687	0.01798	0.934	0.901	0.967	< .001
	Homework Club	0.063	0.01137	1.065	1.041	1.09	< .001
	Female - Male ✻ Homework Club	0.0302	0.02274	1.031	0.984	1.08	0.184

Gender was not significantly associated with creative activities. However, there was a significant interaction between gender and creative activities, suggesting gender differences in the effects of creative activity participation. As can be seen in figure 4, participation in creative activities reduced mental health difficulties for both boys and girls but showed a stronger decrease for girls than boys.

Figure 4.

Data fit lines representing gender differences in mental health difficulties by frequency of participation in creative activities.

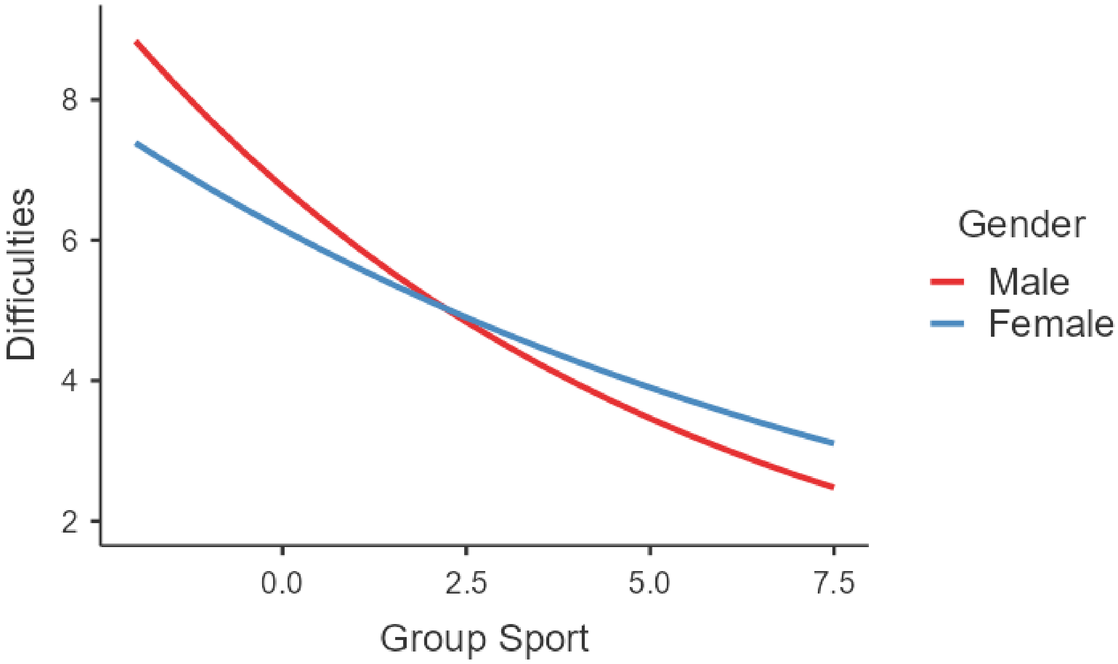


Note. Figure 4 presents lines fitted to the data, not the actual data.

Additionally, participation in group sport activities also showed a significant interaction between gender and participation, as shown in figure 5. Boys' mental health difficulties were initially higher than girls, however participation in group sports reduced difficulties at a faster rate for boys. This is interesting, given that there was no significant interaction between individual sport and gender (p = .664). While participation in group sport reduces difficulties for both boys and girls, there is a greater decrease in difficulties for boys than for girls despite boys initially having higher difficulties. This suggests that boys may gain extra benefits from the group participation that is not present in individual sport activities.

Figure 5.

Data fit lines representing gender differences in mental health difficulties by frequency of participation in group sport.



Mental health benefits by number of group memberships

In order to test hypothesis 3, that the effects of both group membership and exercise effects on 3a.) mental strengths, and 3b.) difficulties will be different by gender, Gender differences across strengths scores, with number of group memberships and hard exercise as covariates was analysed using a negative binomial analysis.

Strengths

Analysis showed significant effects for gender and number of group memberships, however there were no significant effects for hard exercise (see table 4). Girls were approximately 25% higher than boys in strengths. Strengths increased 6.9% per each additional group membership. There was no significant interaction between gender and group memberships, however a gender interaction with exercise benefits showed that higher levels of exercise increased strengths in girls but decreased strengths in boys (shown in figure 6).

Figure 6.

Lines of data fit showing gender differences in exercise effects on strengths.

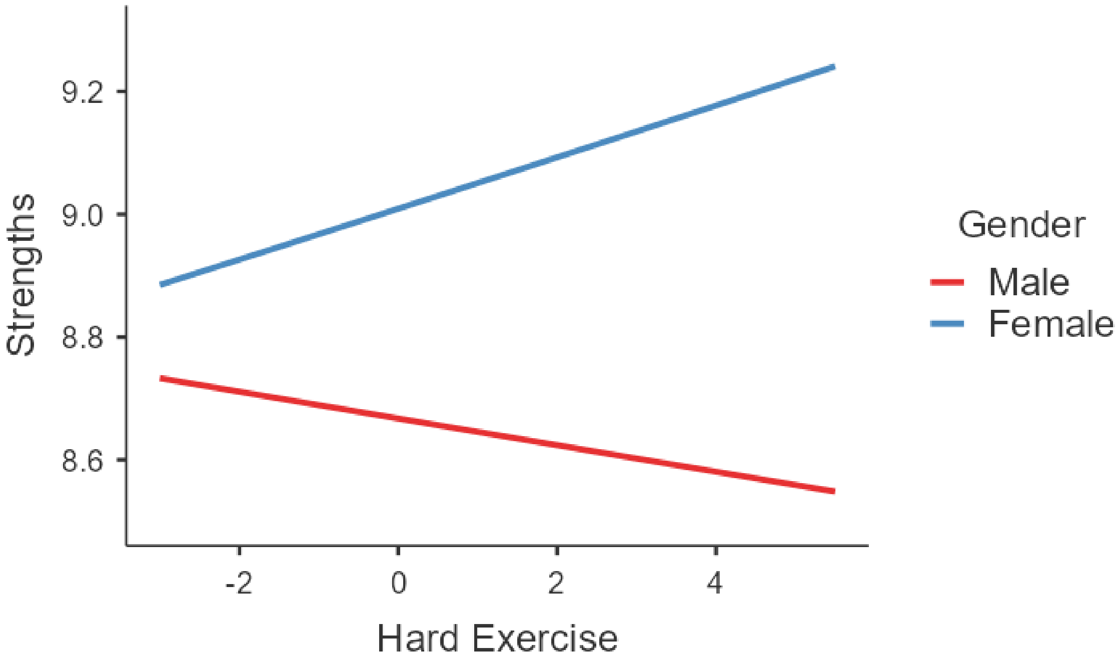


Table 4.

Negative binomial analysis of gender differences across strengths.

Effect	Estimate	SE	Odds Ratio (OR)	95% OR Confidence Interval		z	p
				Lower	Upper		
(Intercept)	0.13611	0.0166	1.146	1.109	1.184	8.217	< .001
Female - Male	-0.2935	0.0331	0.746	0.699	0.796	-8.859	< .001
Number of group memberships	-0.07198	0.0183	0.931	0.898	0.965	-3.941	< .001
Hard Exercise	-0.00986	0.0137	0.990	0.964	1.017	-0.722	0.47
Female - Male ✻ Number of group memberships	0.03392	0.0365	1.035	0.963	1.112	0.929	0.353
Female - Male ✻ Hard Exercise	-0.05815	0.0273	0.944	0.895	0.995	-2.128	0.033
Number of group memberships ✻ Hard Exercise	0.0226	0.0143	1.023	0.994	1.052	1.577	0.115
Female - Male ✻ Number of group memberships ✻ Hard Exercise	-0.01844	0.0287	0.982	0.928	1.039	-0.643	0.52

**Note*. Because the strengths measure was reversed, odds ratios should be interpreted in the opposite direction (ex. >1 indicates a decrease, while <1 indicates an increase).

Difficulties

As with the strengths analysis, a negative binomial analysis testing gender differences on difficulties, with number of group memberships and hard exercise as covariates, was used to analyse the data. Unlike the strengths analysis, all variables showed significant main effects (table 5). Gender showed the largest effect, with boys' difficulty scores 10.6% higher than girls. Additionally, difficulties scores decreased by 10.6% per each increase in hard exercise and also decreased for each additional group membership by 2.9% indicating additive (rather than multiplicative) effects of both exercise and variety of participation. While main effects were all significant, there were no interaction effects with gender, either for number of group memberships or for amount of hard exercise. Additionally, the number of group memberships and hard exercise did not significantly interact with each other, nor was there an overall effect of gender differences of group memberships and hard exercise affecting mental health difficulties.

Table 5.

Negative binomial analysis of gender differences across difficulties.

Effect	Estimate	SE	Odds Ratio	95% Exp(B) Confidence Interval		z	p
				Lower	Upper		
(Intercept)	1.85934	0.00965	6.419	6.300	6.542	192.72282	< .001
Female - Male	-0.11204	0.0193	0.894	0.861	0.928	-5.80654	< .001
Number of group memberships	-0.02931	0.01066	0.971	0.951	0.991	-2.74966	0.006
Hard Exercise	-0.09075	0.00795	0.913	0.899	0.927	-11.41542	< .001
Female - Male ✻ Number of group memberships	-0.01151	0.02132	0.989	0.949	1.030	-0.53968	0.589
Female - Male ✻ Hard Exercise	-3.74e−5	0.0159	1	0.970	1.031	-0.00236	0.998
Number of group memberships ✻ Hard Exercise	0.01492	0.00836	1.015	0.999	1.031	1.78475	0.074
Female - Male ✻ Number of group memberships ✻ Hard Exercise	0.00356	0.01672	1.004	0.972	1.036	0.21305	0.831

Discussion

This study aimed to explore patterns of gendered participation in afterschool activities, as a way of extending the definition of cultural participation beyond creative participation and includes sport, community groups, and homework clubs. To do this, the first analysis aimed to confirm (through replication) findings from past studies of gender differences in afterschool participation. Namely, that boys will participate more in sport, while girls participate more in other activities. Participation differences were found across all activities except homework clubs. Girls were twice as likely to participate in creative activities than boys and were also higher than boys in community club participation, while boys participated in both individual sport and group sport more than girls. Combined with these gendered patterns found both in the number of types of participation, these findings that girls participate in more types of activity groups supports hypothesis 1, that there would be gender patterns of participation in afterschool activities.

The second set of analyses aimed to test if there were gender differences in mental health benefits gained through participation in different types of activities. Hypothesis 2 states that that there will be differences by participation type in mental health strengths (2a), and difficulties (2b), across types of activities, and that 2c.) some of these differ by gender. Increases in strengths were found for increased participation in creative activities and sport activities, however increased participation in homework clubs showed decreased strengths. This supports hypothesis 2a, that there would be differences in the effects across participation types of activities on mental health strengths. Both individual and group sports, and creative activities, were associated with reducing difficulties, however homework club participation negatively impacted mental health by increasing difficulties. This supports hypothesis 2b. There were no significant changes in mental health strengths or difficulties for participation in community clubs. Furthermore, gender differences were found in participation of group sport and creative activities which were associated with mental health difficulties— group sport decreased difficulties in boys at a higher rate than for girls, while creative activities decreased difficulties at a higher rate for girls than for boys. These findings support hypothesis 2c, that there would be gender differences on the effects of some activity types.

Finally, an analysis aimed to test the effects of the numbers of types of group memberships and hard exercise, and how those effects may be different by gender. Hypotheses 3 stated that the effects of both group membership and exercise effects on 3a.) mental strengths, and 3b.) difficulties, will be different by gender. The strengths analysis showed that the number of group membership types increased strengths significantly, however there was no effect of exercise. There was however a gender interaction for exercise, showing that amount of time spent in hard exercise improved strengths in girls, but decreased strengths in boys. This supports hypothesis 3a. The analysis of difficulties showed direct effects of both group membership types and amount of time exercising but showed no gender interactions and therefore no support for hypothesis 3b.

Connections to previous literature

Mental health strengths and difficulties

Past research on mental health has previously focused on negative aspects of mental health such as depression and anxiety, but not often addressed positive aspects of mental health such as social support and resilience. As such, this is the first study to explore both positive and negative mental health in contexts of afterschool participation and exercise. Results showed that the effects of improving mental health by different types of activities were fairly small, ranging from 2.8-4.6% increase in strengths per each increase in participation, and 4.6-10.6% decrease in difficulties per each increase in participation. It should be noted that homework club participation provided no benefits and increase difficulties by 6.5% per each increase in participation, harming mental health overall. Though these effects might not seem large, because they increase by that amount per each level in participation, the overall impact on adolescents who participate frequently can be substantial.

Additionally, increased strengths were associated with increased group membership, but were not associated with exercise. Difficulties decreased alongside increased group membership but showed stronger associations with the amount of hard exercise. These findings contradict research suggesting that exercise may provide resilience (Belcher et al., 2021), and suggest instead that exercise improves mental health through the reduction of difficulties. Group memberships, however, were found to improve mental health through both strengths and difficulties.

Number of group membership types: The more the merrier effect vs the overscheduling hypothesis

Past research on the Social Cure has identified mental health benefits to social group inclusion (Haslam et al., 2018; Wakefield et al., 2019), and in particular, identified the "more the merrier" effect (Iyer et al., 2009), showing that inclusion in more groups provides better benefits overall. However media and parents have expressed concern that adolescent participation in too many groups can lead to negative mental health outcomes (the Overscheduling Hypothesis, Luthar & Latendresse, 2005a, 2005b). As such, this creates an important theoretical gap about whether increasing social participation through afterschool activities is beneficial or harmful. In the current study, results showed that an increased number of group membership types increases both strengths and difficulties is important to understand the role of social groups in mental health. While beneficial to both dimensions of mental health, effects were stronger when increasing strengths than decreasing difficulties, suggesting that while group memberships do decrease difficulties, they primarily improve mental health by increasing mental health strengths. This has not been tested in prior research and strengthens theory around the “more the merrier” effects within the social cure literature. Furthermore, these findings also extend on this line of research by investigating gender effects — While there was no evidence for gender differences in the benefits to mental health through participation in groups, this is still useful for theory building in knowing where differences do not apply.

Additionally, these same findings can be interpreted in the context of the Overscheduling Hypothesis which argues that participation in too many afterschool activity groups can be detrimental to adolescent mental health (Luthar & Latendresse, 2005a, 2005b). In the current study, effects were found showing both an increase in mental health strengths and a decrease in mental health difficulties as the number of group membership types increased. This supports arguments against the Overscheduling Hypothesis, as number of group memberships is associated with improved mental health, both across positive and negative dimensions. This was also found by Mahoney et al. (2006) who firstly concluded that participation does not appear to be excessive, as other leisure activities (e.g., watching tv) consume as much if not more of adolescent’s free time when compared to afterschool participation. Secondly, while external pressures do negatively affect adolescents, high participation was primarily driven by adolescents’ own internal motivations. Additionally, Mahoney & Vest (2012) later followed up this study to account for additional variables (age of child, family SES) and again found no evidence for the Overscheduling Hypothesis, showing instead that benefits increase for every hour spent participating. As such, the Overscheduling hypothesis appears to be a media-created myth rather than an empirical effect.

Overall, group memberships were found to improve mental health across both strengths and difficulties. Though effects were small, increases were non-linear, indicating that benefits build per increase in group membership types. This supports the “more the merrier” effects, and does not support the Overscheduling Hypothesis.

Discussion of gender

Gender differences in adolescent mental health have been unclear in past research, due to conflicting evidence related to differences in measurement, behavioural symptoms, and access to services and social support. These differences are linked to sociocultural gender roles and stereotypes, which have made gender differences in mental health difficult to identify. This study suggests that differences across positive and negative mental health may also show gender differences, which have not been previously researched. This study contributes to the literature across both these issues by providing the first gendered look at mental health across both positive and negative dimensions of mental health.

The analysis of strengths showed stronger gender effects, by which girls consistently participate more frequently than boys across all types of activity types by 20-30%, than participation effects, while boys are higher than girls on difficulties by 6.5-10%. This supports previous literature that girls are likely to have better forms of resilience, such as social support (e.g., Oldfield et al., 2016). Additionally, given that mental health was measured through parent report, which typically identifies higher mental health difficulties in boys (Patalay & Fitzsimons, 2018), it is unsurprising that our study also shows higher mental health difficulties for boys. What this analysis contributes however, is the effect sizes for both. While it is important to address both positive and negative mental health in order to improve overall mental health, the substantial effect of 20-30% difference in mental health strengths suggests opportunities for improving men’s mental health through supporting resilience, such as by improving social support.

Additionally, initial observation showed that girls were more than twice as likely to participate as boys in creative activities, and that they also participated twice as frequently.

This is an important finding for several reasons. Firstly, this participation gap is quite large, especially in comparison to gender gaps in sports — which is discussed quite frequently in gender literature — whereas creativity participation gaps are less discussed.

Secondly, this participation gap may help account for girls' higher number of group memberships through activity participation overall. Smaller gender gaps across other activities, such as sport, indicates increasingly higher participation by women, who may also be participating in creative activities, which men do not. This also supports the idea presented in Messner (2011) that women have wider access in society because they advocate for it while men do not.

Thirdly, there were also direct gender differences in the effects of participation in creative activities on difficulties, showing that for girls, participation in creative activities decreased difficulties more than for boys. Thus, taken together, girls are more likely to participate in creative activities, and those who do may be accessing mental health benefits through direct reduction of mental health difficulties and through increasing indirect benefits through increased group memberships.

Although the gender gap in creativity participation showed a larger effect, results also supported past research showing a gender gap in sports participation, in which boys participated more in both group sport (by 14.5%) and individual sport (by 20.1%). Both increased strengths, equally for boys and girls, and both decreased difficulties, however group sport decreased difficulties by a greater amount (10.6% group sport vs 4.6% individual sport) and did so to an even greater extent for boys. This indicates that 1.) because boys participate more in both sport types, boys are accessing the mental health benefits from sport participation more than girls, and 2.) Boys gain greater mental health benefits from group sport than girls.

Later analysis identified that there were no gender differences in the benefits of exercise on improving strengths, and that exercise reduced difficulties more for girls instead of boys. This excludes exercise effects as a potential mechanism in this group sport effect. However, the measurement difference between individual sport and group sport is participating in groups, which suggests that group memberships may be particularly important in group sports benefits on men's mental health. However, gender effects of participation type on mental health were not part of the origional design of this study, therefore it is particularly important that this finding is confirmed through more intentional design and more precise measurement.

Furthermore, because exercise reduces difficulties for girls, continuing to reduce gender gaps in sport participation would further reduce mental health difficulties for girls. Although girls were found to have better overall mental health than boys, both on strengths and difficulties, it is important to continue improving mental health for all adolescents.

Overall, findings indicate that boys would benefit from increased positive mental health, particularly from more social groups, in order to promote positive mental health outcomes. This is particularly effective for group sport participation. On the other hand, girls may already be gaining extra benefits that boys currently are not, both through number of groups and through participation in creativity specifically. Additionally, girls benefit more from exercise effects than boys in reducing mental health difficulties, suggesting that continuing to reduce gender gaps in sport participation may help in improving girls' mental health.

Limitations

There are several limitations tied to analysis of secondary datasets, such as differences between researchers on choices of specific measures. For example, self-identifying as gender non-binary was not an option to report in this dataset. Unfortunately, non-binary populations are also more likely to have mental health challenges and are an important and understudied population (Chew et al., 2020; Richards et al., 2016), making this a missed opportunity to contribute to that research gap.

A similar measurement issue is that of the measurement of group memberships, which were agglomerated rather than measured individually, as activities by category, such as by sports, or buy creative activities, it is possible that some participants may participate in multiple creative activities, or multiple sports which would not be captured by the present measurement. This is problematic because these different teams or groups provide different social groups and wider networks which may be contributing to improved mental health. Building on the measurement issues of activity participation, an additional limitation of this study is that past research has shown that benefits has shown that identity benefits are dependent on psychological identification with the groups (Jetten et al., 2015). Not only was identification to the groups not measured in the dataset, but by grouping activity types by category, it would be difficult to tie any identification measures to specific activities even if they had been included.

Yet another measurement issue to be considered when evaluating this research is the reliance on parent report measures, particularly for mental health. This has been criticized in past work because it is an indirect measure for which the young people being studied are not able to report for themselves. In addition, there are differences between parent reports of adolescent mental health and self-reports of adolescent mental health in which the parent reports can both over inflate prevalence and skew it toward males being higher (Cabiya et al., 2006). In contrast, self-report measures tend to find an overall lower mental health across all groups, but also that girls are higher in mental illness than boys. This may be related to past research that girls are more likely to self-disclose than boys (Wille et al., 2008). However, Roy et al. (2008) argues that using parent reports of mental health and adolescence is better overall because parent reports are less affected by construal effects. As can be seen, there is some controversy about the best way to measure adolescent mental health, either through parent reports or adolescent self-reports.

A final measurement limitation was in the measurement of mental health strengths, which was limited to prosocial behaviour. While previous research has shown a link between prosocial behaviour and well-being (e.g. Nelson et al., 2016), this is not a direct proxy. However, it is the only one available to us in this dataset. We included this measure in order to expand the literature on adolescent wellbeing, an under-researched area of interest (Patalay & Fitzsimons, 2018).

Given the findings that men participate more in music activities more than women, it is notable that there are stark gender differences in creative activities showing low participation by adolescent males. While this may indicate differences in participation across life stage, it is also possible that adolescent males are involved in garage bands which are not counted in this survey, given that they are not an organized activity. Therefore, it may be that gender differences in creative activities are not as large of an effect in practice. However, given the size of the gender differences in creative activity participation compared to other activities, we would still expect these finding to replicate regardless of contexts even if the effect size is not exact. Future studies are needed to clarify these details.

An additional limitation is the measurement of multiple group memberships (through participation in multiple activities) as identifying the social benefits of participation. While this is an appropriate way to measure overall participation in multiple groups, identifying the degree of social group benefits for each type of activity was not possible in this study due to lack of specific identification questions liked to each activity. Although it was possible to address this issue in sport participation (through group vs individual sport participation) when identifying the group sport/decreased difficulties for boys' effect, this was due to measurement design which was not extended to other activities. This remains an important question to follow up on, and doing so would help differentiate if different activities were associated with environments with greater social benefits or of the activity could potentially be done independently with similar benefits.

Future directions

While we still consider the current study to show promise, these limitations present opportunities for future confirmatory work. One initial direction may be how social gender roles and stereotypes vary by context, which may affect both gendered participation patterns and gendered mental health patterns. Cuddy et al. (2015) has emphasized the cultural variability of gender stereotypes, arguing that the content of masculinity stereotypes more closely reflects the ideal prototype of national or cultural groups. Additionally, Diekman & Eagly (2000) also found that social roles and the stereotypes associated with them tended to change over time, showing that gender roles are contextually dependent, both on the time and the place. In much of psychological research, and gender research more broadly, content of gender roles and the stereotypes associated with them has been previously associated with White Western ideals, and thus may not always extend to all contexts. As noted above, it is also important to consider non-binary genders as well.

Secondly, while we were trying to expand the literature by focusing on both aspects of mental health (wellbeing and mental difficulties), we were limited by the measures available in GUI dataset. The strengths measure is not typically used as a positive measure of mental well-being. While there are associations between prosocial behaviour and well-being (e.g., Nelson et al., 2016), this is not a direct measure of wellbeing, at least not in western cultures. However, some cultures outside of WEIRD and colonial contexts take a less individualistic approach to wellbeing in favour of a communal perspective, in which wellbeing is defined largely as the relationships to others, such as through prosocial behaviour (Osei-Tutu et al., 2020). Ideally, wellbeing should be investigated from both individualistic and communal approaches in order to better compare across cultures and to contextually situate the findings. That is, western conceptions of wellbeing should be measured alongside prosocial behaviour and other measures of social relationships. However, individualistic wellbeing measures were not available in the dataset. As such the finding here should be further investigated in the future with additional measures.

In addition, cultural participation offers a decolonized approach to mental health through connection to identities (Asher BlackDeer, 2023). Though cultural participation may provide benefits to mental health across cultures, the cultural participation as mental health care may be particularly effective for indigenous communities and other marginalized groups. For example, participation in or attendance at Pride events may be an important form of mental health care for LGBTQ+ community members, or for international or refugee communities to connect to their national cultures and cultural values. This may be a useful extension of the work. However further decolonization is needed across several research areas, such as decolonizing definitions of mental health, gender, and other relevant contexts, as evidenced by other future directions discussed in this section.

There may be practical barriers of applying of this broader area of research on exercise and mental health is also that the association between stress and health behaviours may be bidirectional, meaning stress may lead to poorer health behaviours (Ng & Jeffery, 2003), decreasing the motivation to exercise. This is particularly true for those with severe mental illness, where barriers include symptoms of depressions (e.g., lack of motivation), effects of medication, and anhedonia. Adherence to the exercise habits needed to gain the benefits may be even more challenging to attain for those who need it most, particularly given high participation drop out even for non-pathological participants. This may also be a challenge in regard to utilizing social groups as a support during mental illness, as those struggling with mental illness tend to withdraw socially, making motivation and adherence to "the social cure" most challenging for those who may be helped by it the most. Additionally, there may be consequences of participation in specific types of activities that do not fit with group norms, and these may negatively impact mental health. For example, in (Gordon et al., 2018), gender non-conformity increased likelihood of experiencing bullying by 15%. This would negatively impact mental health, further complicating the relationship between mental health and participation in activities. This may also relate to the current study's findings that girls gain more benefits in creativity participation than boys. Future designs investigating mental health benefits of participation in adolescent populations should consider this issue.

Finally, it is important for future studies to explore the role of social class on the associations between group participation, exercise, and mental health. In addition to past research showing that parent's social class is influential for children's participation (Lareau, 2002), as well as exercise behaviors (Stuij, 2015). Furthermore, participation and exercise benefits to mental health may be particularly helpful in social class contexts, given that inequality in lower class groups have been associated with lower mental health (Reiss, 2013), as well as reduced access to traditional mental health supports such as prohibitive costs and other structural issues (Radez et al., 2021). This will be addressed in the next chapter.

Contributions to the literature

The analyses in this chapter make important methodological, theoretical, and practical contributions to the literature. Methodologically, past research on participation has used linear methods (e.g., ANOVA, liner regressions), however the current chapter uses negative binomial regression to test effects. These methods provide a better fit to the data and provide a clearer model of the results and effect sizes of participation and mental health differences, as well as accommodate the presence of zero inflation caused by non-participation.

An important theoretical finding demonstrated that group memberships were found to improve mental health across both strengths and difficulties. Results indicated that benefits build exponentially with increasing group membership types. This supports the “more the merrier” effects, and does not support the Overscheduling Hypothesis.

Another important theoretical finding was in the gender gap of creative activity participation. While gender gaps have been clearly identified in sport contexts (e.g., Chalabaev et al., 2013; Staurowsky et al., 2015) participation gaps in creative participation have not been as widely discussed in the literature. However, in this study, the gender gap was larger for creative activities participation than for sport participation. Furthermore, this may additionally explain why girls tend to participate in a wider variety of activities (Eccles et al., 1990, 2003). This finding has previously been unidentified, and future investigation may provide insights regarding gender differences, values, and mental health.

There were also several practical contributions made that may be useful for educators, policy makers, parents or caregivers, and other adults who work with or are responsible for adolescents. Firstly, the findings of the current study support continued encouragement of girls to participate in sport, given the exercise benefits being particularly helpful for them. For boys, encouraging group participation more so than individual sport as group benefits of being part of a team are particularly good for their mental health. It may also be beneficial to encourage participation in other group activities beyond group sport, however cultural norms around gender norms may be affecting boys’ participation in other types of activities. These recommendations may be most useful from a mental-illness prevention perspective, given that mental illness symptoms may be a motivational barrier to exercise which may reduce effectiveness.

Secondly, given that exercise effects reduce difficulties, it may be most beneficial for mental health if adolescents (and adults) were to use exercise during times of high stress, such as during exams. Conversely, this is when students are most likely to prioritise studying over their physical and mental health. Therefore, there is a gap between what research shows as potentially useful and application of the research findings and needs future work to address this issue before implementation.

Thirdly, this study suggests that participation in creative activities may have extra benefits for girls. If girls have an interest in creative activities, participation should be encouraged to both reduce difficulties and gain support through social groups.

Finally, it was additionally found that homework clubs are detrimental to mental health. While further research may be needed to investigate if there are academic or cognitive benefits to participation, negative mental health effects may need to be prioritised over other benefits. This is an important finding for educators and parents when considering the best interests of the adolescents.

Conclusion

Overall, it was found that while there were gender differences across several activities, girls were more than twice as likely to participate in creative activities, and twice as frequently, as boys. This represents a larger gender gap than was found in sports participation, though this was also significant. It was also found that increased number of group memberships through participation showed better mental health outcomes across both strengths and difficulties, supporting Social Cure research (e.g., Haslam et al., 2018; Wakefield et al., 2019). While mental health benefits vary across types of activities, key findings show that boys gain more benefits from participating in group sport, while girls gain more benefits from participation in creative activities, and from increased hard exercise. However, homework clubs were found to be detrimental to both boys' and girls' mental health. These results may be useful to adults working with or responsible for adolescents, such as educators and parents/caregivers, when encouraging adolescents' growth.

Additionally, these findings may be useful as a way to provide mental health support in preventative contexts, until care can be adequately accessed, or to supplement clinical and professional mental health care.

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Chapter 6, Cultivating better mental health II: Social class differences in afterschool participation, and the effects on mental health

The deprescription approach to mental health is particularly relevant to social class groups. Past research has shown that lower social class groups experience more social inequality which increases the likelihood of mental health challenges (Pickett & Wilkinson, 2015) while also having less access to resources such as treatment (McLaughlin et al., 2011). One important barrier to treatment is the cost of diagnosis and subsequent medicalization (Radez et al., 2021). Thus, the deprescribing movement, which supports lifestyle changes to improve mental health, such as increased social groups (Haslam et al., 2018; Wakefield et al., 2019) and increased exercise (Callaghan, 2004; Donaghy, 2007), may provide a way for adults to help struggling adolescents until more appropriate treatment can be accessed, and to supplement medical approaches even when treatment is accessed.

Social class effects on adolescent participation

As with adult participation, there are limits to participation due to social class-based differences in available resources, such as time and money for activities and equipment. Furthermore, adolescents also rely on support from their parents' which are innately tied to social class, such as transportation and cultural capital (Scherger & Savage, 2010). According to Mahoney et al. (2009), afterschool activities were initially organized to address inequality, both by providing childcare options for single working mothers in particular but working parents more broadly. In doing so, participation in these activities provided opportunities for children by allowing them to learn skills they might not otherwise get at home, which were supposed to increase their chances of future success. This provided benefits for low-income families through the possibility of upward mobility, thus benefiting society. However middle-class families saw the opportunity to improve their own children's opportunities for upward mobility and began to register their own children in these activities, pushing out the working-class families which these programs were initially designed to support. In doing so, these programs which were designed to reduce inequality have instead deepened the divides between working- and middle-class families.

Furthermore, these programmes may not reflect (current) working class parenting values. Lareau (2002) identified cultural differences within social classes, whereby middle- and upper-class families value structured time in afterschool activities as "concerted cultivation", while working class families value unstructured free time in community neighborhoods for their children. These cultural differences, along with socio-historical descriptions of access barriers, suggest that higher participation is likely to be associated with higher social class groups, as middle- and upper-class families are more likely to enroll their children in afterschool activities and to do so in a wider variety of activities.

Types of activities may have different mental health effects by social class.

Types of activities may reflect social class values as well. In particular, activities perceived as associated with talent and hard work are associated with meritocratic beliefs, specifically sport (Dixon, 2021), and those related to creativity (Brook et al., 2018). Wilson (2002) has found that higher levels of social class are associated with increased sport participation through cultural capital. However, while participation in most sport types is associated with higher social class groups, some types of sport are associated with other groups. In upper class groups, embodiment of cultural capital tends to be associated with cultivating benefits, such as technical skills (e.g., golf), teamwork (e.g., polo), and leadership, while working class embodiment in sport is expressed through physical means such as bodybuilding or contact sports.

However, other types of activities have not been studied so closely in terms of social class differences. Other research may provide clues as to how social class differences may show up in other activities. For example, Piff et al. (2010) shows that working class groups tend to be more prosocial, and this tends to decrease as social class increases, which may suggest that community groups may have higher participation by working class participants, but this has not been directly studied and highlights important research gaps surrounding social class differences in participation in different types of activities.

These gaps may be in part because afterschool participation has predominately been studied in US samples, where participation and accolades in afterschool activities are considered in the college acceptance process and scholarship funding (e.g., sports scholarships, Sorensen, 2022). This is not as common in British or Irish contexts, which emphasize test scores (British GCSE, Irish Leaving Cert), and de-emphasize participation in afterschool activities which are not considered in college or university acceptance. However, while afterschool participation may be researched more frequently in the US, social class is largely ignored or undervalued as influencing social groups because it challenges the ideas of meritocracy (Manstead, 2018), and therefore the “American Dream” of transcending social class barriers through hard work. In studies that have included social class in the analysis of afterschool activities, it has been as a control variable (e.g., Eccles et al., 2003) rather than as an important focus of the analysis. Therefore, little is known about social class differences in afterschool participation, and even less is known about whether this participation may be associated with mental health outcomes. This chapter aims to address this research gap, and in doing so, provides an important contribution to the literature.

Given this research gap in social class differences in cultural participation in adolescents, still less is known about how participation may mental health in social class contexts. As described in the previous chapter, different activities may provide different contexts in which to develop skills. For example, participation in community groups has been shown to help develop interpersonal skills such as leadership and teamwork while participation in creative and fine arts activities help develop self-knowledge (Hansen et al., 2003). These skills may help manage mental health differently, particularly across both positive and negative aspects of mental health.

Present study and hypotheses

Firstly, like the gender analysis, social class differences in cultural participation in chapter 3 of this thesis were limited to creative cultural participation, and did not include participation in sport, community groups, or other afterschool activities. Furthermore, prior research has also shown social class differences in different types of participation, such as higher overall participation in sport by higher class groups (Wilson, 2002). I aim to corroborate past research showing social class differences and further extend cultural participation to include sport, community volunteer groups, and homework clubs. To do this, I ask: Are there patterns between social class and cultural participation through afterschool activities? If so, what are they? I hypothesize that 1.) there will be social class patterns in participation across different types of afterschool activities.

Secondly, there may be differences in how participation is associated with mental health strengths and difficulties, given that different activities facilitate different socioemotional contexts in which skills can be learned. Furthermore, these skills learned may be enhanced by differing norms and values across different social class groups (ex. volunteering in community groups as associated with working class values of prosocial behaviour, Piff et al., 2010). In the few studies where social class has been included, social class effects have been controlled for (e.g., Eccles et al., 2003) but not substantially included in the analysis. This is an important research gap to address, and raises questions such as: Is the type of activity associated with differences in mental health, both as a) strengths and b) difficulties? And c.) are there social class differences in these effects? In this study, I aim to address these questions, and hypothesize that there will be differences across mental health a.) strengths, and b.) difficulties, across types of activities, and that some of these differ by social class.

Thirdly, social identity theorists have argued that group memberships and participation can provide mental health benefits in adults (Wakefield et al., 2019), as can participation in exercise (Glenister, 1996). However, there may be social class differences in both participation and exercise, and the ways in which exercise and activity participation may simultaneously be associated with mental health outcomes have not been previously studied. Thus, I aim to explore the concurrent effects of participation and exercise on mental health. This raises the question: Are mental health benefits of participation from group memberships or from exercise? And are these effects different across social class groups? I hypothesize that there will be effects of both group membership and exercise effects on 3a.) mental strengths, and 3b.) difficulties, and 3c.) These will be different by social class.

Finally, as before we operationalize mental health as both strengths (positive mental health) and difficulties (negative mental health) across all analyses. Doing so contributes to wider theory about how mental health, as positive and negative dimensions, may be associated with different levels of social class through a design-based approach. This provides an additional contribution of this study to the wider literature.

Methods

The plan – Split file analysis

This chapter presents the exploratory analyses of a split-plan analysis with a pre-analysis plan, as presented in (Anderson & Magruder, 2017). This involves splitting the data (*N*=7,525) for exploratory analysis (35%, *n* = 2,633) while the remaining data will be used for confirmatory analyses following the thesis submission. As discussed in the introduction chapter, split-file analysis allows for a form of “analysis blinding” (Dutilh et al., 2021), in which initial data analysis is separated into two separate stages: initial analysis, in which the outcomes are unknown, and follow up confirmation analysis. This technique allows researchers to identify unique qualities of the data, such as zero-inflation, while also informing more specific hypotheses that can be tested empirically (e.g., one-tailed hypotheses) and without advanced knowledge of the outcomes (e.g., HARK-ing). The proportion of the data split has been recommended by Anderson & Magruder (2017) in order to allow enough power in both the exploratory and confirmatory samples. In this chapter, I present the exploratory analyses which will inform the hypotheses for later confirmatory analysis.

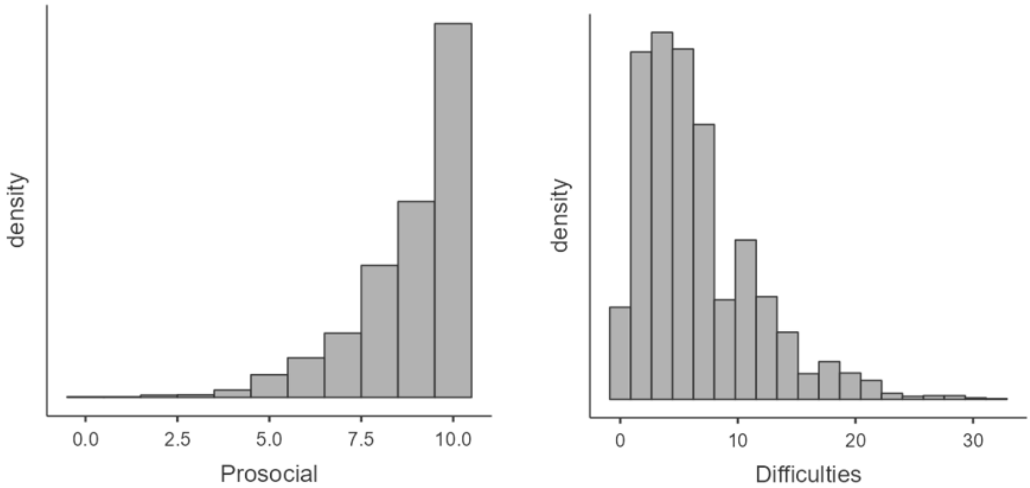
The data and analysis

We received access to data, which was granted by the Irish Social Science Data Archive (ISSDA) separate from permission given for the analyses in the gender chapter.

Participation counts are often used in cultural research to understand rates and patterns of participation. However, such data often shows that while most people do not participate at all, others participate at a wide range of levels (Busseri & Rose-Krasnor, 2010). This was true in our data. Data was a natural count (no values <0) with a high zero-inflation. We also examined the histograms of outcome variables and found high negative skew across both individual items and number of groups participated in (see figure 1). Because of these data characteristics, linear models may be unsuitable and relationships may be missed or mis-interpreted (Green, 2021). Therefore, negative binomial regressions were used to analyse the data.

Figure 1.

Positive and negative skew found in strengths and difficulties outcomes.



Measures

The measure of social class is described below. All other measures were identical to the previous analysis. As before, mental health was measured as strengths (positive mental health through prosocial behaviour) and difficulties (negative mental health) as reported by parents.

Social class

To establish household social class, both primary and secondary caregivers provided their occupation, and were categorized according to procedures by the Irish Central Statistics Office (CSO) using nine categories: Professional managers (15.7%), managerial and technical (40%), non-manual (18.4%), skilled manual (11.8%), semi-skilled (7.3%), unskilled (1.1%), all others gainfully occupied and unknown (missing data), employment status unknown (missing data), validly no social class (not employed outside the home, coded as missing data). Household social class was calculated using the highest social class amongst the Primary and Secondary Caregivers in the household and was collected and compiled by the primary researchers of the *Growing up in Ireland* dataset (Quail et al., 2014, p. 26). Prior to analysis, social class was re-coded to reverse directionality for ease of interpretation, with higher scores representing higher social class groups. For these analyses, social class was treated as an ordinal variable.

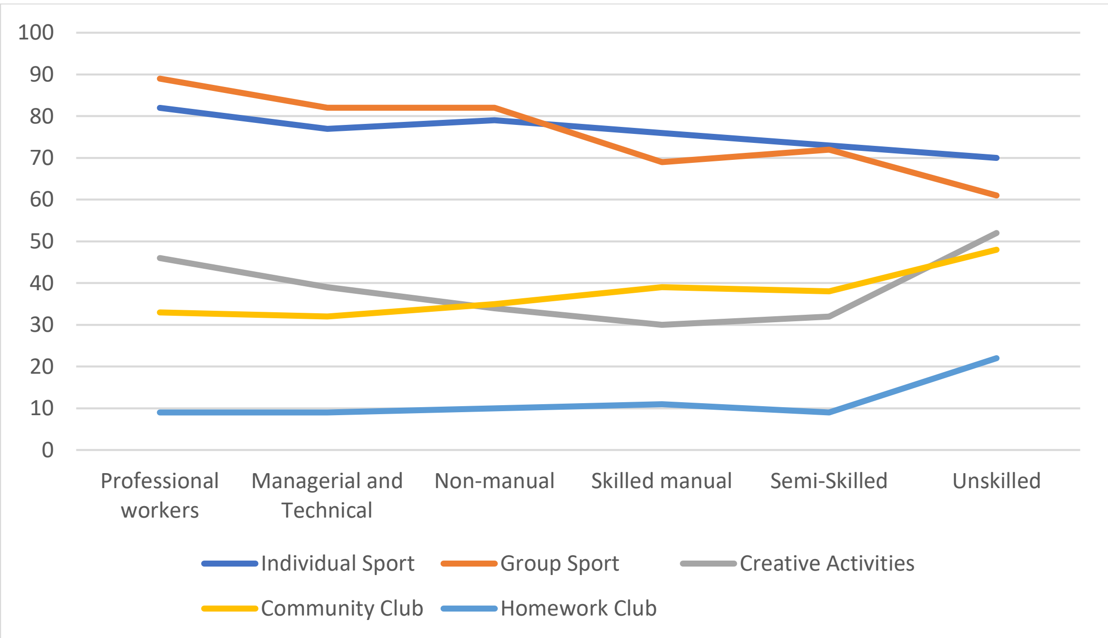
Results

Participation differences by social class

Initial participation differences were explored through binary participation (participation, no participation) by activity type. Percent participation by activity types are presented in figure 2, which shows higher participation for sport activities (individual and group) than for other activities. As social class level decreases, participation in sport activities appears to decrease alongside social class, while participation in community groups appears to increase. Percent participation in creative activities appears to mostly decrease but then increase sharply, and percent participation in homework clubs appears largely stable.

Figure 2.

Percent participation of activity types by social class groups



Negative binomial regression analyses were then used to analyze social class differences by frequency of participation. As seen in table 1, all activities except homework club participation were significantly associated with changes in social class. Across both types of sport activities and creative activities there was an overall increase in participation as social class levels also increased (individual sport OR 1.010; group sport OR 1.080; creative activities OR 1.067). Participation in community clubs however had an inverse relationship with social class — higher social class groups were less likely to participate than lower levels of social class groups (OR .942).

Table 1.

Social class differences in type of participation

				95% OR Confidence Interval			
Activity type	**Estimate**	**SE**	**Odds Ratio (OR)**	**Lower**	**Upper**	**z**	**p**
Individual sport							
(Intercept)	0.3999	0.0165	1.49	1.44	1.54	24.25	< .001
Social Class	0.0352	0.0141	1.04	1.010	1.06	2.49	0.013
Group sport							
(Intercept)	0.558	0.0153	1.75	1.7	1.8	36.51	< .001
Social Class	0.104	0.0134	1.11	1.080	1.14	7.81	< .001
Creative activities							
(Intercept)	-0.386	0.0308	0.68	0.64	0.722	-12.5	< .001
Social Class	0.116	0.0267	1.123	1.067	1.183	4.35	< .001
Community clubs							
(Intercept)	-0.545	0.0326	0.58	0.544	0.618	-16.74	< .001
Social Class	-0.0602	0.027	0.942	0.893	0.993	-2.23	0.026
Homework clubs							
(Intercept)	-1.603	0.0828	0.201	0.171	0.237	-19.36	< .001
Social Class	-0.0879	0.0691	0.916	0.8	1.046	-1.27	0.203

Hypothesis 1 stated that there will be social class patterns in participation across different types of afterschool activities. Participation in both sport activities increased with the level of social class, as did participation in creative activities. Participation in community clubs, however, decreased as social class level increased. Homework club showed no social class patterns. Overall, social patterns of participation were found for percent participation and frequency of participation across most activities, supporting hypothesis 1.

Mental health benefits by types of groups

As with the gender analysis (chapter 5), effects of participation by activity type on mental health strengths was analysed using negative binomial analyses. Social class and activity type were used as independent variables and strengths as the dependent variable, with a social class and activity type interaction term. Separate models were used for each activity.

Strengths

Group sport and creative activities show that for each increase of social class, strengths decreased by 4.9% and 5.1% respectively, but there were no participation effects in either activity. However, strengths scores increased by 12.7% per increase in participation. This participation effect was the largest effect found by type of activity in the social class analysis. There was no effect of social class where community club participation was also a predictor, but participation in community clubs increased strengths scores by 7.5% per level of participation. Because social class and participation in community clubs are correlated, this effect may be due to multicollinearity whereby the shared variance is attributed to community club participation rather than social class in the model. Neither individual sport nor homework clubs showed significant effects of either social class or participation on mental health strengths. In all analyses of activity types, there were no significant interactions between social class and participation. See table 2 for further details.

Table 2.

Social class and participation effects by activity on strengths.

Effects	Estimate	SE	Odds Ratio (OR)	95% OR CI's Lower	95% OR CI's Upper	z	p
Individual Sport							
(Intercept)	0.17577	0.026	1.192	1.133	1.25	6.764	< .001
Social Class	0.04086	0.022	1.042	0.998	1.09	1.848	0.065
Individual Sport	-0.00256	0.026	0.997	0.948	1.05	-0.0993	0.921
Social Class ✻ Individual Sport	0.02224	0.022	1.022	0.979	1.07	1.0098	0.313
Group Sport							
(Intercept)	0.1729	0.027	1.189	1.129	1.25	6.528	< .001
Social Class	0.0482	0.023	1.049	1.004	1.1	2.128	0.033
Group Sport	-0.0387	0.026	0.962	0.915	1.01	-1.488	0.137
Social Class ✻ Group Sport	0.0149	0.0215	1.015	0.974	1.06	0.694	0.487
Creative Activities							
(Intercept)	0.16764	0.026	1.183	1.124	1.244	6.441	< .001
Social Class	0.04936	0.022	1.051	1.006	1.097	2.228	0.026
Creative Activities	-0.13573	0.029	0.873	0.826	0.923	-4.771	< .001
Social Class ✻ Creative Activities	0.00253	0.0243	1.003	0.956	1.052	0.104	0.917
Community Clubs							
(Intercept)	0.1751	0.026	1.191	1.132	1.253	6.76	< .001
Social Class	0.0379	0.022	1.039	0.995	1.084	1.72	0.086
Community Clubs	-0.0778	0.031	0.925	0.871	0.982	-2.54	0.011
Social Class ✻ Community Clubs	0.0425	0.026	1.043	0.992	1.098	1.65	0.100
Homework Club							
(Intercept)	0.1731	0.026	1.189	1.13	1.25	6.66	< .001
Social Class	0.0433	0.022	1.044	1	1.09	1.96	0.05
Homework Club	0.0426	0.038	1.044	0.968	1.12	1.11	0.267
Social Class ✻ Homework Club	-0.0496	0.031	0.952	0.896	1.01	-1.61	0.106

Note. Because the strengths measure was reversed, odds ratios should be interpreted in the opposite direction (ex. >1 indicates a decrease, while <1 indicates an increase).

Difficulties

A parallel analysis of difficulties was used, with social class and activity type as predictor variables and strengths as the outcome variable. Results are reported in table 3.

Table 3.

Social class and participation effects by activity on difficulties.

				95% OR CIs			
Effects	**Estimate**	**SE**	**Odds Ratio (OR)**	**Lower**	**Upper**	**z**	**p**
Individual Sport							
(Intercept)	1.8396	0.0153	6.294	6.108	6.487	119.93	< .001
Social Class	-0.0745	0.0128	0.928	0.905	0.952	-5.8	< .001
Individual Sport	-0.0393	0.0152	0.961	0.933	0.99	-2.59	0.010
Social Class ✻ Individual Sport	0.0244	0.0128	1.025	1	1.05	1.91	0.056
Group Sport							
(Intercept)	1.8352	0.0156	6.266	6.079	6.461	118.01	< .001
Social Class	-0.0598	0.0131	0.942	0.918	0.966	-4.56	< .001
Group Sport	-0.0905	0.0153	0.913	0.886	0.942	-5.91	< .001
Social Class ✻ Group Sport	0.0143	0.0124	1.014	0.99	1.039	1.15	0.250
Creative Activities							
(Intercept)	1.83831	0.0153	6.286	6.1	6.478	119.822	< .001
Social Class	-0.07204	0.0128	0.93	0.907	0.954	-5.616	< .001
Creative Activities	-0.08789	0.0164	0.916	0.887	0.946	-5.356	< .001
Social Class ✻ Creative Activities	0.00886	0.0138	1.009	0.982	1.037	0.643	0.520
Community Clubs							
(Intercept)	1.8435	0.0153	6.318	6.132	6.512	120.23	< .001
Social Class	-0.0804	0.0128	0.923	0.9	0.946	-6.27	< .001
Community Clubs	-0.0226	0.0179	0.978	0.944	1.013	-1.26	0.206
Social Class ✻ Community Clubs	0.0385	0.0147	1.039	1.01	1.069	2.63	0.009
Homework Club							
(Intercept)	1.8395	0.0153	6.294	6.108	6.486	120.326	< .001
Social Class	-0.0756	0.0128	0.927	0.904	0.951	-5.916	< .001
Homework Club	0.1022	0.0225	1.108	1.06	1.158	4.54	< .001

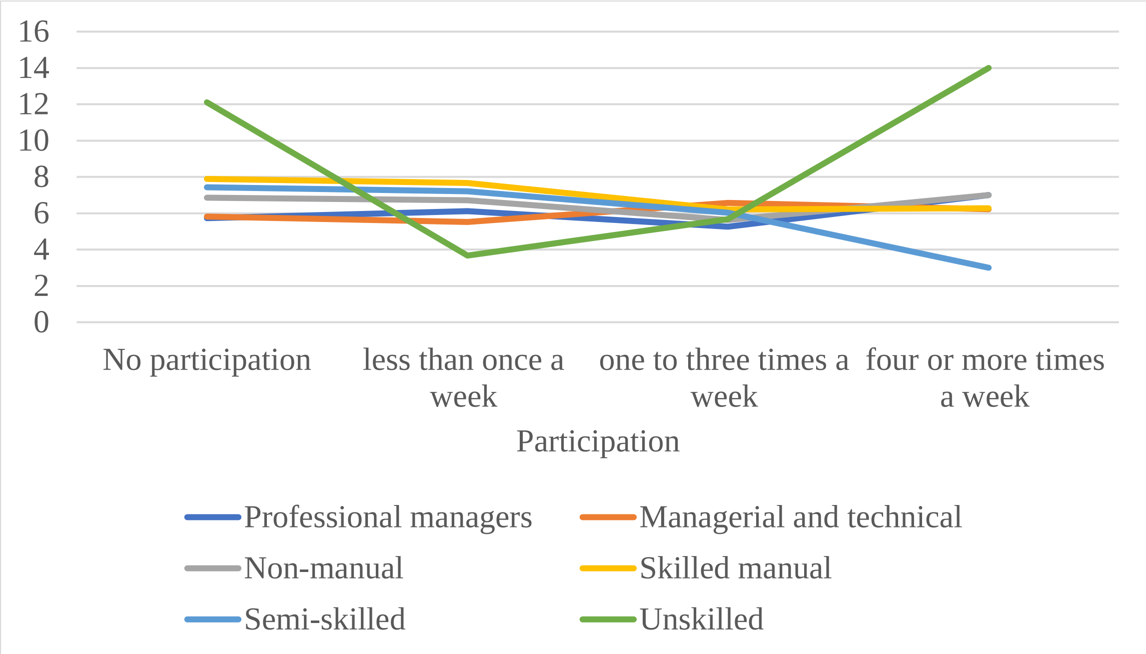
Social Class ✻ Homework Club	-0.0157	0.018	0.984	0.95	1.02	-0.874	0.382

All activity types showed social class effects, which indicated that for each increase in social class level, difficulties scores decreased between 5.8-7.7%. Participation in group sport, creative activities, and homework club activities also showed main effects of participation for each activity type (all p's < .001), but there were no interactions. Participation in individual sport, group sport, and creative activities were all associated with decreased difficulties scores (by 3.9%, 8.7%, and 8.4% per increase in participation, respectively). However as with each increase in participation in homework clubs, difficulties scores increased by 10.8%. Across all these types of activities, there were no interactions between social class and participation.

Community clubs showed class effects with no participation effects, however there was a significant interaction between the two (p < .005). As figure 3 indicates, most social class levels show a small decrease, then an increase in difficulties scores as participation increases. However, participants with parents in semi-skilled jobs show a decrease in difficulties as participation in community clubs increases, with a sharper decrease between participation 1-3 times per week and 4 or more times per week. This suggests that adolescents in semi-skilled class groups gain more benefits with greater participation. Most noticeably, adolescents with parents in unskilled social class groups show higher difficulties than any other groups, with stronger effects in a U-shaped pattern, suggesting that participation in community groups less than once per week provides the most benefits for them than any other class, but that increasing participation also increases difficulties.

Figure 3.

Class effects in participation in community clubs.



Overall, analysis showed that participation in community clubs and creative activities were associated with improved strengths, while group sport and creative activities were associated with decreased difficulties, showing mental health benefits to participation. This is particularly true for creative activities since it provides benefits across both dimensions. However, participation in homework clubs was associated with increases difficulties, reducing overall mental health. This was an additive, but disadvantageous effect, which actively harms mental health. These effects were largely the same across different social class groups. Additionally, an interaction of class and participation in community clubs showed that participants from unskilled class groups benefited most from infrequent participation, but not from participating more than three times a week, while participants from semi-skilled class groups showed decreased difficulties with increased participation. These findings provide preliminary support for hypothesis 2, that there will be differences across mental health 2a.) strengths, and 2b.) difficulties, across types of activities, and that some of these differ by social class. However, subsequent confirmatory analysis is still needed.

Mental health benefits by number of group memberships

To test hypothesis 3, that there will be effects of both group membership and exercise effects on 3a.) mental strengths, and 3b.) difficulties, and 3c.) These will be different by social class, negative binomial regression on mental health (strengths and difficulties, separately) was used. Social class, the number of group memberships and hard exercise were all simultaneously used as independent variables.

Strengths

In the analysis of strengths, each increase in group membership improved strengths scores by 13%. Because hard exercise was not significant, this suggests that more group memberships are associated with benefits while hard exercise is not, and this is not associated with social class. See table 4 for further details.

Table 4.

Number of group memberships and exercise effects on strengths.

				95% OR CIs			
Effects	**Estimate**	**SE**	**Odds Ratio (OR)**	**Lower**	**Upper**	**z**	**p**
(Intercept)	0.16724	0.0265	1.182	1.122	1.245	6.318	< .001
Social Class	0.04132	0.0225	1.042	0.997	1.089	1.835	0.067
Number of groups	-0.13871	0.0298	0.87	0.821	0.923	-4.647	< .001
Hard Exercise	0.01823	0.0224	1.018	0.975	1.064	0.813	0.416
Social Class ✻ Number of groups	-0.00567	0.0254	0.994	0.947	1.044	-0.223	0.824
Social Class ✻ Hard Exercise	-0.01171	0.0189	0.988	0.953	1.025	-0.619	0.536
Number of groups ✻ Hard Exercise	0.02705	0.0241	1.027	0.98	1.077	1.12	0.263

Social Class ✻ Number of groups ✻ Hard Exercise	0.0114	0.02	1.011	0.972	1.052	0.571	0.568

**Note*. Because the strengths measure was reversed, odds ratios should be interpreted in the opposite direction (ex. >1 indicates a decrease, while <1 indicates an increase).

Difficulties

Analysis of difficulties showed significant main effects (Social class, number of group memberships, and hard exercise) but no significant interactions, and is presented in table 5. The number of group memberships showed the lowest effect on difficulties, where each increase in group memberships was associated with a 3.5% decrease in difficulties scores. Hard exercise also showed a small effect (6.3% decrease for each increase in participation in hard exercise), while social class showed the largest effect, where each increase in social class was associated with a 6.6% decrease on difficulties scores.

Table 5.

Number of group memberships and exercise effects on difficulties.

				95% OR CIs			
Effects	**Estimate**	**SE**	**Odds Ratio (OR)**	**Lower**	**Upper**	**z**	**p**
(Intercept)	1.83661	0.0156	6.275	6.087	6.47	117.835	< .001
Social Class	-0.06844	0.0131	0.934	0.91	0.958	-5.227	< .001
Number of group memberships	-0.03539	0.0175	0.965	0.933	0.999	-2.022	0.043
Hard Exercise	-0.06526	0.0131	0.937	0.913	0.961	-4.966	< .001
Social Class ✻ Hard Exercise	-0.00693	0.0109	0.993	0.973	1.014	-0.636	0.525
Social Class ✻ Number of group memberships	0.0262	0.0147	1.027	0.998	1.056	1.78	0.075
Number of group memberships ✻ Hard Exercise	0.0081	0.0142	1.008	0.981	1.036	0.571	0.568

Social Class ✻ Number of group memberships ✻ Hard Exercise	0.01153	0.0116	1.012	0.99	1.034	0.997	0.319

In this analysis, it was found that while group memberships increase strengths, difficulties were reduced by both group memberships and amount of hard exercise. This does not support hypothesis 3a (there will be effects of both group membership and exercise effects on mental strengths) but does support 3b (there will be effects of both group membership and exercise effects on difficulties). On both strengths and difficulties, there were no social class interactions in these effects, providing no support for hypothesis 3c, (these effects of group membership and exercise will be different by social class).

Discussion

This study aimed to explore patterns of social class participation in afterschool activities, as a way of extending the definition of cultural participation beyond creative participation and includes sport, community groups, and homework clubs. To do this, the first analysis aimed to confirm (through replication) findings from past studies that there are social class patterns in afterschool participation, specifically that higher social class groups participate in sport (Wilson, 2002), Furthermore, because of the literature gap in social class participation differences across types of activities, this analysis aimed to contribute knowledge about social class participation differences in creative activities, community groups, and homework clubs.

Analysis showed that sport participation increases with social class level, as did creative activities, while participation in community clubs decreased as social class increased. Because patterns were found across most activities, this supported hypothesis 1 (there will be social class patterns in participation across different types of afterschool activities). These finding replicate (Wilson, 2002) by showing higher levels of social class participate more frequently in sport overall. Similarly, creative participation increased with social class, as was also found in adult samples (chapters 3 & 4). Because participation in community groups decreased as social class increased, findings also replicate broader research that lower social class groups are prosocial than higher class groups (e.g., Piff et al., 2010).

The second set of analyses, testing each type of activity separately, aimed to test if there were social class differences in the mental health benefits gained through participation in different types of activities. These analyses showed that participation in creative activities both improved strengths and decreased difficulties. Group sport also decreased difficulties. Additionally, community group participation improved strengths, and while there were no direct effects of participation on difficulties, there appeared to be an interaction of class and participation in community clubs where lower and middle social class groups gained benefits from participation but participation increased difficulties for higher social class groups, however this observation needs to be confirmed in confirmatory analysis. In contrast, participation in homework clubs showed no benefits for strengths but did increase difficulties. These findings support hypothesis 2, that there will be differences across mental health 2a.) strengths, and 2b.) difficulties, across types of activities, and that some of these differ by social class.

The third and final analysis aimed to test the effects of the numbers of types of group memberships and hard exercise, and how those effects may be associated with social class differences. Group membership was associated with improvements on both strengths and difficulties, while exercise was only associated with decreased difficulties. Therefore, there was no support found for hypothesis 3a (there will be effects of both group membership and exercise effects on mental strengths), however these findings did support hypothesis 3b (there will be effects of both group membership and exercise effects on difficulties). There were no interactions of social class for the effects of group membership or exercise on either strengths or difficulties, providing no support for hypothesis 3c (effects of group membership and exercise will be different by social class).

Mental health and dimensions of strengths and difficulties

As with the chapter on gender, an important literature gap filled by this analysis is the exploration of mental health, as separated by positive and negative aspects. This has been identified as a relevant gap by Patalay & Fitzsimons (2018), particularly for an adolescent population, where wellbeing has not been frequently studied. In the current analyses, strengths benefits showed improvements of 7.5% (community clubs) and 12.7% (creative activities). While difficulties were largely decreased by 3.7% (individual sport), 8.7% (group sport), and 8.4% (creative activities), homework clubs increased difficulties by 10.8%. Most of these effects largely improved mental health by 7-8% per each increase in participation time, and more activities decreased difficulties than increase strengths, suggesting that although there are differences across specific types of activities, general participation mostly improves mental health through protective mechanisms (reducing difficulties). This is an important contribution to the theory of how participation is associated with mental health. However, there were differences by specific types of activities. Individual sport showed the least effective in improving mental health, either through association with increased strengths or decreased difficulties, while creative activities showed the most overall improvement across both strengths and difficulties. However, like findings in the previous chapter on gender, participation in homework clubs was found to provide no strengths and increase difficulties, indicating negative effects on overall mental health.

Number of group memberships: social cure and the more the merrier vs the overscheduling hypothesis

While group memberships have been shown to be positively associated with mental health (Haslam et al., 2018), exercise has also been shown to provide benefits (Glenister, 1996) and is frequently done in the same contexts as group memberships through participation, making the effects of both unclear. The number of group memberships was associated with both increased strengths and decreased difficulties. Effects were larger for improving strengths (13% per increase in number of groups) than for decreasing difficulties (3.5% per increase in groups). Exercise was associated with decreased difficulties, albeit to a greater extent than group memberships (6.3% per increase in time spent exercising). These results are identical to the similar analysis in the previous chapter on gender. This provides further support for arguments against the Overscheduling Hypothesis, extending these findings into differences by social class. These same findings also support arguments for the "more the merrier" effect (Iyer et al., 2009) of increased benefits from multiple group memberships, and extend this finding to show there are no social class differences in the benefits of increased group memberships. This is an additional contribution to the literature, as social class differences have not been tested before.

Social Class

An important contribution of this paper is the investigation of social class differences in the participation effects on mental health. Social class has not been frequently included in these types of studies in past literature, and where it has been included, it has been controlled for (e.g., Eccles et al., 2003) but not explored. However, it is important for afterschool activity funders, educators, and parents to know which programs will provide the best benefits to schools, and for parents to know which afterschool activities may best support their child. In the current study, the effect sizes of social class ranged from 5.1-7.7%

(increase or decrease) across analyses, while participation effects ranged from 3.9 -12.7%. This suggests that social class effects may be quite small, but considering that these also increase per level, there may be quite a disparity between the highest and lowest social class groups. Additionally, these effects seem quite stable, as demonstrated by the narrow range. Alternatively, the range of participation effects is wider here, suggesting that the type of activity matters for participation effects.

Additionally, social class interaction effects were observed for participation in community clubs. These suggest that for unskilled class groups, participation less than once a week to a maximum three times a week provided decreased difficulties, with infrequent participation providing the strongest effects. It was also observed that participants from semi-skilled social class groups, increases in community club participation were associated with decreased mental health difficulties. These may be reflective of the values of different social class groups. Specifically, community clubs may reflect the prosocial values of working-class groups (Piff et al., 2010), while creativity may be associated with elitism, as discussed in the literature review of this thesis. However social class differences in sport may be more complicated. Different social class groups may be associated with specific types of sport activities, such as upper-class participation in polo or rugby, while working class sport participation may be higher in physical sports such as boxing (Wilson, 2002).

Contributions

This study also contributes to both theory and practice. As in the analysis of gender differences (chapter 5), this study operationalized mental health as both strengths (positive mental health) and difficulties (negative mental health) across all analyses. Doing so contributes to wider theory about how mental health, as positive and negative dimensions, is associated with different levels of social class, specifically that participation mostly improves mental health through protective mechanisms (by reducing difficulties). This is an important contribution to theory, as it clarifies how participation is associated with mental health.

Additionally, this study found that mental health improved with increased group memberships. This provides support for the more the merrier hypothesis (Iyer et al., 2009), and provides no support for the overscheduling hypothesis (Luthar & Latendresse, 2005a, 2005b), and contributes to both theoretical areas of literature.

As discussed in the introduction, there are important contributions for practice in taking a deprescribing approach to mental health. This can be useful for clinicians in supplementing medicalized approaches, as well as reducing the need for medication overall. This can also be useful for both adolescents and the adults who work with adolescents who don't have access to clinical mental health treatment options. Therefore, the findings of the current study are likely to be of interest to clinicians, adults who work with or are responsible for adolescents' mental health (including caregivers and educators), and to the adolescents themselves. Specifically, a few key findings are relevant.

Firstly, participation in creative activities was found to be most effective at improving mental health, given that participation both increases strengths and decreases difficulties, and shows larger effects than other activities. This suggests that young people should be encouraged to participate in creative activities, and that support should be given to after-school programmes which provide a space for adolescents to do so.

Secondly, individual sports are the least effective at improving mental health overall. While sport and exercise does have benefits, adolescents who are interested in sport participation may gain more from group sport than individual sport participation. This will also increase the number of groups adolescents have access to, improving mental health through increased group memberships as well.

Thirdly, social class differences in mental health benefits gained from participation in community clubs suggest that participants whose parents were classed as unskilled workers may benefit most from infrequent participation but not from participating more than three times a week, while participants from semi-skilled class groups showed decreased difficulties with increased participation. While this observation still needs to be confirmed in follow-up analysis, this may suggest that organizers of community groups that tend to work with these different class groups should consider how frequently activities should be scheduled. For example, in working class communities (unskilled workers), fortnightly or monthly activities may work better, both in terms of reducing barriers such as time and energy commitment, and by increasing the mental health benefits gained through participation. However, those working with semi-skilled groups (lower middle class) may want to increase the frequency of activities to gain better benefits.

Finally, participation in homework clubs is likely to decrease overall mental health and is therefore not recommended. As discussed in the gender chapter, further investigation of whether there are cognitive benefits gained from homework club participation may be relevant, but adolescent mental health may need to be prioritized regardless of any potential cognitive benefits.

Limitations and future research

Similar limitations to those identified in the gender chapter exist given that both analyses used the same dataset and similar measures — namely the amalgamated measurement of group memberships and the strengths measure of prosocial behaviours. As before, using prosocial behaviours as a measure of wellbeing is imperfect, but does align with non-western perspectives of wellbeing (Osei-Tutu et al., 2020). This would therefore be improved upon by measuring wellbeing through western conceptualizations of wellbeing and prosocial behaviour as a decolonized and communal approach to wellbeing.

In this study, there is also potential for future research to explore psychological elements of social class, such as subjective social class (e.g., Rubin et al., 2014) or perceived inequality (Willis et al., 2022) and how these relate to participation and subsequent mental health effects. This is not a limitation of the current study, but rather a limitation of wider research contexts, as social class tends to be measured through sociological (work-based) definitions of social class rather than psychological ones in large datasets (Harrison, 2010). Even so, social class is notoriously difficult to measure in psychology (Diemer et al., 2013), and researchers often chose to use particular markers of social class (e.g., education, income, job status,) that may be relevant to the contexts rather than an overall conceptualization of social class.

Future research should consider additional aspects of intersectionality, such as age and race/ethnicity. It may be that adolescents and other young people have more access to settings where friendships can be developed, whereas retirees and aging populations may have more challenges with loneliness (Pinquart & Sorensen, 2001). Given these age-related differences, cultural participation may provide stronger benefits through increased social networks, in addition to the benefits of participating in activities they enjoy. Additionally, group-based differences in activities participation have also been found for aspects of race and ethnicity (Mowatt, 2018). These differences may have historical roots, such as how participation differences in swimming activities can be linked to the practice of putting acid in swimming pools during American segregation (also Mowatt, 2018). Therefore, both age and race may be important factors in the mental health effects of participation and may have further intersectional associations with both participation and mental health effects associated with participation.

Conclusions

Overall, it was found that participation in activities improved mental health mostly through reducing difficulties, though there were some types of activities that also increased strengths. The number of group memberships, as measured through variety of participation types, also showed increased strengths and decreased difficulties, showing an overall positive effect on mental health with each increase in the number of groups. Exercise decreased difficulties but did not increase strengths, indicating that benefits reduce mental illness behaviours but are not associated with wellbeing.

There were also differences in the mental health benefits by different types of activities. Key findings show that creative activities provide both increased strengths and decreased difficulties, and with large effect sizes, indicating that participation in this activity improves mental health more than other activity types in this study. Additionally, participation in homework clubs was shown to increase difficulties and had no effect on strengths, indicating that participation actively harmed adolescents' mental health. Finally, there were differences found by social class groups in the benefits of community group participation. These differences indicated that adolescents from working class groups benefit from infrequent participation, but not from participating more than three times a week. The results of this study contribute to areas of literature around the "Social Cure" (Haslam et al., 2018; Wakefield et al., 2019), as well as by extending theory around mental health, particularly in regard to wellbeing, through participation. These findings are also of practical relevance to any adults responsible for adolescent mental health, such as clinicians, educators, and parents or caregivers, and may be of interest to the adolescents themselves. These findings may also be useful for making decisions around policy and funding of afterschool activities.

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Chapter 7, Conclusion

Summary of findings

The present thesis aimed to examine the association between social group membership and cultural participation. These chapters were used to address the overarching question of this thesis: "*How is gender and social class associated with cultural participation and the mental health benefits gained through cultural participation?".* To address this question, four aims and hypotheses were used to guide the overall research and were linked to each empirical chapter. It was hypothesized that there would be social category patterns in the cultural activities people participated in (chapter 3) and their attendance of cultural events (chapter 4), and that these differences would have effects on mental health by gender (chapter 5) and social class (chapter 6). I analysed secondary data from a large subset of the *Taking Part* study in the first two studies (chapters 3 & 4), and from the *Growing up in Ireland* dataset (chapters 5 and 6) and evaluated these hypotheses. Both chapter 3 (focus on cultural participation activities) and chapter 4 (focus on attendance at cultural events) followed a similar structure in relation to the data analyses steps followed. Similar analysis structures were also used between chapters 5 & 6.

Aim 1 investigated patterns of gender and social class in cultural participation through activities, and address research gaps of using activities as cultural participation. This was addressed in chapter 3 (activities) where it was found that women participate more than men both with more frequency and with greater variety in activities, though specific activity types did show patterns in gendered participation. Women were more likely to participate in dance activities, and craft making and buying, while men were more likely to participate in wood crafts and music. Higher levels of social class were also associated with higher participation levels. For no activity type was this reversed. Additionally, participation in performance activities may denote group boundaries between upper and middle classes against working class groups.

Aim 2 investigated patterns of gender and social class in cultural participation through events. Here, this research addresses research gaps of measuring events beyond defining culture as “highbrow” or “elite” culture. Like activities, events participation showed clear gender patterns in participation. Women attended all events more than men, both in frequency, variety, and type. This differs to activity participation in that men did not attend any events more than women. Particularly notable effect sizes were present in attending craft exhibitions, pantomime, ballet, and contemporary dance events. There were also clear participation differences by social class between upper and middle classes against working class groups, whereby upper / middle class groups were more likely to attend events. This showed particularly strong effects for classical music concerts, art exhibits, opera/operetta, and ballet events, which are all traditionally defined as “highbrow” or “elite” culture, as opposed to “classical” forms of culture as identified in this thesis. This suggests that past measurement limited to only these activities may have emphasized differences in social class participation, and that wider measurement inclusion of cultural events show effects to be less strong, though still present.

Aim 3 investigated mental health associations with participation in activities, accounting for gender, in order to address the research gap is whether there are gender differences in the benefits gained through group participation and exercise. As with the analysis of adults, adolescent girls participated across a wider variety of activities and with more frequency. They were also twice as likely to participate in creative activities as boys, showing a larger gender gap than that of sport participation, which was also significant. Wider participation across activities was associated with better mental health overall. Types of activities were also associated with mental health, and key findings showed that boys gain more benefits from participating in group sport, while girls gain more benefits from participation in creative activities, and from increased hard exercise. However, homework clubs were detrimental to both boys' and girls' mental health.

Aim 4 investigated mental health associations with participation in activities, accounting for social class differences, in order to address the research gap is whether there are gender differences in the benefits gained through group participation and exercise. Identical results were found as with the analysis of gender differences in mental health, however where sport activities significantly improved mental health in the gender analysis, this was not true for social class. Instead, community clubs significant improved mental health in class analysis, whereas this was not true for gender.

Contribution and theoretical implications

Definitions of cultural participation

In this thesis, I define cultural participation as the intentional engagement in activities or attendance at events related to the values of a social group, which include creative, social and physical activities. This includes, for example, attending creative events, and participating in hobbies, volunteering or activism activities, and sport. It is important to keep in mind however, that the possible activities or events that fall under this description are potentially limitless, given the wide variety of social groups that are present in people's daily lives as well as the myriad of ways in which similar activities can be expressed differently (e.g., social cultural differences in cooking or gardening as an expression of group values). While this thesis cannot comprehensively include participation in all cultural activities or attendance at all cultural events, it has provided a snapshot of activities and events that can further illustrate the need to expand the definition of culture beyond highbrow events (ex. opera, ballet, art gallery attendance).

Theoretical implications for Gender

As discussed in the introduction chapter (1), research has been largely focused on masculine-centered contexts (androcentrism) even in gender research (Riley & Evans, 2017). Like critiques of social class as a working-class issue, past work that has emphasized women in research often suggests perspectives that women need "fixing" (Ryan, 2023). In contrast, cultural participation has historically been considered part of female domains (Collins, 1992), shifting research narratives away from “women in a men’s world” toward one in which traditionally female contexts are equally valued for their own sake.

In addressing this topic through my thesis, I address the research gaps detailed above. I found patterns of gendered participation in both activities and events. Firstly, I consistently found that women and adolescent girls participate more both in the frequency and variety of participation, across activities participation, events attendance, and afterschool participation. There were also similar findings in the cluster analysis of both participation chapters (3 & 4), which approached the issue from a different perspective- that of grouping people by their participation patterns and identifying differences between groups. This also examined engagement by frequency and variety overall, allowing us to make inferences about gendered patterns in variety and frequency in activities and events engagement more generally. Specifically, chapter 3 showed that women were nearly 2.5 times more likely to be in a high activities’ participation group than men, while chapter 4 showed that women were more than 1.5 times more likely to be in a high event attendance group than men.

Taken together, these findings suggest that women and men still maintain the social spheres around cultural participation (through frequency of attendance or participation, and through the variety of types of attendance and participation) in the comparatively private contexts of cultural engagement through activities participation and events attendance (Collins, 1988). These findings are similar to findings by (Eccles et al., 2003) showing that adolescent girls participate in a wider variety of activities and with more frequency, and further extend these findings to adults. The gendered differences across both frequency and variety of participation demonstrate the "do it all" mentality, as demonstrated by the frequency and variety of cultural engagement, is an expression of the "Superwoman" identity of the modern women (Ringrose & Walkerdine, 2008) by doing it all even within the domains of activities and cultural event attendance. However, findings in chapter 5 show that increased participation provide mental health benefits and reduce mental health difficulties, suggesting that increased participation is a form of resilience rather than a burden on women. Further research will need to unpack the motivations, of these high rates of cultural participation among women.

Furthermore, our findings further develop on this by looking closer at the types of cultural engagement, which allow for more specific and contextual analysis of gender patterns around cultural engagement. This is the second type of gender patterns we identified in this thesis. In afterschool participation contexts, adolescent girls were twice as likely to do creative activities, though this effect size dropped in adult samples.

In adult samples, and when measured with more specific creative activities and events, it was found that women are particularly likely to engage in dance and craft activities, while men were more likely to engage in music activities. Specifically, within craft activities, women were 48 times more likely to participate in textile crafts, suggesting that textile crafts may be associated with female gender roles. However, within crafts, men were more likely to engage with woodcraft activities. This suggests that while the values of specific activities may be tied to specific gender roles, crafts may reflect the gender dimension more broadly.

An additional, but important finding was the observation that the gender gap in creative activity participation is much larger than the gender gap in sport participation, given that there has been more of a research focus on sport gender gaps (e.g., Chalabaev et al., 2013; Staurowsky et al., 2015) than on creative gender gaps. This is important, considering the attention that has been given to encouraging girls to participate in sport to reduce gender differences. However, these findings suggests that this creative participation gender gap has been overlooked, and that achieving gender equality may require some effort to reduce this gap as well.

Theoretical implications for Social Class

As discussed in the introduction chapter (1), Critical perspectives on social class argue that research on social class is largely focused on social class in working class contexts, and rarely extends to how social class structures work in other contexts. This oversight implies that social class is only relevant for the working class (Holt & Griffin, 2005). Additionally, past research that does focus on working class contexts is frequently situated in ways that often position working classes as deficient (Day et al., 2014). These are both important gaps in the literature. Importantly, past theories of associations between social class and cultural engagement have suggested that higher levels of social classes tend to engage in "elite" events (such as Ballet, theatre, the arts", Bourdieu, 1987). Contrary to this research, our findings have shown positive associations between higher levels of social class and higher participation (both as frequency of participation and variety of types of participation, where applicable) across *all* items and factors of both activities' participation and events attendance. While this indicates clear associations between higher levels of social class and higher participation, arguments around "elite" or "highbrow" types of activities are not supported, as social class was also positively associated with types of activities that are not considered "highbrow" (such as street art). If there were distinctions between types of activities, we would see items that were more highly associated with working class than upper/managerial social classes.

However, some events showed stronger effects of social class than others, and many of the events that showed the strongest were also the events that were part of the factor we called “classically defined events”. These have previously been called “highbrow” events, for their association with “highbrow” “elite” status, and included items such as ballet, plays and dramas, and the opera/operetta. The stronger class effects for attendance at these events does indicate that higher levels of social class do value these types of activities more, However, given that these items were the only items used to define and measure cultural participation in past research (e.g., (Katz-Gerro, 1999; Lagaert & Roose, 2018; Shin & Youn, 2020) rather than those more representative of the public’s interests (i.e., Film attendance), previous effects may have been misrepresented as larger than they were. Additionally, the key indicators of cultural engagement that did emerge (such as reading, film) were less stereotypically “highbrow” than the events used to indicate cultural engagement in past studies. For both reading and film, significant social class and gender differences were found, but the effect sizes were lower than that of classically defined activities. This further supports the finding that events that have previously been used to measure cultural participation may have over-emphasized the social class differences by focusing on events that are specifically “elite”.

An alternate perspective of the association between social class and cultural participation is that of the cultural omnivore hypothesis (Peterson, 1992), which argues that variety of participation are stronger class markers than the types of events themselves. In line with previous literature that also uses the cultural omnivore hypothesis (Katz-Gerro, 1999; van Hek & Kraaykamp, 2013), my findings show that participants in our sample who are from higher social class levels are more likely to be culturally engaged, through wider and more frequent participation, in activities and events. These findings would initially appear to support this hypothesis. In my cluster analyses, I also found that there were two categories of participation patterns, those who do not participate or who participate minimally, and those who participate both more frequently and more widely. Because clustering identifies participation patterns without a pre-determined structure (meaning that groups could have been clustered by type of participation), this provides strong evidence that participation patterns are more determined by frequency (supporting Peterson's cultural omnivore hypothesis) than by type (supporting Bourdieu's "elite" culture arguments). The high participation and high events attendance clusters were also associated with higher levels of social class, further supporting the argument that social class was associated with the variety of activities, not type of activities.

However, of those who engage more, they may not engage as broadly as implied in past research literature (DiMaggio & Mukhtar, 2004; Dimaggio & Useem, 1978; Peterson, 1992) suggest. In our studies, of the people who do lots of activities, they tended to do around 2-3 types of activities over the span of a year, and those who were high events attenders tended to attend 2-4 types of events on average over the span of a year. Our alternate findings may be due to a decrease in participation over time, which has been noted in previous studies on cultural participation (DiMaggio & Mukhtar, 2004; Rossman & Peterson, 2015).

We further extend the research through new findings of the frequency and variety analyses which show that the performance factor showed no significant differences between higher and middle classes, but both were significantly different from working class. This may indicate covert signalling (Smaldino, 2019) establishing symbolic group boundaries in social class (e.g., de Vries & Reeves, 2021). This has not been identified in previous literature. Participation in performance activities and attendance at events may subtly indicate middle- and upper-class status and identify those who are working class by their lack of experience or exposure. These findings suggest it may be useful for those who aim to reduce inequality by providing greater exposure to the Arts through focus on the performance arts specifically.

Performance, street art, and art exhibits.

Higher levels of cultural engagement in performance activities indicate the value groups have for these activities, reflecting the social values of the groups themselves (Glaveanu et al., 2019; Smith et al., 2013). Specifically, higher levels of cultural engagement were associated with higher levels of social class, therefore, these activities and events likely represent the values of higher social class levels more than working class values. All activity items with high effect sizes (play/drama, ballet, and street art) and classically defined events of note (classical music, opera/operetta, and ballet events) are also forms of performance.

In addition, we found new evidence that higher participation in performance activities may indicate symbolic group boundaries that may help to define higher/middle class groups from the working class. Combined with the observation that social class effects in cultural engagement were particularly strong in performance activities and events, this provides an opportunity for investment in performance activities and events that appeal to working-class people, to attempt to ameliorate some of these differences. However, funders should also be mindful that support for some performance activities and events may further deepen inequalities if the activities or events do not appeal to working-class people.

Social class, cultural participation, and mental health

Social class effects were found in differences of participation across types of activities and frequency of participation, with higher social class groups associated with higher participation in sport and creative activities, while working class groups were more likely to have higher participation in community clubs. While there were social class differences in how participation in community groups different may have mental health effects, these observations would need to be confirmed in follow-up analysis. There were no social class differences in the effects of number of group memberships or exercise effects on mental health.

Theoretical Intersectional implications

Past research on cultural participation has either individually investigated the influence of gender (Christin, 2012) or social class (Bourdieu, 1987; DiMaggio & Mukhtar, 2004; Peterson, 1992), however few studies have included both gender and social class together. Of those that have, (e.g., (Katz-Gerro, 1999; Lagaert & Roose, 2018) gender and social class were investigated as parallel research questions while interactions between the two were not tested. The current thesis addressed this gap. It was found that while gender and social class are simultaneously associated with participation, both in frequency and type of participation, these effects were largely separate and did not interact. In the few instances where analyses did show an interaction between social class and gender, we have observed effects that appear to be additive rather than multiplicative. The nature of these interactions has not been closely investigated in past research, so our findings contribute this knowledge to broader literature.

Additionally, previous research has defined cultural participation as participation across a range of selected items, whereas our analysis has taken a more specific contextual approach to analysis than these past studies through analysis of specific items rather than broad categories (e.g., ballet vs. dance). This contextual approach may be extremely important, according to early research in the "lens-based account of intersectional stereotyping" (Petsko et al., 2022; Petsko & Bodenhausen, 2020). This perspective argues that intersectional identities can be highly context dependent, such that one of the social categories or identities may not be considered relevant when stereotyping in a particular social context, may be perceived as a benefit in the context and therefore, may not significantly influence outcomes or may influence them in the opposite direction than expected. In this thesis, each activity and event that participants engage in has its own context regarding gender and social class (craft-making doesn't have the same cultural context as attending a rock concert, per se).

Women and those from higher levels of social class groups were more likely to participate in performance activities and events, and were found to be additive, rather than multiplicative effects. Though further research should pinpoint exact reasons why this may be, performance might provide a form of cultural escapism, either by becoming a character (activities participation) or watching others do so (attending events).

However, there may also be similar effects, in which both gender and class groups express values through the same behaviours. For example, women were more likely to engage in dance performance, while those from higher social class groups were more likely to engage in classically defined events and activities (e.g., ballet, opera, dramatic plays).

Serious and Casual leisure

As discussed in the introduction chapter (chapter 1), different types of leisure that can fulfil different purposes — rest, through casual leisure which I tied to events attendance, and self-improvement, through serious leisure in the form of activities participation. Empirical studies of both activities (chapter 3) and events (chapter 4) showed that people tend to attend events more than participate in activities, as evidenced by higher participation rates. This suggests that attending events may be easier for people to participate in than activities. Only by studying both activities and events alongside each other could this be identified, something that our work has contributed to research.

Furthermore, while events attendance may provide better social networking opportunities, and activities participation provides improved skills, mental health, and cognitive abilities. Given higher participation by both women and those of higher social class groups, there may be further implications as different skills are gained for each activity, reinforcing gender and social class differences in performance.

Politicisation

As discussed in the introduction and literature review chapters (1 & 2), participation in leisure activities is political in terms of those who have access and support to participate in leisure activities, as well as those who are seen as deserving of leisure in terms of gender and social class. In this thesis, there were some findings that support this argument. Firstly, across all relevant chapters, higher social class groups were more likely to participate frequently and in a wider variety of activities, suggesting that those with the resources to participate will do so at higher rates.

Secondly, specific types of activities or events showed gender or social class differences which aligned with social roles. These social roles may facilitate or create barriers to participation in particular types of activities. Gender roles could be seen most clearly in differences in participation in certain crafts — men were 5 times more likely than women to participate in woodworking crafts while women were 48 times more likely to participate in textile crafts than men. Social class roles were also shown quite clearly through attendance at events, specifically regarding upper class participation in classically defined events (opera, ballet, etc.). These findings show that where personal choices may seem “innocent” rather than influenced by social groups, gender and social class are strongly associated with cultural participation through frequency, variety of participation, and types of activities participated in, or events attended. Participation can be politicized to support and reinforce traditional values if the activities or events participated in are in line with social roles and given expectations.

However, politicization of leisure activities and cultural participation can also occur through acts of everyday resistance by using the types of activities in which people participate to resist traditional roles (Shaw, 2001). Here, participation can be used to either reject a traditional identity in favour of a conflicting identity, such as women's involvement in heavily physical and competitive sport (e.g., Women's participation in Roller Derby, Pavlidis & Fullagar, 2013; snowboarding mothers, Spowart et al., 2008) or to subvert or redefine the values and expression of a given identity way (ex. Female knitters using yarnbombing as political protest; (Hosegood, 2009). In both processes, participation in cultural activities can be a strategic mechanism of resistance against the traditional social values of a given social category, whereby the personal choice of cultural participation is an expression of individual agency. In chapter 3, I found higher male participation in music activities, (e.g., men were three times more likely to play an instrument for pleasure than women). Despite having higher participation by men, music careers are not considered to be normatively masculine and identities need to be negotiated (Ramirez, 2012) though the ways this occurs can differ by music genre (e.g., Crider, 2014; Eastman, 2012). Whether participation is used to strategically reinforce or challenge the identity stereotype of the wider group, participation is politicized. However, given accessibility issues associated with social class, only those who can participate in the first place are those who can use cultural participation to strategically alter their identity roles.

Furthermore, in both chapters 5 & 6, increased participation in activities was associated with improved mental health, showing that increased cultural participation does improve mental health outcomes (even while accounting for gender and social class). In addition to Beadleston et al. (2019), which shows increased cognitive abilities with increased participation, this shows that those who participate more in cultural activities may receive benefits which facilitate better quality of life and greater opportunities in society. As such, the group level associations of gender and social class on access to participation extends group differences into differing abilities and deepens divides between groups.

Practical and Applied Implications

In addition to the theoretical implications of the findings in this thesis, there are also several practical and applied implications. Firstly, in chapter 3, evidence was found that suggests that performance participation and attendance may be used as covert signalling by upper and middle classes to differentiate from working class groups. This may indicate that encouraging participation in the performing arts, whether through participating in activities or attending events, may be a way to reduce class differences. This may be a useful finding for educators and policymakers in justifying support for performance activities, as well as those working to reduce social class differences.

Secondly, also in chapter 3, reading books was found to be associated with participating in a wider range of activities, suggesting that improved access to reading may be useful in encouraging cultural participation in other domains. As such, public libraries remain a key resource both for improving accessibility and as a potential hub for hosting or dispersing information about other events or activities within communities. In encouraging cultural participation for the benefit of communities, this finding may be useful in justifying support to public libraries that may be facing budget cuts and in expanding the services of public libraries to include other cultural activities or events. Similarly, chapter 4 showed similar patterns in film attendance as facilitating attendance at other cultural events. This may be useful for marketing cultural events which may be of interest to the public. This finding may be most useful to those working in the film industry and to those seeking to market cultural events to the public.

Findings in chapters 5 and 6 both showed that after school participation in homework clubs was detrimental to mental health across both gender and social class groups. This is an important finding for educators and caregivers. While there may be cognitive benefits to after school homework club participation, the negative effects on mental health likely outweigh any academic benefits gained from participation. Because of this, offering after school homework clubs likely runs contrary to the aims of parents and educators to look after children. Therefore, it needs to be evaluated whether this is an activity worth continuing to support. There may also be additional implications for homework students are assigned on a regular basis and how this contributes to adolescent mental health.

Instead, other findings from chapters 5 and 6 suggest that after school participation provides benefits across types of activities. One particularly important finding of this thesis was identifying the gender gap in participation of creative activities in comparison to the gender gap in sport participation, whereby girls were more than twice as likely to participate in creative activities then boys. While it is important to continue encouraging girls to participate in sports to address the gender gap seemed there, less attention and effort has previously been given to the creative participation gender gap. Researchers, policy makers, educators and caregivers may find this finding important for addressing gender inequality.

Additionally, the highest mental health was found in those who participate most in creative activities across both gender and social class. There were additional benefits for girls. Additionally given findings in the adult sample showing covert signaling of social class for performance activities, school performances can provide several important roles in improving both mental health at an individual level, as well as helping to reduce social class disparity at a group level. This is important for educators, and caregivers to support and encourage adolescents to participate in these types of activities.

Sporting activities were also found to provide benefits across gender and social class, although individual sport provided less benefit than group sport. Boys had better mental health if they participated in group sport compared to their peers who participated in individual sport. This may be an indication of mental health benefits of belonging to a group. Girls were also found to benefit from sport activities, although they were particularly likely to gain benefits from exercise rather than group memberships.

There were also social class differences across participation in types of activities showing similar findings to those regarding gender, namely that creative activities and sport activities provide the highest mental health benefits. Findings in the present thesis, which support previous work (such as Wilson, 2002), show that higher levels of social class are associated with higher participation in sports and creative activities. In the current thesis higher benefits gained from creative activities and sport participation also accounted for social class differences, indicating that these benefits come from the activities themselves over and above the effect of social class. This is important for educators and educational policymakers to consider ways to address social class gaps in participation and creative and sport activities given that they provide the best mental health benefit, such as through programs that address barriers to participation (cost of supplies, transport, etc.).

Limitations

Despite these key contributions, there are limitations with the present research. Limitations that are specific to chapter have been discussed by chapter and include issues such as measurement inclusion of specific activities (e.g., activities related to cars), and missing measurement of subjective identification with groups. Methodological limitations that pervade secondary analysis research more broadly, such as a reliance on retrospective self-report measures and cross-sectional non-experimental designs. However secondary analysis allows researchers to observe trends across large data, which can inform more precise research questions and experimental designs. The next step will be to replicate these trends experimentally (where possible) while further extending findings.

Another limitation is that although a major justification of this research is to address issues of representation, much of the sample itself lacked the diversity needed to explore other relevant identities, such as ethnicity and nationality. Ethnicity was not included in the current research due to the low diversity of the sample, while nationality was limited to Great Britain as that was the population sampled. Categories measuring social class, gender, and ethnicity concurrently were too small to be statistically relevant, meaning that we are still unable to draw conclusions from any findings around ethnicity that may occur. Past associations between national or ethnic identities and cultural events such as parades (O'Donnell et al., 2016), sporting events (Neville & Reicher, 2013), and museums (Muldoon et al., 2017), have been identified, however, this research primarily focuses on Europe and North America (i.e., Christin, 2012; DiMaggio & Mukhtar, 2004; Lagaert & Roose, 2018; van Hek & Kraaykamp, 2013), creating a research gap that needs to be addressed in future research.

Future Directions

Future directions of this research should continue to extend the gaps identified in this work, such as continuing to use multivariate design and intersectional approaches, and expanded definitions of cultural participation.

An important consideration for future research is the potential differences in meaningfulness between participation in activities compared to attendance at events which may affect benefits gained. While attendance at singular events may be easier than sustained participation in activities, it may be that participation in activities may provide more meaningful connections than events (e.g. Making a scarf for a loved one, Liddle et al., 2013) which may affect how lasting any effects may be, as one is reminded of the person who made it every time the scarf is looked at, touched, or worn. Other subjective aspects of group identities also need to be considered in future research, such as subjective identification (the importance of an identity or role is to one's personal identity, Hogg, 2000). For example, it may be that women who perceive themselves to be more feminine may participate in culture more than those who perceive themselves as unfeminine. Likewise, men who place value in challenging gender norms may also be more likely to participate in culture as a way to challenge identities than men who value traditional masculinity. Thus, subjective identification is an important aspect of identity that was not measured in the datasets used in this thesis but is an important extension of the theory and may provide important knowledge about how and why cultural participation provides benefits through group memberships.

Future directions in cultural participation may also provide useful contexts for further work in developing theory about social identities. For example, cultural participation can be useful in exploring the differences between abstract group identities in which the physical presence of others may not be necessary to be part of the group (e.g., knitter, piano player) compared to direct participation (e.g., team sports). This may affect the subsequent benefits gained through participation. Alternately, there may be differences in the benefits gained from different identity levels, such as identities connected to social categories (e.g., gender and social class) compared to smaller but more direct groups (e.g., participating in local community clubs),

Finally, contextual differences in cultural participation need to be considered, such as cultural differences between individualistic or collectivistic groups. Because collectivistic groups place more importance on the connection to the group than on individual expression, there may be more expectation for people to participate. However, this may affect the ways in which people participate, as participation would need to align with group values rather than individual self-expression. As such, this may affect mental health in both positive and negative ways.

Conclusion

In the context of cultural participation research, the findings from this PhD thesis indicate that there are more nuances to cultural participation by social groups than was previously recognized, and that the type of activity/event is associated with different participation levels by groups.

While past research had identified group-based patterns in “elite” cultural engagement, it was still unclear whether some groups did not culturally engage, and therefore did not gain benefits, or if their forms of engagement have been overlooked and under-represented in research, which may have led to inequalities in policy and funding opportunities (Stanziola, 2021) as well as benefits of participating such as mental health. Our analysis suggests that for social class, some activities have indeed been overlooked (e.g., craft activities, attendance at films), which show higher overall participation than the “elite” cultural participation that has been classically measured (e.g., ballet, opera). This suggests that a wider measurement of participation does provide a clearer perspective of overall participation, and that lower class groups are not entirely disengaged from cultural participation. Still, lower status groups are indeed less engaged than higher social class levels, indicating that members of high-status groups may be gaining extra benefits from cultural engagement, such improved mental health benefits (chapter 6) and cognitive abilities (Beadleston et al., 2019), as well as opportunities for social inclusion with the wider community (Le et al., 2015).

Likewise, it was clear from past research that context matters for gender differences and that some forms of participation were underrepresented in research. Findings relating to gender challenge the assumption that the type of activity is an important element of women’s cultural participation. Instead, this thesis shows that frequency and variety are equally defining features. Additionally, higher engagement in cultural participation was associated with better mental health outcomes, suggesting that women are gaining more mental health benefits through increased cultural participation than men.

However, there was no evidence of overlapping effects of social class and gender in influencing participation. Further analysis showed that participation in activities does provide mental health benefits, both by the number of types of groups participated in and by specific activities across both gender and social class (separately).

More broadly, these findings contribute to psychology as a whole the knowledge that associations with gender and social class persist but are contextually dependent in settings of leisure activities, and that participation in cultural activities does lead to improved mental health. Given leisure activities are perceived as having some degree of choice or free will, this raises questions for future research in addressing issues of inequality within these groups.

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