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### **Cultural Capital and the Cultural Field in Contemporary Britain**

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## **Cultural Capital and the Cultural Field in Contemporary Britain**

**Tony Bennett , Mike Savage, Elizabeth Silva, Alan Warde, Modesto Gayo-Cal,  
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This paper presents a preliminary analysis of the survey components of an ESRC project on *Cultural Capital and Social Exclusion* focused on the relations of culture and class in contemporary Britain. It draws on the data produced by a national survey of the cultural activities, preferences and knowledges of 1700+ adult UK residents. Administered in 2003–4, the survey constitutes an expansion and revision of that used by Pierre Bourdieu in *Distinction*. In presenting this data, the paper examines the organisation and distribution of cultural capital in and across different components of the cultural field in contemporary Britain. Attention is paid to the art, music, literary and media fields, and to correlations of taste across these fields. In summarising the project's initial findings in these regards the paper also considers the respects in which they suggest the need to qualify aspects of Pierre Bourdieu's account of cultural capital. Their bearing on subsequent debates - Richard Peterson's account of omnivorous taste culture, for example - is also considered.

### **Acknowledgements**

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Since the publication of Pierre Bourdieu's *Distinction* (1979, English ed 1984), there has been renewed interest in how the organisation of cultural preferences can be seen as a form of cultural capital, generating pervasive inequalities. However, it is also well known that the survey data on which Bourdieu rested his arguments is specific to a particular time (the 1960s) and place (France), and there is now an elaborate body of quantitative and (especially) qualitative research which has emphasized that cultural capital, insofar as it exists at all, takes very different forms (Halle 1983; Lamont 1992; Devine et al 2004). It is to a consideration of the different forms that cultural capital can take that we address ourselves in this paper, paying particular attention to the relations between cultural tastes, patterns of cultural participation and cultural knowledge as components of cultural capital that are only rarely adequately distinguished.

The basis for our discussion arises from the research we have conducted for the ESRC-funded project *Cultural Capital and Social Exclusion: A Critical Investigation*<sup>1</sup>. This is the first systematic attempt to explore whether we can detect the existence of cultural capital in the British context, using both qualitative and quantitative methodologies: the former through focus-group discussions and semi-structured household interviews exploring the cultural tastes, forms of cultural participation and cultural knowledge of the participants;<sup>2</sup> the latter by means of a questionnaire, applied nationally on both a random sample basis and to an ethnic boost sample of Indian, Pakistani and Afro-Caribbean respondents, which explored such indicators of cultural capital alongside indicators of economic and social capital.<sup>3</sup>

This project, when completed, will provide a detailed account of the organisation of cultural practices in contemporary Britain, and an assessment of their inter-relationships with economic and social inequalities. The findings reported and discussed here, however, are our first attempt to explore our data. As such, they are limited largely to the main sample of the survey component of the project, and focus on responses to a selection of the questions concerning respondents' cultural tastes, knowledge and participation across the musical, media, literary and visual art fields. It is an important feature of our survey that we differentiate between these components of cultural capital since the failure to do so has meant that, in much of the literature, quite different relations to the cultural field are frequently confused and confounded with one another. We were therefore, in our approach to the questionnaire design, particularly concerned to distinguish these three different modes of cultural involvement from one another by asking questions which distinguished between (i) frequency of participation in nominated cultural activities, (ii) cultural taste as measured by expressions of likes and dislikes, and (iii) cultural knowledge assessed in terms of degree of familiarity with particular writers, painters, composers, film directors, or literary, musical and film texts. In thus seeking to disaggregate cultural capital into a set of clearly distinguished component parts, we are concerned to explore the ways in which these interact with each other to yield a more complex and nuanced understanding of the organisation of cultural capital and its relations to other capitals.

Our purpose in this paper is, first, to convey some sense of our initial findings relating to these matters by briefly reviewing a selection of participation, taste and knowledge indicators, and outlining the relations between these and a selection of socio-demographic variables. We present our findings fairly descriptively, taking one cultural field after another, so as to give a flavour of the data and a sense of its salience to a range of current debates. We look first at the distribution of cultural tastes as suggested by the distributions of likes and dislikes in the musical and media fields focussing, in the latter, on television. We then proceed, in our discussion of the literary and visual art fields, to consider the relations between indicators of cultural taste, participation and knowledge. There then follows a consideration of the extent to which distinctive patterns of cultural taste and knowledge can be identified across these four fields. This sets the scene for our preliminary conclusions and identification of lines of inquiry to be pursued in further work on the data.

In order to provide a context for our findings in relation to the existing literature, we discuss their implications in relation to two different ways of representing the organisation of the cultural field and placing individuals within it. In the first, proposed by Bourdieu (1984), the most relevant distinctions are between cultural forms and activities that are accorded high legitimacy through, for example, their validation by the education system, those accorded a ‘middlebrow’ status in which elements of legitimacy remain, but in diluted forms, and popular taste. In the second, proposed by Peterson and Kern (1996), the more relevant distinctions are between the permutations of differently ranked forms of cultural activity engaged in by different groups, with the professional middle classes showing a tendency to ‘omnivorousness’ - that is, to both like and be knowledgeable about a range of legitimate, middlebrow and popular forms - while other groups, notably the less well educated members of the working classes, have more ‘univorous’ tastes focused mainly on popular forms.<sup>4</sup>

## **1. Musical taste**

Bennett et al (1999) note, following Bourdieu, that music is especially telling in assessing the structure of cultural taste, and recent studies, such as Peterson and Kern (1996) and Bryson (1996) give particular pre-eminence to musical taste (see also Longhurst 1997; Martin 1996). Recent arguments that omnivorous taste is increasingly important have focused especially on music (e.g. Peterson and Kern 1996; Chan and Goldthorpe 2004). Equally, there is also significant interest in the extent to which there is negative reaction against (rather than ignorance of or apathy towards) certain kinds of music, notably heavy metal (Bryson 1996).

Empirical studies of musical taste in Britain are, however, somewhat limited. Although extensive audience research permits clear delineation of the audience size for specific kinds of music, the extent to which musical tastes are linked together into clusters or oppositions has not been addressed. Furthermore, we lack the kinds of detailed socio-demographic data on respondents from these audience surveys that would allow us to assess the correlates of various kinds of musical taste. Standard survey sources in Britain contain very few questions about musical taste, with questions largely restricted to general interest in music. The main exception is the Arts Council of England survey on musical taste which has been examined by Chan and Goldthorpe (2004). These writers examine whether respondents have either listened to, or attended live, five different genres of music (jazz, pop/rock, opera/operetta, classical, and musicals), so allowing them to assess the extent and nature of participation in the ten resulting categories. However, although this is an interesting attempt to consider the structure of musical participation, the data does not assess whether respondents liked the genres, nor do the five genres themselves represent an especially wide array of musical tastes. Although the resulting latent class models interestingly point to the relative independence of musical participation from class, Chan and Goldthorpe’s exclusive focus on patterns of participation in music at the expense of any consideration of musical likes and dislikes and different degrees and kinds of musical knowledge means that they fail to adequately recognize the complexity of the relations between musical taste, knowledge and participation itself.

In seeking to disentangle the relations between musical tastes and knowledge and to explore the former more fully than usual, we asked respondents to rank eight musical genres from 1 (do not like at all) to 7 (like very much). Thus, in contrast to Chan and Goldthorpe, we asked for respondents’ taste towards musical genres, rather than simply whether they have listened to them. In addition, we asked about a wider range of genres: rock, modern jazz, world music (including reggae and bhangra), classical (including opera), country and western, electronic dance music (including techno and house), heavy metal, and urban (including hip hop and R&B).

Looking first at broad patterns of interest in the musical genres, it is noteworthy that no musical form is liked by a majority of the respondents in absolute terms. The most popular

(rock, classic, and country and western) accumulated less than 50% between the rankings 5 and 7, indicating positive responses. There is no one dominant genre of musical taste that appeals across the board; what we see instead is evidence for more fractured 'taste communities'. This having been said, there are some strikingly different patterns of distribution. Urban, world, jazz, electronic and heavy metal are highly unpopular in purely numerical terms, above all the last two, where around 50% of respondents give them the lowest possible rating of 'do not like it at all'. For the other three the equivalent figure is approximately 30%. These genres thus provoke strong negative identifications, in a way consistent with the arguments of Bryson (1996) and Bennett et al (1999). Interestingly, these are all forms of 'popular music', which are also associated with youth culture. By contrast, classical music, rock, and country are quite popular in terms of overall numbers, but in slightly different ways. Rock is disliked by 30% of the sample, compared to 20% for each of classical music and country. Perhaps the most intriguing aspect of these findings is that 'classical' music is, in quantitative terms, so widely liked given its strong association with legitimate culture: rather than it functioning narrowly as a feature of elite culture, it appears to form a part of mainstream musical taste. Of course, the picture is more complex when the category of classical music is broken up and looked into more thoroughly. When asked for their preferences between different named pieces of music, for example, only 3% claimed to like Philip Glass's *Einstein on the Beach* very much indeed, compared with 19% for Mahler's *Symphony No 5* and 56% for Vilvadi's *Four Seasons*. Nonetheless, the widespread participation in classical music represents a check to the expectation that cultural forms with a high degree of cultural legitimacy, like classical music, can be simply contrasted to forms with lower legitimacy, such as popular music, in the simple pyramid form of a division between elite and mass tastes. As we shall see, though, more complex versions of this opposition are an important element of our findings.

In looking more carefully at the relationship between likes and dislikes for different musical genres, we conducted Pearson correlations between liking for particular genres. Graphs 1 and 2 indicate the most important relationships for women and men respectively. Lines in green (or the thickest lines) represent strong correlations of over 0.35 between the liking for the relevant genres, lines in blue (or of intermediate thickness) represent correlations between 0.2 and 0.35, and the black lines (or thinnest) indicate weak correlations of less than 0.19. Dotted lines indicate negative correlations. All the lines indicate statistically significant relationships.

These graphs show that there are indeed strong relationships between many of the musical genres. Graph 1, for women, reveals strong associations between liking for rock and heavy metal, and urban and world music. There are strong relationships linking rock with urban, jazz, electronic and world music, with liking for all of these genres being positively related to each other. This graph also reveals, however, that there are clear negative relationships between this cluster of 'popular' music, and classical and country music. Indeed, liking for classical music is negatively correlated with all the other musical genres except jazz, country and (very surprisingly!) heavy metal, with all of which it has a slight positive association. For women, then, the musical field appears to be quite sharply divided between, on the one hand, classical music, linked loosely to country music, and, on the other, more popular and 'youthful' genres which are strongly inter-related amongst themselves.

*Graph 1: Structure of musical field (Women): musical*

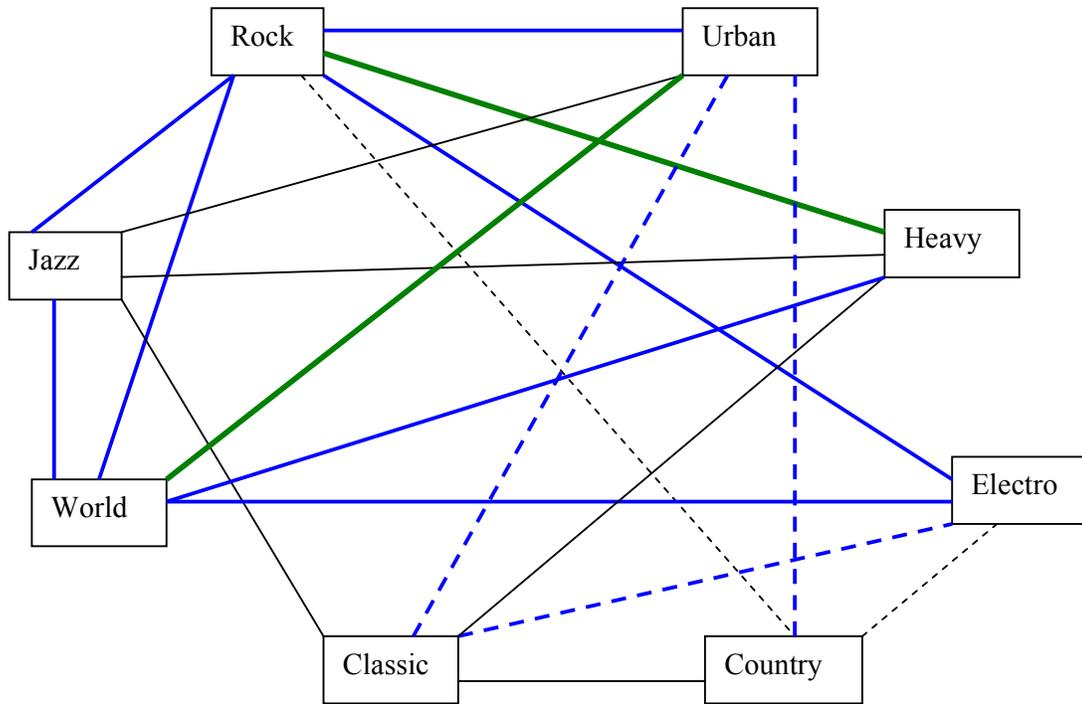
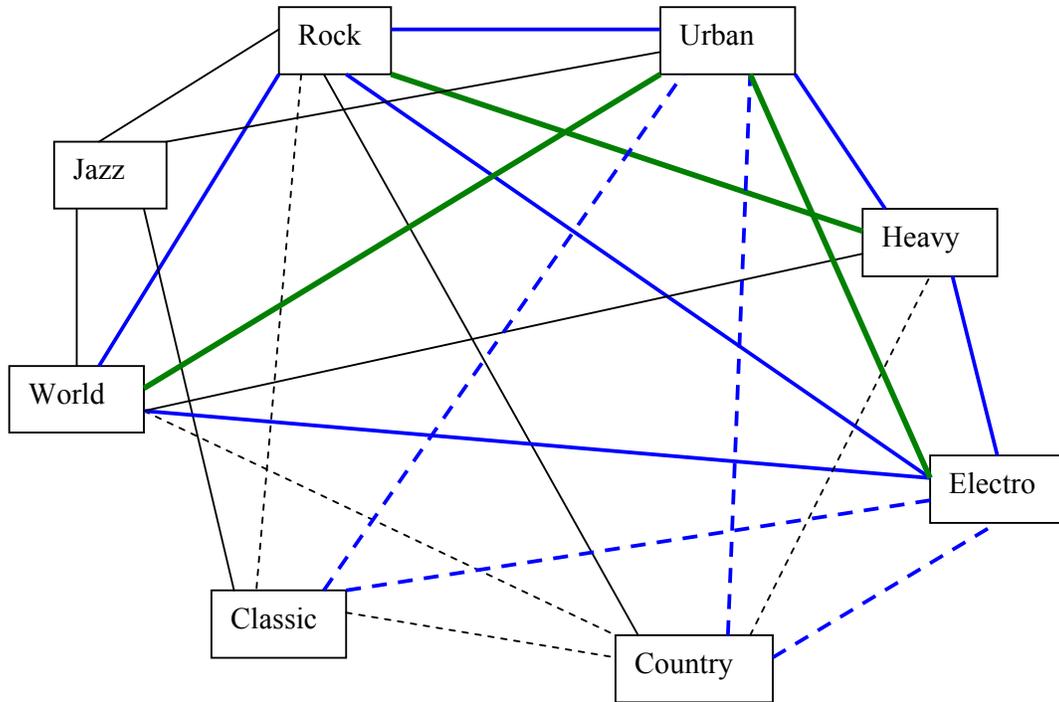


Figure 2 shows the correlations for men, which, on the whole, are similar. We find strong associations here between urban and world, urban and electronic, and rock and heavy metal. It is worth noting that these are all very high correlations of 0.35 and above. Indeed, all the ‘youthful’, popular, forms of music are positively correlated amongst themselves, and classical music is clearly differentiated from these. Liking for it is negatively associated with liking for all other musical genres except jazz. There are strong negative associations between classical music and urban and electronic music. A key factor here is undoubtedly age, with a liking for classical music increasing significantly for every age cohort: from 5% for those in their twenties, to 9% for those in their thirties, 15% for those in their forties, 18% for those in their sixties and 26% for those in their sixties.

*Graph 2: Structure of musical field (Men): musical*



We do not find in Graphs 1 and 2 any extreme isolation of specific genres as ones which are strongly identified against: notably, heavy metal, which has been seen by Bryson (1996) as an isolated taste against which musical omnivores react, is in fact positively associated with numerous other ‘youthful’ genres. This is true even for women who one might assume would be less well disposed towards it. The most ‘central’ musical genre is ‘rock’: for men this is positively associated with a liking for six other genres (thus exhibiting more positive connections than any other genre). For women, rock has five positive associations, as does world music (though its associations tend to be weaker). For both women and men, country music is the most isolated genre, with only one weak positive association with another genre.

Table 1 shows considerable variation in the occupational class gradients for liking particular genres. In some cases, there is very little variation between such classes, certainly in absolute terms: modern jazz is universally unpopular. So is world music, though there is a considerable relative difference between the self-employed (nearly 2% like it very much indeed) and the semi-routine workers (9% of whom like it very much indeed); heavy metal (though again, there are large proportional differences between nobody at all from the large employers and a little over 8% of the lower supervisory workers who liked this genre); and urban (ranging from just over 5% for the higher professions to around 11% for routine workers).

The most striking gradient concerns classical music, where around 30% of higher professionals like it very much indeed, a figure that falls sharply to a little over 6% for large employers and managers. Country appears to have the most ‘proletarian’ profile, with appreciation clustering in classes 5 (self-employed) to 8 (routine workers). Heavy metal shows a slight clustering in the middle, but in general is unpopular everywhere. In general, there is limited evidence that some classes are more predisposed to like musical forms in

general than are other classes: higher professionals, for instance, are not especially prone to like musical genres more than any other group (except for classical music, and, marginally, jazz). Large employers and managers, however, seem to have the most restricted involvement in music - only their predisposition to rock is at all marked, and other than this their appreciation for other musical forms is towards the lower end of the class groupings.

**Table 1: Like musical genre very much indeed by occupational class %**

	<i>Large employers</i>	<i>Higher profess</i>	<i>Lower profes</i>	<i>Intermediate</i>	<i>Self employd</i>	<i>Lower superv'ry</i>	<i>Semi-routine</i>	<i>Routine</i>
<b>Rock</b>	19.4	17.9	16.0	15.5	14.3	20.4	12.4	10.9
<b>Jazz</b>	3.2	6.3	6.2	3.2	3.6	5.9	4.7	3.0
<b>World</b>	3.2	3.1	6.2	2.7	1.8	6.4	9.0	4.5
<b>Classical</b>	6.5	30.5	22.5	14.0	11.8	14.0	12.0	10.9
<b>Country</b>	6.7	5.2	10.3	12.4	14.3	17.7	13.0	15.8
<b>Electronic</b>	0	3.2	4.4	3.2	4.5	7.0	7.7	5.9
<b>Heavy metal</b>	0	2.1	5.2	5.9	6.2	8.1	2.8	1.5
<b>Urban</b>	6.7	5.3	9.0	11.2	5.5	8.6	10.8	11.4

In general, moreover, the differences between the musical taste clusters of the different classes are not especially pronounced. There is, however, speaking more generally, a high degree of division between two clusters of musical taste - popular, youthful, music on the one hand, and classical music on the other - a finding which goes somewhat against the idea developed by Peterson and Kern (1996) that the field of music sees a high degree of omnivorousness as manifested by people listening to a range of genres.

There seems little doubt, then, that a consideration of the organisation of musical likes and dislikes allows a more nuanced and complex understanding of the economy of the musical field than is available where attention is focused exclusively on indicators of musical participation. We therefore look next at the light that the distribution of likes and dislikes throws on the organisation of the media field.

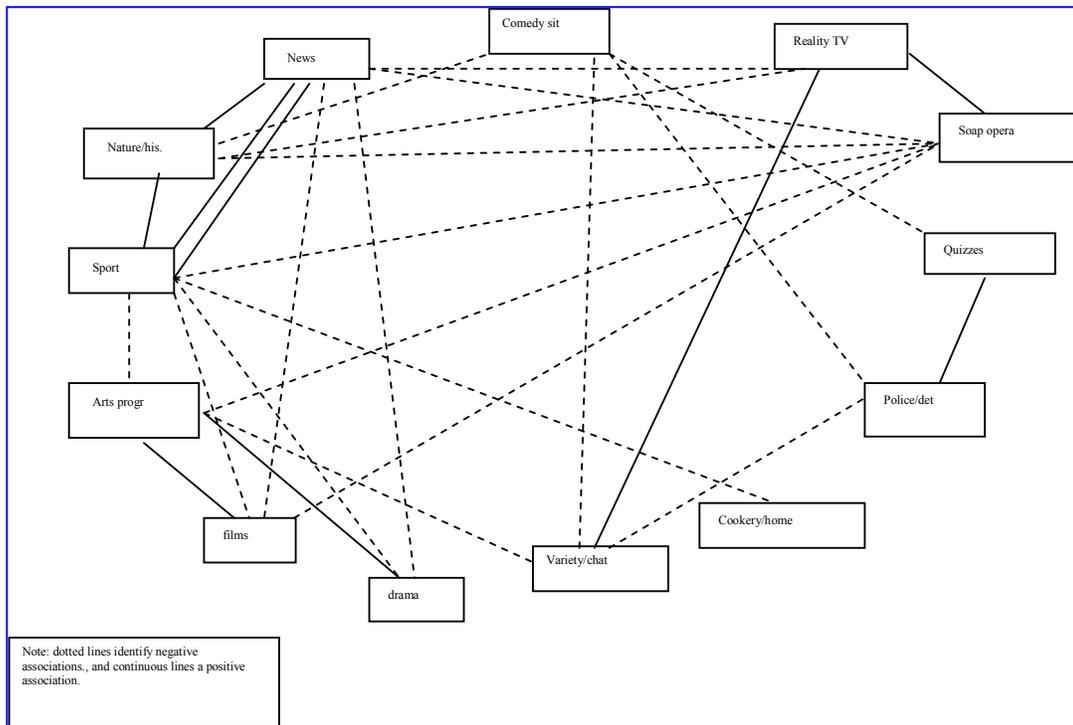
## **2. The media field and ‘quality television’**

The extent to which the media comprise a field in Bourdieu’s sense is a moot point. The term is not one that Bourdieu uses nor are the relations that we draw upon it to explore - those between film and television viewing preferences - ones that Bourdieu investigated. While, in *Distinction*, Bourdieu examines film tastes and knowledge in some detail, he only asks one question about television - ‘If you watch TV, which programmes do you mainly watch’ (Bourdieu, 1984: 515) - and, interestingly, does not report any of the responses that this question elicited. In his later work on television, it is not the media but journalism that he theorizes as a field - one which, however, he is less concerned with in itself than for its consequences for the relations between other components of the cultural field. According little attention to the respects in which television itself might furnish the site for varied practices of distinction on the part of its viewers, Bourdieu focuses instead on the respects in which television, as the main component of the journalistic field, ‘distorts’ the relations between other fields, exercising power over them and the capitals accumulated within them by tending ‘to reinforce the “commercial” elements at the core of all fields to the detriment of the “pure”’ (Bourdieu, 1998: 70).<sup>5</sup>

A part of the difficulty here is that the industrial nature of both film and television production automatically places them within the field of extended rather than that of restricted cultural production. They are thus, as John Hill (2003) puts it in relation to film, governed by the logic of market calculations of profitability rather than by long-term calculations of the symbolic profits to be derived from investing in a non-economic relation to culture. Yet, as Hill goes on to note, Bourdieu did recognize that, in spite of the industrial nature of its production, film could be consecrated for aestheticized forms of consumption by importing into it principles of classification and interpretation derived from the literary and artistic fields: the role played by the director's name, in accordance with the conventions of *auteur* theory, in the canonisation of art cinema, for example. This made it possible, Bourdieu argued, for film too to function as a site for the acquisition and demonstration of cultural capital. That the same is true of television is evident from the now extensive debates that have been ongoing since the 1990s concerning the distinguishing properties of 'quality television' - debates concerned precisely with consecrating particular kinds of television in spite of the fact that their production is thoroughly commercial and located in a component of the cultural field (television) that is axiomatically ranked as low in relation to the artistic and literary fields (see, for example, Born, 2000; Frith, 2000; Geraghty, 2003; Jacobs, 2001).

What light does our data on the organisation of taste in relation to television throw on these debates? Two questions explored these matters by asking, first, which genres respondents liked the most, which they liked second best, and which they liked least out of a list of thirteen television genres. Graph 3 shows the results of Pearson correlations of the 'most like' and 'least like' preferences, the continuous lines indicating positive correlations and the dotted lines negative ones. Focusing here solely on the positive correlations, four positively related clusters of genres can be identified comprising, first, reality television, soap operas, and variety/chat shows; second, arts programmes, films and drama; third, news and current affairs programmes, nature and history documentaries and sport; and, fourth, quizzes and police shows. These represent, broadly speaking, a division between popular television (reality, soaps and variety/chat shows), a "middlebrow" group of police/detective and quiz shows, a set of 'factual' television genres represented by news, current affairs and documentaries, and sport, and a 'culture' grouping of arts programmes, films and drama.

**Graph 3: TV genre clusters<sup>6</sup>**



The category of popular television is most strongly marked in terms of gender: nearly 28% of women indicated genres in this category as opposed to less than 4% of men, while, unsurprisingly, sport reversed this pattern, being favoured by just over 26% of men versus less than 2% of women respondents. There is a male bias, too, to the news/current affairs/documentary grouping even when sport is excluded from the picture: almost 35% of men compared to around 20% of women preferred these genres. Correlations with class also prove revealing as do correlations with level of education, although sometimes in surprising ways. The ‘culture’ grouping of genres, for example, while correlating strongly with gender - excluding films, nearly 13% of women preferred arts and drama genres to just over 4% of men - varies relatively little with level of education or occupational class and recruits its strongest support from the unskilled and semi-skilled (around 11% and 9% respectively compared to around 6% of professionals), suggesting that television plays a relatively minor role, if any, in relation to a traditional ‘high culture’ formation. Sport and the ‘middlebrow’ genres similarly registered relatively minor class effects, apart from a relatively high rate of preference for sports television on the part of the unskilled. By contrast, the ‘serious’ end of ‘factual’ television - news, current affairs, and documentaries - shows a strong correlation with occupational class with preferences ranging from a little over 49% for professionals to around 17% for unskilled workers. The popular television genre cluster reverses this tendency - with a liking for these genres being lowest (at nearly 5%) for professionals and highest for semi-skilled and unskilled workers (at just over 26%). These are also the two sets of genres registering the most pronounced variations when correlated with level of education suggesting that the relations between them are of the strongest relevance to the analysis of television’s role in relation to practices of distinction.

However, the picture is somewhat more complicated, and more interesting, when we probe preferences for particular programmes rather than broad generic categories. We explored programme tastes by asking respondents to name their three favourite television programmes out of a set list. While the full pattern of responses is too detailed to consider here, *Coronation St*, *Eastenders*, *Home and Away* and *Big Brother* were closely related as a soaps/reality television cluster, while *Midsomer Murders*, *A Touch of Frost*, *The Bill* and *Bad Girls* exemplified a popular drama grouping. *Panorma* and *University Challenge* also correlated with one another as traditional forms of ‘serious’ television. *West Wing*, *Spooks*, *6 Feet Under* represent a ‘new drama’ cluster of programmes while *Friends*, *Sex and the City*, *South Park*, and *Absolutely Fabulous* constitute a ‘new comedy’ cluster. It is worth noting that the new comedy/drama groupings form a part of a wider set of programmes whose properties have been widely invoked in debates about ‘quality television’ as evidence for new forms of qualitative division within the television text (see, for example, Jacobs, 2001).

Tables 2 and 3 report the cross-tabulations between these programme groupings and level of education and occupational class respectively. These suggest a complex pattern of popular/legitimate divisions on television between soaps and reality television, and popular drama, on the one hand, and two sets of programmes for which a strong liking increases markedly in accordance with both level of education and class position: ‘serious’ television on the one hand, and new drama and new comedy other which, as Bernard Lahire has shown, have emerged as important sites for new practices of distinction in France (Lahire, 2004: 605–11).

**Table 2: Television programme preferences/level of education %**

<i>TV programmes</i>	<i>No quals</i>	<i>GCSE</i>	<i>A levels etc</i>	<i>RSA/OCR</i>	<i>Uni/CNAA Degree</i>	<i>Ph D</i>
<b>Soaps/reality</b>	26.4	28.5	22.4	21.9	16.5	0
<b>Popular drama</b>	43.4	31.5	24.8	32.5	21.1	11.1
<b>‘Serious’ TV</b>	5.3	4.3	8.1	8.3	14.6	22.2
<b>New drama</b>	2.6	3.8	6.7	5.3	10.4	22.2
<b>New comedy</b>	5.2	13.4	21	12.4	21.1	33.3

**Table 3: Television programme preferences/occupational class %**

<i>TV programmes</i>	<i>Professionals</i>	<i>Intermediate</i>	<i>Skilled non-manual</i>	<i>Skilled manual</i>	<i>Partly/semi Skilled</i>	<i>Unskilled</i>
<b>Soaps/reality</b>	4.8	16.6	26.7	19.1	32.1	37.7
<b>Popular drama</b>	27	29.3	33.9	32.5	33	35.8
<b>‘Serious’ TV</b>	19	10.1	5.8	9.8	4.1	3.8
<b>New drama</b>	11.1	10.1	4	4.65	2.4	3.8
<b>New comedy</b>	19	15.7	15	10.9	13.4	13.2

One factor in play in the differences between these two sets is gender: the ‘serious’ television category attracts more support from men (at over 11%) than from women (at just over 5%)’ while new comedy is more popular with women (nearly 16% compared to almost 12% for men) with new drama registering little difference in terms of gender. It is clear, however, that,

as in the musical field, age plays the more important role in organising these two different forms of differentiation from more popular areas of television programming. As an indicative example: whereas almost 73% of those preferring *Panorama* in the 'serious' television group are in the 41+ age range, nearly 43% of those expressing a first preference for *Sex and the City* in the new comedy group are in the 18–30 age range. This suggests that the 'quality' end of television programming is characterized by two, age-related practices of distinction whose differences may well turn out to tell us a great deal about the dynamics of the media field and their relations to the mobility strategies of different class fractions.

There are, then, both significant similarities between the musical and the media fields in terms of the distribution of likes and dislikes as well as important differences: age is clearly an important factor in both, while this is less true of gender which emerges as a significantly more powerful differentiating factor in the media field. The overall shape of the distribution of tastes is also different, with tastes in the media field being less sharply divided between two polarized extremes. The issues we now go on to look at concern how far such indicators of taste coincide with, or depart from, those generated by indicators of knowledge of and participation in the literary and art fields.

#### **4. The literary field: participation, taste and knowledge**

In order to explore the relationships between cultural taste, knowledge and participation in the literary field, our survey asked three types of question. Firstly, as part of a broader interrogation of cultural ownership whose purpose was to illuminate cultural capital in its objectified form, we asked about the numbers of books that our respondents owned and the numbers of books that they had read in the year previous to their completion of the survey. Secondly we asked respondents to grade their preferences for a number of genres of book. As with all the sections of our survey, the names we give to things and the classifications we derive from them are a means of simplifying the complexity of the contemporary cultural field. In the context of the literary field, though, such questions are of particular importance. Sociological studies of reading practices, inspired by feminist or subcultural theorists, have thus emphasized the importance of genre as an exclusionary tactic, used by fans or readers to mark and police the boundaries of their space (Radway 1987, 1999). Similarly, the label of 'literature' is also implicated in hierarchies of cultural value reflecting the ways in which readers relate to writing, as much as to intrinsic, aesthetic, characteristics of text (Bennett 1990).

The genres, then, were selected to account for a spread of preferences, taking in popular genre fiction and non-fiction as well as the more amorphous category of modern literature. This echoes Bourdieu's selection of 'novels' as a category separate from 'detective' and 'adventure' stories (Bourdieu 1984: 119) but also takes account of the centrality of genre to the organisation of production in the contemporary literary field as well as acknowledging the importance of women's reading, particularly romance fiction. The importance of gender to understanding the literary field has been made clear through Radway's work which focuses on the importance of genre both to readers of romance fiction (1984) and to producers or intermediaries working in the cultural industries (1997). The rise of the self-help book (including mind, body and spirit books) as a non-fiction form with both a popular audience and, according to Giddens (1991), contemporary theoretical significance is also reflected in our choice of genres for respondents to rate.

Thirdly, to account for questions of knowledge and participation a list of six books was compiled and respondents were asked whether they had heard of or read each book. A number of complex factors governed the selection of these authors, including a need to represent a variety of genres, different levels of complexity and accessibility, different levels

of popularity or visibility, as well as to reflect and interrogate the presence of cultural hierarchies and accepted canons.

In relation to these three-fold interests of taste, knowledge and participation, there are a number of interesting preliminary findings. Firstly, and significantly, our data reveals that regular participation in book reading is the pursuit of a significant minority. Forty-five percent of our sample had read 5 or more books in the previous year, whilst just over 20% had read none. Book ownership is more evenly spread, with around 55% of people owning more than fifty books and only 5% claiming to own none. An analysis of the spread of ownership of books across occupations showed that 52% of those classified in higher professional occupations owned over 200 books, whilst 32% of those in semi-routine and nearly 43% of those in routine occupations owned less than 20. In terms of participation, Table 4 shows that a little over 74% of those in higher professional occupations had read 5 or more books in the previous year, compared to around 44% of those in semi-routine and around 30% of those in routine occupations. Three per cent of those in higher professional occupations had not read a book in the previous year, compared to just over 21% and 34% of semi-routine and routine occupations respectively. Whilst this indicates a possible connection between cultural and economic capital, the complexity of this relationship is also revealed through the fact that almost 27% of employers or senior managers of large organisations had also not read a book in the previous year.

**Table 4: Participation in the literary field/occupation %**

	<i>Higher professional</i>	<i>Semi-routine</i>	<i>Routine</i>
<b>Read 5+ books previous year</b>	74.2	44.2	30.5
<b>Not read book previous year</b>	3	21.1	34

These indicators of the spread of participation do not necessarily point to a general pattern of exclusion from the literary field. If we take knowledge of books as an indicator of inclusion in this field, then the patterns of recognition of our selected authors and titles are revealing. The most read book of our selection, by far, was Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice*, by 38% of our respondents. The next most popular was J.K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* which had been read by 21% of our respondents. Interestingly, if we combine responses in the ‘Have read’, ‘Thinking of reading’ and ‘Have heard of but not likely to read’ categories to give an indication of visibility, almost the whole of our sample (nearly 97%) had heard of *Harry Potter* and almost 93% had heard of *Pride and Prejudice*. In the former case this reflects the considerable promotional work by the cultural industries and media surrounding ‘the *Harry Potter* phenomenon’, as well as the associated film franchise. This has helped lodge the *Harry Potter* books in the collective consciousness of our sample. However, most of those who had heard of the book were actually unlikely to read it (just over 61% - the largest percentage in this category for any of our books). Similarly, the recognition of Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice* may have been helped by a successful television adaptation in the late nineties, as well as by its prominence in the BBC’s *Big Read* initiative which was aired in the months immediately preceding the survey period. Catherine Cookson’s *Solace of Sin* was recognized by nearly 52% of our sample and read by a little short of only 8%. This was, though, the most borrowed adult fiction title from UK libraries in 1999–2000. Cookson had been the most borrowed author from British libraries for the seventeen years up to 2003 (Public Lending Right Registry 2004). The relatively low levels of participation in the reading

of this popular text might indicate the existence of library use as a distinct sub-field of the broader literary field, with its own patterns and trends.

The least read and least recognized of our books were Maya Angelou's *I Know Why The Caged Birds Sing* with only 4% and *Madame Bovary* by Gustave Flaubert. Angelou was included as a representative of an established, global, 'high cultural' figure, as well as one with trajectories that might connect specifically with diasporic communities. Flaubert was included to account for an established European canon of complex literary works and had been read by a little under 7% of our sample. Both, though, had been heard of by significant numbers of the sample, Angelou by just over 20% and Flaubert by over 40%. In terms of visibility and recognition there seems to be a stark division between those books and authors who have been translated into more popular mass audience media and those that have not. Of the former, Rowling and Austen have been treated by film and TV and John Grisham's *The Firm* – also widely recognised - has been made into a popular film starring Tom Cruise. Catherine Cookson's romantic period dramas about life in the North East of England have also been translated into several successful commercial TV mini-series, though not *Solace of Sin* itself. The two most 'unpopular' books, Angelou's *I Know Why The Caged Birds Sing* and Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*, had not received this 'massifying' treatment, which might account for their relative lack of recognition. This points to the possibility that more popular cultural forms act as routes into the literary field for the majority of our respondents.

The tastes of our respondents, as reflected in their genre preferences, are similarly revealing (see Table 5). Respondents were asked to rank their taste on a seven point scale from 1 'Like very much indeed' to 7 'Do not like at all'. The genres scoring most in the '1' category were biographies/autobiographies and whodunnits, both amassing around 19% of our sample. Combining scores of 1–3 into a 'most liked' category indicates that a little over 54% of our sample expressed a preference for biographies and autobiographies and nearly 47% expressed a preference for whodunnits. The genre 'modern literature', the clearest 'high cultural' category, was preferred by 24% of the sample, just above sci-fi (at nearly 22%) and the least preferred type of books, religious books (at just over 14%). Dislikes are an equally important and revealing component of taste. In the context of the literary field this might be particularly important. The genre for which most category 7 ('Do not like at all') scores were counted was religious books with just over 50% of respondents placing them in this category. Combining scores of categories 5, 6 and 7 into a 'most disliked' category shows that nearly 76% of our respondents were disinclined towards religious books. Other striking disinclinations were towards sci-fi (at nearly 69%), romances (just over 55% - with 33% saying they did not like romances at all) and modern literature (at nearly 56%).

*Table 5: Frequency of preferences for literary genres %*

<i>Genre</i>	<i>Liked by</i>	<i>Disliked by</i>
<b>Romances</b>	31	55.2
<b>Biographies/autobiographies</b>	54.4	30
<b>Self-help books (such as Mind, Body and Spirit)</b>	28	59
<b>Religious books</b>	14.3	75.5
<b>Sci-fi, fantasy and horror</b>	21.6	68.8
<b>Thrillers, whodunnits and detective stories</b>	46.8	37
<b>Modern literature</b>	24	55.9

Pearson correlations between genre preferences revealed that the most significant relationship (.438) is between ‘modern literature’ and ‘biographies/autobiographies’, which might indicate a ‘high cultural’ taste cluster, with readers of these books being less likely to prefer other types of popular ‘genre’ fiction such as romance or science fiction. This might be misleading given the breadth of the genre of biography and the popularity, expressed in sales, of biographies of popular celebrities or athletes. It is perhaps also interesting to note the negative correlation (-.136) between science-fiction and romance fiction. Science-fiction, more than the other examples of genre-fiction, seems to represent a kind of specialist interest, whereby preference for this type of reading does not indicate connection with more obviously valued forms. In terms of correlations for knowledge of particular titles, the most significant relationship (.317) is that between knowledge of *Madame Bovary* and knowledge of *I Know Why the Caged Birds Sing*. As these were our two most unpopular books this seems likely to again indicate the presence of a cluster of high cultural, ‘literary’ taste. In fact, having heard of *Bovary* correlates with having heard of four of the other titles, indicating the presence of a group with broad literary interests.

However, correlations of responses indicating that respondents had read particular titles with preferences for particular genres suggest that this interest does not necessarily translate into participation in the literary field in an indiscriminate way.

Liking modern literature thus correlated positively with having read all the books except *Solace of Sin*. This indicates that readers who associate themselves with the high cultural form of modern literature are more likely to be open to read a wide range of genres. It also suggests that a preference for this type of reading is likely to indicate discrimination against some types of popular text. Readers of our most unpopular books (*Angelou* and *Bovary*) were also likely to be the readers who participated in the literary field most avidly, as recorded by their accounts of their ownership of books and the number of books read in the preceding year (see Table 6). Thirty-four percent of those who read *Angelou* and over 36% of those who read *Bovary* reported having read over 40 books in the year previous to the survey. This compares with around 19% of those who had read J.K. Rowling and the nearly 21% of those who had read Jane Austen. A similar distinction occurs when we consider ownership, where a little over 60% of readers of *Angelou* and around 74% of readers of *Bovary* owned over 100 books. Those respondents who had read our books were likely to be owners of considerable numbers of books.

*Table 6: Literary taste and participation in the literary field*

<i>Title read</i>	<i>Percentage owned &gt;100 books</i>	<i>Percentage read &gt;40 books</i>
<b>Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix (Rowling)</b>	56	19
<b>Pride and Prejudice (Austen)</b>	55	21
<b>Solace of Sin (Cookson)</b>	36	25
<b>I Know Why the Caged Birds Sing (Angelou)</b>	60	34
<b>The Firm (Grisham)</b>	53	25
<b>Madame Bovary (Flaubert)</b>	74	36

What we see in the literary field, then, are strong connections between literary tastes, knowledge and participation, but not sufficiently strong to discount the differences such that any one of these could be simply be read off from the other. We find much the same when we look to the interrelations between tastes, knowledge and participation in the arts field.

## **5. The field of visual art**

Our analysis of the appreciation of art focused on a range of types of legitimate visual art and artists. The range of choices centred on paintings not just in the predominance of paintings among the types of art listed in the questionnaire - performance art, landscapes, renaissance art, still lifes, portraits, modern art and impressionism - but also in the range of artists selected. These - Pablo Picasso, Vincent van Gogh, Frida Kahlo, L.S. Lowry, Andy Warhol, J.M.W. Turner and Tracy Emin - are known mostly for their paintings, except for Emin who is best known for her ‘unmade bed’ installation at the Saatchi Gallery in London.

Individual engagement with visual arts generally presupposes a cultural capital which correlates with the social trajectory of the individual, and is frequently acquired outside the educational system and relatively independent of certified academic achievement. Bourdieu (1984) claims that, together with music, painting is one of the most legitimate areas of culture. However, within the field of painting, as within the field of music, a hierarchy exists by which certain genres or certain works are associated with differences in social status. Often these are historical differences derived from the popularisation (devaluation) of the works across time, through which forms once accorded ‘highbrow’ status descend the hierarchy of genres to become ‘middlebrow or even ‘lowbrow’. Social trajectory has a powerful relationship with educational capital and - notwithstanding the fact that familiarity with art is often acquired via family mechanisms independently of scholastic achievement - this is therefore expected to correlate very strongly with engagement in the field of the visual arts. But, of course, education also relates to - and is often the product of - other variables, including economic capital. Although the analysis of our research data is not yet sufficiently advanced for a clear identification of different forms of capital and the investigation of their relationships with the various cultural fields, some approximation in terms of major demographics appears to confirm the expected divisions of the social world in the field of visual art. Differences in social worlds relate to different engagements with art where, for example, original art works are objects of appropriation, both among those whose origins are within the dominant class, who can appreciate art as personal objects, and among those with less economic and social capital who may buy reproductions of varied quality.

The exploration of taste for different types of art for the whole sample population shows a great predilection for landscapes (around 47%). Each of impressionism, modern art, portraits and performance art each captures the preference of less than 1/8<sup>th</sup> of the population. But dislikes are also highly significant as markers of taste. The type of art most disliked is, by far, modern art (nearly 40%), and more people also dislike than like each of performance art, impressionism and still lifes. There is also a significant proportion of people who feel no engagement with the visual arts, as identified by those who neither like nor dislike any of the types listed or don't know whether they like or dislike them (Table 7).

**Table 7: Taste for type of art**

<i>Type of art</i>	<i>Like the most %</i>	<i>Like the least %</i>
<b>Performance</b>	8.3	13.1
<b>Landscapes</b>	47.3	5.9
<b>Renaissance</b>	4.4	4.8
<b>Still lifes</b>	4.6	10.2
<b>Portraits</b>	8.6	4.5
<b>Modern</b>	8.9	39.6
<b>Impressionism</b>	9.3	11.9
<b>None/don't know</b>	8.8	10.1

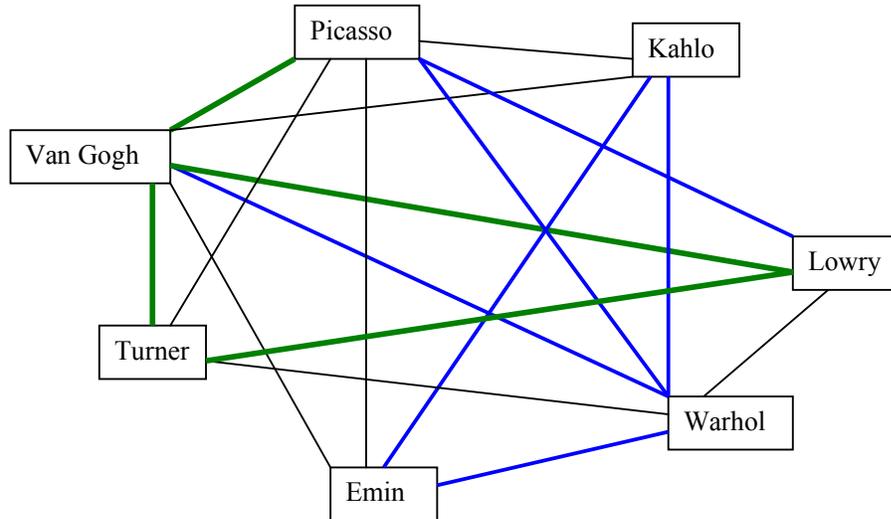
To further explore taste, and also to investigate knowledge and participation in the visual arts, we asked about different sorts of engagement with the works of particular painters. We assumed that knowledge of a painter would refer to having seen (printed reproductions, or reproductions on TV or on the internet) or having heard of his or her works. Participation would imply having seen some of her or his works, whether originals or reproductions. Taste would be expressed in like or dislike for the work that was seen. There are limitations in these assumptions since, for example, lack of participation may be a result of a dislike unconnected to an active engagement with the works of the painter. Let us say, for example, that someone who dislikes Mexican art *tout court* could simply decide that she didn't like Frida Kahlo's works without ever having seen any of them. Or, having heard a television discussion about Tracy Emin's 'bed', would come to the conclusion that he disliked her works. More established painters are less likely to suffer from judgements of these sorts. Because we chose to explore taste in relation to a variety of visual art styles, we need to account for the imposing effect that different levels of legitimacy may have for the judgements of taste expressed by our respondents. For it is possible that the corroboration of legitimate taste - for landscape painting, van Gogh, Picasso and Turner - is to a large extent the playing out of an already existing system of aesthetic classification and the expectations it engenders. It is along these lines, for example, that the widespread positive appraisal of the works of van Gogh might be analysed - as a sign that his name has attained a general currency within the population at large rather than indicating any active engagement with his work.

These considerations are relevant to investigating the relations between taste and participation. Have those who like performance art the most seen Tracy Emin's works? Have those who like modern art the most seen the works of Picasso, or Andy Warhol, or Frida Kahlo, for instance? How is the taste for a type of art related to the active engagement of having seen the works of a painter representative of that type?

The correlation between type of art and participation is sparse and low, yet coherent when it is positively expressed. While there is no positive correlation between a taste for performance art, still lifes or portraits with seeing the works of any of the 7 painters in our list, those who prefer landscape art coherently engaged with seeing the works by Turner (actually mostly seascapes) and Lowry. Similarly, those who like modern art the most show a positive moderate correlation with seeing the works of Frida Kahlo, Tracy Emin and Andy Warhol. A preference for impressionism correlates positively at moderate levels with having seen the works by - in order of correlation strength - Warhol, Picasso, Turner and van Gogh. This last set of associations is somewhat puzzling, suggesting, perhaps, that one's preference for a type of art does not restrict participation to that type but that certain types - like impressionism - may be more conducive to omnivorousness within the field of visual art. A liking for impressionism, in other words, may signal a relation to the consumption of art that takes in whatever is available to participate in rather than exclusively pursuing a dedicated taste. Should this be so, a preference for impressionism is functioning more elastically than a dedicated taste choice.

To consider more closely the relationship between likes and dislikes we measured Pearson correlations for the works of the particular painters. These are grouped below in Graph 4. The green lines (or thickest) indicate the strongest correlations, the blue lines (or lines of intermediate thickness) the correlations of intermediate strength and the black lines (or thinnest) the weakest correlations. Thus people who like the works of Picasso and van Gogh, van Gogh and Turner, van Gogh and Lowry, and Lowry and Turner comprise one particular set of related tastes. A second set is shown by a medium range correlation between Picasso and Lowry, Picasso and Warhol, Warhol and van Gogh, and Warhol, Kahlo and Emin. The weakest positive correlations are found to emerge from the works of Kahlo, Emin, Warhol, Picasso and Turner - and, statistically weaker still, Lowry. In the case of Picasso and Turner, it is because they correlate widely with other artists that, in some cases, the correlation is weak. The strong direct connection between Kahlo and Emin may reflect gender considerations, although it is worth noting that, as in the musical field, the effects of gender on these taste patterns is not highly significant. The distribution of women's tastes mirrors that of the sample as a whole exactly whereas, for men, the only significant departure is the lack of any connection between liking van Gogh and liking Emin.

*Graph 4: Visual artists - likes*



In Table 8, which explores the relations between taste, participation and knowledge, taste (as measured in terms of ‘have seen and like’ responses) appears as the most distinctive correlation among the three factors. This is in accordance with our expectations. Knowledge is the most widely shared factor and the least discriminatory, since our minimal criterion for this - having heard of the artist concerned - interprets knowledge as access to a fairly low level of information about the works of an artist. No particular form of familiarisation, or qualification, is attached to knowledge about the works of an artist. Participation appears as a more discriminating variable implying the action of having seen the artist in question. It is in expressions of taste as an actual liking of the artists named that more distinctive boundaries appear to exist.

**Table 8: Participation, taste and knowledge of the works of the artists %**

	<i>Taste</i> <i>Have seen &amp; liked</i>	<i>Participation</i> <i>Have seen &amp; liked</i> <i>or not liked</i>	<i>Knowledge</i> <i>Have seen &amp; not</i> <i>seen but heard</i>	<i>Not heard</i> <i>Don't know</i>
<b>Van Gogh</b>	67.2	81.4	94	6.0
<b>Picasso</b>	49.0	76.7	93.3	6.6
<b>Kahlo</b>	3.9	5.6	11.7	88.2
<b>Turner</b>	50.5	57.2	72.3	27.6
<b>Emin</b>	2.9	20.6	27.8	72.1
<b>Warhol</b>	21.7	55.8	73.9	26.1
<b>Lowry</b>	54.5	67.4	76.7	23.2

To translate this into the terms introduced earlier, Bourdieu (1984), when discussing the division of tastes, defines three categories: (1) legitimate taste, comprising the most assured aesthetes who engage strongly with those arts that are validated by the institutions of legitimation; (2) ‘middlebrow’ taste, where major genres and minor works combine; and (3) popular taste, where the popularized work prevails. Applying these categories to Table 8 we can see that van Gogh, Lowry, Turner and Picasso are the most liked artists, but Turner and Lowry are associated with lower levels of participation and are the lesser known among these. Van Gogh and Picasso are no doubt the most popularized through extensive reproductions and exhibitions that have reached popular taste. Frida Kahlo, Tracey Emin and, to some extent, Andy Warhol appear to constitute a group for whom those who like their works would constitute the greatest taste risk takers, suggesting an *avant-garde* rather than a legitimate taste formation. Greater attention to the engagement with their works by groups with different capital compositions will perhaps reveal a range of distinctive tastes expressed in these choices. The lack of knowledge of the works of Emin and Kahlo is a relevant indicator of their niche position within the visual art field. Turner, Lowry and, to some extent, Warhol are broadly placed within ‘middlebrow’ taste.

Expressing the relationships between taste and knowledge and taste and participation as ratios also makes it clear that taste is a more powerful differentiating factor in relation to the more rarely known artists than in relation to those enjoying ‘middlebrow’ popularity. When this is done (see Table 9) then the lower the ratios the more sharply taste discriminates. Emin and Warhol are thus the two artists for whom taste differentiates most sharply from both participation and knowledge, and Lowry and van Gogh the two for whom it differentiates least sharply.

**Table 9: Taste/participation, taste/knowledge ratios**

	<i>Taste/participation ratio</i>	<i>Taste/knowledge ratio</i>
<b>Van Gogh</b>	0.83	0.71
<b>Picasso</b>	0.63	0.53
<b>Kahlo</b>	0.69	0.33
<b>Turner</b>	0.88	0.70
<b>Emin</b>	0.14	0.10
<b>Warhol</b>	0.39	0.29
<b>Lowry</b>	0.81	0.71

It's worth noting, finally, a degree of tension between Tables 7 and 8. For whereas the first shows that not many people like impressionism, the second shows that van Gogh and Turner - whose influence on impressionism is widely acknowledged - are among the most popular artists. This is perhaps because the findings reported in Table 7 measure responses to 'linguistic categories' more than actual responses to art work. We might thus have expected, had we included them in our survey, that Leonardo's *Mona Lisa* or Michelangelo's *Last Judgement* might have scored very highly even though the category of 'renaissance art' elicited a low score.

## **6. Elements of the space of lifestyles**

In the previous sections we have examined selective aspects of the operation of different components of cultural capital as evidenced by patterns of cultural participation, knowledge and taste in the musical, media, visual art and literary fields.

This has highlighted a number of differences: the greater role of gender in organising taste in relation to television and reading than in the musical and visual art fields, for example. We have also seen that the relations between cultural knowledge and cultural taste operate differently in different fields. Cultural knowledge, for example, is more broadly spread in the literary field than it is in the visual art field.

The question we wish to explore here, however, is whether, notwithstanding such differences, there are identifiable patterns of taste and knowledge across fields. If this were the case there would be grounds for positing the existence of distinctive life styles, and to expect there to be some correspondence between the space of life styles and social space; i.e. if there are homologies across fields then we may be observing the correspondence between cultural capital, in its varied forms, and social position that forms the core demonstration of *Distinction*.

We explore these issues in two ways. We look first to see whether there are patterns of taste across fields. We do this by using principal component analysis to examine whether, across pairs of fields - in this case, the art and literary fields - there are identifiable shared patterns of likes. Second we offer a preliminary analysis of the implications of our data for the cultural omnivore hypothesis: the argument that some sections of the population have experience of a wider range of cultural items than others, so that knowing more of our named books would mean that one also knew more of the works of music, art, etc., that we named. Should this be so, it would lend support to the argument (Peterson and Kern 1996) that omniverousness is itself a distinctive life style with specific socio-demographic connections. We therefore look

at whether there is an accumulation of knowledge across fields in this way and, if so, at whether such knowledge is differentially distributed among categories of the British population.

Table 10 summarizes the results of a factor analysis of the relationships between likes for the works of the particular authors and artists examined in the two previous sections. The first factor distinguishes those who like most of the artists named (other than Emin and Kahlo) but are not predisposed towards reading (other than *Pride and Prejudice*). The second factor, more interestingly, distinguishes those who like Emin, Kahlo, Warhol, Bovary and Angelou. Interestingly, these are not part of the British canon, and include the women artists (Emin and Kahlo) but not the women writers (Austen and Cookson) named in the questionnaire. The third factor distinguishes those who like popular fiction (Potter and Grisham), and the fourth those who like Cathryn Cookson, Jane Austen, and Flaubert. While clearly, then, there is considerable differentiation between the organisation of taste in the two fields, we can see some tastes crossing over, especially in Factor 1 (where Austen is weakly linked to established artistic taste) and Factor 2 which suggests a more cosmopolitan and female taste cluster.

**Table 10: Taste across the literary and visual art fields**  
**Rotated Component Matrix (a)**

	<i>Component</i>			
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>
<b>POTTER</b>	-.039	.021	.788	.048
<b>PRIDE</b>	.322	.051	.235	.644
<b>SOLACE</b>	-.022	-.162	-.031	.614
<b>CAGEBIRD</b>	-.089	.391	.257	.383
<b>FIRM</b>	.160	.025	.606	.166
<b>BOVARY</b>	.167	.341	.080	.461
<b>VANGOGH</b>	.702	.082	.310	-.062
<b>EMIN</b>	-.042	.703	.011	-.030
<b>LOWRY</b>	.738	-.029	-.078	.216
<b>TURNER</b>	.730	.004	-.080	.254
<b>KAHLO</b>	.048	.726	-.061	.061
<b>WARHOL</b>	.340	.512	.220	-.157
<b>PICASSO</b>	.547	.216	.387	-.247

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method:  
Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.  
A Rotation converged in 6 iterations.

In order to explore the omnivore thesis, we examined the pattern of responses to all those questions in the survey which asked whether respondents had, or had not, heard of or seen the particular cultural items in questions. This yielded 24 items across the media, literary, and music fields. These identified four national events broadcast on television (the Grand National, the World Cup [soccer], the Queen's Christmas broadcast and the General Election night results programme); the works of six film directors (Stephen Spielberg, Alfred Hitchcock, Pedro Almodovar, Ingmar Bergman, Jane Campion, and Mani Rathnam); the named works of the six authors discussed in the previous section; and eight pieces of music (*Wonderwall* by Oasis, *Stan* by Eminem, *Four Seasons* by Vivaldi, *Einstein on the Beach* by

Philip Glass, *Symphony no 5* by Mahler, *Kind of Blue* by Miles Davis, *Oops I Did It Again* by Britney Spears, and *Chicago* by Frank Sinatra). These items all measure *knowledge* or *familiarity* (in the sense of having heard of the work) with specific cultural items and thus relate to the knowledge component of cultural capital.

By collating the responses across all these questions we created a 'scale of cultural knowledge' measuring the total number of different items that each respondent to the survey recognized. Those with a high level of knowledge we might expect to be culturally well-endowed, and to be culturally 'omnivorous' in the sense of having a knowledge across a range of types of item within each field and across all four fields. This indicates not necessarily enthusiasm or critical engagement or even liking, but probably involves at least some degree of familiarity with critical guides to culture, a cultural education, an exposure to certain kinds and sources of information, or, more likely, all three. Erickson's (1996) hypothesis that those in managerial positions have greater need of a wider range of topics of conversation, and so will follow more fields, is also relevant to the social distribution of this kind of cultural knowledge.

The scale was normally distributed. One person scored zero, and two people 24. The mean was 15, the median 16. The bottom quartile scored 13 or less. The top quartile 18 or more. 58 per cent of respondents scored between 13 and 18, representing a strong concentration in the middle of the scale. To assess the relations between different points on this scale of cultural knowledge and social position, we cross-tabulated these scores with five socio-demographic variables: occupational class, gender, ethnic group (self-identified), educational level and age. The measure for class was NS-SEC (2001). Responses to a question about ethnic self-identification produced four categories: White English, White 'Celtic' (Scottish, Welsh and Irish), Other White and Other. Education was in six groups: no qualifications, GCSE, HND, A-level, degree, postgraduate degree. Age was in 10 year cohorts.

There was a steady class gradient. In the top quartile there were 40% of employers and higher managers, 34% of higher and 37% per cent of lower professionals, 27% of intermediate occupations, 28% of self-employed, 17% of lower supervisory and technical workers, 16% of semi-routine workers, 14% of routine workers, and 15% of those who had never worked. The lowest quartile was a mirror image of this, but notably contained 69% of those who had never worked and 47% of routine workers (group 8). There were no obvious differences by gender. In terms of self-identified ethnicity, the top quartile contained 27% of the 'White English', 26% of 'White Other', 21% of 'White Celtic' and 10% of 'Other'. These differences, especially those between the white and non-white groups, obviously merit further exploration. That the 'White-Other' were slightly less culturally familiar with the items we presented to them than were their White English counterparts is also of interest since this contrasts with the outcomes of a similar exercise we undertook to identify a scale of cultural participation where the 'White-Other' group participated more than any other group.

Education was the most clear differentiating principle, as in this case we would certainly expect. Again taking proportions in the top quartile, these were as indicated in Table 11.

*Table 11: scale of knowledge by level of education %*

<b>No qualifications</b>	11
<b>GCSE</b>	20
<b>Technical qualificaitons</b>	23
<b>A-level</b>	29
<b>Degree</b>	42
<b>Postgraduate degree</b>	70

Age presented an inverted U shape distribution in the top quartile. Fewer of the youngest group (18–24) were familiar with the full range of items than those between 25 and 64. Those over 65, and especially those over 75, were much less likely to be in the top quartile of familiarity.

## **8. Conclusions**

As this is the first ‘public outing’ for our data, we do not, at this stage, wish to draw any conclusions which, in being too specific, would foreclose on possible further lines of inquiry. It does, however, seem reasonably clear that disaggregating cultural capital into participation, taste and knowledge components will prove productive for the light it throws on the different articulations of the relations between these which characterize different fields and for the ways in which patterns across fields can then be examined and connected to a range of social position indicators. In further pursuing these lines of inquiry we shall, among other things, be concerned to explore the extent to which these different components of cultural capital interact in different ways to yield what we might call different formations of cultural capital.

Five possibilities might be identified here. The first, following Bourdieu, might loosely be described as that of the Kantian aesthetic in which the ability to appreciate ‘abstract’ cultural forms, distanced from the practical necessity of daily life, is viewed as a crucial component of cultural capital. This is most likely to manifest itself in relation to traditional forms of high culture (a liking for classical music and opera, for example) and, perhaps more especially, in modernist and avant-garde cultural practices including their contemporary cosmopolitan formation. The second is a more conventional form of ‘snob’ culture in which some of the same cultural practices figure, especially traditional forms of high culture, alongside other practices, elite sports for example, in a formation in which it is not a Kantian disposition that matters but the expense of the activity or other aspects which enable it to function as a marker of social exclusiveness. A third formation which, again, shares elements of the first and second, defines cultural capital in terms of whatever is consecrated by the education system and is thus able to be mobilized by, in the main, the professional middle classes as a key aspect of trans-generational strategies of inheritance. Fourth, pulling in a somewhat contrary direction to these first three, is the cultural omnivore thesis in which cultural capital is defined less in terms of a particular orientation to particular types of culture than in terms of a socially restricted ability, again largely acquired and transmitted through the education system, to range across different cultural genres irrespective of their classification as ‘high’ or ‘low’. And finally, there is the concept of cultural capital as a distinctively national formation which, in terms proposed by Ghassan Hage (1998) and endorsed by Bourdieu, operates in the different relations that different ethnic groups have to those forms of cultural experience, knowledge and familiarity conferring a sense of national belongingness.

The evidence collected above is already suggestive. In each of the fields we do see clear evidence towards clusterings of taste which, while lending it some degree of confirmation, would make any unqualified application of the omnivore thesis problematic. Although there are people who do range across different cultural genres, we can also find clear fractures in each of the fields, and, on the whole, these do conform to some kind of distinction between 'high' and 'low'. Second, we have seen evidence pointing towards the 'mainstreaming' of what might be seen as 'snob' taste. Classical music, impressionist art, J.M.W. Turner, and the novels of Jane Austen are amongst the most popular of the cultural works we asked about, and liking for these is often associated with other apparently 'middlebrow' works, such as the novels of John Grisham or the art of L.S. Lowry. These works are differently located from the taste of what might be seen as the intellectual *avant garde* associated with non-British, and/or marginal cultural producers (e.g. Frida Kahlo, Maya Angelou, and Tracy Emin, for example). This points to the need to recognize the power of the 'nation' to configure a distinctive form of cultural capital. Rather than cultural distinction resting on the ability to distance oneself from everyday practical existence - as in the distinction Bourdieu draws between the 'purposiveness without purpose' of the Kantian aesthetic and the taste for the necessary of working class culture - it may reside more in the ability to distance oneself from the national frame of reference and to embrace the 'non-British'.

This is an issue we will explore further in relation to the evidence from our ethnic boost sample. For it is clear from our preliminary work on this that, for each of the fields reviewed in this paper, the profiles of one or more of the minority ethnic groups included in this sample are positioned outside or in an eccentric relation to those aspects of cultural capital that Hage identifies as forming a distinctive national belongingness, and in ways which suggest their Western as well as purely national articulations. The percentages of Indian, Pakistani and Afro-Caribbean respondents who had not heard of Turner, van Gogh, Warhol, Lowry or Picasso were thus much higher than for the main sample. The same was true, in the literary field, where knowledge of Austen, Cookson, and Flaubert was low for all three groups. On television, similarly, those programmes at the core of the national "middlebrow" culture - *Midsomer Murders* and *A Touch of Frost* - were little watched by respondents in the ethnic boost samples. These are, of course, no more than pointers to the types of consideration we shall need to consider to produce an understanding of contemporary formations of cultural capital which, in contrast to Bourdieu's analysis in *Distinction*, is open to the effects of transnational flows of both people and culture. But they are a start.

(If you wish to be advised of further publications and events flowing out of the *Cultural Capital and Social Exclusion* project, please contact Karen Ho - [K.D.Ho@open.ac.uk](mailto:K.D.Ho@open.ac.uk) - who will place you on the project mailing list).

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<sup>1</sup> This paper draws on data produced by the research team for the ESRC project *Cultural Capital and Social Exclusion: A Critical Investigation* (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.

<sup>2</sup> The focus groups, totalling 25, comprised between 4 and 8 participants per group, involving a total of 143 participants, including 74 women and 69 men. The groups were conducted in 6 areas in the UK in order to take account of regional and national differences as well as of differences between urban and rural areas and those between metropolitan and provincial cities. Focus groups were held between March and July 2003 in London (8), Birmingham (2), rural Scotland (3), Belfast (2), Swansea

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(3), and Nottingham (7). Household interviews were conducted with 30 respondents from the survey and, in some cases, their partners, yielding a total of 45 interviews. The selection of households was based on a theoretical sample which aimed to take account of the distribution of households in terms of (i) cultural capital composition, (ii) the presence or absence of dependent children, (iii) geographical location, and (iv) a division between 'white' and minority ethnic composition.

<sup>3</sup> The survey was administered to a main sample of 1564 and an ethnic boost sample of 227 divided roughly equally between members of the Indian, Pakistani and Afro-Caribbean communities. The survey was conducted between November 2003 and March 2004 by the National Centre for Social Research. See Thomson (2004) for the technical report.

<sup>4</sup> There is also a third position that we shall need to consider - that of Bernard Lahire (2004) whose concern with 'dissonances' in the cultural profiles of individuals gives rise to different ways of placing individuals in socio-cultural space than those of both Bourdieu and Peterson and Kern. We shall, however, defer a consideration of the implications of Lahire's position for a later stage of our work.

<sup>5</sup> The trans-field nature of Bourdieu's approach to the journalistic field is carried further by Nick Couldry (2003) in his contention that the journalistic field functions as a locus for the organisation of 'media meta-capital' which partly displaces the state's role, through the education system, in determining the value of different forms of cultural capital. See also Benson and Neveu (2005).

<sup>6</sup> This graph interprets negative correlations between the genres 'most liked' by respondents and those 'least liked' as positive correlations.

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