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Against the omnivore: assemblages of contemporary musical taste in the United Kingdom

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Abstract

This paper offers a comprehensive analysis of the structure of British musical taste, drawing on the unusually detailed survey questions and in-depth interviews carried out as part of the *Cultural Capital and Social Exclusion* project in 2003–04. Using cluster analysis, multinomial regression, and multiple correspondence analysis, the paper demonstrates that there is a major partition between those attracted to popular music, and those who prefer classical, jazz, or country music, which is primarily related to age divisions. More specifically, the analysis disputes that the concept of the 'cultural omnivore' is a valuable tool for understanding musical taste. We show that the considerable interest in a genre of 'light classical' music, which embraces easy listening, but not esoteric, forms of classical music, means that we should no longer view a taste for classical music as necessarily 'highbrow'. Once this point is recognised, most measures of the 'cultural omnivore' become problematic. The paper concludes by emphasising the need to recognise the continued importance of powerful, contested musical enthusiasms in contemporary cultural life.

Keywords

music, cultural omnivore, cultural capital

Acknowledgements

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In the past decade the concept of the cultural omnivore, who enjoys a pluralistic range of cultural activities, drawn from both elite and popular culture, has come to play a central role in cultural sociology. The reasons for this are not difficult to see. Firstly, the idea that contemporary cultural taste and practice is organised on a pluralistic basis in which increasing numbers of people range across cultural genres allows sociologists to explore the relationship between social structure and cultural life in new and original ways. It can be argued that omnivorousness marks the demise, or transformation, of the exclusive, 'snob' cultures, which were held to define the contours of status based culture in earlier periods and which were central to foundational sociological analysis of Max Weber and Pierre Bourdieu[1]. Some commentators thereby see the omnivore as a marker that the middle classes become more tolerant and in liberalising conditions[2]. Other sociologists, however, see the omnivore as the new embodiment of contemporary middle class domination, through their capacity to absorb previously opposed elements of cultural taste[3]. Whichever of these interpretations are accepted, omnivorousness now appears fundamental to sociological analysis of contemporary cultural consumption.

Secondly, though perhaps less well appreciated, the omnivore concept leads itself to clear and definite forms of empirical measurement from survey sources, through its ability to make an analytical virtue out of the existence of hybrid cultural activity which might otherwise appear to unsettle sociological accounts of culture. The omnivore debate has, in fact been central to the rapidly emerging quantitative analysis of cultural taste and activity, a field which had previously been dominated by qualitative research.

These two virtues have come to allow unusual, productive, cross fertilisation of theoretical reflection and empirical measurement. Yet, although this debate has been important in opening up new avenues for research on cultural taste and participation, this paper argues that it is now desirable to discard the 'chaotic concept' of the omnivore and move the debate onto a more structural terrain. In this paper we argue that the concept of the omnivore is a fundamentally empiricist one, where the possibility of deriving quantitative measures for the omnivore from varied survey sources drives the analytical agenda in a way which ultimately draws attention away from systematic structural inequalities in cultural life. It is not incidental that although the omnivore is widely debated in quantitative analysis, in journals such as *Poetics, American Sociological Review, European Sociological Review,* it has almost no resonance amongst qualitative researchers in cultural sociology, cultural and media studies, or anthropology[4]. Indeed, research from these domains on issues such as the nature of 'enthusiasms', the character of 'sub-cultures', or 'lifestyle enclaves', emphasise the continued significance of intense cultural communities of various kinds which seem at odds with omnivorousnes[5]. In practical terms, the concept relies on rudimentary survey data, normally where questions on taste for (some) pre-defined genres are asked. Therefore, and sometimes despite the theoretical orientations of its proponents, it depends on the reification of genre categories and fails to recognise the historically mutable and complex ways by which cultural boundaries are constructed, maintained, and challenged. When there are only a limited number of indicators of cultural activity, and especially when genre labels are used as measures (see Holt 1997) the concept of the omnivore appears to usefully measure those with multiple tastes, but at the cost of sidelining the complex patterning of their tastes which can be unravelled through appropriate quantitative analysis as well as by the use of qualitative data.

We draw on the sophisticated and extensive quantitative and qualitative data collected by the Cultural Capital and Social Exclusion (CCSE) project based at the Centre for Research on Socio-Cultural Change (CRESC) which has demonstrated the class based inequalities in

cultural taste and participation in contemporary Britain (e.g. Bennett et al 2009: Le Roux et al 2008). The particular contribution of this paper is to explore in more detail the definition and boundaries of musical taste by deploying survey questions which ask respondents about their taste for a series of musical works. Rather than a distinction between omnivores and univores (or abstainers), we show that there is a prime age-related tension between advocates of classical and popular music, and that this key boundary is rarely crossed. Within these two broad clusters, we also demonstrate the existence of more specific musical enthusiast clusters. We will show that musical taste thereby remains highly socially loaded and differentiated. We argue that our findings are in keeping with a broad Bourdieusian approach which emphasises the close relationship between cultural taste and social hierarchy.

Our focus on music is appropriate because most of the research on the cultural omnivore is focused on musical field in which the most rigorous kinds of survey analysis have been conducted (see e.g. Peterson and Kern 1996: Lopez Sintas et al 2008, etc). The CCSE survey data contains questions which ask respondents their liking or disliking of 8 genres of music, including not only more legitimate but also more popular forms of music, and uses a Likert scale. These kinds of genre based questions are not, in themselves unusual - questions on as many as 18 musical genres have been asked in the US General Social Survey (GSS) and have been analysed by sociologists such as Peterson and Bryson. The CCSE data has two additional features which accentuate its significance. Firstly it contains questions about the respondents liking and knowledge of 6 named musical works. By looking at the relationship between these liking for genre and named works of music it is possible to assess how far genre labels accurately capture specific musical preferences. Secondly, it also includes qualitative data, including interview material collected with a sub-sample of survey respondents, which makes it possible to assess whether respondents classified into different taste groups on the basis of their survey responses provide qualitative accounts which are consistent with this[6].

After discussing limitations with the literature on the cultural omnivore, we turn, in the second section, to introduce the broad patterns of musical taste revealed by CCSE data where we identify a clear tension between those appreciating classical music and those who prefer popular musical forms. Thirdly, we then conduct a cluster analysis of musical genres which reveals the existence of eight distinctive clusters, only one of which genuinely straddles this divide between classical and contemporary popular music. We fourthly examine the relationship between people's tastes for genres and for named musical works using multiple correspondence analysis. This demonstrates the centrality of age as the most important divide. We finally examine the cloud of individuals within multiple correspondence analysis as a means of further demonstrating the limited power of the omnivore model. In the conclusion we restate the need to recognize cultural cleavages and oppositions in musical taste.

1. The cultural omnivore in the musical field

The concept of the cultural omnivore was introduced by Richard Peterson in the 1990s in his account of the changing nature of American musical taste (Peterson and Simkus 1992; Peterson and Kern 1996). It is worth noting that Peterson himself did not expect the idea of the omnivore (which he initially sometimes put in inverted commas to indicate its provisional and metaphorical status[7]) to become so influential (Peterson 2005). In his admirably precise and clear way, Peterson laid out the basic idea at stake as follows.

> Appreciation of the fine arts became a mark of high status in the late 19th century as part of an attempt to distinguish 'highbrowed' Anglo-Saxons from new 'lowbrowed' immigrants whose popular entertainments were said to corrupt morals and thus were to be shunned. In recent years, however, many high status people are far from being snobs and have become eclectic, even 'omnivorous' in their tastes … . This suggests

a qualitative shift in the basis of marking status – from snobbish exclusion to omnivorous appropriation

(Peterson and Kern 1996: 900)

In this formulation, Peterson was able to use the idea of the omnivore as a means of settling accounts with Bourdieu's influential analysis of cultural capital in a form which has been followed by many critics of Bourdieu's work (e.g. Chan and Goldthorpe 2005, 2007a, 2007b). Yet the concept has also been attractive in offering those more sympathetic to Bourdieu's arguments, notably Alan Warde, who defines contemporary cultural capital in terms of its omnivorous orientation (see Bennett *et al* 2009, Warde *et al* 2007; 2008). Before considering this important debate, we need to focus on the architecture, rather than the content, of the omnivore argument, as this has structured the ensuing debate.

Peterson's argument proceeds by classifying musical genres asked on the General Social Survey into either 'highbrow' (classical & opera), 'middlebrow' (easy listening, broadway, big band), and 'lowbrow' (gospel, country, blue grass, rock and blues) and seeing how far those who liked highbrow music also liked middle- and low-brow forms. Between 1982 and 1992 it became increasingly likely for highbrows to also report more preferences for low – and middle-brow music. This approach has been influential in defining omnivorousness as (a) a kind of score or scale where the more genres that one likes, the more omnivorous you are, and (b) as linked to mobility across key categorical types defined by the sociologist (in this case, 'high', 'middle', and 'lowbrow'). Most subsequent omnivore research uses one or both of these methods to measure to omnivorousness[8].

Let us consider four key issues in this conceptual architecture. Firstly, how useful is it to group musical genres into 'brow' categories? After all, these labels were developed primarily with reference to literary taste (see, for the case of British literature, Rose 2000) and have hardly ever been used by musical audiences[9]. They have also been more influential in the United States than in Europe (see Savage 2009 who argues that although the terms had resonance in inter war Britain they largely fell into abeyance by the 1950s). Peterson (2005: 258–9) sees the idea of the 'highbrow snob' as tapping Bourdieu's analysis of cultural capital and legitimate culture which he develops in *Distinction,* but this is not warranted by Bourdieu's own analysis, which focuses on the contrast between the 'Kantian aesthetic' and the 'culture of the necessary'[10].

Secondly, there is a typical assumption that a liking for classical music is the litmus test for exponents of 'highbrow' culture[11]. Schulze, for instance distinguishes between 'highbrow', 'folk' and 'pop', and this has been popularized by van Eijck (2001, 2008). Sonnett (2004) differentiates between art/highbrow, omnivore, folk/lowbrow, and pop/mass culture. Despite disagreements in how popular music is categorized, there is here a common view that 'highbrow' music can be singled out through an appreciation of classical music. Here, we often see a genuflection to Bourdieu's famous arguments about its apparent role in constituting cultural capital (see notably Peterson 2005). We should note that Bourdieu, however, does not regard a taste for classical music as necessarily 'highbrow', or a marker of cultural capital. In *Distinction,* he even regards a predilection for Strauss's 'Blue Danube' as a marker of popular taste. Musicologists recognise that the musical canon is no longer to be conflated with classical music (e.g. Clarke 2007, Krims 2007).

This is not a trivial point: once we recognise that classical music itself might not be inherently highbrow, then indicators of omnivorous ness might simply be picking up on the remaking of classical music itself. There is evidence that 'light classical' music has increased in popularity in recent years. This is based on the popularization of classical music components in popular culture and the media. Krims (2007), focusing on the popularity of popular classical musicians such as Charlotte Church, Sarah Brightman, and the extensive sales of compilations

such as *Bach for Relaxation* or *The most relaxing piano album in the world....Ever!* emphasizes the significance of a new role for classical music as an aspect of interior design[12]. Further evidence for the pertinence of this kind of orientation is found in the interviews conducted by Savage, Bagnall and Longhurst (2005) who showed that many middle-class Manchester residents embraced 'light classical' music, but specifically avoided 'difficult' forms of classical. They repudiated *avant garde* or esoteric classical music in favour of 'easy listening': Mozart or Vivaldi rather than Schoenberg or Stravinsky. In short, rather than people becoming more omnivorous, perhaps genre boundaries have been reworked. Rather than seeing those who like 'light classical' and 1960s rock as omnivores because they seem to straddle genre boundaries, perhaps they are actually genuine enthusiasts for an emergent musical sub-culture associated with new urban spaces which is not accurately captured by standard genre labels[13].

Thirdly, this leads us to focus further on boundary making and classificatory processes themselves. Here, we rehearse the arguments of Holt (1998) who insists that we need to examine how boundaries around and within genres are defined, rather than take genre labels at face value[14]. This is an argument amply developed in cultural studies where writers such as John Frow (2006) see genres as constantly evolving or in process, as subject to mutation and hybridisation, and as historically mutable. Antoine Hennion (2001) has developed this point by emphasizing that genres are constructed through performances involving a range of human, institutional and technical agencies, so emphasizing the fluidity and complexity of musical process which cannot usefully be seen in terms of static and all encompassing 'genre' labels (see also Born 2005 who elaborates how concepts of assemblage can be deployed for a similar purpose).

Finally, we can identify an even more fundamental issue at stake here. Peterson's argument has the characteristic structure of much Anglo-American social thought (on which see Strathern 1990). It differentiates a structure (in this case, of genres arrayed into a hierarchy) and then the possibility of individual mobility within this structure (through the figure of the omnivore). One result is to paradoxically reproduce the hierarchical categories which it also argued are being transcended. Savage *et al* (2001) and Savage (2007) have argued that a rather similar structure is in place for contemporary English conceptions of class identity. Most individuals prefer to position themselves as mobile between classes, and thus narrate stories of individual and familial social mobility, but in the process they produce accounts of classes as the benchmarks from which mobility can be measured. This conceptual architecture involves a 'variable centred' focus on the characteristics which distinguish the omnivore from the non-omnivore. We might see this as akin to traditional 'status attainment' approaches to social mobility, in which attention centres on the correlates of 'omnivorous' individuals. The problem here is the lack of attention to what might be termed the 'cultural structure' in which mobility is deemed to take place[15]. Here, we need to note that studies of omnivorousness largely ignore Pierre Bourdieu's conception of the field, which as Martin (2003) has emphasised, allows a means of understanding the patterning of cultural practices and tastes, and in particular a means of delineating the tensions and inequalities which are embedded in them. This demands a systematic analysis of dislikes and avoidances alongside likes and practices. Unfortunately, Bourdieu's work is usually cited in the omnivore literature simply for establishing the importance of the highbrow snob, rather than through its concern with field dynamics. Yet this figure of the highbrow snob is a red herring. In their study of cultural taste and participation in contemporary Britain, Bennett et al (2009) thus demonstrate the very limited significance of 'intellectual', snobbish dispositions towards cultural activity, in a way which is akin to Lamont's (1992) study of American middle class culture. Nonetheless, they demonstrate that there continue to be tensions between extensive engagement on the one hand against cultural disengagement on the other. This allows omnivorousness to be seen, in Alan Warde's (Warde *et al* 2008, Bennett et al 2009) useful terms, not in volume, but in compositional terms[16]. In exploring the limits to even the most liberal omnivore's cultural vocabulary, the relationship between liking *and disliking* is necessary to bring out the specific

reformation of taste communities. This 'compositional' approach means developing the work of Bryson (1996), Warde et al (2007; 2008). This means avoiding the fallacy that those who appear to be predisposed towards more genres according to survey responses are somehow more tolerant. Lahire has exposed the limitations of this kind of thinking very clearly

> … is it really a sign of greater tolerance when someone declares that they like a greater number of musical genres than any other people, or is it rather the simple reflection of their having a wider musical knowledge which would not necessarily exclude a severe symbolic hierarchisation? Conversely, does the fact that an individual does not like certain musical genres necessarily signify 'intolerance'? There is nothing contradictory in the idea that someone might dislike something whilst believing that others were perfectly within their rights to like it'

> (Lahire 2008: 183)

Lahire emphasises that the apparent omnivorousness of the educated middle classes may simply reflect their greater knowledge of musical forms and hence their capacity to answer genre questions, rather than be a marker of any kind of tolerance or genuine hybridity. This argument is echoed in earlier analyses of CCSE data. Warde *et al* (2008: 164) thus insist on the provisional and limited nature of cultural tolerance, noting that even for apparent omnivores, 'persistent forms of discrimination and disavowal of forms of popular culture (reality TV, fast food, electronic dance music) suggest that the openness of the omnivore is partial and qualified'. In a different paper, Warde *et al* (2007) have also talked about the 'myth of the cultural omnivore'.

In order to redress these problems, this paper first seeks to lay out the structure of the musical field in contemporary Britain. Avoiding a priori assumptions that certain kinds of music are necessarily high, middle or low-brow, we firstly assess the extent to which musical likes and dislikes are integrally related. We show that there are indeed, systematic tensions between those who like classical and those who like popular music and that only a small minority of Britons straddle these two musical camps. Using cluster and multiple correspondence analysis, we delineate eight different musical clusters, seven of which are characterised by structured liking (for cognate genres) and disliking (for distant ones). We show how it is preferable to define the middle classes not as omnivores – since there are marked avoidances and dislikes in their musical tastes – but as experts. Finally, we use in depth interviews to demonstrate how the differentiation between those who like classical music as a form of easy listening and those who define it in more 'energetic' terms demonstrates the need to unpack genre categories carefully.

2. Patterns of musical taste

The Cultural Capital and Social Exclusion (CCSE) project consists of a national survey with 1564 respondents, focus groups with 25 contrasting social groups, and 44 qualitative interviews, 22 of which are with a sub-sample of survey respondents (see Appendix for a technical account of the survey component)[17]. In this paper we focus specifically on musical taste, focusing on two unusual strengths of its survey data: firstly extensive details on dislikes, and secondly questions on named musical works as well as musical genres. We begin by unravelling our data to consider what it tells us about the boundaries of musical taste communities. Table 1 reports people's liking for eight genres, chosen to be deliberately skewed towards more 'popular' musical forms.

Table 1: Liking/ disliking of musical genres (per cent ages)

Genre	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Don't know
Rock	15	12	13	10	9	9	29	4
Modern Jazz	5	7	14	12	13	16	32	1
World Music	6	7	10	13	14	14	34	3
Classical, inc Opera	16	13	13	14	10	11	23	0
Country and Western	13	13	13	14	12	12	24	1
Electronic	6	6	8	7	9	13	45	7
Heavy Metal	4	7	6	7	7	12	55	3
Urban inc Hip Hop, R&B	10	9	11	11	11	12	31	5

Notes: liking of musical genres on scale where 1 = like very much indeed and 7 = do not like at all

The questions ask respondents to rank musical genres from 1 (like very much indeed) to 7 (do not like at all), so that we can differentiate real enthusiasts from moderate fans, those who dislike mildly from those who detest a given musical genre. This is especially valuable given Peterson's (2005: 265) recent emphasis on the paucity of musical research which examines dislikes as well as likes. The most arresting finding from Table 1 is that the category of '7', indicating extreme dislike, is the most common single response for every genre. People tend not to give neutral or ambivalent responses about music they do not like, but react strongly against it. This is hardly *prima facie* evidence to support the omnivore thesis, and is a striking rejoinder to Chan and Goldthorpe's (2007: 14) argument that musical taste is affected more by self-realization than with status competition. These patterns are more extreme than those of Bryson (1996) who is the best known exponent of the view that musical dislikes are sociologically important. Her account of American musical taste also used (5 point) Likert scales, and revealed that out of the 18 musical genres from the 1992 GHS, only heavy metal and rap had the highest scores in the 'dislike very much' category. If anything, there may well be a growing trend to identify extreme dislikes in the United States: Sonnett's (2004) analysis of later GSS data suggests that opera and new age are also characterised by dislikes rather than likes.

Table 1 also shows that for rock and for classical music, the second most common responses after '7' is '1'. Apparently extreme fans stand opposed to severe critics. There were no cases from the 1992 American GSS when 'like very much' was the most common response. For CCSE only for classical and for country and western music do the middle ranging responses (between 3–5) accumulate more responses than either the very positive (1–2) or very negative (6–7) ones. We thus have prima facie evidence that our British sample from 2003 reports considerably more polarised taste than has often been identified in other recent survey research.

We can also detect an interesting inversion in the aggregate popularity of high and popular music. It is interesting that classical music is actually the single most popular musical genre, with 16 per cent liking it a lot, and 42 per cent giving it a positive evaluation (1–3)[18]. This is hardly consistent with viewing it as 'highbrow'. By contrast, more 'popular' forms of music are actually much less liked across the board. Urban, world, jazz, electro and heavy metal all see high negative ratings. 74 per cent do not like heavy metal (rankings 5–7); 67 per cent don't like electronic, 59 per cent don't like world and 54 per cent don't like urban. This point is important since it indicates the need to disaggregate different kinds of classical music fans, separating out, for instance, fans of 'light classical' from classical enthusiasts.

Table 2 reports frequencies to the distinctive CCSE questions concerning whether respondents had listened to, and liked, eight musical works chosen to exemplify different musical genres and periods of composition, from musical artists of varied ethnicities, nations, and gender. Since Bourdieu's own analysis in *Distinction* (e.g. Bourdieu 1985: Table 1 and

Figure 1), questions of this type have not been asked in comparable musical research and constitute a major innovation which we will elaborate below

Table 2: Knowledge of and taste towards musical works (percentages)

Musical work	Listened and liked	Listened, don't like	Not listened, have heard of	Have not heard of	Don't know
Wonderwall, Oasis	47	14	13	27.	0
Stan, Eminem	31	18	16	35	0
4 Seasons, Vivaldi	56	6	18	21	0
Einstein on Beach, Glass	3	3	11	84	0
Symphony 5, Mahler	19	6	21	53	0
Kind of Blue, Miles Davis	13	3	14	69	0
Oops, I did it again Britney Spears	26	39	12	22	0
Chicago, Sinatra	65	17	10	8	0

Notes: Percentages may not add up to 100 because of rounding

Whereas even the most popular genres of music failed to get more than 43 per cent of the sample endorsing them, Table 2 shows that some specific works of music command much more appeal: Nearly two thirds like Frank Sinatra's, *Chicago,* well over half like Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*, and nearly half like Oasis's *Wonderwall*. By contrast, however, the other musical works are much less popular, but in all cases except for Britney Spears, *Oops I did it Again,* this is not because they are disliked, but because respondents have not heard of them (or at least, cannot remember hearing of them), and hence don't feel able to say whether they like them or not. It may not be surprising that 84 per cent have not heard of Philip Glass's *Einstein on the Beach*, but remarkably perhaps, over two thirds of respondents have not heard of Miles Davis's *Kind of Blue*, despite its canonical status in jazz history. We can see that knowledge, rather than taste, comes over as a key area of stratification of musical taste for particular works of music. This is evidence which supports Lahire's (2008) contention that taste for cultural genres need to be placed in the context of the knowledge which different kinds of respondents have of them. It is also consistent with Bourdieu's stress on cultural capital / competence / knowledge as a key element in the constitution of distinction and social differences.

The key divide amongst musical works here distinguishes between musical works in such widespread currency that large numbers know – and like – them, and which range across light classical (Vivaldi), mainstream (Sinatra) and popular (Oasis) genres, and those which are very much of minority interest and taste, which also range across classical and popular forms. This underlines our point about the need for care in drawing inferences from data on musical genres: those who dislike such genres might include those who have never heard of the music but don't like the connotations of that genre, from those (smaller numbers) who have heard of such music and don't like it.

Table 3: relationship between liking for rock and classical music

	Like classic	Neutral classic	Dislike classic	Total
Like rock	6.3	12.8	7.6	26.7
Neutral rock	8.1	12.4	11.3	31.9
Dislike rock	13.7	10.4	13.4	37.4
Total	29.1	37.3	33.3	100

Analysis of this data reveals a key tension between those who are drawn to classical and those who are drawn to popular musical forms. Table 3 illustrates this with a simple crosstabulation between these who like these two most popular musical genres. Only 6 per cent like both classical and rock music. By contrast, 22 percent like classical but are neutral or hostile to rock: 21 per cent like rock but are neutral or hostile to classical. Only 13 percent of respondents are hostile to both forms of music. Most respondents hence some kind of relationship to one of these two musical genres but very few are positively inclined to both of them. These findings are in apparent contrast to several other studies of the musical omnivore, for instance Peterson and Kern (1996) who found that those 'highbrows' who liked classical and opera, were also more likely than other respondents to report more 'lowbrow' and 'middlebrow' tastes[19]. Lizardo and Skiles (2009) similarly argue that for many nations, including the UK, highbrow fans of classical music and opera are more likely to like other genres of music (and see more generally Sonnett 2004, on the US). However, in an important paper Gindo Tampubolon (2008), examining the same GSS data used by Bryson (1996), shows that once missing data is controlled for there is actually a fundamental division in the United States between two types of omnivores, one group who are attracted to pop and rock, heavy metal, rock and blues, and jazz, and a second group who are predisposed to musicals, classical, and folk music, who might be identified as 'light classical' supporters. This analysis suggests similar cleavages to those evident from the CCSE data.

Tampubolon's distinction immediately suggests that the fundamental divide may not lie between middle class omnivores and working class univores or abstainers, but between the older and younger age groups. Given the extent to which research on musical sub- cultures has focused on the role of music in defining generational sub-cultures (Thornton 1996; Bennett 2000; 2001), it is surprising that this aspect has been relatively played down in the omnivore debate[20]. One of the exceptions is Bellavance (2008), who on the basis of qualitative interviews in Canada sees the contrast been 'old' and 'new' as at least as important as that between 'high' and 'low' culture.

We can more systematically assess the structuring of musical likes and dislikes by conducting a cluster analysis of respondents according to their liking for musical genres, using the full seven-scale range of the Likert scales, which allows an unprecedented unravelling of the differentiation of the musical field (see Table 4)[21]. Each cluster shows a score for each of the eight genres, so that we can identify whether those in particular clusters are omnivorous (liking more than one genre, and if so, what kind) and also whether particular tastes (high scores) for certain genres are associated with distastes (low scores) for others. We can also distinguish strong liking and disliking from more moderate tastes by differentiating between the lowest possible score of 1 and the highest possible of 7. Table 4 also reports the proportion of women, respondents from different age groups, graduates and professionals located in each cluster, so that we can assess whether the clusters are associated with certain kinds of social group.

We used Schwarz's BIC statistic to assess the number of clusters required. The cut off point was to accept all the improvements in fit up to less than 5% over the first difference obtained in BIC terms. This leads to 8 clusters: including cluster 9 would have improved our solution by only 3.4% in BIC terms. Perhaps the most arresting finding here is that only two of these eight clusters (3 and 4, comprising 24 percent of the respondents) are omnivorous to the extent that at least half of the eight genres are liked (defined here as a score of 4 and over). All the other clusters, comprising three quarters of the sample, are characterised by the dominance of dislikes. One cluster (8) gives seven out of eight genres scores of less than 2.5. This cluster might best be understood as the only one which is not strongly vested in liking for any musical genre, since the country and western score (4.15 percent) hardly surpasses the middle ranking 4. Cluster 1 has six low scores, and clusters 5 and 6 have five low scores. Cluster 5 (11 percent) isolates those who only like urban music. Echoing Bryson's (1996) findings for American musical taste, heavy metal is the most common negative reference point for many

clusters, being singled out with the lowest score in no less than five, and it is closely followed by electronic (with four scores of under 2). Country is the only genre which does not attract a very low negative score (less than 2) from at least one cluster. Our cluster analysis therefore demonstrates, following Bryson, that it is musical dislikes which drive the structuring of musical taste.

Table 4 also reveals that different clusters may report similar levels of liking for certain musical genres. The case of classical music is interesting here. Positive scores for this are found in three different clusters. Cluster 6 represents the nearest to conventional 'high brow' musical taste, with an exceptionally high score for classical music (6.07), a good score (4.51) also for jazz (elements of which could be combined into a highbrow formation) and low scores for every other genre, often very low scores. Elderly professionals are over-represented in its ranks. But we can also see that high scores for classical are also found in cluster 1, where it is combined with a liking for country music. This might be the cluster which appreciates 'light classical' music. A liking for classical is also found in cluster 4, which is the most 'omnivorous' of the clusters, with high scores for country, classical, rock and world, but with dislikes for electronic, and urban music.

A similar issue is found for rock music, liking for which is scattered across four clusters. This is probably because the meaning of rock itself varies according to those other genres which are associated with it. Cluster 7 includes afficianados of rock and heavy metal ('loud rock'); cluster 2 brings together those who like jazz, urban and rock (jazz rock'). Cluster 3 is comprised of a more omnivorous group who are very keen on rock, electronic, and urban and have a moderate liking for heavy metal and urban but dislike country and classical ('contemporary rock').

The central point we wish to make is that only one cluster genuinely straddles classical music and popular music. This is cluster 4, which comprises those where a liking for country, classic, rock, and world are found, and even heavy metal scores almost indifferently. This is the counterpart of Van Eijck's (2001) 'new omnivore' grouping. Leaving aside this small group, however, although there is evidence for large amounts of 'short-range' omnivorousness linking cognate musical genres, we can clearly discern a powerful divide between popular and classical music enthusiasts.

This analysis can be deepened by looking at the demographic correlates of the clusters. The most 'omnivorous' clusters do not appear to be especially composed of the well-educated middle classes as Peterson and Kern (1996), Bryson (1996) and Chan and Goldthorpe (2006) suggest. The most 'transgressive' 'new omnivore' cluster (4) – the only one which spans classical and popular – has a roughly proportionate share of professionals and only a slight over-representation of graduates. This is a cluster populated by those aged between 45 and 64, (55 percent of this cluster is comprised of members of this age group). In the 'contemporary rock' cluster (3) 25–44 year olds are over-represented, but characteristics of class and education do not discriminate.

The importance of age for structuring cluster membership is underscored when we see that the youngest age group (18–24) are massively over represented amongst the urban enthusiast cluster 5. This is also the cluster which sees great over-representation of black respondents. By contrast those over 65 are dramatically over-represented in cluster 1 (light classical) and to a lesser extent cluster 6 (expert classical). Put in these terms we further see the power of an age-related cultural divide where popular music appeals to the young and classical music appeals to the old, in which only the middle aged, first exposed to music in the 1950s and 1960s when popular music first challenged classical music's cultural visibility, are somewhat likely to appreciate both of these forms. Yet we can see within these two broad musical 'families', variants in terms of the specific combinations of musical genres which are

combined. Only in one, marginal case, that of the country-liking cluster 8, can univore taste be discerned.

No other socio-demographic variables map onto these clusters in such a crisp way as age. These findings are interesting in view of the argument that some sub cultures are crossing age divides (Bennett 2006), for the evidence here very clearly points to the fundamental role of age in stratifying taste communities. Our findings support Tampubolon's (2008) and Lopez-Sintas et al's (2008)[22] arguments regarding the existence of different kinds of omnivorous taste communities who cannot helpfully be regarded as sharing common properties.

Table 4: cluster analysis of musical liking for genres

	1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*	*8*
ROCK	2.03	5.08	5.89	4.70	1.88	2.46	6.16	2.41
JAZZ	2.08	4.25	3.12	3.84	1.77	4.51	3.03	2.26
WORLD	1.50	3.16	4.11	4.52	3.68	3.02	2.72	1.83
CLASSIC	5.96	3.00	2.94	5.06	1.66	6.07	4.03	1.70
COUNTRY	5.06	2.27	2.60	5.74	2.04	2.39	3.03	4.15
ELECTRONIC	1.31	2.49	5.80	2.79	3.69	1.70	1.65	1.49
HEAVY M	1.22	1.70	4.41	2.80	1.41	1.40	5.06	1.20
URBAN	1.41	5.26	5.14	3.90	5.77	2.07	2.75	1.56
% IN CLUSTER	**16**	**11**	**13**	**12**	**11**	**10**	**13**	**15**
% PROF	16	16	12	11	5	14	18	5
% FEMALE	16	12	10	13	14	11	9	16
% 18–24	0	11	18	4	42	2	18	4
% 25–44	3	18	20	10	13	8	16	12
% 45–64	22	5	6	20	4	12	14	17
% 65+	52	2	0	6	0	14	1	25
% black	11	7	12	17	32	11	1	9
% GRADUATE	12	12	15	16	7	15	19	4

Note: cluster scores range from a low of 1 (don't like at all) to high of 7 (like very much indeed) with 4 representing neutrality (neither like nor dislike).

We can test the statistical significance of these observations by using a multinomial regression model which allows us to see which of the socio-demographic variables are significantly associated with the musical clusters concerned (see Table 5). Using as a reference category the 'new omnivore' cluster 4, the importance of age as the fundamental determinant of musical taste is once more confirmed, as it is the only variable which has statistically significant effects on every other cluster[23]. In a predictable way, the "light classical", the "expert classic" cluster and the "country" cluster are inhabited by those older than the omnivorous cluster 4. The association between being in the contemporary clusters and being one of the younger age groups is statistically significant in every case. It is clear that ethnicity can also be important in some cases. Ethnic minorities are less likely to be found in cluster 3 'rock & electronic & urban' and in cluster 7 'loud rockl'. A few class effects can be found, though these are relatively weak.

Table 5: multinomial logistic coefficients for clusters

	Light classical	ROCK/ URBAN	ROCK/ ELECTRO/ URBAN	URBAN	Expert classical	ROCK/ HEAVY	Slight Country
Age	0.075	-0.081	-0.093	-0.119	0.021	-0.056	0.017
White Other British/ Irish	0.784						
Other origin		-1.541	-1.127			-3.290	
Salariat		0.942		-0.866	0.737		-1.398
Intermediate				-0.797			-0.508
Female			-0.715	0.560		-1.021	

Notes: baseline category is 'Rock/world/CLASSIC/COUNTRY', but the table provided is constructed in a way that allow to make comparisons between music tastes leaving aside the reference category. Variables that do not show any statistically significant effect were not included. All the logistic coefficients in the table are significant at least at the level of 0.05.

3. Assembling genres: the structuring of musical taste

So far, we have argued that the concept of the omnivore is of limited value for unravelling the nature of musical taste. This is not because evidence for omnivorousness cannot be found – it certainly can – but rather that it is analytically advantageous to recognise the existence of distinctive musical communities, characterised by clustering of likes and dislikes which cut in complex ways across various genre labels. In particular, we are able to show that although there is considerable short-range omnivorousness, it is best to see these as assemblages of musical types which both combine and exclude. Most fundamentally, there is a very clear divide between those affiliated to different kinds of popular on the one hand, and to those attracted to combinations of classical, country, and jazz on the other. Only a few people have tastes which straddle this fundamental divide between classical and contemporary popular forms. We have also shown that this division is one which first and foremost differentiates older age groups who are oriented to classical, country, and jazz, and younger age groups who are predisposed to popular music (rock, world, heavy metal, electronic, urban). There are also some significant effects linked to class, gender and ethnicity though these are not so marked.

Table 6 explores how these clusters of musical taste for genre map onto respondents' accounts of their liking for musical works. It demonstrates that some of these musical works are more omnivorous, in the sense that they are popular in different clusters, than others. A majority of respondents in seven out of eight clusters appreciate Frank Sinatra's *Chicago,* and in five out of the 8 clusters like Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* and Oasis's *Wonderwall*. These musical works, we can suggest, have become part of a wider musical repertoire, circulated in the media, and can be appreciated by people from different clusters of taste. The less popular works, and notably Eminem's *Stan,* Mahler's *Symphony 5*, and Miles Davis's *Kind of Blue* are more discriminating between clusters. Very few people in some clusters like them, but substantial proportions of others do. The high popularity of Mahler amongst 'expert classical' supporters of cluster 5 differentiates it from the 'new omnivore' cluster 4 who are less keen on Mahler but more enthusiastic towards Oasis, Eminem and Britney Spears. The urban enthusiasts from Cluster 5 are not attracted to any musical works other than Oasis and Eminem, and even the ubiquitous Frank Sinatra earns low approval. Those in the 'easy listening' clusters 1 and 7 show little enthusiasm towards any of the popular works

*Table 6. % of people who like each named works by musical cluster*

	Clust. 1	*Cl. 2*	*Cl. 3*	*Cl. 4*	*Cl. 5*	*Cl. 6*	*Cl. 7*	*Cl. 8*
Wonderwall	14	77,4	82,4	51.2	58,4	30,8	75,7	30,5
Stan	4,7	61	73,5	26,9	56,7	13,8	38,7	10,1
4 Seasons	72,6	65,1	47,4	72,3	18,8	84,5	72,8	29,6
Einstein	1,9	5,5	3,5	7,2	0,7	5,4	4,4	2
Symph. 5	35,8	13	10,5	28,9	2,7	55	16,7	1,5
Kind of blue	5,1	17,2	15,8	27,7	2	24,6	18,8	3,5
Oops	12,6	37,9	36,5	32,9	34,9	17,7	23,2	25
Chicago	76,2	69	56,1	80,8	33,3	80	58,9	58,5

Cluster 1: Light classical, Cluster 2: ROCK/URBAN, Cluster 3: ROCK/ELECTRO/URBAN, Cluster 4: Rock/world/CLASSIC/COUNTRY, Cluster 5: URBAN, Cluster 6: Expert classical, Cluster 7: Loud rock, and Cluster 8: Slight Country.

We can see, then, a complex patterning of musical appreciation, which are not usefully summarised by terms such as high-, middle- or low brow, but which nonetheless seem to exhibit some underlying coherence which is explicable in its own terms. We can further unravel these taste communities by using multiple correspondence analysis (MCA). MCA is a form of principal components analysis for categorical data, which locates the mean points of variables in geometric space so that their clustering and partitioning can be visually interpreted (Le Roux and Rouanet 2004). It was used by Bourdieu as a means of unravelling the structure of fields, and is therefore ideally suited for our purposes here (for other examples, see Ekelund and Bjorissen 2006, Sonnett 2004; Bennett *et al* 2009) We can here use the remarkable resource of having survey questions on six named musical works, in addition to our genre measures, to construct an unusually detailed mapping of musical taste.

Inspection of the eigenvalues produced by the MCA (See Appendix 2) shows that there are powerful axes accounting for 76% of the modified inertia rate. Figure 1 arrays in two axes the clustering of two sets of questions on musical taste, those on genres (as in Table 1) and on musical works (see Table 2), so that we can see how far these appear to correlated together and hence how convincing genre labels are in capturing people's liking for specific musical works. We can thus see how closely associated named works of music are with what might be seen as their genre categories (e.g. for the case of classical, a liking for Mahler's *Symphony 5*, Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* and Glass's *Einstein on a Beach*.

Figure 1: Mapping of musical taste (genres and named works)
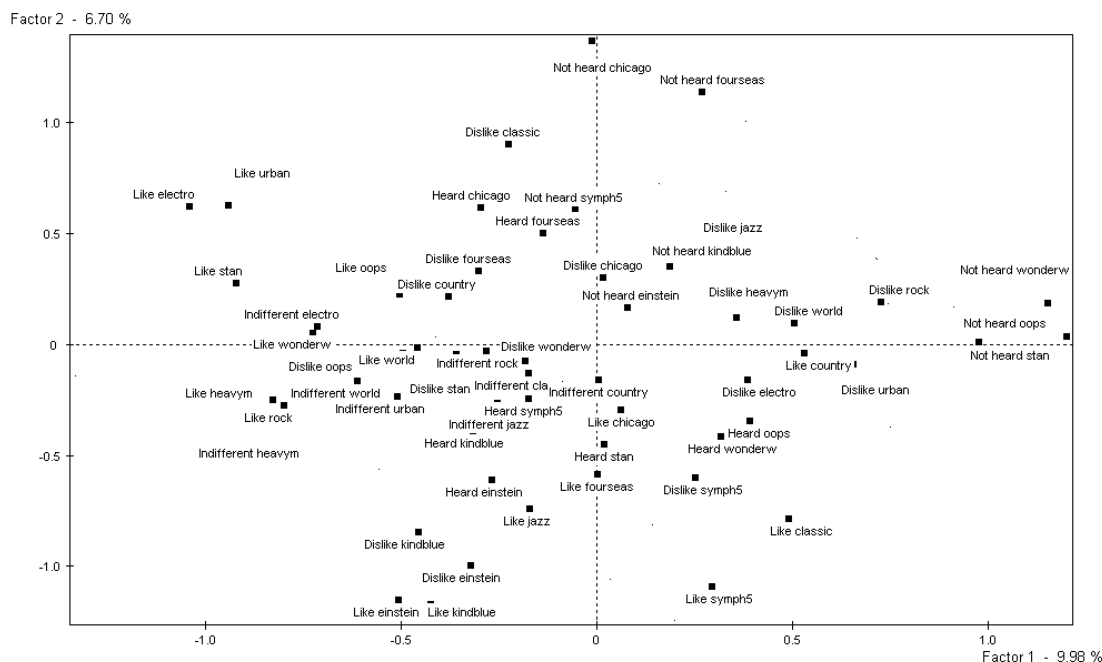
If we look first at the partitioning on the first axis, we can detect a prime opposition between enthusiasts for popular music (on the left) and classical and country (on the right). This primary opposition distinguishes those who like electronic, urban, rock, heavy metal and world against those who appreciate classical and country. There is a clear symmetry where dislike for the musical genres is located at the opposite end of the axis to that of the likes. Of our 8 genres of music, only jazz is not easily partitioned into one of these two groups. Liking for it is located towards the (left) centre of the first axis. This confirms the analysis in Section 3 that there is a fundamental division between two clusters of musical taste.

The second axis is more complex, and in some ways more interesting, to unravel. It appears to differentiate between those at the bottom who are likely to have listened to specific of the named works (*Symphony number 5*, *Einstein on a Beach*, *Kind of Blue*, and *Four Seasons*) against those at the top who are less likely to have listened to these. This appears to be an axis structured around the extent of musical knowledge, which distinguishes between those who appear to be musical experts (at the bottom), and those who have a less knowledgeable appreciation of music. Whether it is possible to define the experts as omnivores is an issue we will take up presently – but here we can simply comment that it is revealing that this divide is secondary to the more fundamental one between contemporary popular music and classical, jazz and country which we have also demonstrated from our cluster analysis.

One of the values of the mapping in Figure 1 is that we can see how closely liking of named items is associated with the genres of which they are supposed to be a part. This is one way of critically examining what actual works of music are assembled under various genre labels. Here we see some interesting contrasts. We can see, notably, very different locations of the three named works of music which might be deemed to be classical. A 'liking' and 'disliking' of Mahler´s *Symphony number 5* is located quite close to a liking for classical music generally (indeed these are the two closest modalities to it). A liking of *Four Seasons* is further away, at about the same distance as a liking for Sinatra's *Chicago* which is not normally identified as a part of classical music. Most interestingly of all is that a liking for Philip Glass´s '*Einstein on a Beach*' is not found very close to classical at all but much closer to jazz, near a liking of '*Kind of Blue*'. In general, the boundaries of the classical music genre appear to exclude

contemporary classical composers but actually include mainstream easy listening music such as Frank Sinatra. This confirms our arguments about the need to recognise the importance of a genre of 'light classical' which includes familiar forms of classical music alongside other mainstream musicians is now a powerful force, and that this is identified as different to more contemporary classical music which is closer to jazz. This kind of light classical music circulates in popular media, notably radio stations such as Classic FM rather than Radio 3[24].

There is also the interesting point that the liking and disliking of *Einstein on a Beach* and *Symphony number 5* are located closely together. Enthusiasts and critics of these two works are likely to be rather similar, but they are united by having heard and been knowledgeable about it. By contrast those who do not like the more popular *Four Seasons* are considerably distant to those who do like it: those who dislike it being at the top of the second axis.

We can also see that the contemporary popular works, Eminem´s *Stan* and Oasis´s *Wonderwall* and Britney Spears' *Oops* are located fairly close to those who like electronic, urban heavy metal. Here again, dislikes are also closely located with likes, indicating that the most powerful structuring concerned with knowledge rather than taste. In this case, those who have heard of the named items and those who have not are in similar locations.

Axes 1 and 2 produce four distinctive quadrants. On the top right are comprised a group who have ´not heard´ all the named contemporary musical forms and ´dislike´ the contemporary musical genres. No positive likes are located here. This quadrant might therefore be identified as antagonistic to popular music. In the bottom right hand quadrant are a group which likes classical music and country music but also have some knowledge of contemporary music (they have 'heard of, though not listened to' *Oops*, *Stan* and *Wonderwall*). This quadrant might be seen as exponents of 'light classical' taste, whereby interests in classical music are affiliated to their 'easy listening' qualities. In the top left hand quadrant are a group which likes popular music and dislikes classical music, though they may have some knowledge of classical music (they have 'heard of, but not listened to' *Chicago*, and *Four Seasons*). Finally in the bottom left hand corner are a group which likes jazz, heavy metal and rock and shows interest in the contemporary named works (Phillip Glass, Miles Davis), but dislike what might appear to be commercial popular music (Britney Spears, Eminem). These appear to be musical experts. These are perhaps to be seen as the musical *avant garde*, yet they are not distinguished by their liking of classical music, which we have seen is more of a mainstream taste[25]. In short, a liking for classical music – in and of itself – is not to be understood predominantly as a marker of highbrow taste, in the way that omnivore theorists characteristically assume.

We might better interpret out four quadrants using the terms defined by Ballavance (2008) on the basis of in-depth interviews with middle class Canadians. She distinguishes those who like high and new culture (in our bottom left), high and old culture (our bottom right), low and old culture (our top right) and high and low culture (our top left). It is also rather similar to Van Eijck's (2008) classification of four types of Dutch musical taste in the 1980s, (folk, highbrow, pop and "new omnivore").

In interpreting the tensions revealed by Figure 1, the idea of omnivorousness does not appear useful. No less than three of these quadrants appear to be omnivorous, though in substantially different kinds of way. The exception is the top right quadrant where dislikes (5 of which are recorded) and 'not heard of' (with 5 variables) prevail. The top left quadrant reports 5 likes and 3 dislikes (and two 'not heard's' and 1 indifferent); the bottom left quadrant reports 6 likes and 5 dislikes (and 6 indifferent's), the bottom right quadrant reports 5 likes and 3 dislikes (and 1 indifferent). In short, we find a series of oppositions between three clusters with a range of linked likes and dislikes, rather than between those who are omnivorous and those who have more univore tastes.

The addition of supplementary variables in the MCA (see Figure 2) allows us to examine the socio-demographic characteristics of the people who are located in each of these four quadrants. Again supporting our cluster analysis, the first, most powerful axis which distinguishes between popular and classical music is associated most directly with age, whereas the second dimension which distinguishes between the expert and the less knowledgeable is organised on the basis of class and education. The most important point is that the bottom left hand quadrant, which we have identified as the most avant garde, through its enthusiasm for contemporary music, is indeed that where highly educated managers and professionals are located. This reinforces our point that classical music is now more to be seen as complicit with interests in mainstream 'light classical' tastes.

Although we cannot be sure on the basis of this data whether the importance of age on axis 1 is an age or cohort effect, it is likely that it demonstrates the primacy of youthful socialisation to the creation of musical generations, related to significant shifts in the technologies of musical circulation and reception. The oldest age groups are indifferent to, and ignorant of, contemporary popular music. The middle aged are more likely to show an interest in classical and country and might also have heard of items of contemporary music. Those under 44 are far more vested in contemporary musical forms.

Figure 2: Mapping of socio-demographic variables and cluster variables onto the musical map
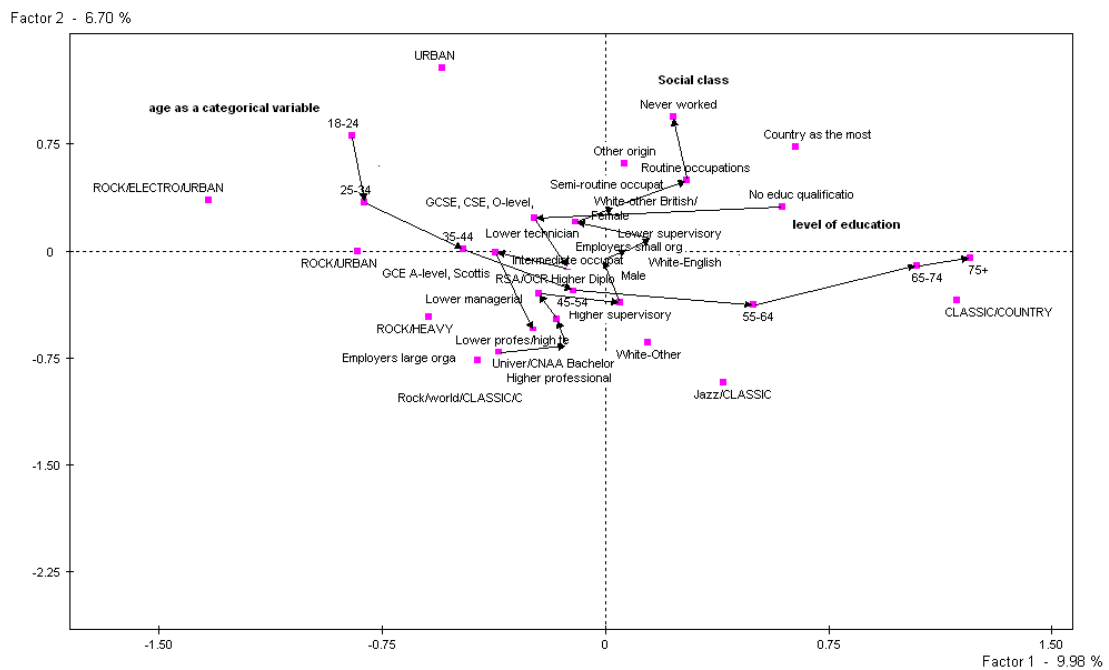
Class and educational attainment work on axis 2 to distinguish predominantly 'middle class' experts from working class 'indifferents'. We prefer to talk about the middle class as experts rather than omnivores because a considerable number of dislikes are revealed. What marks out middle class taste is capacity to pass (positive and negative) judgements on several of the named items, rather than any particular range in their cultural taste. This is further confirmation of Bourdieu's (1985) emphasis on the way that cultural capital can be usefully defined as a form of competence related to the capacity and the confidence to reflect on questions of value.

4: Mapping musical clusters

Let us now work with the cloud of individuals within MCA to further demonstrate the pertinence of the cohesive musical communities which we have identified here. Figure 3 locates all individuals within the CCSE survey, illuminated in different colours according to which of the 8 musical clusters they fall into. Ellipses are drawn so that they contain 86% of individuals within the specific clusters. Comparing the ellipses allows us to see how dispersed particular clusters are, and how far they overlap with each other. Figure 3 also highlights named individuals with whom we conducted qualitative interviews. We can use their accounts to deepen our analysis of the clustering and boundaries of musical taste.

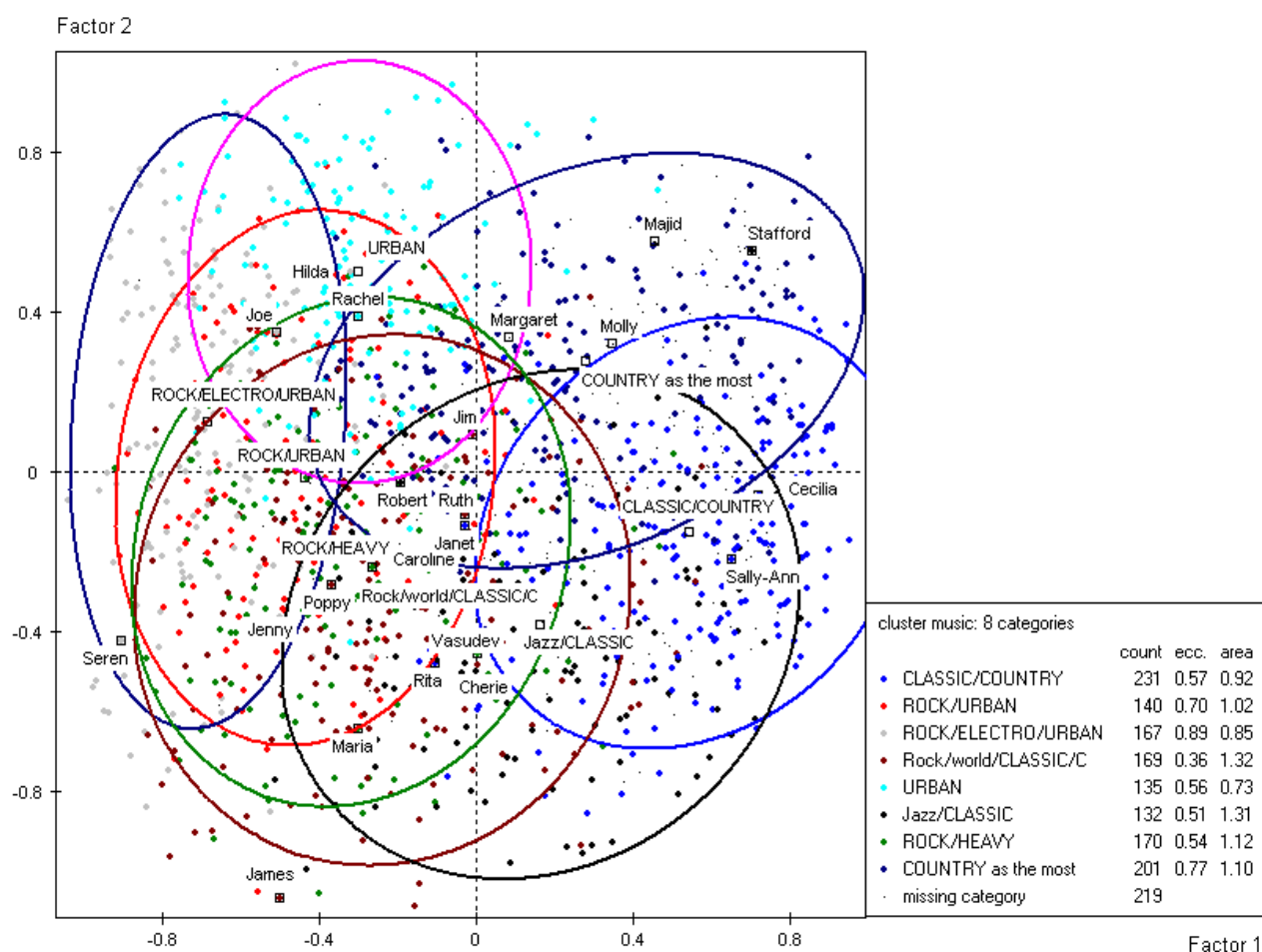*Figure 3: Mapping of musical clusters in the cloud of individuals*

Figure 3 shows that four clusters each map onto the quadrants we have identified above, with relatively little overlap between each other. In the top left hand quadrant, we can see the pink urban music cluster, which stands in opposition to the 'light classical' blue cluster in the bottom right hand quadrant. There is no overlap between these two ellipses, indicating complete separation in the musical tastes of these individuals. We see that the 'new omnivore', expert, cluster, which appreciates rock, heavy metal, classic and country is found in the bottom left hand quadrant. This ellipse has the widest area of any, indicating that it is the most-wide ranging in its musical tastes. It stands opposed to the advocates of country music in the top right had quadrant. We can note that the 'jazz/classical' cluster which we have identified as the nearest equivalent to 'highbrow' taste is located at the bottom of the second axis.

Figure 3 interestingly reveals that the bottom left hand quadrant is characterised by most 'intense' kinds of tastes, acting as the centre of gravity, in which all clusters - other than that for urban music – being well represented in it. As we have seen, individuals in this location tend to be highly educated professionals. Rather than seeing this as the omnivorous sector of our musical map, it seems more accurate to characterise it as the most intense sector, where likes and dislikes jostle together and where enthusiasms, likes, and dislikes are most apparent. Defining musical taste in these terms allows us recognise the stakes and tensions, rather than the tolerance, bound up in boundary crossing musical taste.

We can elaborate this argument further by considering the accounts of those respondents who we interviewed in depth. In general, our interviewees generally give a clear and consistent account of their musical taste, organised as accounts of set of related likes and dislikes. Yet we can also see that their accounts further demonstrate how specific genres can be combined into coherent taste communities. The case of classical music is especially revealing. Seven interviews showed enthusiasm for classical music, but these were linked to three different clusters. Janet and Sally-Ann were in the 'light classical' cluster 1. Janet showed her interest in classical music to the extent that she identifies some specific composers, Tchaikovsky, Dvorak, and Mozart. However, she then reverts to a refrain of distancing herself from a passion for classical music, in terms of its easy listening qualities.

> *Janet I have a four CD called Reflections which is Mozart, it's like a choice of all the classical music and yes, I do, I like listening to classical, <u>only because it chills me out</u>. That and Michael Ball. I like opera but not the hard opera, I mean somebody with a really good voice, ... got a beautiful voice it makes all the hairs stand up on me.

Sally-Ann, a retired doctor's wife from Northern Ireland, had a similar refrain about the easy qualities of classical music which were deemed to be in contrast with 'heavy' music.

> I would listen to classical, I would listen to Classic FM in the car, sometimes or here, and we would have gone to the Ulster Orchestra in the Ulster Hall (in Belfast)….. I'm not into heavy, I like nice music, now Michael Ball, I enjoy him, we went to see him now live at the Waterfront, he's wonderful. He was on television yesterday and I just heard that last year he was the most popular singer and it was amazing. I thought, I just think his singing is lovely, I think he's very easy to listen to and he's a very natural nice person, I think and I couldn't believe that the Waterfront was packed and I was sitting beside a wee girl and she had come over from Newcastle or something and he was on for two nights and she said, 'if I'd known he'd been on for two nights I would have gone to both' She followed him right round Britain.

Sally-Ann shows the characteristic tendency to display more enthusiasm for non classical musicians, in her case, Michael Ball.

Poppy was keen on what she termed 'lighthearted' opera and referred to the value of listening to classical music in the car which 'right calmed me'. Like Sally-Ann, this was in opposition to hip hop which she saw as 'noise, and I don't understand the words. A lot of these rapping now it just doesn't sound English to me you know I like a song that you know with proper words in, meaning and stuff, yeah'.

This kind of account of light classical in opposition to hip hop was shared by Cherie, a middle aged tourist worker who lived in an historic northern town. The antinomies of her cultural tastes are clearly apparent in the way that her distaste for hip hop is much more specific and heart felt than her liking for classical

> Well, I just like things that make you feel cheerful, just sort of lift the heart, you want to bounce around the living room and sing along, it adds to the gaiety of the life really. Classical is generally much more soothing, it just sort of mells you out

> *And you said the type of music you least liked was jazz, world and urban*
>
> Yeah, I hate that kind of hip hop stuff, I really hate it
>
> *Can you say why?*
>
> I'm embarrassed to tell you! I really, really, hate it because I really hate those guys in those baseball hats because I really hate baseball hats and if I could have something in Room 101,that would be the top of my list, I would ban them from the world. I hate those baseball caps so as soon as those guys come on and they've got them, they look as though they're actually thinking of putting one on, – I'm totally appalled by the whole thing.

The contrast here is with James, who is located in the expert, 'new omnivore' cluster 4, the only one which straddles a liking for classical and rock. James, a University teacher who works in cultural studies, evokes his liking for classical through an appreciation of its energy, and its modern associations, and in the same voice articulates his recognition that he is deliberately crossing boundaries which are rarely straddled.

> Well, I've got a real wide taste so there's a lot of classical music I do like but I do like jazz music and you know? Some modern stuff, I use music a lot at work while I'm teaching drama
>
> *Of course you do, yes.*
>
> But what I look for then, I suppose is often, it can be anything I bring in but it's something that's got to have an energy to it or
>
> *The right energy*
>
> Yes, yes
>
> *For what you're*
>
> That's right, yes. So, that can be a classical thing or it might be something very modern, you know? But, but, you know? Yes, a very wide taste, you know? But I certainly do like classical, yes'

James clearly distinguished his liking for classical music as different to appreciation for 'light classical' forms.

> Like, I like listening to Radio 3 but I find Classic FM gets on my nerves a bit sometimes.
>
> *Yes, yes*
>
> Because it's all a bit, you know? Sort of chocolate box kind of classical music, you know? And, so I tend to, Radio 3 perhaps has more of them, it has that but interweaved with other things so I'm quite happy listening to that, yes

One of James's emphases was that he is picky within genres, so he insisted that whilst he liked some jazz, he did not appreciate 'dixieland' jazz. In keeping with the characteristics of his cluster, James thus presents himself as a musical expert, opposed to easy forms of music, and embracing classical, modern, jazz and rock. This account has similarities to another teacher, Maria. Her enthusiasm for classical is shared with a taste for the contemporary music: she is the only example from her interview transcript of someone who has intense likes for both classical and contemporary music amongst our interviewees (though it is interesting to

see that according to her survey responses she is located in the 'Rock/Heavy metal' cluster). She had learned the piano to grade 6, and loved Debussy, Chopin and Rachmaninov. But she also liked jazz, and 'extreme rock music, it's just great, full of energy'. She then went on to describe herself as someone who liked 'extremes', identifying herself as someone who knew the cultural boundaries which she was crossing in her unusual tastes. She hated country and western, in part because of its American associations. This is a classic profile for someone who has lots of musical education and thus cultural capital, and has the confidence to exercise judgment in predictably educated ways.

These interviews show, therefore two very different ways of appreciating classical music. The most common form, embedded within clusters 1 and 8 evokes it as a kind of light classical easy listening, contrasting it with heavy metal, hip hop, and other forms of 'loud' popular music. A minority view, more associated with the 'new omnivore' cluster, identifies its energy, insists on its purist features (for instance through being critical of Classic FM) and is also interested in other forms of modern, popular music. In both cases we see clearly structured musical tastes, involving liking for specific combinations of genres or sub-genre types, and disliking of others. These subtle but powerful distinctions are not readily captured by the 'omnivore' label and require more fine grained analysis which is attuned to the continued tensions of the broader musical field.

Conclusions

The aim of this paper has been to move the analysis of musical taste away from the simultaneously nebulous and empiricist concept of the omnivore towards more adequate terrain which recognises the continued contestation and differentiation of musical taste. Our argument here is that rather than focus on the specific individual characteristics of putative omnivores, we firstly need to recognise the structure of the musical field. Once we do this, we can readily attest to the highly loaded and oppositional terms in which people appreciate and criticise musical forms. There is rather little evidence, in the UK, of genuine, wide ranging musical omnivorousness in which different genres and musical types are appreciated by the same people. If anything, the musical field appears more contested and differentiated than in the past. We have thus shown the need to distinguish a series of musical clusters, all of which are characterised by sets of avoidances as well as positive tastes, and some of which can be split into sub clusters. At the most general level we have followed Bellavance (2008) in emphasising the split between old and new, but these two groups can also be split into several sub-types.

In developing this argument we have emphasised the need not to conflate likings for particular genres with membership of particular cultural groups. Explanations for the rise of those who like both classical and more popular musical forms, as demonstrated by Peterson and Kern (1996) do not require the concept of the omnivore. Our interpretation would be that in recent decades we have seen the formation and institutionalisation of 'light classical' taste. The growth of easy / popular / light classical radio stations (Classic FM, but also the old Radio 2 and their ilk) has gone along with a decreasing legitimacy and a growing popular familiarity with some parts of the classical repertoire – operetta, Strauss waltzes, Vivaldi played by Nigel Kennedy, the Three Tenors, and so on. The people drawn to such light classical only appear to be omnivores if it is assumed a priori that a liking for classical is somehow highbrow. In fact, we have shown that their appreciation of classical music can best be understood as a cohesive set of musical tastes which link light classical to other 'easy listening' genres. In addition, there is secondly, a more expert appreciation of classical music, often affiliated to a liking of modern music, which repudiates 'easy listening' and prefers energy. These musical experts are omnivores in that they often also like other kinds of popular music, but they can be seen as having unified 'expert' tastes.

The concept of the cultural omnivore is thus a good example of a 'chaotic conception', one which is derived from the deployment of ad hoc indicators which on close inspection prove not to be effective discriminators of musical preference. Rather than focus on the supposed tolerance of the omnivore, we can instead note the marked, and possibly increasing, tensions bound up with the display of musical taste. In contemporary Britain at least, the debate on the omnivore has distracted us from examining the profoundly divided nature of musical taste, one which predominantly pitches older against younger respondents, but which also encapsulates significant issues of class and educational inequality. One advantage of this analytical framework is the potential it allows to develop more critical analyses of middle class taste which avoid the normative assumptions that the middle classes are more liberal and tolerant but which instead draws attention to the boundaries of taste communities and the emergence of new kinds of exclusive cultural practices, even if these are different from traditional snob models. They are thus more suitable for unravelling the kind of mobile, reflective identities which the middle classes are often deemed to exemplify (Skeggs 2004; Ball 2003; Savage 2000).

Finally, we can note that in order to explain the patterning of musical taste, we need to go beyond a 'demand side' model which focuses on consumer preferences, and instead recognize the wider historical patterns of musical production, institutionalization and mediation. The extent to which classical music has become part of the mainstream, so leading the formation of 'light classical' taste, the canonization of some forms of popular music (e.g. the way that literary theorists such as Christopher Ricks have championed Bob Dylan), have themselves transformed the meaning of genre categories as they are appreciated today. Rather than people changing their musical taste and ranging across more musical genres, we are seeing the reworking of the boundaries of musical genres themselves.

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[1] This argument is evident in Peterson and Kern's (1996) influential account of the cultural omnivore which pitches itself against Bourdieu's account of exclusive snob culture.

[2] The most clearly developed account of this kind is Lahire's (2004) emphasis on cultural dissonance, which he has recently sought to relate to the omnivore debate (see Lahire 2008).

[3] The most important statements to this effect being Peterson and Sinkus 1992, Bryson 1996, Warde *et al* 2007, 2008, Tampubolon 2008. More generally, on the idea that specifically middle class taste is seen as the unacknowledged norm of contemporary life, see Savage 2000, Skeggs 2004.

[4] The recent issue of *Poetics* (2008) indicates a growing interest in trying to use qualitative research to address the omnivore debate, and it is revealing that contributors such as Bellavance (2008), Warde *et al* (2008) and Olivier (2008) end up by seriously qualifying its importance. For examples of qualitative research which makes no reference to the omnivore concept, see Bennett (2000), De Nora (2000), Krims (2000; 2005). We return to this issue below.

[5] On 'lifestyle enclaves' as exclusive communities of like minded individuals, see Bellah *et al* (1985), which follows in the footsteps of Fischer, (1982). On the importance of enthusiasms and 'serious leisure', see Stebbins (1992).

[6] This feature of the CCSE data has also been excellently exploited by Warde *et al* 2008's critical analysis of the omnivore, whose arguments are discussed later in this paper.

[7] See the abstract of Peterson and Kern (1996), and the discussion in Peterson (2005, footnote 7).

[8] For example of scale based approaches, see Bryson 1996, Erickson 1996, Warde *et al* 2008, Lizardo and Skiles 2009, van Eijck and Oosterhoot 2005; for categorical type based approaches, Coulangen 2008, van Eijck 2008. To use the terms developed by Warde *et al* (2008), the former leads itself to

'volume' and the latter to 'compositional' approaches. Volume based measures are sometimes defined as 'voraciousness' (see Peterson 2005).

[9] We might further note that in a similar manner the idea of genres is also predominantly developed with respect to literary genres. See for instance Frow's (2006) account of genres which is based primarily on literary form.

[10] See the discussion in Bennett *et al* (2009), Chapter 12.

[11] The association between classical music and highbrow taste is evident in van Eijck and Oosterhout 2004

[12] 'Both Harvey and Hanigan describe the making over of inner city areas as entertainment centers for those with higher levels of disposable income, mixing architectural innovation with entertainment venues and destinations … the urban inhabitants of such spaces, then, frequently deploy music as part of the sonic design of their residential, automotive, or even working, space. …. It is towards such a deployment of music that the classical recordings considered here seem to be moving' (Krims 2007: 148, 150). See also Chan and Goldthorpe (2007: 7) who note on the basis of their latent class analysis of British Arts Council England survey that 'there is some non-negligible probability of listening to classical music in addition to more popular forms, which can perhaps be understood as "crossover" or 'Classic FM" effect'.

[13] This issue is raised by Peterson himself, notably in his famous study of the gentrification of jazz, (Peterson 1972, and see also Peterson 2005: 276) but has not sufficiently informed the omnivore debate

[14] This point is nicely and amusingly made in Bryson's influential account of American musical taste. 'these data cannot tell us what respondents have in mind when they think of each genre. One of the categories for instance is named New age/space music. While 18.2% of respondents replied that they didn't know much about the genre, we cannot tell how the remaining respondents understand the category. Are they thinking about Vangellis and music with an electronic sound from the early 1980s (such as the themes from *Star Wars* and *Chariots of Fire*) or music like that of the group *Enigma* (whose eerie sound and sometimes disturbing lyrics won a spot in the movie *Silver)* or are they thinking of 'new age' music produced by artists on the 'Windham Hill label' (Bryson 1996: 895-896).

[15] This point is, of course, much elaborated in social mobility research, notably through the arguments of John Goldthorpe (1980, 2000) who insists on the need for a theoretically rigorous conceptualisation of the class structure.

[16] See also van Eijck 2001: 1179 who notes that 'it is possible, and very instructive, to discern specific musical taste patterns that reflect an elementary combinatorial logic of culture'.

[17] ESRC funded project award no R000239801. The team comprised Tony Bennett (Principal Applicant), Mike Savage, Elizabeth Silva, Alan Warde (Co-Applicants), David Wright and Modesto Gayo-Cal (Research Fellows). The applicants were jointly responsible for the design of the national survey and the focus groups and household interviews that generated the quantitative and qualitative data for the project. Elizabeth Silva, assisted by David Wright, coordinated the analyses of the qualitative data from the focus groups and household interviews. Mike Savage and Alan Warde, assisted by Modesto Gayo-Cal, co-ordinated the analyses of the quantitative data produced by the survey. Tony Bennett was responsible for the overall direction and coordination of the project. The full results have been reported at length in *Culture, Capital, Distinction*, Routledge, 2008.

[18] By contrast, in the American GSS analysed by Bryson, popularity of classical music (taking this to be those who responded that they liked it, or liked it very much, was exceeded by rock and blues, show time, oldies, jazz, swing time, easy listening, contemporary rock/pop, country and western, and gospel. In the US, classical music is therefore relatively unpopular, which is not the case in the UK. It is rather more similar to the situation van Eijck describes for the Netherlands in the 1980s where symphonic classical music was amongst the most popular forms. (Van Eijck 2001: 1171)

[19] Peterson and Kern's (1996) analysis does not allow us to assess whether there were specific low brow or middle brow genres which were avoided by the high brows. Thus we note that in 1992 high brows nominated an average of 2.23 low brow genres out of 5 possible, indicating that there might have been several low brow genres that they avoided.

[20] It is true that Peterson and Kern (1996) do note the importance of generational differences, but this is analytically subordinate to their main contrast between omnivores and univores

[21] For other examples of the use of factor analysis to examine the structuring of musical taste, see van Eijck 2001, Lopez-Sintas and Garcia-Alvarez 2002, all of whom show a structuring of tastes which complicate the omnivore model, yet all of whom ultimately retain the concept.

[22] 'listening to classical and pop music are two different cultural activities that require different presuppositions, as Bourdieu (1979) suggested' (Lopez-Sintas *et al* 2008: 97).

[23] As the variables are differently constructed, we should avoid making cross-variables comparisons in terms of the coefficients' sizes. Thus, 'age' is usually the most important variable even though it does not appear as the highest co-efficient.

[24] This is consistent with the arguments of Chan and Goldthorpe (2007: 7) who note on the basis of their latent class analysis of an Arts Council England survey that 'there is some non-negligible probability of listening to classical music in addition to more popular forms, which can perhaps be understood as 'crossover" or 'Classic FM' effect'.

[25] The idea that specialised areas of contemporary musical taste are now central to cultural capital is evident in Nick Prior's (2008) discussion of the appeal of 'glitch' to educated audiences.

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Appendix 1: the Cultural Capital and Social Exclusion survey

The survey was administered between November 2003 and April 2004 by the National Centre for Social Research. The cross-sectional sample was a stratified, clustered random sample designed to be representative of adults (aged 18+) living in private households in England, Wales and Scotland. The sample was drawn from the Small Users Postcode Address File. Postcode sectors were then ordered by Government Office Region and within region by population density and proportion of population with a degree. From this ordered list, 86 postcode sectors were drawn and 30 addresses were selected using a random start and a fixed sampling interval, giving 2,580 selected addresses. At each address, the interviewer sought to establish the number of occupied dwelling units. If there were more than one, the interviewer selected one, using a Kish grid and computer-generated random numbers. At the (selected) DU, the interviewer sought to establish the number of residents aged 18+. If more than one, the interviewer also selected using a Kish grid and computer-generated random numbers. An interview was then attempted with the selected person. No substitution was allowed at any stage of the process. The original sample failed to yield the anticipated number of interviews. An additional sample of 25 postcode sectors was therefore drawn, with 750 addresses. Procedures followed were identical. The final response rates were 53%.

The sample for Northern Ireland was selected from the Valuation and Lands Agency's list of domestic properties using a simple random sample (unclustered) design. This is a preferable approach for Northern Ireland where there are known deficiencies in the PAF coverage. Using this approach, 90 households were sampled with equal probability. The interviewers sought to establish the number of people aged 18+ in each selected household, and one person was selected for interview at random by the computer.

Appendix 2: Details of Multiple Correspondence Analysis of Musical Taste

Table A1: Number of axes.

	Axis 1	Axis 2
Eigenvalue	0.2504	0.1681
Percentage	9.98	6.70
Cumulative percentrage	9.98	16.67
Variation (% axis 1- % axis 2)		3.28
Modified inertia rate (%)	56.6	20.3
Cumulated modified rates (%)	76.9	

Note: the modified inertia rate is the squared difference between the eigenvalue of a particular axis and the mean of all axis' eigenvalues divided by the sum of all these same differences for all the eigenvalues above the mean. See Le Roux & Rouanet (2004: 225).