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## *Social Status and Cultural Consumption*

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.

TAK WING CHAN teaches sociology at the University of Oxford, where he is also a fellow and tutor of New College, and the Director of the Oxford Network for Social Inequality Research.

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To my mother,  
*Wai Fong Poon*

and

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

## Contents

<i>List of figures</i>	<i>page</i> ix
<i>List of tables</i>	xi
<i>List of contributors</i>	xiv
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xv
1 Social status and cultural consumption	1
TAK WING CHAN AND JOHN H. GOLDTHORPE	
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	

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978-0-521-19446-4 - Social Status and Cultural Consumption  
Edited by Tak Wing Chan  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

---

viii	<i>Contents</i>
8	Social stratification of cultural consumption across three domains: music; theatre, dance and cinema; and the visual arts
	TAK WING CHAN AND JOHN H. GOLDTHORPE
	204
9	Conclusion
	TAK WING CHAN
	232
	<i>References</i>
	252
	<i>Index</i>
	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

Cambridge University Press  
978-0-521-19446-4 - Social Status and Cultural Consumption  
Edited by Tak Wing Chan  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

---

x

*List of figures*

- |   |     |
|---|-----|
| 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	31
2.2 Status groups in descending status score and their relative size in each country	33
2.3 Correlation of status scales estimated for different sub-populations in the UK and the US	42
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	43
2.5 Seven-fold version of the CASMIN class schema	47
2.6 Variance of social status between classes and within class for the seven countries	48
2.7 Correlation between various occupational status scales for the UK	52
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	62
3.2 Latent class models fitted to SPPA musical consumption items	63
3.3 Relative size of latent classes and conditional probabilities of consuming each item in last twelve months	64
3.4 Estimated overall probability and conditional (row) probabilities of consuming each item	65
3.5 Characteristics of latent classes	66
3.6 Multinomial logistic regression predicting latent class membership	74
4.1 Correlation of factors to initial variables and MCA eigenvalues	94

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 covariate $N (= 6844)$	153

<i>List of tables</i>	xiii
6.8 Multinomial logistic regression: type of cultural consumer as dependent variable	154
6.9 Examples of predicted probabilities of cultural activities by father's social status	163
7.1 Descriptive statistics	183
7.2 Regression of visiting museums on individual and partner's class and status position	186
7.3 Regression of attending theatre on individual and partner's class and status position	188
7.4 Regression of attending classical concerts on individual and partner's class and status position	190
7.5 Regression of attending pop concerts on individual and partner's class and status position	192
7.6 Frequencies of overlapping audiences	198
7.7 Multinomial regression of omnivorousness versus non-participation, univore pop attendance	200
8.1 Distribution of respondents by latent classes within the three cultural domains ( $N = 3819$ )	207
8.2 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 & cinema, and (3) the visual arts	212
8.3 Distribution of respondents across levels of cultural participation over all three domains	213
8.4 Distribution of respondents by level of cross-domain cultural participation within social class	215
8.5 Multinomial logit model: level of cultural participation as the dependent variable	219

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*Tak Wing Chan*