

**Sport and Symbolic Boundary Making: A Test of the Highbrow and Omnivore
Theses**

by

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Abstract

The question of how cultural practices and lifestyles count as status markers is a topic of much debate in cultural sociology. The aim of this thesis is to examine whether the dominant trend towards cultural omnivorism (inclusivity) and away from highbrow patterns (exclusivity) of ‘elite’ status consumption, which has been observed in many cultural fields, has carried over to the field of sports. I use Correspondence Analysis with nationally representative survey data to visualize the structuring principles of the Canadian social field of sports. I explore whether the nature of the distribution of sporting practices and social class positions in the Canadian field of sports bear resemblance to ‘inclusive’ omnivore and/or ‘exclusive’ highbrow structuring principles, and whether the overall social structure of culture and sport is the same for both men and women. This thesis shows that Canadians’ sporting practices generally reflect principles of exclusion for both men and women.

List of Abbreviations Used

SSHRC	Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council
GSS	General Social Survey
PUMF	Public Use Microdata File
RDD	Random-Digit Dialing
CA	Correspondence Analysis
CBC	Canadian Broadcasting Corporation

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Sports play an important role in culture and society. In Canada, one need not look beyond their local ice hockey rink to see how seriously sports are taken and that they are an immense source local and national pride. Indeed, hockey is dubbed as being “as essential to the Canadian identity as beer, maple syrup, politeness and Tim Hortons” (Shendruk, 2014, p. 1). This reflects the commonly held belief that sports, particularly hockey, are democratic and egalitarian. That is, sports provide common ground for all strata of society and they bring Canadians together. Despite this rhetoric, the reality is that sports participation rates in Canada have dropped from nearly half (45%) of all adult Canadians in 1992 to just over a third (34%) in 1998 and then fell to under a third (28%) in 2005 (Ifedi, 2008). In little over two decades, sports participation rates in Canada declined a total 17 percent points, highlighting a serious issue of access to sports. In 2005, a charity called Canadian Tire Jumpstart was established to address this very issue and provide support to the 1 in 3 Canadian families that cannot afford to play sports due to financial barriers (Billes & Thompson, 2009). More recently, Canadian Tire Jumpstart and the Hockey Canada Foundation started The Big Play program specifically to address the downward trend in hockey participation rates, again due to the lack of affordability. Taken together, it appears that our national pastime, hockey, which is widely believed to “bring Canadians together”, is actually a pastime for a select few Canadians. My thesis will explore the issue of whether sports function to integrate social groups, or rather serve a more exclusive and distinguishing function.

In cultural sociology, cultural practices and lifestyles have been shown to be an effective reflection of social status. In particular, sports have traditionally (in Western

societies) been reserved for 'elites' as a means to display their social status through the non-productive consumption of time and resources (Veblen, 1953). While in the mid-nineteenth century sports experienced a phase of popularization and are now enjoyed by both the upper- and lower-classes, scholars suggest that sports have remained a staple in high-status repertoires. Within the main academic discourse of culture and class in North America, Pierre Bourdieu's highbrow thesis and Richard Peterson's omnivore thesis have provided somewhat conflicting explanations for how cultural practices, such as sports, signify class boundaries. Pierre Bourdieu (1991) and his proponents argue that 'elites' continue to signal their high status by engaging in sports seen as elevated and, perhaps more importantly, shunning 'popular' sporting practices, a pattern known as 'highbrow snobbery'. Richard Peterson (1997) and others, however, have observed a historical shift in the process of status attainment and found that 'elites' not only engage in high-status repertoires but rather their higher social status is linked with the fact that they engage in a wider range of cultural activities, a pattern known as 'cultural omnivorism'. As a result, it has been argued that cultural omnivorousness (inclusivity) is replacing highbrow snobbery (exclusivity) as a status marker (Peterson, 1997; Peterson & Kern, 1996). While this theoretical expectation has been empirically supported in various countries by a number of studies, most have relied on music and visual arts as indexes of status, leaving sports largely out of the discussion, which begs the question: how does sports participation contribute to social differentiation in today's society?

The purpose of my Master's thesis is to extend the contemporary investigation of elite status consumption to sporting practices. By applying Correspondence Analysis (CA) to a Canadian General Social Survey, this paper will address the following research

questions: First, does the nature of the distribution of sporting practices and social class positions bear resemblance to ‘exclusive’ highbrow and/or ‘inclusive’ omnivore structuring principles? Second, do the structuring principles of the field of sports vary between men and women?

In the following sections of this chapter I will provide a review of literature, highlighting how these theoretical frameworks have contributed to the current understanding of class differences in taste, in particular taste in sports, and how they account for social reproduction and stratification. In doing so, I will also examine the intersectionality of class and gender because sport is a highly gendered field.

1.1 Highbrow/Lowbrow Framework

Pierre Bourdieu’s highbrow thesis has been a lynchpin of analysis for scholars within a number of disciplines exploring social class formation and its reproduction. Indeed, many sociologists continue to apply his theoretical framework to examine how cultural tastes and practices produce and reproduce a stratified class hierarchy (Clement, 1995; Lefèvre & Ohl, 2012; Mehus, 2005; Moens & Scheerder, 2004; Ohl, 2000; Scheerder, Vanreusel, & Taks, 2005; Scheerder, Vanreusel, Taks, & Renson, 2002; Stempel, 2005; Taks, Renson, & Vanreusel, 1995; Thrane, 2001; White & Wilson, 1999; Wilson, 2002). For Bourdieu (1984), social class is manifested in cultural practices, through which social groups differentiate themselves and cultivate distinguishing features of group membership. Members of the dominant social class, for instance, maintain their privileged social position by defending rigid cultural boundaries through consuming exclusive highbrow culture. Simply put, highbrow culture refers to cultural tastes and practices that are rare, hard to access, and associated with the upper-class, as compared to

lowbrow culture, which is more widely accessible by common people. Ultimately, the cultural distancing that occurs through the opposition of tastes and practices between the social classes serves to maintain and reproduce the class structure through symbolic values.

Bourdieu theorises two principle mechanisms of cultural distinction. The first distinguishes between the repertoires of the “dominant” and “subordinate” social groups and the second distinguishes between the types of repertoires among the dominant social groups. In regard to the former, Bourdieu argues that the boundaries of the dominant classes are rigidly maintained because people learn to appreciate (or dislike) highbrow cultural tastes through socialization, and highbrow practices are not easily accessible by those outside of elites in a society. The affinity towards highbrow cultural practices involves accumulation of cultural capital, which generally refers to one’s cultural knowledge, ideas, tastes, preferences and ways of presenting oneself¹. The acquisition of cultural capital effectively spans the whole period of childhood socialization, and presupposes a large investment of time, as well as freedom from economic necessity. Hence the offspring of the dominant classes, who are endowed with strong cultural capital from a young age, are most likely gain an affinity toward highbrow cultural practices—*the taste of luxury*. Conversely, other social groups are more accustomed to lowbrow culture due to a lifetime of living under conditions of scarcity; as a result, their choices stem from a *taste of necessity*, that is, what is both necessary and practical given their economic and social conditions. In either case, it is taste—either the taste of luxury or the taste of necessity—as opposed to economic conditions, that guides one’s affinity for certain types

¹ Bourdieu (1986) formulates cultural capital with three states: the *embodied* state, referring to enduring dispositions of body and mind; the *objectified* state, which entails the appropriation of material objects or cultural goods, such as artwork, books, instruments and equipment; and in the *institutionalized* state, such as educational qualifications.

of cultural practice. As Bourdieu famously stated, “through taste, an agent has what he likes because he likes what he has” (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 171).

As for the second mechanism of distinction, Bourdieu conceptualizes an intra-class distinction process. This process further distinguishes members of the dominant social groups’ affinities to highbrow cultural repertoires based on *luxury* and *asceticism*. Bourdieu defines these concepts as follows:

“*luxury*, as the manifestation of distance from necessity, or *asceticism*, as self-imposed constraint, two contrasting ways of defying nature, need, appetite, desire; ... the unbridled squandering which only highlights the privations of ordinary existence, and the ostentatious freedom of gratuitous expense or the austerity of elective restriction.” (Bourdieu, 1984, pp. 254-255, emphasis in the original)

According to Bourdieu’s theory, the most economically rich have an affinity for cultural practices that exemplify principles of luxury because they provide a straightforward means of displaying one’s wealth, status and power through conspicuous displays of economic assets. He also argues that those endowed with greater cultural and social resources are drawn to cultural practices that exemplify principles of asceticism which reject hedonistic pleasures of spending and enjoyment in favor of the “ascetic ethic of production and accumulation, based on abstinence, sobriety, saving and calculation” (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 310).

According to the logic of distinction, the acquisition of tastes and predispositions of class membership become internalized by the very process of acting according to the normative practices prescribed for a given social group. Bourdieu (1984) notes that this dual process, embodiment of values and action based on those values, is habitus: “a structured and structuring structure” (p. 171). Simply stated, habitus refers to a set of acquired values, tastes and dispositions which shapes one’s ‘worldview’. Habitus is a

structured structure because it is shaped by one's past and present conditions of existence, but it is also a *structuring* structure because it gives rise to one's practices, and subsequently shapes one's future circumstances and the range of possibilities made visible by one's habitus. In Bourdieu's portrayal of social arrangement, each social class forms a distinct habitus and consequently similar cultural tastes and practices which function to mark class membership. Indeed, "taste classifies, and classifies the classifier" (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 6).

Using the logic of distinction, Bourdieu theorizes a typology of sports and social class. Generally, it is expected that the upper-class is oriented to sporting practices that are distinctive and rare (highbrow)—either luxury or ascetic—whereas the lower-classes have an affinity for sports that carry the stigma of vulgarity (lowbrow) (Bourdieu, 1991). Moreover, the distribution of sport practices among social classes can be explained, at least in part, by the basic oppositions of highbrow-lowbrow and luxury-asceticism because "a sport is most likely to be adopted by a social class if it does not contradict that class's relation to the body at its deepest and most unconscious level [that is their habitus]" (Bourdieu, 1984, pp. 217-218). Consequently, the upper-class tends to use their body as an end in itself (sports as a tool to shape the body) and is therefore more likely to play sports that emphasise the values and virtues of asceticism, or rather health and fitness oriented sports. Moreover, these sports are most likely to be practiced in exclusive venues and have great economic costs, which fit the principle of luxury. The lower-classes, on the other hand, are most likely to engage in more popular, rigorous, and physically hazardous sports because they tend to use their body for means to an end (body as a tool to play sports) and are therefore more likely to play sports that emphasise values of vulgarity, or rather displays of strength and the propensity towards violence. Such sports also happen to be

more economically accessible, within the limits of one's free time, and are often played in public venues, which fit the principle of necessity.

Ultimately, the highbrow thesis argues that 'elites' signal their high status by engaging in sports seen as elevated and shunning 'popular' sports. Moreover, within the ranks of the upper-class the mechanism of distinction varies between conspicuous consumption and an ethic of asceticism. In this way, cultural distancing occurs through the opposition of tastes and practices between social groups which serves to reproduce the class structure through symbolic values and defending ridged cultural boundaries. In the next section I will outline the main arguments from the cultural omnivore literature.

1.2 Univore/Omnivore Framework

While a number of scholars following the Bourdieusian sociological tradition have provided evidence to support Bourdieu's theoretical framework, others have questioned the contemporary relevance of his work, particularly within North America (Erickson, 1996; Hall, 1992; Halle, 1993; Lamont, 1992, 2012; Lamont & Lareau, 1988). Indeed, the applicability of Bourdieu's theoretical framework has been fiercely debated among North American social scientists. These critics argue that his theoretical apparatus has limited power for explaining patterns of taste and culture outside of France (Lamont, 2012), while his proponents suggest that many theoretical and empirical criticisms of Bourdieu reflect misreading and misinterpretation of his work rather than actual shortcomings (Holt, 1997, 1998). However, Lamont's (1992) research in New York showed that highbrow patterns of taste were nowhere near as predominant in the United States as Bourdieu found in Paris France two decades earlier. In another study published in the United States in 1992, using nationally representative survey data, Peterson and Simkus (1992) tested Bourdieu's

hypothesis that high-status individuals are more likely to have an affinity and engage in the fine arts. While they confirmed this hypothesis, they also found that high-status Americans were also more likely to have an affinity and engage in popular and folk genres in addition to those considered to be legitimate “high culture”. Findings such as these flew in the face of Bourdieu’s widely accepted contrast of “the exclusive highbrow snob and the indiscriminating lowbrow slob” (Peterson, 2005) and brought into question whether highbrow pattern of taste is a class-based attribute that can be found in all “western” nations.

Having found a lack of straightforward relationships between social status and cultural consumption, at least in the United States, Richard Peterson theorised that elite status consumption has shifted from highbrow snobbery to cultural inclusivity, and developed the cultural omnivore thesis (Peterson & Kern, 1996; Peterson & Simkus, 1992). This thesis contends that there remain few inherent and distinct highbrow and lowbrow cultural forms, but rather cultural practices have become more diffused and the upper-class distinguishes itself from the lower-classes through engaging in a variety of traditionally high- and low-status culture. Thus, the upper-class is considered culturally *omnivorous* and its taste is characterised by variety and tolerance, whereas the lower-classes are characterised as *univores* and their taste is more limited and intolerant (Sonnett, 2004). Through developing a wider breadth of tastes and practices, or rather utilizing the omnivore strategy, the upper-class develops a wider variety of cultural skills, familiarity and knowledge than the lower-classes, who by contrast have a very narrow breadth of taste. As a result the upper-class can effectively navigate more social fields and get ahead and/or stay ahead in the class structure. In other words, cultural variety has become the marker of

social status (Peterson, 1997, 2005; Roose, van Eijck, & Lievens, 2012), or rather the ability to be conversant in a number of cultural-speaks.

Bonnie Erickson (1996) provides evidence of this shift in elite status consumption and argues that social capital (social networks and variety) plays a more important role in cultural consumption in Canada. Using original survey data from a Canadian metropolis centre, Toronto, Erickson tested for association between class status and network variety, network size, and knowledge of cultural genres. Her results showed that the upper-class is more familiar with all genres of knowledge than their lower-class counterparts, and as one's class status increases so does the size and variety of their social network. Moreover, Erickson's results showed that there is significant crossover in social networks and genres of knowledge across social classes. In view of these results, Erickson argues that cultural practices (i.e. music, food, movies, theater, types of television, visual arts, sports, etc.) have fundamental social consequences and wide variety in such practices is the most useful cultural resource because it produces more social network variety and expands an individual's repertoire, making it easier for them to move through a plethora of cultural and social spaces and be more resourceful in a variety of social settings.

More recently, Veenstra (2010) confirmed that the shift from high-brow snobbery to omnivore strategies utilized by the upper-class is occurring in Canada. Using Bourdieu's theories of capital and social spaces, Veenstra provides a depiction of the Canadian social space by identifying important forms of culture and resources that are influential in Canadian fields of power. The aim of his research was to construct a representation of the Canadian social space and compare it to Bourdieu's (1984) depiction of the French social space created in *Distinction*. Ultimately, Veenstra's research did not find the existence of

distinctly high- and low-brow cultural practices in the Canadian social space. While Bourdieu suggests that the upper- and lower-classes participate in distinct cultural practices consistent with their own social class, Veenstra finds that Canadians rich in both cultural and economic capital participate in the widest variety of cultural practices.

Similar observations have been made by numerous researchers examining the cultural omnivore thesis, using data from North America and focusing on different sets of cultural activities. These studies include: *United States* (Barnett & Michael, 2000; Bryson, 1996, 1997; DiMaggio, 1987, 1996; Holbrook, Morris, Weiss, & Habich, 2002; Kern, 1997; Lopéz-Sintas & Katz-Gerro, 2005; Peterson, 1997, 2005; Peterson & Kern, 1996; Peterson & Simkus, 1992; Relish, 1997; Roberts, 1999; Sonnett, 2004; Stempel, 2005; Weiss, Holbrook, & Habich, 2001); *Canada* (Erickson, 1991, 1996, 2008; Fisher & Preece, 2003; Friedman & Ollivier, 2002; Veenstra, 2005, 2007, 2010). The prevalence of the omnivore thesis within the North American literature may suggest that cultural omnivorism may be linked to the historical context of North America, characterized as “new world” in contrast to traditionally aristocratic countries such as France. In a review of this research, Peterson (2005) proposes a number of other possible factors that may have contributed to the finding of cultural omnivorism over the last two decades. He argues that *structural change*, an increasing amount of global migration and social class mobility in the late 20th and early 21st century, has exposed people to more diverse cultures and greater interaction with those with different tastes than their own, making exclusion more difficult. He likewise recognizes the effects of *time*; shifts of fashion happen frequently, which makes it hard to maintain the social values associated with certain cultural practices (Davis, 1992). These findings suggest that highbrow snobbery simply fell out of vogue in the late 20th

century. Lastly he finds that *status group politics* affect fashionable tastes, with dominant social groups defining popular culture to fit their own interests. Whereas highbrow snobbishness fit the needs of the upper-classes in the 20th-century, an omnivorous palate may be better suited for a globalized context.

In the line of studies investigating omnivore/univore patterns of taste, most have relied on music and visual arts as indices of status, leaving sports largely out of the discussion. Peterson (2005) points out that taste and consumption of music have been the primary focus of such studies because they reflect a relatively stable class hierarchy and are therefore the most reliable measure of status-ranked taste, whereas sports have been a less popular measure due to issues of comparison across various cultural, historical and social contexts. For instance, due to the availability of sports scholarships in elite academic institutions soccer has gained higher social status in the United States, while in other countries it is considered a working class sport (Ibid). While such considerations have made music the preferred measure of status-ranked taste, the inconsistent finding of straightforward relationships between social class and consumption of music may suggest that it is losing its predictive power.

In the field of sport sociology research tends to revolve around social factors that affect access to sports. Studies show that the upper-class generally plays more sports than the lower-classes. For example, Wilson (2002) uses data from the 1993 Canadian General Social Survey and finds that Canadians with the highest income and highest education are most likely to be involved in sports² generally, but not necessarily any particular type of

² According to Sport Canada's definition of a sport used by Statistics Canada for the GSS, a sport is considered a competitive activity with formal rules involving two or more people (Statistics Canada, 2011b).

sport. Yet, according to these findings there remain a select few so-called “prole” sports—short for proletarian—that are primarily associated with the working class and are avoided by the upper-class, namely; weightlifting, bowling and some contact sports. In a comparative study, using data from the 1998 US National Health Interview Survey on adult Americans' frequency and intensity of participation in 15 sports, Stempel (2005) finds that while the upper-class play more sports than the lower-classes, there are no sports that the lower- or middle-classes play more of than the upper-class. In other words, there are no “prole” sports associated with the lower-class that the upper-class avoids. While these studies were not particularly motivated to find omnivore patterns of consumption in the field of sport, they provide some preliminary evidence to support the omnivore thesis. That is, rather than participating in few distinct sports, the upper-class plays a broad range of sports. However, Wilson’s (2002) finding of sports with “proletarian” connotations suggest that the Canadian field of sports features more exclusive structuring principles compared to the American field of sports examined by Stempel (2005). Apart from these studies, there remains relatively little empirical basis to support or deny the existence of omnivorism in the field of sports. My research will address this gap in the literature.

Ultimately, the omnivore thesis suggests that the process of status attainment has shifted and now ‘elites’ not only engage in high-status pursuits but are also more likely to engage in a wider range of cultural practices. The underlying theory is that in today’s society, cultural exclusivity serves as a sign of ignorance whereas cultural inclusivity has become a more ‘legitimate’ expression of taste and consequently a more effective status marker.

1.3 Gender in Sports

As anyone who has watched or played a sport can readily attest, sports are highly gendered cultural practices and as a result, gender should be a significant predictor of sport preferences. While both the highbrow and omnivore theses are framed predominantly in terms of social class, scholars have also shown that other important taste groups form around other social markers, such as gender (Lamont & Fournier, 1992). Indeed, postmodern feminists argue that class structure cannot be adequately understood without considering the complexities of social class and its intersections with other social and cultural categories (P. Collins, 2000; McCall, 2005). They hazard that failing to account for these intersections reduces the multidimensionality of class and gender, and isolates them into singular, independently acting dimensions. However, early social class research “mostly dealt with class as if it was not gendered, as if the effects of class were the same for males and females” (Donnelly & Harvey, 1999, p. 98), and women have generally been understudied in the analysis of class and sports (Ibid).

Despite the lack of research exploring the intersectionality of class and gender in sports, research in sport sociology tends to examine gender as a source of inequality and focuses on the marginalization of women in the traditionally male dominated field of sports. For example, Ifedi (2008) shows that in Canada only 21% of women regularly participate in sports compared to 36% of men. Although the participation gap between men and women in sports has narrowed significantly since the mid-1960’s, which can be attributed to the fitness and health movement that increased awareness of the health benefits of sports and sparked an increased interest and enrolment in sports for women (Coakley & Donnelly, 2009), many women continue to face barriers to participation in

sports since it is still largely considered a male domain. For example, in recent years women have made up very little ground in narrowing the sports participation gap in Canada, having only closed the gap from 17 percent points in 1998 to 15 percent points in 2008 (Ifedi, 2008).

There is a significant amount of literature, in particular feminist, addressing the gender gap in sports participation. The key assumption of feminist theory is that society and sports institutions are patriarchal. Feminists argue that women are marginalized because sports are deemed predominantly male oriented and resist female participation. For example, Thompson (2002) argues that inequality in sports participation for women exists because “men dominate and control sport structures, and sporting ideologies carry messages that connect masculinity, power and superiority” (p.115). As a result, male controlled and centered sport institutions serve the needs of men and reproduce patriarchal relations. And since sport is a pervasively masculinized concept and sport institutions are arenas in which masculinity is celebrated, many women face strong ideological barriers that influences their decisions to limit their participation to particular kinds of sports, or to not participant at all.

Ideological barriers operate subtly, but they provide good explanations for how gender norms shape the sport practices of men and women. For example, M. Collins (2003) argues that women are not involved in sports to the same level as men because they do not identify with sports to the same degree as men do. Sports are less valued and important in the lives of women as compared to men because they are socialized to value different things. For Collins, gender norms and ideological barriers explain why women’s sports participation tapers off significantly from early adolescent years into adulthood. This

occurs because physical education in schools becomes optional in high-school, and many young women choose not to participate in sports but rather choose to do more traditionally feminine activities (e.g. cooking, baking, knitting, crocheting, sewing, and non-competitive physical/fitness activities such as yoga and jogging). Moreover, as women grow older they are expected to settle into more traditional gender roles, therefore participation in sports becomes less accepted. For instance, once sports and physical education become optional in the educational curriculum women who continue to participate in sports are often deemed abnormal by their peers because they choose to participate in typically masculine appropriate activities (Krane, Choi, Baird, Aimar, & Kauer, 2004). Traditional gender roles further limit females' opportunities in sports and physical activities in adulthood. Donnelly and Harvey (1999) argue that because women tend to be more liable for taking care of domestic work, men's participation in sports tend to come at the expense of women's time for sports and other leisure activities. This is particularly true for lower-class women who cannot afford to free up their time for leisure activities through paying for domestic help.

Thorpe (2009) provides a good example of a critical analysis of the intersectionality of gender and sport, combining a feminist and Bourdieusian sociological approach. Her unique analysis is helpful for understanding how gendered sport practices function to produce and reproduce gender differences. Thorpe uses the concept of habitus to show how "taken-for-granted social inequalities are embedded in everyday practices" (p. 500), and how sport practices function to embody gender. She argues that men and women form and embody a gendered habitus. Similar to Bourdieu's conceptualization of class habitus, one's gender habitus is formed through socialization from a young age and consists of tastes and disposition consistent with one's gender identity. Moreover, through habitus gender norms

and inequalities become embodied. Gender habitus is reflected by the way that men and women take care of and use their bodies. As a result, gender habitus shapes and is shaped by the differences in the way men and women play sports. Just as Bourdieu argues that sports are instrumental in shaping the “classed” body, sport also functions to shape the “gendered” body. From one point of view, we can see that gender habitus shapes the levels of participation as well as the sports men and women choose to play. From another point of view, we can see that different levels and types of sports participation between men and women function to shape their bodies differently. For example, gender habitus draws men toward more “masculine-appropriate” sports which are high-contact and emphasize the need for power, whereas women are drawn towards “feminine-appropriate” sports that are low-contact and emphasize the need for finesse. As a result, men and women develop bodies that reflect their needs and uses in these sports (and in everyday life). Thus, Thorpe (2009) shows that “the concept of habitus draws our attention to the ways in which gendered values and expectations are imprinted on our bodies” (p. 502), and how gender inequalities are reinforced through sports.

Thus, this literature highlights that sport is a masculine dominated field and as a result women face significant ideological barriers to participation. It also shows that gender and class-based inequalities often intersect creating further marginalization of women from the lower-classes. Despite this, the study of intersections between gender, class and sports is understudied (Donnelly & Harvey, 1999), as such there is little empirical evidence to show precisely how gender and class intersect in the field of sports.

1.4 Summary

My thesis thus will explore gaps in the literature by examining the applicability of Bourdusian perspectives of class structure, as compared to the Omnivore principle, in the field of sports in Canada. The existing Canadian research examining other cultural practices suggest that the Canadians elites are characterized as cultural omnivores. As such, this should be reflected in the field of sports. Moreover, given the highly gendered nature of sports, the classed nature that is reflected in sports is not expected to be observable as the same for men and women. If feminist contentions about the gendered nature of sports are correct, sporting practices among women should be different. More specifically, class should not matter as much for sporting practices among women as for men.

Chapter 2: Methods

2.1 Data and Sample

In order to analyse the structuring principles of the field of sports in Canada, I chose to use the Statistics Canada's *General Social Survey (GSS) Cycle 24: Time-Stress and Well-Being* (2010), Public Use Microdata File (PUMF). This cycle of the GSS was collected with a purpose to understand how survey respondents spend their time and what cultural activities they engage in. It was deemed the most appropriate for this analysis since it is the most recent source of data available on sports participation in Canada and it was readily available through Equinox³.

The target population for the survey was all non-institutionalized persons 15 years of age and older residing in Canada, excluding the territories. The sample was drawn using stratified random sampling and Random-Digit Dialing (RDD). This is a probability sampling procedure that uses all possible working banks of household telephone numbers within ten Provinces of Canada as a sampling frame. Each respondent's data were directly collected via telephone interview on a voluntary basis. RDD is a highly technical and effective sampling procedure that avoids many pitfalls commonly seen with other methods of sampling for telephone interviews that use a published telephone directory (i.e. phone book) as their sampling frame. In this case, the only people excluded from the RDD sampling frame are households that do not have a working telephone; however, this represents 2% of the total Canadian population (Statistics Canada, 2011a). The total GSS sample includes information from 15,390 respondents, however, the total GSS sample was randomly split into two equal sub-samples; half were asked questions about cultural

³ Equinox is a data delivery system developed for use within the Canadian Academic community, providing easy access to Statistics Canada data and other data products.

activities and the other half were asked the questions regarding sports participation. Therefore, the analysis for this paper only includes the sub-sample asked questions about sports (n=7,500).

2.2 Dependant Variables

The dependant variable of interest is *sports participation*. According to Sport Canada's definition of a sport used by Statistics Canada for the GSS, a sport is considered a competitive activity with formal rules involving two or more people (Statistics Canada, 2011b). The competitiveness criterion implies that a sport requires the development of physical and mental competencies, heightened degree of difficulty and effort, and played for the purpose of competition. Following this definition, activities that rely heavily on motorized vehicles in the determination of competitive outcomes were excluded from the list of sports, such as car racing, motorcycling and snowmobiling. Moreover, informal/un-organized sports and/or physical activities that are primarily used for leisure and/or fitness (non-competitive) were also excluded, such as aqua-fitness, bicycling (for recreation/transportation), aerobics, body building/sculpting, dancing, yoga, fishing, fitness classes, hiking, jogging, weightlifting and walking (Statistics Canada, 2013). Some of the abovementioned activities (e.g. weightlifting and cycling) were considered to be a sport if played on a competitive level.

With regards to sporting practices, respondents were asked, "Did you regularly participate in any sports over the last 12 months?" Statistics Canada defined "regularly" to mean that respondents played a given sport at least once a week when it was in season or, for non-seasonal sports, for a certain period of a year. If respondents answered "yes" they were given a list of 91 possible sporting practices and asked which sport(s) they played.

Based on this information, participation in these sports were coded into a dichotomy of “1” as participation and “0” as no participation. While the GSS dataset includes 91 different sports, only 33 had high enough frequency counts—participated with great enough frequency—to conduct meaningful analysis. The remaining 58 sport categories were collapsed into a category titled ‘other sports’, for a total of 34 sport categories included in the analysis. Table 1 displays the sports included in the analysis and their participation rates. This list includes most of the major sports in Canada and shows the great extent of variability in participation across them. The most popular sport practiced was golf, with more than one in twenty Canadians playing golf regularly (5.32%), followed by hockey (4.50%) and soccer (3.56%). The lowest ranked sport in this list was rowing (0.08%).

2.3 Independent Variables

Class status is a main concept of my analyses. Generally, it is measured by income and education. Researchers, including Bourdieu himself, uses income as a measure of individuals’ economic capital, while education is a proxy of cultural capital. In my analysis, *Income* was measured using respondents’ total household income (INCMHSD). This was coded into 5 ordinal categories: less than \$40,000; between \$40,000 and \$59,999; between \$60,000 and \$79,999; between \$80,000 and \$99,999; more than \$100,000. This set of categories was used in order to facilitate a direct comparison to Veenstra’s (2010) depiction of the Canadian social space. *Education* was measured using respondents’ highest level of educational attainment (EOR_Q200) and was coded into 5 ordinal categories: less than high school; high school; community college; bachelor’s degree; graduate degree. Again, these categories were used to allow for comparability across studies. *Gender* is the other

Table 1: *Relative frequencies for sports participation variables*
(N=27,535,915)

Sport	Yes Participation (%)	No Participation (%)
Golf	5.32	94.67
Ice Hockey	4.50	95.50
Soccer	3.56	96.41
Baseball	2.11	97.89
Volleyball	1.93	98.07
Basketball	1.86	98.14
Alpine Skiing	1.60	98.40
Cycling	1.44	98.56
Swimming	1.38	98.62
Other Sports	1.17	98.83
Badminton	1.13	98.87
Tennis	0.97	99.03
Curling	0.89	99.09
Softball	0.80	99.20
Football	0.68	99.32
Ball Hockey	0.50	99.50
Ten-pin Bowling	0.50	99.50
Snowboarding	0.43	99.57
Five-pin Bowling	0.42	99.58
Martial Arts	0.42	99.58
Squash	0.41	99.59
Equestrian	0.37	99.63
Canoeing/Kayaking	0.36	99.64
Rugby	0.36	99.64
Weightlifting	0.34	99.66
Nordic Skiing	0.30	99.70
Adventure Racing	0.30	99.70
In-Line Hockey	0.26	99.74
Figure Skating	0.22	99.78
Mountain Boarding	0.22	99.78
Sailing/Yachting	0.19	99.81
Boxing	0.19	99.81
Triathlon	0.16	99.84
Rowing	0.08	99.92

factor examined in this research and it was measured based on the self-reported sex category (SEX_Q01) and recoded into “0” as “Male” and “1” as “Female”.

2.4 Analysis

The method used in my analysis is an exploratory statistical technique, Correspondence Analysis (CA). CA is an optimal scaling technique—similar to Principle Component Analysis—used for categorical data which was developed by Jean-Paul Benzécri (1992) and popularized by a number of other scholars (Greenacre, 2007; Le Roux & Rouanet, 2010). In short, CA is a geometrical modeling technique that analyses a multidimensional data matrix and reduces this larger matrix of data by identifying fewer and more manageable summary dimensions, or rather underlying structural principles. The meaning and nature of these summary dimensions are interpreted by the researcher and can be displayed in graphical form via a CA map; typically, two- or three-dimensions capture the majority of the explained variance in the CA model and are theoretically interpretable.

In order to provide an exploratory analysis of the social field of sports in Canada, CA was deemed to be the most suitable statistical tool. To begin with, its focus on underlying dimensions fits well with the notion that different structural principles are at play in the formation of cultural practices and lifestyles. Additionally, its exploratory nature is particularly useful in this case because there is a limited pool of knowledge about the field in sports in Canada from which one could generate reasonable *a priori* hypotheses. This is especially true since the supposed shift in elite status consumption highlighted by the omnivore thesis places into question many of the ideas we have about sport and social class. As opposed to most statistical techniques that are used to test *a priori* hypotheses, which rely heavily on specific items used in the analysis, CA allows us to examine a large amount of data without an assumption of the nature of those relationships and focus on interpreting which parts are responsible for association (Greenacre, 2007). While the

downside to using CA is that it does not provide a test of significance, it allows me to examine the nature of the relationships between sporting practices and social positions in relations to the debate on whether the Canadian class structure in the field of sports resembles “highbrow/lowbrow” model or “omnivore/univore”. If the results of the CA show a social space, in which certain types of sports are positioned closely to the social class indicators, it lends support towards “highbrow/lowbrow” model. In contrast, if the “omnivore/omnivore” model depicts the Canadian social space, we should observe that those with high income and high education participate in a greater number of sports and wider range of sports than those with lower level of income and education.

The first part of the analysis was used to establish an overall picture of class structure in the social field of sports in Canada. In this process, a CA map was generated, including both men and women. In this map, 34 coordinates of sports were projected on the two dimensional space, along with coordinates of income and education. The CA map summarizes the information from 68 cross tabulations (34 sports variables with income and those with education), and represents the overall field of sports in Canada, which allows us to interpret the nature of the relationships between social class positions and sporting practices. In the second part of the analysis, in order to detect differences in the class structure in the field of sports by gender, two models were run separately for men and women. The results of these models were used to generate gender specific CA maps, which allow us to assess whether the nature of the relationships between social class positions and sporting practise vary across this social cleavage.

Chapter 3: Results

My research questions pertain to the identification of exclusive and/or inclusive structuring principles in the Canadian field of sports with the purpose of examining the theoretical relevance of the highbrow and omnivore theses. Based on my review of the literature, I expect that the dominant trend towards cultural omnivorism observed in the fields of music and visual arts within North America will be observed in the Canadian field of sports. Moreover, I expect this trend to hold true for men but not for women.

My findings are presented below. I will first present descriptive statistics for the demographic variables included in the analysis. Next I will explore the structuring principles of the field of sports using CA. The CA results will be presented in two parts. In order to establish the overall class structure and structuring principles of the Canadian field of sports, I will first present the full model results which includes the entire nationally representative GSS sample. I will then present the CA results for men and women separately in order to detect structural differences between the male and female specific fields of sports.

3.1 Descriptive Statistics

As shown in Table 2, only 23.85% of adult Canadians participate in at least one sport. This rate is slightly lower than the figure reported by Ifedi (2008). He estimated the sports participation rate for the Canadians in 2005 was 28%. My finding from the GSS in 2010 shows a further reduction in the sports participation rate 5 years later. This is in line with the declining trend of sports activity over the last few decades.

With regard to the number of sports Canadians play, the majority of people tend to limit their participation to one sport (15.03%) and fewer people report more than one

sport—6.12% of Canadians reported that they played two sports and 2.71% reported three sports. The mean number of sports played is .30, when including those who had no sports participation. However, when excluding those who do not play any sport the mean is 1.45. Moreover, out of the 34 sports investigated, participation is highly concentrated in only a few sports. As shown in Table 1, in Chapter 2, there are only 10 sports, which have more than one percent of the Canadians playing them regularly. Golf was the most played sports with 5.32%, followed by ice hockey (4.50%), soccer (3.56%), baseball (2.11%), and five other sports had at least a 1% participation rate. Thus, generally, few Canadians are playing sports on a regular basis. Also, even among those who play sports, they are not very eclectic in their sport participation; only a fraction of the Canadians play more than one sport. Now, how do these rates of sports participation vary across social class and gender?

Table 2 represents sports participation by income, education, and gender groups. We see that sport participation varies considerably by these socio-demographical characteristics.

First, participation in sports rises steadily with income level. About a third (32.92%) of those from the highest household income, *\$100,000 or more*, participated in at least one sport. This makes a sharp contrast to the rate of those with lowest household income group (10.97%). The gap between highest and lowest income group is almost three-fold, and is statistically significant ($\chi^2(4, N = 6,568,352) = 277.264, p < .001$).

Figure 1 portrays the rates of sports participation across household income groups, along with the sport participation rates. Overall, those with higher household income tend to report higher levels of participation in more than one sport. For instance, the highest income group is about 5 times more likely to play 3 or more sports, compared to the lowest

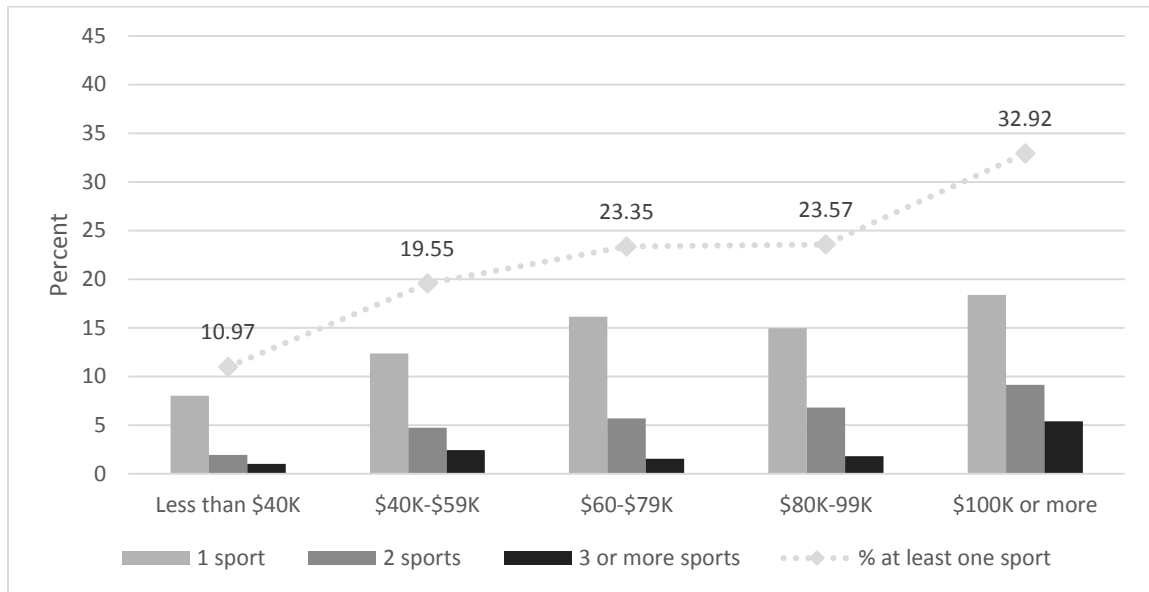
Table 2: Sports participation rates by demographical variables (weighted data)

Variable	Participation in (at least one) Sports				Test Statistics
	Yes		No		
	N	%	N	%	
Total	6,568,352	23.85	20,967,562	76.15	
Income					
Less than \$40,000	488,930	10.97	3,967,931	89.03	df=4
\$40,000 - \$59,999	691,685	19.55	2,847,139	80.45	
\$60,000 - \$79,999	772,309	23.35	2,534,613	76.65	X-sq= 277.264
\$80,000 - \$99,999	679,576	23.57	2,204,183	76.43	P= 0.000
\$100,000 or more	2,442,983	32.92	4,977,120	67.08	
Education					
Less than high school	1,113,513	24.41	3,447,651	75.59	df=4
High school	1,815,960	22.13	6,391,224	77.87	
Trade/technical/college diploma	1,554,333	21.25	5,759,393	78.75	X-sq=65.216
Bachelor degree	1,481,166	28.51	3,714,961	71.49	P=0.000
Graduate school	584,839	28.46	1,470,366	71.54	
Gender					
Male	4,471,754	32.88	9,127,252	67.12	Z= 15.711
Female	2,096,597	15.04	11,840,310	84.96	P= 0.000

income group. Hence, there is a positive correlation between income levels and levels of participation in sports in terms of both whether or not one plays sports and how many sports one plays.

The relationship between education and sports participation is not as straightforward as income groups. Table 2 shows that sport participation rates are somewhat bifurcated. The two highest education groups, *bachelor's* and *graduate degrees*, have the highest rates of sports participation (28.51% and 28.46%, respectively). The lowest education group, *less than high school education*, have higher rates of participation (24.1%) than the middle categories, *high school* (22.13%) and *trade/technical/college*

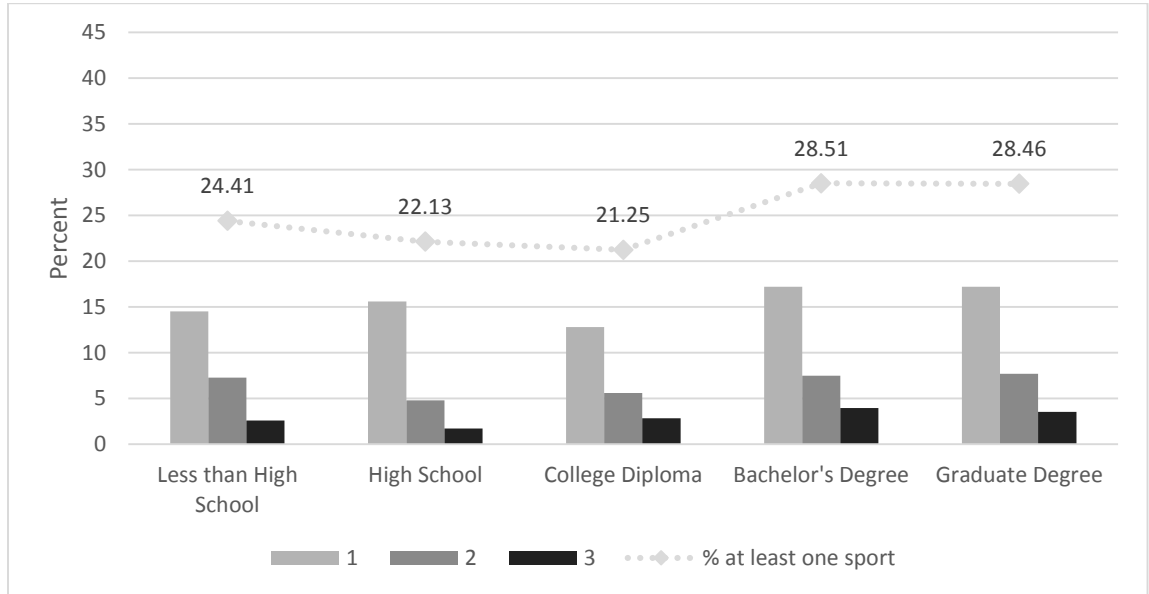
Figure 1: Sports participation by total household income



(21.25%). And the association between sports participation and educational attainment is statistically significant ($\chi^2(4, N = 6,568,352) = 65.216, p < .001$). It is important to note, however, that people who are under the age of 18, and consequently still in high school, are included in this sample. Since high school students tend to have greater access to sports through educational institutions, this likely accounts for why those with the lowest level of education have relatively high participation rates. Nevertheless, those with university degrees have higher participation rates than those without. Thus generally, this finding shows that sports participation rates are divided between those with and without university degrees.

A similar trend is apparent for the number of sports people play shown in Figure 2. In this figure, there is an almost curvilinear relationship between education and number of sports played. Those with a graduate degree and/or bachelor's degree are more likely to play more than one sport, followed closely by those with less than high school education, and those with a high school or college education who play the least sports on average.

Figure 2: *Sports participation by highest level of educational attainment*



Again, those with less than high school education may have relatively high participation rates because they are still in school.

Overall there is much less variation in sports participation rates between educational attainment categories compared to total household income categories. Unlike the linear and monotonic relationship income has with sports, the effect of education is not linear and rather bifurcated. While those with university degrees play more sports than lower education groups, those with less than a high school diploma play more sports than those with a high school and college diploma. However, this may be a result of not controlling for age.

Next, I examined these patterns for both men and women. Comparing sports participation rates, men are over twice more likely to participate in sports than women. As shown in Table 2, about a third of men (32.88%) played at least one sport on a regular basis, while about 15% of women did and this proportional difference was statistically significant ($z = 15.711, p < 0.001$). Given that sport is a highly gendered field, this is well

expected. However, the gap, about 18 percentage points, in sports participation rates are is slightly widened from 15 percentage points back in 2005 (Ifedi, 2008). Thus, while Canadians’ sports participation has generally declined, the gender gap has widened.

When considering the effect of income and education on sports participation, the result shows some differences between men and women. Figures 3 and 4 show patterns of sports participation by income for men and women, respectively. Likewise, Figures 5 and 6 show patterns of sports participation by educational attainment for each gender group.

Figure 3: *Sports participation rates by highest level of income—men only*

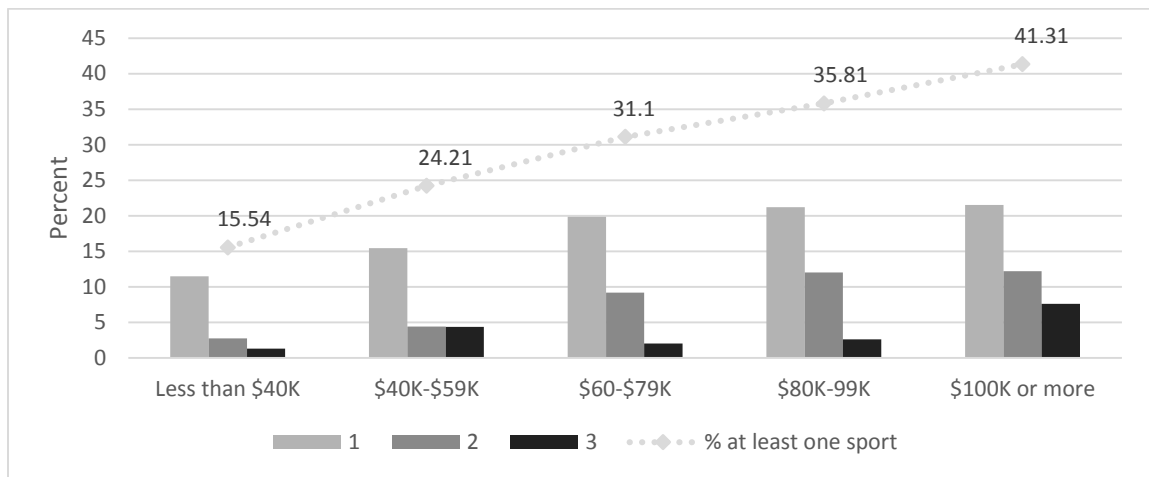


Figure 4: *Sports participation rates by highest level of income—women only*

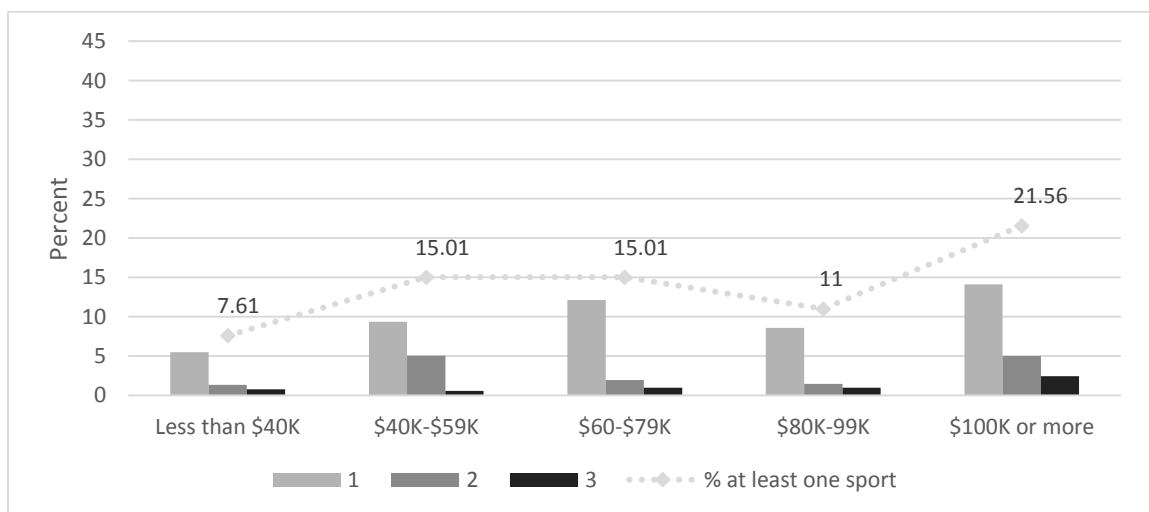


Figure 5: Sports participation rates by highest level of educational attainment—men only

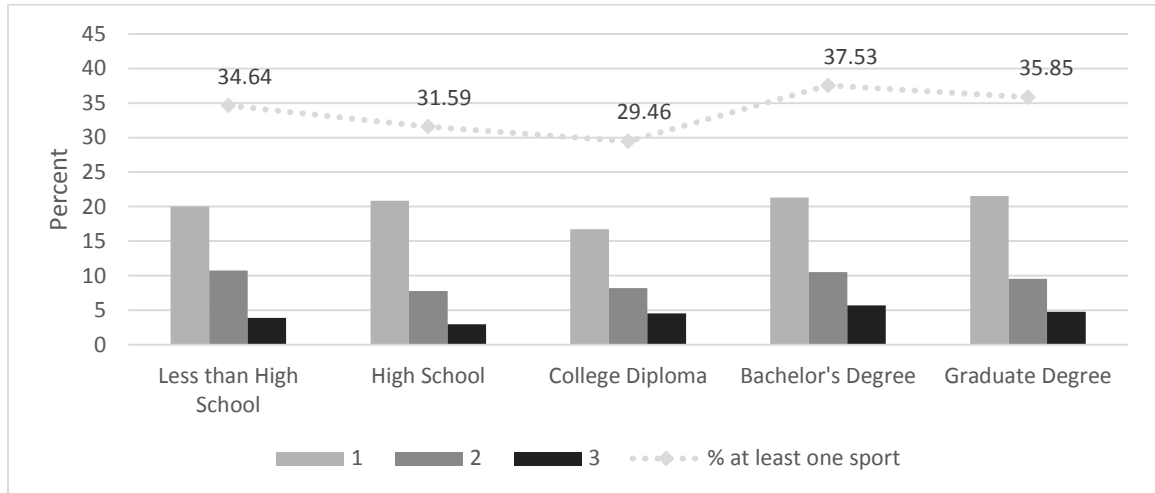
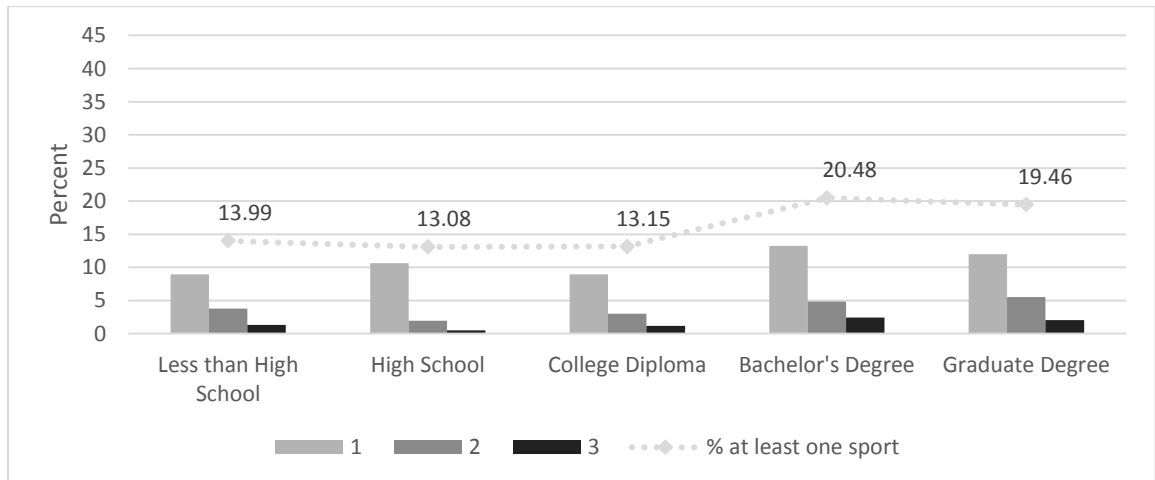


Figure 6: Sports participation rates by highest level of educational attainment—women only



For men, income linearly affects the rate of sports participation. As household income increases, both the rate of sports participation and the proportion of those who play two or more sports increase as well. As for women, the effect of income is not linear. Sports participation rates are greatest among the highest household income group (21.56%), while there is no trend for the other income groups. A similar pattern is apparent for the rate of women who play more than one sport. That is, income is not affecting sports participation for the low to middle income groups among women.

Educational attainment, for men, does not have as strong of an effect on sports participation as income. The rate of sports participation among the lowest category of education is equivalent with university degree holders. Also, a sizable number of those in the lowest education category played more than one sport. For education, the middle range categories, those with *high school* and *college diplomas* had lower rates of sports participation. Again, this may be an artefact of age. Had respondents from the youngest age cohort, who are likely still in school, been removed from the analysis, a clear pattern may have emerged. Considering women, those with university educations (either *bachelor's* or *graduate degrees*) have higher rates of sports participation and play more sports, relative to those with lower education. This pattern is similar to that which was seen among men, except that, for women, the lowest education category does not have clear advantage to the middle education categories.

Taken together, these data suggests that there are indeed gender variations in how income and education are related to sports participation. Most notable is the fact that patterns of sports participation with people's income levels are drastically different between men and women. For men, we observe the clear income gradient of sports participation, which was not the case for women. Also, men's results resemble the patterns of overall results (including both men and women), where there is a linear relationship for income and a curvilinear one for education. This is likely due to the fact that the field of sport is a masculine dominated field and so men play a larger proportion and a greater variety of sports than women.

These results have two competing implications about the applicability of the omnivore perspective of the Canadian class structure in the field of sports. On the one hand,

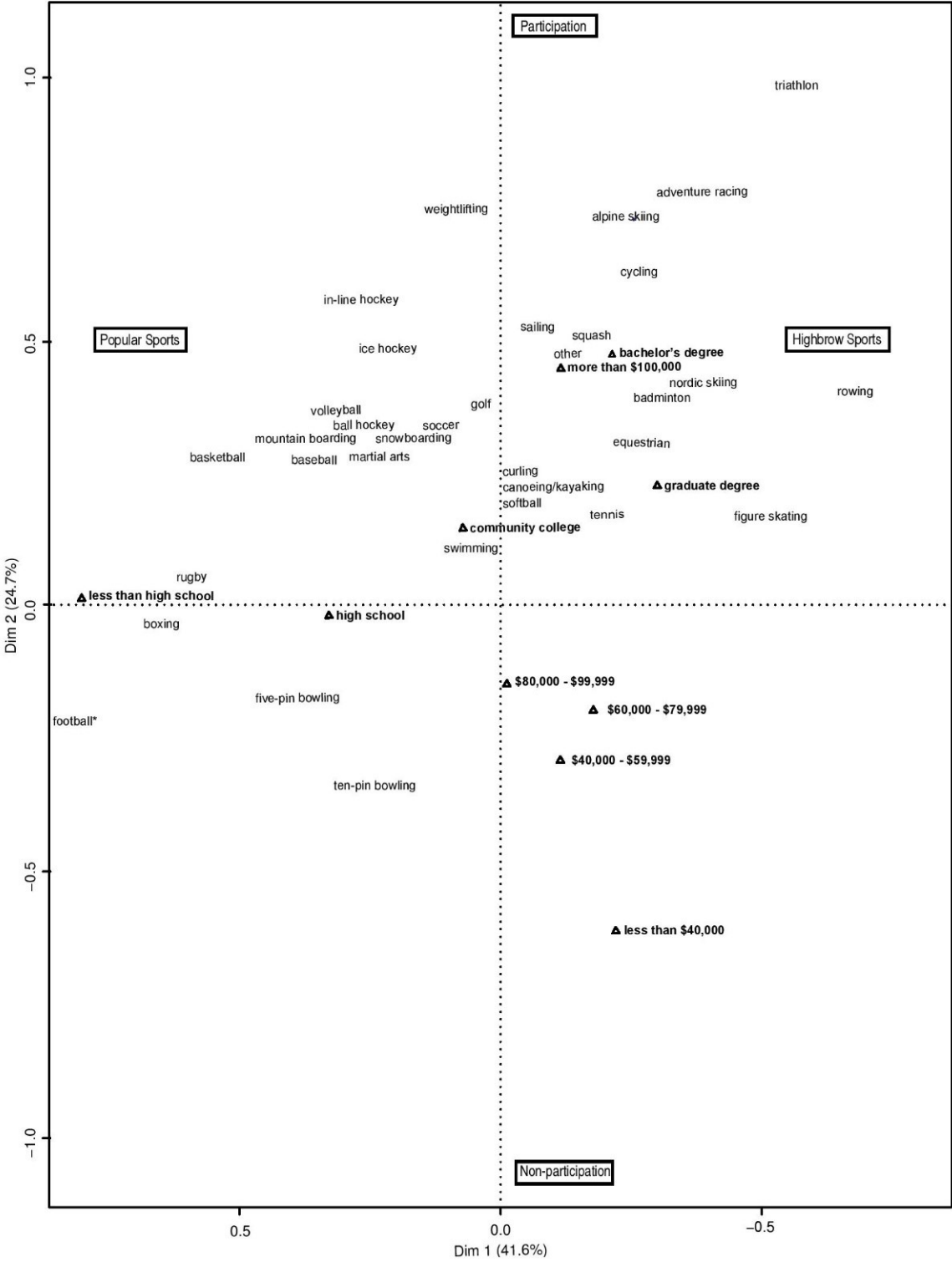
income gradients in sports participation lend support for the omnivore thesis. Members of higher income groups tend to play more sports. On the other hand, the average number of sports people play is very limited. Only a fraction of individuals plays more than one sports. Thus, it is hardly the case that socioeconomic elites are playing a wide range of sports. Moreover, when it comes to education, our results do not show a clear gradient. However, this is likely because age was not controlled for. Also, these are the findings based on individual practice, and they do not capture the sports and class positions at the macro level. The next section will examine the class structure of the field of sport with correspondence analysis to offer insight at the broader scale.

3.2 CA Results: Full Model

In this section we will establish the class structure in the field of sports from which we can identify the structuring principles operating in this field—either inclusive omnivore or exclusive highbrow—and compare them with the gender results. To do this, CA was used to create a two-dimension depiction of the field of sports, with all 34 sporting practices and social class indicators (i.e. income and education) contributing to its structure.

Figure 7 displays the map for the full model. This model includes both men and women and shows the structuring principles of the field of sports in Canada as a whole. This map is based on the CA analysis for the first two dimensions analysed. These dimensions account for 41.6% and 24.7% of the explained variance respectively—amounting to a total of 74.2% of variance in the model. Only two dimensions are retained because the first two account for almost three quarters of all variance, and adding more dimensions does not improve the model fit and results in less parsimonious interpretation. Each dimension will be interpreted separately below.

Figure 7: The Canadian Field of Sporting Practices



Dimension 1 (Inertia = 41.6%). Participation vs. Non-participation.

Displayed on the vertical axis, Dimension 1 contrasts high and low levels of sports participation. The top of the map is densely populated and includes a total of 30 sporting practices, and the bottom is sparsely populated and consists of only 4 sports. More specifically, the sports on the very top of the map, such as triathlon, adventure racing, alpine skiing, cycling and sailing are characterised by high costs, in both time and money, since they generally involve extensive training (e.g. orienteering, vessel rigging etc.), expensive equipment (e.g. boat, bike, skis) and access to private facilities (fitness club, yacht club, and ski hills and lifts). Located closer the middle of the map are the more common or popular sports, such as softball, baseball, basketball and soccer, which are characteristically less cost prohibitive since they require limited equipment and can be played in public venues. Interestingly, the four sports located on the bottom of the map, namely football, boxing, five and tenpin bowling, seem to have in common “proletarian” reputations by virtue of their association with the working class and their values (Wilson, 2002). While there seems to be meaningful stratification of sporting practices from top-to-bottom, the fact that nearly all of them are located on the top of the map suggests that the most important issue is not *what types* of sports one plays, but rather *whether or not* one plays sports at all. As a result, the top-to-bottom distinction seems to manifest a dimension ranging from ranging from participation at the top to non-participation at the bottom.

This interpretation is supported by the social class positions along the vertical axis of Dimension 1. Total household income and educational attainment categories are dispersed widely along the first dimension, with the higher income and education groups positioned at the higher levels of Dimension 1 and the lower categories positioned on the

lower end. Between these two socioeconomic factors, income is more strongly linked to this axis than education, with the lowest income categories positioned on the very bottom (non-participation) and the highest categories on the top (participation). The categories of income groups are more widely spread apart along this axis than education. For education, the vertical distances across the categories are smaller, indicating that education is only a modest predictor of participation. Thus, both income and education are related with participation in sports, but income is much more visually aligned with who plays sports or not.

Dimension 2 (Inertia = 24.7). Highbrow Sports vs. Popular Sports.

Displayed on the horizontal axis, Dimension 2 is much more evenly populated, with 20 sporting practices located on the left of the map and 14 on the right. It appears that this second dimension is linked to types of sports, which reflects cultural preferences and tastes, distinguishing sports that have appeal to the masses from those that cater to more specialized tastes and sensibilities. The most specialized, or distinctive, sports are also associated with more expensive costs for participation. Figure 7 depicts the top six, or 7 out of top 10, most played sports among adult Canadians on the left side of the map (e.g. golf, ice hockey, soccer, baseball, volleyball, basketball and swimming) (see Table 2 in Chapter 2). Not only are the sports on the left side of the map popular in the sense that they are the most widely played, but they are also among the most mainstream and mass consumed sport spectacles in Canada. For instance, CBC's Hockey Night in Canada is among the top 10 regularly scheduled television programs in Canada and the Stanley Cup Finals (National Hockey League Championship) matches consistently top the list of Canada's top 10 most watched television events annually (Quan & Dupuis, 2013). The

sports located on the right side of the map, however, are not simply less widely played or watched but they also have relatively high equipment and facility costs (e.g. equestrian, sailing, skiing and cycling) and require the development of a specific set of physical and mental competencies, proper etiquette and sociability that generally require early exposure to a specific sport (e.g. tennis, badminton and squash) (Bourdieu, 1991). These sports are considered “highbrow” due to the fact that they manifest institutionalized values (i.e. luxury and aestheticism) and relations to the body (sports treatment of the body as an object of cultivation for its own sake) that appeal to the tastes and dispositions of the upper social groups. Likewise, the more common or popular sports, perhaps “lowbrow” or “prole”, may require a certain set of tastes, knowledge and skills, however these are more consistent with those of the lower social economic groups and have a more instrumental relation to one’s body (sport’s treatment of the body as a tool to play sports). Taken together, it appears that the left-to-right distinction of Dimension 2 manifests a continuum ranging from popular sports to highbrow sports (see Table 3).

With regard to social class positions, only educational attainment is closely linked to this highbrow/popular dimension, with the highest level of education plotted with participation in highbrow sports and the lowest levels associated more closely with popular sports. On the other hand, the horizontal distances between household income levels are quite small: in fact, none of the income groups are located in the lower half of this dimension. Thus, Dimension 2 captures the variability in the types of the sports. This variability is also more strongly linked to education level, rather than levels of income.

To recap, this two-dimensional interpretation of the field of sports suggests that the first and most important dimension captures the variance between sport participants and

Table 3: *Sport types*

Popular	Highbrow
Golf	Triathlon
Soccer	Rowing
Swimming	Figure skating
Weightlifting	Adventure racing
Snowboarding	Nordic skiing
Ice hockey	Badminton
Martial arts	Alpine skiing
Ball hockey	Tennis
Mountain boarding	Squash
Volleyball	Other
Baseball	Sailing
In-line hockey	Canoeing/kayaking
Basketball	Curling
Rugby	Softball
	Cycling

non-participants, whereas the second dimension captures the variance between those who play popular sports and those who play highbrow sports. Moreover, we find that income is a greater determinant of whether or not one plays sports while education is a stronger determinant of what particular sports one plays. Taken together, these results suggest that income largely defines the range of possibilities available to social agents within the field of sports, whereas education is linked to taste and determines agents' positive orientation to this or that particular sport. That is, overall, the structuring principles of the sports field in Canada are characterized as participation/non-participation, closely linked with economic capital, and highbrow/popular cultural tastes, represented by the accumulation of educational capital. While the implication of these findings for the omnivore thesis will be more fully discussed in the latter part of this chapter, these findings suggest that Canadian class structure in the field of sports taps into some elements from both the

Bourdieuian *and* omnivorism perspectives. Thus, the economic elites' position is closely positioned to wider ranges of sports. This is in line with the omnivore expectation. However, this does not mean that they consume sports without distinctive tastes. Cultural elites, identified with higher levels of education, generally consume certain types of sports that are not so popular among the less educated groups. This is more in line with Bourdieu's notion of cultural distinction.

3.3 CA Results: Gender Specific Models

In the previous section, the overall class structure of the field of sports was established using nationally representative data from the Canadian population. To further investigate the class structure in the field of sports, this section will explore the intersectionality between class and gender in the field of sports. In doing so, I will examine the gender specific CA maps.

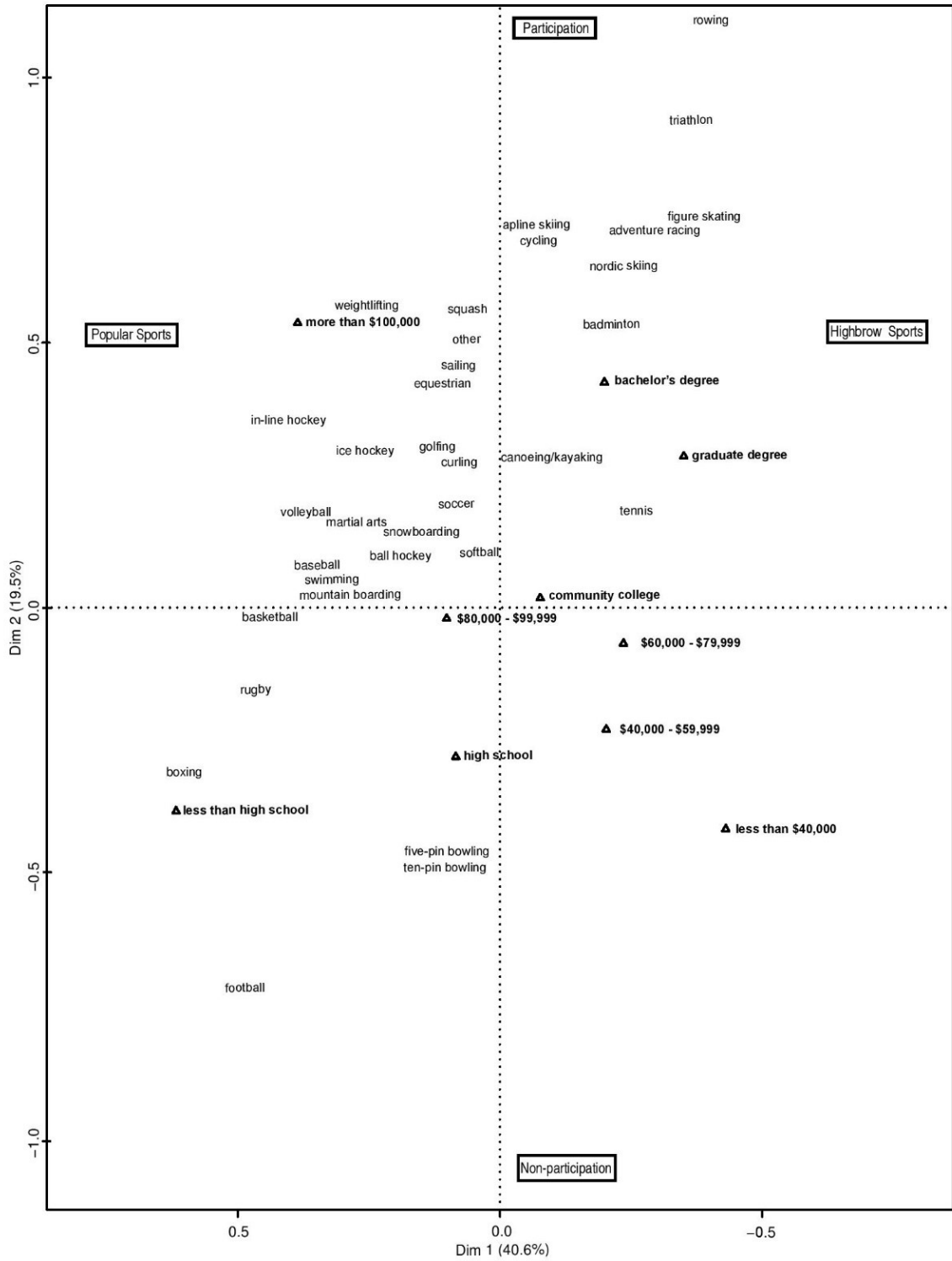
3.3.1 CA Model for Men

Figure 8 displays the CA map for men. As indicated in the margins of the figure, Dimensions 1 and 2 account for 40.6% and 19.5% explained variance, respectively—amounting to a total of 60.1%. Again, only two dimensions are retained because they account for the majority of all variance in the model and the consistency with the previous model allows us to compare the results to it.

Dimension 1 (Inertia = 40.6%). Participation vs. Non-Participation

Similar to the full model, the distribution of sporting practices in Figure 8 is highly segmented along the vertical axis—the first dimension. The top half of the map is densely populated with 28 sports, while the bottom-half is sparsely populated with only 6 sports. Thus, the first dimension contrasts high and low levels of participation in sports, which is

Figure 8: *The Canadian Field of Sporting Practices for Men*



tantamount to the participation/non-participation dimension observed in previous model. Likewise, the top of the map is largely populated by the most expensive—financial and time requirements—and culturally exclusive sports (i.e. triathlon, adventure racing, alpine skiing, cycling and sailing). The middle of the map is characterised by more affordable and mainstream sports, such as, baseball, basketball and soccer. Again, the sports depicted in the bottom-half of the male model have “prole” reputations (Wilson, 2002), such as football, bowling, boxing, rugby and basketball. Compared to the full model, sporting practices in the male model are distributed slightly more evenly from top-to-bottom. A few more sports are located in the bottom-half of the map compared to the full model indicating that men with lower levels of participation consume a wider range of sports. This may reflect the gendered nature of sports. That is, the sports field is male oriented and therefore men are generally more likely to identify with and play a wide range of sports.

In terms of positions of socioeconomic indicators, both total household income and educational attainment categories are linked to the first dimension. The higher income and education groups are positioned at the higher levels of the vertical axes and the lower categories are positioned on the lower end. This can be contrasted to the full model in which primarily income is positively correlated with participation in sports. In the male model, however, education categories are widely spread over the vertical axis. This means that education levels are also linked to the first dimension of the participation/non-participation. Despite this disparity between the two maps, there is no substantive change in the interpretation of the participation/non-participation dimension compared to the full model. That is, the upper-class social groups are more likely to play a greater number of

sports. But for men, not only economic capital, but also the educational capital are plotted near along the level of participation dimension.

Dimension 2 (Inertia = 19.5%). Highbrow Sports vs. Popular Sports.

Displayed on the horizontal axis, Dimension 2 is more evenly populated and appears to be more closely linked to cultural preferences. Similar to the full model, it appears the second dimension distinguishes between popular or “prole” sports that have more appeal for mass consumption and highbrow sports that appeal to the tastes and dispositions of more sophisticated cultural consumers. For instance, the right side of Figure 8 is populated by sports which exemplify the values and virtues of asceticism (e.g. cycling, tennis, triathlon, Alpine and Nordic skiing), such as self-restraint and goals related to health and character building. That is, the appreciation of such sports require a perception of certain rules of etiquette and self-discipline. These virtuous elements presuppose the development of learned schemes of perceptions which are not widely possessed by all social groups. Conversely, the left side of Figure 8 displays mainly team-based and high-contact sports (e.g. soccer, basketball, baseball and rugby) that require fairly common physical and mental competencies in order to play. These sports are generally more accessible within the limits of one’s free-time, energy and money. This characterization of such sports also fits the popular/highbrow typology observed in the full model analysis (Table 3). However, one clear difference is that the left side of the male model also includes a number of sports that are characterised by high costs and exclusive tastes, such as, sailing, tennis and equestrian. These are the sports that are classified as “highbrow” in the full model. But in the male model, these sports share the similar position on the second

dimension. This however, can be explained by the distribution of social class positions along the axis of Dimension 2.

Similar to the full model, educational attainment is closely aligned with Dimension 2, with the highest educational credentials located in the far right end of the horizontal axis, whereas the highest income groups are located in the upper-left quadrant with popular sports. Recall that in the full model, household income did not spread widely over this axis. But for the male model, it is distributed fairly widely, and the direction is opposite to the way education is distributed. That is, the position of the higher education groups on the horizontal axis is similar to the lowest income group, and *vice versa*.

Thus, the CA map for men shows a clearer distinction across all quadrants. The lower left quadrant, characterized by the lowest education attainment, is closely positioned with popular sports, particularly those with “prole” reputations; the lower right quadrant signifies lower levels of income with no particular sports. For the top half of the map, the left quadrant, characterized by the highest income group, contains populist but expensive and high contact such as hockey, along with highbrow sports such as equestrian and sailing. The top right quadrant, characterized by the high education level, generally contains the sports that are more in line with highbrow sports that feature less physical contact, such as triathlon, figure skating, and rowing. These results show a clear contrast to the full model in which levels of participation are associated with the levels of income, while taste preferences are primarily determined by educational attainment. In this case, for men, we see that the culturally dominant (high education) have an affinity for highbrow sports, whereas the wealthiest have an affinity for sports with mass appeal that are more closely linked to populist culture.

Taken together, these results offer support for Bourdieu's (1984) theory of the cultural distancing in which there is a clear segregation of repertoires between the culturally and economically dominant groups. According to the logic of distinction, the economically dominant social group has an affinity for "luxury" sports since they provide a straightforward means of displaying one's wealth, status and power through conspicuous displays of economic power and socio-economic status. On the other hand, the culturally dominant groups are engaged in more ascetic or erudite sports that serve to establish "mastery of one's own body as well as the free and exclusive appropriation of scenery inaccessible to the vulgar" (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 839).

Up to this point, we have established the overall class structure in the field of sports as well as how the class structure manifests exclusively for men. The results between the full and male models were similar. Again, this is likely because the field of sport is a masculine dominated field. The most notable difference was that in the male model there is a discernible difference between the repertoires of the culturally and economically dominant social groups, whereas the full model showed that the segregation of repertoires was primarily between the upper and lower social groups. The next section will explore how the class structure in the field of sports looks for women.

3.3.2 CA Model for Women

Figure 9 displays the CA map of sports participation and socio-economic indicators for women. Dimensions 1 and 2 account for 40.9% and 21.6% explained variance, respectively—amounting to a total of 62.5%. Again, only two dimensions are retained because they account for the majority of all variance in the model and allow for comparative analysis with the previous models.

Figure 9: *The Canadian Field of Sporting Practices for Women*



Dimension 1 (Inertia = 40.9%). Hybrid: Participation vs. Non-participation and Highbrow Sports vs. Popular Sports

In contrast to the full model, the vertical axis for women reflects somewhat of a hybrid between participation/non-participation and highbrow/popular dimensions. The top of the map is populated with more sports than the bottom half—22 sporting practices are located on the top-half of the map, whereas the bottom-half of the map only contains 12 sporting practices. Compared to the full model or the men’s model, however, this is a much smaller gap. This implies that the vertical axis has a less clear cut plotting of sports participation, income and education. When we closely examine the types of sports that are in the very top and bottom of the map, it is noticeable that it also bears a resemblance to the highbrow/popular distinction. For instance, the upper segment of the female model is populated almost exclusively by the luxury sports (e.g. sailing), as well as ascetic individualised sports that feature rigorous self-discipline and abstention (e.g. triathlon). Conversely, the very bottom part of the vertical axis is populated by a collection of common team-based sports (e.g. volleyball, baseball, basketball and soccer). While dimension one is less clearly defined than the previous models, this layout along the vertical axis suggests that Dimension 1 in the female map is not only linked to participation in sports, but also reveals a distinction between the highbrow practices comprising the upper-half of the map and the popular/“prole” sports located in the lower-half.

In regards to social class positions along this axis, both educational attainment and total household income categories are linked to the first dimension. For instance, the higher income and education groups are positioned at the higher levels of vertical axis of Dimension 1 and the lower categories are positioned on the lower end. Between these two

socioeconomic factors, education is more strongly linked to this axis than income in the women's map. Along this axis, the lowest education categories are positioned lower on the map than the lowest income group, and the highest education group is located even higher than the highest income group. This implies that income is only modestly associated with this vertical axis relative to education. One possible explanation for the plotting of popular sports in the bottom-right quadrant with the *less than high school* category is that this group contains women who are still attending school and are therefore more likely to have access to these sports through educational institutions. Indeed, volleyball, basketball, soccer, and rugby are quite common varsity team sports played in high school. Nevertheless, this provides a clear contrast to the full model and men's model, in which the vertical axis was more closely linked with income than education. It is also noticeable that all income categories, except the top category are bunched up around the center of the map. This lack of a clear income gradient implies that the relationship between social class and sports participation for women is bifurcated: the top income group is very distinct from the rest of the income groups for women's sports participation.

Dimension 2 (Inertia = 21.6%). Highbrow Sports vs. Popular Sports.

While cultural preferences are observable along the first dimension, Dimension 2 appears to primarily manifest taste based distinction—differentiating between highbrow and popular sports. For instance, the far right side of the map displays popular sports such as ice hockey, soccer, basketball and baseball, whereas highbrow sports such as canoeing/kayaking, rowing, squash, and tennis are depicted towards the left side of the map. Although the physical location of “popular” sports and “highbrow” sports in the women's map is opposite of those in men's map, in which the “popular” sports was in the

left of the map and “highbrow” sports were in the right, the relative locations of these types of sports along this dimension is similar. One noticeable difference from the previous models is that some of the sports change locations in Dimension 2. For instance, figure skating, which is located in the “highbrow” side in men’s model, takes a more central position in women’s model. Likewise, weight lifting, which considered to be “popular” sports in men’s map, is now located in the “highbrow” side position in women’s. These positional differences in some of the sports signal the gendered nature of sports. For instance, sports like figure skating are plotted in the “highbrow” quadrant for men but not for women. This is likely because figure skating is a low-contact, individualized and high-aerobic sport, which is more closely associated with stereotypical feminine qualities (Koivula, 1995). Such sports are therefore considered more appropriate for women to participate in and more popularly practiced among women. Conversely, popular and “prole” sports located on the right side of the map are high-contact and team-based sports (e.g. hockey, boxing, baseball, basketball, football and rugby) and are generally associated with masculine qualities which tends to discourage participation by women (Ibid).

Considering social class positions, both educational attainment and total household income categories are linked to the second dimension. However, it is not so clear-cut. Figure 9 depicts the highest educational credentials in the middle of the map adjacent to highbrow sports, whereas the lowest education group takes the high values in the second dimension. As for income, the highest income group is more closely associated with popular sports in the far right of the map, while the rest of the income categories are located on the opposite side of the map, but relatively closer to the middle of the axis. Moreover, unlike the men’s model, in which affinity for this or that particular sport was more gradated

along the levels of income and educational attainment, for women the middle income and education groups are positioned in the center of the map. The pattern of women's sports participation is mainly shaped by the highest groups of income and education. While the second dimension for women is not as clear-cut compared to men, these results still indicate some degree of distinction between the types of sports played by the culturally and economically dominant social groups. The most highly educated women have an affinity for highbrow sports and the wealthiest women have an affinity for popular sports. Thus, it appears that the omnivore thesis is not well supported since sporting practices are tied to social class positions. Bourdieu's theory of the distinctive tastes within the dominant class—the distinction between *luxury* and *asceticism*—seems to hold at least some explanatory power. The elite status group, primarily based on the economic privilege, are more geared towards the taste based on *luxury*, expensive but “popular” sports, while the elites based on cultural privilege towards *ascetically* oriented “highbrow” sports.

Up to this point, we have established the overall class structure in the field of sports as well as how the class structure manifests for men and women separately. While the results for men were more akin to the full model, the results for women were noticeably different. For instance, the first dimension was not only defined by levels of participation, but rather was a hybrid, which captured variation across types of sports as well. In regards to levels of participation, for women this is better explained by level of education as opposed to income levels. As for cultural repertoires, there was a more clear distinction between the lowbrow practices played by the lower social groups and highbrow practices played by the upper social groups. Finally, like the male model there is a discernible difference between the repertoires of the culturally and economically dominant social

groups, whereas the full model showed that the segregation of repertoires was primarily between the upper and lower social groups.

Overall, these results show that the first dimension of the Canadian field of sports, which includes both gender groups, captures variation in participation and non-participation in sports, and this is highly reflective of class status. In regards to the gender specific models, participation in sports is a more salient stratifying factor among men compared to women, and economic status is a stronger indicator of participation for men, while educational capital matters more for women. On the other hand, the second dimension captures variation across types of sports participation. Although educational attainment largely contributed to explaining the variations in types of sports in the full model, the gender-based results revealed a clear distinction between the repertoires of the economically and culturally dominant social groups, with the former having an affinity for expensive but popular sports (luxury) and the latter for more highbrow sports (ascetic).

Chapter 4: Conclusion

The purpose of this analysis was to identify the structuring principles in the field of sports in the Canadian context and assess the theoretical relevance of highbrow and omnivore theses. Previously, researchers contended that that the Canadian class structure in cultural fields are more in line with an omnivore (inclusive) social structure (Erickson, 1996; Veenstra, 2005, 2010). However, the findings from the full model in my analysis show that the stratification in the field of sports in Canada is rather more in line with the highbrow principle or more explicit divisions in repertoires. Yet, unlike Bourdieu's observation in France (1984), it is not necessarily the case that each social class has its designated repertoires, rather the field of sports in Canada has another layer of exclusionary force. That is, participation in sports itself was the largest and foremost difference across the class division. And this is largely divided along the levels of economic capital. Unlike music, which people generally consume some sort of music regardless of its genre, when it comes to consumption of sports, the largest divide was between those who play sports and those who do not. Granted, there are numerous different ways to consume sports, such as passive consumption through the radio, newspaper, magazines, television, video games and the internet. I argue that the limited access the lower-class social groups have to sports participation—as opposed to passive consumption—produces a symbolic difference between upper- and lower-classes' knowledge and appreciation of sports. That is, the upper-class social groups can be distinguished from their lower-class counterparts as being more legitimate consumers of sports by virtue of the fact that they have built their schemes of perceptions from first-hand experience—through participation.

Some (Erickson, 1996; Veenstra, 2005) argue that Canada is rather less class-conscious than France, by showing that sports knowledge in Canada is fairly common and equally distributed across social classes. In theory sports serve an integrative function across classes since most people can hold a conversation about sports—like the weather. However, in Bourdieu’s view (1991) the distinctive value of one’s familiarity of sports comes from their ability to impress others with what they know about the intricacies of a highbrow sport or rather a great variety of sports. In this case, we see that the upper social groups’ knowledge and appreciation of sports comes from first-hand experience, whereas the lower social groups’ schemes of perceptions are more superficial and can be discounted because their knowledge comes from passive consumption and second hand information passed down from “the experts” (i.e. actual athletes and/or sports broadcasters). In other words, the polarization in sports participation between social groups reveals a clear distinction between the upper-class social groups that are characterised as “connoisseurs” (Bourdieu, 1991) of sports, whereas the lower-class social groups are characterised as mere spectators or “armchair sportsmen” (Ibid). This divide is more remarkable along the differences in economic/financial capital than educational capital.

Education, presumably capturing cultural capital, such as aesthetic tastes, was rather a secondary factor for participation/non-participation divide. However, educational attainment largely contributed to explaining the variations in types of sports, the other layer of exclusionary principal operating in the field of sports. The results based on highbrow/popular dimension of the full model shows that there is a clear segregation of repertoires between the upper-class and lower-class social groups, where the upper-class is associated with more exclusive highbrow sports and lower-class with more accessible

popular sports. Interestingly, the most popular sports are also characteristically team-based sports (e.g. rugby, hockey, soccer, baseball and basketball) whereas the highbrow sports are generally individualized (e.g. cycling, triathlon, tennis, squash, Alpine and Nordic skiing). Hence, the upper social groups not only play different sports than the lower social groups, but they have a particular affinity for ones that are “practiced in exclusive places (private clubs), at the time one chooses, alone or with chosen partners (features which contrast with the collective discipline, obligatory rhythms and imposed efforts of team sports)” (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 215).

At the same time, popular team-based sports are avoided by the upper-class social groups because “their very accessibility and all that this entails, such as undesirable contacts, tend to discredit them in the eyes of the dominant class” (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 214). This segregation provides support for the highbrow thesis because it shows that some sports have greater symbolic value than others, while it undermines the credibility of the omnivore thesis because it shows that sports provide little interaction between social groups and the upper social groups are even less likely to play the sports that facilitate interaction with others.

Overall, these results from the full model provide evidence of two distinctive exclusionary structuring principles in the field of sports. First, participation in sports is virtually exclusive to the upper-class social groups, and therefore the upper-class can be distinguished from their lower-class counterparts as being more legitimate consumers of sports because they have first-hand experience. Second, there is a clear segregation of repertoires between the upper-class and lower-class social groups, where the lower-class

social groups are associated with popular team-based sports and the upper social groups are associated with exclusive individualized sports.

Taken together, these data show that there is a strong relationship between sporting practices and social class positions in the field of sports, indicating that sporting practices are indeed good indicators of social-economic-status. That is to say, that they are not diffused among social groups as would be expected from the omnivore thesis. As a result, sports do not reflect inclusivity or facilitate interaction between social groups, but rather distinguish between them through symbolic boundaries.

The purpose of the second part of the analysis was to determine if the structuring principles found in the full model hold theoretical relevance for both men and women and investigate the intersectionality of class and gender in the field of sports.

Providing further evidence of exclusive structuring principles, both the male and female models display a relationship between sporting practices and social class positions. For instance, both income and education groups are positioned with a close link to the first dimension of both gender specific models, while it was only income, which had a close link to the first dimension in the full model.

The findings also show evidence for the intersectionality between class and gender in the field of sports. For men, mirroring the overall societal trend, participation in sports itself was the largest and foremost difference across the class division. That is, the upper-class social groups tend to play sports and the lower-class social groups are much less so. While this layer of exclusionary force is pertinent for both genders, the distribution of sporting practices for men was more segregated for men. In the male model there is a more clear and gradient trend between one's income and education and levels of participation in

sports. For women, however, the division between participants and non-participants was not as prominent, which is highlighted by the fact that there is a larger number of sports located in the lower-half of Figure 9 (female model) compared to Figure 8 (male model).

While these results shows that lower-class women are more likely than lower-class men to play more types of sports compared to their upper-class counterparts, this does not mean that lower-class positions among women fare better in sports participation than men. Instead, it is rather a reflection of their lower baseline levels of sports participation compared to men. When considering the fact that women have lower levels of participation to begin with, these results suggest that women from lower social groups may experience greater obstacles than their male counterparts (Donnelly & Coakley, 2002; Donnelly & Harvey, 1999; Loy, McPherson, & Kenyon, 1978). That is, men are over twice as likely to play sports as women in general; the upper-class social groups participate more than their lower-class counterparts; consequently, lower-class women have the lowest levels of sports participation. Indeed, previous research shows that economic constraints of the lower-classes are often compounded by the fact that working class women are frequently responsible for household chores and child rearing, in addition to paid labour (Hochschild, 1989). At the same time, upper-class women are much more likely to have the free time to play sports as a result of the ability to absorb the costs of child care, domestic help and expenses related to playing sports (Donnelly & Harvey, 1999).

Taken together, the results show that sports participation itself is a more salient stratifying factor for men compared to women; yet when considering that women are generally marginalized in the field of sports and this exclusion is exacerbated for lower-class women, it seems as though sports participation is indeed a significant structural

principle for women in the field of sports. In this sense, in the field of sports in Canada, sports not only signify class boundaries, but also such boundaries are intersected across gender lines.

In fact, the findings show that the field of sports is not only a site of struggle between the upper-class and lower-class social groups, but also between the dominant fractions who are clearly distinguishable through the types of sports they play (Bourdieu, 1991). For instance, the second dimension—highbrow sport vs. popular sports—in the gender specific models showed that the economically and culturally dominant social groups diverge within the upper social space and autonomous clusters of sporting practices form around the two types of capital. This shows that sporting practices are related to position-bound stratification mechanisms; however, this distinction was more clearly defined in the field of sports for men compared to women.

Ultimately, these data provide evidence of exclusionary structuring principles in the field of sports, which can be seen in light of four key findings: First, there is a strong relationship between sporting practices and social class positions in the field of sports, indicating that sporting practices indeed signify one's social position. Participation in sports is virtually exclusive to the upper social groups. Moreover, there is a clear segregation of repertoires between the upper and lower social groups, where the lower social groups are associated with popular team-based sports and the upper social groups are associated with exclusive individualized sports. There is also a clear segregation of repertoires between the economically and culturally dominant social groups, where the most educated engage primarily in ascetic sports and the economically endowed engage in the most expensive sports. Further, unequal access to sports on the basis of class position

is compounded by gender inequalities, further limiting the access of lower-class women to sports participation. While previous studies (Erickson, 1996; Veenstra, 2005, 2010) have found evidence of cultural omnivorism in Canada, the findings presented here provide contrary evidence. That is, sports do not reflect inclusivity or facilitate interaction between social groups, but rather distinguish between them through symbolic boundaries.

To conclude, the aim of my research was to develop a better understanding of the field of sports in Canada. This has important policy and program implications. While over the past few decades Canada has emerged as a leading nation in a number of sports, as can be seen by its recent success at the Olympics Games and world championship competitions, ironically sports participation rates in the country have plunged to an all-time low (Donnelly, 2013). Despite this obvious trend and Sport Canada's (2012) mandate, to *increase participation*, the Canadian federal government continues to devote the vast majority of its resources to support high-performance sport instead of increasing access to sports. This is compounded by a shortage of public sport facilities, in addition to the rising cost of user and service fees. Ultimately, only the wealthiest Canadians now have access to sports. My research highlights that if issues of access and social exclusion in sports are not addressed aggressively, then sports participation is likely to continue to fall.

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