

ARE AMERICANS' MUSICAL PREFERENCES MORE OMNIVORES TODAY?

YES, BUT NOT EVERYONE ¹

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Abstract

Although we found a general trend favouring the omnivorousness thesis, as soon as we adjusted it to a set of structural factors and consumers' tastes it was clear that this was caused by elitist inclusive omnivores who had increased the scope of their tastes. In general, younger cohorts were becoming less omnivorous, nevertheless, they were also becoming more educated and had greater to higher levels of income, making the youth more omnivorous. As expected, upscale consumers set limits on their popular taste: musical genres, whose audiences had educational levels below the mean profile were less preferred by upscale respondents. In spite of this, as time passed, some popular brows gained social status.

KEY WORDS: Symbolic consumer research, musical tastes, omnivorousness, correspondence analysis of matched matrices.

JEL Classification Number(s): M31, C14 and Z11.

INTRODUCTION

This paper addresses a topic, which has been relatively neglected in the marketing and consumer research literature, and especially in the macromarketing literature (Venkatesh, 1999). Increasingly, cultural goods have been produced as commodities, cultural activities and signifying practices have become mediated through consumption, and consumption has involved the consumption of signs and images (Featherstone 1992). Consequently, if we try to understand the market's logic, know what constitutes societal marketing and help the development of societies, we should expand our understanding of the structures, meanings and discourses that shape consumption acts (McDonagh and Shultz II 2002, 520)

To understand the symbolic meanings of musical genres, we have focused our attention on the temporal development of Americans' musical preferences due to the fact that, as far as we know, the U.S. National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) provides the only longitudinal data available to conduct an analysis about the omnivorousness thesis in the space of musical preferences. Although our theoretical framework is based on the sociology of culture, in particular developments by Bourdieu (see the theoretical framework section), a theory so grounded in data as Bourdieu's encounters the challenge of explaining when some hidden factors change in the analyzed social context (the French social space) or when his theoretical framework is applied to another social context (U.S.A., etc.) that differs in its structural features.

Actually this is the real challenge of Bourdieu's theory of taste in predicting a univorous but opposite pattern of preferences for low and high social classes. In fact, since the first release of the NEA survey on public participation in the arts, several researchers

have pointed out that the data were consistent, showing a pattern different from the one expected: an omnivorous pattern of consumption showed by highscale consumers, versus a univorous pattern for middle and low scale consumers (DiMaggio 1987). Further research conducted in the U.S. has provided plenty of evidence (see Bryson 1996; Peterson and Simkus 1992; and Peterson and Kern 1996) and some authors have proposed that Bourdieu's theory of taste could not be applied to the U.S. social context.

The NEA has made the 2002 survey available as well, allowing us to (1) study the temporal trends of musical preferences (tastes) in the U.S. social context, and (2) find support for the proposed trends or discard them due to spurious effects. Nevertheless, all inferences made herein are conditioned to the U.S. social context. To further generalize results beyond this context, additional comparative research should be conducted in other social settings to highlight the common structural facts and temporal trends. Such kinds of research are not easy to conduct since common data from different countries are rare.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Social distinction through taste

Taste in general, and musical taste in particular, serves to unify those consumers with similar preferences and to differentiate them from the rest, as Bourdieu proposes (1979). In other words, people classify musical preferences and thereby classify themselves in the process (Ritzer 1992). Bourdieu proposes that consumers' behaviours are the result of the dialectical relationship between the way people construct reality (their agency) and the social structure that 'constrains' them (their structural conditions). The result of this dialectical discourse is the habitus: the mental or cognitive structures through which people deal with the social world (Bourdieu 1979), including preferences for goods. Thus, the world of

musical preferences must be related to the hierarchical world of social class (Bourdieu's homology thesis), since it is both hierarchical and hierarchizing. Furthermore, we can expect upscale people to be much more able to have their tastes accepted (Douglas and Isherwood 1996) and opposed to the tastes of lowscale consumers, making upscale consumers distinct (and better) from lowscale (the distinction effect).

Consequently, empirical tests of the extent of musical tastes were expecting a univorous pattern, high or lowbrow. Nevertheless, when simultaneously ranking musical tastes and occupations in a national sample of the U.S. populations collected in 1987 for the National Endowment for the Art (NEA), Peterson and Simkus (1992) found an unexpected result: upscale respondents were also more likely than downscale ones to attend a wide range of low status activities, while respondents in low status occupations were more limited in their range of lowbrow activities. Thus, they found the omnivorous pattern suggested by DiMaggio (1987), a pattern that has later shown up again and again in twelve countries of North America and Europe (see Peterson's 2004 review).

Instead of rejecting the homology thesis (Bourdieu 1979; DiMaggio and Useem 1978), Peterson and Kern (1996) have suggested that a new breed of elitist inclusive omnivores were replacing elitist exclusive snobs, implicitly suggesting that the distinction of upscale social classes was working through two paths: an elitist exclusive taste (the one suggested by Bourdieu) and an elitist inclusive taste. Actually, Holbrook, Weiss and Habick's (2002) recently proposed a theoretical framework in which the three effects were working simultaneously: the already mentioned distinction-snob and distinction-omnivorous effects, but also the boundary effacement effect.

The boundary effacement effect proposes that the rise of mass-market popular music could greatly erode upscale social classes' preferences for highbrow musical genres. This concern was proposed by the Frankfurt critical school thinkers, mainly Adorno (1991). This school of thought foresaw a world dominated by commercial music (mainly jazz at that time), where high and low social classes were mixed into one single group of commercially developed tastes, thereby making social class differences invisible and everyone liking the same kind of music (with highbrow classical music, for instance, condemned to disappear). Time has showed the fallacy of this proposition in both the U.S. context (see Holbrook, Weiss and Habick's 2002) and the Spanish setting as well (see López and García 2005, forthcoming).

Explaining the omnivorousness trend

The omnivorousness construct is usually defined as the extent of brows respondents' choice (see Peterson, 2004, for a state of the art discussion on the omnivorous research). Being omnivore does not mean liking highbrow genres but at least being able to appreciate and criticize them, based on some knowledge of its content (Ward, Martens and Olsen, 1999). The omnivore comprises the new upscale consumers, which show positive reaction to three basic musical genres: highbrow, pop and folk (van Eijck, 2001). Generally, it also means being more tolerant to racial and ethnic cultural differences, as Peterson and Kern (1996) state.

Nevertheless, the idea of elitist inclusive omnivore includes the concept of distinction (Peterson, 2004). This makes it is worthwhile to analyze *how elitist highbrow consumers expand the breadth of their musical taste* as time goes by, in comparison to non-highbrows, and *what the difference is between elitist inclusive omnivores and elitist exclusive snobs*. In

any case, this is not an easy question to study. Peterson and Kern (1996) tried to provide an answer by conducting a longitudinal study with data collected in 1982 and 1992, testing two hypotheses: H1) High status people were generally becoming more omnivorous or H2) younger, more omnivorous cohorts of high status people were replacing older cohorts with a more highbrow taste. Peterson and Kern (1996) found that both hypotheses were explaining the omnivorousness trend, and that some structural factors were enhancing this trend (mainly education and income).

These authors could not explain, however, whether the phenomenon was a 'secular trend or due to forces just affecting the decade 1982-1992' (1996: 902). As far as we know, only Peterson and Kern (1996) and van Eijck and van Rees (2000) have conducted a temporal comparison of cultural tastes or activities, although with different methodologies, and only the former conducted an analysis of the determinants of the omnivorousness evolution, but with a limited span of time. Actually, both studies have reported that highbrow snobs reduce their proportion whereas highbrow omnivores increase theirs. Our aim here, then, is to show if there has been a secular trend towards omnivorousness and what forces have affected this trend.

Pattern of tastes and social class in the long term

Do the elitist inclusive omnivores put limits to their taste? Bryson (1996, 1997) has suggested that elitist inclusive omnivores practice a selective exclusion. In fact, Bryson found that even though people with high levels of education, income and occupational prestige like more types of music than do people with low levels of the three social class indicators, she also showed a limit in the tolerance exhibited by elitist inclusive omnivores: people who dislike few music genres will mostly dislike those genres that are liked by

people with low levels of education, when education is controlled. Putting her findings in perspective: upscale consumers with an omnivorous taste will like less those types of music that are liked by people with low levels of education.

Some researchers have proposed that consumers tend to fixate on whatever popular music they happened to enjoy during the period when they first reached maturity and to carry those same musical preferences forward into later life (Holbrook and Schindler, 1989), which this phenomenon known as nostalgia, a longing for the past or a yearning for yesterday (Davis, 1979). Consequently, popular genres that upscale omnivores like less will change during a sufficiently long period of time, as young upscale consumers reach adulthood and bring with them the popular music they happened to enjoy during their adolescence.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Research Questions

- 1) Is there a long-term secular trend toward omnivorousness? If so, which role have upscale highbrows played?
- 2) Do the elitist inclusive omnivores place limits on their tastes? Have these limits changed during the last 20 years?

Sample

Data were obtained from the survey of public participation in the arts [SPPA 1982-2002] requested by the Research Division of the National Endowment for the Arts (<http://www.nea.gov>) with the aim to explore American's participation in the arts, including their musical preferences. Although the SPPA survey has been conducted every 5 years since 1982, only the ones conducted in 1982, 1992 and 2002 have been done by the U.S.

Bureau of the Census as a supplement to a larger national survey, the National Crime Survey (the former two) and the Current Population Survey (the latter). Surveys conducted in 1985 and 1997 are not comparable to the three samples selected due to different reasons: the former because it was aborted before finalizing the fieldwork and the latter because it was administered by a different survey organization. This fact leaves us with the three surveys used in this analysis (NEA, 1985, 1993, and 2003).

The 1982 survey collected data from 17,254 U.S. households, 12,736 for the 1992 survey and 17,135 for the 2002 survey. Picking these three surveys made it easier to analyze the omnivorousness trend, since all were collected by the same statistical agency following similar procedures, except for the last survey that was collected as a supplement to the Current Population Survey. All non-institutionalized individuals living in the U.S. were eligible and those above the age of 18 in selected households were asked to respond. Surveys had the following overall respond rates: 85 percent for 1982 (25% conducted over phone), 80% for 1992 (80% conducted over phone), and 70% for 2002 (90% over phone).²

Measuring the omnivorousness trend in the live performing arts space

Interviewees were asked whether they liked the musical genres showed in a list of alternatives from the aesthetic spectrum. In particular, the spectrum common to all three surveys included: classical or chamber concerts, big band, country-western, bluegrass, rock, ethnic/national, contemporary folk, mood or easy listening, opera, hymns or gospel, operetta/musicals, jazz, and blues/rhythm blues. We used the omnivorousness construct as the number of music genres respondents liked. So the variable omnivorousness takes a range

² For additional information about the SPPA data, see the National Endowment for the Arts web site (<http://www.nea.gov/pub/ResearchReports.html>) or CPANDA's (www.cpanda.org).

of values that goes from 0 to 13, with 25,411 total respondents providing valid answers for the three periods (5156, 5184, and 15071, respectively).

Measuring alternative explanations

Highbrow effect. This was measured as a dummy variable, with a value of 1 if respondents liked both classical music and opera productions. This is a less demanding operationalization than the one used by Peterson and Kern (1996) as they also asked respondents to choose one of these two forms as the best-liked musical genre from the list (pp. 900-901). Nevertheless, our operationalization of highbrows is in line with Peterson's (2004) suggestion that both highbrow omnivores and highbrow snobs have to like classical music and opera.

Distaste for popular genres effect. This identifies respondents who liked neither western/country nor bluegrass, those people who distaste the most lowbrow musical genres. We selected these two indicators because when conducting a multiple correspondence analysis (not reported here) these two music genres were classified as the most popular and the two genres most distanced from the position of highbrow music genres.

The elitist exclusive snob effect, then, is conceptualized as an interaction between the highbrow taste and the distaste for popular genres: those respondents who report liking highbrow performances but do not report liking the most popular ones. Evidence of a snob pattern of cultural consumption has been found in Dutch reading habits (van Rees, Vermunt and Verboord 1999; van Eijck and van Rees 2000) and in the Spanish performing arts space (López and García 2002), always characterized by a comparatively high level of consumption of highbrow genres and a comparatively low consumption of popular genres.

Period effect. This was measured as a categorical variable with three levels, 1982, 1992 and 2002, where the first level is the reference for estimating the model. The period effect captures the outcome of the immediate environment on the omnivorousness trend.

Birth year. This is a metric variable with respondents' birth year, produced by subtracting respondents' age from the survey year. Thus, in the 1992 survey an American aged 42 was born in 1950 (=1992-42). The operation was obtained for 1982 and 1992 surveys, as the interviewee age was asked; however in 2002 the data were recoded as a categorical variable, making it necessary to produce the respondent's actual age using the central values of age categories. This procedure introduced some noise in the model, but was the only strategy available.

Controlling by cohort structural variables

Indicators of social class. Social class is captured through two indicators: income and educational level. The former is an indicator of economic capital and the latter, of the cultural one, as it has been proposed by Bourdieu (1979, 1987). These indicators are the ones commonly available for the three cohorts of Americans. Unfortunately respondents' socio-economic status (SES) was not available for the three surveys, as respondents' occupation was not recorded in 1992 survey. We used educational level as a categorical variable with four levels: low secondary school or less (until 8th grade, the reference level), some upper secondary school (among 9 and 12th grade, no diploma), upper secondary school (diploma or equivalent), college or higher education (until bachelor's degree and master or doctoral degrees). We had to recode educational level into a categorical variable as 2002 survey changed the usual codification of education in years. Income level was recorded as a

categorical variable with two levels: below the median income distribution (reference level), and equal to or greater than the median.

Barriers to appreciation were measured as marital status and metropolitan status. The first was coded with four levels (single—reference level—, married, divorced or separated, widow) and the former as a dummy variable capturing whether respondents' living quarters had been categorized as a metropolitan statistical area (see Slifkin, Randolph, and Ricketts, 2004).

Differences due to socialization were captured through gender (male—reference level—, and female) and white race (a dummy) variables.

Analysis

First, a linear model was estimated, where the omnivorousness effect was regressed on the alternative explanations and cohort structural variables,

$$y_i = \mathbf{X}\boldsymbol{\beta} + \mathbf{e}_i.$$

The full model included highbrow effect, distaste for popular genres effect, the interaction between the two (the elitist exclusive snob effect), period effect, cohort effect, education, marital status, metropolitan status, gender, and interactions of period with all the other variables. The age effect captures the fact that respondents, born in different years, have experienced different events during their childhood and development. The cohort effect is obtained through control variables that take into account differences in demographic composition. Lastly, the period effect includes all effects of the immediate environment (see Rodgers 1982a and 1982b; Smith, Mason, and Fienberg 1982).

In a regression setting when the errors are normal, ordinary least squares (OLS) is clearly the best procedure to estimate parameters. When there might be outliers, however,

one has to take an approach that minimizes their impact on the estimators. One strategy is to remove the largest residuals as outliers and still use OLS, but this may not be effective when there are several large residuals, something highly probable when working with large data samples (our case). The other strategy is to use robust, resistant methods. In particular, we used Huber's method (Huber 1981), a compromise between OLS and least absolute deviation (LAD), implemented in the R language and environment for statistical analysis (R Core Development Team 2004) and described in the VR package (Venables and Ripley 1999).

To answer the second question we made use of a flexible multivariate descriptive tool, correspondence analysis (Greenacre 1984). Correspondence analysis (CA), is a statistical technique, which transforms a frequency table into an elegant graphical display; its aim is to facilitate the interpretation of cross-tabular data. One variation of this technique is correspondence analysis of matched matrices (Greenacre 2003). By setting up the tables from different periods in a particular block format, we are able to visualize, with a single analysis: 1) the communalities during the different periods studied (associations among musical genres that do not change with time), and 2) the differences among the three periods (changes in such associations due to the pass of the time). The main advantage of this analysis is that, without extra calculations, the communality analysis is centered, as is usual in CA, but the differences not. This is a desired property since differences will have a reference point of zero.

RESULTS

The Omnivorous Trend

Model selection

First we started proceeding forward from the simplest model adding the principal effects. Then we proceeded backwards, eliminating higher effects that we found minimized Akaike's Information Criterion, AIC, defined as follows:

$$AIC = n + n \log 2p + n \log(RSS/n) + 2(p+1),$$

where *RSS* stands for the residual sum of squares, *n* for the sample size and *p* for the number of parameters. AIC statistic suggested that all principal effects were meaningful, but when testing higher order effects, it favoured a model without period*marital status and period*white interactions. This reduced model produced an adjusted R-squared of 0.52.

Model parameters

The Mestimators of the resistant linear model are presented in Table 1. To make the interpretation easy we have plotted the model's effect displays (Fox 1987 and 2003). Effect displays are constructed by identifying high-order terms in the estimated linear model. Fitted values under the estimated linear model are computed for each such term, where main effects marginal to an interaction are absorbed into the plotted high-order term. The values of other predictors are fixed at typical values: the mean in the case of covariates and in the case of a factor at its proportional distribution in the data (see Fox 2003, for further details).

[Table 1 ABOUT HERE]

The role of tastes in explaining the omnivorous trend

During the three periods, highbrow elitists were responsible for an overall increase of 4.3 (=4.7-2.0-0.4+2.9+1.3-2.2) genres on the omnivorousness record, after discounting cohort structural effects. Nevertheless, respondents with a distaste for the most popular genres, country/western and bluegrass, reduced their omnivorous record by 5.7 (=1.8-2.0-0.7-0.3+1.3-2.2) genres during the entire period in comparison to consumers with a taste for

popular music. Being elitist exclusive snob (liking highbrow genres but not the most popular ones) reduced the omnivorousness grade by 3.1 ($=2.0+1.3-2.2$) genres in comparison with non-highbrows with a taste for popular genres (the reference category).

Figure 1 shows the net effect of the main effect of highbrow elitists and distaste for popular music and higher order terms (the interaction between both main effects - snobbishness - and period effect). Elitist inclusive omnivores (panel *LOWBROW DISTASTE: No* in Figure 1) have increased the number of musical genres liked during the last 20 years, and this increase is greater in 2002 (an increase of 0.33 in 1992 and of 2.07 in 2002). The reverse can be said for non-highbrows liking the most popular music, which reached lower levels in 2002 than in 1982 (a difference of 0.51 genres). Now let's take a look at panel *LOWBROW DISTASTE: Yes*: in 1992 elitist exclusive snobs had a slight increase in the number of musical genres liked (0.46), although this was below the 1982 level (5.03 genres liked versus 4.92). Finally, non-highbrows and non popular-brows (middle brows) have decreased the number of genres liked, from 2.37 in 1982 to 1.53 in 2002, with an eventual pick of 2.51 in 1992.

[Figure 1 about here]

Replacement of cohorts

The mean effect of birth year on the omnivorousness taste was negative (though the statistical significance was not high), suggesting that younger persons had less omnivorous musical tastes. Nevertheless, this effect depended on the immediate environment. Panel a of Figure 2 shows that year 1992 provided the most omnivorous environment, and 2002 the least, though with the same pattern of consumption—among people of the same age in all periods, the ones in 1992 liked one more genre—, but the 1982 environment exhibited a

different pattern, more expanded. In fact, in 1982 people liked 0.078 genres less than consumers 20 years younger, in 1992 0.27, and in 2002 0.234.

[Figure 2 ABOUT HERE]

Cohort structural effects

Indicators of social class. The educational level had the expected sign and its effect was greater in higher brackets. Nevertheless, this factor depended on the period examined (see panel b in Figure 2). The same educational level had a greater impact on the omnivorous musical preference in 1992, but in the year 2002, it had a lower impact and this difference increased as we moved from low secondary education to college or higher.

Household income followed the same temporal pattern (see panel c in Figure 2), increasing its effect in 1992 (0.75 genres for people with incomes over the median, and 0.22 for those below) and decreasing it in 2002, reaching lower levels than in 1982 (a net reduction of 0.42 genres for people with incomes equal or over the median, and of 0.57 for those below the median). Consequently, the net difference between people below and above the median in 1992 experienced an increase (almost 1 genre) and in 2002 a reduction (0.3 genres).

Barriers to appreciating musical tastes. Living in a metropolitan area had a positive impact on the tendency to exhibit an omnivorous musical taste, as expected (see Becker's 2004 explanation about jazz venues). Nevertheless, this impact again depended on the year analyzed. Between 1982 and 1992 the number of musical preferences increased more among people living in metropolitan areas (0.6 genres for metropolitans versus 0.4 for non-metropolitans—see the slope in panel d of Figure 2), but in 2002 the number of genres liked

decreased by almost one genre, regardless of whether the respondent lived in a metropolitan area or not (so the relative difference was not erased).

Marital status, another barrier, this time due to the responsibility for being in charge of domestic care, did not change its effect on the omnivorousness trend during the period 1982-2002. This appears to be a structural variable with no change in effect with the immediate environment. Results suggest that singles and divorced or separated people developed a wider spectrum of tastes than married couples or widows, with the latter being the least omnivorous.

Gender and racial socialization. Males seem to be less omnivorous than females throughout the entire period examined, although the year 1992 showed an increase in the omnivorous grade for both, 0.47 for women, and 0.55 for men, with men narrowing the distance from women (difference of 0.22 genres in 1982, and of 0.12 in 1992). This increase, nevertheless, had been wiped away by 2002: both women and men liked fewer genres in 2002 (0.44 fewer genres for women and 0.56 for men) and the difference between both genders had increased. We also found that being white, net of other effects, reduced the respondent's omnivorous trend.

Limits to the elitist inclusive taste

In order to find simultaneous support for the hypothesis of the pattern of exclusiveness (Bryson 1996, 1997) and the nostalgia effect (Holbrook and Schindler 1989, 1994; Holbrook 1993), we matched (see appendix) , in one hand, the tables corresponding to years, 1982-1992 and, on the other hand, the tables related to years 1992-2002. All tables have the same structure: Rows represent the different types of music and columns collect the markers of social class (educational and income levels). Frequencies of such tables are

indicators of audiences' preferences for musical genres, with respect to the markers of social class. Since the pattern of results was similar in both analyses (1982-92, and 1992-02) we opt to display just a single analysis: 1982-2002, for communalities and differences as well.

Then, the cross tabulation of musical tastes by markers of social class showed an association summarized in a total inertia of 0,134. This total inertia is distributed in the following way: principal axes 1, 4, 6 and 7 collect information related with differences, while principal axes 2, 3 and 5 collect communality associations (see appendix). From those, the first axis of differences accounted for 84.72% of its total association, the second axis of differences, though, was responsible for 15,27%. For the communality analysis, the first principal axis collects 77.77% of the total communality inertia while the second one represents the 20,63% one. (This study used XL-Stat Pro and the Sigma Plot softwares to obtain the results.)

Given the total inertia, we display symmetric maps where just relative positions between points of different variables can be interpreted (Greenacre 1984). Figure 3 is the symmetric map for communalities while figure 4 displays the symmetric map for differences. Besides, since to give a detailed description of correspondence analysis of matched matrices is not the aim of this paper, we just present, in the appendix, some geometric details that can help to understand the interpretation of such maps. For more details, go to Greenacre (1984, 2003).

The communality analysis displays the horseshoe effect, represented when rating scales are plotted in two dimensions (Greenacre 1984). Here we are looking at the coordinates of liking musical genres and a set of markers of audiences' social class with regard to their respective first principal axis. From left to right, citizens liking musical genres

were set according to their social class' indicators, from left, downscale, to right, upscale consumers; while the second axis sets apart the preferences of middle educational levels from the rest. In other words, the first axis differentiates ethnic musical genres (ethnic, hymns, country) from the rest: the second axis upside down, small group musical preferences (classical music, opera, musicals, jazz, folk, all associated to the highest educational level, and ethnic music that close to the lowest educational level) from mass culture (big bands, blues, bluegrass, mood, rock, country, and hymns), all of them associated to middle educational levels).

[Figure 3 ABOUT HERE]

Let's turn now to the analysis of differences in the association of musical genres to the markers of social class. The main difference is displayed by Ethnic music. Its close relative position with respect to E1 indicates that the proportion of people belonging to the lowest level of education has decreased along this period, while a counterpart position with respect to E4 reveals that the proportion of people who belongs to the highest level of education has increased. Hymns have similar patterns to Ethnics but the differences are less strong. The rest of types of music, with negative coordinate values for the second principal axis and positive values for the first one, occupy a close relative position with respect to E3 and E2, translated in a decrease in the proportion of people belonging to middle educational levels. Simultaneously, they display an increase in the proportion of people who belongs to the highest educational level (E4). Summarizing, while proportions in low educational levels decrease, the one corresponding to the highest level of education, for all types of music, increase.

[Figure 4 ABOUT HERE]

DISCUSSION

Our findings favour Peterson and Kern's hypothesis: There is a steady trend towards an omnivorous musical taste among consumers, both elitist highbrows and popular brows, but higher in the former. Descriptive variables already suggested the trend. It has been proposed that high status people listen to many musical genres because of the broad knowledge they have gained from the social networks and the constant communication with persons of different cultures (Peterson and Simkus 1992). For Bryson, these people have *multicultural capital*.

Although generally speaking elitist highbrows have increased their taste from 7.49 (1982) to 8.50 (1992) and 9.71 (2002) genres, this level masks the fact that: (1) elitist exclusive snobs (people with a univorous highbrow taste) have barely enlarged their omnivorousness record: 5.30 in 1982, 6.41 in 1992, and 5.60 in 2002; and (2) elitist inclusive omnivores (who like highbrow and popular musical genres) have showed a steady increase in the number of genres liked: from 8.88 in 1982 to 9.51 in 1992 and to 11.18 in 2002.

Once we discounted the effect of structural variables affecting the composition of the different cohorts and the result of the immediate environment, we found a net increase among elitist inclusive omnivores during the 20 years analyzed, especially during 2002, whereas elitist exclusive snobs have reduced the breadth of their musical tastes. These results suggest that elitist inclusive omnivores have enlarged their tastes to the popular brows domain (as suggested by Wilensky 1964).

Nevertheless, we did not find support for the hypothesis that younger, more omnivorous cohorts of people were replacing older cohorts. Actually we found a consistent

trend towards the contrary: the younger the respondent, the weaker its omnivorousness record. In fact, Peterson and Kern also found this trend in their model of middlebrow genres liked by both highbrows and non-highbrows. We found that cohorts are greatly influenced by environmental social values that shorten or enlarge generational differences. In order to know if there were differences in age among cohorts of elitist inclusive omnivores and exclusive snobs, we checked for age differences during the three periods but none were found; nevertheless, both highbrow groups have comparatively become older. There seems to be, for instance, a more omnivorous taste for every generation 20 years younger due to a more favorable position in the distribution of the educational and income level: A person 25 years old in 2002 in comparison to another aged 45, on average likes 0.204 more musical genres, simply due to changes in educational level distribution. Generally, there is a positive relation between education and cultural consumption (see Tally Katz-Gerro 1999).

Highbrows have become more educated than non-highbrows during the period studied but have not become proportionally more favored in income distribution. When taking a closer look at the separation of highbrows between elitist inclusive omnivores and exclusive snobs, we found that: (1) both had almost the same proportion of upper secondary education (with degree) and college and higher education degrees in comparison to non-highbrows, but elitist exclusive snobs showed a higher proportion of college and higher degrees than elitist inclusive omnivorous. Both showed a high rate of increasing their numbers in the higher bracket of the educational level. As far as income distribution is concerned, snobs have lost 12.26 points of percentage among respondents over the median income distribution, whereas omnivores only 7.6 points. In fact, omnivores have become more abundant, in comparison to snobs, in relative and absolute numbers.

Women's greater interest in musical genres is explained as an investment that can provide them with an efficient weapon to survive in a male-dominated business world (Paul DiMaggio 1982). Nevertheless one has to take into account that, as Peter Christenson and Jon Brian Peterson have noted (1988), women are more likely to confirm that they use music as a secondary gratification or a general background activity. Interestingly, being white, net of the effect of the other variables, reduces the respondents' omnivorousness trend, a fact that merits further research.

The immediate environment had an effect on the structural variables for which distribution changed over time, that is, institutional values affect the consumers' process of socialization: metropolitan areas, educational level, household income distribution and gender. The year 1992 seems to be an exceptional year where all structural variables increase their effect on the omnivorous taste of people, but 2002 puts their effect back to levels lower than those seen in 1982; these findings show how judicious was Peterson and Kern's reticence to generalize the positive findings of 1992 (1996:902) and raises concern about the fact that 2002 survey was collected as part of the Current Population Survey (1982 and 1992 were a supplement to the National Crime Survey). However, the immediate environment does not affect marital status and the fact of being white.

Finally, our findings support Bryson's (1996, 1997) proposition and produced evidence that musical tastes have a specific pattern of exclusiveness. That is, the common association during the period studies between the set of musical preferences and markers of social class suggests that musical genres whose fans have the least education are also those most likely to be rejected by the musically tolerant (those better educated). Further, the differences in the association between both sets of indicators during the period (temporal

changes) put forward that the changes in the composition of consumers liking musical genres, according to their markers of social class, put forward a change from regional or ethnic cultures to mass cultures or class cultures. Holbrook and Schindler (1989, 1994) have proposed that as cohorts of people move forward in the adulthood period, those genres liked by people who advance in the social ladder show a carryover effect with regard to the musical tastes developed during their youth.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This paper has addressed the meanings of musical preferences, in particular, the development of the omnivorous trend suggested and its distribution among highbrow elitists (both exclusive and inclusive) and consumers with a popular taste, and the limits that highbrows put on their popular taste. Although at the societal level there is a general trend that favors the omnivorousness thesis, as soon as we adjusted it by a set of structural factors and consumers' tastes it was only operating together with elitist inclusive omnivores during the 20 years studied, while the rest of the consumers did not. For the U.S. society it can be said that younger cohorts are becoming less omnivorous, *per se*. Whether it is because there is an abundant supply of cultural products and entertainment products or not merits further investigation. Nevertheless, younger cohorts are becoming more educated and have a better access to higher levels of income, this fact making them more omnivorous, and the latter effect dominates the former.

As far as the meanings of musical preferences are concerned, it can be said that the distinction of an omnivorous taste is gaining status through two paths: 1) the new cohorts of elitist inclusive omnivores are becoming more educated (in comparison) and then more omnivorous and 2) elitist inclusive omnivores are therefore generally becoming more

omnivorous, and this group is gaining numbers. As expected, musical genres with audiences that had educational levels below the mean profile were less preferred by upscale consumers, but as time went by there were changes in the association of musical preferences with social class indicators, and some popular brows have gained social status.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that our findings add to our knowledge of the market logic of musical preferences by developing a better understanding of the structural factors that affect musical preferences and their meanings, both shaping the consumption of musical genres.

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Table 1:
Resistant M-estimators from the linear regression of omnivorousness on the selected regressors

Coefficients	Value	Std. error	t value
(Intercept)	10.7317	3.5551	3.0187
Birth year	-0.0039	0.0018	-2.1204
Period: 1992	19.4268	4.8252	4.0261
Period: 2002	15.1554	3.9652	3.8221
Highbrow taste: Yes	4.6733	0.1390	33.6175
Lowbrow distaste: Yes	-1.8365	0.0629	-29.1845
Educational level: Some upper secondary	0.4615	0.1186	3.8927
Educational level: Upper secondary	1.0158	0.1056	9.6153
Educational level: College or higher	2.0075	0.1104	18.1913
Gender: Male	-0.2220	0.0587	-3.7802
Marital status: Divorced or separated	0.1651	0.0492	3.3543
Marital status: Widowed	-0.1503	0.0670	-2.2425
Marital status: Married	-0.0509	0.0377	-1.3497
Income: Below median	-0.1120	0.0633	-1.7699
White: Yes	-0.2354	0.0402	-5.8528
Metropolis: Yes	0.1904	0.0660	2.8846
Highbrow taste:Yes*Lowbrow distaste:Yes	-2.0191	0.2196	-9.1949
Birth year*Period: 1992	-0.0096	0.0025	-3.8237
Birth year*Period: 2002	-0.0078	0.0021	-3.7949
Period: 1992*Highbrow: Yes	-0.4762	0.1818	-2.6200
Period: 2002*Highbrow: Yes	2.9074	0.1558	18.6650
Period: 1992*Lowbrow distaste: Yes	-0.6712	0.0886	-7.5780
Period: 2002*Lowbrow distaste: Yes	-0.3334	0.0723	-4.6144
Period: 1992*Gender: Male	0.0817	0.0826	0.9887
Period: 2002*Gender: Male	-0.1187	0.0676	-1.7547
Period: 1992*Metropolis: Yes	0.2230	0.0912	2.4457
Period: 2002*Metropolis: Yes	0.2278	0.0769	2.9614
Period:1992*Educational level:Some upper secondary	-0.0724	0.1819	-0.3981
Period:2002*Educational level:Some upper secondary	-0.2015	0.1526	-1.3202
Period: 1992*Educational level: Upper secondary	0.1352	0.1581	0.8555
Period: 2002*Educational level: Upper secondary	-0.4126	0.1331	-3.0990
Period: 1992*Educational level: College or higher	0.1548	0.1633	0.9475
Period: 2002*Educational level: College or higher	-0.5901	0.1368	-4.3150
Period: 1992*Income: Below median	-0.5234	0.0887	-5.9012
Period: 2002*Income: Below median	-0.1483	0.0725	-2.0460
Period: 1992*Highbrow:Yes*Lowbrow distaste: Yes	1.2993	0.2958	4.3924
Period: 2002*Highbrow:Yes*Lowbrow distaste: Yes	-2.1690	0.2560	-8.4720

Figure 1:
Highbrow and closeness effect displays

Period*Highbrow taste*LBrow distaste effect plot

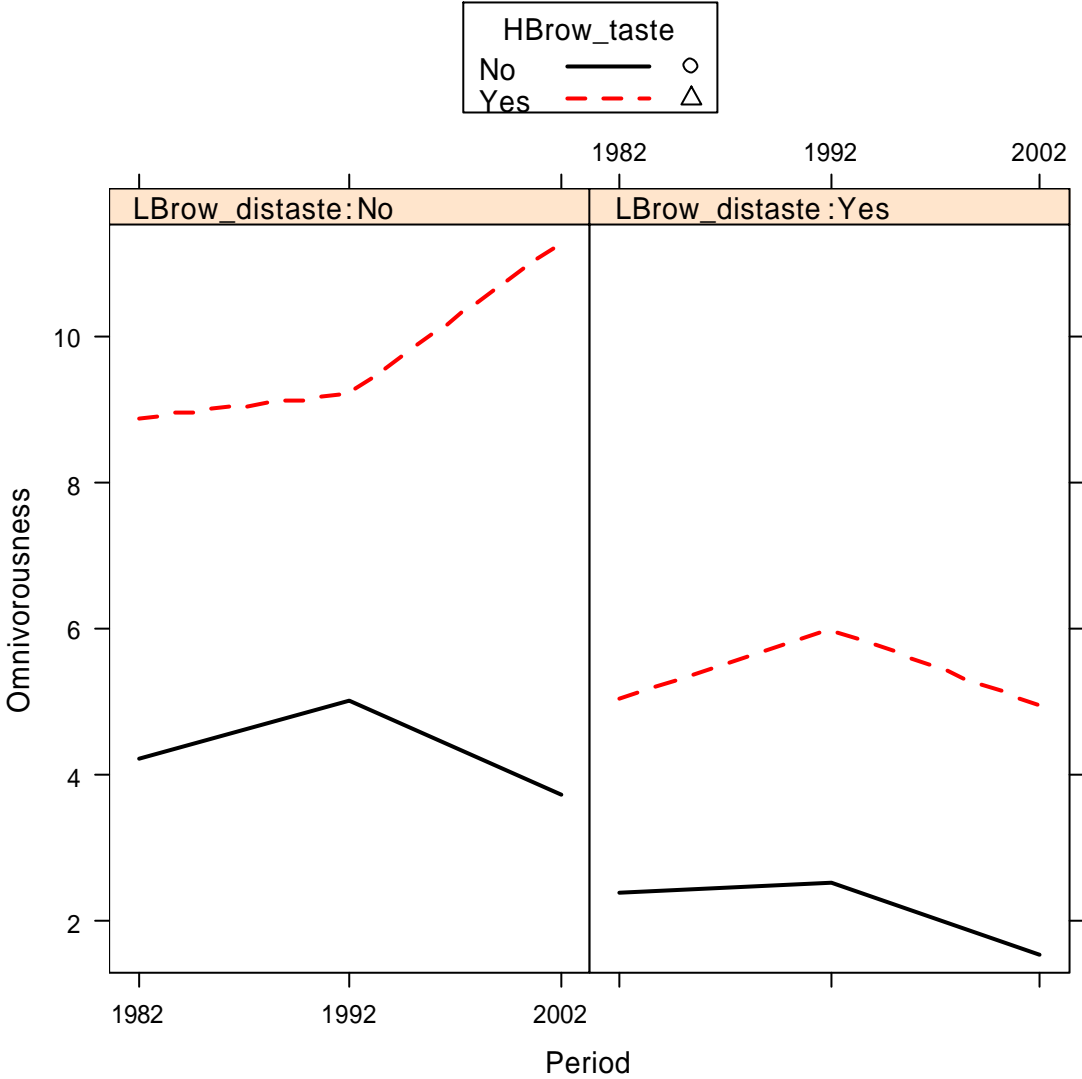
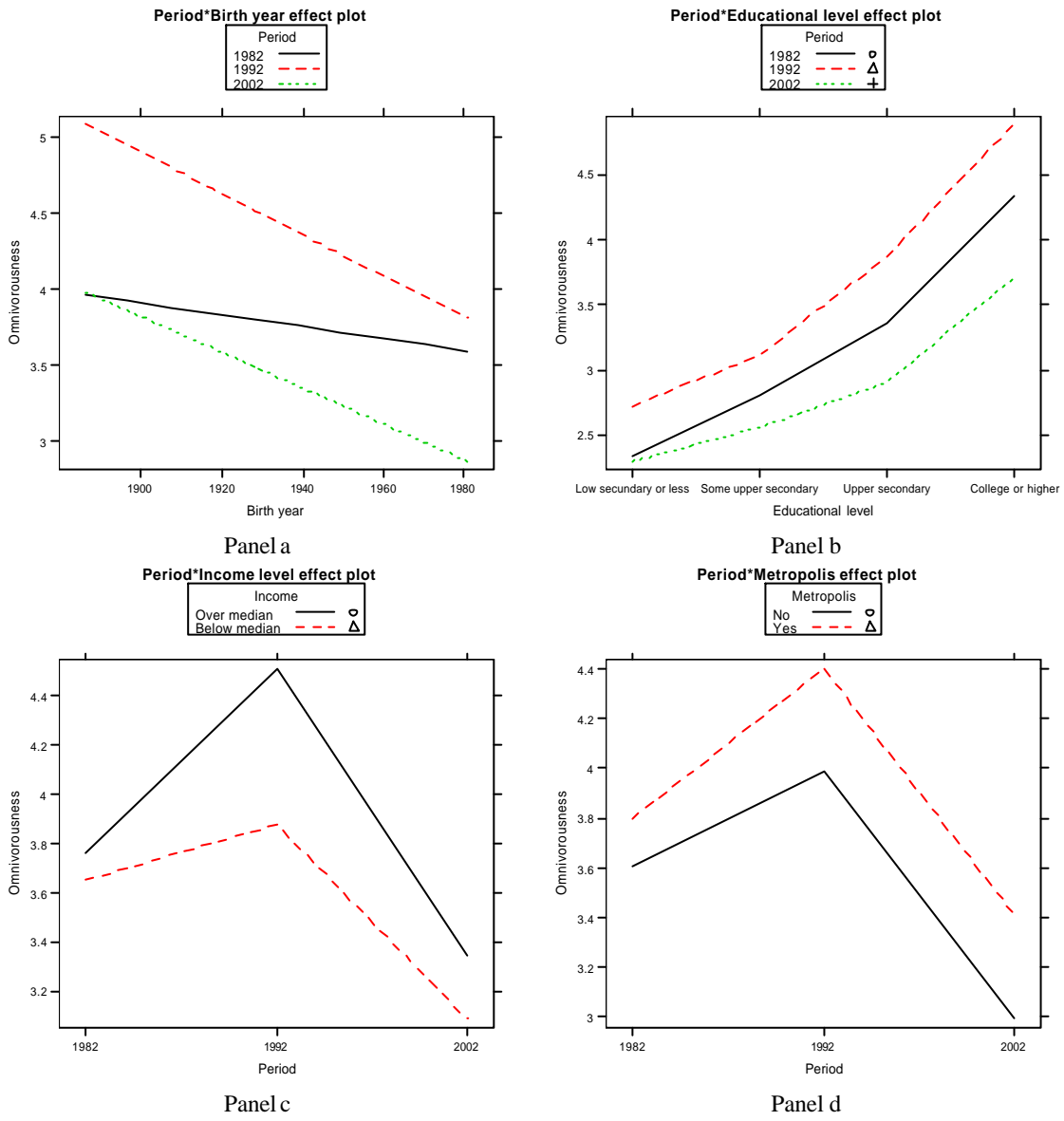


Figure 2:
Structural and socialization effect displays



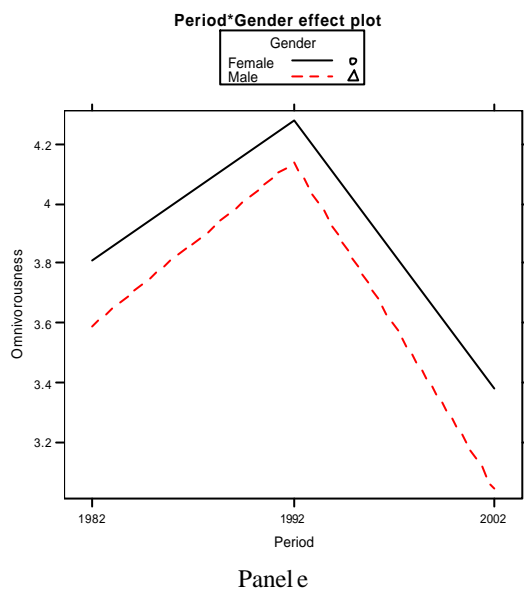


Figure 3. Communalities analysis: symmetric map. Association between the set of musical genres and the markers of social class (in principal coordinates).

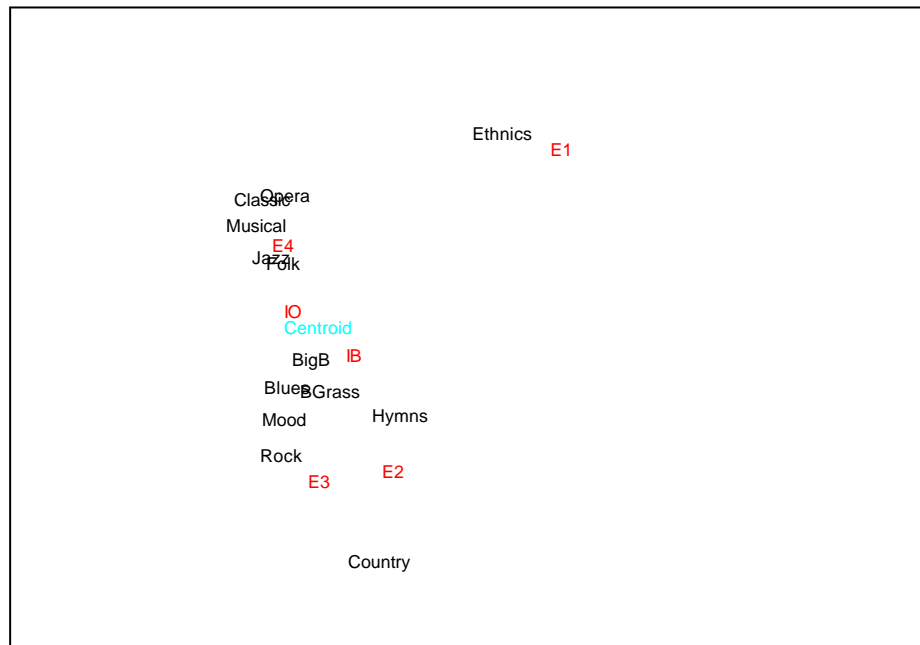
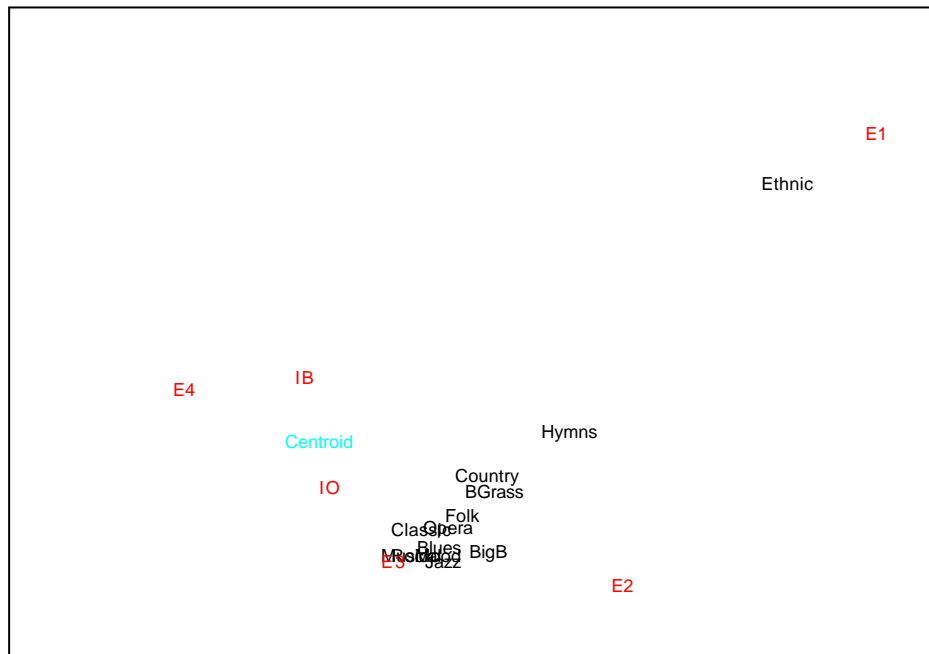


Figure 4: Differences analysis; symmetric map of the association between the set of musical genres and the markers of social class (in principal coordinates).



Appendix

A and **B** are two $n \times m$ matrices, where n is the number of different types of music and m represents the number of levels corresponding to the classificatory variables, in this case, educational and income level. These association tables, with common rows and columns, are collected at two different time periods: **B** corresponds to 2002 and **A** at 1982. The data matrix to apply correspondence analysis takes a particular block format:

$$\begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{A} & \mathbf{B} \\ \mathbf{B} & \mathbf{A} \end{bmatrix} \quad (1)$$

which let us to capture communalities and differences between both tables.

The sum component **A + B** captures communalities, or strong associations which are independent of the year of measurement. The difference component, **A - B** captures asymmetries between the two tables, corresponding to different periods.

Let the singular value decomposition (Eckart & Young, 1936) of **A + B** and **A - B** be respectively:

$$\mathbf{A} + \mathbf{B} = \mathbf{U} \mathbf{D}_r \mathbf{V}^T \quad \mathbf{A} - \mathbf{B} = \mathbf{X} \mathbf{D}_s \mathbf{Y}^T$$

where **U**, **V**, **X** and **Y** are singular vectors of the sum and differences, respectively, and

D_r and **D_s** are diagonal matrices with the singular values of the communalities and asymmetries respectively, in their main diagonal. Then, the singular value decomposition of the $2n \times 2m$ block matrix is (Greenacre, 2003):

$$\begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{A} & \mathbf{B} \\ \mathbf{B} & \mathbf{A} \end{bmatrix} = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} \begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{U} & \mathbf{X} \\ \mathbf{U} & -\mathbf{X} \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{D}_r & \mathbf{0} \\ \mathbf{0} & \mathbf{D}_s \end{bmatrix} \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} \begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{V} & \mathbf{Y} \\ \mathbf{V} & -\mathbf{Y} \end{bmatrix}^T$$

where

$$\frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} \begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{U} \\ \mathbf{U} \end{bmatrix}^T \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} \begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{U} \\ \mathbf{U} \end{bmatrix} = \frac{1}{2} \mathbf{U}^T \mathbf{U} + \frac{1}{2} \mathbf{U}^T \mathbf{U} = \mathbf{I}.$$

The solutions related with the difference component appear as repeated vectors with a change in sign in the singular vectors. Since we apply CA, we add an additional component, which is the introduction of different weights, and then, standardization in the form of chi-square metric (Greenacre, 1984).

We are going to expose the main concepts related with the CA geometry, required to interpret the maps obtained in any CA software. In the main text, we describe which axes are related with communalities and which axes are related with differences. Such inertias are decomposed in the following way:

$$\begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{D}_a & \mathbf{0} \\ \mathbf{0} & \mathbf{D}_b \end{bmatrix} = \mathbf{F}^T \mathbf{D}_r \mathbf{F} = \mathbf{G}^T \mathbf{D}_c \mathbf{G}$$

where \mathbf{F} is a matrix that collects the principal coordinates (Greenacre, 1984) for rows (types of music), and \mathbf{G} is the matrix collecting principal coordinates for columns (segmentation variables). Further more, \mathbf{D}_a and \mathbf{D}_b are the diagonal matrices with the principal inertias of communalities and differences respectively in their main diagonals. Finally, \mathbf{D}_r and \mathbf{D}_c are diagonal matrices with the row masses (Greenacre, 1984) and column masses, in their main diagonal respectively.

The contribution of inertia (Greenacre, 1984) shows to what extend the geometric interpretation of the axis is determined by the variable categories (Blasius & Greenacre, 1994). In our application this can be used to assess which levels of the active segmentation variables have contributed most to the principal axis and thereby to give meaning to the obtained dimensions. The contribution of each active column variable (educational levels) to

the principal inertia is defined as the inertia components relative to their total. For the communality analysis, the corresponding expression is the following: $c_j g_{jk}^2 / \mathbf{a}_k$. For the difference analysis, it is: $c_j g_{jk}^2 / \mathbf{b}_k$. If the sum of contributions for each dimension is equal to 1, the values closer to this maximum will correspond to those levels, which contribute more in its meaning. Finally, we also check the correlation values for “types of music” and “segmentation variable levels” to complement the interpretation of the dimensions, as well, to see which types of music are well represented and then, which can be interpreted in such dimensionality. The squared correlations of the rows /columns, with respect to the principal axes, are the inertia components $r_i f_{ik}^2$ (for rows) and $c_j g_{jk}^2$ (for columns) expressed relative to the row (type of music) or column (segmentation variable level) total inertia, which are $\sum_k r_i f_{ik}^2$ and $\sum_k c_j g_{jk}^2$ respectively. The highest value for each observation, can take a value equal to 1, which will correspond to types of music/segmentation variable levels, more correlated to that particular axis.

Additionally, we run a CA of matched matrices with the 3 tables, 1982, 1992 and 2002. This analysis displays the uncentered difference between asymmetries of both periods. In such analysis we would confirm small difference between asymmetries, which justify the description of the analysis related to 1982-2002.