How does cultural hierarchy relate to social hierarchy? Do the more advantaged consume ‘high’ culture, while the less advantaged consume popular culture? Or has cultural consumption in contemporary societies become individualised to such a degree that there is no longer any social basis for cultural consumption? Leading scholars from the UK, the USA, Chile, France, Hungary and the Netherlands systematically examine the social stratification of arts and culture. They evaluate the ‘class–culture homology argument’ of Pierre Bourdieu and Herbert Gans; the ‘individualisation arguments’ of Anthony Giddens, Ulrich Beck and Zygmunt Bauman; and the ‘omnivore–univore argument’ of Richard Peterson. They also demonstrate that, consistent with Max Weber’s class–status distinction, cultural consumption, as a key element of lifestyle, is stratified primarily on the basis of social status rather than by social class.

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Social Status and Cultural Consumption

Edited by

TAK WING CHAN
To my mother,
Wai Fong Poon

and

in fond memory of my father,
Chun Mou Chan
(1925–2007)
Contents

List of figures ix

List of tables xi

List of contributors xiv

Acknowledgments xv

1 Social status and cultural consumption 1
   TAK WING CHAN AND JOHN H. GOLDSMITH

2 The social status scale: its construction and properties 28
   TAK WING CHAN

3 Social stratification and musical consumption: highbrow-middlebrow in the United States 57
   ARTHUR S. ALDERSON, ISAAC HEACOCK AND AZAMAT JUNISBAI

4 Bourdieu's legacy and the class-status debate on cultural consumption: musical consumption in contemporary France 84
   PHILIPPE COULANGEON AND YANNICK LEMEL

5 Social status and public cultural consumption: Chile in comparative perspective 109
   FLORENCIA TORCHE

6 Social stratification and cultural participation in Hungary: a post-communist pattern of consumption? 139
   ERZSÉBET BUKODI

7 Status, class and culture in the Netherlands 169
   GERBERT Kraaykamp, KOEN VAN EIJCK AND WOUT ULTEE
8 Social stratification of cultural consumption across three domains: music; theatre, dance and cinema; and the visual arts 204
TAK WING CHAN AND JOHN H. GOLDSWORTHY

9 Conclusion 232
TAK WING CHAN

References 252
Index 269
# Figures

2.1 Distribution of educational attainment within status group 45  
2.2 Distribution of income within status group 46  
2.3 Distribution of status within and between classes 50  
2.4 SIOPS and H–G scale plotted against social status scale 52  
2.5 ISEI plotted against social status scale 54  
3.1 Area plot of styles of highbrow–middlebrow musical consumption by social status 72  
3.2 Factor change/discrete change associated with significant parameters 77  
3.3 Factor change/discrete change associated with gender-specific status measure and other key parameters 80  
4.1 Musical genres most often listened to and the distribution of respondents by number of genres listened to 92  
4.2 MCA results 95  
5.1 Cultural participation rate in four countries: overall rates and movie-going rate by income quartile 113  
5.2 Distribution of types of consumer by status, education, class and income 123  
5.3 Predicted probabilities of being an inactive, an omnivore or a movie-lover by social status and income 129  
5.4 Predicted probability of being an omnivore, a movie-lover or a live-performance aficionado by income and status with income–status interaction 133  
6.1 Bivariate association between social status and type of cultural consumer 151  
6.2 Predicted probability of being culturally active 158  
6.3 Predicted probability of being an omnivore 159  
7.1 Cultural participation rate by social class and social status of respondent and partner 184
8.1 Bivariate association between social status and level of cross-domain cultural participation 216
8.2 Probability of a hypothetical respondent being found at above level 1 and at level 4 by educational qualifications and status 225
Tables

2.1 Data used in the estimation of the status scale
2.2 Status groups in descending status score and their relative size in each country
2.3 Correlation of status scales estimated for different sub-populations in the UK and the US
2.4 Bivariate correlation between status and education and between status and income, and standardised regression coefficients when status scores are regressed on education and income
2.5 Seven-fold version of the CASMIN class schema
2.6 Variance of social status between classes and within class for the seven countries
2.7 Correlation between various occupational status scales for the UK
3.1 Percentage of respondents who have attended live music events, listened to music (recording/radio), or watched a musical performance (television/vcr/dvd) in the last twelve months
3.2 Latent class models fitted to SPPA musical consumption items
3.3 Relative size of latent classes and conditional probabilities of consuming each item in last twelve months
3.4 Estimated overall probability and conditional (row) probabilities of consuming each item
3.5 Characteristics of latent classes
3.6 Multinomial logistic regression predicting latent class membership
4.1 Correlation of factors to initial variables and MCA eigenvalues
List of tables

4.2 Percentage of respondents within each cluster listening to various genres of music and reporting different number of genres 96
4.3 Distribution of types of listener by age, gender, area of residence, hours worked per week, class, status, income and education 97
4.4 Cultural consumption characteristics of the four clusters of music listeners 99
4.5 Multinomial logistic regression on cluster membership 100
5.1 Descriptive statistics 117
5.2 Percentage of respondents who have taken part in various cultural activities in the last 12 months 118
5.3 Latent class analysis of six indicators of cultural consumption 118
5.4 Relative size of the latent classes and conditional probability of participating in various cultural activities each class 119
5.5 Percentage of respondents within each latent class engaging in other cultural consumption and leisure activities 121
5.6 Multinomial logistic regression of cultural consumption patterns 125
5.7 Multinomial logistic regression model of cultural consumption pattern with income proxy by status interaction 132
5.8 Typical occupations within each of the 28 occupational groups in Chile. 137
6.1 Percentage of respondents who have taken part in various cultural activities in the past 12 months 144
6.2 Distribution of respondents in the three separate domains of cultural consumption 145
6.3 Goodness of fit statistics of log-linear models as applied to a three-way contingency table cross-classifying types of cultural participation in different domains 146
6.4 Distribution of respondents by pattern of cultural consumption over the three domains 147
6.5 Distribution of types of cultural consumer within status groups (% by row) 149
6.6 Distribution of types of cultural consumer within classes (% by row) 151
6.7 Descriptive statistics of covariateN(= 6844) 153
List of tables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>Multinomial logistic regression: type of cultural consumer as dependent variable</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>Examples of predicted probabilities of cultural activities by father’s social status</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>Descriptive statistics</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>Regression of visiting museums on individual and partner’s class and status position</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>Regression of attending theatre on individual and partner’s class and status position</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>Regression of attending classical concerts on individual and partner’s class and status position</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>Regression of attending pop concerts on individual and partner’s class and status position</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>Frequencies of overlapping audiences</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>Multinomial regression of omnivorousness versus non-participation, univore pop attendance</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>Distribution of respondents by latent classes within the three cultural domains (N = 3819)</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>Goodness of fit statistics of loglinear models as applied to a three-way contingency table cross-classifying cultural participation in (1) music, (2) theatre, dance &amp; cinema, and (3) the visual arts</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>Distribution of respondents across levels of cultural participation over all three domains</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>Distribution of respondents by level of cross-domain cultural participation within social class</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>Multinomial logit model: level of cultural participation as the dependent variable</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Tak Wing Chan