



# Parent–child leisure activities and cultural capital in the United Kingdom: The gendered effects of education and social class



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## ABSTRACT

This article uses data on couples from the 2000 UK Time Use Survey ( $N = 610$ ) to analyze how social position influences parents' leisure activities with children. The study is the first using representative data to investigate this fundamental question to understand social inequalities in family life and children's life chances. Results reveal that social position intersects with gender in influencing parent–child leisure activities with implications on children's cultural capital. Three are the main findings: (1) social position has significant positive effects on cultural activities with children and negative on parent–child television watching among mothers, but moderate differences are observed for fathers; (2) father–child leisure is strongly influenced by the spouse's social position, but not mother–child leisure; (3) education and social class show complex differences in affecting parent–child leisure, suggesting that future studies should include these two variables when analyzing parent–child time and family life.

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## 1. Introduction

In this study I use data from the 2000 UK Time Use Survey (UKTUS) to analyze how parents of different levels of education and social classes spend time with children in leisure activities with cultural capital implications. Studying how parent–child shared leisure varies across socioeconomic groups is not only crucial to understand daily family relations (Bianchi et al., 2006; Craig and Mullan, 2012; Nock and Kingston, 1988), but also to better understand children's life chances and the reproduction of social inequality (Lareau, 2003). My study is the first in offering rich quantitative evidence on how parents of different social backgrounds engage in distinct leisure activities with children with implications for their cultural capital and future life chances.

Social stratification scholars posit that privileged parents transmit social advantage through the family. Children from privileged backgrounds typically acquire the 'elite culture' associated with schooling and labor market chances, which is substantially explained by children's accumulation of 'embodied' cultural capital through family life (Bodovski and Farkas, 2008; Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990; De Graaf et al., 2000; Farkas, 2003; Kraaykamp and Van Eijck, 2010; Lareau, 2003). Scholars also stressed the role of gender, namely that privileged mothers are the key actors in transmitting social advantage, as they are the main organizers of child-related activities (Hays, 1996; Reay, 1998). Further, studies on cultural consumption posited that men, but especially women, with high socioeconomic resources disproportionately engage in 'highbrow' cultural practices (Bihagen and Katz-Gerro, 2000). Overall, previous studies suggest that privileged fathers, and particularly mothers,

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participate in cultural-typed leisure activities with their offspring that create inequalities in children's schooling and employment chances.

The existing literature, however, has provided insufficient evidence on how parents of different social backgrounds participate in leisure activities with children. To my knowledge, only two studies (Altintas, 2012; Lareau, 2003), both with American data, have analyzed this question. Lareau (2003) offered rich ethnographic evidence showing that parents' social class, and especially mothers', affects children's socialization in leisure routines that promote their skills and life chances. Lareau (2003) provided rich empirical evidence, but raised the question of whether her results can be extrapolated to the general population. Altintas' (2012) quantitative study partly complemented Lareau's study. She found that parental education is negatively associated with parents' time watching television with children in the United States. However, Altintas (2012) did not study other specific leisure activities with key cultural capital implications, like parent-child shared time going to museums, theatres, or libraries, as well as their home-based cultural activities. Altogether, new studies on new countries are needed to better understand how parents of different social backgrounds share time with children in cultural-typed leisure activities.

My study makes three main contributions. First, I adopt a novel *multidimensional* approach using rich quantitative time use data to analyze how parent-child shared leisure differs by social position. I focus on three distinct leisure activities, namely (i) 'out-of-home cultural activities', 'home-based cultural activities', and 'watching television'. These activities provide detailed evidence on how parent-child shared leisure differs across socioeconomic groups. Parents who often spend time with children in 'highbrow' cultural activities, either 'home-based' (i.e., reading books) or 'out-of-home' (i.e., theatres, visiting museums, going to libraries), can – directly or indirectly – transmit cultural capital to children that affect their schooling and labor market chances (DiMaggio, 1982; Kraaykamp and Van Eijck, 2010). By contrast, parents' "excessive" time watching television with children is associated with children's leisure socialization in activities with negative implications on their schooling outcomes and cultural capital (Bianchi and Robinson, 1997; Notten and Kraaykamp, 2010). Overall, studying how parents engage in these three leisure categories with children provides new rich evidence on how social stratification operates in the family.

Second, I investigate how *gender* influences the way social position is associated to parents' leisure with children. Mothers disproportionately combine leisure with child care activities, reflecting gendered behaviors in the home (Bianchi et al., 2006). Also, previous studies imply that privileged mothers are the main agents of social reproduction. This fact is explained by mothers' active engagement in cultural family leisure practices, arranging also husbands' time with children (Hays, 1996), as well as through their participation (with children) in 'elite' forms of cultural consumption (Bihagen and Katz-Gerro, 2000). My study is innovative in analyzing gender differences, not only in how parents' leisure with children is influenced by their social position, but also by the spouse's social position. This approach contributes to a better understanding of how gender and social position intersect in ways that affect the reproduction of social inequality.

Third, the present study is the first that analyzes the influence of *education* 'and' *social class* on parents' time with children. Education and social class are two interrelated variables, but have also different implications for social stratification. Education better captures human capital and credentials, while social class provides more specific information on individuals' material resources, occupation, and social status (Crompton, 2010; Erikson and Goldthorpe, 1992). This means that these two variables might have distinct effects on parent-child shared activities. Yet, previous quantitative studies omitted the analysis of how social class influences parent-child time, and only looked at educational inequalities in parents' time use (e.g., Bianchi et al., 2006). Therefore, the look at different measures of social position to analyze parents' time with children permits to better understand which factors influence social inequalities across families and children.

## 2. Literature review

Parents' leisure activities with children promote family solidarity and intergenerational relations (Bianchi et al., 2006; Craig and Mullan, 2012), but also affect children's socialization and life chances (Lareau, 2003). Consequently, the way parents engage in cultural-related activities with children is relevant to identify the mechanisms behind the reproduction of social inequality. Research on the United Kingdom (Sullivan, 2001), Denmark (Jæger and Holm, 2007), the Netherlands (De Graaf et al., 2000; Van de Werfhorst and Hofstede, 2007), and the United States (Bodovski and Farkas, 2008; DiMaggio, 1982), found important socioeconomic differences in children's family access to the 'elite' cultural capital linked to schooling and labor market outcomes. This raises the question of how parents of different social backgrounds share time with children in daily leisure practices with cultural capital implications.

The study of Bourdieu (1984) on *cultural capital* provides an important theoretical framework to study socioeconomic differences in parent-child shared leisure. Bourdieu (1984) argued that parents transfer material and non-material resources to their offspring through the possession of three forms of capital: cultural, economic, and social. Cultural capital, according to Bourdieu, plays a determinant role in social reproduction. Cultural capital, for Bourdieu, is expressed in three basic ways; 'embodied' (i.e. cultural knowledge, linguistic skills), 'institutionalized' (i.e. educational diplomas), and 'objectified' (i.e. books, dictionaries, pictures). The notion of 'embodied' cultural capital seems particularly crucial to study parent-child leisure, since it implies that children's *habitus*, namely the lifestyles, values, and dispositions acquired in daily practices, is strongly determined by parent-child shared time.

Lareau's (2003) work offers rich evidence on how parent–child shared leisure activities differ by social background. In her ethnographic study on American families, Lareau found that middle and upper class parents conform to the parenting values of *concerted cultivation*. These parents, not only enrolled children in various age-specific activities (i.e. theatre, music lessons, sports), but also participated in family-organized leisure activities that were seen as instruments to enhance children's skills and cultural capital. In contrast, poor and working-class parents conformed to her concept of *accomplishment of natural growth*, which generally assumes that children's free time should not essentially conflict with parents' strategies to develop their offspring's 'talents'. In short, Lareau's (2003) study suggests that parents' cultural-related leisure with children differs significantly across social strata.

Scholars also suggested that *gender* shapes the way parent–child shared leisure differs by social position. Mothers are the key organizers of child care and family activities (Hays, 1996). This fact shows gender inequalities at home (Craig, 2006), yet it also captures gendered patterns in the transmission of social advantage (Reay, 1998). Qualitative studies (Lareau, 2003) found that privileged mothers are the key organizers of 'developmental' activities for children by fostering also fathers to engage in 'enriching' daily routines with children. Quantitative evidence (England and Srivastava, 2013) shows that the spouse's education is strongly associated with fathers' child care, but not with mothers' child care. These findings imply that mothers' social position would make the difference in both their own and spouse's leisure with children, yet evidence in this direction is only restricted to few ethnographic studies.

The *cultural consumption* literature also provides insights into how mothers' and fathers' social position affects their shared leisure time with children. Social class and education were found to have positive effects on cultural consumption (i.e., reading, exhibitions, theatre) and negative effects on watching ('lowbrow') television (Bihagen and Katz-Gerro, 2000; Robinson and Godbey, 1999). Women were found to be more engaged than men in 'highbrow' cultural activities (i.e. theatre, arts, reading) and less in watching ('lowbrow') television (Bihagen and Katz-Gerro, 2000). Because parents are increasingly including children in their leisure time (Bianchi et al., 2006), one might expect that fathers, but especially mothers, of privileged social backgrounds unevenly engage in 'highbrow' cultural activities with children.

Parents' *socioeconomic resources* can also influence their leisure time with children. Privileged parents have high economic resources that allow them to be active in (highbrow) cultural consumption (Yaish and Katz-Gerro, 2012). Parents from affluent social positions can be advantaged also to engage in family-oriented activities, due to their high income to outsource domestic work (Bianchi et al., 2006), or their job autonomy to balance paid work and family leisure (Lesnard, 2008). These socioeconomic resources might give privileged parents a relative advantage on family-organized 'elite' cultural activities. By contrast, the lower socioeconomic resources of disadvantaged parents would bring them to concentrate most of their leisure time with children in activities that cost less money, time, and effort, such as watching television.

Overall, social position might intersect with gender in influencing parent–child shared leisure, due to variations in parental values, cultural consumption, and material resources. However, quantitative studies on parent–child time (Altintas, 2012; Bianchi et al., 2006; England and Srivastava, 2013; Sayer et al., 2004; Sullivan, 2010) have provided poor evidence on how specific parent–child leisure activities with cultural capital implications differ across social strata. The insufficient attention to three key questions, namely (i) the focus on distinct cultural-typed activities, (ii) the role of gender, and (iii) the study of different measures of social position, motives this study.

### 3. Theoretical background

#### 3.1. Parents' leisure activities with children

Parent–child shared leisure can influence children's skills and cultural capital by two main mechanisms. One is through parents' supervised participation in the same leisure activities as children, like for example going to museums and libraries. The second is indirect. Children can interiorize parents' leisure practices through direct observation. This occurs for example when parents play an instrument or read books at home in presence of children, which indirectly influences children's own cultural tastes and consumption (Kraaykamp and Van Eijck, 2010). Overall, the transmission of 'embodied' cultural capital in the family is affected by how parents engage in leisure activities in presence of children.

This study focuses on three relevant parent–child shared leisure activities: 'out-of-home cultural activities', 'home-based cultural activities', and 'watching television'.

- *Out-of-home cultural activities*: Parents who participate with their offspring in 'out-of-home cultural activities' socialize them in the 'status' culture (i.e., opera, classical music, art exhibitions) or in purely 'cognitive' practices (i.e., reading in libraries) (De Graaf et al., 2000; Lareau, 2003). This implies that children, directly or indirectly, accumulate cultural capital associated with their life chances (Bourdieu, 1984).
- *Home-based cultural activities*: If parents participate in the same space than children in 'home-based cultural activities' (i.e. reading, painting, playing music), children may develop a taste for such practices, and would easily incorporate them into their own lives through direct imitation of parents' routines (Kraaykamp and Van Eijck, 2010). For example, when parents read books and their offspring share time with them in such activities, children might very easily develop a taste for reading, which in turn would increase their chances of being active readers themselves.

- *Watching television:* Parents who spend ‘too many’ hours with their children watching television can negatively influence children’s cultural capital. Children who are highly exposed to watching television in family life are also more likely to watch television during their childhood and throughout the life course (Cardoso et al., 2010; Notten and Kraaykamp, 2010), which conflicts directly with children’s time allocated to reading and studying (Hofferth, 2010). By contrast, parents who moderate their time watching television with children are more active in supervising children’s television watching time by discussing the content of the programs and choosing programs with ‘developmental’ aims (Huston et al., 1999). Finally, the literature suggests that ‘too much’ television exposure in childhood socialization has negative effects on children’s cognitive and educational outcomes (Hancox et al., 2005).

### 3.2. Social position

One first main question is how parents’ *social position* influences their shared leisure with children. Two measures of social position are considered: education and social class. Education and social class are interrelated, but also differ substantially (Erikson and Goldthorpe, 1992; Kingston, 2000). Education captures information on academic credentials, cognitive skills, and human capital that are transferable into labor market outcomes, and is also a marker of values, tastes, and lifestyles shared by people with similar levels of education (Kalmijn, 1998). Social class also captures differences in values, tastes, and lifestyles (Crompton, 2010), but more directly reflects one’s economic resources, as well as occupational information on individuals’ authority, social relations, and status (Erikson and Goldthorpe, 1992).

Previous studies imply that social position has positive associations with parent–child shared cultural activities, and negative with watching television. Yet, the way education and social class influence parent–child shared leisure has not been investigated. Kingston (2000) argued that education can influence parent–child time in capturing different cultural tastes and parental values, unlike social class. Lareau (2003) suggested that social class, not education, explains variations in parent–child shared leisure activities, arguing that class identities shape cultural attitudes and parental values. One could also argue that social class is, after controlling for education, a better indicator of material resources and social status than education. By contrast, education better describes preferences that are relatively independent from material resources and social status. This leads to two possible hypotheses, one on *education effects* and the other on *social class effects*.

**Education Hypothesis (H-1).** Education has a positive effect on parents’ home-based and out-of-home cultural activities with children, and negative on parents’ time watching television with children.

**Social Class Hypothesis (H-2).** Social class has a positive effect on parents’ home-based and out-of-home cultural activities with children, and negative on parents’ time watching television with children.

### 3.3. Gender

The second main question is whether *gender* influences the way parents’ leisure with children differs by social position. As mentioned, previous studies found that women in the highest social positions are particularly active in ‘highbrow’ cultural consumption (Bihagen and Katz-Gerro, 2000), and in fostering children’s cultural capital through family leisure activities (Lareau, 2003), also ensuring that the husband actively supervises children’s routines that foster their skills and cultural capital (Hays, 1996). This implies that the effects of parents’ socioeconomic position on their leisure time with children and their spouse’s leisure with children should be stronger when looking at mothers’ social position than at fathers’ social position. Two hypotheses can therefore be formulated, one at the *individual level* and the other at the *spouse’s level*.

**Individual-Level Gender Hypothesis (H-3).** Parents’ social position has a stronger association with their leisure activities with children among mothers than among fathers.

**Spouse-Level Gender Hypothesis (H-4).** The spouse’s social position has stronger associations with father–child shared leisure than it has with mother–child shared leisure.

## 4. Method

### 4.1. Data

The 2000 UKTUS is a representative time use survey from the United Kingdom population, included in the *Multinational Time Use Study* (MTUS). This survey offers excellent data for the goals of this study. Time use surveys are the most reliable statistical sources to examine individuals’ daily activities (Gershuny, 2000; Robinson and Godbey, 1999). Previous studies on cultural consumption were able to offer valuable evidence on the cultural activities and television programs consumed by individuals of different generations (Bihagen and Katz-Gerro, 2000; Notten and Kraaykamp, 2010; Yaish and Katz-Gerro,

2012). However, time-diary data ideally complement these studies with accurate information on how parents spend time on a range of specific activities and – more important – on whether children are present in such activities.

In the UKTUS, respondents reported their 10-min activities along the 1440 min of a weekday (Monday–Friday) and weekend day (Saturday–Sunday). Respondents gave information on the main (primary) and simultaneous (secondary) activity, and whether one or more children were present in each activity. These activities were coded, including many different practices, like for example watching television, reading books, visiting museums, and going to libraries. These time-diary data were complemented with individual-level and household-level information.

The UKTUS provides information on 6414 households, with 61% of response rate for households, 81% for individuals, and 73% on diaries (Short, 2006). The sample of this study is restricted to married/cohabiting couples where both spouses completed the two diaries, were aged 25–59, and had dependent children in school age (aged 4–15) at the moment of the interview ( $n = 686$ ).<sup>1</sup> From this sample, 76 cases were dropped due to incomplete information on either the mother's or the fathers' current or previous occupation. This leaves a final sample of 610 couples.

#### 4.2. Dependent variables

Three dependent variables are used. *Cultural out-of-home activities* (dummy) captures parents' participation (on the weekday or weekend day) in out-of-home cultural activities in presence of children, including museum exhibitions, art galleries, theatre, opera, ballet, dance events, going to libraries, cinema, and concerts. Given that less than 10% of respondents engaged in an out-of-home cultural activity, a dummy variable seems the most robust measure. *Cultural home-based activities* (continuous) sums the daily minutes in home-based cultural activities with children, including reading, fine arts, music performance, and listening to music records. *Watching television* (continuous) sums the daily minutes watching television in presence of children. The two continuous dependent variables capture the average daily time by multiplying the weekday minutes per five, the weekend minutes per two, and dividing the total sum of minutes by seven. Both primary and secondary activities (conditional on not reporting leisure activities as the primary activity) are considered (see Table A.1).

#### 4.3. Independent variables

The two *independent variables* used are education and social class. *Education* measures the minimum years of schooling completed to reach one's highest level of education. *Social class* is constructed following the Erikson–Goldthorpe–Portocarero (EGP) class scheme (Erikson and Goldthorpe, 1992), using a five classes scheme: (1) 'High-graded managers/professionals' (Class I); (2) 'Low-graded managers/professionals' (Class II); (3) 'Routine non-manual workers, small employers, self-employed workers' (nonprofessional) (Classes III, IVa, IVb); (4) 'Technicians of lower grade, supervisors of manual workers, and skilled manual workers' (Class V, VI); (5) 'Unskilled manual and non-manual workers' (Class VIIa, VIIb). For those cases in which the respondent was not employed, the last occupation was considered.

Previous related studies used a categorical measure of education (Bianchi et al., 2006; England and Srivastava, 2013; Sayer et al., 2004). A continuous measure, however, was preferable for producing lower levels of multicollinearity with social class, indicated when testing the correlation matrix of parameter estimates, and the 'variance inflator factor' (VIF). Additional analyses (not shown) with a categorical education measure produced similar results to those presented here.

#### 4.4. Control variables

The *control variables* provide individual-level and household-level information on demographic characteristics, resources, and time availability. *Father's employment* has three categories: not employed (reference), standard full-time (working less than 50 h) and 'overworking' (working 50 or more hours per week). *Mother's employment* has also three categories: 'not employed' (reference), 'part-time' (working less than 30 weekly hours), and 'full-time' (working 30 or more hours per week). *Number of dependent children* includes three categories: 'one' (reference), 'two', and 'three or more'. *Outsourcing domestic labor* (dummy) indicates whether the couple outsources domestic work. Finally, *age* is measured as a continuous variable. Although income is an important variable of cultural participation (Yaish and Katz-Gerro, 2012), it was excluded from the analyses for its high number of missing values. Additional analyses (not shown) presented general insignificant effects of income. Table 1 presents a description of the variables used in the empirical analyses.

#### 4.5. Analytical strategy

The empirical strategy follows two steps. First, descriptive information on the time mothers and fathers spent on the three activities of study is provided in relation to their educational level and occupational class.

Second, multivariate statistical analyses were applied. Model 1 presents the respondent's social class effects. Model 2 shows the respondent's education effects. Model 3 combines the education and social class effects. Model 4 adds the spouse's

<sup>1</sup> The sample is restricted to families with school-aged children, where less time is allocated to direct child care (i.e., physical and interactive care) and children are more actively engaged in leisure practices, as compared to families with pre-schoolers.

social class and education into the equation. Model 5, the full model, adds the control variables. Parents' out-of-home cultural activities with children was analyzed with Binary Logistic (Logit) models with the *Karlsoln–Holm–Breen (KHB)* method (Karlsoln et al., 2012). This method allows the comparison of the odds in Binary Logistic models by subtracting the residuals of the variables that are subsequently added into the original equation. This method provides a more robust estimate of these models than standard Logit models, even if results were generally comparable using any of the two methods. *Ordinary Least Squares' (OLS)* regressions were applied for home-based cultural activities and watching television. The models were run separately for mothers and fathers.

Two clarifications are needed. First, the multivariate statistical analyses contain clustered standard errors, which allow for a correction of possible underestimation in the standard errors when using time use data on two observation days. Second, Seemingly Unrelated Regressions (SUR) were used in additional analyses (not shown). Results of the SUR models were consistent with the ones presented here using OLS regressions

## 5. Findings

### 5.1. Descriptive findings

Fig. 1 presents descriptive evidence on parents' leisure activities with children by their education and social class. Relevant differences for *education* are observed. For 'out-of-home cultural activities' with children, a positive relationship, albeit non-linear, is observed with years of education. Mothers' out-of-home participation is clearly more frequent among the college-educated (13%) than among the lowest educated (4%), with similar differences for fathers. As for 'home-based cultural activities' with children, positive associations with education are also observed. Mothers with basic education spent clearly less time in these activities (19 min) than college-educated mothers (38), with similar differences between fathers with the lowest education (13 min) and those with the highest education (28). For 'watching television' with children, negative associations are observed, especially for mothers, with the highest educated spending much less minutes (54) than the lowest educated (76).

For *social class*, descriptive results in Fig. 1 show similarities with education, but also visible differences. For 'out-of-home cultural activities' with children, social class variations are more evident amongst mothers than amongst fathers. For mothers, the unskilled working class participate much less frequently in out-of-home cultural activities with children (4%) than professionals and managers, especially at the top of the class hierarchy (12%). By contrast, fathers' out-of-home cultural activities show a u-shaped association with social class. For 'home-based cultural activities', similar positive average differences to those for education are observed for social class in both genders, yet these are less pronounced than for education. Finally, for 'watching television' with children, social class mirrors the negative associations of education, yet a more substantial time use gap is appreciated between mothers at the top of the social class hierarchy (45 min) and those at the bottom (76).

The descriptive analyses also present relevant *gender* differences (Fig. 1). In relation to 'out-of-home cultural activities' with children, mothers' education, and especially social class, presents more positive associations, as compared to fathers' education and social class. For 'watching television', the mother's social position (especially social class) presents more evident negative associations than the father's. Only for 'home-based cultural activities' with children, the general associations for social class and education are similar across genders.

### 5.2. Education effects

The *education hypothesis* (H-1) anticipates that education has a positive effect on parents' home-based and out-of-home cultural activities with children, and a negative effect on their time watching television with children. Analyses are consistent with the *education hypothesis* for mothers' cultural-related activities, but not for fathers.

Table 2 presents the Logit KHB models for outdoor cultural activities with children. The mother's education is clearly associated with the odds of engaging in these activities ( $p < 0.01$ ), while the effects remain significant when controlling for all covariates ( $p < 0.01$ ). For fathers, education moderately increases his out-of-home cultural participation with children ( $p < 0.10$ ), but these effects fully disappear with the spouse's controls. Table 3 presents the OLS regressions for home-based cultural activities with children, showing strong positive effects for mothers ( $p < 0.001$ ), with persistent significant effects in the full model ( $p < 0.05$ ). By contrast, the significant positive effects of education on fathers' home-based cultural activities ( $p < 0.001$ ) completely disappear when the wife's social position is included in the analyses. Table 4 presents the OLS results for watching television for children. It shows negative educational effects in the basic model ( $p < 0.05$ ), yet these correlations become completely insignificant, for both men and women, when controlling for the wife's social class.

### 5.3. Social class effects

The *social class hypothesis* (H-2) states that, instead of education, social class has positive effects on parents' cultural-related activities with children, and negative effects on their time watching television in presence of children. The multivariate analyses are (only) consistent with the *social class hypothesis* when looking at mothers' television watching with children, not among fathers.

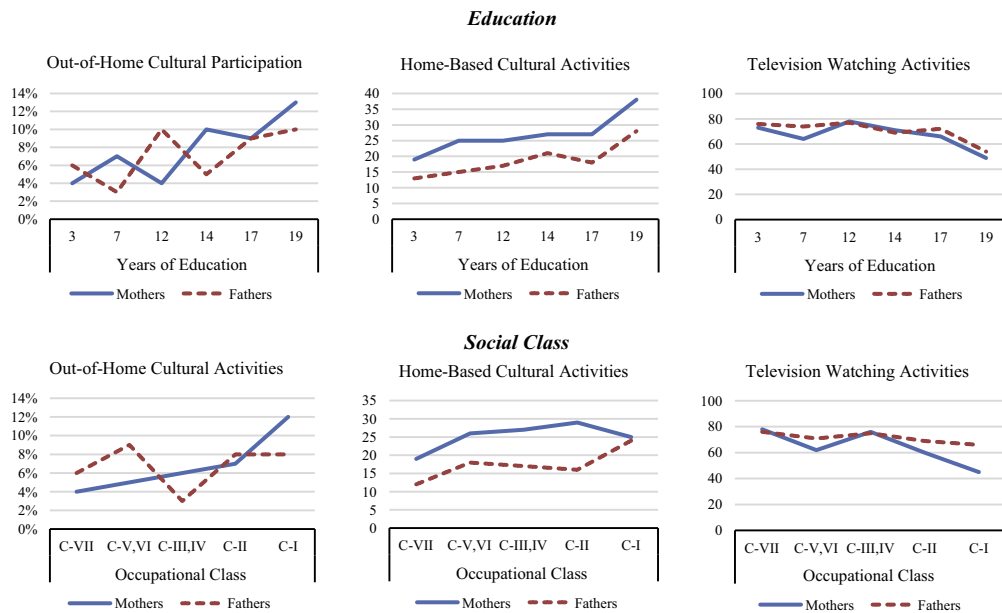


Fig. 1. Average participation in leisure activities with children by parental education and social class.

Table 1

Descriptive statistics. Means and s.d. Source: '2000 UK Time Use Survey'.

	Mothers		Fathers	
	Mean	s.d.	Mean	s.d.
Participation in out-of-home cultural activities with children	0.08		0.08	
Minutes in home-based cultural activities with children	25.54	39.11	18.58	34.65
Minutes in television watching with children	68.47	71.97	70.59	80.17
Class I (high-graded managerial/professional occupations)	0.16		0.36	
Class II (low-graded managerial/professional occupations)	0.20		0.12	
Class III, IV (intermediate occupations)	0.38		0.13	
Class V, VI (skilled routine occupations)	0.08		0.18	
Class VII (unskilled routine occupations)	0.18		0.21	
Years of education	10.58	4.47	10.69	4.71
Mother is not employed	0.20		0.20	
Mother has part-time job (<30 weekly hours)	0.47		0.47	
Mother has full-time job ( $\geq 30$ weekly hours)	0.33		0.33	
Father is not employed	0.09		0.09	
Father has full-time job (<50 weekly hours)	0.51		0.51	
Father overworks ( $\geq 50$ weekly hours)	0.40		0.40	
One child at home	0.38		0.38	
Two children at home	0.44		0.44	
Three or more children at home	0.18		0.18	
Outsourcing domestic work	0.36		0.36	
Age	38.64	6.13	41.08	6.79
N	610		610	

The KHB Logit models (Table 2) show that mothers in high-graded managerial and professional occupations engage more often in out-of-home cultural activities with children than unskilled working-class mothers ( $p < 0.05$ ), but these effects become insignificant when controlling for education. The fathers' social class has insignificant effects on his out-of-home cultural activities with children. The OLS models for home-based cultural activities (Table 3) show positive correlations for social class. These correlations are particularly strong when comparing fathers at the top of the social class hierarchy with those at the bottom ( $p$ -value  $< 0.001$ ), yet these effects disappear when the mother's education is considered. Finally, the OLS models for television watching time with children (Table 4) show that high-graded professional and managerial mothers clearly spend much less time in these activities than their unskilled working-class counterparts ( $p$ -value  $< 0.001$ ), with visible significant differences also in the full model ( $p$ -value  $< 0.05$ ). The father's social class, on the contrary, has insignificant effects on his time watching television with children.

**Table 2**  
KHB logit. Participation in out-of-home cultural activities with children. Source: '2000 UK Time Use Survey'.

	Mothers					Fathers				
	M-1 Odds	M2 Odds	M-3 Odds	M-4 Odds	M-5 Odds	M-1 Odds	M-2 Odds	M-3 Odds	M-4 Odds	M-5 Odds
Individual										
Class VII	[ref]		[ref]	[ref]	[ref]	[ref]		[ref]	[ref]	[ref]
Class I	3.13 <sup>+</sup>		1.50	1.40	1.64	1.31		0.83	0.66	0.66
	1.78		0.99	0.92	1.09	0.65		0.52	0.40	0.40
Class II	1.67		0.93	0.84	0.92	0.53		1.11	0.90	0.95
	0.96		0.61	0.54	0.59	0.92		0.70	0.56	0.59
Class III, IV	1.45		1.14	1.08	1.15	0.38		0.33	0.30	0.30
	0.76		0.62	0.58	0.64	0.31		0.28	0.25	0.25
Class V, VI	1.17		0.92	0.95	0.88	1.91		1.75	1.44	1.73
	1.37		1.09	1.12	1.09	0.99		0.92	0.74	0.92
Years of education		1.12 <sup>**</sup>	1.12 <sup>**</sup>	1.09 <sup>+</sup>	1.10 <sup>+</sup>		1.07 <sup>+</sup>	1.08 <sup>+</sup>	1.01	1.02
		0.04	0.05	0.05	0.05		0.04	0.05	0.06	0.06
Spouse										
Class VII				[ref]	[ref]				[ref]	[ref]
Class I				1.69	1.88				1.03	1.62
				1.05	1.19				0.71	1.09
Class II				2.14	2.24				0.65	0.87
				1.39	1.48				0.43	0.57
Class III, IV				1.94	1.90				1.39	1.71
				1.31	1.33				0.72	0.89
Class V, VI				1.44	1.49				0.96	1.00
				0.96	1.03				1.10	1.20
Years of education				1.04	1.03				1.17 <sup>**</sup>	1.18 <sup>***</sup>
				0.04	0.05				0.05	0.06
Controls										
Father not employed					[ref]					[ref]
Father full time job					0.71					0.60
					0.44					0.37
Father overworking					0.72					1.56
					0.44					0.95
Mother not employed					[ref]					[ref]
Mother part-time job					0.44 <sup>+</sup>					0.37 <sup>+</sup>
					0.19					0.16
Mother full time job					0.60					0.45
					0.28					0.22
1 child					[ref]					[ref]
2 children					1.09					1.33
					0.43					0.53
3 or >children					1.28					1.82
					0.64					0.89
Domestic work outsourcing					0.85					0.60
					0.32					0.25
Age					0.98					0.98
					0.03					0.03
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12
N	610	610	610	610	610	610	610	610	610	610

Clustered standard errors are below parameter estimates (KHB significance levels account for indirect effects).

- <sup>+</sup> p < 0.10.
- <sup>\*</sup> p < 0.05.
- <sup>\*\*</sup> p < 0.01.
- <sup>\*\*\*</sup> p < 0.001.

#### 5.4. Gender effects

The *individual-level gender hypothesis* (H-3) posits that parents' social position has stronger effects on their leisure time with children among mothers than among fathers. Meanwhile, the *spouse-level gender hypothesis* (H-4) states that the spouse's social position has stronger effects on father-child leisure than on mother-child leisure. Multivariate analyses are consistent with both the *individual-level gender hypothesis* and the *spouse-level gender hypothesis*.



**Table 3**

OLS. Minutes in home-based cultural activities with children. Source: '2000 UK Time Use Survey'.

	Mothers					Fathers				
	M-1 b	M2 b	M-3 b	M-4 b	M-5 b	M-1 b	M-2 b	M-3 b	M-4 b	M-5 b
Individual										
Class VII	[ref]		[ref]	[ref]	[ref]	[ref]		[ref]	[ref]	[ref]
Class I	6.18		-2.66	-4.32	-0.31	12.09***		7.52*	6.38	6.76
	5.05		5.38	5.44	5.40	3.30		4.28	4.39	4.43
Class II	10.23*		3.20	1.87	3.94	4.22		0.99	-0.55	-0.37
	4.63		5.05	5.12	4.93	4.48		4.23	4.12	4.18
Class III, IV	8.41*		5.53	4.32	4.60	5.40		4.05	3.49	3.45
	3.83		3.97	4.00	4.05	4.46		4.51	4.59	4.45
Class V, VI	7.59		4.71	4.18	6.49	6.70*		5.84	4.61	5.48
	11.58		11.78	11.70	11.63	4.02		3.97	3.96	3.93
Years of education		1.20***	1.31**	1.12**	1.10*		1.02**	0.80*	0.52	0.46
		0.36	0.40	0.43	0.47		0.31	0.40	0.36	0.37
Spouse										
Class VII				[ref]	[ref]				[ref]	[ref]
Class I				10.29*	10.04*				-4.20	-1.50
				4.96	5.00				5.60	5.82
Class II				-0.23	0.08				0.91	2.36
				5.03	5.00				4.66	4.78
Class III, IV				2.89	2.77				1.30	1.67
				4.61	4.57				3.78	3.96
Class V, VI				6.79	8.01				-9.56*	-7.15
				5.34	5.29				5.05	4.87
Years of education				0.07	-0.06				0.85*	0.92*
				0.45	0.46				0.36	0.38
Controls										
Father not employed					[ref]					[ref]
Father full time job					-0.91					1.40
					5.39					5.01
Father overworking					-1.21					-0.55
					5.74					5.26
Mother not employed					[ref]					[ref]
Mother part-time job					0.79					2.04
					4.24					3.35
Mother full time job					-8.27*					-2.39
					4.72					3.66
1 child					[ref]					[ref]
2 children					2.73					1.71
					3.72					3.09
3 or >children					5.39					8.25*
					4.42					4.47
Domestic work outsourcing					2.07					-2.02
					3.98					3.08
Age					0.26					0.21
					0.22					0.23
Intercept	18.62***	12.82***	8.81*	5.91	3.93	11.79***	7.71*	5.67	3.70	11.62
Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	2.90	3.88	4.03	5.31	11.96	2.05	3.29	3.58	4.71	10.97
	0.01	0.02	0.03	0.04	0.05	0.02	0.02	0.03	0.04	0.05
N	610	610	610	610	610	610	610	610	610	610

Clustered standard errors are below parameter estimates.

\*  $p < 0.10$ .\*  $p < 0.05$ .\*\*  $p < 0.01$ .\*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ .

Results are indeed in line with the *individual-level gender hypothesis*. For out-of-home cultural activities with children (Table 2), social position, particularly education, has stronger effects for mothers than for fathers. Likewise, for home-based cultural activities with children (Table 3), the education associations are stronger among mothers than among fathers, with particularly salient differences when controlling for the spouse's and household's measures. Finally, the individual's social

**Table 4**  
OLS. Minutes of television watching with children. Source: '2000 UK Time Use Survey'.

	Mothers					Fathers				
	M-1 b	M2 b	M-3 b	M-4 b	M-5 b	M-1 b	M-2 b	M-3 b	M-4 b	M-5 b
Individual										
Class VII	[ref]		[ref]	[ref]	[ref]	[ref]		[ref]	[ref]	[ref]
Class I	-33.40***		-31.49**	-31.67**	-23.36*	-10.39		-2.03	-0.86	6.26
	9.83		11.24	11.39	10.87	9.71		10.62	10.68	10.08
Class II	-16.32*		-14.79	-14.56	-10.13	-6.69		-0.77	-1.46	4.35
	9.75		10.61	10.56	10.20	12.29		12.68	12.81	12.21
Class III, IV	-2.12		-1.49	-0.90	-0.66	-10.39		1.62	2.33	4.06
	9.26		9.52	9.61	9.12	9.71		12.56	12.48	12.31
Class V, VI	-16.44		-15.81	-17.22	-22.82	-6.69		-2.99	-4.01	0.62
	16.83		16.97	17.16	15.53	12.29		11.60	11.60	10.76
Years of education		-1.38*	-0.28	-0.08	-0.47		-1.52*	-1.45+	-1.28	-1.32
		0.62	0.72	0.79	0.80		0.67	0.79	0.83	0.86
Spouse										
Class VII				[ref]	[ref]				[ref]	[ref]
Class I				-6.02	-1.77				-28.03*	-18.57*
				9.99	9.51				12.99	9.46
Class II				-10.14	-4.84				-10.68	-5.11
				11.20	10.49				12.23	11.97
Class III, IV				6.37	7.59				-0.56	-0.20
				10.44	10.42				10.59	10.66
Class V, VI				-8.45	-5.07				-6.77	-6.14
				9.67	9.17				18.82	18.00
Years of education				-0.03	-0.26				0.59	0.39
				0.77	0.78				0.93	0.94
Controls										
Father not employed					[ref]					[ref]
Father full time job					-24.04*					-32.13*
					12.34					16.95
Father overworking					-18.89					-32.90*
					12.55					16.93
Mother not employed					[ref]					[ref]
Mother part-time job					-25.63**					-2.63
					8.54					9.40
Mother full time job					-29.61**					-14.20
					9.02					10.02
1 child					[ref]					[ref]
2 children					14.13*					13.67*
					6.34					6.50
3 or >children					13.36					32.50**
					8.16					10.67
Domestic work outsourcing					12.25*					6.10
					6.38					6.92
Age					-1.36**					-0.88*
					0.43					0.52
Intercept	77.94***	83.11***	80.07***	82.07***	168.18***	76.08***	86.79***	87.28***	85.48***	142.34***
Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	8.05	7.71	9.63	11.55	27.51	8.50	8.55	10.88	12.66	27.95
	0.03	0.01	0.03	0.03	0.10	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.08
N	610	610	610	610	610	610	610	610	610	610

Clustered standard errors are below parameter estimates.

- \*  $p < 0.10$ .
- °  $p < 0.05$ .
- \*\*  $p < 0.01$ .
- \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ .

position, in particular social class, has stronger (negative) correlations with watching television time with children among mothers than among fathers (Table 4).

Furthermore, empirical analyses show indeed effects consistent with the *spouse-level gender hypothesis*. The mother's out-of-home cultural participation with children is not influenced by the spouse's social position (Table 2), while the father's time in these activities is strongly driven by the wife's education, even after controlling for all covariates ( $p < 0.001$ ). As

for home-based cultural time with children (Table 3), even if mothers' and fathers' time is affected by the spouse's social position ( $p < 0.05$ ), the spouse's social position cancels out the father's education effects, while this is not true for mothers. For watching television with children (Table 4), mothers' time is unaffected by the spouse's social background, while fathers spend clearly less time when the spouse has a high-graded managerial or professional occupation, with confidence intervals ranging between the 95% (Model 4) and 90% (Model 5).

## 6. Discussion

This study used time-diary data from the United Kingdom to analyze how education and social class influence mothers' and fathers' leisure activities with children. Previous studies on parent–child time (Altintas, 2012; Bianchi et al., 2006; Craig, 2006; England and Srivastava, 2013; Lareau, 2003) suggest that parents (particularly mothers) with the highest education and social class conform to intensive parenting norms and family routines of the 'elite' culture. Yet, previous studies offered insufficient (quantitative) evidence on how parents' time in specific leisure routines with children differs across social strata. My study has contributed to the literature by focusing on three parent–child shared leisure activities, namely 'out-of-home cultural activities', 'home-based cultural activities', and 'watching television', that capture key differences in family life and children's cultural capital accumulation and life chances.

Three general findings can be summarized. The *first* is that the mother's social position was clearly associated with differences in her leisure activities with children, while the father's social position had weak effects on his leisure time with children. Mothers' education was positively associated to their out-of-home and home-based cultural activities with children, and social class was negatively associated with their time watching television with children. Although social position was for some activities associated with fathers' leisure time with children, these effects disappeared when other variables, mostly the wife's social position, were considered. These findings complement previous qualitative studies with American and British data (Lareau, 2003; Reay, 1998) suggesting that privileged mothers disproportionately share leisure activities with children with cultural capital implications.

The *second* main finding is that the mother's social position, not only influenced her leisure with children, but also her husband's leisure with children. The father's time with children in 'home-based cultural activities', and especially in 'out-of-home cultural activities', was positively associated with the wife's education. Also, the father's time 'watching television' with children was negatively associated with the wife's social class. In contrast, the mother's leisure with children was essentially unaffected by the father's social position. This implies that privileged mothers in the United Kingdom play an active role in arranging out-of-home cultural activities with their husbands and children, which are typically family-organized activities. Regarding watching television with children, mothers from privileged social classes seem to actively regulate the time that fathers spend with children in such family-related activities. These findings are in line with American qualitative studies on the key role of privileged mothers as agents of family leisure organization and social reproduction (Lareau, 2003). The findings are also consistent with (very limited) quantitative evidence from Spain (Gimenez-Nadal and Molina, 2013) and United States (England and Srivastava, 2013) on how mothers' education affects fathers' child care time.

The *third* contribution deals with the focus on education and social class. My study is the first in analyzing whether education and social class influence parents' (leisure) time with children, an important question for the social stratification literature. Father–child shared leisure was weakly associated to his education and social class. Yet, more interesting differences were found among mothers. The mother's education was more important for cultural activities, while her social class was a better predictor of differences in watching television with children. One interpretation is that (maternal) education captures cultural and family preferences better than class. Meanwhile, the stronger effects of social class on television watching with children might reflect the poor material resources of disadvantaged families. Indeed, working class parents are time and income poor in ways that might constrain their participation in "sophisticated" cultural activities with children, forcing them to restrict most of their free time to an inexpensive activity. Nevertheless, the fact that my analyses consider paid work time and outsourcing domestic labor suggests that the effects of social position are partly 'net' of differences in monetary and time resources. Future studies should further investigate the role of education and social class in parent–child and family activities.

This study has important implications for the literatures on family and social stratification. In the United Kingdom, children raised in privileged families (and especially with privileged mothers) disproportionately share time with parents who participate in *out-of-home cultural activities* (i.e., going to museums, theatres, libraries), providing social advantage in their cultural capital and schooling (Bodovski and Farkas, 2008; DiMaggio, 1982; Lareau, 2003). When the mother is highly educated, children tend to spend time with parents in *home-based cultural activities* (i.e., reading, playing music, fine arts), having critical consequences for their future cultural preferences and consumption (Kraaykamp and Van Eijck, 2010). On the other hand, children from the most disadvantaged working classes in the United Kingdom are prone to share their leisure time with parents *watching television*, which has a potential negative impact on their cognitive development, cultural capital, and schooling performance (Hancox et al., 2005; Notten and Kraaykamp, 2010). These results are relevant, not only to understand socioeconomic differences in family relations, but also to understand how the reproduction of social inequality operates in everyday life.

The study has two limitations that need to be mentioned. First, my study focused only on couples. The study of single-parent families is necessary to better understand social inequality in parent–child leisure, not only for the increasing

**Table A.1**

Definition of measures on parents' leisure with children.

	Main activities	MTUS coding system <sup>a</sup>
Out-of-home cultural activities with children	Library, museums, art galleries, cultural events, theatre, music events, opera	5221, 5223, 5224, 5230, 5240
Home-based cultural activities with children	Reading, artistic activities, playing a music instrument, to listen to music albums	7120, 8100, 8111, 8120, 8320
Watching television with children	Watching television	8210

<sup>a</sup> Multinational Time Use Study database (<http://www.timeuse.org>).

demographic presence of these types of households in Western countries, but also because single-parent families face several types of disadvantage that affect children specifically (McLanahan, 2004). Second, the data that I used do not allow to differentiate between 'highbrow' and 'lowbrow' cultural consumption (i.e., television programs, types of books, music taste), unlike in studies with rich information on cultural consumption (Bihagen and Katz-Gerro, 2000; Notten and Kraaykamp, 2010). However, the time use data that I employed in the study are really unique for allowing me to accurately study how parents share time with children in distinct cultural-typed leisure activities, contributing to an important question for the family and social stratification literatures.

Future studies can complement my study with some questions that have not been considered here. First, scholars should ideally provide richer evidence on how parents spend time with children in cultural activities that are more or less related to the 'elite' culture (highbrow vs. lowbrow culture). Second, future studies could focus on children's own leisure, a line of research that has received growing attention in recent years (Bianchi and Robinson, 1997; Hofferth, 2010; Mullan, 2009; Wight et al., 2009), but needs further evidence in the direction of this study. Third, my study has not explicitly analyzed partners' togetherness with children, yet one can expect that spouses frequently spend time in joint activities with children. New studies should investigate how partners' joint leisure with children differs by social background.

To conclude, this study provides an innovative approach to parent-child shared activities by analyzing rich time-diary data from the United Kingdom. This is the first quantitative study that uses time use data to investigate how parents share time with children in different key leisure activities for children's cultural capital formation. My study, hopefully, will inspire new research aiming at better understanding how family life, parent-child relations, and foremost child wellbeing differ across social strata.

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## Appendix A

See Table A.1.

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