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Social Differentiation in Musical Taste Patterns*

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Abstract

In this article, we investigate patterns of musical taste using a large sample from the Dutch population. It is found that members from higher-status groups tend to be more omnivorous (that is, they like more different musical genres) than those from lower-status groups, which is in line with Peterson's (1992; Peterson & Simkus 1992) hypothesis. The actual difference is, however, rather small and occurs only with regard to the number of genres that respondents like at least "more or less," not with regard to their favorite genres. In order to discover the combinatorial logic by which musical genres are clustered into specific taste patterns, a factor model is estimated. The results indicate that musical genres can be structured on the basis of three basic "discourses" (highbrow, pop, folk). The so-called omnivores comprise a specific fraction of the higher-status groups known as the new middle class, whose tastes combine a set of genres related to all these discourses.

Review of the Literature

CULTURAL BOUNDARIES

Cultural consumption is related to a person's social status. Bourdieu (1984) has shown that people belonging to the higher-status groups have more cultural capital at their disposal than people of lower status. For Bourdieu, the term *cultural capital* refers to knowledge and appreciation of highbrow culture and the arts, "good" taste, and appropriate manners. His conception assumes the existence of a homology

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between the cultural field, in which cultural products can be positioned, and the social field, in which consumers or participants occupy their specific positions. By and large, this notion seems to be supported by empirical research. Studies show that persons with higher educational levels and higher occupational status are the most frequent visitors of museums, classical concerts, the theater, et cetera (DiMaggio & Mohr 1985; Ganzeboom 1989; Kirchberg 1996). Also, members of the higher-status groups read more literature, quality newspapers, and opinion weeklies (Knulst & Kraaykamp 1998). Level of education and family background are the best predictors of participation in the arts (De Graaf & De Graaf 1988; Van Eijck 1997), which points toward socialization as a major predictor of cultural consumption, as Bourdieu noted.

Which specific cultural behaviors are actually associated with high social status strongly depends on the social context in which this association is studied (Levine 1988; Peterson 1997). Bourdieu's definition of cultural capital is determined by both the time and the place of his own empirical investigations (Calhoun 1993; Holt 1997). Cultural products do not have a fixed status but to some extent always move through the sociocultural field. They are constantly subject to reappraisal and competition with new cultural products (DiMaggio 1992; Heilbrun 1997). Even *within* musical genres, interpretations of composers and how their works should be performed are regularly under discussion (Farnsworth 1969; Hennion 1997). Cultural tastes, opinions, and consumption patterns are part of a broader vision on moral, social, and cultural values. An illustration of this is provided by Lamont (1992) in her comparative study of French and American upper-middle-class men. She shows that American respondents who are concerned about cultural sophistication have a broad cultural repertoire incorporating a lot of mainstream culture, whereas their French counterparts are more culturally exclusive and draw sharper boundaries between themselves and the *français moyen* (Lamont 1992:104). The fact that Lamont's American respondents tend to distance themselves less from persons with lower status does not imply that they care less about cultural distinction. It can be argued that their catholic taste is as relevant to conveying their status position as the elitist taste is for the French. In 1964, Wilensky already observed, albeit with regret, that nearly all highly educated persons in the U.S. regularly enjoyed forms of mass culture. Bourdieu's notion that a high status implies snobbery and, thereby, a consistent aversion to popular culture, has been inadequate for decades, at least outside France. In order to assess the extent to which people actually appreciate diverse cultural products simultaneously, we will take a closer look at the way in which Dutch people combine elements from highbrow and popular culture. To what extent do members of the higher-status groups display "exclusive" highbrow tastes and which typical combinations of genres can be found in different groups?

Omnivores and Univores

Peterson and Simkus (1992) have studied cultural repertoires in the U.S. by examining musical preferences. They find that the higher (occupational) status groups, *as a group* — that is, at the aggregate level — tend to appreciate more musical genres than the lower-status groups. Based on these findings, Peterson and Simkus propose conceiving of the domain of tastes not as a small column with elite taste at the top and popular taste at the bottom, but rather as a reverse pyramid. The wide base at the top represents the broad taste (the relatively large number of genres appreciated) of members of the higher-status groups, whereas the apex at the bottom represents the restricted, univorous taste of the lower-status groups. Besides attempting to provide a “broader” view of patterns of cultural consumption, Peterson and his collaborators also suppose that this image of a reverse pyramid illustrates a trend in cultural hierarchization, which, they argue, is shifting from a column with elite culture versus mass culture as the extremes to a pyramidal structure with omnivores and univores as the opposites. Peterson and Kern (1996) show that, between 1982 and 1992, individuals with a taste for classical musical genres have indeed learned to appreciate more middlebrow and lowbrow genres as well.

The aggregated results obtained by Peterson and Simkus (1992) cannot be directly translated to the individual level (e.g., Jepperson & Swidler 1994; Longhurst & Savage 1996). The results are nevertheless interpreted in that manner. One reason for this interpretation is the idea that persons from the higher-status groups have a broader musical taste due to the fact that they have a broader (more diverse) social network. As people interact more frequently with persons from different social circles, they would benefit more from the ability to display *passing knowledge* (Peterson 1992:255) regarding matters that produce social approval in each of those circles. People who feel at ease in different social settings have acquired a competence that is highly valued in the U.S. Bryson (1996) labeled this competence *multicultural capital*. Robinson (1993) shows that those with higher education express a greater preference for all types of music, with the exception of country music. Thus, Peterson’s interpretation of his aggregate results is probably valid to a considerable extent, although it may not suffice to explain the entire difference found between status groups, as will be argued below.

Peterson also relates the omnivore taste to the phenomenon of social mobility. Many mobile persons adhere at least in part to the cultural preferences and habits from their past. This is one of the reasons that the superiority of the traditional high arts is increasingly contested and that the traditional “snobbish” cultural pattern seems to evanesce (Featherstone 1991). Yet mobility also contributes to a compositional effect, which may help explain the differences between status groups observed by Peterson, as is shown by Van Eijck (1999). Because most social mobility that took place during the last decades has been upward, especially the members of the higher-status groups are increasingly recruited from different social strata,

resulting in a relatively high degree of sociocultural heterogeneity. Therefore, the diversity of tastes among the higher-status groups may have come about as the sum of either omnivorous individual tastes or diversity of tastes at the group level (or both). If the former is the case, we will find more omnivores within the higher-status groups. If the latter is true, higher-status groups will not necessarily contain more omnivores, because Peterson's findings may reflect diversity of tastes between the members of these groups only in the aggregate.

It can be argued that Peterson's notion of passing knowledge is based on Bourdieu's homology thesis. It is assumed that genres are more or less representative of specific social milieus and that people get to know and appreciate types of music by means of going around in the milieus that are, by way of homology, linked to these styles of music. But it is exactly the assumption of this homologous relationship that has been criticized by many scholars (Frith 1996; Frow 1995). A broad spectrum of cultural products has become available to most of us through mass media, so familiarity with cultural products does not imply familiarity with the cultures from which they (supposedly) sprang. Therefore, musical taste cannot be explained as a consequence of belonging, or wanting to belong, to the social context to which it is supposed to be linked, or in which it is being produced. It is more likely that passing knowledge of music is acquired mainly through mass media and perhaps becomes useful in more or less unfamiliar social environments. Given the fact that almost anything is available to anybody,¹ the concept of homology may still be useful in understanding the relation between social and cultural positions, but we can no longer assume that cultural products are linked to one specific social milieu and vice versa. Homology is a structuralist concept that does not dictate the content of what is being preferred by whom. The association between class position and cultural taste is changing, but as long as we are able to discern specific taste patterns (even an omnivorous one) within specific social groups, homology is at work, although the organizing principles determining *what* is appreciated by whom may have undergone a transformation. Since Peterson's results do not tell us much about actual differences in individual patterns of taste between status groups, we attempt to provide an answer to this question by analyzing comparable data for the Netherlands.

Patterns of Cultural Consumption

Although Peterson (1983) ardently argued for a thorough and ongoing study of *patterns of cultural choice*, the omnivore-univore thesis has little to say about the way in which consumers combine cultural products. Accepting that a somewhat broader taste may well be a characteristic of members of the higher-status groups, we still expect to find them focusing on a limited number of genres (the actual favorites), with a supplementary number of genres that are also liked but are less

central to one's musical taste. Note that we do not assume that appreciating several different genres in itself is something peculiar or limited to the higher-status groups. Each more or less personal taste can exist only if it combines elements of different styles (Simmel 1997a). Therefore, a second goal of this article concerns actual taste *patterns*. We will attempt to take Peterson's analysis one step further by linking the question who likes *how many* genres to who likes *which* genres. We argue that these issues need to be taken up simultaneously in order to understand cultural tastes. We thus hope to unravel which organizing principles are at work in the formation of cultural taste patterns.

The problem that is raised by addressing the cultural omnivore lies in what combinatorial logic might underlie their musical preference. Simmel (1997b) and Longhurst and Savage (1996) point at the fact that lifestyles that are highly consistent (in terms of dual structuring principles such as highbrow versus lowbrow) do not reflect people's "natural" longing for diversity and are therefore deliberate cultural constructions. According to Simmel (1997b:187): "we seek calm devotion to people and things just as much as energetic self-assertion against them both." Longhurst and Savage (1996) argue that there are two rather different types of consumer action: that geared toward impressing others and that directed at reassuring oneself. Since such modes, or habituses, have no distinct occupational bases (contrary to Bourdieu's argument), they may exist in tension with each other within the individual. Thus, detached reflection and emotional immersion are not modes of action and perception that necessarily differentiate between people — on the principle that people are largely inclined to engage in only one of these approaches to the world. Rather, these are ways of dealing with the world that are in principle open to most of us. As Frith (1991) puts it: academics have bodies and "the people" have minds.

Yet there seem to be differences in the degree to which people deploy several of their faculties as a cultural consumer. Empirical descriptions of cultural consumers who cross traditional boundaries are provided by Savage et al. (1992), Schulze (1995), and Wynne and O'Connor (1998). This category of consumers has been labeled the new middle class. This class is thought to consist of younger, well-educated, often upwardly mobile persons whose lifestyles might be characterized as postmodern because their consumption patterns encompass leisure activities and preferences that seem incompatible from a traditionalist point of view, such as visiting amusement parks *and* museums or listening to classical *and* pop music. Peterson's locating of the omnivores is far less specific, referring to all higher-status groups. The new middle class constitutes only a fraction of these groups.

Bourdieu's equivalent of the new middle class would be the new petite bourgeoisie. However, whereas Bourdieu claims that the new petite bourgeoisie turn the ethic of duty into an ethic of fun as a strategy in their struggle for legitimacy, Wynne and O'Connor (1998) suggest that this lifestyle is neither designed in order to bring cultural distinction nor based on a specific social position. The self may

be presented through cultural consumption, but the cultural consumption pattern of the new middle class is not so much a matter of competence as a matter of sociability and openness. Schulze (1995) posits self-realization as the driving motive behind the cultural behavior of a similar class that he calls the *Selbstverwirklichungsmilieu*. Members of this class engage in pop culture and highbrow culture (including avant-garde) while keeping clear of the taste of the "common folks" (folk music, quiz shows, party games). These authors seem to disagree on the extent to which status motives play a role because it is unclear which taste pattern actually yields status. The increasing differentiation within the higher-status groups at least implies a growing diversity of tastes among the successful and thus a blurrier association between taste and (socioeconomic) status.

Schulze distinguishes three "schemes"; highbrow, pop, and folk. These correspond with the three discourses discerned by Frith (1990): art, pop, and folk. These discourses do not refer to separate art worlds or class attitudes but are at play across cultural practices and can therefore work together in shaping taste patterns. Transcendence is the ideal of cultural experience in the art discourse, which is infused by the Kantian aesthetic described extensively by Bourdieu (1984). The pop discourse is related to fun as a cultural experience, offering routinized but relatively intense pleasure and emotional gratification. The folk discourse, finally, is about integration, providing a means of placement. These three discourses or schemes may be considered as organizing principles in the domain of cultural consumption because they describe different ways of appropriating cultural products, or different types of experience that people may seek. We therefore consider them as underlying principles structuring patterns of musical taste.

Although different musical genres clearly satisfy different cultural "needs," it is not easy to link every single genre to only one of the above-mentioned discourses. Just as cultural consumers may combine elements of the above-mentioned discourses, so too can cultural products incorporate aspects of more than one discourse. Nevertheless, we believe that it is possible, at a more general level, to link clusters of genres (taste patterns or "metagenres") to (combinations of) discourses. Whereas some people may largely restrict themselves to a single discourse (the cultural "snob," the pop-minded adolescent, or the person who confines himself or herself to sentimental Dutch songs), others may combine discourses in more or less predictable ways. For example, according to Schulze the members of the new middle class are likely to combine pop with classical music or jazz (the latter being in itself a genre that can be argued to evoke both excitement and transcendence). This implies that we expect to find at least three clusters of genres, or taste patterns, that are more or less one-dimensional as well as a group combining elements of highbrow and pop. This latter group's socioeconomic profile will resemble what has been labeled the new middle class, rather than representing the higher-status groups in general, as Peterson would expect. Among the older members of the higher-status groups, we expect to find that a so-called snobbish

(exclusively highbrow) taste pattern remains. The pop discourse is likely to prevail among younger respondents with low or intermediate schooling levels, whereas the folk discourse will dominate the taste of the older respondents from lower-status groups.

Hypotheses

A number of hypotheses are deduced from the above considerations, concerning both the scope and the content of musical taste patterns. First, we expect to find in the Netherlands, as in the U.S., differences between status groups in the scope of their musical repertoire. It is predicted that more educated persons and those with a higher occupational status will be more omnivorous than persons with less schooling and lower occupational statuses.

Hypothesis 1: Level of education and occupational status are positively related to the number of musical genres a person appreciates.

If, as Peterson argues, the ability to display passing knowledge is indeed crucial, it is to be expected that status groups will differ most markedly in the number of genres that are appreciated aside from the actual favorites. The difference in the number of favorite genres will be less notable.

Hypothesis 2: Status groups will differ more with respect to the number of genres that are listened to “now and then” than the number of genres that are listened to “often.”

Third, it is expected that we can distinguish patterns of cultural choice that are based on (combinations of) three cultural discourses. The classical genres (symphonic music, opera, chamber music) will be appreciated mostly by older members of the higher-status groups whose tastes are organized around the highbrow discourse. Popular genres (pop music, disco, top 40) will make up the repertoire of young respondents without higher education (pop discourse), and the common genres (sentimental Dutch songs, folk, blues, music for accordion, etc.) to older members of the lower-status groups (folk discourse). We expect to find a highly educated, relatively young audience that combines elements of the pop and the highbrow discourse.

Hypothesis 3: Musical genres cluster into taste patterns according to a specific combinatorial logic. We expect to find a taste pattern organized around each of the discourses — that is, a folk pattern, a highbrow pattern, and a pop pattern — as well as a taste pattern displaying a combination of the latter two.

We finally expect that musical preferences are not only conditional upon sociodemographic characteristics but also upon a person's attitude toward highbrow culture in general (cultural capital à la Bourdieu) and upon active musical participation, which is operationalized as playing a musical instrument or singing.

These variables are therefore incorporated in the model used for the prediction of patterns of genre preferences even if no specific hypotheses are formulated with respect to their effects. Thus, the analysis of the data consists of two distinct parts. First, we will investigate differences between status groups in the numbers of appreciated genres in order to test Peterson's omnivore-univore thesis. Next, we will address the question of the extent to which different genres cluster into specific patterns. We expect to demonstrate that a difference in the breadth of tastes is not the only, or most salient, possible difference in taste between status groups. We expect to gain more insight from asking who prefers *what* than from who prefers *how much*.

Data

The data set to be used is *Cultuurparticipatie van de Nederlandse Bevolking, 1987* ("cultural participation of the Dutch population"; Intomart 1987). These data are gathered from a representative sample of the Dutch population aged 12 and over. Information was obtained from 4,251 respondents on, among other things, their leisure activities, cultural participation, and media use. For our analyses, only the information from the questionnaires filled out by respondents aged 25 and over ($N = 3,178$) are incorporated, so as to make sure that all respondents had finished their educational careers at the time the survey was conducted.

The independent variables are gender, age, level of education, occupation, affinity with highbrow culture, and active musical participation. See the appendix for a brief description of these variables. The dependent variables refer to genre preferences. Respondents were asked to indicate how often they listened to each of thirteen (combinations of) genres:

(1) chamber music; (2) symphonic music; (3) opera; (4) improvised music or jazz; (5) blues, Dixieland, etc. (6) pop, rock, reggae, new wave² (7) top 40, disco; (8) folk; (9) operetta; (10) spiritual music, gospel, psalms, choirs; (11) sentimental Dutch songs, chansons, popular songs (schmaltzy); (12) music for mandolin, accordion, or guitar; (13) brass band

For each genre, respondents could indicate whether they listened to it "often" (1), "every now and then" (2), or "seldom or never" (3).

Results

CULTURAL BOUNDARIES

Before the actual hypotheses are tested, an overview of the thirteen genres is offered to show to what extent a preference for each of these covaries with the status indicators "occupation" and "level of education." For each category of occupation

and education, Table 1 displays the percentage of respondents who listen to a certain genre "every now and then" or "often."

For the first five genres, chamber music to blues, we see the percentage of listeners increase with increasing levels of education and with higher occupational status. The differences between categories are more marked for schooling levels than for levels of occupation. Listening to pop/rock and top 40/disco is not systematically related to education or occupation. For folk to brass bands, we see the appreciation decline as the level of education increases. The tendency with these two genres is much less clear for occupational groups.

Table 1 also shows the average proportion of lovers for each of the genres. It is remarkable that symphonic music, a "highbrow" genre, has a large audience; more than 18% of the respondents indicate that they listen to this classical genre. This proportion is only superseded by the two mainstream genres pop/rock (23.9%) and top 40/disco (29.0%) and by sentimental songs or chansons (38.8%). The highbrow or lowbrow status attributed to genres does not very much help us predict the magnitude of its audience. Rather, complexity seems to characterize the result. The mainstream genres and the sentimental songs, styles characterized by their relative musical simplicity or accessibility, have the largest following. Jazz, on the other hand, the genre that is least suitable to sing along with, since it uses very complex chords and sequences and puts much emphasis on virtuosity, has the smallest number of fans (9.4%).

The average levels of education and occupation of the listeners (lower rows of Table 1) show a downward tendency when the genres are glanced through from left to right. Exceptions are jazz and blues/Dixieland, which attract a more educated audience than opera. Fanciers of jazz and blues have a relatively high schooling level in comparison to their occupational status, since average levels of occupational status do decline consistently from left to right. Thus, in addition to the above observation that educational differentiation matters more than occupational differentiation, genres are also ordered somewhat differently according to the status dimension used. This implies that Peterson's one-dimensional operationalization of status (only occupational status) is insufficient to map musical tastes.

Table 1 shows that the preference for genres differs between status groups and that this difference more or less parallels expectations based on the "legitimacy" of genres. In Table 2, it will be examined to what extent the breadth of musical tastes, or the degree of so-called omnivorousness, is also related to occupation and schooling level.

OMNIVORES AND UNIVORES

The extent to which people are omnivorous can be operationalized in a number of ways. We have examined how status groups differ in the number of genres to which they listen "frequently" (the favorites), the number of genres to which they

TABLE 1: Proportions of Lovers of Each of the Musical Genres by Occupational Status and Level of Education

	Genres												
	Symphonic Music	Chamber Music	Opera	Jazz/ Improv- ised	Blues/ Dixie- land	Pop/ Rock	Top 40/ Disco	Folk	Operetta	Gospel/ Spirit'	Chanson/ Senti- mental	Accor- dion/ Guitar	Brass Band
Occupational groups													
Unskilled manual labor	3.3	5.4	8.8	6.3	9.7	24.3	36.8	12.5	14.6	10.9	50.0	12.9	17.1
Skilled manual labor	3.1	10.5	8.0	9.5	13.8	34.9	42.2	11.8	13.8	9.6	44.3	16.9	15.1
Lower employee	10.9	18.3	11.3	9.4	13.9	28.5	33.8	14.1	18.0	9.9	40.1	12.1	12.6
Intermediate employee	14.9	24.1	13.2	11.3	16.2	25.9	25.7	9.8	13.9	11.7	31.4	8.3	8.6
Higher employee	28.8	40.2	17.4	16.5	17.6	16.5	12.0	10.6	16.7	14.4	21.8	14.4	11.4
Supervisor	18.8	31.3	18.1	15.2	16.6	16.6	20.0	8.3	21.0	14.6	31.9	9.7	13.8
Educational levels													
Primary education	4.3	6.8	13.1	2.7	4.9	8.2	16.5	14.6	22.5	19.7	45.9	18.6	22.4
Junior vocational training	4.8	8.0	10.7	5.9	10.0	29.3	41.6	12.1	17.5	13.8	49.6	13.0	17.3
Junior general secondary	8.5	16.5	13.0	12.0	17.1	26.3	31.3	10.9	20.2	11.2	39.5	8.5	11.8
Senior vocational training	9.8	19.1	10.2	9.6	14.0	28.4	34.1	10.9	15.3	11.8	37.0	9.4	9.2
Senior general secondary	15.1	27.4	9.8	13.7	20.1	33.3	30.2	10.0	12.1	8.6	35.3	9.0	4.7
Vocational colleges	23.0	35.9	15.7	15.0	14.9	22.3	20.4	8.8	12.4	10.5	22.0	7.4	5.7
University and higher	36.8	48.5	21.1	19.3	19.9	22.2	10.5	8.2	11.8	11.1	13.5	5.3	4.7
Average proportion lovers	11.0	18.1	12.6	9.4	12.8	23.9	29.0	11.4	17.1	13.1	38.8	11.2	12.9
Average occup. category	4.02	3.90	3.63	3.62	3.49	3.13	2.97	3.16	3.38	3.46	3.04	3.09	3.08
Average level of education	4.65	4.50	3.51	4.18	3.86	3.52	3.12	3.02	2.95	2.94	2.84	2.73	2.47

Source: Intomart/WVC 1987

TABLE 2: Number of Genres Respondents Listen to and Occupational Status and Level of Education

Education	A	B	C	Occupation	A	B	C
	Genres at Least	Genres Now	Cate- gories+		Genres Least	Genres Often	Cate- gories+
	Often	and Then			Often	and Then	gories+
Primary	1.99	5.05	1.70	Unskilled manual	2.12	5.19	1.35
Jr. voc. train.	2.33	5.46	1.39	Skilled manual	2.33	5.38	1.38
Jr. gen. sec.	2.26	5.72	1.37	Lower employee	2.32	5.74	1.39
Sr. voc. train.	2.18	5.67	1.33	Intermediate emp.	2.14	5.87	1.29
Sr. gen. sec.	2.28	5.83	1.36	Higher employee	2.35	6.24	1.39
Voc. colleges	2.12	6.07	1.32	Supervisor	2.34	5.42	1.33
University	2.34	6.05	1.30				
Eta	0.06	0.12**	0.08		0.05	0.11**	0.05

Source: Intomart/WVC 1987

+ The categories are: highbrow (chamber music, classical music, opera, and jazz), middlebrow (blues/dixieland, pop/rock, top 40/disco, chanson/sentimental song) and lowbrow (folk, gospel/spiritual, accordion/guitar/mandolin, operetta, brass band).

* p < .01 ** p < .001

listen at least “every now and then” (about which one has at least some passing knowledge), and the number of categories (high/middle/low) from which the favorite genres were picked.

The number of genres to which people listen frequently averages two or three (see Table 2, column A). The educational and occupational groups do not differ significantly in the magnitude of their repertoires of favorites. We therefore cannot conclude that the members of the higher-status groups actually have more favorite genres than members of the lower-status groups. Yet, if we add the genres that respondents listen to “every now and then” to assess the scope of their musical tastes, we do find a significant status difference (see Table 2, column B). The higher a person’s schooling level, the larger the number of genres he or she appreciates. Something similar is true for the occupational status, although the association between this status dimension and the number of genres is not as linear due to the supervisor category, the status of which is difficult to adjudge. But it does seem clear that social status is positively related to a more omnivorous musical taste.

Because column B refers only to the *number* of genres a person appreciates, irrespective of the degree to which these genres are different, column C shows the number of categories (high/middle/low) from which these genres are selected.³

TABLE 3: Factor Structure of Musical Tastes

	Factor			
	1 Folk	2 Highbrow	3 Pop	4 New Omnivore
Chamber music		1.234 (.453)		.344 (.166)
Symphonic music		1.346 (.495)		.554 (.267)
Opera	.530 (.257)	1.000 ^a (.368)		.236 (.114)
Jazz		-.239 (-.088)		1.000 ^a (.483)
Blues/dixieland	.205 (.099)	-.613 (-.225)		1.280 (.618)
Pop/rock/reggae/new wave		-.458 (-.168)	.866 (.616)	.302 (.146)
Top 40/disco	.272 (.132)	-.541 (-.199)	1.000 ^a (.711)	
Folk	.634 (.307)	.163 (.060)		.318 (.153)
Operetta	.927 (.449)	.614 (.226)		.226 (.109)
Gospel/spiritual/psalm	.441 (.213)	.392 (.144)	-.112 (-.080)	
Chanson/sentimental song	.767 (.371)	-.310 (-.114)	.280 (.199)	.081 (.039)
Accordion/guitar/mandolin	.779 (.377)		.051 (.036)	.287 (.139)
Brass band	1.000 ^a (.484)			.096 (.046)

Note: Standardized loadings between brackets.

Source: Intomart/WVC 1987

^a Fixed parameter

These results make clear that differences in the number of genres appreciated do not necessarily mean that tastes differ in breadth or diversity among status groups. This may indicate that members of the higher-status groups allow their tastes to expand only within certain delimitations, or that everybody cares equally much (or little) about the status or legitimacy of the genres she or he prefers. We will return to this issue when the results regarding patterns of tastes are discussed. The observation that members of the higher-status groups do, nevertheless, appreciate a larger number of genres confirms hypotheses 1 and 2. When passing knowledge is included, the higher-status groups have a broader, or at least more extensive, repertoire than the lower-status groups. Yet it would be an exaggeration to label members of the higher-status and lower-status groups as omnivores and univores respectively. Across all status groups, the number of appreciated genres varies roughly between five and six, which is not spectacular. But let us now try to find out who these so-called omnivores are, considering the expected heterogeneity within the higher-status groups.

PATTERNS OF MUSICAL TASTES

In order to answer the question whether patterns of musical tastes reflect the combinatorial logic of the three discourses distinguished above, we will now move to Table 3. What concerns us here is the question whether, using factor analysis, it is possible to identify interpretable clusters of genres and, subsequently, whether these clusters can be linked to sociodemographic characteristics and how much explanatory power such an analysis has. For this purpose, a linear structural model was estimated that includes the independent and intermediating variables plus a number of latent factors representing the musical taste patterns.

As shown in Table 3, four musical factors could be distinguished. These are incorporated into a path model, the structure of which can be inferred from Table 4. Only significant effects were maintained in the final model. First, the musical patterns will be discussed. These are shown in Table 3.⁴ Above each column in Table 3, we put a label to indicate what each factor represents. For each factor, the loading of one genre was fixed at value 1 in order to scale the latent factors. This implies that all other loadings from the same column reflect the weight of the genres relative to the weight of the genre that was fixed at 1. This common procedure does not affect the factor solution (Bollen 1989:239-40).

The genres music for accordion/mandolin/guitar, brass band, sentimental Dutch songs, and operetta are most typical of factor 1. These are the four genres for which the average audience levels of occupation and education are lowest, as can be seen in Table 1. These listeners do not display an evident dislike for any genre, although it is clear that chamber music and symphonic music (the most abstract classical genres), as well as jazz and pop/rock (the more "tempestuous" genres) do not appeal to them. This image nicely suits the aesthetic orientation of

TABLE 4: Parameters Belonging to the Path Model for Musical Preferences

Independent Variables	Level of Education	Occup. Status	Musically Active	High-brow Culture	Dependent Variables			
					1 Folk	2 Highbrow	3 Pop	4 New Omnivore
Gender (female)	-0.521 (0.062)	-0.246 (0.042)	0.030 (0.015)	1.313 (0.119)		0.054 (0.013)		-0.065 (0.018)
Age	-0.033 (0.002)	0.019 (0.001)	-0.002 (0.000)	0.039 (0.004)	0.012 (0.001)	0.007 (0.000)	-0.027 (0.001)	-0.002 (0.001)
Level of education		0.419 (0.012)	0.044 (0.004)	1.078 (0.034)	-0.084 (0.007)	0.044 (0.005)	-0.017 (0.008)	0.049 (0.007)
Occupational status						-0.019 (0.008)		
Being musically active				1.495 (0.144)	0.111 (0.022)	0.083 (0.017)	-0.092 (0.030)	0.090 (0.022)
Affinity with highbrow culture					0.007 (0.003)	0.039 (0.003)		0.048 (0.004)
R ² (percent)	11	29	5	29	34	40	37	30
Model fit:								
df = 106								
$\chi^2 = 1212.28$								
Adjusted goodness of fit index = 0.92								
(N = 3,160; Critical N = 367)								

Note: Only significant effects are incorporated in the model and depicted above.
 Source: Intomart/WVC 1987

the folk scheme (Schulze 1995). Being both conservative and averse to any sort of cultural or intellectual pretension, it is probably most popular among older respondents with relatively little schooling. Frith (1990) adds that a longing for purity and tradition is central to the folk discourse. Because these adjectives are all applicable to the core genres of factor 1, we have labeled this factor folk.

The second factor ("highbrow") represents the preference for traditional highbrow culture; witness the high factor loadings of chamber music, symphonic music and opera. Operetta loads high as well.⁵ We see some aversion toward pop, top 40, blues, and sentimental Dutch songs. This pattern fits the more educated cultural snob who is applied to the arts while avoiding everything corny. The core musical genres are typically performed in a formal setting by highly trained,

credentialed musicians. Both the audience and the performing artists have a scholarly approach to “their” music.

Pop/rock and top 40 are the genres that characterize the third factor, labeled pop. Sentimental songs are appreciated only slightly, while the other genres leave this audience cold. We suppose that the cluster belonging to factor 3 is popular among younger (although 25 and older) respondents with relatively little education. Their musical interest is rather narrow.

Finally, the fourth factor is most strongly characterized by the high loadings of jazz and blues/Dixieland, two genres that also occupied separate positions in Table 1. In addition, there is some affinity with chamber music, symphonic music, pop/rock, and folk. As with factor 1, negative factor loadings are absent, which points toward a certain degree of openness or tolerance. We can imagine that this factor represents the taste of a segment of the cultural elite that values authenticity (blues, folk, rock) and instrumental tours de force (jazz, symphonic music, chamber music). The taste of this group resembles that of Schulze’s adherents of self-realization, where classical music is appreciated alongside pop and rock, but actually combines elements of all three discourses rather than just pop and highbrow (top 40/disco being unpopular). We have labeled this factor new omnivore. Given that all three discourses (including folk) play a role here, one might argue that the new middle class is relatively indifferent to status claims (Wynne & O’Connor 1998). But it may also be that the conventional high-status discourse is being replaced by a new one, as Peterson (1990) argues when he speaks of the possible advent of “world music.”

The factor analysis shows that there is a lot more to be said about musical tastes besides the observation that they may be divided into repertoires that differ in scope or breadth. Specific clusters of genres can be discerned that largely follow the combinatorial logic of the three main discourses. This leads to the question of whether the taste patterns we have found can be coupled to recognizable status groups, as we more or less supposed above. For an answer to this question, we move to Table 4.

We will start by briefly discussing the relations between the exogenous and the intermediately variables. Women are more often musically active than men and also more interested in legitimate culture. Older respondents are on average less actively involved in music as amateur singers or instrumentalists but participate more in legitimate culture. Level of education has a positive impact on both musical activity and cultural participation. Furthermore, there is a positive relation between the latter two variables. This association has been modeled as an effect of musical activity on participation in legitimate culture, but actually the direction of this effect is not clear.⁶

Let us now look at the direct effects of the variables on the musical factors in order to characterize the respondents associated with each of the clusters.⁷ As could be expected, the folk factor is mostly appreciated by older respondents with little

schooling and, to a lesser extent, low occupational statuses. Singing or playing an instrument increases the chance of being an enthusiast for these genres. The impact of (passive) participation in legitimate culture is small but significantly positive.

The profile of those obtaining high scores on the highbrow factor does not contain any big surprises either. Women are known to be more active in most areas of legitimate culture and, as Table 4 shows, this is also true of classical music. In addition, the likelihood that a person enjoys classical music increases somewhat with age and strongly with level of education. The occupational group to which one belongs has no impact (not even if we change the order of the occupational categories in order to optimize scaling). Active musical participation enhances the interest in classical music (or vice versa) and participation in other cultural domains is also strongly positively related to being a lover of classical music.

The so-called pop-factor turns out to be largely a youth-factor, given the strong negative effect of age. The love of pop, top 40, and other genres occupying the charts does diminish somewhat as a person's schooling level increases. There is no additional differentiation with respect to gender, occupation, or interest in legitimate culture. Musical activity has a negative impact on appreciating these genres. The involved musical enthusiast, who also sings or plays an instrument, apparently wants to inquire beyond what is presented to her or him in large quantities by the media.

The fourth factor, new omnivore, mainly arouses male interest. Age is of minor importance, but level of education has a strong positive effect. Occupation again makes no difference. Being an amateur musician is positively related to a preference for blues and jazz, which is not surprising since these genres strongly emphasize instrumental technique and virtuoso solo playing. Most striking is the very strong positive impact of the interest in legitimate culture. Lovers of jazz and blues are also very active in other cultural domains. This supports the assumption that we are dealing here with a well-educated social segment that is interested in a broad range of cultural domains.

The variance in the scores on the four musical factors can be explained for at least 30% (factor 4) and at most 40% (factor 2) if we use the path model from Table 4. These high proportions indicate that musical taste patterns are predictable to a considerable degree. Given that Frith's discourses are based on the work of Howard Becker and Bourdieu, it is even possible to label our taste patterns in terms of Bourdieu's representation of the cultural field. We have roughly found low-brows (factor 1), and a dominant (factor 2) and dominated (factor 4) fraction of the dominant class. Factor 3 represents commercial pop culture, or majority culture. This similarity between Frith's discourses, Schulze's schemes, and Bourdieu's class-based cultures is due to the fact that tastes often reflect a single scheme or discourse and thus do not come about as a mixture of potentially conflicting habituses. Declassification does not seem to have eroded cultural boundaries. More or less homogeneous, recognizable patterns of taste can still be discerned.

The four taste factors we have found differ not only in content, but also in scope. Only four genres load positively on the pop factor, which reflects the rather narrow musical interest of pop fans, who are indifferent to most genres. Six genres load positively on the highbrow factor, nine on the folk factor, and eleven on the new omnivore factor. The lovers of classical music seem to be the most exclusive party, considering that five genres load negatively on this factor and are thus actually disliked. Those scoring highest on the new omnivore factor combine the most diverse genres. The taste represented by the folk factor also encompasses relatively many genres, but these are less diverging from the viewpoint of legitimacy; we see a strong emphasis on the lower half of Table 3. The observation that both the highbrow and the new omnivore factor are appreciated mostly among the higher-status groups may help explain why we do not find impressive differences in numbers of genres between status groups. The higher-status groups consist of both very exclusive, "snobbish" respondents liking (nothing but) classical music, and of omnivorous respondents with a taste for the many genres related to factor 4. Making this additional distinction within the higher-status groups according to patterns of taste yields a picture that makes a lot more sense, as it takes into account the fact that especially the higher-status groups are likely to be highly heterogeneous. Counting genres and taking their average numbers, as we did in Table 2, leaves actual tastes, the scope of which is closely related to the content, out of the picture.

Conclusions and Discussion

In conclusion, we want to argue that it is possible, and very instructive, to discern specific musical taste patterns that reflect an elementary combinatorial logic of culture. There is still a lot to be said about the content of musical taste patterns, and about the relation between breadth and content. Differences in breadth of musical taste become sociologically meaningful only if they are coupled to the constellation of genres that characterizes the omnivore taste and to the type of respondents that display this taste.

The factors or clusters found can be interpreted in a straightforward manner. We have found two clusters that are popular among the highly educated, where one cluster represents a liking for classical legitimate genres (the dominant fraction of the dominant class) and the other is broad and built around genres (jazz, blues) that have gained legitimacy over the last few decades without having become chic or classy (the dominated fraction of the dominant class or the new middle class). In addition, we found a folk factor, characterized by a very strong negative effect of level of education, and a pop factor that is preferred by younger respondents. These tastes, or factors, differ both in breadth and in content, and we argue that studying patterns has the advantage that it allows us to take these two aspects into account simultaneously. Many people's tastes have a single discourse as their core

structuring principle, but we also found a class fraction whose taste reflects a combination of all three discourses distinguished in the literature.

The difference in the degree to which status groups may be considered omnivorous is, as predicted, only significant as far as *passing knowledge* is concerned and not when only the really favorite genres are considered. In practice, this difference in breadth of tastes is quite small. We wonder to what extent this difference, at the individual level, is bigger in the U.S. Peterson and Kern's (1996) highbrow lovers in 1992 liked on average 2.23 lowbrow genres and "others" 2.07. For middlebrow genres, these numbers are 2.12 and 1.12, respectively. In relative terms this difference is large, but the average difference is only one genre. Our own data show differences in breadth of tastes that are only just significant, whereas the effects of the sociodemographic and intermediate variables on cultural patterns are strong, leading to high proportions of explained variance for the musical taste factors.

Contrary to what Peterson and his collaborators suppose, level of education turns out to be a better predictor of musical tastes than occupational status. It must, however, be noted that occupation could not be operationalized optimally in this study. But even if we take this into account, it is clear that leaving out education cannot be justified by our results. Nevertheless, Peterson and Simkus consider occupational status to be the single most salient determinant of musical taste patterns (1992:166-67 and note 9). They argue that, in order to appreciate its relevance, one has to estimate uncontrolled effects of occupational status rather than net effects. Because schooling level and income are thought to culminate in a person's occupational status, controlling for education and income is thought to lead to an underestimation of the actual relevance of occupation. Yet we believe that, if the effect of occupation disappears after controlling for other status characteristics, the contention that the occupational variable does not get a fair chance to show its actual impact is remarkable. One could easily reverse the argument by reasoning that the association between occupational status and musical taste is spurious because both variables are determined by schooling level. We favor the latter interpretation for our results, because occupational status can add explanatory power to a model including educational level only if it encompasses noneducational elements that matter in explaining musical taste. In any case, we argue for a multivariate analysis of cultural tastes. By concentrating on only one status dimension, one leaves out not only education or occupation but also age. This further contributes to an incomplete view on musical tastes, because this variable takes care of a taste factor of its own. We expect this variable to have become even more important as of the 1990s, given the rapid emergence of bands gainfully tapping into the teen pop market (e.g., 'N Sync, Britney Spears, Boyzone, Spice Girls).

Omnivorousness does not imply that people are equally apt to like everything, but that the choice made by a specific group encompasses more genres than the

choice of another group. Therefore, just as the concept “postmodern lifestyle” does not mean very much unless it can somehow be positioned in the social world (Featherstone 1991), so the idea of the “omnivorous lifestyle” is not too informative if it cannot be made more specific or positioned socially. High status alone does not tell the whole story. The highly educated highbrow lovers are, as Table 3 shows, in fact a rather exclusive group, drawing clear boundaries between what is beautiful and what is ugly. The broader taste of the higher-status groups found in Table 2 can be attributed entirely to a rather omnivorous subgroup (dominated fraction of the dominant class) within the class of higher educated persons, which does more or less live up to the expectations of Peterson and his collaborators. By coupling the breadth of taste patterns to a one-dimensional division of status groups from high to low, such essential distinctions within groups with comparable statuses are disregarded.

The omnivorous group that emerged from our analysis is remarkably similar to what others describe as the new middle class. The omnivore taste and the postmodern lifestyle seem to refer to the same phenomenon. Our data further support this idea by showing that the musical omnivores are also very active in the field of legitimate culture. Whereas the older persons with high schooling levels still prefer the classical genres, this omnivorous group, consisting of younger respondents, displays a broad cultural repertoire. We believe that this is not (just) an age effect, but rather indicative of a trend. In a recent report, the Social and Cultural Planning Bureau of the Netherlands (1998:727-30) discusses this phenomenon in terms of a generation that is “programmed differently” when it comes to culture. The *Bildungsideal* of cultural education does not appeal to a generation for whom the difference between elite culture and pop culture has little meaning. In that case, knowing whether a person loves symphonic music does not mean very much. Rather, what matters is to find out whether this love is combined with an appreciation for opera or jazz. Studying tastes is probably increasingly less informative if one does not assess the full breadth of a person’s taste (the cultural consumption pattern) because it is more and more the specific combination of styles of genres that tells us what type of cultural consumer we are dealing with. If tastes cannot be deduced from a single status dimension through homologous reasoning, we will have to look at the combinatorial logic by which tastes are structured in order to learn more about the way in which cultural boundaries are put to work.

APPENDIX: Independent Variables

The following independent variables were used in our analyses:

Gender: This variable was coded "1" for men ($n = 1,380$) and "2" for women ($n = 1,798$).

Level of education: Coded in seven categories: (1) primary education ($n = 560$); (2) junior vocational training ($n = 794$); (3) junior general secondary education ($n = 534$); (4) senior vocational training ($n = 460$); (5) senior general secondary and preuniversity education ($n = 235$); (6) vocational colleges ($n = 234$); (7) university ($n = 171$).

Occupational status: This variable was initially divided into seven categories: (1) unskilled manual labor ($n = 240$); (2) skilled manual labor ($n = 325$); (3) lower white-collar employee ($n = 406$); (4) intermediate white-collar employee ($n = 700$); (5) higher white-collar employee ($n = 134$); (6) supervisor over at most nine subordinates ($n = 118$); (7) supervisor over at least ten subordinates ($n = 27$). Because the seventh category included very few respondents, categories six and seven were combined into a single supervisor category.

Active participation in music denotes whether respondents play any type of keyboard, strings, strumming instrument, wind instrument or percussion, or whether they sing. Respondents answering "yes" to at least one of these items ($n = 681$) received score 1, all others received score 0. Note that we do not distinguish between different instruments, even though it will be clear that playing one instrument evidences a preference or other genres than playing another.

Affinity with highbrow culture: This is a scale consisting of eight items with respect to highbrow culture ($\alpha = 0.77$). Five items concern an interest in the arts (visual arts, dance, opera or musical theater, plays, literature) and three items measure actual cultural participation (attending performances of music, Dance, or theater, visiting museums and exhibitions, and visiting architectural objects).

Notes

1. In passing, Christenson and Peterson (1988) show that the average percentage of respondents (undergraduates) that is familiar with each of 26 popular music categories lies above 90%. Acquiring knowledge of popular musical styles through media exposure seems virtually inevitable rather than being the result of any deliberate cultural activity.
2. We will refer to this category as pop/rock. The added genres "reggae" and "new wave" are actually 1980s variants of pop and rock; witness the great popularity of these genres during this decade. Both reggae and new wave reached the charts very often (consider UB 40, Peter Tosh, Jimmy Cliff and U2, the Cure, Simple Minds, respectively).
3. In order to classify the genres into these three categories, a cluster analysis was carried out, which we will not report here. Genres were clustered according to their association with (proximity to) schooling levels. The resulting clusters, which are only used for the analysis of column C in Table 2, are shown in the Table's note and formed in all modesty, since clusters based on another status characteristic is likely to lead to different results.
4. In order not to rely entirely on confirmatory factor analysis using LISREL in determining the number of latent factors and the loadings of the individual genres on these factors,

we have first conducted a varimax factor analysis and a latent class analysis. Both methods yielded a highly similar clustering of genres into four factors.

5. Operetta is a genre with a double loading. On the one hand, operetta is a light version of opera and therefore akin to the legitimate genres that load on the classical factor. On the other hand, the catchy melodies of operetta have often been used for schlagers (popular hits) or sports anthems, which explains the high loading on the first factor (see also Middleton 1990).

6. The respondents themselves do not agree on the direction of this effect either. Of those who are engaged in the arts both actively and passively, 14.0% believe that passive cultural participation stimulates active participation whereas 16.0% claim the reverse to be the case. The 8.4% who indicate that they want to learn from professionals can be added to the first group. Most respondents believe that no causal relation between active and passive cultural practice exists (37.7%) or that both are caused by an underlying interest (20.7%).

7. Initially, we also calculated the total effects of the independent variables on the musical clusters, but these deviate so little from the direct effects that they hardly add to the overall picture.

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