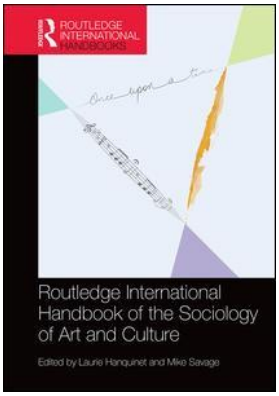

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Genre

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Genre

Relational approaches to the sociology of music[1]

Jennifer C. Lena

A core objective for sociologists of culture has been to understand classification and categorization processes. Categorizing the observed world into groups of things with some perceived similarities is fundamental to human cultures and provides sociologists with insights into how particular social groups define difference and similarity, value and significance. Categorization reflects social structures, as generations of cultural anthropologists and sociologists have demonstrated.

The study of *sociocultural* classification has a long history in sociology, perhaps because category distinctions are often the nucleus for identities, hierarchies, and conflict. Sociologists have examined classification systems in diverse contexts, including organizational forms and religious communities and exploring distinctions between people based on gender, sexuality, race, and cultural tastes, among others. The transmutation of relational qualities, like poverty (which is a social relationship and not a quantity of money), into attributional qualities is a core concern of sociologists working in many areas of the discipline, but the study of how categories '"totalize" identities that are in fact often multidimensional and contradictory' (Emirbayer 1997: 308–9) is work that often falls to cultural sociologists.

In this chapter, I turn my attention to the classification of musical works into genres, illuminating some problems that result from the use of musicological categories in sociological research. I propose that we substitute a sociological specification of genre built from the careful study of how relations within music communities constitute categories of consumption. I discuss the consequences of sociological genres for two bodies of research on taste: that of the heritability of preferences and of the theorized 'omnivorousness' of elites. In tracing the roots and uses of a relational approach both in and outside of cultural sociology, I hope to illustrate both a method and a theory of use in the field.

Genre

No ordering principle is as fundamental to culture as genre. Genres are generally treated as natural objects; contested, yes, but based on the sorting of 'intrinsic' or 'objective' attributes like beats-per-minute, or narrative tropes, that link individual works. Our peers in the humanities often employ the idea of genre to focus attention to the text abstracted from the

social environment of its production or consumption (*inter alia* Frow 2006). Such musicological genres include rock, pop, and jazz.

Cultural sociologists, and the sociologists of music who are my focus here, often treat genres as natural objects for the sake of expediency and to favor the emic experience of fans, artists, and other 'insiders' in music communities. Stories about socio-musical identities are usually premised on the assumption that patronage of a musicological genre makes one's experiences and opinions coherent. Musical texts reinforce the notion that musicological genres have natural boundaries by presenting linear trajectories of musical, economic, or social development in timelines, the chronological organization of chapters, and status and role designations for participants that resemble ancestry charts (e.g. 'grandfather' and 'queen'). These features do the canon-formation work for genres and, to the extent that they include discussions of boundary controversies, guide readers away from questioning the existence of a coherent whole. Treating genres and the boundaries around them as natural and inevitable effaces their core sociological attributes by portraying something constituted through dynamic relations as something objective and extra-social.

But such 'natural' philosophies of genres don't hold up under scrutiny; they 'collapse a complex, shifting social world full of debate and disagreement into an inevitable chain of events leading to the present, during which necessary transformations take place' (Lena 2012: 146). Claims for inalienable boundaries between styles cannot be sustained in the face of substantial evidence that stylistic boundaries are social constructions accomplished when people and organizations collaborate in order to re-/produce genres. Sociological genres are 'systems of orientations, expectations, and conventions that bind together industry, performers, critics, and fans in making what they identify as a distinctive sort of music' (Lena 2012: 6). Sociological genres are community structures characterized by shared musical activity, not musical performances that share musicological characteristics. That said, the music enjoyed by a particular genre community has particular (but not particularistic) musical or aesthetic traits. However, a shared appreciation of particular aesthetic characteristics is only one of the dozen traits that characterize a given sociological genre.

The dynamic, social character of boundary-making is reflected in the very arguments we have about what kinds of people and works should be included within a genre category, and patterned kinds of claims-making that are used to exert power over these inclusions. We err if we ignore the obvious fact that music history is not characterized by widespread consensus over the allocation of songs or performers to musicological genres. Instead, musical history is better characterized as punctuated by periodic arguments over the sorting of songs and groups among contiguous styles. Genre disputes illustrate how power is exerted to support 'invidious categorical distinctions which compel our obedience' (Emirbayer 1997).

After all, 'genres do not work by simply reproducing the same patterns over and over; such repetitive logic would likely have little appeal to popular music audiences' (Wakesman 2009: 8). Consider, for example, the merging of popular musical styles, the 'pop-rockization', that Regev details in his book as a form of 'expressive isomorphism' (2013:12). He observes the 'tendency within pop-rock music to merge and fuse pop-rock with other styles and genres, and the tendency of musicians and producers working in various genres of popular music to adopt and implement at least some creative practices associated with pop-rock, most notably the adoption of electric instrumentation, have contributed to a process whereby the pop-rock aesthetic became the dominant force in world popular music' (Regev 2013: 22). This fluidity of instrumentation and other creative practices across musicological genre boundaries is *characteristic* of creative fields, not exceptional.

What's at stake in getting genre right?

The consequences of relying on these musicological genres in sociological research are quite grave, which I can illustrate in reference to a recent study of intergenerational musical influence, and in the scores of articles charting the rise of 'omnivorous' tastes. In both cases, the reliance on musicological genres leads authors to mistaken conclusions.

Ter Bogt *et al.* (2011) study an interesting and underexplored facet of taste: how parents' listening habits in their teen years impact the preferences of their offspring. To determine if there is a correlation of musical preferences between generations of a family, the authors asked a sample of Utrechtian parents and their children to tick off their musical preferences from a list that included soul, rock, punk, hip-hop, and jazz.[2] The authors found that parents who enjoyed pop had children who preferred pop and dance; parents who preferred rock had daughters (but not sons) who enjoy rock. They concluded that 'preferences for cultural artifacts such as (popular) music show continuity from generation to generation' (2011: 297).

But is the pop music of the early 1970s the same as the pop music of the oughts? If we compare the weekly Album Top 100 charts (a conventional measure of 'pop' music) when parents were the same ages of their teens, we see some stark (musicological) differences.[3] According to dutchcharts.nl, the top performers in 1971 (for fathers) included The Rolling Stones, Paul and Linda McCartney, and Emerson, Lake, and Palmer. In July 1974, mothers enjoyed the soundtrack to Andrew Lloyd Weber's *Jesus Christ Superstar*, a compilation album of the 'RCA Nashville Sound' and Chris Hinze featuring Louis van Dyke and Jan Goudswaard playing *Sketches on Bach*. The July 2005 Top Album charts included The Black Eyed Peas, System of a Down, and Guus Meeuwis.

On first glance, both the older and more recent pop charts feature a number of rock acts (from The Rolling Stones to hard rockers System of a Down), which begs the question of whether the authors should have treated 'pop' and 'rock' as distinct genres in the survey.[4] Indeed, in their preliminary analysis, the authors found some cross loading of factors for the pop music items for parents (2011: 305). Next, the comparison reveals that music that might also be labeled as folk revival, Broadway, classical, and country appears on the pop charts in the 1970s and is replaced by rap and hard rock on the 2005 charts. The aesthetic content of this genre doesn't appear to be stable enough to use as an index of the intergenerational transmission of music tastes. I would add that the weakness of these genres as descriptors of musical content isn't an artifact of some feature of pop or rock (noting Regev's [2013] argument to the contrary). The authors excluded a number of genres (disco, soul) from the youth survey and added others (hip-hop, electronic music) to reflect the waning and waxing salience of the category titles.

We might measure taste using these categories because we think they are emic representations of taste – that they best reflect how respondents do the work of categorizing their musical preferences. But do sociologists have evidence this is the case? In a very provocative study of musical taste among students in Mississippi, John Sonnett (2013) finds that musical boundaries cohere not around musicological genres, but around processes of inclusion, exclusion, and ambivalence. Based on respondents' own ranking of artist preferences, Sonnett finds 'the primary opposition in the field of musical taste is between those who make distinctions within genres (i.e., Ambivalent) versus those who make distinctions between genres (i.e., Divider)' (25). While Sonnett's research is too preliminary in scope to offer a generalizable model of taste, it is worth noting that his results suggest that fixed-choice questions about genres are both failing to reflect the emic experience of taste for many respondents, and that obvious alternative specifications exist for how to measure cultural tastes.[5]

Musicological genre distinctions are also used in the many studies of musical omnivorousness, and here too we see scholars drawing conclusions about taste that rest on shaky foundations. In a landmark study, Peterson and Kern (1996) used data from the Survey of Public Participation in the Arts (SPPA) to demonstrate that wealthy and well-educated Americans were supplementing their traditional fondness for consecrated musical genres (opera and classical music) with a small set of popular styles. They discovered that 'highbrow snobbery' was being replaced by 'highbrow omnivorousness', particularly within younger cohorts of elites (Peterson and Kern 1996). Many studies have replicated this result in multiple countries, and across a range of cultural pursuits, including reading, art, and most recently, food and television (see Peterson 2005 for a review).

To measure musical taste, the SPPA asks respondents to tick off all the styles (e.g. classical, rock, classic rock) they enjoy from a list provided to them. The reason sociologists argue that elites are increasingly omnivorous is because younger elites in recent surveys tick off more styles, on average, than elites who completed earlier waves of the survey, or who are older. Many interpret this to mean that elite tastes have experienced fragmentation, such that older elites maintain exclusionary tastes, while younger elites adopt an ideology of equality. The later discovery of omnivorousness among non-elites (Peterson 2005; Peterson and Rossman 2008) was interpreted as an indication that the old homology between class or social position and taste was breaking down.

The more stirring alternative is that the increase in reported genre preferences is a means respondents use to indicate increased selectivity within genres, which would likely be true if taste identities cohere around inter-genre selectivity. In fact, there is a large and growing body of research that suggests that boundary work operates (for at least some of us) within and across genres. I have already noted Sonnett's (2013) excellent study of how combinations of inclusion, exclusion, and ambivalence around specific artists typify Mississippi college students' tastes, which usefully builds upon Goldberg's (2011) earlier research. Johnston and Baumann's (2007) research on foodies (omnivorous eaters) demonstrates that their preferences are not driven by cuisine, or the status of any eaterie, nor do they fail to discriminate among foods; they eat at the same places and the same foods as other eaters, but they set themselves apart with the discourse they use to describe the experience: the food they like is 'authentic', less 'processed', or 'industrial'. The time has come for more concerted attention to the categories that consumers produce through their consumption behaviour; such research may reveal the need to jettison (musicological) genre as a valid (or even reliable) variable in many studies of cultural taste.

How relational methods produce sociological categories

So, what alternatives to musicological genre categories exist? How can we construct more valid and reliable measures of taste for use by sociologists? How can we incorporate into such measures our understanding that boundaries are socially constructed, contested, manifestations of power?

Understanding the relationship between taste and aesthetic categories profitably begins with the observation of how people participate in music communities, since group membership predicts how aesthetic boundaries are drawn. That is, the study of taste relies first on the study of taste groups and how they categorize since 'processes by which genre distinctions are created, ritualized, and eroded, and processes by which tastes are produced [are] part of the sense-making and boundary-defining activities of social groups' (DiMaggio 1987: 441). An inductive approach is suited to measuring these kinds of cultural questions because we

seek to understand how people order the world to produce the categories that they then treat as fixed or natural. If we examine social exchanges we begin to see the social relationships that produce, and are produced by, categorization processes.

A set of classic anthropological studies by Ward Goodenough, Thomas Schweitzer, and James Davis may offer inspiration for this relational, inductive approach to taste. In 1963, Ward Goodenough published a study of the neighborhood of Manuhoe in Papeete, the capital of the country then called French Polynesia. His study was designed as a test of theories of economic rationality, to see if cost and 'objective' utility would explain the acquisition of consumer goods within the village; he asked: would wealthier families own more expensive goods? Goodenough gathered data on 40 of the 41 households in Manuhoe and seven kinds of consumer goods they might own, including bicycles, cars, radios, stoves, and refrigerators. In contrast to what we might find if economic resources were perfectly correlated with taste, each household did not simply buy what it could afford, acquiring objects in order of expense, nor was it the case that households treated the same object as possessing the same amount of utility. Instead, social ties and cultural attitudes better explained the observed variation. Household 33 included only a widower whose food was provided by his children; although he could afford it, he had no need for a stove and so did not have one.

The method that Goodenough used to analyze these data is the same one that Thomas Schweizer used in his study of the Congo-region Mbuti people. The process, known as Guttman scaling, 'identifies the maximally transitive and consistent representation of the rows and columns of the matrix' (Schweizer 1993a: 471) into which the analyst has entered data on things like 'who owns which consumer goods'. What the scaling process yields is classes of data points where members are maximally similar to one another and maximally dissimilar to members of other groups. In such a model, we must rely purely on observation to identify groups, rather than imposing some set of expectations on what kind of households, goods, or people should end up belonging to the same group.

This approach may appear to be a kind of primitivist sociology: one assumes no characteristics of the exchanges within a population before initiating observation. The first act isn't to identify gender, race, age, or wealth, or even to trust reports of who or what belongs to the group. Rather, we start by documenting transfers of resources, goods, positions, ideas, people, and organizations through social ties. This approach has been referred to as 'relational sociology' (Emirbayer 1997) although it is worth noting that roots lie in core sociological texts by authors we now treat as progenitors of distinct theoretical traditions (itself an interesting case of classification), including Marx, Weber, Durkheim, and Simmel. Thorough and recent reviews of the application of this approach to culture (Mohr and White 2008; Goldberg 2011) emphasize the complexity of these relations and the resulting multiplicity of shared understandings (Breiger 2009; Mohr and White 2008; Mohr 2013; Mische 2011), and largely abjure the hard behaviourism of earlier network models.

One of the notable strengths of this approach is its ability to assist the researcher in identifying relationships that might be ignored or denied by interview subjects or if more assumptions were made about category salience. Speaking of his study of status relationships, Schweizer (1993a: 478) wrote: 'As participant observers we had difficulty breaking down this structure.… The frequencies and the prices of consumer items provided clues to their economic and cultural values, but the whole pattern was rather diffuse'. Using a simple observation and indexing process, we can identify patterned disparities in both access to resources and control of them, and observing the sorting behaviour that leads to categories can help us to generate a robust understanding of how some things are left out of such categories.

Consider the difficulty of measuring status without some method that allows you to identify forms of esteem or deference that are embarrassing to relate, that are based on automatic cognition (Vaisey 2009: 1688), or that would result in lower self-esteem if they were related faithfully. Studies of status rely on measures of financial success like sales (Dowd 2004) and on indexes of productivity or publication (Anheier *et al.* 1995; Craig and Dubois 2010), critical success (Allen and Lincoln 2004), and awards (Allen and Lincoln 2004; Craig and Dubois 2010). Scholars have also used name recognition (Anheier *et al.* 1995) and surveys (Craig and DuBois 2010) to evaluate peer esteem. While sales and critical acclaim reliably measure certain status dimensions, they do a poor job capturing others. Indeed, a recent study of rap artists reveals that three distinct status orders exist: one based on sales success, one based on peer esteem, and one based on aesthetic innovation and imitation (Lena and Pachucki 2013). While sales and peer esteem are relatively visible to actors in the field and made objective in charts, award shows, invitations to collaborate, interviews, and 'listicles', the aesthetic status order is more complex and less visible, yet it reflects an important dimension of the art world's social structure.

This relational approach attempts to 'take seriously what Durkheim saw but most of his followers did not: that the organic solidarity of a social system rests not on the cognition of men, but rather on the interlock and interaction of objectively definable social relationships' (Boorman and White 1976: 1442) That is, social structure is 'regularities in the patterns of relations among concrete entities; it is *not* a harmony among abstract norms and values or a classification of concrete entities by their attributes' (White *et al.* 1976: 733–4, emphasis in original). The analysis of patterns of values and attributes tells us a great deal about social life, but there are some aspects of culture they are not suited to reveal. A relational approach can help us to identify 'hidden relations' and 'the constraining and enabling dimensions of patterned relationships among social actors within a system' (Emirbayer and Goodwin 1994: 1418). As Bearman (1993: 9–10) wrote, 'Categorical models alone rarely partition people in a way that confirms with observed action, because individual activity in the world is organized through and motivated not by categorical affiliations but by the structure of tangible social relations in which persons are embedded'. While most sociologists are 'beholden to the idea that it is entities that come first and relations among them only subsequently' emerge in the analysis, we can instead 'reverse these basic assumptions and depict social reality instead in dynamic, continuous, and processual terms' (Emirbayer 1997: 281).

How relational methods produce sociological genres

Turning back to music, the process of identifying musical communities should be relatively straightforward. We can begin by identifying a data source that might document transfers of resources among music community members. Lena (2012) and Lena and Peterson (2008) treated the voluminous corpus of primary and secondary documentation of the lives of musicians, fans, administrators, organizations, and styles that exist as containing information on exchanges.

Through an iterative coding process, patterns in community structure, use of media, and discourses used by group members emerged from these histories. The organizational form (a circle or scene), scale, and locus (homes, firms, or festivals) of activity captured differences in groups' social structures. To describe differences in how groups employed material culture, the authors identified the sources of income for participants, the degree to which technology was standardized, and the use of fashion and drugs as identity markers in order to distinguish groups. Finally, several important facets of discourse were coded including

the way group members articulated their 'genre ideal' or goals, the content of disputes or complaints about other musical artists, the degree of consensus in the use of argot or lingo by members of the group, and the source of the name for the musical style.

Combinations of these attributes make it possible to identify resemblances between rock and gospel, south Texas polka and salsa, while clusters of quantities of these attributes revealed developmental trajectories held in common by musical communities. Taking the simplest of these: organizational structures are often informal when the group is small, and become more formal as it increases in size. The patterned clusters of attributes reveal that four stages characterize the history of 60 musical styles created in the twentieth century United States: avant-garde, scene-based, industry-based, and traditionalist.

The first stage includes a very small group of people who occasionally make music together, never develop a name for the group, and typically fail to make money or develop fans, and quickly disband. In some cases, they grow and create a scene-based community, often located within a neighborhood from which they generate income (often from non-musical employment), fans, press attention, and a collective sense of purpose or identity. Occasionally, these groups come to the attention of record label executives or national journalists, and attention from either can catapult the community into the mainstream as an industry-based genre. Finally, some last long enough for a core group to call for album re-issues and reunion concert tours, and academics and old timers support these heritage movements with their time and money; these are traditionalist genres.

The inductive categorization process used in Lena (2012) yielded a matrix of associations that best describes classes of data points where members are maximally similar to one another and maximally dissimilar to members of other groups. But we must bear in mind that the genre forms that result are ideal-typical structures. If distinctions between attributes or finer gradations within them had been made it would have been possible to identify more than twelve attributes, or more than four genre forms. For example, 'press coverage' could have been dissembled into two dimensions: one that captured the size and demographic attributes of readers and one that reflected the content or character of specific articles.[6] The four-genre type by twelve-dimension resolution was ultimately the most parsimonious.

The four-genre forms that resulted represent a way of thinking about genre that is sociological – that is based on differences in community characteristics and not musicological ones. A striking difference with musicological genres is that the sociological approach allows us to identify and understand musicians who participate in a community at one point in time but later produce what will be seen as aesthetically dissimilar music. One such example can be found among the group of singer-songwriters who lived and worked together in Los Angeles' Laurel Canyon in the late 1960s. This group included members of the Doors; the Mamas and the Papas; Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young; Joni Mitchell; Jackson Browne; Linda Ronstadt; Leonard Cohen; and Frank Zappa. That these diverse artists constituted a musical community is undeniable (Lena 2012: 86–9). That they produced musicologically diverse pop is similarly beyond dispute: they contributed to at least six distinct traditions: singer-songwriter rock (James Taylor), contemporary folk-pop (Joni Mitchell), cosmic country (Flying Burrito Brothers), country rock (the Eagles), psychedelic pop (the Mamas and the Papas), and adult contemporary pop/country (Linda Ronstadt). The sociological definition of genre allows us to correctly identify the existence of a genre (community) at an early point and to mark its dissolution over time.

A second advantage of the sociological definition of genre is that it helps us to understand why fans of the same music have patterned, almost routine, arguments about which performers, albums, and songs represent the 'true', or 'authentic', manifestation of the style. Debates within punk music are characteristic in this regard. Older punk fans, those who have

participated in the community for many years, tend to defend the value of specific songs developed in a particular time period. Younger punks, or those newer to the music, tend to defend a punk ethos that isn't particular to music created in any isolated time or space (Lena 2012: 52). The former defines authentic punk as the *music* made in a particular period, while younger fans associate authenticity with a fidelity to what they see as the *spirit* of that era. While both groups might be described in musicological terms as 'punk fans', the former are properly understood as members of a traditionalist punk movement, while the younger fans are members of a scene-based contemporary punk community. The two are linked in the sense that they describe the music they enjoy using the same word ('punk'), but they are sociologically distinct in that they transfer few resources across the groups. They don't even share space – in Andy Bennett's recent book on aging music fans, he notes that the 'codes of crowd behaviour are not necessarily understood, or appreciated, by older punks, whose appreciation of the music, sense of association with the crowd, and acquired reading of acceptable crowd conventions are often qualitatively different' from youths' (2013: 137). Bennett's careful observation reveals that two groups exist: a traditionalist genre comprised of older music fans and a scene-based genre populated by teens, both (confusingly) employing the same musical label (e.g. punk). While sociologists have become accustomed to using musicological designations, Bennett concludes, 'the fact of generation can, in itself, produce a particular perception of the meaning and significance of a specific music genre' (2013: 122).[7]

The recognition that sociological genres do a better job of capturing community membership, taste, and behaviour provides a foundation for us to integrate existing research on fans of musicological genres with research that shows some people have broad, or inter-genre, tastes. For example, Wakesman (2009) studied fans of 'underground' or 'independent' music, noting that 'indie' now refers to a set of political, moral, and ethical values, rather than to a mode of production (that is, not to music manufactured without the assistance of 'major' record labels) (2009: 215). Fans of indie music often report their sympathy extends to music categorized within multiple musicological genres. These are not fans of punk, in particular, or of punk music made in an era, but of scene-based music from a variety of popular styles. Sociological genres help us to make sense of existing evidence that fans are oriented toward genre forms, not (necessarily) musical styles.

Broader impacts of relational approaches to the study of categorization

I have focused here on the value of relational approaches and inductive methods of category construction within the study of musical genre, but I wish to point toward the value of such approaches beyond genre. Contemporary readers may be more familiar with the relational approach as it informs some social network studies, whether they are studies of individuals linked through bonds of friendship (Milgram 1967); scientists joined by the papers they co-author (Moody 2004); or songs linked by the shared use of score elements, like musical notes (Cerulo 1995). It is the emphasis on these links or flows that makes network studies compatible with relational models.

Relational approaches are valuable in the study of other forms of categorization, including the study of law school reputations (Espeland and Sauder 2007), insurance rates (Heimer 1985), and economic behaviour (Callon 1998; MacKenzie 2006). Most provocatively, relational approaches may help us to integrate new research on cognition (Lizardo and Strand 2010) and values (Vaisey 2009; on both, see Vaisey and Lizardo 2010) with sociobiological knowledge about the body as an interactional site and more traditional research on

meaning. Take musical taste as an example: preferences result (in part) from listening to music. In order to listen, humans interact with a sound-making device, sound waves interact with the environment as they travel to the ear, and with the anatomy of the ear, and then a human must choose to initiate a set of mental processes (built on a web of significances that are themselves relationally generated and maintained) in order to be attentive and to generate meaning.[8] We can pretend that timbre is an attribute of the sound waves, or that arrays of meanings are attributes of people, but in fact we are transmuting relational qualities into attributes (Vannini *et al.* 2010).

Moreover, these relations between sounds and objects must be seen as something more than the backdrop of social interaction, but also as constitutive of some interactional forms, and less others. Music sociologists like Grazian (2003), DeNora (2000), and Lena (2012) illuminate how sounds facilitate various forms of sociality. Subjective representations of sound are constrained by a common language. Sensory experience is produced by social learning (Keane 2003: 410) and sociologists have a great deal to learn about how socialization includes objects (Knorr Cetina 1997); we may even need to revise our notion of how experience, mental storage, and reproduction operate (Vaisey and Lizardo 2010).

Concluding thoughts

It may be important in some cases to dispense with existing cultural categories and engage in inductive work to identify groups and boundaries. This is particularly so in cases where we rely on categories we have inherited (as was the case with music genres) and when the categories we use are outmoded by rapidly changing social and cultural circumstances (as is the case with omnivorousness). It is – of course – important in situations where sociologists know very little about local social structure and cultures, or in societies where few studies have been completed on any of the three facets of culture.

Instead of relying on a set of demographic attributes, or a cluster of genres assumed to have some social value, we can understand taste as an interactive process whereby people buy, sell, and talk about culture and in so doing, constitute their similarities (or differences) with other people. Studying this process may lead us to confirm the existence of working-class, white culture as a coherent sociological object (aka 'mass culture'). On the other hand, we may find new and interesting communities of consumers that change our ways of thinking about identity and culture.

I have suggested a relational model of taste in which we simultaneously model the coordination of behaviours, discourses, and objects. The limit of this model's replicability lies in the ability of successive researchers to observe and code attributes in the same way. However, it poses no additional barriers beyond what already exists for observational or archival research. It provides an ideal framework for producing inductive categories in almost any social setting. The first order benefit to researchers is the identification of inductively produced social categories. These stand a chance of representing emic and etic orders simultaneously, while allowing the two to be segregated during analysis.

Notes

1 The first draft of this argument ('Relational and multi-method approaches to category construction') was written for the Measuring Culture Conference, hosted by the University of British Columbia in 2012. For comments on that draft, I thank the participants in the conference: Amin Ghaziani, Chris Bail, Omar Lizardo, Ashley Mears, Ann Mische, Iddo Tavory, Steve Vaisey, Fred Wherry, and especially Terry McDonnell and John Mohr, both of whom provided comments on later drafts as well. A version of this paper was presented at the second Measuring Culture Conference, at the University of California,

Santa Barbara (April 2014), and at the University of Chicago Global Literary Networks Conference (May 2014).

2 Parents and teens were given a slightly different list of genres, and the authors used Principal Components Analysis to arrive at the final units of comparison.

3 The report is unclear about the date when music interviews and demographic data were gathered. The mean teen age was 14.4, and based on the mean ages of parents, the average father was 14 in 1971, and mothers in 1974. I arbitrarily chose the final year of the 5-wave study (2005) as the baseline for teen comparisons and chose the first week of July in all three years of "mean teendom': July 3, 1971; July 1, 1974; and July 4, 2005. While my selection of the July charts was arbitrary, there's little reason to think music at the mid-year mark is an unreliable indicator of yearly patterns.

4 Are these genre boundaries recognizable to respondents? The authors address this concern in their conclusion: 'today's adolescents may love hip-hop in the abstract yet argue endlessly between Snoop Doggy Dogg and Kanye West, or they may like rock, in general, yet disagree violently between Tool and Marilyn Manson. Measuring music preferences in finer detail, that is, on the level of artists, bands or composers, may have revealed deeper and more intricate links between parental and adolescent taste as well as between music preference and social differentiation' (2011: 315). Please note the authors are in effect suggesting that their measures are not valid measures of the core phenomen on of interest: musical taste.

5 Bourdieu's (1984) research on music highlighted the importance of specific musical works, rather than named genres, and some contemporary sociologists have adopted this approach (Bennett *et al.* 2009), highlighting stylistic variation within genre categories (Savage and Gayo 2011).

6 It is possible that readership and content do not work in concert, but in this case there is substantial evidence to suggest that these attributes are correlated.

7 Regev cites Lena (2012) and concludes that 'the analysis of genre trajectories implies that genres cannot exist concurrently in multiple incarnations – at any given moment a genre's incarnation is either avant-garde, scene-based or industry based' (2013: 128–129), but this ignores the discussion of overlapping genre forms (2012: 62–63).

8 As McDonnell (2010: 1803) explains: 'meaning happens through the emergent process of interaction between the material and symbolic qualities of an object, the interpretant, and the context of that interaction'.

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