Consumption and the Postmodern City

Article *in* Urban Studies · May 1998

DOI: 10.1080/0042098984583

CITATIONS
155

READS
641

2 authors, including:

Justin O'Connor
University of South Australia
89 PUBLICATIONS **2,968** CITATIONS

SEE PROFILE

Urban Studies, Vol. 35, Nos. 5–6, 841–864, 1998

CARFAX

Consumption and the Postmodern City

Derek Wynne and Justin O'Connor (with statistical analysis by Dianne Phillips)

[Paper received in final form, December 1997]

Introducing the End

In a recent article which addresses this very same issue of consumption, postmodernity and the city, the author—following an exposition of Baudrillard's conception of hyperreality and a following logic which asserts the suburbanisation of the city through the hypermarket (Baudrillard, 1994)—is led to conclude that

> the experience of the postmodern, posturban world assumes the form of an immediated experience of the aleatory transformation of space–time ... all future understandings of the city must proceed to ex-appropriate it as an impossible object. We have truly witnessed the sophistication of the city—its transposition to the realms of simulation (Clarke, 1997, p. 234).

We are tempted to say "Well, we know where you're coming from, but would the last person to leave please switch off the lights!" Lest such response be seen as unfair, we would quickly add that Clarke's piece provides a useful historical overview for those who wish to trace the origins of Baudrillard's thought and the more extravagant of his claims regarding the postmodern.

Introduction

In this paper, we will say very little about Baudrillard other than to suggest a retrieval of the social from this 'logical end'. While certainly wishing to acknowledge a debt to Baudrillard's seminal work in symbolic exchange and the commodification of the sign (Baudrillard, 1981), we believe that his announcement of the death of the social—including the city—is somewhat premature; though again, we can see where he is coming from. Rather, we will attempt to introduce some of the work that has been central to our own research, prior to a presentation of some of that work and its findings.

For those working in a cultural studies tradition, the city has provided both a topic and a resource for their enquiries wherein the city is seen as a text to be read and interpreted (Chambers, 1990; Donald, 1992; Shields, 1996). As a number of writers have suggested—most recently, Clarke (1997)—processes of commodification, the production of the consumer and places (palaces) of consumption became central to the transformation of the city in the 19th century (Benjamin, 1973). In addition, such developments also saw the emergence of new cultural experiences connected to them, in particular those related to new forms of sociability in the developing galleries and department stores (Laermans, 1993). We would argue that in spite of a tendency for such

Derek Wynne is in the Department of Sociology, Manchester Metropolitan University, Manton Building, Oxford Road, Manchester, M15 6LL, England, UK. Fax: 0161 247 6321. E-mail: D.Wynne@mmu.ac.uk. Justin O'Connor is in the Manchester Institute for Popular Culture, Manton Building, Manchester Metropolitan University, Rosamond Street West, Manchester, M15 6LL, England, UK. Fax: 0161 247 6360. E-mail j.oconnor@mmu.ac.uk.

0042-0980/98/050841-24 $7.00

work to ignore the economic and political dimensions of changing urban form in favour of a textual approach to the city, it has nevertheless provided what have been amongst the most stimulating commentaries and debates on the city and cultural change in recent years. (Again, see Clarke, 1997, for the most recent overview and commentary.)

In what one might term a more conventional urban studies tradition most commentaries and analyses of the relationship between postmodern culture and urban form have been centred around three processes or transformations associated with the contemporary city. These are: first, the transformation of the derelict, wasteland, and no longer productive areas of the city traditionally associated with a disappearing, or at least displaced, urban working class—such transformation being understood as gentrification (Zukin, 1982, 1987, 1992b, 1995). Secondly, the transformation of the declining industrial, producing or 'working' city through the development of arts and leisure-led regeneration programmes in an effort to attract new investment usually addressed towards the financial and administrative services and cultural tourism (Wynne, 1992; O'Connor and Wynne, 1996a, 1996b; Bianchini and Parkinson, 1994). Thirdly, and often implicated in the development of the former, has been a transformation, or attempted transformation, by a reimaging of the city through a series of 'partnerships' which, in attempting the gentrification and reinvestment programmes cited above have been accused of adopting undemocratic and exclusionary polices which have seen local democracy diminished and accountability removed, and which have produced 'two-tier' cities comprised of the 'haves' and 'have-nots'. Such a process has been identified in a number of British and American cities, perhaps most devastatingly in the analysis of Los Angeles by Mike Davies in *City of Quartz* (1990) and his work published in the *New Left Review* (1993a, 1993b). This, of course, has been linked to structural socio-economic changes associated with the new global economy (Sassen, 1991, 1994, 1996; Castells, 1994; Castells and Hall, 1994).

To the extent that an attempted understanding of these transformations has been made by invoking any of that body of thought understood as the postmodern, particularly that associated with consumer culture either as the culture of consumption or the consumption of culture, the critical response has invariably been one of denial or dismissal. One response has been to define much of the work that has attempted to uncover some of the processes associated with these transformations as essentially celebratory, and therefore lacking any real critical dimension (or, indeed, 'complicit'—see Taylor *et al.*, 1996). Here the suggestion is that either the research topic addressed is of no significance in itself, or that researchers themselves lack any real critical awareness of the nature of the phenomena that they are investigating. A second response suggests that such concerns as are associated with the study of consumer culture and the postmodern city neglect what should be the 'real' concerns of the contemporary urban researcher. These are identified exclusively as being about unemployment and its solution, the loss of a manufacturing base and its recovery, the disappearance of local democracy and its restoration—usually bemoaning the loss of some mythic golden age in local authority politics. A third response which is invariably, though not always, incorporated in the other two is to declare the concern with consumer culture, consumption and postmodernism as inadequate and fundamentally flawed because of its emphasis on a phenomenon which is seen as secondary, transitory and ephemeral, as opposed to issues of 'production'—concerned with the 'real' world of the political and economic.

Notwithstanding the above other than to note the responses which could be made regarding the 'democratic' nature of traditional forms of local authority politics, or the role of ideas (culture?) in the construction of the political and the economic, we would contend that the questions and issues raised by 'the postmodern turn' have a history

rooted in social theory, rooted in the modernist debate itself and rooted in the attempt to understand the role of the city in social life. Additionally, we would contend that the concerns of, and issues raised by, those working in this area have developed an agenda both for the theorist of the urban and of contemporary social change, and for the practitioner concerned with the future development of the city.

While there is little current agreement as to the status of postmodern culture either as a temporally located response to a perceived collapse of 'modernism' as a cultural project (Jameson, 1991) or as a failure or new turn within the project of 'modernity' itself (Harvey, 1989), there is a recognition that the contemporary world and the nature of the social have undergone considerable change. For some, such change is associated with the economic restructuring associated with the move from an industrial to a post-industrial society, including a move from Fordist to post-Fordist regimes. Such positions are taken by a variety of authors including Lash and Urry (1987), Harvey (1989) and Jameson (1991). For others, the development of postmodernism stems from a cultural dynamic operating within modernist culture and is therefore understood not as a response to a set of economic restructurings, but rather from a continual debate with modernity. As such no fundamental 'break' is premised and postmodern cultural forms are seen to reside alongside those associated with modernism itself (Berman, 1982; Pred, 1995).

Clearly the former position posits postmodern culture as implicated in an economic shift, while for the latter no such shift can be understood as determinant. While not wishing to argue that the dichotomy created above be understood simply as a heuristic device, we would also point out that one recent history of the debate around postmodernism has concerned itself with the development of a variety of positions between these dichotomous poles, with authors, including some of those above exploring the ground between these two positions (Featherstone, 1991; Lash, 1990; Lash and Urry, 1994; Giddens, 1992).

Commodification and Consumer Culture

In contextualising the role of consumption, we would argue that an understanding of the increasing commodification of culture is central to any understanding of the postmodern, and therefore, that an historical grounding of the postmodern is a necessary precursor to a discussion of consumption and the postmodern city. For us, this requires an understanding of the changing nature of the relationship between culture and the commodity form and recognition of an increasing interpenetration of the cultural and the economic. In this context, we would argue that theorists of consumer culture and cultural consumption in the city need to acknowledge the growing importance of cultural production to the city. Most recently Scott, in his article on the cultural economy of cities, has argued that

> As we enter the twenty-first century, a very marked convergence between the spheres of cultural and economic development seems to be occurring ... capitalism itself is moving into a phase in which the cultural forms and meanings of its outputs become critical if not dominating elements of productive strategy, and in which the realm of human culture as a whole is increasingly subject to commodification ... an ever-widening range of economic activity is concerned with producing and marketing goods and services that are infused in one way or another with broadly aesthetic or semiotic attributes (Scott, 1997, p. 323).

Such a view reflects those expressed in some of our earlier work (Wynne, 1992; Wynne and O'Connor, 1992; O'Connor and Wynne, 1996a, 1996b), where we argue that one aspect of the process related to the emergence of 'new cultural intermediaries' is the way in which new cultural producers are actively involved in promoting the collapse of the traditional distinctions between high and popular culture, and the way in which 'everyday consumer goods' are increasingly infused with symbolic value—part of that

process referred to by Featherstone as the 'aestheticisation of everyday life'—one of the defining characteristics of postmodern culture (Featherstone, 1991). Furthermore, this de-differentiating dynamic identified by Lash (1990) and Lash and Urry (1994) is also seen in the 'flexible' working practices of these small cultural producers in the cultural industries (Wynne and O'Connor, 1992; Crewe, 1996; Crewe and Forster, 1993; Lury, 1996; Purvis, 1996; Hill and O'Connor, 1996; Lovatt *et al.*, 1996; O'Connor, 1998).

Retrieving Baudrillard

Baudrillard's work on the commodity form, the sign and symbolic exchange is fundamental to much of the work outlined above and to the development of analyses of consumer culture. His claims for 'the end of the social' and for the emergence of a world of hyper-reality reflect a truth in the observation that 'the centre no longer holds', if we locate that centre in 'relations to the means of production' (Baudrillard, 1981). For Baudrillard, as mass consumption and the consumer economy develop in the 20th century, the value of commodities is seen to derive not from their use or exchange value but rather from the way such products function culturally as signs within coded systems of exchange. As such, the distinction between real and false needs collapses, as does the distinction between commodities and signs—signs themselves come to take on a life of their own rather than as signifiers of any external reality. The implications of such a position are that we can no longer read-off a reality signified by sign consumption. The 'triumph' of a postmodern signifying culture produces a simulational world of endless re-productions. It is this loss of the 'real' and its replacement by simulation which allows Baudrillard to claim 'the end of the social'.

However, rather than a passive acceptance of Baudrillard's essentially pessimistic conclusions, we would turn to Featherstone's analysis of consumer culture which, employing Bourdieu, offers an escape from this seeming impasse. Originally in a 1987 paper (but see also Featherstone, 1991), Featherstone begins with an analysis of Baudrillard and the claim of postmodernism to signal the 'end of meaning', a move towards a society beyond fixed status groups, producing a proliferation of signs which cannot be ultimately stabilised. However, rather than seeing such sign-consumption as producing the 'end of the social', Featherstone retrieves Baudrillard to suggest that,

> the [post-modernist] proclamation of a *beyond* [the social] is really a *within*, a new move within the intellectual game which takes into account the new circumstances of production of cultural goods, which will itself in turn be greeted as eminently marketable by the cultural intermediaries (Featherstone, 1987, p. 167).

This retrieval is accomplished by suggesting, as per Bourdieu (1984), that social groups competing for control in particular social fields, use their relative amounts of economic and/or cultural capital accumulated to promote their own symbolic ordering in attempts to control such fields. For these new social groups, it is argued that postmodernist cultural productions offer a schema whereby new cultural producers and other cultural intermediaries, together with 'service' professionals, combine to promote their own cultural and economic productions in order to establish their position in a changing social world,

> which judges people by their capacity for consumption, their 'standard of living', their lifestyle, as much as by their capacity for production (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 310).

A similar position has also been offered by Lash and Urry (1987) and Savage *et al.*, (1992). However, for these authors postmodern culture is tied strongly to the emergence of a new middle class, understood, as per Bourdieu (1984), as a class fraction of the middle class. This is the position developed in the work of those 'gentrification theorists' who have attempted to understand gentrification and the re-valuation of the city

centre as a process primarily associated with its redevelopment as a residential space for the new middle class.

However, rather than a view of consumer culture as being primarily concerned with the purchase and display of consumer goods amongst a particularly residentially located fraction of the middle class, we would argue that its impact has to be understood in all its forms. These include the very making of culture itself, the legitimation practices that it produces, and its aesthetics. As such, consumer culture provides, like other cultural forms, the means by which social structure is mediated to and by individuals. Consumer culture, like other cultures, provides the 'stuff' that allows for such mediation. It is here that we would argue that the processes of cultural commodification outlined above have had a destabilising effect on the very nature of the cultural and the individual's relationship to it, and that such a changed relationship casts some doubt on the contemporary relevance of Bourdieu's original project in *Distinction* (1984) and, therefore, on some of the work of such 'gentrification theorists'.

Consumer Culture and the Postmodern City

Our own research seeks to attend to this debate by concentrating on two specific aspects: first, that associated with urban regeneration and the changing role of the city, secondly, that associated with the construction and deconstruction of identities claimed by much of postmodern theorising (Featherstone, 1991; Harvey, 1986 and 1989; Lash, 1990; Shields, 1991; Smith and Williams, 1986; Zukin, 1982, 1987,1988, 1992a, 1992b and 1995; Beauregard, 1986; Bramham and Spink, 1994). In addition, we are particularly concerned to relate our research to that undertaken by Bourdieu (1984). Given the impact of Bourdieu's work in the sociology of contemporary cultural change, and the implicit debt owed to Bourdieu in much of the work on gentrification, our research has attempted to incorporate some of the concerns of his thesis into our own investigations. The last decade has seen a growing literature on this area of cultural change and on those groups which are seen to be central to the active dissemination and promotion of such change—the new cultural intermediaries (Betz, 1992; Bourdieu, 1984; Featherstone, 1991; Lash and Urry, 1987). In this context, our research seeks to investigate the claims made by those who would use Bourdieu to characterise culturally based urban regeneration as integral to a distinction strategy of this fraction of the new middle class and that this class fraction can be identified as being among the prime bearers of postmodern lifestyles.[1]

We examined these claims by choosing a study population which had recently moved into the new and refurbished residences in Manchester city centre, hypothesising that these would conform most closely to the above model. The residential developments were closely linked to a culturally based urban regeneration strategy. The lack of any recent tradition of city centre living, the particular quality and style of the developments and the relatively condensed time-span in which these were occupied, suggested that our survey would pick up a sufficiently homogeneous group against which to test these claims.

Methods

Data were collected by questionnaire (210 households), in-depth interview (50 households) and ethnography and the research design employed quantitative and qualitative approaches in an interactive and complementary way.

The questionnaire asked respondents for information on 104 items related to cultural consumption and included a number of 'ethnographically developed' questions regarding preferred choices of bars, clubs, shops, theatres and galleries and other venues in the city centre.[2]

Fifty in-depth interviews were undertaken to uncover information associated with the practices of use and reflexive monitoring of

activity which quantitative methods are less able to discover.[3] In this context, our in-depth interviews provided us with an extended discussion of biographies, goals and life-structures of interviewees, together with the ways in which they 'used' or 'lived' in the city including the nature of 'apartment' life and their domestic arrangements.

Our ethnography began with a mapping of the cultural and social facilities of the city centre which also assisted with the development of the questionnaire. This task was facilitated by the ethnographer's extensive formal and informal knowledge of the city, including involvement in its cultural life through membership of a theatre group based in the city centre, and formal and informal contact with proprietors and other providers and users of the city's bars, cafés and clubs gained through extensive participation. In addition to this field work, the ethnography was also concerned with uncovering emergent networks at the policy level, and the relationship between these and providers.

Results

The structural characteristics of our survey population can be found in Figures 1–5 and in Tables 1–2. The group were predominantly young and young middle-aged with a mean average age of 36 years and a modal age of 27 years (Figure 1). Only 17 per cent of the sample were married and currently living together. Their current marital and household condition is shown in Figures 2 and 3.

Our respondents possessed relatively high levels of educational qualifications: 52 per cent had first degrees or higher, and the majority of others had been educated beyond 'O' level. Although a number of students in our sample led to some low-income respondents and households, outside this category, as Figure 4 indicates, household income was fairly evenly distributed up to levels beyond £50 000 per annum. One-quarter of the group were in managerial and professional occupations (Registrar General classification 1) and a further 34 per cent in RG2, the largest

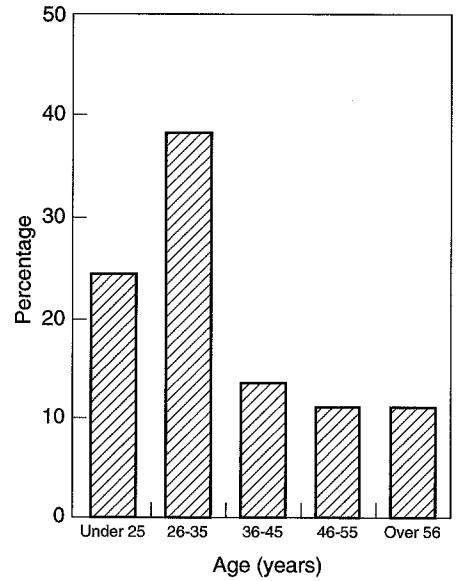

Figure 1. Age-groups of survey population.

single group being teachers. A breakdown of occupations is provided in Table 1.

Some of our respondents were clearly middle class in origin, others were from backgrounds which indicated substantial social mobility. A crude indication of social mobility, using Registrar General

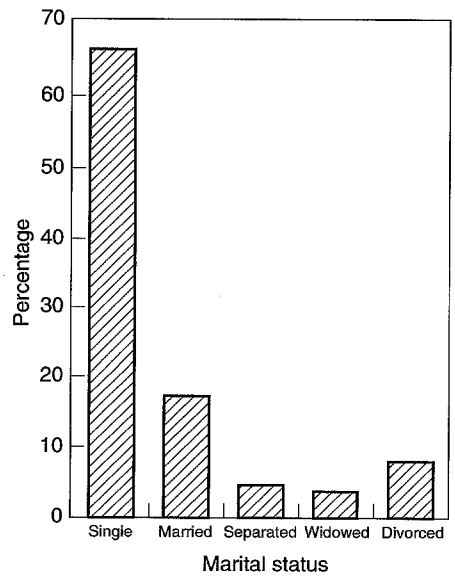

Figure 2. Marital status of survey population.

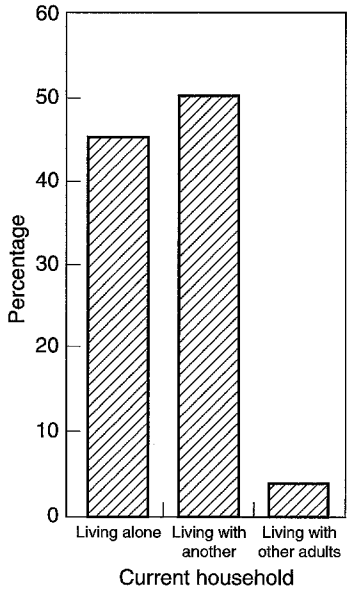

Figure 3. Household types of survey population.

classifications of respondents and their father's occupations, is provided in Table 2. The usual levels of mobility over short ranges are notable, but nonetheless, for example 12 persons in (1) were of two ranks or more away.

As Figure 5 indicates, the majority of the sample had moved within Greater Manchester and its suburbs—that is, they had traded living from somewhere within the Manchester area for the city centre itself.

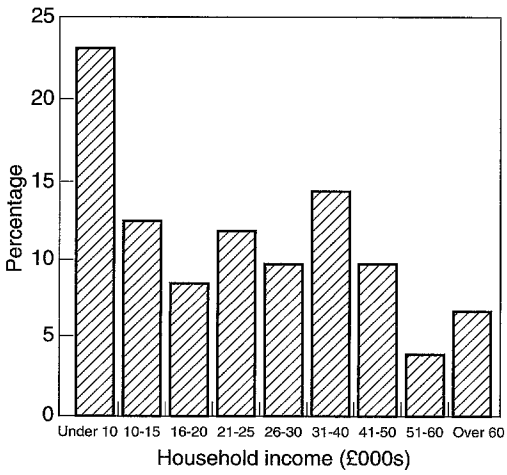

Figure 4. Household incomes of survey population.

Cultural Consumption, Lifestyle and the City

In an effort to examine cultural consumption by our sample of city-centre residents we asked a variety of questions related to their leisure and cultural activities and preferred modes of spending their leisure time. The group are, in general, enthusiastic users of the city-centre facilities. Those on which we report below are taken from a variety of materials and responses which were gathered during the course of our empirical investigations.

Classical music concert attendance was limited in comparison to other forms of cultural consumption, but still above the national average: 15 per cent had been to Manchester's own Hallé Orchestra in the last six months, although under 5 per cent were regular visitors. The relative limitation of their consumption of classical music was also reflected in the scores on the questions involving knowledge of classical music—only 19 people knew 6 or more composers in our questions on concert works. Serious music users were widely distributed across the occupational structure, with notable numbers of teachers and managers.

Theatre attendance was very much higher. In particular, the Royal Exchange, Manchester's major producing theatre, had been visited by 50 per cent of the group in the last 6 months. The popular and varied diet of the Palace and Opera House receiving theatres had attracted over 30 per cent of the group. However, attendance at the smaller, more specialist, venues staging plays were lower: 14 per cent for the Library Theatre and 7 per cent for the Contact Theatre—Manchester's youth theatre.

Gallery attendance was similarly high, 44 per cent had visited the City Art Gallery and 30 per cent the Whitworth. Some 10–20 per cent were clearly serious gallery users, with the major private galleries getting this level of attendance, as well as the Tate North (Liverpool) and the major London galleries.

Table 1. Occupation of survey population

Value label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Per cent	Cum Per cent
General manager/administrative large organisations	10	3	2.0	2.0	2.0
Production managers	11	5	3.4	3.4	5.4
Specialist managers	12	12	8.1	8.1	13.5
Financial, office, managers, executives	13	1	0.7	0.7	14.2
Transport (etc.) managers	14	1	0.7	0.7	14.9
Managers/proprietors/service industries	17	10	6.8	6.8	21.6
Managers and administrators NEC	9	5	3.4	3.4	25.0
Natural scientists	20	3	2.0	2.0	27.0
Engineers and technologists	21	5	3.4	3.4	30.4
Health professionals	22	5	3.4	3.4	33.8
Teachers	23	16	10.8	10.8	44.6
Legal professionals	24	11	7.4	7.4	52.0
Business and financial professionals	25	4	2.7	2.7	54.7
Architects, planners, surveyors	26	3	2.0	2.0	56.8
Professional occupations NEC	29	3	2.0	2.0	58.8
Scientific technicians	30	1	0.7	0.7	59.5
Programmers	32	7	4.7	4.7	64.2
Ship, aircraft traffic controllers	33	1	0.7	0.7	64.9
Health associated professionals (nurses, etc.)	34	3	2.0	2.0	66.9
Business financial associated professions	36	3	2.0	2.0	68.9
Social welfare associated professions	37	2	1.4	1.4	70.3
Literary, artistic and sports professions	38	11	7.4	7.4	77.7
Associate professionals NEC	39	3	2.0	2.0	79.7
Administrative clerical officers	40	6	4.1	4.1	83.8
Numerical clerks, cashiers	41	4	2.7	2.7	86.5
Filing, record clerks	42	1	0.7	0.7	87.2
Secretaries	45	2	1.4	1.4	88.5
Electrical trades	52	4	2.7	2.7	91.2
Textiles, garment trades	55	2	1.4	1.4	92.6
Other craft and related	59	1	0.7	0.7	93.2
Sales representatives	71	2	1.4	1.4	95.3
Mobile salespersons	73	1	0.7	0.7	95.9
Transport and machine operators	88	1	0.7	0.7	96.6
Plant and machine operatives	89	1	0.7	0.7	97.3
Hospital porters	95	1	0.7	0.7	98.0
Manual NEC	99	3	2.0	2.0	100.0
Total		148	100.0	100.0	
Valid cases 148		Missing cases 0			

Questionnaire responses on art were those which Bourdieu would take as safe—but we must admit that opportunities within the questionnaire to display advanced enthusiasm were limited. What characterised these answers could equally be represented as openness: they were willing to look, but were not exactly seekers. For example, attendance at the Festival of Expressionism held in the city in September 1992 was relatively low, at 18 per cent.

Film attendance and awareness (including some measure of knowledge of film directors and their work) was medium or high for 50

Table 2. Social mobility of survey population: occupation by father's occupation

Count Row Occupation	Father's occupation									Row total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
1	10 31.3	10 31.3	1 3.1	3 9.4	4 12.5	2 6.3		2 6.3		32 23.5
2	8 17.4	14 30.4	3 6.5	2 4.3	10 21.7	1 22	2 4.3	4 8.7	2 4.3	46 33.8
3	8 27.6	9 31.0	1 3.4	1 3.4	4 13.8	2 6.9	1 3.4	2 6.9	1 3.4	29 21.3
4	2 16.7	2 16.7	2 16.7		4 33.3	1 8.3		1 8.3		12 8.8
5						4 57.1			3 42.9	7 5.1
6		1 100.0								1 0.7
7	1 33.3					1 33.3	1 33.3			3 22
8					2 100.0					2 1.5
9	1 25.0					1 25.0	1 25.0		1 25.0	4 2.9
Column Total	30 22.1	36 26.5	7 5.1	6 4.4	28 20.6	8 5.9	5 3.7	12 8.8	4 2.9	136 100

31/136-No change

per cent, and high for the usual 10–20 per cent of specialists. There was a quite substantial openness to new and varied kinds of cinema, 13 per cent expressing interest in experimental film, and 37 per cent interested in 'independent' cinema. The baseline of video taste—horror—held little appeal, but thrillers (40 per cent) and comedies (50 per cent) could be classified as mainstream enthusiasms.

The questionnaire did not reveal exceptional tastes in popular music. Soul was the most popular category. Interestingly, the scene music of the time—Manchester Independent, and House—only rated 'enthusiast' scores, of around 18 per cent. One of the most popular bars, which had seen over 50 per cent of the group, the Cornerhouse Bar, can be described as a 'designer-style' bar located in the city's independent cinema/gallery. Other bars aiming at a new fashion in continental bottled beers and expresso coffee tended to attract around 35 per cent of the group. Regular and frequent discotheque and club use occupied around 30 per cent of our sample, and a further 30 per cent were aware of, and made some use of, the club scene. However, 40 per cent had limited knowledge, and made little or no use of this scene. In club awareness and use, the Hacienda stood out, not surprisingly given its international reputation in the 'club scene'. Almost 40 per cent of the group had visited it, and over 12 per cent went often.

Respondents are very clear about their choice of friends. They like them lively (50 per cent), sociable (63 per cent) and amusing (65 per cent). They respond only

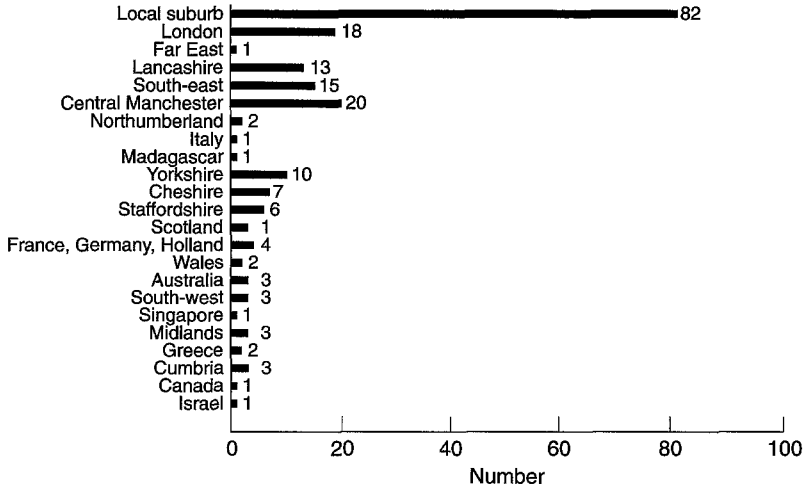

Figure 5. Previous place of residence of survey population.

minimally to them being refined (8 per cent), well-bred (8 per cent) or artistic (15 per cent). Such responses could be seen as indicative of the contemporary changes outlined by Maffesoli (1988) in comparison to Bourdieu (1984).

Their politics were altogether more striking. What got their support, passive rather than active, was the politics of the expanding circle, a 'good-cause', new politics. Organisations such as Greenpeace, Oxfam and Friends of the Earth received levels of strong approval of 70 per cent and above and 50 per cent expressed clear support for both gay and feminist movements. Orthodox political parties received altogether lower levels of approval and support. Membership, generally, was low—with 70 per cent support, only 4 per cent claimed membership of Greenpeace. While 41 per cent would support Labour, only 3 per cent were members of the Labour Party—the lowest membership of each of the main parties. Similarly, 58 per cent supported the Greens, but membership was under 2 per cent. The Conservatives were supported by 24 per cent, and 5 per cent were members of this party. The group in general were hence not classically political but 'leftish', with a massive expressed support of, though not membership of, new socio-political movements.

While we would conclude that our respondents are enthusiastic users of the facilities of their city, it is clear that much of their use is what could be described as the 'open middle'. Where access is unfamiliar, or there is a threat of boredom or pretension, usage falls away. Although overall they are enthusiastic users, 25 per cent made little or no use of cultural facilities such as galleries or theatres and this could suggest some continuing socio-cultural boundaries in usage of a traditional and familiar kind.

Correspondence Analysis: Factors Underlying Cultural Consumption

Central to our concerns, we carried out a multivariate homogeneity analysis in an attempt to achieve a map of the cultural consumption of city-centre residents (for details of correspondence analysis, see Phillips, 1994). In this procedure, the relationships between seven 'cultural indicator' variables were explored. The seven variables used as 'cultural' indicators derived from discussions of the preliminary statistical, in-depth interview and ethnographic results outlined above. They are shown in Table 3.

Our initial results suggested that an attempt to reduce the dimensions to two would produce only a poor representation of the

Table 3. Variables used in the correspondence analysis

Variable	Scale used	Notes
MUSIC (knowledge of composers)	1–4	Note that this is a fairly 'objective test' of classical composers, unlike the other questions. Answers did not derive from attendance.
FILMS (knowledge of film directors)	1–3	
THEATRE (theatre-going on a regular basis)	1–5	The variable reflects weightings both for frequency of attendance and attendance at relatively 'serious' events.
FASHION (attitudes to clothes purchase)	1–4	To score at the high end, respondents had to prefer clothes that reflected fashion, or were 'daring and out of the ordinary'. Further, they had to purchase mainly from small fashion boutiques.
GALLERY (visits to art galleries)	1–4	To score at the top on this, respondents had to visit frequently and to visit out-of-town galleries.
POLITICS (affiliation to political and voluntary organisations)	1–5	Given the emergent character of the politics of the sample, this variable reflects degree of commitment or opposition to 'new political topics'. For a score of 4, a respondent had to express very general support for ecological, liberationist and caring organisations, together with a generally left-leaning political attitude. For a 5, respondents had, in addition, to be members of relevant organisations. For a 1, respondents had to express active opposition to some aspects of the new politics.
CLUBBING (familiarity with clubs/venues)	1–3	This involved factors of recognition and 'knowledge' as much as attendance.

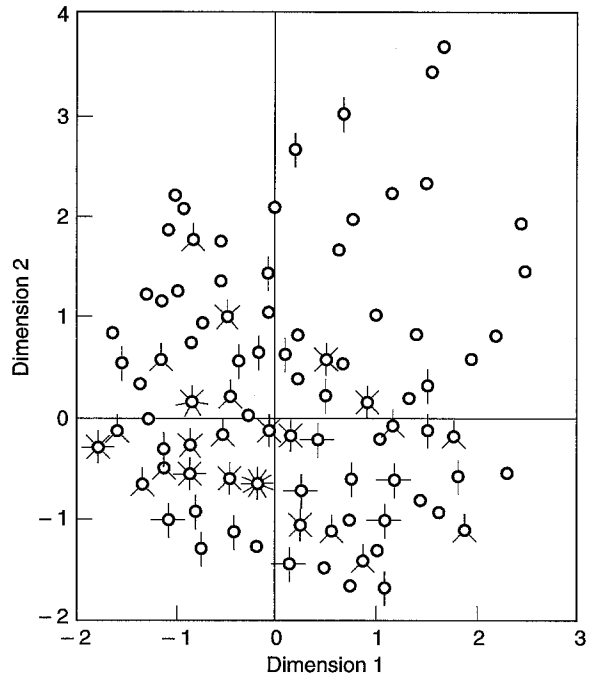

Figure 6. Object scores (cases weighted by number of objects).

relationships. The following maps are the results from selecting a three-dimensional solution.

Figure 6 shows the object scores on all the variables assigned to cases (respondents). Clearly the mass of scores are closely clustered with a small proportion distinguished on the 'fringe'. There are no obvious outliers. It suggests again that we have a relatively homogeneous group in terms of cultural taste.

The diagram of discrimination measures, Figure 7, suggests that the first dimension in the multivariate case is related most strongly to the knowledge of film directors, the second to music. Fashion is discriminating poorly in the two first dimensions. Theatre attendance, gallery and club visits and politics are in between.

The effect of the influence of film and music knowledge is clearly seen in the diagram of the category quantifications, Figure 8. This diagram places categories that contain the same object scores close together. The first dimension differentiates most clearly along the categories of film knowledge, the second on the music scores.

Taking the left-hand side of the plot, a low knowledge of film directors (fl1) is also closely associated with low scores on visits to galleries (gl), theatre (tl) and music (ml). On the right hand side, a high score on film knowledge (f13) is associated with high scores on gallery and theatre visits (g4, t5). High scores on politics (p5) are also associated with high scores on film knowledge.

Although the second dimension discriminates most obviously on knowledge of music, it also discriminates between high scores on all dimensions except politics and middle and low scores. However, a score of 1 on politics, it should be remembered, indicates a level of active opposition that does not characterise a score of 2 or 3. We have treated, in these indicators, the political choices as a 'cultural' variable. This is justified in our argument, and in terms of the raw scores. The latter show clear 'position-taking' with much less actual activism. Theoretically, we think our sample population are largely

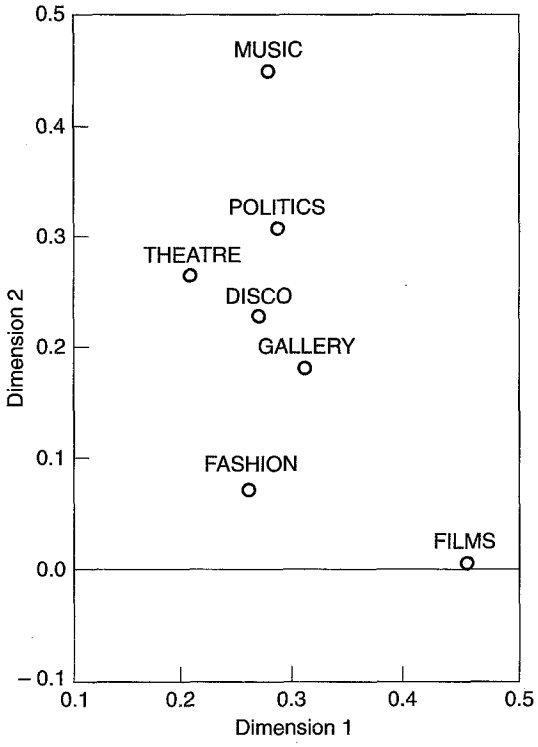

Figure 7. Discrimination measures.

defining themselves by their expressed position in this 'new politics. Tentatively, given a three-dimensional solution, we propose that these dimensions are.

(1) cultural awareness ('low' to 'high' taste);
(2) activism and commitment; and
(3) style.

Hence we read the diagram, using the first dimension, as levels of cultural awareness. The second dimension involves levels of active commitment. The highest score for music (m4) is an expression of lengthy commitment to music. A score of p1 or p5 on politics, indicates activism and independence of mind at both ends of the political spectrum. A score of g4 on gallery indicates an active use of art facilities, locally and nationally. On fashion, f4 puts a concern with clothing/style at the centre of commitment.

In terms of our original questions, the diagrams, taken together, indicate that the majority of the study sample are culturally active, with the politics of the expanding circle working like other cultural dimensions. They are a large 'centre' with substantial usage, but not particularly high on what Bourdieu would call cultural capital, or exploratory cultural practice. There is then in each cultural dimension a much smaller group of serious enthusiasts. This group includes some who are scoring high on all scales except fashion and 'clubbing'.

There is, in addition, a cluster of scores low on all dimensions. We would interpret this in relation to the 25 per cent of the sample population who make little or no use of the cultural facilities and score low on knowledge and 'taste' tests. The only obvious anomaly to this broad interpretation is that a high score on clubbing rates low on commitment and activism. It should be remembered that this question reflects awareness and recognition as much as actual attendance.

The positioning of high fashion scores close to low scores on the other variables appears to suggest a separateness of style activism from other activisms. Very tentatively, the diagrams fit a picture of a substantial middle to high usage and high cross-over, without general enthusiast commitment, with two separate groupings of low awareness and use, and one of high awareness, use and active commitment. This could suggest a continuity of taste boundaries (Bourdieu) rather than a 'postmodern collapse', but the relative size of the middle grouping suggests that this would be a very partial explanation. Rather, we would interpret these results as suggestive of a de-differentiation of previously structured tastes in these cultural fields with our relatively large middle grouping experiencing a variety of cultural pursuits—a 'sampling culture' constructed by individuals—in which traditional practices and competencies are rejected or, at least, no longer adhered to (Lash, 1990).

Qualitative Analysis

In analysing the interview material, we have

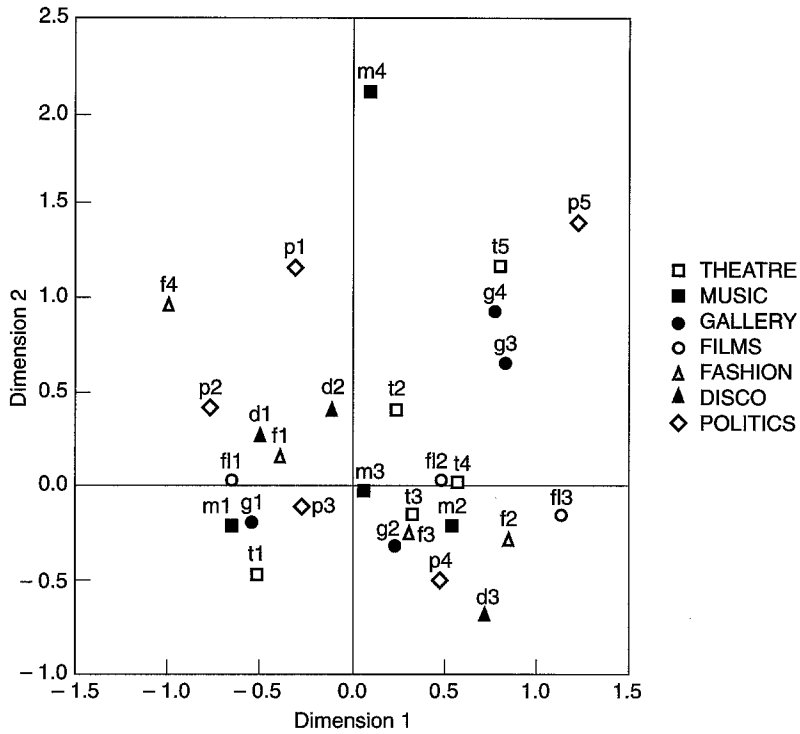

Figure 8. Category quantifications.

focused upon the most pertinent characteristics for explicating the principal features associated with changing identities under conditions of late or postmodernity. Principally, we take these to be a concern with self-monitoring or reflexivity, changing patterns of sociability and a developing aestheticisation of everyday life (O'Connor and Wynne, 1996a and 1996b).

Subjects speak of having flexible fixtures in terms of their social/work life, they see themselves as having few roots, a strong sense of self—of who they are, and a desire to be 'different'—expressed not only in terms of a changed relationship to work, which many define as not of primary importance, but also in terms of leisure activities, clothes or apartment style. They believe in their abilities to make choices about their life-course, suggestive of a reflexive approach to their lives—i.e. a concern with why they do what they do. Their explanations or rationale show a concern with 'making sense' of the positions they find themselves in—which they related to the nature of their sociability and work patterns. Significant numbers express a desire, and are engaged in, the construction of lives in which work and social life penetrate each other such as to make them indistinguishable. They do not see themselves as 'belonging' anywhere in particular—their 'selves' are quite contained and 'sparse'. As one of our respondents remarked: precious belongings can be 'put in a box' and carried with them. Dreams and futures are not especially related to 'important' or well-paid jobs. Rather, concern tends to be with the quality of life and an unsureness about the future. They see the future as problematic—politically, socially and economically (Pahl, 1995).

Our interviewees show a high commitment to the use of cultural facilities and other forms of leisure activity, and relatively weak commitments to any traditional form of work ethic. Lifestyles show a fluidity and openness with regard to non-traditional forms of sociability and relatively weak commitments to,

for example, marriage, child-rearing, established religions and traditional forms of political expression. Our respondents exhibit high degrees of reflexivity and a concern with image and presentation of the self over what might be described as more traditional concerns such as occupation, stability and career orientation. Our data suggest the adoption of less fixed social codes and what have been characterised as 'post-'68' values (Martin, 1981).

For our subjects, the nature of the city centre is described as being 'where it's at', of 'living at the heart of things' and as 'living on the edge' (Shields, 1992b). It cannot be separated from what is perceived to be left behind—suburbia, conformity, isolated family life, conservatism. Their move to the city centre is an attempt to 'open up' to 'explore', although this is more so for some than others. Some were quite young and at a stage where they were able to experiment here. The presence of two 'low-cost' residences pointed us to some interesting comparisons. Whilst any young person would need money to move into the other developments, these last two were open to anybody who was able to, as one put it, 'blag their way in' via housing-need officers of housing associations and the local council. Our interviewees used different routes and used different social capitals (we suspect enthusiasts here) but they came for the same reasons—the idea of living 'at the centre/on the edge/away from suburbia' was strong. It also pointed to the very different possibilities opened up by the space of the centre. This is pronounced with the 25–35 age group who have taken a deliberate stand away from a perceived suburban lifestyle. Although this group is the usual target of investigators, in our study it is difficult to see them as 'yuppies'. The centre is approached in terms of a sense of play, sociability and hedonism, but one not geared to the 'work hard, play hard' ethos of the yuppie.

Much of the attraction of the centre, beside its ability to represent an 'edge', was its function as a stage. It was felt that the presentation of self was much more theatrical here than in other areas. This is a common characterisation of large cities, though not necessarily industrial cities. The debate on globalisation has focused on information and commodity flows and how these impact upon a sense of place. Much less work has been done on how local city cultures respond to this. We argue below that the agencies involved in 're-imaging' cities are multiple with complex effects. In Manchester, the city centre as stage opened up a realm of experimentation and negotiation of identity which may have involved one night a week for visitors, but was more extensively felt by these residents. The strongest such group were the gay population, having targeted one of the residences as safe and convenient for access to the events of the 'gay village'. This sense of city centre as stage and edge could also be found in the café-bars where respondents felt that a move away from traditional pubs made Manchester seem more 'European'. This word operated on a number of different levels, but for the residents it was felt as a source of openness and change that was often read in parallel to their own lives. In moving to the centre, they opened up the centre to these new possibilities as they consumed the cultural distinction on offer (the developers' image) in ways not intended by the instigators of the residential developments.

Earlier work done by the Central Manchester Development Corporation suggested that residential moves to the city centre could be explained equally by economic advantage and convenience for work and leisure. We found from our interviewees that the reasons for their moving were overwhelmingly to do with the attraction of living in the centre. It was upon this perceived attraction that we focused. Previous studies on gentrification have stressed the economic and cultural aspects of the displacement of existing (lower-class) residents and the establishment of 'trendy' places which form part of the habitus of a new class fraction or group. We have pointed earlier to the difficulties of this debate and to the ambiguities of the group it points to. In this study,

there was no displacement and the economic viability of the new apartments as 'investment' is dubious given the recent market in British provincial cities. Understanding this move to the centre became an important part of our investigation—in what way does *this* represent a 'cultural investment'—i.e. living in the city being a distinction strategy, as addressed by Zukin (1982, 1995).

As suggested above, our interviewees are willing to give up certain things in order to engage in cultural and social pleasures, with some sense of 'urban pioneer' but muted and linked more to their own self-development rather than annexing the neighbourhood for economic value-added. In the gentrification debate, the cultural value-added of a bohemia and the development of self through cultural experimentation are seen as primary, but this is mostly description and prejudice rather than convincing evidence. For many that we have interviewed, their choices reflect less these above strategies—which are there to a degree—than a particular lifestyle response to insecurity, changing life-course expectations, marital breakdown, awareness of 'alternate' sexual identity and a commitment to exploring the fluidity of life chances that is often (though not always) forced upon them. Again, the political thread ties them not to 'yuppiedom' but to a 'post-68, greenish, politically correct' culture (Betz, 1992; Purkis, 1996; Kennedy, 1996; Ley, 1996).

In addition to an examination of some of the cultural spaces used by our subjects, our ethnography also examined some of the actors and agencies involved in the restructuring of the centre (O'Connor and Wynne, 1996a, 1996b). We found that the supposed unification of cultural and economic capital as argued for in certain theories of gentrification and the postmodern city was much more complex than this. The need to deal with the specific competencies of those involved in the production and distribution of culture and the need to keep cultural activity away from direct identification with the demands of economic capital, saw the developing networks between development agencies, the city council, developers and associated cultural intermediaries as relatively autonomous (O'Connor and Wynne, 1996a, 1996b).

Those 'cultural intermediaries' associated with the new centre were an increasingly diverse group. If their networks originated in the high cultural art world they gradually extended through the pop music world, the cultural industries and the entertainment industries. In this, the cultural intermediaries had an increasingly active role in the definition of the cultural image to be presented. The high cultural model increasingly gave way to an emphasis on sociability and the vibrancy of everyday life which was weighted towards the pop scene. Although the figures from our sample do not show an 'enthusiasm' for pop music and clubbing, the ethnography and our interviews constantly underscore the attraction of the centre as a place 'where it's at' and linked directly to the vibrancy of this scene.

As such, the centrality of the centre as a (possible) source of cultural capital appears linked to its 'vibrancy'. In Manchester, this is different from that process described by Zukin. Manchester is tying its fortune as a city of culture as much to the previously marginal world of pop culture as it is to the mainstream art worlds. Similar things could be said for the role of gay culture in recent years and both the City Council and CMDC's willingness to promote it as a cultural asset. Such a response has to be understood as linked both to the economic troubles of Manchester and to its need/desire to promote itself as an international city. In this context, cultural regeneration, if it is linked to class distinction, is done via a re-imaging of the identity of the city as a northern, industrial, working-class city whose claim to world status in production has disappeared. Cultural regeneration then is explicitly linked, by respondents and users of the centre, to a re-imaging of place. This is complex if couched as a question of agency (i.e. those networks involved in this push to 're-image'), but it is also complex in its effects. It could be argued that the image of place was crucial to the enhancement of the econ-

omic and cultural capital of those groups that stand to gain directly by Manchester's international standing. But to focus on this exclusively would be to ignore the wider resonances of this renegotiation of identity at stake. The creation of the centre as *central* in a new way, linked to both high culture and the vibrancy of culture as everyday life, brought in groups who would use that centrality in different ways to create a lifestyle and habitus which our ethnography cannot place as being of one class fraction only.

Our subjects' everyday non-work practices in the centre reflect a re-negotiation of place, a re-negotiation of identity—as to what it is to be northern (Shields, 1992), and what marks out a 'place-based' quality of life. This relates to the particular findings of our sample, and helps to explain what we have called their 'middle-brow' nature. The group members have a role for culture, but its meaning is to be found in the wider social practices and patterns of sociability and play, rather than in the accretion of cultural capital. The traditional pattern of a rising social group aspiring to the cultural capital of a higher one, whether through imitation or outflanking is, for us, no longer a viable model. The autodidact has turned flâneur.

Conclusion

We have examined the hypothesis that the subjects of our study could represent part of a new middle class associated with the promotion of postmodern lifestyles as part of a distinction strategy aimed to overturn existing hierarchies, inserting themselves into a new position of power in the reformed cultural field. With regard to our findings we would wish to make four points.

First, as a new middle class of cultural intermediaries indicated by *occupation* in the cultural/media sphere, they do not generally belong to such occupational sectors—though most are based in the knowledge/service industries and/or public sector.

Secondly, the majority of our subjects are not particularly rich in high cultural capital, nor does there seem to be a concentration on amassing it; if it is a 'rising' fraction, then high cultural capital does not seem a primary means of ensuring this trajectory. Nor, however, could they be regarded as *avant-gard* in cultural preferences, or as taste-makers in the fields of fashion/lifestyle. There are enthusiasms in the sample, but these do not cross over into other enthusiasms. Many tend towards a 'middle-brow' level of cultural capital and show a distrust of the *avant-gard* if it is seen as 'pretentious'. We would suggest that, for this sample, high cultural goods were important for them, but that they were neither aspiring to the cultural models of a higher class nor trying to renegotiate the cultural field through the use of *avant-gard* forms. This may well underline the difficulties Bourdieu's notion of symbolic economy has with a possible proliferation or weakening of cultural codes.[4]

Thirdly, obvious divisions between 'high culture' and 'pop culture' do not provide any structural markers within the sample. The score on film indicates this, though this has long ago ceased to be a cultural interloper. Knowledge and taste in the field of pop music seemed to reflect the general separations of enthusiasm and middle grouping, which only confirms that pop music has ceased to signify 'low' culture amongst the educated middle class—but neither does it represent a particularly *avant-gard* move. The impact of 'popular' culture on the cultural field is something that Bourdieu seems unwilling to acknowledge.[5]

Finally, the divorce between style activism and cultural activism is ambiguous. It could well point to a concern with fashion amongst the 'low scorers', or a distrust of the notion of 'fashionable' given by the question. This last could indicate an asceticism linked to cultural capital, a 'northern' quality discussed below, or refusal of 'fashion' from within a valuation of spontaneity and individualism, an authenticity that is strong within pop culture. This may also link to the political culture of the group, which tends to an appreciation of difference which would refuse the more structured play of differences in fashion.

Our subjects then represent nothing that could be structurally understood as a 'rising class fraction'. This could be because our sample group was too small, or that there was no comparative aspect built into our research. However, from the data that we have examined, we would argue that this form of class analysis is too blunt an instrument to understand what is occurring.

However, such an analysis has underlain many assertions as to the nature of gentrification/cultural regeneration (Zukin, 1982 and 1992a; Berking and Neckel, 1993; Ley, 1992; Whimster, 1992; Beauregard, 1986). We feel that the theoretical models employed need to be reassessed. The literature on gentrification, and the wider literature on lifestyle in the city, points to groups whose outlines are vague, ambiguous and often contradictory. The figures of the yuppie, of the new households, of new metropolitan classes, of inner city 'bohemia', of 'lost generations' and 'post-'68' groups all point to a difficulty in a structural underpinning of these groups.[6] On one level, our conclusion is that Bourdieu's 'cultural intermediaries/ new middle class' seems unhelpful, and that any analyses of cultural intermediaries have to be uncoupled from their role in a 'rising class fraction' thesis. Such an analysis explains *through* class a tendency to construct identity *apart from* class (i.e. through lifestyle). If this group does promote a postmodern lifestyle, then it will have a general impact on the way in which distinction through lifestyle is achieved. We all make lifestyle choices now. The question as to whether this class can somehow close down the field in order to monopolise the distinction pay-off, or whether it explodes beyond any singular field is something that demands more specific investigation (Featherstone, 1991; O'Connor and Wynne, 1996a, 1996b). We would contend that the debates associated with our subjects are to do with the multiplication of choices, of certain refusals (suburbia, traditional careers, marriage, 'straight' sex), a management of fluidity and uncertainty, and a desire to participate in or 'sample' different social and cultural worlds.

To place the above within a strategy of 'distinction' would require considerable expansion of Bourdieu's model in the context of: first, distinct national/cultural formations; secondly, the opposition of provinces—capital—and north–south as it operates in England; and thirdly, the impact of changes in the cultural field since Bourdieu's original study was undertaken.

An understanding of the traditional differences in the role of culture within the national formations and especially the role it plays in securing the cohesion and/or distinction of middle-class fractions within this would demand extensive historical work. We would emphasise especially the different role of *avant-gard* culture, which works as a strategy of 'out-flanking' much more powerfully in France than it does here, and can stand as an articulation of France-as-culture in a way unthinkable here.[7]

Regarding the provincial–capital and north–south divisions, we would suggest that the reluctance to advertise cultural competence and/or resistance to statements pointing towards an *avant-gard* stance may represent a refusal of a cultural model associated with London and a resistance to pretentiousness that marks out northern culture. While we have found an openness to new cultural forms, and to a crossing of boundaries, there also remains an awareness of 'preciousness' that has long roots in northern (English) culture.

Although the restructuring of the cultural field since the 1960s goes beyond the scope of this study, the very debate around the new middle class is itself a way of explaining some of this restructuring. Here we can point to our work on the Manchester International Festival of Expressionism.[8] This survey found a broad middle-class attendance at a range of *avant-gard* forms, with the clear exception of music. Music was the form with which most people had most difficulty. Indeed, those attending the music events were relatively self-contained, with little cross-attendance at others. This, coupled with work showing the marketing and organisation of the Festival itself, indicated a model of cul-

tural participation that emphasised enjoyment, spectacle, ease of entry and a crossing of genres—all underpinned by a crossing of this cultural participation into a general participation in sociability and the wider realm of everyday life/leisure.[9] We could interpret this in conjunction with notions of the 'aestheticisation of everyday life', which can be understood as a presentation of self through cultural consumption and a penetration of cultural commodities into everyday life—one of the claims as to a postmodern lifestyle. However, this need not be interpreted solely in terms of distinction strategies. Rather, it may be part of a general shift that cannot be easily monopolised by a class fraction (Maffesoli, 1988).

In these circumstances, the role of culture as cultural capital may change. The reluctance to pursue the path of cultural capital beyond limited areas of enthusiasm, but a general middle of cultural usage could point to a changed model, or a proliferation of models, as to what a 'cultured' person may be. This may be couched decreasingly in terms of competence and more of a lifestyle test of openness, ability to cross boundaries, willingness to dip into things, and a degree of integration of the enjoyment of culture into a sociable lifestyle. Whether this lifestyle is structured around 'style' as an aesthetic unity or in terms of a more fluid ethical unity is something that cannot, we believe, be argued at the level of the general, but must be established by reference to empirical groups and contexts. The ambiguity of 'fashion' referred to above represents this difficulty, often being used to articulate ethical stances—as politics could often be seen to articulate aesthetic choices.

How the above is to be explained in terms of strategies of distinction would, we believe, be difficult in the strict terms of Bourdieu's schema. Rather, we believe that a more fruitful approach would involve consideration of the following.

First, the degree to which underlying cultural shifts be understood as having more widespread or more permeable implications. Whether we are to call these late or post-modernity, or reflexivity, or detraditionalisation, it seems to us that Bourdieu's attempt to describe cultural change in terms of the struggle for positional goods is, amongst other things, restricted by its limitation to a problematic of 'scarcity' (Beck, 1992). We need to look at the cultural field as multiple rather than singular; as twisting and sliding in and out of regulation and legitimation (Bauman, 1992); as proliferation rather than zero sum; as marked out by ambiguity rather than structural cohesion; in sum, as moving beyond the Kantian problematic of an establishment of a universal system of taste based on the Judgement-power of a particular class and state (Caygil, 1990).

Secondly, an attempt to assess the recent transformations of lifestyle and more traditional class cultures in terms of general shifts within which different groups (of which 'class fractions' are one) are forced to position themselves. The distribution of positions will be fluid, ambiguous and complex. We need not have to accept all of Maffesoli when we concur in the recognition of the rise of new forms of intense yet transitory and loose forms of sociability. Similarly, we need to recognise tendencies in these new lifestyle groups towards the working out of some of the implications of Beck's work on women's choices and the impact of the labour market on the family, or the burdens placed upon the traditional household which are part of that 'transformation of intimacy' discussed by Giddens (1992).

Finally, an attempt to ground accounts of emergent lifestyle groups in terms of both place and space. The transformation of city cultures is complex and demands context. This, it should be stressed, also demands a more historical account. The debate on the postmodern city, we feel, needs to recognise that place as well as space 'makes a difference'.

Notes

1. Promoting the constant attention to (and preoccupation with) the self as presented through 'lifestyle' (includes age trajectory

and traditional social routes); the blurring of traditional cultural boundaries, especially those of 'highbrow' and more 'popular' cultural forms; and an emphasis on play, hedonism and spectacle. This growth of 'new cultural intermediaries', of 'para-intellectuals', is crucial for an understanding of postmodernism.

2. The HOMALS procedure within CATEGORIES (SPSS) was used for multiple correspondence analysis. As the name hints, this is the form of multiple correspondence analysis which uses homogeneity and analysis—i.e. it seeks to optimise the homogeneity of variables. HOMALS was used to explore the relationships between the seven indicator variables. For a fuller discussion of correspondence analysis and its use in this research project see Phillips (1994).
3. Responses to six open-ended questions in the questionnaire were entered into AskSam, a free-form database. The preliminary analysis of the AskSam text files of the responses to the open-ended questions provided suggestions for themes and topics which were included in the schedule for the qualitative interviews.
4. This comes out in a revealing exchange response to an interlocutor who suggests just such a process: "In my view, there are higher markers, places in which the dominant codes remain absolutely efficient; and these places are where the main games are played—that is, in the academic system (in France, the *Grandes Écoles* system, the places from which the executives are selected)". But this is to sidestep the question as to what happens to these codes if large sections of the social spectrum no longer subscribe to a universal classification system. (See Bourdieu and Eagelton, 1992.)
5. See the above note. In that exchange, he sees the valuation of "mass culture, popular culture and so on" as part of a "dominant chic" amongst intellectuals whose positive evaluation of something such as rap is really a form of distinction, saying "You don't see that, but I do and I am the first to see it". Any such positive evaluation of pop music 'overestimates the capacity of these new things to change the structure of the distribution of symbolic capital.' "You mystify people when you say 'Look, rap is great'. The question is: does this music really change the structure of the culture?" We would argue that the very rhetorical nature of the question underlines the inadequacy of this response.

   The separate question of working-class culture is crucial here, but goes beyond the scope of the study.
6. For an overview of the literature and competing definition of the word 'yuppie' see Whimster (1992). The role of this word as catch-all explanation is revealed in the last paragraph where Whimster makes the contradictions of the yuppie life bear the weight of the contradictions of modernity itself: "Whether the young professional will work out an expressive and secular redemption (a la Habemas), or a salvation through consumption (Bourdieu), or whether he or she will be, at last, simply beyond redemption are questions and directions that should repay further investigation" (Whimster, 1992, p. 332).

   This provides a very unsteady basis for an investigation of urban regeneration—our research has been premised on the absolute necessity to begin to ground these sorts of pronouncement of contemporary cultural shifts in some form of empirical investigation.

   Two recent articles underline this. Betz (1992) has shown that many of the 'new middle class' are in fact politically active in a way rarely acknowledged in discussions on this subject. This is supported by our own research and that done by Bramham *et al.* (1992) in Leeds. See also Bonner and Du Gay (1992). They attempt to found a theoretical account of the ethical and political positioning of this 'new middle class' based purely on a reading of the television programme *Thirtysomething*.
7. Note the difficulty of translating Debussy, which Bourdieu sees as quintessentially French, to an equivalent—Elgar?!
8. This involved certain questions in the questionnaire and a related study undertaken by O'Connor and in the process of completion. The survey found a broad middle-class attendance at a range of *avant-gard* forms.
9. The festival was one of the first to integrate traditional art venues with newer spaces (bookshops, design centres) and pop cultural spaces such as bars, pubs, jazz clubs and cafés. There was also an expressionist 'pub crawl' and an expressionist cocktail (*The Scream*!).

References

BAUDRILLARD, J. (1981) *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign.* St Louis: Telos.

BAUDRILLARD, J. (1994) *Simulacra and simulation.* Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

BAUMAN, Z. (1987) *Legislators and Interpreters:*

On Modernity, Postmodernity and Intellectuals. Cambridge: Polity.

BAUMAN, Z. (1992) *Imtimations of Postmodernity*. London: Routledge.

BEAUREGARD, S. (1986) The chaos and complexity of gentrification, in: N. SMITH and P. WILLIAMS (Eds) *The Gentrification of the City*, pp. 35–55. London: Allen & Unwin.

BECK, U. (1992) *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*. London, Sage.

BENJAMIN, W. (1973) *Illuminations*. London: Fontana.

BERKING, H. and NECKEL, S. (1993) Urban marathon: the staging of individuality as an urban event, *Theory, Culture and Society*, 10(4), pp. 63–78.

BERMAN, M. (1982) *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

BERMAN, M. (1986) Take it to the streets: conflict and community in public space, *Dissent*, Summer.

BERMAN, M. (1992) Why modernism still matters, in: S. LASH and J. FRIEDMAN (Eds) *Modernity and Identity*, pp. 33–58. Oxford: Blackwell.

BETZ, H. (1992) Post-modernism and the new middle class, *Theory, Culture and Society*, 9(1), pp. 5–36.

BIANCHINI, F. (1987) GLC R.I.P.: cultural policies in London, *New Formations*, 1, pp. 103–117.

BIANCHINI, F. (1989) Cultural policy and urban social movements: the response of the 'new left' in Rome (1976–85) and London (1981–86), in P. BRAMHAM *ET AL.* (Eds) *Leisure and Urban Processes*, pp. 18–46. London: Routledge.

BIANCHINI, F. (1990) Urban renaissance? The arts and the urban regeneration process, in: B. PIMLOTT and S. MACGREGOR (Eds) *Tackling the Inner Cities?*, pp. 215–250. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

BIANCHINI, F. and PARKINSON, M. (Eds) (1994) *Cultural Policy and Urban Regeneration*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

BIANCHINI, F. and SCHWENGEL, H. (1991) Reimagining the city, in: J. CORNER and S. HARVEY (Eds) *Enterprise and Heritage*, pp. 212–234. London: Routledge.

BONNER, F. and DU GAY, P. (1992) Representing the enterprising self: *Thirtysomething* and contemporary consumer culture, *Theory, Culture and Society*, 9(2), pp. 67–92.

BOURDIEU, P.(1984) *Distinction*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

BOURDIEU, P. and EAGELTON, T. (1992) In conversation: Doxa and common life, *New Left Review*, 191 (Jan/Feb), pp. 111–121.

BRAMHAM, P. and SPINK, J. (1994) Leisure and the postmodern city, in: I. HENRY (Eds) *Leisure, Modernity, Postmodernity and Lifestyles*, pp. 83–104. The Leisure Studies Association, Chelsea School Research Centre, University of Brighton.

CALHOUN, C., LIPUMA, E. and POSTONE, M. (Eds) (1993) *Bourdieu: Critical Perspectives*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

CASTELLS, M. (1994) European cities, the informational society, and the global economy, in: *New Left Review*, 204, pp. 18–32.

CASTELLS, M. and HALL, P. (1994) *Technopoles of the World: The Making of 21st Century Industrial Complexes*. London: Routledge.

CAYGIL, H. (1990) *The Art of Judgement*. Oxford: Blackwell.

CHAMBERS, I. (1990) *Border Dialogues*. London: Routledge.

CLARKE, D. (1997) Consumption and the city, modern and postmodern, *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 21(2), pp. 218–237.

COOKE, P. (1988) Modernity, postmodernity and the city, in: *Theory, Culture and Society*, 5(2/3), pp. 475–492.

COUPLAND, D. (1991) *Generation X: Tales of an Accelerated Culture*. New York: St Martin's Press.

CRANE, D. (1992) *The Production of Culture*. London: Sage.

CREWE, L. (1996) Material culture: embedded firms, organisational networks and the local economic development of a fashion quarter, *Regional Studies*, 30, pp. 257–272.

CREWE, L. and FORSTER, Z. (1993) Markets, design and local agglomeration: the role of the small independent retailer in the workings of the fashion system, in: *Environment and Planning D*, 11, pp. 213–229.

DAVIES, M. (1990) *City of Quartz*. London, Verso.

DAVIES, M. (1993a) Who killed Los Angeles, *New Left Review*, l97, pp. 3–28.

DAVIES, M. (1993b) Who killed Los Angeles: part two, *New Left Review*, 199, pp. 29–54.

DONALD, J. (1992) The city as text, in: R. BOCOCK and K. THOMPSON (Eds) *Social and Cultural Forms of Modernity*, pp. 417–470. Cambridge: Open University/Polity Press.

EHRENREICH, B. (1989) *Fear of Falling: The Inner Life of the Middle Class*. New York: Pantheon Books.

ELIAS, N. (1994 reprint) *The Civilising Process*. Oxford: Blackwell.

ERICKSON, B. (1996) Culture, class and connections, *American Journal of Sociology*, 102, pp. 217–251.

FAINSTEIN, S. *ET AL.* (Eds) (1986) *Divided Cities*. New York: Blackwell.

FEATHERSTONE, M. (1987) Lifestyle and consumer culture, in: E. MEIJER (Ed.) *Everyday Life: Leisure and Culture*, pp. 157–168. Department of Leisure Studies, University of Tilburg, The Netherlands.

FEATHERSTONE, M. (1991) *Consumer Culture and Postmodernism*. London: Sage.

FISHER, M. and OWEN, C. (Eds) (1991) *Whose Cities?* London: Penguin.

FRITH, S. and SAVAGE, J. (1993) Pearls and swine, *New Left Review*, 198, pp. 107–123.

GIDDENS, A. (1992) *The Transformation of Intimacy*. Cambridge: Polity.

HAMMOND, J. and WILLIAMS, P. (1986) Yuppies, *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 50, pp. 487–501.

HARVEY, D. (1986) *The Urbanisation of Capital*. Oxford: Blackwell.

HARVEY, D. (1988) Voodoo cities, *New Statesman and Society*, 30 September, pp. 28–36.

HARVEY, D. (1989) *The Condition of Postmodernity*. Oxford: Blackwell.

HILL, D. and O'CONNOR, J. (1996) Cottonopolis and culture: contemporary culture and structural change in Manchester, *City*, January (5–6), pp. 109–118.

HITTERS, E. (1993) Culture and capital in the 1990s, *Built Environment*, 18, pp. 111–122.

HODGE, J. (1993) *Rethinking temporality: Heidegger, sociology and the postmodern critique*. Working Paper No. 5, Manchester Institute for Popular Culture, The Manchester Metropolitan University.

JAGER, M. (1986) Victoriana in Melbourne, in: N. SMITH and P. WILLIAMS (Eds) *The Gentrification of the City*, pp. 78–91. London: Allen & Unwin.

JAMESON, F. (1991) *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. London: Verso.

KELLNER, H. and HEUBERGER, F. (Eds) (1991) *Hidden Technocrats: The New Class and the New Capitalism*. New York: Transaction Press.

KENNEDY, P. (1996) Capitalist enterprise as a moral or political crusade, in: J. O'CONNOR and D. WYNNE (Eds) *From the Margins to the Centre*, pp. 225–248. Aldershot: Arena.

KING, A. (Ed.) (1996) *Re-presenting the City: Ethnicity, Capital and Culture in the 21st Century Metropolis*. London: Macmillan.

LAERMANS, R. (1993) Learning to consume: early department stores and the shaping of modern consumer culture, *Theory, Culture and Society*, 10(4), pp. 79–102.

LASH, S. (1990) *Sociology of Postmodernism*. London: Routledge.

LASH, S. and URRY, J. (1987) *The End of Organised Capitalism*. Cambridge: Polity.

LASH, S. and URRY, J. (1994) *Economies of Signs and Spaces*. London: Sage.

LAW, C. (1988) Urban revitalisation, public policy and redevelopment: lessons from Baltimore and Manchester, in: B. HOYLE *ET AL.* (Eds) *Revitalising the Waterfront*, pp. 146–166. Baltimore: Belhaven Press.

LEWIS, J. (1990) *Art, Culture and Enterprise*. London: Routledge.

LEY, D. (1992) *Gentrification and the politics of the new middle class*. Paper presented to the Department of Geography, University of British Colombia, August.

LEY, D. (1996) *The New Middle Class and the Remaking of the Central City*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

LOVATT, A. and O'CONNOR, J. (1995) Cities and the night time economy, *Planning Practice and Research*, 10(2), pp. 127–135.

LOVATT, A,, RAFFO, C. and O'CONNOR, J. (1996) Modernist business education in a postmodern world—critical evidence of business practice and business education in the cultural industries, *British Journal of Education and Work*, 9(3), pp. 19–34.

LURY, C. (1996) *Consumer Culture*. Cambridge: Polity.

MAFFESOLI, M. (1988) *Le Temps des Tribus*. Paris: Livres des Poches.

MARTIN, B. (1981) *A Sociology of Contemporary Cultural Change*. Oxford: Blackwell.

MARTIN, B. (1992) Symbolic knowledge and market forces: a profession on the frontiers of postmodernity, in: H. KELLNER and F. HEUBERGER (Eds) *Hidden Technocrats: The New Class and the New Capitalism*, pp. 111–156. New York: Transaction Press.

MILESTONE, K. (1992) *Pop music, place and travel*. Paper presented at *Leisure Studies Conference*, Department of Leisure Studies, Tilburg University, The Netherlands. (Available from the author at The Manchester Institute for Popular Culture, Manchester Metropolitan University).

MULGAN, G. and WORPOLE, K. (1986) *Saturday Night or Sunday Morning?* London: Commedia.

MYERSCOUGH, J. (1988) *The Economic Importance of the Arts in Britain*. London: Policy Studies Institute.

O'CONNOR, J. (1992) Local authorities and cultural industries, in: D. WYNNE (Ed.) *The Culture Industry*, pp. 56–69. Swindon: Avebury.

O'CONNOR, J. (1993) Manchester and the millenium: whose culture, whose civilisation?, *Regenerating Cities*, 5, pp. 17–19.

O'CONNOR, J. (1995) A close look at the regeneration business: cities 95, *City*, December, Nos 1–2, pp. 167–170.

O'CONNOR, J. (1997) Cultural intermediaries, cultural policy and urban regeneration, in: L. BOVONE (Ed.) *Mode*, pp. 82–100. Milan: Franco Angeli.

O'CONNOR, J. (1998) Popular culture and urban regeneration, in: T. HALL and P. HUBBARD (Eds) *The Entrepreneurial City: Geographies of Politics, Regime and Representation*. London: Wiley (forthcoming).

O'CONNOR, J. and WYNNE, D. (1992) The uses and abuses of popular culture: cultural policy and popular culture, *Loisir et Societé*, 14(2), pp. 465–483.

O'CONNOR, J. and WYNNE, D. (Eds) (1996a) *From the Margins to the Centre*. Aldershot: Arena.

O'CONNOR, J. and WYNNE, D. (1996b) Left loafing: cultural consumption and production in the postmodern city, in: J. O'CONNOR and D. WYNNE (Eds) *From the Margins to the Centre*, pp. 49–90. Aldershot: Arena.

PAHL, R. (1995) *After Success: Fin-de-siècle Anxiety and Identity*. London: Polity.

PETERSON, R. and KERN, R. (1996) Changing Highbrow taste: from snob to omnivore, *American Sociological Review*, 61, pp. 900–907.

PHILLIPS, D.(1994) Correspondence analysis, in: N. GILBERT (Ed.) *Social Research Update, No. 7*. Winter, University of Surrey.

PRED, A. (1995) *Recognising European Modernities: A Montage of the Present*. London: Routledge.

PURKIS, J. (1996) The city as a site of ethical consumption and resistance, in: J. O'CONNOR and D. WYNNE (Eds) *From the Margins to the Centre*, pp. 203–224. Aldershot: Arena.

PURVIS, S. (1996) The interchangeable roles of the producer, consumer and cultural intermediary: the new pop fashion designers, in: J. O'CONNOR and D. WYNNE (Eds) *From the Margins to the Centre*, pp. 117–140. Aldershot: Arena.

REDHEAD, S. (1993) Disappearing youth, *Theory, Culture and Society*, 10(3), pp. 191–200.

ROBBINS, K. (1991) Prisoners of the city: whatever could a postmodern city be?, *New Formations*, Winter, No. 15, pp. 1–22.

ROBSON, E. (1986) *Those Inner Cities*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

ROSE, D. (1984) Rethinking gentrification: beyond the uneven development of Marxist urban theory, *Environment and Planning D*, 1, pp. 47–74.

SASSEN, S. (1991) *The Global City*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

SASSEN, S. (1994) *Cities in a World Economy*. Newbury Park, CA: Pineforge Press.

SASSEN, S. (1996) Rebuilding the global city: economy, ethnicity and space, in: A. KING (Ed.) *Representing the City: Ethnicity, Capital and Culture in the 21st Century Metropolis*, pp. 23–42. London: Macmillan.

SAVAGE, J. (1992) Structures of Feeling, *New Statesman and Society*, 18 September, pp. 30–31.

SAVAGE, M. *ET AL.* (1992) *Property, Bureaucracy and Culture: Middle Class Formation in Contemporary Britain*. London: Routledge.

SCHULZE, G. (1993) *Die Erlebnisgeselleschaft: Kultursoziologie der Gegenwart*. Frankfurt: Campus Verlag.

SCOTT, A. J. (1997) The cultural economy of cities, *The International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 21(2), pp. 323–339.

SHIELDS, R. (1991) *Places on the Margin*. London: Routledge.

SHIELDS, R. (Ed.) (1992a) *Lifestyle Shopping*. London: Routledge.

SHIELDS, R. (1992b) A truant proximity: presence and absence in the space of modernity, *Environment and Planning D*, 10, pp. 181–198.

SHIELDS, R. (1996) A guide to urban representation and what to do about it: alternative traditions of urban theory, in: A. KING (Ed.) *Re-presenting the City: Ethnicity, Capital and Culture in the 21st Century Metropolis*, pp. 227–252. London: Macmillan.

SIMPSON, C. (1981) *SoHo: The Artist in the City*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

SMITH, N. (1987) Of yuppies and housing: gentrification, social restructuring and the urban dream, *Environment and Planning D*, 5, pp. 151–172.

SMITH, N. and WILLIAMS, P. (Eds) (1986) *The Gentrification of the City*. London: Allen & Unwin.

TAYLOR, I., EVANS, K. and FRASER, P. (1996) *A Tale of Two Cities*. London: Routledge.

THORNLEY, A. (1990) *Urban Planning under Thatcherism*. London: Routledge.

THRIFT, N. (1993) An urban impasse?, *Theory, Culture and Society*, 10(2), pp. 229–238.

TURNER, V. (1969) *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-structure*. London: Allen Lane.

WHIMSTER, S. (1992) Yuppies: a keyword of the 1980s, in: L. BUDD and S. WHIMSTER (Eds) *Global Finance and Urban Living*, pp. 312–332. London: Sage.

WHITTLE, S. (Ed.) (1994) *Gay Culture and the City*. Swindon: Arena.

WORPOLE, K. (1992) *Towns for People: Transforming Urban Life*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

WYNNE, D. (Ed.) (1992) *The Culture Industry*. Swindon: Avebury.

WYNNE, D. and O'CONNOR, J. (1992) Tourists, hamburgers and street musicians, in: R. REICHARDT and G. MUSKENS (Eds) *Postcommunism, the Market and the Arts*, pp. 101–125. Frankfurt: Peter Lang.

ZUKIN, S. (1982) *Loft Living: Culture and Capital in Urban Change*. London: Radius.

ZUKIN, S. (1987) Gentrification, *Annual Review of Sociology*, pp. 129–147.

ZUKIN, S. (1988) The postmodern debate over urban form, *Theory, Culture and Society*, 5(2/3), pp. 431–446.

ZUKIN, S. (1992a) Postmodern urban landscapes:

mapping culture and power, in: S. LASH and J. FREIDMAN (Eds) *Modernity and Identity*, pp. 221–247. Oxford: Blackwell.

ZUKIN, S. (1992b) *Landscapes of Power: From Detroit to Disneyworld*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

ZUKIN, S. (1995) *The Culture of Cities*. Oxford: Blackwell.