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Capital, Consumption, Communication, and Citizenship: The Social Positioning of Taste and Civic Culture in the United States

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In this article, the authors analyze the field of cultural consumption in the United States. Using the 2000 DDB Lifestyle Study, they examine a cross-section of Americans in terms of their occupational categories, media usage, consumption practices, social behaviors, and indicators of civic and political engagement. In doing so, the authors find many parallels to the determinants of taste, cultural discrimination, and choice within the field structure observed by Bourdieu in 1960s French society. However, there are also some notable differences in terms of the composition of cultural capital consistent with the concept of omnivorousness. The distribution of positions is largely defined by patterns of taste that discriminate between refinement, moderation, nurturance, and a communal orientation, on one side, and coarseness, excess, aggressiveness, and an individual orientation, on the other. Historical and national differences partly account for this variation, but a major role may be played by the increasing formation of identities around media and consumption, leading to a more gendered and ideological positioning of taste cultures in the U.S context.

Keywords: Bourdieu; correspondence analysis; high culture; cultural capital; middlebrow; omnivore; political participation; popular culture

Pierre Bourdieu's *Distinction* (1979/1984) has earned wide influence for its path-breaking and elaborate analysis of the economy of cultural goods: the social conditions for their production, consumption, and valuation. Correspondingly, it defines the different modes of taste that assign these goods their value as "cultural capital." Treating "culture" in the anthropological rather than the normative sense, Bourdieu analyzes the phenomena of taste at elite, middlebrow, and popular levels of cultural consumption. He covers such areas of taste as food, sport, fashion, manners, home décor, art, music, and literature. In all these fields of cultural production, cultural goods circulate as a form of power or capital, as markers of distinction among classes and class fractions.

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Bourdieu's great innovation was to connect the production, consumption, and valuation of cultural capital with the social practices of establishing hierarchies, maintaining distances, and legitimating differences between dominant and dominated groups. Since taste plays such an important part in these social practices, Bourdieu (1979/1984) argues that its logic needs to be examined sociologically and placed within a history of struggles between the dominant and the dominated. "Taste classifies," he declares, "and it classifies the classifier. Social subjects, classified by their classifications, distinguish themselves by the distinctions they make" (p. 6). From this starting point, *Distinction* outlines a complex program for a science of cultural consumption. In pursuing this program, Bourdieu's explicit polemical goal was to demystify and expose the social misrecognitions that the Kantian tradition of aesthetic judgment helped rationalize. But many scholars have adapted Bourdieu's insights about the social meanings and uses of

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cultural goods for a variety of other purposes (see Holt 1997a, 1997b, 1998; Lamont and Lareau 1988).

Here, we take Bourdieu's concept of the field of consumption and apply it to the United States in 2000. Using the 2000 DDB Lifestyle Study, we analyze a cross section of Americans ($N = 3,122$) in terms of the associations among occupational categories, media usage, consumption practices, social behaviors, and indicators of civic and political engagement. In doing so, we are reproducing the field of consumption in a different national and historical context. Bourdieu's research, conducted in the late 1960s, was situated in a France that had a relatively stable class structure and a stratified system of institutions that reproduced cultural taste. The United States in 2000 differs not only in its class and cultural structure. It also lies at the other side of a historical shift in which consumption is less clearly the outcome of the intersection of class and culture but rather actively shapes it. Moreover, media consumption in the form of television, radio, magazines, newspapers, and the Internet has become an increasingly important marker of cultural consumption in this context. To test whether and how the concept of the field of consumption might apply in the United States, we have attempted to reproduce parts of the analysis of *Distinction* with the following two goals: first, to visualize the field of consumption in the United States and analyze whether the categories of Bourdieu's analysis of the field apply, even generally; and second, to expand and examine the patterns of the field of consumption in the social space in the United States that include media consumption as central to cultural consumption and taste.

One of the most useful outgrowths of Bourdieu's research on cultural consumption is his model for mapping what he calls "social space." He proposes this model as a challenge to the "substantialist" social-scientific habit of assigning a "mechanical and direct relation" between social classes, on one hand, and cultural goods, practices, and consumption patterns, on the other. Substantialist thinking "is inclined to treat the activities and preferences specific to certain individuals or groups in a society at a certain moment as if they were substantial properties, inscribed once and for all in a sort of biological or cultural *essence*" (Bourdieu 1994/1998, 3-4). As an alternative, he constructs a "relational" model of the social logic of taste judgments. This relational model considers any given activity or preference as "nothing other than *difference*, a gap, a distinctive feature, in short, a relational property existing only in and through its relation with other properties" (Bourdieu 1994/1998, 6).

From Bourdieu's relational perspective, class distinctions exist only as features of social space. Social space itself consists of the relative status positions people perceive themselves to occupy, along with their perceptions of the positions that other people occupy. It is always with reference to these perceived relations in social space that people acquire and judge cultural tastes. These relations are informed by complex rules of judgment, and these rules correspond with the contours of social space. Although Bourdieu sometimes organizes social space in three dimensions (1994/1998, 15), he usually organizes it in just two: "Agents are . . . distributed, in the first dimension, according to the overall volume of the capital they possess and, in the second dimension, according to the composition of their capital"

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(2001, 231). On the *Y*-axis of social space, low quantities of capital are at the bottom and high quantities are at the top. Where Bourdieu's mapping becomes more complex is on the *X*-axis, which marks relative proportions, or composition, of economic versus cultural capital. On the left side of the *X*-axis, social classes, activities, goods, and professions have relatively higher degrees of cultural capital and lower degrees of economic capital. On the right side, they have relatively lower degrees of cultural capital and higher degrees of economic capital.

This map of social space is somewhat complicated, but it is useful for two complementary reasons. On one hand, it suggests the ineluctable dynamism and relativity of taste judgments. But on the other hand, it proposes ways to ground those judgments in concrete social relations. Our use of the map is designed to understand how Americans are arrayed in a space defined by these two central axes of economic and cultural capital, and whether the result is sensible. As noted, Bourdieu's maps have a clear logic. We wondered whether a similar logic would emerge here, and if not, how it would be different.

Operationalization. We treat cultural capital primarily as "an indicator and a basis of class position," and as a set of tastes that can be "mobilized for social selection." To do this, we make one central assumption: The products and the media people consume signal their cultural status. In Bourdieu's sociology, this assumption is an outcome of a long process of the formation of cultural capital for each class fraction, embodied in a habitus, a system of "dispositions" that "functions at every moment as a *matrix of perceptions, appreciations, and actions* and makes possible the achievement of infinitely diversified tasks" (Bourdieu 1977, 82-83). The habitus is a "kind of theoretical deus ex machina by means of which Bourdieu relates objective structure and individual activity. . . . It is similar but not reducible to class subculture" (DiMaggio 1979, 1464). In other words, the system of coordinates on which the field depends itself requires both cultural capital and a group habitus that is relatively fixed.

[W]e make one central assumption: The products and the media people consume signal their cultural status.

Bourdieu himself has recognized that a sociology of taste grounded in the strong state, hierarchical aesthetic and educational culture, and historically rigid class structure of France in the postwar period do not transpose easily to the United States. For a consumption practice or object to count as a signal of cultural

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capital, it needs "to be defined as a high status cultural signal by a relatively large group of people" (Lamont and Lareau 1988, 155-56). Here, we begin to encounter important differences between France and the United States. In the France of the late 1960s, certain high-cultural markers allow us to distinguish among classes. In Bourdieu's terms,

> Thus nothing more rigorously distinguishes the different classes than the disposition objectively demanded by the legitimate consumption of legitimate works, the aptitude for taking a specifically aesthetic point of view on objects already constituted aesthetically . . . and the even rarer capacity to constitute aesthetically objects that are ordinary or even "common" . . . or to apply the principles of a "pure" aesthetic in the most everyday choices of everyday life, in cooking, dress, or decoration, for example. (Bourdieu 1979/1984, 40)

In other words, the ability to distinguish objects according to their aesthetic value and thereby distinguish oneself from others is a primary marker of cultural capital. A major problem in applying this understanding to the United States is the now-long-standing controversy over whether and how a high culture can effectively set criteria of legitimate consumption.

Several scholars (Gans 1999, 1973/1999; Guillory 1995; Levine 1988; Rubin 1992) argue that America has never had a tradition of high culture analogous to that of countries like Germany and France. A typical member of a European elite might be assumed to have strong, fluent familiarity with nationally representative figures of high culture. But in America, there is no widely held expectation that elites will share a common knowledge of a select set of high cultural figures whose work cannot be understood without costly and laborious prerequisites (Bourdieu calls them "entry tickets") of intellectual training and aesthetic refinement.

The correspondingly strong link between elite social status and a high-cultural tradition has been disputed in America. Distinctively American forms of art and literature did not arise until the antebellum period of the nineteenth century (e.g., see Matthiessen 1941). By that time, international trends in the professionalization and popularization of art were well under way. In addition, America's elites increasingly comprised a technical professional class that did not have the traditions, training, or leisure to acquire high levels of cultural capital (Rubin 1992). As a result of these historical conditions and their legacy, the highest forms of culture in America are generally at best "middlebrow." Simply put, middlebrow culture refers to the phenomenon of gaining access to high culture only after it has first been mediated by mass culture. Guillory's (1995) canonical example of the middlebrow is the American Public Broadcasting System. A more salient recent equivalent would be Oprah's Book Club. What makes high culture middlebrow in America is that the mode of experiencing it is initially filtered through, and therefore made significant by, the mass media. This mediated status conferral also points to the central role of media and mass culture in the valuation of taste and fixing of class distinctions.

Analyzing arts participation in the U.S from 1982 to 2002, DiMaggio and Mukhtar (2004) observed that while there has not been a dramatic "meltdown" in the value of the arts as cultural capital, audiences for the arts have undergone

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a long-term attrition, particularly among younger cohorts (even after controlling for large overall increases in education). However, they find that declines for middlebrow activities (craft fairs, musical theater, historical sites) are greater than for high arts, which suggests that all arts activities are facing increased competition for attention from many sources, including media. They also found increased attendance for art museums and jazz concerts, consistent with Peterson's influential "omnivore" theory.

Peterson posits a qualitative shift in the basis for marking elite status, "from snobbish exclusion to omnivorous appropriation" (Peterson and Kern 1996, 900). With Kern, he finds that high-status culture consumers (highbrows) are more omnivorous than others, seeking out both high and low forms of taste, and that they have become increasingly so over time, confirming earlier findings by DiMaggio (1987) and Lamont (1992). In a comprehensive review that surveyed the research arc from *Distinction* to comparative international research on omnivorousness, Peterson (2005) confirms the finding that omnivorousness has become increasingly dominant among elites. But he also considers recent research comparing highbrow and lowbrow omnivorousness. He traces the evolution of research across three stages. First, highbrow "snobs" were distinguished from omnivores; lowbrow "slobs" were conceived as univores. Second, the element of breadth was introduced, opening up the possibility of lowbrow omnivores. Third, lowbrow omnivorousness is understood as having been diffused into lower status levels, as found by Bryson (1996) in a comparison of lowbrow musical tastes. She found that lowbrow omnivores tend to *avoid* the most marked genres of country, heavy metal, and rap, suggesting complex patterns of omnivorous inclusion and exclusion. Furthermore, Peterson (2005) suggests that the focus on high cultural tastes has made it more difficult to measure ominvorousness across class positions, and he calls for greater attention to sports, magazines, beverages, hunting and fishing, and food, as well as church attendance, associations, and self-improvement groups (pp. 266-67).

With these issues in mind, we generated correspondence maps of the social positioning of taste in the United States. We did so with the goal of exploring the social stratification of taste culture and integrating media consumption and civic practices into this investigation of the U.S. context. Our central research question concerns the transitivity of both Bourdieu's general framework and his specific reading of the field of consumption to another historical and geographical context. Before we do so, we first provide relevant details about our data and analytic strategy. We then provide a general reading of the field structure before analyzing each quadrant in greater detail.

Data and Analytic Strategy

The data in this study were gathered in a 2000 DDB Needham mail survey conducted by Market Facts, using a stratified quota sampling procedure. To do this, Market Facts began with a large list of names and addresses acquired from

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commercial list brokers. A sample, counterbalanced along demographic characteristics to account for expected differences in response rates, was then drawn from a pool of approximately five hundred thousand individuals. Then, the final sample of approximately five thousand individuals is drawn annually to best approximate the distributions within the nine Census divisions of age, income, household size, and population density. This starting sample is then adjusted within a range of subcategories that include race, gender, and marital status to compensate for differences in return rates, with more surveys mailed to population categories that respond at lower rates. Although this panel may underrepresent transient populations, the very poor, the very rich, and certain minority groups, the data have been verified as an effective barometer of mainstream America (Shah, McLeod, and Yoon 2001). Indeed, these data have been shown to produce responses that are highly comparable to conventional probability sampling procedures (Putnam 2000).

This particular survey comprises 3,122 adult respondents with a response rate of 62.4 percent against the mailout to prerecruited panelists. These data contain a wide range of indicators of consumption patterns, media usage, social behaviors, civic practices, and political ideology, and other types of socially signifying actions. Rather than detailing all of these indicators, which space does not allow, we discuss the analytic strategy used to generate the correspondence analysis maps used to examine the field structure in the United States.

To do so, we used the method of multiple correspondence analysis (MCA) to explore and visualize the structure of social positions and its relationship with lifestyle choices, social behaviors, media usage, product consumption, and civic and political indicators in the United States. MCA, which is a multivariate version of simple correspondence analysis, seeks to summarize the interrelationships between the categories of three or more discrete variables with a small number (usually two or three) of underlying dimensions and to visualize these relationships in a low-dimensional correspondence map such that categories sharing similar distributions lie close together in the map (Benzecri 1992; Greenacre 1984). As in principal components analysis, the nature of the relationships between the categories can be examined by interpreting the principal axes with each dimension reflecting a defining property of the social space.

Following Bourdieu (1979/1984), we analyzed the 2000 DDB Lifestyle survey data in two phases. First, MCA was conducted only for the indicators of cultural and economic capital. Using those indicators as socioeconomical and cultural markers, this analysis seeks to construct a social-space plane with a two-dimensional structure. Second, after the space of social positions has been constructed and fixed, those variables associated with cultural taste and social practices, and with civic engagement and political ideology, were superimposed onto the existing social space. To project the variables of cultural taste and lifestyle onto the social space, we entered the socioeconomic and cultural markers as *active* points while entering the lifestyle variables as *supplementary* points in a new correspondence analysis. In this way, the supplementary points overlaid onto the social space

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display the relationships of those supplementary points with the principal axes while not contributing to the total variance and to the positions of the dimensions (Greenacre 1984, 1993). These supplementary points help us interpret the principal axes and enable us to examine how social positions related to cultural taste and consumption behaviors.

Correspondence Analysis

As the first stage of analysis, we ran a multiple correspondence analysis for occupation and the indicators of economic and cultural capital. A total of thirty-four variables and all nonmissing cases were considered in the analysis, mainly income, education, and occupational categories. The total inertia (variance) was .012, 70.2 percent of which was explained by the two most dominant dimensions (46.5 percent for the first dimension and 23.7 percent for the second dimension).[1] Since the subsequent dimensions explained a relatively small amount of variance (9.0 percent for the third and 5.4 percent for the fourth), we considered only the first two in the construction of social space.

Next, we added the supplementary points to further visualize the social stratification of taste and cultural consumption in this U.S. context. The correspondence maps yielded two overarching dimensions: volume of economic and cultural capital on the vertical and form of cultural capital on the horizontal (see Figure 1). On the vertical *(Y)* axis, the bottom end is marked by lower levels of income and education and the corresponding occupational categories, whereas the top end is marked by higher levels of income and education. College-educated, white-collar professionals who earn more than $50,000 a year populate this upper half of the volume of capital axis. They consume products and media in a manner reflective of their positions in the social space. That is, they consume goods more for their aesthetic or symbolic value than for their utilitarian benefit, while their news consumption tends to focus on informational media. In terms of civic behaviors, these are the individuals who most engage in civic and political life. Individuals who occupy blue-collar and service professions, make less than $50,000 a year, and prefer entertainment media populate the lower half of the volume axis. Their consumption choices are driven by the utilitarian and pragmatic concerns and tend to be disengaged from traditional means of civic participation.

In Bourdieu's analysis of French society in the 1960s, occupation was a distinguishing factor on the horizontal dimension. Individuals on the right side might be viewed as possessing lower levels of cultural capital but comparatively higher levels of economic capital. They are characterized as industrialists, small shopkeepers, business owners, and craftsmen. On the left side of Bourdieu's maps, we would see individuals with higher levels of cultural capital compared to their levels of economic capital. They might be thought of as the artistic producers, cultural intermediaries, educators, and social workers.

Although occupation is important in our mapping of the field, it is less of a factor in defining the field structure than are media preferences, consumption

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habits, and civic behaviors. To the degree that occupation is relevant, it is reflective of youth and physicality. For example, early career professionals, precision craft workers and operator/fabricators, jobs that are either dominated by younger workers or require considerable stamina, characterize the far right end of the *X*-axis. Similarly, media use, consumption habits, and civic behaviors mirror this individualistic and aggressive skew. In terms of media use, they favor entertainment content such as sitcoms, rock music, and lifestyle publications. Consumption habits, for example, center on buying lottery tickets, hard liquor, and personal technology. Individuals at this end are also less likely to join in civic activities than those on the left side of the map.

Although occupation is important . . . it is less of a factor in defining the field structure than are media preferences, consumption habits, and civic behaviors.

Occupation maps similarly on the left side of the map, though on this end it reflects a more mature and communal orientation. In particular, retired people and homemakers by choice dominate this side of the axis. In comparison to other areas of the map, this side is most strongly defined by media use, with a strong preference for news content or entertainment programming that focuses on dramatic situations, social relations, and family. Along with this preference for informational and dramatic media content, people on this end of the continuum show comparatively higher levels of civic participation, with the intensity and frequency of participation rising along this dimension.

Accordingly, we interpret the vertical *(Y)* axis as representing the volume of economic and cultural capital, consistent with Bourdieu, whereas the horizontal axis indicates the composition of capital. However, the composition of capital in millennial U.S. society does not mirror that observed by Bourdieu in 1960s French society. We interpret the horizontal axis as characterized by refinement, nurturance, and moderation (i.e., a communal orientation) on the left side and coarseness, excess, and aggressiveness (i.e., an individual orientation) on the right. Notably, these two axes jointly identify the quadrants defined by their intersection. To fully understand how occupation, media use, consumption, and civic and social practices define and situate distinct lifestyles in this social space, we move to an examination of each quadrant.[2]

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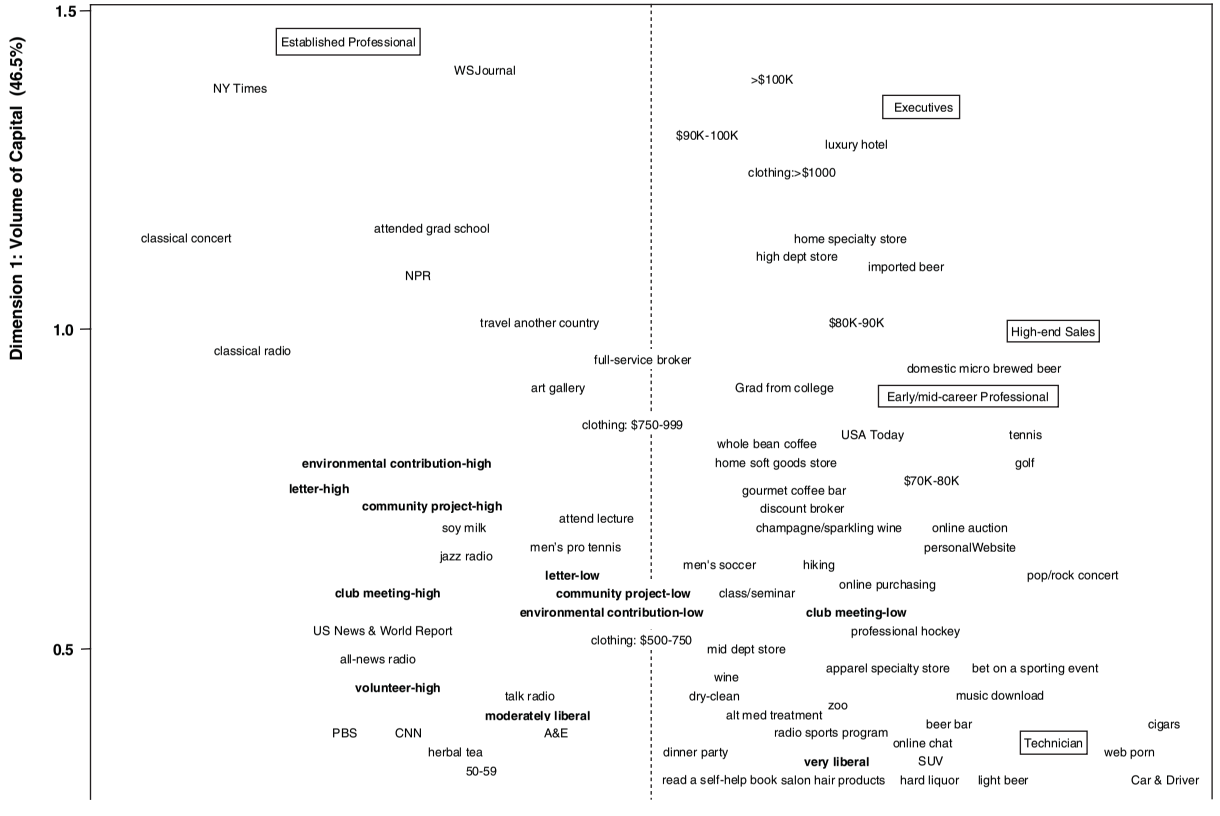
FIGURE 1
CORRESPONDENCE MAP OF THE VOLUME AND COMPOSITION OF CAPITAL



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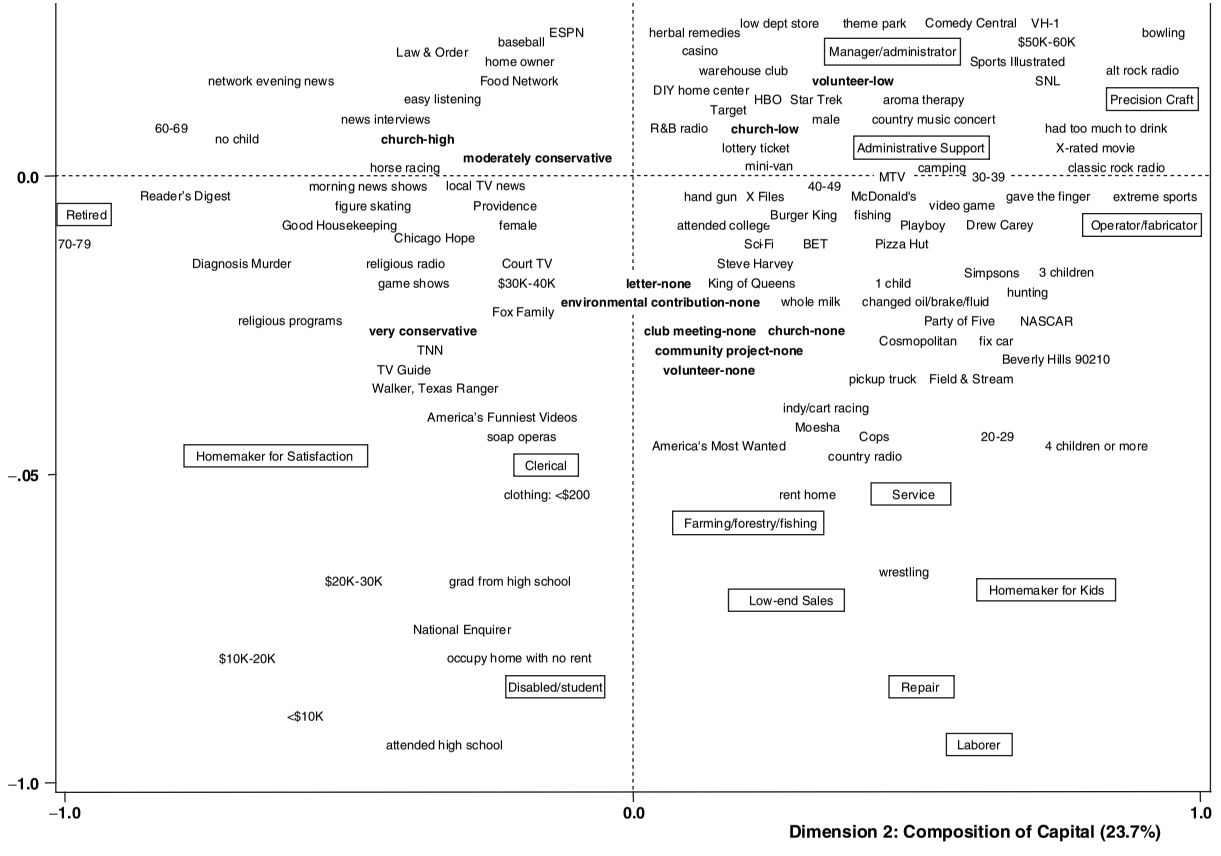

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Quadrant 1: High volume of capital–communal orientation (upper left)

This first quadrant is inhabited by middle- and upper-income, well-educated individuals with patterns of cultural consumption that correspond to an emphasis on cultural capital (see Figure 1). Their media use, consumption, and civic and social behaviors cluster around two visible groups, with the second composed of two subgroups. The top cluster possesses a high volume of cultural and economic capital. Occupationally, they are established professionals, such as doctors and lawyers. It is here that we find people who have attended graduate school and who make more than $100,000. In terms of media use, they rely predominantly on leading, prestige outlets for news and information, such as the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and National Public Radio. These media choices represent not so much a liberal leaning, but rather a reliance on the media of record. These are the outlets that set the agenda for other media in the areas of politics, finance, and culture. Their consumer behavior maps loosely onto Bourdieu's high-cultural-capital individuals. That is, individuals in this cluster prefer high art, such as classical music and classical concerts, to other forms of entertainment. Their high incomes also afford them the opportunity to travel internationally.

It is interesting to note that when it comes to our indicators of civic engagement, this top cluster of the quadrant is somewhat removed from the day-to-day civic practices such as volunteering and working on community projects. This is the privileged segment of American society that Republicans have effectively framed as defining the stereotypical, effete New York and California liberals, who personify the distance between cultural elites and "ordinary" Americans. Yet a liberal political ideology does not map cleanly onto this top cluster; instead, it corresponds more closely with those clustering in the lower end of this quadrant. Similarly, donating money to environmental causes and writing letters to the editor are linked to these established professionals; however, these activities, along with other civic practices, are also more closely associated with the second major cluster found in this quadrant.

In this second cluster, we find ideological moderates, both conservatives and liberals, although moderate liberals are pulled slightly more upwards along the volume axis, whereas moderate conservatives are drawn further leftward along the composition axis. These two positions bracket this second cluster. This cluster is also more varied in terms of its media use habits. Although our data lack the specific occupational markers, all other indicators point to this space in the field being occupied by white-collar service workers in social support occupations, such as professors, teachers, social workers, and civil servants. Individuals in this cluster favor broadcast news over print-based news, preferring to watch and listen rather than read. They choose news outlets such as CNN Headline News, network evening news, PBS, *U.S. News & World Report*, and talk radio. These news consumption habits share a clear trajectory with civic-life indicators. Exposure to information about current events and issues is associated with volunteering, contributing, community work, and letter writing. The occupants of this cluster are the foot soldiers of civil society, not only collecting information about their social and political environment but also working to support and improve their communities.

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In terms of nonnews media use, this cluster straddles the fence between two domains that might be thought of as refined but not elite. At the right side of this cluster, higher on the volume of capital axis, we see a social life defined by more sophisticated activities, such as listening to jazz radio, going to art galleries, and attending lectures. At the left side of this cluster, along the composition axis, we see a preference for more conventional cultural pursuits, such as programming like *Law & Order*, the Food Network, and easy listening radio.

Quadrant 2: Low volume of capital–communal orientation (lower left)

Further down the left side of the map, we find a social cluster that represents a departure from Bourdieu's field of cultural consumption in France. Consistent with Bourdieu, here we find a social space dominated by somewhat older, less affluent, and less educated individuals. At the bottom of this quadrant are individuals who did not graduate from high school and who earn less than $10,000. In terms of occupations, these individuals are students, play support roles such as clerical workers, work within the home for personal satisfaction, or are retired.

The major departure is the centrality and force of religion in defining those relatively lower in volume of capital but compositionally higher in cultural than in economic capital. What is also striking is the structuring role of mass media in the U.S. case. This cluster is characterized by churchgoing individuals whose media use habits reflect a taste for moralistic content such as religious programs, traditionalist social dramas such as *Touched by an Angel* and *Walker Texas Ranger*, and family-friendly fare such as *America's Funniest Home Videos* and the *Cosby Show*. In terms of news media use, individuals in this cluster favor softer, so-called infotainment programming, such as morning news shows and *Reader's Digest*. Branded consumption markers and civic engagement are less closely aligned with this cluster, though their church ties may provide them with badges of identity and opportunity for involvement. In line with this, we also see a strong relationship with a conservative political ideology.

Quadrant 3: High volume of capital–individual orientation (upper right)

The upper-right quadrant contains individuals who possess a relatively high volume of capital, but in contrast with the first quadrant, their composition of capital is more economic than cultural. Many of these behaviors reflect an orientation that can be interpreted as competitive, aggressive, and more individualistic. Despite these shared traits, occupying this quadrant are three distinct clusters that vary considerably from one another.

The cluster that occupies the uppermost space of this quadrant represents the economic power brokers of American society. Here we find individuals who have graduated from college, earn high incomes, and hold executive-level or upper midlevel corporate positions and high-end sales jobs. In comparison with previous clusters, media consumption does not appear to distinguish this cluster; the

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only defining media choice is reading *USA Today*, the newspaper of choice for America's "road warriors." Rather, what appears to define this cluster is their consumption of products. Clothing, fashion, and other luxury goods are important badges of their social and economic position. They frequent high-end and upper-middle-tier department stores, like Neiman-Marcus and Macy's, and lifestyle stores such as Crate & Barrel. Similarly, when they travel, this group prefers luxury hotels and activities such as snow skiing and tennis. In regard to civic participation, this cluster seems detached from conventional engagement in public life through volunteer or community participation.

Two distinct clusters occupy the lower half of this quadrant. The cluster in the lower-left position includes midlevel professionals such as managers and administrators. What truly defines this cluster is its product consumption and lifestyles. These individuals engage in consumption patterns that might be viewed as aspirational in nature (Schor 1998; Veblen 1899/1994), consumption that strives to mirror the practices of higher social strata. They are appearance minded, buy clothing at midtier department stores and specialty stores, get professional manicures and pedicures, and buy hair care products from salons. Yet they also express a certain orientation toward natural products and experiences with their use of alternative medical treatments such as acupuncture and with their enjoyment of activities such as hiking.

Civic engagement for this cluster is best defined as socially versus civically driven. Their engagement does not appear to seek political or social justice ends, but rather provides individuals with an opportunity to socialize with others. For example, this cluster visits gourmet coffee bars, hosts dinner parties, and occasionally volunteers or attends clubs and church. From an ideological standpoint, these people define themselves as moderately or very liberal, yet this ideological position does not inspire higher levels of engagement.

The third cluster in this quadrant is largely defined by the horizontal axis of the composition of capital. Although their volume of capital reflects a midlevel status, they emphasize the economic over the cultural in their taste patterns. Members of this cluster are employed in the technical support and precision crafts fields, careers that often require on-the-job training or more formalized apprenticeship programs. In overarching terms, their lifestyle can be defined as youthful, hypertechnological, and highly sexualized. This lifestyle is clearly reflected in their media use, with cultural consumption focused on outlets such as Comedy Central, *Sports Illustrated*, and classic and alternative rock. Moreover, this cluster actively uses the Internet for virtual gaming, downloading music, and adult content. They are also active producers of online content, maintaining Web sites and engaging in online chats.

This cluster's enjoyment of athletic events like hockey, sports betting, and heavy drinking reinforces the emphasis on the coarse and aggressive over the refined and temperate. It is not surprising, then, that this cluster is also defined by a lack of civic and political engagement in keeping with their highly individualistic and competitive cultural consumption practices.

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Quadrant 4: Low volume of capital–individual orientation (lower right)

The lower-right quadrant represents a social space dominated by individuals with relatively lower volumes of capital, though they still emphasize the economic over the cultural. Cultural consumption within this quadrant is again defined by coarse, aggressive, and competitive forms. From a demographic perspective, this quadrant comprises individuals who attended but did not complete college; make less than $50,000 per year; and are employed in service industries, agriculture, forestry, or fishing, or are homemakers by necessity. Within this quadrant, two clusters, each with overlapping subclusters, distinguish themselves from each other in terms of their rural and urban lifestyle orientation.

The center of this quadrant contains a cluster of young, less affluent, urban families largely defined by their media consumption. Central to this cluster are family-oriented programs with primarily black and working-class casts such as *The Steve Harvey Show*, *King of Queens*, and *Moesha*, as well as African American lifestyle programming such as BET. Though this cluster might be interpreted as being dominated by the black middle class, it also likely contains other groups that populate large urban areas and more broadly represent the blue-collar, working, lower-middle class. Consumption variables are limited to dining at fast food restaurants like McDonald's, Burger King, and Taco Bell. Regretfully, this absence of consumption markers is likely a function of the lack of relative consumption indicators in this data that reflect the practices of those who populate this quadrant. Individuals with relatively low volumes of capital are not typically viewed as ideal consumers for a wide range of goods.

The second cluster within this quadrant represents a youthful, more exurban and rural population. Specifically this shift is visible in this cluster's media preferences. First, country music and *Field & Stream* magazine are defining features of this cluster. In addition, in contrast to the more family-oriented media consumed by the previous cluster, this cluster consumes more sexualized media such as *Playboy*. It may be that two overlapping clusters, one more rural and the other more urban, occupy this space. Yet what is interesting is the aspirational component of this type of consumption. Members of this cluster are limited by the volume of capital they possess to engage in the lifestyles depicted in *Cosmopolitan* or *Beverly Hills 90210*, yet appear to consume these media as a way of participating in upper-middle-class consumer culture.

Like the other cluster in this quadrant, our data limit the number of product consumption markers available for analysis. However, some interesting patterns do emerge that help define this cluster in rural and exurban terms, specifically, activities such as hunting, fishing, extreme sports, driving a pickup truck, and automotive maintenance. In regard to civic and political engagement, members of this cluster are the most disengaged, far removed from civic practices such as attending church, volunteering, or making environmental contributions. Politically, this quadrant is defined as middle-of-the-road. In short, due to their status position in society and their involvement in other activities, civic and political markers do not define these individuals.

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Synthesis and Discussion

This preliminary mapping of the field of consumption in the United States has two primary goals. First, through this mapping, we hoped to compare our results with the general structure of the field of consumption found by Bourdieu (1979/1984). Second, we wanted to discover distinct properties of that field in the United States, in particular to understand whether the dual axes of volume and composition of capital remain determinant or whether some other principles may be at work in structuring the U.S. field. Although this first exploration does not answer these questions, it takes us a bit closer and provides an agenda for further exploration.

Before we attempt to synthesize these findings, we need to note some limits of our data. First, while the DDB Lifestyle Study is the most comprehensive data set on consumption patterns in the United States, it is a marketing study. We have already noted that it underrepresents the very rich and very poor. But more subtly, it may distort our analysis for the lower half of the field. It is skewed away from the lower ends of the mass market and toward those brands that can be sold to middle- and upper-middle-income consumers. Second, while Bourdieu began with a precise analysis of class, based on occupational and income categories, we had to reconstruct these categories from a general analysis to fit the broader available variables. While we believe we have attained construct validity for the variables used, there are gaps that themselves could contribute to the somewhat discontinuous structure of the field. We cannot be sure whether clusters represent real gaps in the field or missing gradations of occupational categories.

[T]he middlebrow in America confounds the presence of "high" culture.

Moving to the comparison with Bourdieu's (1979/1984) analysis of the field of cultural consumption in 1960s France, the upper left quadrants in both *Distinction* and our analysis appear similar in some respects. Bourdieu's space is marked by grades of intellectuals and service workers—teachers, social and medical workers, public sector executives, and intellectual and cultural workers. The U.S. quadrant also contains these groups, but it may be dominated by a larger class of professionals and knowledge workers, inclusive of the previous groups, but also shaped by legal and financial services and other highly educated fractions of the upper middle classes. We see a clear split between high-income members of this grouping, who appear to be higher cultural consumers, and a lower group that is among the most civically and politically active. Second, and closely related,

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this group appears to be stratified less by cultural capital in Bourdieu's sense than by clusters of media consumption. This may reflect a shift to a principle of stratification defined by volume of capital and media use.

One central difference is that the middlebrow in America confounds the presence of "high" culture. To be sure, aspects of the map of the social space of consumption found by Bourdieu appear in our own analysis (particularly the existence in the upper half of the map distinguished by a higher volume of cultural and economic capital). But in the United States, the meaning of the upper-left quadrant marked by a high volume of cultural capital is unclear. Our analysis shows that although traditional markers of "high" culture are here—for example, listening to classical music and attending art galleries—the space is less saturated with high-cultural markers and less stratified than France in the 1960s. Notably, some of the strongest markers of this social space are elite media, particularly newspapers of record such as the *New York Times*.

This finding is mirrored, to some extent, in the upper-right quadrant, high economic–lower cultural capital. This quadrant is the most isomorphic between the United States and France. In Bourdieu's (1979/1984) analysis, it is occupied by the wealthy, private sector executives, "engineers" (higher-level technical workers), and the traditional high-status "professions." We find analogous categories of the wealthy, college graduates, and midcareer professionals, but this space is much more densely populated, with multiple clusters defined by fine gradations of lifestyle and consumption. This, however, is where the specific commonalities break down.

The most prominent difference comes from our major finding of what we have labeled the communal/individual continuum that forms the horizontal axis. Although we set out to replicate the dimension of cultural capital used by Bourdieu as closely as possible, we are not sure that this horizontal dimension does, indeed, reflect cultural capital as understood by Bourdieu. Rather, we have found a dimension that seems to scale broadly along a communal to individual continuum, though this dimension also reflects contrasts between refinement and coarseness, between nurturing and competitive, and between genteel and aggressive.

A strong corollary is the importance of age cohort and gender in our mapping. Age and gender clearly structure the map to some extent. This structuring may point toward a larger, important analytical issue. Age and gender were largely omitted as structural principles of Bourdieu's (1979/1984) map of the field. For instance, age functions as a secondary effect of income through the life course in Bourdieu's analysis. In other words, those with a high volume of capital tend, by definition, to be older. Furthermore, the analysis in *Distinction* represents the distribution of occupations of male heads of households; women's occupations were entered in as secondary variables, when at all. We believe that the inclusion of women as equivalent to men in our analysis of these data, along with the use of age to help fix the social space, help to explain some of the differences we observe. America in 2000 and beyond is a more age-segregated society, and much of this segregation is a direct principle of lifestyle segmentation. Also, many more women have moved into the workforce in both American and French society since the 1960s.

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Also worthy of note is the centrality of media consumption as a form of cultural consumption. The use of various newspapers, television programs, radio formats, and magazines was particularly relevant in marking individuals' social position, distinguishing them from others in the social space, while also providing aspirational reference points for consuming. The importance of digital media as a distinguishing feature is particularly pronounced among certain clusters, especially among the more youthful and aggressive set defined along the right side of the map, though print media and television also serve as key cultural markers. It is also notable that television consumption, especially of escapist fare such as sitcoms and reality shows, tends to cluster along the bottom half of the social space, whereas newspaper and magazine consumption tends to distinguish between those with higher and lower volumes of capital.

[T]here is a clear correspondence between civic behavior, political ideology, and the social positioning of taste cultures within the U.S. context.

Finally, we find that there is a clear correspondence between civic behavior, political ideology, and the social positioning of taste cultures within the U.S. context. Civic life in our analysis does not follow a more or less linear distribution by age and income, as implied by both Putnam (2000) and Verba, Schlozman, and Brady (1995). Rather, we see strong clustering in the midlevels, around both the volume and composition axes. Furthermore, we see lifestyle-based subclusters of activity that themselves have distinct civic and political implications. More important, perhaps, we see a clear alignment between certain media consumption practices and certain civic activities with news consumption. Most interesting is the space just to the left of the volume axis that represents the engaged middle classes, running from moderately liberal to the moderately conservative. There seems to be some split between the church-attending, moderate conservatives on the lower end and the community-engaged, moderate liberals near the vertical axis. On the other, individual side of the social space, we see those who are more broadly disengaged from civic and political life, possibly due to a kind of liberalism that involves socializing and consumption, but relatively little formal civic engagement.

Clearly, this initial effort to map the field of cultural consumption in the United States provides a number of unique insights about consumer behavior, media use, civic practices, and their alignment with various demographic and

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occupational markers. What is needed is further analysis of the implications of the sort of social alignment and stratification that we observed here. Although the data do not allow us to make statements about the relationships among these factors over time, this is just the type of longitudinal analysis of the shifting nature of cultural capital that is so desperately needed to further illuminate the connections between citizenship, consumption, communication, community life, and the volume and composition of capital.

Notes

1. Multiple correspondence analysis (MCA) tends to inflate the total amount of variance of the points due to the inclusion of the cross-tabulation of each variable with itself in the analysis. We adjusted raw MCA results following a method suggested by Greenacre (1984, 1993).

2. Because of space limitations, we are unable to reproduce each quadrant of the field here. The full set of analyses, quadrant by quadrant, including details of the correspondence analysis, can be found at http://www.journalism.wisc.edu/cccp/research.php.

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