

The Australian space of lifestyles in comparative perspective



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Abstract

This article (1) examines the social distribution of cultural practices in Australia, and (2) compares this with similar data for the UK in order to identify where and in what respects the social articulations of Australian cultural practices are distinctive. The article draws on the statistical data produced by the Australian Research Council-funded inquiry into Australian Everyday Cultures in the late 1990s and the data produced by the UK's 2003–6 Economic and Social Research Council inquiry into the relations between cultural capital and social exclusion in Britain. It reports the findings of a comparison of multiple correspondence analyses of the survey data for these two projects. The two spaces of lifestyle produced by these procedures show strong similarities with regard to their relations to class, age and gender as the three most significant axes of differentiation. There are, however, differences in the roles that specific cultural fields (the music, literary and media fields, for example) play relative to one another in the two national contexts. Class culture divisions also appear more attenuated in the Australian than in the British case, with a significant clustering of classes in the middle of the space of lifestyles. However, working-class tastes and those of professionals appear strongly polarised in Australia while managers and professionals are more distinctive in their cultural practices than are their British counterparts.

Keywords: age, class, cultural practice, gender, multiple correspondence analysis, space of lifestyles

To what extent are cultural fields in a globalised world nationally specific?¹ That question has grown in importance since the publication of *Distinction* (Bourdieu, 1984). Posed initially as a set of questions concerning how far the peculiarities of the French cultural field in the 1960s (the central role of the state; the distinctive qualities of the education system) apply elsewhere (Lamont, 1992), it has been displaced, in more recent literature, by an accumulating body of evidence about the specific characteristics of other national cultural fields (see, for example, Cvetičanin and Popescu, 2011; Gripsrud et al., 2011; Prieur and Savage, 2011).

It is to this second enterprise that we contribute here. We first present the results of a multiple correspondence analysis (MCA) of the data produced by the Australian Everyday Cultures (AEC) survey that was conducted in the mid 1990s, and then compare these findings with those produced by the MCA that was applied to the data produced by the UK Cultural Capital and Social Exclusion (CCSE) survey conducted a little short of a decade later. We do so with a view to considering how far the social articulations of cultural practices in 1990s Australia approximate to, or differ from, those found in the United Kingdom.² We have selected this point of comparison partly because, while their trajectories are likely to become increasingly diverse, the British and Australian cultural fields are still closely connected through language, cultural and media networks, and relations of historical affiliation. Britain therefore provides the most meaningful point of reference for a comparative analysis concerned to identify those distinctive aspects of the social organisation of Australian cultural practices that might merit closer attention in future research.

There is also a more pragmatic reason for this choice. Cross-cultural comparisons are, of course, beset with methodological difficulties and we shall review these – and the ways in which we have addressed them – at appropriate points in the analysis. Suffice it to say here that our primary concern has been to model the design of the Australian MCA as closely as possible on the procedures used for the UK MCA to permit broadly based comparisons to be made regarding the organisation and composition of the two spaces of lifestyles and their connections to social divisions. Even so, our conclusions are cautious and provisional, identifying questions for further investigation, rather than being definitive. This is particularly so as far as the differences between the two studies are concerned. Our findings regarding the similarities are rather more robust in the respect that the most statistically significant axes of differentiation produced by the two MCAs show strong similarities with regard to both the distribution of modalities of cultural taste and participation across the two spaces of lifestyles, and the connections between those axes of differentiation and pertinent social divisions. In rough summary, the first and most significant axis of differentiation is, in both cases, organised mainly in relation to forms and levels of cultural participation which are most strongly related to social class indicators;

the second axis, where indices of cultural tastes and participation are more equally weighted, connects most strongly with age; and the third axis, where tastes prove more significant than indicators of participation, correlates most strongly with gender. There is, however, also evidence of significant differences that warrant further investigation. These concern, first, differences in the roles that specific cultural fields (the music, literary and media fields, for example) play relative to one another in the two national contexts; and, second, the ways in which cultural divisions connect with social divisions of class in the two studies. There are three issues here. First, class–culture divisions appear more attenuated in the Australian than in the British case, with a significant clustering of classes in the middle of the space of lifestyles. Second, and as the chief exception to this, the division between the working class and professionals is more strongly polarised in Australia while, third, managers and professionals seem to be more clearly separated from each other with regard to their cultural practices than are their British counterparts.

We return to these comparisons, and the degrees of reliance that might be placed on them, in the final section of the article. First, though, we look more closely at the methods used in the two studies in order to identify the strengths and limitations of the comparisons we are able to make. We pay particular attention here to the comparability of the procedures used in the design of the two MCAs. We then look more closely at the construction of the space of lifestyles produced by the Australian MCA before looking at the connections between this space and social class indicators, age and gender. These analyses will set the scene for our concluding discussion of the most significant differences suggested by comparing the AEC and CCSE MCAs.

Methodological perspectives

The similarities between the two projects are soon stated. Both were based on national surveys of cultural practices and preferences designed to identify aspects of cultural tastes, participation and knowledge as indices of cultural capital and to correlate them with indicators of economic and social capital and a range of socio-demographic indicators.³ The questionnaires for both surveys drew on focus group discussions designed to tease out the cultural interests of different social groups identified in terms of gender, class, ethnicity, level of education and, in the Australian study, Aboriginal identification. Both surveys were supplemented by follow-up interviews with representatives of the survey sample.⁴ These were selected to allow the research teams to explore particular areas of cultural practice in greater detail, particularly with a view to unravelling the social logics informing their relations to class position, age or gender – or, of course, combinations of these. The two studies were conducted roughly a decade apart: the AEC survey was in the field between October 1994 and March

1995; that for CCSE was administered between November 2003 and April 2004. While this temporal lag brings with it the danger that we are not comparing like with like, the questions asked in each survey are for the most part not strongly affected by cultural change (the major exception of course has to do with the digital media, and we have omitted questions in this area). There are also significant differences between the two studies. The surveys were administered by different methods to national samples which differed in size and in the modes of their construction.⁵ The CCSE sample comprised a main sample and an ethnic boost sample, and also included interviews with a specially recruited cohort of economic and political elites, whereas the AEC study was limited to a main sample. While both studies surveyed cultural practices across a range of cultural fields, the scope of these was broader in the AEC questionnaire, which included a greater range of domestic cultural practices and also surveyed holiday and gambling practices. And while many questions asked were similar, others differed with regard to both their specific content and their form.

Although it is important to register these differences, we have taken a number of steps to limit their bearing on our comparisons of the MCAs conducted for the two studies. We shall explore the properties of MCA more fully shortly. Suffice it to say for now that this is the method through which the relations between cultural practices are plotted into a visual representation of the space of lifestyles where their relations to socio-demographic variables can then also be examined. The MCA for the UK study was performed solely on the main sample for this project, and was thus congruent with the MCA on the Australian data in this respect. When account is taken of the individuals excluded from the two MCAs because they had failed to respond to an adequate range of questions, the UK MCA refers to 1529 individuals whereas that for Australia refers to 2715 individuals (of whom 2154 were retained for the purposes of class analysis).⁶ The questions selected for the Australian MCA approximated as closely as possible those included in the British study and focused, in both cases, on cultural tastes as expressed by likes and dislikes (with a greater stress on the latter in the UK study) and on cultural participation.⁷ Questions concerning the extent and kind of respondents' cultural knowledge were not included in either case. When passive modalities – those recruiting a response rate of less than 4% – were excluded, the Australian MCA comprised 29 questions, 16 of which focused on taste and 13 on participation, encompassing 102 active modalities – that is, particular practices – 38 of which deal with participation and 64 with taste. The UK MCA comprised 41 questions, 24 focused on taste and 17 on participation, encompassing 166 active modalities.

The questions were, in both cases, spread across seven fields: television, film, music, literature, visual art, culinary practices and sport.⁸ The distribution of questions across these fields was the same with regard to film, visual

Table 1: Active modalities, AEC and CCSE

<i>Field</i>	<i>AEC</i>	<i>CCSE</i>
Television	11	23
Film	13	20
Music	21	38
Literary	17	25
Visual art	12	23
Culinary	16	16
Sport	12	21
Total	102	166

art, culinary practices and sport. There was a greater focus on the music, literary and, to a lesser extent, television fields, particularly with regard to tastes, in the questions included in the UK MCA. The active modalities were spread across the different fields (see Table 1), thus securing, in both cases, a reasonable balance between them in the construction of the space of lifestyles rather than any one field preponderating unduly. The coding of questions included in the two MCAs followed similar procedures, albeit that some options included in the UK study were not possible with the Australian data owing to the wording of the survey questions; in the former, some tastes were coded as like, dislike or indifferent, whereas only like and, less frequently, dislike responses could be coded for the Australian data. Similarly, the framing of participation questions for the latter usually permitted only yes/no coding options whereas infrequent participation could sometimes also be coded in relation to the UK data. These considerations account for a good deal of the difference in the totals of active modalities in the two MCAs.

MCA is a form of geometric data analysis which produces two clouds: the cloud of individuals and the cloud of modalities (see further Rouanet and Le Roux, 2005). The former plots onto geometric space the supplementary (demographic) information for the individuals in the survey. Sub-clouds of individuals can then be generated in relation to each variable – for occupational class, level of education, gender, and so on – whose mean points can be put into correspondence with the modalities constituted by the cloud of modalities. These modalities are disposed relationally to one another depending on the degree to which there is overlapping participation in, or liking for, particular cultural practices. Where there is a large degree of overlap between liking, disliking, taking part in or shunning particular kinds of cultural activity, these modalities are placed close to one another in the space of lifestyles. Where such overlap is small, modalities are distanced from one another across either the west–east or the north–south axes of the space of lifestyles. The construction of this space is based

entirely on the relative disposition of the modalities, where each modality represents the mean point of the individuals who like, dislike, take part in or shun the practice in question. The organisation of this space is thus indifferent to the social characteristics of those individuals, and its construction is therefore entirely inductive. The correspondences between individuals' social characteristics and the relative positioning of cultural tastes and practices within the space of lifestyles is possible only when different sub-clouds of individuals (class, gender, etc.) are fed into that space.

We shall then, in accordance with the principles of this method, present our findings concerning the organisation of the Australian space of life styles first and consider its social articulations only when its dispositional qualities have been determined. The social articulations we shall explore will be determined by how many axes of differentiation are pertinent to the interpretation of the space of lifestyles. Employing the same tests as the UK study,⁹ four statistically significant axes of variation were identified. The first three of these (and particularly the first two) were far more important than the fourth. We therefore focus on the first three axes, which account for a cumulated modified rate of 82% of the total variance in the cloud of modalities (compared with 78% for the UK data). The contributions of the seven fields to this variance and, within each field, the relative contributions to such variance made by the taste and participation modalities, are broadly similar in the two studies (Tables 2 and 3). The main differences here are registered in relation to the culinary and visual art fields and, to a lesser extent, television.

Table 2: AEC – Contribution of the seven fields to total variance according to participation and taste (percentages)

<i>Heading</i>	<i>TV</i>	<i>Film</i>	<i>Music</i>	<i>Literary</i>	<i>V. Art</i>	<i>Culinary</i>	<i>Sport</i>	<i>Total</i>
Participation	2.7	2.7	5.8	5.5	4.2	5.3	4.1	30.3
Taste	8.1	11.0	14.8	12.2	4.0	10.8	8.7	69.7
Total	10.8	13.6	20.6	17.8	8.2	16.2	12.8	100.0

Table 3: CCSE – Contribution to total variance of the seven fields by participation and taste (percentages)

<i>Frequency by subfield</i>	<i>TV</i>	<i>Films</i>	<i>Reading</i>	<i>Music</i>	<i>Visual Art</i>	<i>Eating out</i>	<i>Sport</i>	<i>Total</i>
Participation	3.2	1.6	4.0	7.9	6.3	3.2	4.0	30.2
Taste	11.2	12.1	11.2	11.2	9.7	6.4	8.1	69.8
Total	14.4	13.7	15.2	19.1	16.0	9.6	12.1	100.0

The clouds of modalities which make up the two spaces of lifestyles are thus broadly comparable in their composition. The relative total contributions of taste and participation modalities are virtually identical across the two studies. Rather more important for our purposes, however, is the strong degree of correspondence in the relative contributions that modalities of taste and participation make to the first three axes across the two MCAs. In the case of the Australian data, participation modalities account for most (64%) of the variance on the first and most important axis whereas, on the second axis, the contributions of taste and participation are weighted at 50% each (Table 4). On the third axis, the role of taste eclipses that of participation, accounting for 80% of the variance. On the first axis, then, the distinctions between what people choose to do, or not do, are more consequential than expressions of likes or dislikes; on the second axis, these are more or less evenly balanced; and on the third axis, likes and dislikes trump elective forms of participation. The pattern in the UK data is similar for the first and third axes, but less so for the second, with participation/taste ratios as follows: axis 1 – 60/40; axis 2 – 37/63; axis 3 – 15/85 (Table 5). We can also note that the relative contributions of the music, literary and visual art modalities to the first axis are similar, and the most significant, across the two studies. Music also stands out as the most strongly differentiating field on axis 2 of both studies. The third axis shows a greater and more mixed set of differences.

The Australian space of lifestyles

We turn now to examine how, in the Australian MCA, these first three axes translate into visual mappings of the most significant differences in the distribution of tastes and forms of participation across the Australian space of lifestyles. We look first at how all of the 102 active modalities are arrayed across this space. This will serve a number of purposes. It will allow us to identify how the questions we included in the AEC MCA have been translated into visual form, the symbols used to differentiate cultural fields, and those used to identify dispositions of taste and participation. It will also serve a more theoretical purpose. With the recent resurgence of interest in applying the principles of MCA to the analysis of cultural data, there is a tendency to present only those visual maps which identify the modalities which are most sharply distinct from one another in terms of their distribution across the space of lifestyles. While these are understandably a primary focus of attention, account also needs to be taken of the commingling of those modalities which, typically clustered together in the middle of the space of lifestyles, indicate areas of broadly shared tastes. This is a useful precaution against the tendency to over-polarise tastes. While this has been a long-standing criticism of Bourdieu's work, it is one that has acquired a particular salience in the wake of Bernard Lahire's contentions regarding

Table 4: AEC – Contribution of the seven fields to the first three axes according to participation and taste (percentages)

Heading	Axis 1			Axis 2			Axis 3		
	Participation	Taste	Total	Participation	Taste	Total	Participation	Taste	Total
TV	1.0	2.2	3.2	0.2	9.0	9.2	0.8	20.5	21.3
Film	3.7	3.7	7.3	5.7	4.2	9.9	1.1	10.9	12.0
Music	17.7	7.3	25.0	25.1	22.4	47.5	2.1	4.0	6.1
Literary	17.6	4.6	22.1	0.8	3.0	3.8	1.2	16.2	17.3
V. Art	19.3	8.8	28.1	2.9	1.9	4.8	2.3	2.4	4.6
Culinary	3.1	8.0	11.1	7.5	5.5	13.0	1.7	14.3	16.0
Sport	1.2	2.0	3.2	7.5	4.4	11.9	11.4	11.3	22.7
Total	63.6	36.4	100.0	49.7	50.4	100.0	20.5	79.5	100.0

Table 5: CCSE – Contribution of modalities from each cultural subfield to the variations on each axis (percentages)

Subfields	Axis 1			Axis 2			Axis 3		
	Participation	Taste	Total	Participation	Taste	Total	Participation	Taste	Total
TV	4.5	2.9	7.4	0.2	6.5	6.7	0.2	22.1	22.3
Film	3.7	2.1	5.8	2.9	10.2	13.1	1.3	18.0	19.2
Literary/reading	9.5	13.5	23.0	2.6	7.0	9.6	0.9	18.3	19.2
Music	14.9	10.3	25.2	19.5	25.9	45.4	2.5	7.5	10.0
V. Art	21.1	2.6	23.7	4.1	4.2	8.2	1.4	6.8	8.2
Eating	3.6	5.7	9.3	4.0	5.4	9.4	3.4	1.4	4.8
Sport	3.0	2.4	5.4	3.7	3.8	7.6	5.3	11.0	16.3
Total	60.4	39.6	100.0	37.0	63.0	100.0	15.1	84.9	100.0

through less frequent ones (=) to nil (-) levels of eating out, going to the cinema or reading books, for example. Yes/no for all symbols refer either to activities participated in or not (writing and drawing, going to live music, rock or orchestral concerts, for example) or to ownership of pertinent cultural items (original paintings and drawings, limited-edition prints, art posters). While most of the labels are self-explanatory, some need a little unpacking, particularly in the culinary domain where Ff refers to frequency of eating out at fast-food outlets, and where the various references to Guest indicate different preferred styles of home entertaining, ranging from serving something special through to just serving the usual fare. The references to actor, plot, director and reviews in the film domain are to the factors that are most important to individuals in deciding whether or not to watch a particular film. There are two participation labels in the sports domain referring to whether individuals play any particular sport regularly or not at all, and whether or not they watch sport at live venues. The symbols for particular sports played are ball sport (baseball, basketball, netball, softball, volleyball), water sport (sailing, scuba diving, swimming, water polo, water skiing, fishing and surfing), racquet sport (tennis, badminton, squash), football/rugby (all the codes, including touch football and AFL), cricket etc. (cricket, indoor cricket and lawn bowls), athletic sport (athletics, gymnastics, jogging, power walking, running, walking, weight lifting, weight training) and golf (standing only for itself).

Figure 2 plots the distribution of those modalities which account for the greatest degree of statistical variation in the analysis. The interpretation of this axis relies on the selection of those modalities whose contributions exceed the average contribution (0.98%) to this axis. There are 34 such modalities accounting for 85% of the variance of axis 1. We can see that this first axis of differentiation – arrayed from west to east – is organised primarily in terms of participation or non-participation in legitimate forms of culture and, secondarily, in terms of preferences for popular or legitimate forms. The right of the axis is thus dominated by participation in museums and art galleries; going to orchestral concerts, the theatre, or the opera; owning original paintings, limited-edition prints and art posters; and reading books, drawing and writing. Owning of art objects proved particularly significant here, accounting for 44% of the variation. Taste preferences are for classical music, film dramas and novels and, in the culinary field, for wine. The symbols in the western end of the map indicate zero to low levels of participation in all these forms of legitimate culture: little or no participation in theatre-going, going to art galleries, museums, orchestral concerts, or the opera; very little engagement with painting or drawing; and low levels of ownership of books and art objects. There are lower levels of participation, too, in cinema-going and eating out. With regard to tastes, a dislike of classical music is accompanied by a liking for film westerns, country and folk music, televised sport and beer.¹⁰

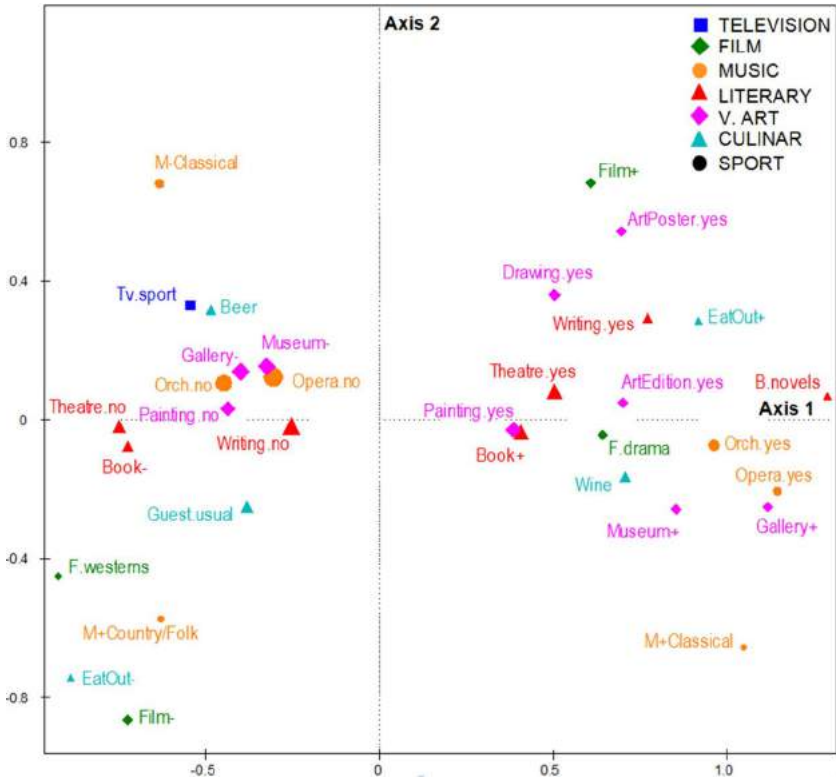


Figure 2: AEC – The modalities contributing most to Axis 1

Looking now at the second most significant axis of differentiation, the 34 categories selected for the interpretation of this axis account for 83% of the variance (Figure 3). The most immediately observable distinguishing characteristic here consists in the significance of music (accounting for 48% of the variance) in differentiating the north and south ‘poles’. We find, in the north of the map, a liking for contemporary musical forms (liking rock and popular music accounting for 9% of the variation) matched by high levels of participation in rock concerts and live music venues (15%), and a dislike for classical and religious music. This pattern is reversed in the southern half of the map where a positive taste for classical, light classical and country and western genres is counterbalanced by low levels of participation in popular music venues (9%) and a dislike of heavy metal. There is not, though, any evidence of high levels of participation in opera or orchestral music concerts. The other key organising feature of the north–south axis is that between active participation in sports in the north and the absence of such participation in the southern part of the map. Going

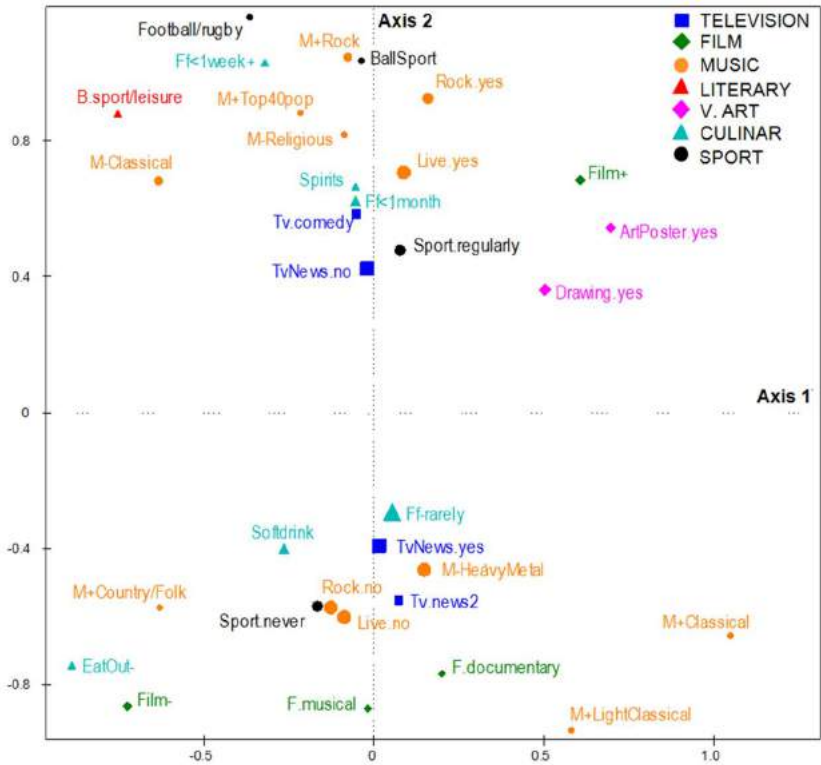


Figure 3: AEC – The modalities contributing most to Axis 2

out – to the cinema and to fast-food outlets – is also more prevalent in the north. Television news is strongly liked in the south but not in the north, where a liking for comedy shows as the most active television preference. Tastes for specific film genres register as significant only in the south – for film musicals and documentaries – whereas art practices (owning art posters and drawing) register only in the north.

Looking, finally, at the third axis of differentiation in the Australian space of lifestyles (Figure 4), the 23 categories selected here account for 79% of the variation. Sport figures very strongly in the upper half of the map, with high levels of regular participation in sport. Playing golf and cricket are particularly popular here. Watching sport on television and reading sport/leisure genres are also popular. Taken collectively, the sport modalities account for 25% of the variance here. There is a strong documentary flavour to other cultural tastes – documentary films, television news and historical books. Western and adventure films are the only fictional genres that register. We note, finally, high levels of museum visitation

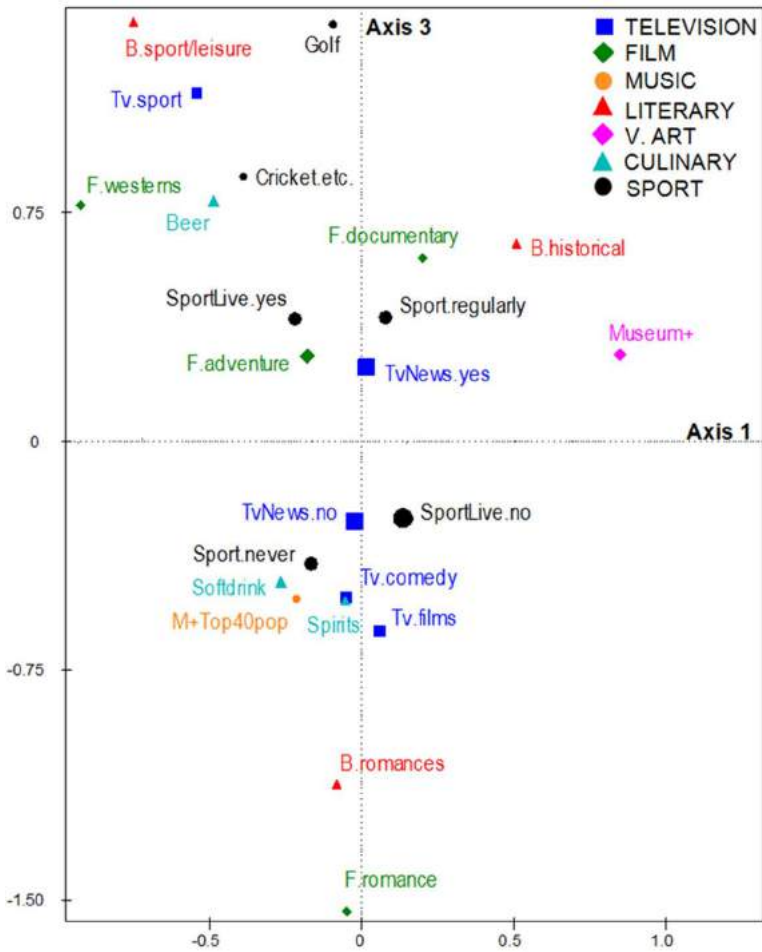


Figure 4: AEC – The modalities contributing most to Axis 3

and a liking for beer in the two upper quadrants. If this last taste is contrasted, in the southern half of the map, by a liking for soft drinks and spirits, the north and south axes are most significantly contrasted in the lack of interest in sport and in documentary or factual genres in the south, and the marked preference, in both film and literary tastes, for romances.

In summary, then, cultural tastes and practices in the Australian data are most significantly differentiated in terms of relative degrees of engagement in cultural activities with a high degree of legitimacy. Second in importance are divisions across, generally speaking, more modern and traditional cultural tastes and pursuits with, third, a set of divisions between genres invested with different values (factual, fictional) and between levels of participation in physical activities. We have also seen that each of these axes of

differentiation is strongly marked by practices from different fields: the art field for the first axis, music for the second, and sport for the third. We now go on to examine how each of these axes connects with social divisions.

The social organisation of the Australian space of lifestyles

As we noted earlier, MCA allows us to generate two overlapping clouds: a cloud of modalities showing the scattering of cultural preferences and participation across a geometric space; and a cloud of individuals distributed across the same space, from which we can extrapolate the mean points for sub-classes organised by socio-demographic variables. It is the mapping of those sub-classes onto the cloud of modalities that makes possible the form of analysis traditionally undertaken by sociology: a correlation of cultural practices and preferences with the variables of age, gender, income, education and so on.

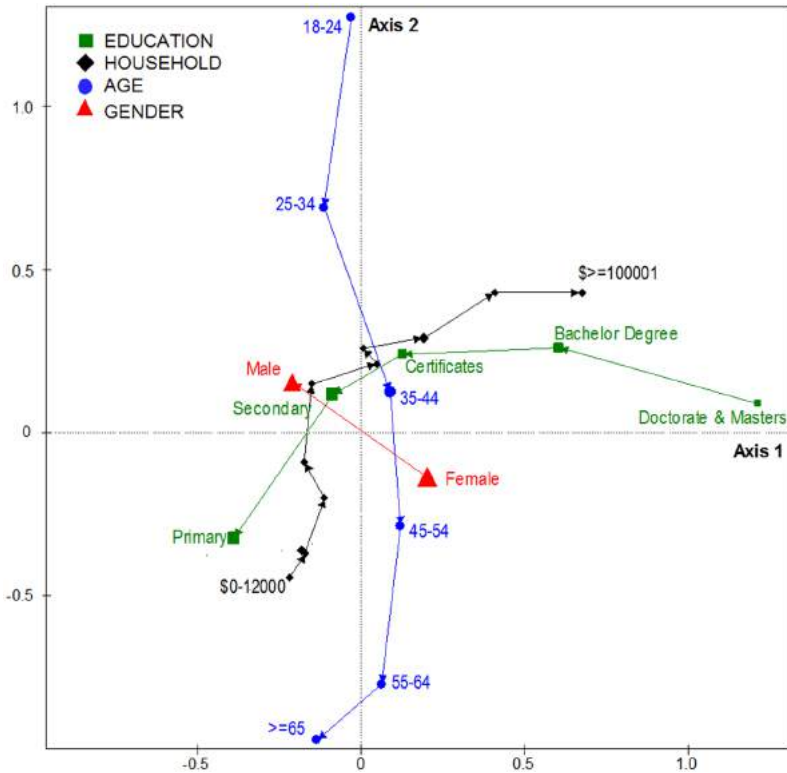


Figure 5: AEC – Supplementary variables: gender, age, education and household income in the cloud of modalities

We begin by mapping these four variables onto axes 1 and 2 (Figure 5). We have designated axis 1, which runs horizontally, as establishing a continuum from relative disengagement in 'legitimate' cultural activities on the west to heavy involvement in them on the east of the space of lifestyles. On this axis there is a strong correlation with level of education (the most educated have the strongest levels of participation in high culture, the least educated have the weakest levels) and, apart from the lower income levels, a correlation with income; levels of income are also correlated, especially at the lower levels, with the south–north axis 2, which, in its most significant aspects, runs from 'traditional' to 'modern' tastes: the higher the income, the more modern the tastes.

Axis 2, running vertically, has a particularly strong correlation with age; as you move south from youth to age, you are likely to move from 'modern' to 'traditional' preferences. Finally, gender cuts diagonally across the two axes to indicate higher levels of involvement in legitimate culture and more traditional tastes on the part of women, and lower levels of involvement in legitimate culture together with more 'modern' tastes on the part of men. When we map these four variables onto the third axis of differentiation (Figure 6), which runs vertically from a liking for romances and a lack of interest in sport in the south of the Figure to strong levels of participation and interest in sport in the north, we find that this axis is correlated to some extent with age (increasing age runs from south to north), but very strongly with gender. The distinction in terms of cultural preferences between women and men is, we might say, the 'meaning' of this axis.

One way of rendering graphic the social organisation of the space of lifestyles is to examine individuals occupying extreme positions in the cloud of modalities. We compare below two individuals representing the polar extremes of this first axis of differentiation.

Individual 998, occupying the centre of the far left side of the axis, is an unemployed man aged between 25 and 34 and earning less than \$12,000 p.a. He watches television extensively (10 to 29 hours a week), particularly comedy shows and the news. He likes westerns, and he chooses films that have striking special effects. He likes pop music, dislikes classical music and does not attend musical concerts of any kind. He reads about three books a year, mostly adventure books; he does not write; he does not go to the theatre or to museums or art galleries; he owns no artwork of any kind; he eats at fast-food outlets (at least once a week), not at restaurants, and his preferred drink is beer. He does not play sport, but goes to matches.

By contrast, *Individual 1279*, occupying the centre of the far right of the axis, is a professional woman aged between 25 and 34, with a bachelor's degree and earning between \$40,000 and \$50,000 p.a. She watches television for less than nine hours a week, and her preferred programs are the news and films. She goes to the movies frequently and prefers dramas, which she chooses according to who is acting in them. She goes to rock and

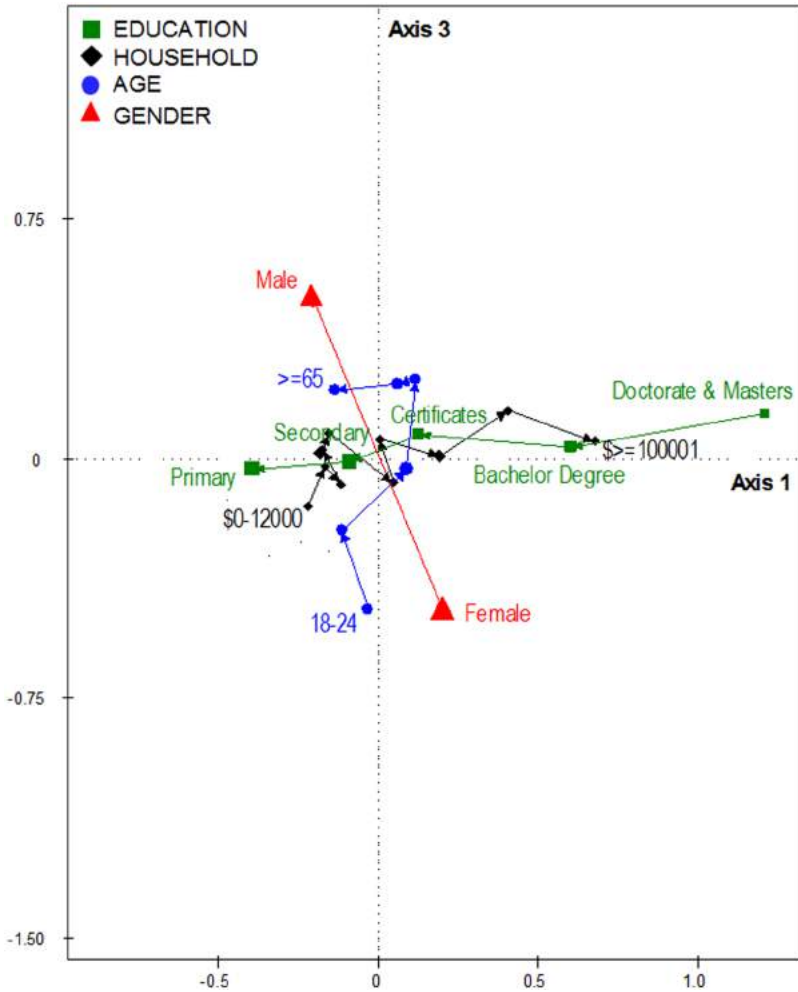


Figure 6: AEC – Gender, age, education and household income in the cloud of modalities

orchestral concerts and the opera, likes the blues and soul and dislikes heavy metal. She reads a book a week, mostly novels, and she writes herself. She goes to the theatre and to museums and art galleries. She owns drawings, paintings and art posters but no limited-edition prints. She eats frequently at restaurants but not at fast-food outlets, and her preferred drink is wine. She engages in sport (athletics), but does not go to sporting events.

These are extremes, almost caricatures; but they display with great clarity the distinguishing features of the statistically most significant axis of cultural differentiation, that which maps degree of cultural involvement. The picture is considerably complicated when we look more closely at how

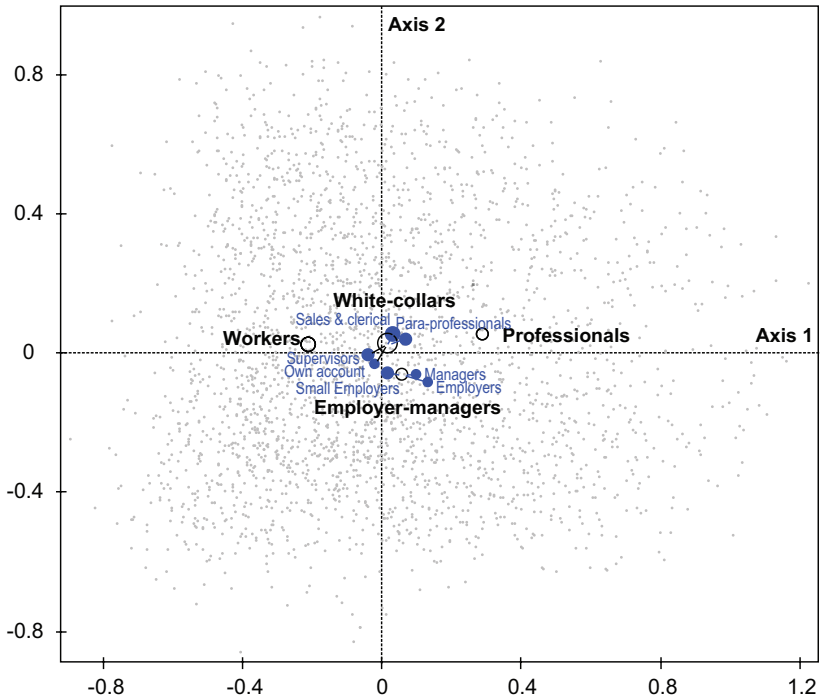


Figure 7: AEC: Occupational group mean points in the cloud of individuals (Axes 1 and 2)

class differences map onto this space of lifestyles. The original Australian study worked with an eight-class model constructed on the basis of relation to the means of production (being an employer, an employee or self-employed); occupation; supervisory status; and education as a marker of difference between professionals and para-professionals.¹¹ For the purposes of this comparative study we reduced the Australian class model to a smaller number of classes. The statistical clusterings generated by MCA gave rise to a four-class model comprising a class of manual workers (19.7%); a white-collar class (50%) made up of sales and clerical workers (23.1%), supervisors (9.9%), own-account workers (7.9%) and para-professionals (9.1%); an employer-manager class (16.8%) made up of the small employers (9.4%), larger employers (2.2%), and managers (5.2%); and a class of professionals (13.4%) (Figure 7).

This model foregrounds a sharp differentiation between manual workers and professionals which shows up in the way these two groups map onto the space of modalities, especially along the axis of engagement. It also divides other occupational groups into two classes, which cluster around the middle of the cloud at the intersection of axes 1 and 2, according to similarities in the location and shape of the concentration ellipses formed around their mean points. Figure 9 shows the ellipses formed by

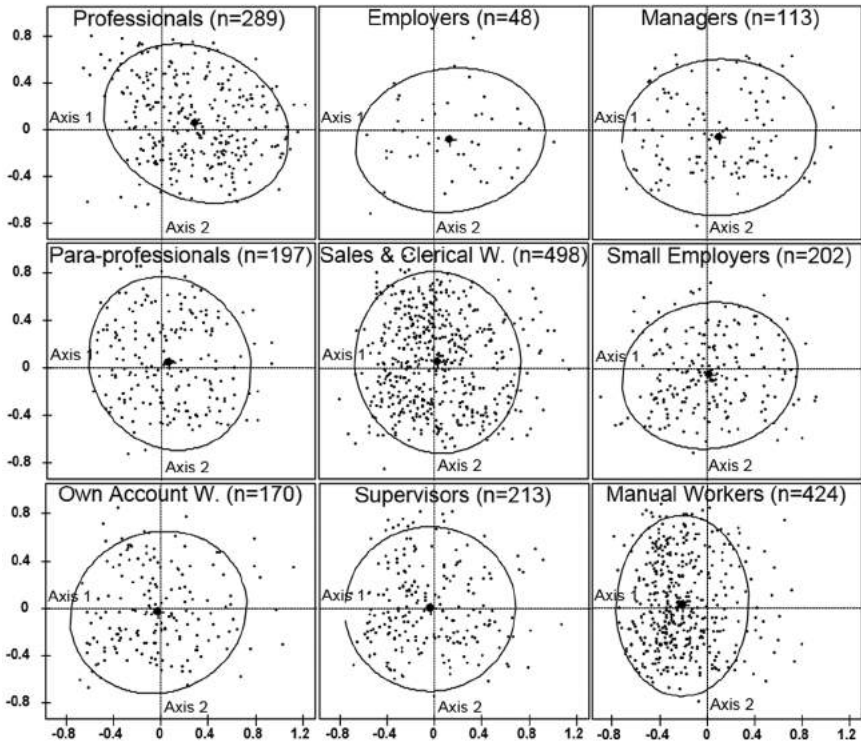


Figure 8: AEC – The sub-clouds of the occupational groups with their concentration ellipses on Axes 1 and 2

these four groups in relation to axes 1 and 2. It indicates the relative proximity of the white-collar and employer-manager groups as well as the degree of distance between manual workers and professionals.

For each of these groups we can isolate the modalities of participation and taste in which they are over-represented. For *professionals* (see Table 6)¹² the 23 over-represented modalities concern a range of high-cultural practices (opera, theatre, art galleries, movies, concerts and so on) and preferences for classical music, novels, and athletic and racquet sports. For *employer-managers* (see Table 7) three of the five over-represented categories refer to possessing artworks and not going to concerts, especially rock concerts. A further two have to do with playing golf and disliking heavy metal music, bringing this class closer in this respect to professionals. For *white-collar workers*, no categories are under- or over-represented, which means that this class has no statistically distinctive cultural practices and tastes. For *manual workers* (see Table 8), finally, 19 categories are over-represented. Eleven categories of participation define this class as uninterested in high-cultural practices, and as participating as spectators but not as players of sport. Categories of taste

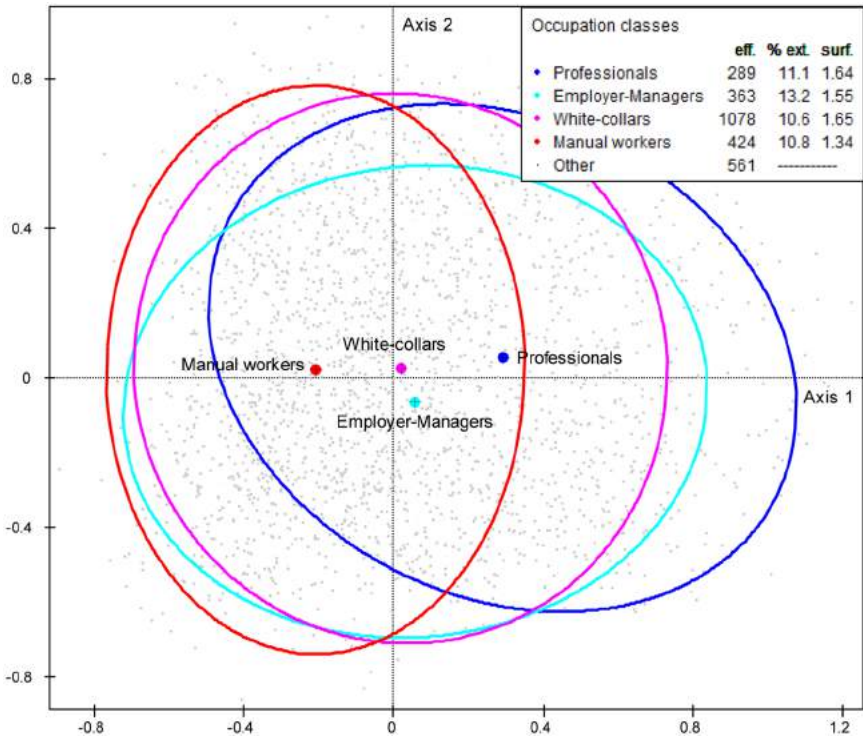


Figure 9: AEC – The concentration ellipses of the four occupational classes on Axes 1 and 2

include disliking classical music but liking country/folk music, together with liking beer, watching sport on television, watching films for the sake of the actors, and serving guests with the food that is normally served in the house.

In summary, then, Australians are most strongly divided in their cultural pursuits in terms of their class as marked by a range of social class indicators (income, level of education) and by occupational class position. Age then articulates a powerful set of distinctions between ‘traditional’ and ‘modern’ tastes, followed, third but still significantly, by a set of gendered divisions. While the initial analysis of the Australian data identified the importance of all of these social divisions, the MCA we have applied here has clarified their relative importance as well as identifying the regions of cultural practice with which they most strongly articulate. As we noted at the outset, however, this MCA was modelled closely on that for the UK study in order that we might, by comparing the two, be able to identify how far and in what respects the social organisation of the Australian space of lifestyles exhibits distinctive characteristics. It is to this matter that we now turn.

Table 6: Class of professionals (n = 289; 13.4%): the 23 over-represented categories

Variable labels	Categories (k)	% of k in class c(f_k^c)	% of k(f_k)	f_k^c / f_k	p-value	Absolute freq.
MusOrch	Orch.yes	54.0	31.7	22.3	0.000	683
Theatre	Theatre.yes	78.9	58.9	20.0	0.000	1268
Writing	Writing.yes	41.2	23.1	18.1	0.000	498
MusOpera	Opera.yes	35.6	19.8	15.9	0.000	426
Art_Gallery	Gallery+	43.3	26.9	16.3	0.000	580
Bk_Freq	Book+	68.2	51.1	17.1	0.000	1101
TVfreq	TV.0-9	37.4	23.8	13.6	0.000	512
Art_Poster	ArtPosters.yes	30.8	19.2	11.6	0.000	414
Art_Edition	ArtEdition.yes	27.0	16.2	10.8	0.000	348
Art_Drawing	Drawing.yes	41.5	29.2	12.3	0.000	629
Art_Museum	Museum+	39.8	27.8	12.0	0.000	598
Art_Paintings	Painting.yes	67.1	55.3	11.8	0.000	1191
FilmFreq	Film+	30.1	21.1	9.0	0.000	455
SportLive	SportLive.no	69.2	60.1	9.1	0.000	1295
SportFreq	Sport.regularly	46.7	38.9	7.9	0.002	837
DrinkTaste	Wine	42.6	26.0	16.5	0.000	561
MusicLike	M+Classical	21.1	9.8	11.3	0.000	212
Bk_Taste	B.novels	14.9	6.0	8.8	0.000	130
SportPlay	AthleticSport	12.8	6.8	6.0	0.000	147
SportPlay	RacquetSport	17.0	11.3	5.7	0.001	243
FilmTaste	F.reviews	18.7	12.9	5.8	0.002	278
GuestTaste	Guest.special	39.1	32.4	6.7	0.006	698
FilmTaste	F.plot	48.4	41.9	6.5	0.010	903

Table 7: Class of employer-managers ($n = 363$; 16.9%): the five over-represented categories

<i>Variable labels</i>	<i>Categories (k)</i>	<i>% of k in class $c(f_k^c)$</i>	<i>% global of k (f_k)</i>	$f_k^c - f_k$	<i>p-value</i>	<i>Absolute freq.</i>
Art_Paintings	Painting.yes	65.8	55.3	10.6	0.000	1191
MusLive	Live.no	51.8	43.0	8.4	0.000	934
MusRock	Rock.no	58.7	52.0	6.7	0.003	1120
MusicDislike	M-HeavyMetal	56.5	47.3	9.2	0.000	1019
SportPlay	Golf	13.5	8.7	4.8	0.000	187

Table 8: Class of *manual workers* ($n = 424$; 19.7%): the 19 over-represented categories

<i>Variable labels</i>	<i>Categories (k)</i>	<i>% of k in class $c(f_k^c)$</i>	<i>% global of k (f_k)</i>	$f_k^c - f_k$	<i>p-value</i>	<i>Absolute freq.</i>
Bk_Freq	Book-	38.4	23.0	15.5	0.000	495
Art_Paintings	Painting.no	60.9	44.7	16.1	0.000	963
Theatre	Theatre.no	48.6	33.9	14.7	0.000	731
MusOrch	Orch.no	75.2	61.1	14.1	0.000	1316
Art_Gallery	Gallery-	80.7	69.0	11.7	0.000	1486
Art_Poster	ArtPoster.no	88.9	80.8	8.1	0.000	1740
Art_Edition	ArtEdition.no	91.3	83.8	7.4	0.000	1806
FilmFreq	Film-	21.2	14.0	7.3	0.000	301
SportFreq	Sport.never	43.2	33.9	9.3	0.000	730
SportLive	SportLive.yes	48.1	39.9	8.2	0.000	859
MusOpera	Opera.no	77.4	71.2	6.1	0.001	1534
Writing	Writing.no	74.3	68.9	5.4	0.004	1484
Art_Museum	Museum-	72.9	67.7	5.2	0.006	1458
DrinkTaste	Beer	41.3	29.1	12.2	0.000	626
MusicDislike	M-Classical	24.1	15.1	8.9	0.000	326
MusicLike	M+Country/ Folk	19.6	12.7	6.9	0.000	274
FilmTaste	Factor	37.5	29.0	8.5	0.000	624
TVtaste	Tv.sport	22.9	16.1	6.8	0.000	346
GuestTaste	Guest.usual	36.6	29.1	7.4	0.000	628

Comparative perspectives

The three most significant axes of differentiation in the CCSE study are structured broadly similarly to those we have reviewed, and connect with social divisions in much the same way. There are, however, also some suggestive differences. We look first at these questions axis by axis before considering the similarities and differences between the two class models constructed by the two MCAs.

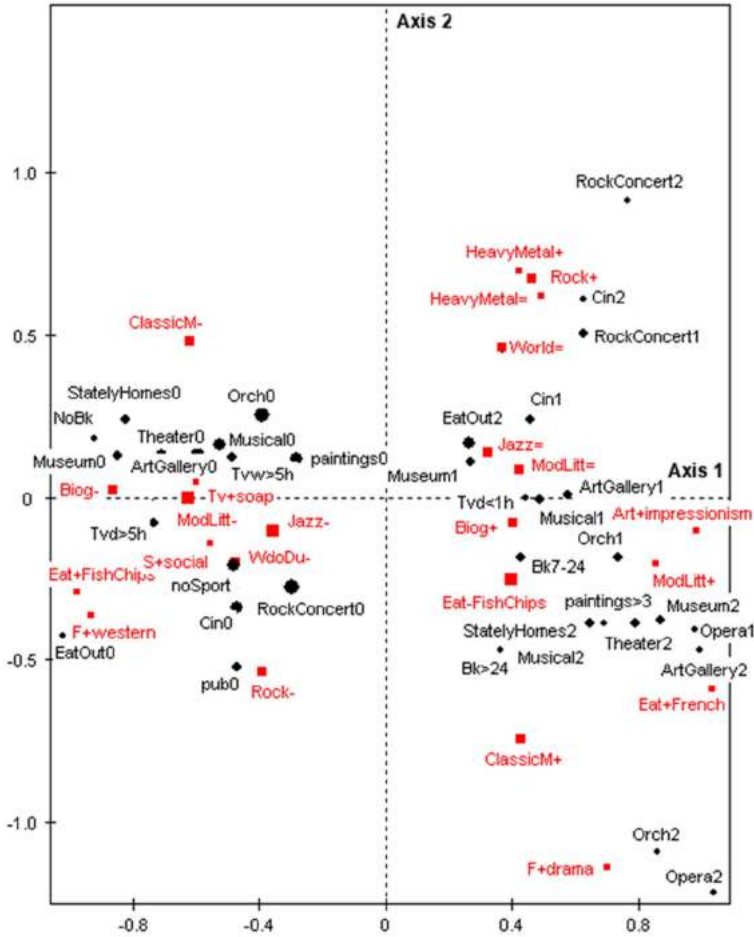


Figure 10: CCSE – The modalities contributing most to Axis 1

Axis 1

Figure 10 represents the most significant axis of differentiation produced by the UK MCA. The black symbols here refer to cultural participation – to things that people do or do not do. A zero indicates nil or very low levels of participation; the number 1 indicates occasional levels of participation; the number 2 indicates very high levels of participation. The red symbols refer to tastes: a plus sign indicates liking, a minus sign indicates dislikes, and an equals sign indicates neutrality. The size of the symbol, as in the Australian map, indicates the number of people engaged in or not engaged in, liking or disliking, the activity concerned. As we can see, degree of cultural participation is more important than tastes in the organisation of axis 1.

The west–east distinction is most strongly articulated as one between those who do and those who do not engage in those legitimate cultural activities that are traditionally coded as high culture: museum and art gallery visiting, going to the opera, theatre or orchestral concerts and so on. Tastes on the right of the axis are also mostly for legitimate cultural forms of music, art and literature, whereas such positive tastes as there are on the left are for more popular forms (soap operas and westerns, for example). This first axis of the CCSE MCA connects with social class indicators in generally the same way as for the AEC data, with levels of income, education and occupational class position rising consistently across the west–east coordinates of the space.

The most significant difference from the Australian pattern registered here concerns the appearance, in the top right-hand quadrant, of high levels of participation in rock concerts and similar levels of liking for rock and heavy metal music; going to rock concerts and other live music venues and liking rock music are, by contrast, located in the middle of the Australian space of lifestyles (see Figure 1). It is also noteworthy that levels of television viewing register as significantly differentiating in the UK data – registering at less than one hour per day on the right and at more than five hours a day on the left – in ways that are not true for the Australian data where such differences congregate more toward the middle of the space of lifestyles and are thus less sharp. This implies that the tastes of the most highly educated and paid groups in the UK are more eclectic – or, perhaps, omnivorous¹³ – than is the case in Australia. It also suggests that watching television of any kind frequently and, by implication, indiscriminately is a stronger marker of social class in the UK. This is supported by the CCSE interview data, with professionals and higher-level managers going to some pains to stress the rarity of their television viewing (see Bennett et al., 2009: ch. 8).

Axis 2

As with the AEC MCA, tastes are more significant than indices of level of participation in dividing the north and south poles, with music tastes proving the most important in this regard (Figure 11). Tastes are also divided along roughly the same lines: a liking for and participation in contemporary popular forms (rock concerts and night clubs) in the north of the map, a disengagement from these and a liking for more classical musical genres in the south. We should note, however, that this also includes going to orchestral concerts, the opera and musicals, alongside frequent participation in art galleries, stately homes, museums and the theatre – practices which are not found in the southern half of the Australian map. The high levels of participation in art galleries in the UK study are matched by largely conservative visual art tastes (landscapes), whereas modern art – disliked in the south of the map – is the genre singled out for liking in the north. Positive film tastes for costume dramas and musicals in the south of the map are

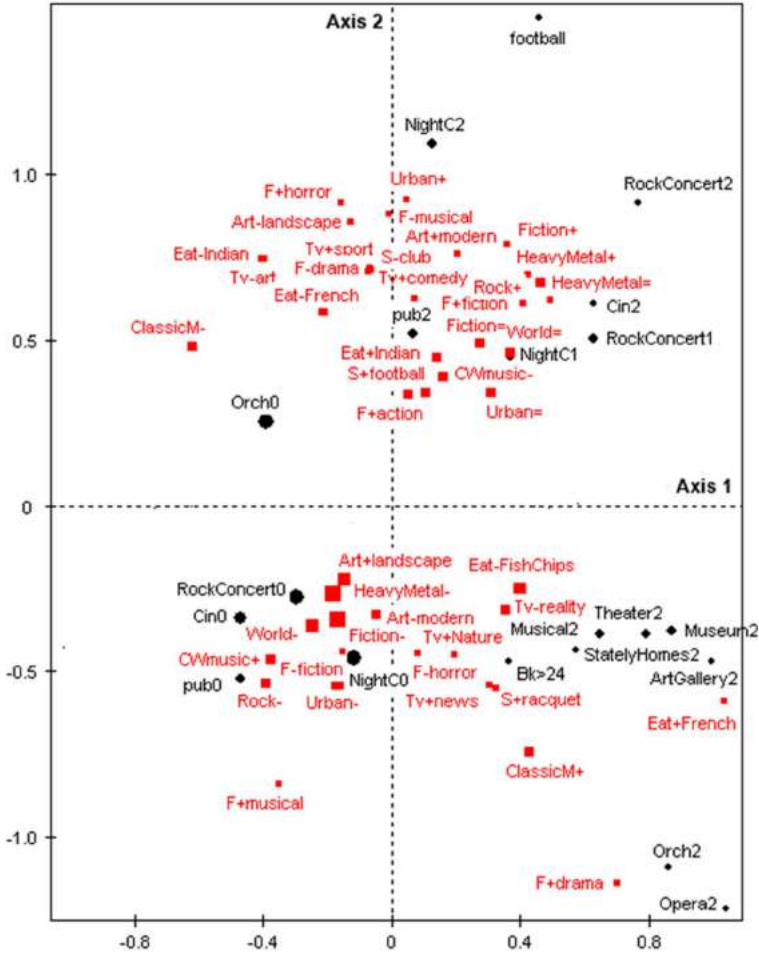


Figure 11: CCSE – The modalities contributing most to Axis 2

counterbalanced by positive film tastes for comedy, science fiction, horror and action films in the north. The pattern for television is broadly similar to that for the Australian map: liking news and natural history programs in the south; liking TV comedies and sports on TV in the north. We note also that literary tastes enter into the picture here, with science fiction, fantasy and horror stories popular in the north of the map. There are differences between the kinds of sports liked or practised – playing football registers in the north and liking racquet sports in the south. Although the question exploring this matter was included in the MCA, there are no indicators of zero or low levels of sports participation. As with the second axis of the

Australian MCA, the north–south differentiation that we see here correlates most strongly with a consistent movement from younger groups (18–25-year-olds) in the north to late-middle-aged and retirement-aged groups in the south. This suggests that participation in the more ‘public’ forms of legitimate culture (orchestral concerts, opera and musicals) is more strongly correlated with increasing age in the UK than in Australia; and that level of sports participation differentiates younger and older Australians more strongly than it does their British counterparts.

Axis 3

The third axis of differentiation for the CCSE MCA (Figure 12) – which correlates with gender – again presents interesting similarities and differences. In reading this Figure, though, it is important to note that the axes are inverted relative to the figure for the AEC third axis of differentiation. It is thus in the south of the map that we find high levels of participation in sport and a liking for documentary genres – or, where fictional genres are liked, they are ones with a strong action or adventure orientation – and an equally strong dislike for romances, Bollywood and musicals. These patterns are, generally speaking, reversed in the north of the map where a liking for soap operas, TV drama and comedy films is added to the strong interest in romances that we find in the south of the AEC map. War films, westerns and horror movies are disliked. We see too that visual art tastes differentiate the north and south, with a liking for modern art and portraits pairing with a dislike for more established genres (Renaissance art and landscapes, for example) in the north while only landscapes score positively in the south. Such tastes do not register in the AEC map as the AEC survey did not ask about tastes for visual arts genres. It is notable, though, that the broadly comparable range of questions about musical tastes asked in both surveys, while not registering as significant in the third axis of the AEC MCA, do register here. Rock and heavy metal music thus score positively in the south while urban music, disliked in the south, registers most strongly in the north where rock music is also liked, although not so strongly. Women in the UK are thus like Australian women in expressing a liking for romance genres compared to factual or documentary forms, and having a relative lack of interest in sport. However, musical tastes, particularly in relation to popular genres, seem to play a lesser role in differentiating men’s and women’s cultural practices in Australia than in the UK.

We now turn, finally, to compare the class models produced by the two studies. This is complicated by the different assumptions made in each. The UK study used a 12-class occupational model which, among other things, distinguished occupational positions according to size of organisation. For most practical purposes, however, it worked with a three-part distinction between a working class (46%), an intermediate class which includes lower managers (30%), and a professional-executive class which includes professionals, managers in large establishments and large employers (24%)

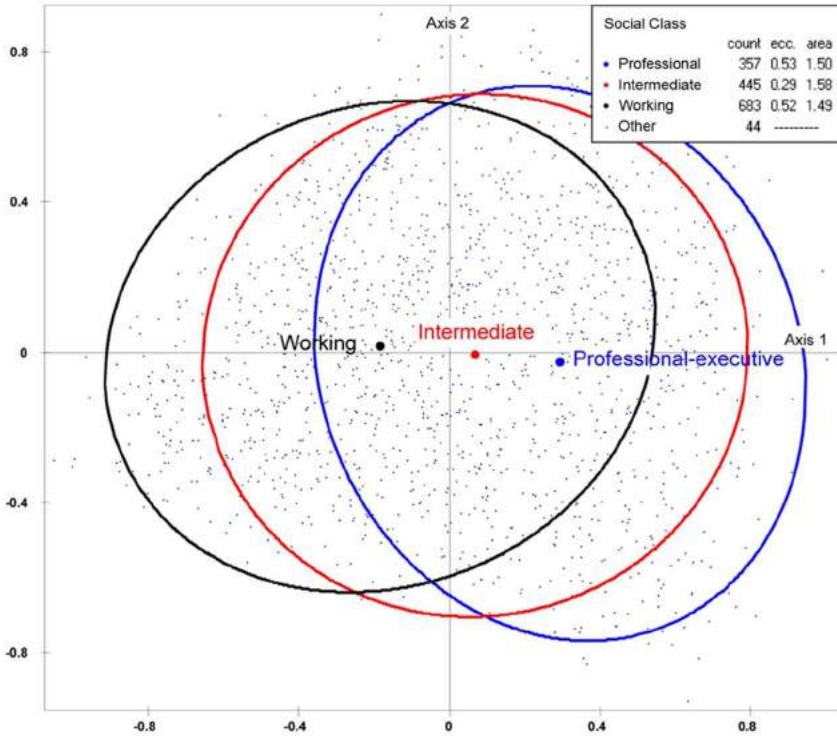


Figure 13: CCSE – The ellipses of concentration of the three occupational classes on Axes 1 and 2

However, these gross similarities conceal what might prove to be significant differences: in Australia, for example, the size of the white-collar class occupying the middle of the spectrum (50%), and even more so of the two classes (white-collar and employer-managers) that cluster around the mean (66.8%), suggests a weaker social differentiation of the population as a whole than in the UK. In the Australian model, too, professionals are a sharply distinct class, whereas in the United Kingdom they are more closely aligned in their cultural preferences and practices with the class of large employers and managers. This might indicate a greater degree of interaction and class affinity between managers, employers and professionals in Britain, and indeed a greater degree of coherence of the professional-executive class than is the case in Australia. The relative isolation of Australian professionals (13.4% of the population, as opposed to an aggregated professional-executive class in the UK of 24%) might also suggest a weaker hegemony of 'legitimate' culture, and of the corresponding forms of cultural capital, in Australia. The cultural tastes of the employer-managers, by contrast, are in many respects closer to those of the working class than to those of professionals, who are anomalous in their high degrees of participation not only

in 'high'-cultural practices but across the board. These differences, however, do stand in need of some qualification when the fourth axis of differentiation in the UK study is taken into account. While of relatively weak statistical significance compared to axes 1, 2 and 3, this axis does testify to a division within the professional occupations between those in educational, cultural and traditional professional occupations – such as law – and those in business, engineering and science professions, with the former being more inclined to be intensively involved in high-cultural pursuits.

These differences in the salience of social class between Australia and Britain are perhaps not unexpected. That said, some cautions need to be registered regarding the consequences of the different class categories used in the two studies. Given the different occupational categories used in the Australian ASCO and the UK NS-SEC data classification systems,¹⁴ as well as the different organisation of the questionnaires on which the two studies are based, there a number of mismatches between the class categories that have been fed into the two spaces of lifestyles. The Australian data, for example, does not permit that differentiation of employers and managers in large organisations of 25 employees or more from those in smaller enterprises, which informs the grouping of the former with professionals in the UK study. Equally, the category of para-professionals in the Australian data includes both lower-level professionals and high-level technicians, the latter being included alongside professionals in the UK MCA. Some of the semi-routine workers who are included among sales and clerical workers in the Australian schema would count as members of the working class in the UK scheme, and the significantly larger number of those counting themselves as small employers in the Australian data (9.4% compared to 2.4% for the UK) must also be noted.

These are, however, matters whose resolution goes beyond the scope of the comparative analysis that the composition of the two data sets permit.¹⁵ In general, it is clear that both studies point to a substantial fracturing of the cultural field along the fault-lines of education and social class, albeit that these fault-lines are somewhat differently structured. It is also the case that both studies point to a marked clustering of commonalities in the middle of the field – perhaps more strongly so in the case of Australia than in Britain, but nonetheless significantly so in each case; what divides us culturally happens above all at the social margins, but none the less consequentially so for that.

Conclusion

Our comparison of the MCAs conducted on roughly similar datasets derived from research in Britain and Australia has yielded conclusions about the structure of relations between social variables and cultural tastes and participation in the two countries that are broadly comparable. Our findings about the role of social class in the two countries, and about local

variations in the practices that contribute most to cultural differentiation – the greater importance of rock and other forms of popular music in cultural engagement in Britain, compared to the role of more high-cultural forms in Australia, for example; a greater differentiation of television-watching in the UK (which might reflect differences in historical patterns of broadcasting provision, as well as the comparative costs of public engagement with culture and their effect on patterns of cultural distinction); a somewhat different organisation of gender-based variations in the two countries (perhaps reflecting historically distinct divisions of labour in the home and in the labour market) – provide an insight into the way these cultural fields are structured and the way they interact with socio-demographic variables. They are in many ways homologous, but their differences reflect those between an older, more densely populated, socially in many ways more conservative country and a younger, in many ways more homogeneous country with greater social mobility and yet with clearly established markers of cultural distinction, particularly between professionals and workers.

Most importantly, perhaps, our analysis confirms the methodological advantages of the techniques of Multiple Correspondence Analysis pioneered for the social sciences by Bourdieu. For a range of reasons our two studies diverge from the particularities of Bourdieu's findings in *Distinction*. Nevertheless, the core principle of Bourdieu's work – the socially formative role of cultural taste in its intersection with social power – remains valid for us. Equally, the principle of induction that lies at the heart of MCA – the principle that, rather than starting with pre-given social variables, one should seek to derive patterns from the scatter of modalities across a geometric space and to work from them to the explanatory constructs on which analysis is based – seems to us to offer an invaluable tool for the work of social understanding. This tool works in particular to help us understand social class as being less a matter of occupational grouping or relation to the means of production than a complex amalgam of 'social' and 'cultural' variables. Rather than mapping a pre-given set of social coordinates onto a map of cultural practices and preferences, Multiple Correspondence Analysis allows those coordinates to emerge from the map itself. One consequence of this, in the UK study, was to call into question the logic of Goldthorpe's (1982) concept of the service class by showing that lower managers occupy a different socio-cultural space from that occupied by employers and higher-level managers in large organisations, and professionals. Finally, our analysis similarly suggests, in the Australian case, a partitioning of professionals from managers, and a polarisation of the relations between professionals and workers, that derive from particular orderings of the relations between the economic and cultural aspects of class. We believe that these findings make it clear why the analysis of cultural practices and preferences can make a substantial contribution to our

understanding of social structure in a way that the consideration only of demographic and economic data cannot.

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Notes

- 1 Although bearing only our names, this article is indebted to Brigitte Le Roux and Philippe Bonet for directing the Multiple Correspondence Analysis of the AEC data and for ensuring that this replicated that for the CCSE study (undertaken by Brigitte Le Roux and Henri Rouanet) as closely as possible. We also draw on the collective work of the research teams responsible for the design and execution of the two projects, and acknowledge the advice and input of Mike Emmison, Mike Savage, Elizabeth Silva and Alan Warde at various stages in the design and execution of this comparative study.
- 2 For full analyses of both data sets, see, respectively, Bennett et al. (1999) and Bennett et al. (2009).
- 3 The surveys were funded by the Australian Research Council and the UK's Economic and Social Research Council respectively.
- 4 The CCSE household interviews also included interviews with the survey respondent's partner in order to explore gender differences within the same household.
- 5 The AEC survey was administered by post; the CCSE survey was administered by the National Centre for Social Research using computer-assisted personal interviewing (CAPI) techniques. The random sampling techniques used for the AEC survey were based on the Australian Electoral Role; those for CCSE were based on the UK Small Users Postcode Address File for Britain and the Valuation and Lands Agency's list of domestic properties in Northern Ireland. The achieved sample size for the CCSE study was 1576, with an additional ethnic boost sample of 227 (not included in the MCA reported here), and, for the AEC study, 2756. The two samples were similar in their gender distribution: 51% women for the AEC and 54% for the CCSE. Their age distributions are also broadly similar, particularly in the 25–54 range. The most significant differences are that the AEC sample has a smaller proportion of 18–24-year-olds (9% compared to 17%) and a larger grouping in the 55–64 range (15% compared to 9%).
- 6 This was due to the exclusion of the categories of *unemployed* and *others*.
- 7 Readers interested in comparing the questions included in the two MCAs will find the AEC survey questionnaire reproduced as Appendix 2 of *Accounting for Tastes* (Bennett et al., 1999). The questionnaire for the CCSE survey is reproduced in Thomson (2004).
- 8 The relations between fields, modalities and questions are mostly self-evident. The art field in the UK study, however, includes questions about museum and heritage site visitation; museum visitation is also included in the Australian art field data.
- 9 These are detailed in Appendix 2 of Bennett et al. (2009).

- 10 It is important to qualify the engagement/disengagement interpretation we place on these axes. These mostly relate to engagement/disengagement in forms of legitimate culture which are accorded a prominence in surveys informed by cultural capital theory that is out of proportion to general levels of population participation in such practices. See Bennett (2011) for a discussion of these matters.
- 11 A ninth class of the unemployed was excluded from most of our analyses because of its heterogeneity: it includes the chronically ill and disabled, housewives, sole carers, students and those who have not yet begun employment.
- 12 For Tables 6 to 8, the third column identifies the percentage of the class participating in or liking the activity in question; the fourth column identifies the percentage of the sample of 2154 retained for the analysis of occupational classes participating in or liking the activity in question; and the fifth column identifies the deviation between these two percentages. The p -value is the result of the hypergeometric typicality test (a combinatorial test or the comparison of a frequency to a reference frequency; see Rouanet et al, 1988: 102–3). Where p is equal to or less than 0.025, the frequency is statistically greater than the reference and the category in question is thus said to be over-represented.
- 13 We refer here to the debates around the thesis that middle-class tastes are most distinguished by their omnivorous qualities – ranging across high and low boundaries – proposed by Peterson (1992). Bennett et al. (2009: 182–90) suggest that this concept unravels into a number of different mixed-taste profiles when probed more closely.
- 14 See, on the latter, Rose and Pevalin (2003).
- 15 It is likely that, beyond the problems we have identified, significant differences in historical processes of class formation are also involved. The proximity of managers and employers in the CCSE study is something of a historical novelty – largely a result of the redrawing of class boundaries effected by the post-war expansion of higher education – when compared to longer histories of opposition between technical and managerial cultures and the gentlemanly ethos of earlier ruling-class fractions (see Savage, 2010).

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