

Structure of Cultural Rejection

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journals.sagepub.com/home/spx**Sosuke Okada¹**

Abstract

This study explores the relationship structure of cultural rejection. The proposition is advanced that people reject cultural practices as the proxies of out-groups who are perceived to be associated with them, so that they would maintain social identities that are separate from those of out-groups. Using data on musical preferences from 1993 General Social Survey, it applies blockmodeling—a methodology originally developed in social network analysis—in a new way to analyze the structure of cultural rejection within U.S. society. The results indicate that blockmodeling based on cultural rejection is effective in uncovering sociologically meaningful positions among the respondents. The results are mostly consistent with the omnivore thesis, while highlighting the multifaceted nature of cultural divisions in the United States. Finally, the identified positions correspond with respondents' perception of the degree of unity (or lack thereof) among Americans, consistent with the theoretical assumption of this study.

Keywords

social psychology, culture, social network analysis

Introduction

Sociologists of culture have long studied how the cultural preferences of individuals are associated with their positions on the social structure. One of the common themes for such research—most famously raised by Pierre Bourdieu (1984)—is that cultural tastes are used as a tool of exclusion; the specific sets of cultural preferences are used to mark symbolic boundaries between groups, and therefore play an important role in maintaining the structure of stratification. Underlying such research is the Durkheimian notion that emphasizes the roles of symbols in setting the distinctions between in-group and out-group. Both the processes of boundary formation and the consequences of symbolic boundaries have been the central topics of cultural sociology (Lamont and Fournier 1992).

One of the key elements that connect cultural preferences and symbolic boundaries is cultural hostility—(expression of) hostile attitudes held toward particular cultural practices. Cultural hostility is central to Pierre Bourdieu's (1984) *Distinction*, which suggested that high-status individuals maintain their symbolic distinction from low-status individuals by rejecting cultural tastes that are deemed banal and lowbrow. Mary Douglas (1996), who was also influenced by Durkheim, argued that consumption behaviors are often inspired by (expression of) cultural hostility. Similarly, Richard R. Wilk (1997) argued dislikes have distinctive roles in expressing one's identity, and that distastes are more socially diagnostic than tastes. Bethany Bryson (1996) evaluated cultural rejection across two symbolic boundaries: high-status–low-status and black-white.

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These arguments share the common assumption that people's distastes toward cultural objects are not solely motivated by characteristics of their contents. Instead, the distastes (at least partially) are associated with the establishment and maintenance of symbolic boundaries. This study focuses on cultural rejection, which is conceptualized here as the distaste evoked to symbolically distance oneself from cultural objects that are preferred by others—others who belong to perceived out-groups, in particular—so that they would maintain social identities that are separate from those of out-groups. This conceptualization of cultural rejection allows researchers to simultaneously integrate both tastes and distastes into a single analysis. Because cultural rejection is conceptualized as symbolic relationships between individuals, it is inherently relational. To directly analyze this relational structure of cultural rejection, this study proposes a novel methodology that is borrowed from social network analysis. Because social network analysis was developed for the analysis of relational data, it provides an appropriate toolkit for studying cultural rejection. In particular, this study will apply blockmodeling, which is a methodology that was originally developed in social network analysis, to identify positions in the structure of cultural rejection. A blockmodel condenses a set of relationships between actors into a set of relationships between blocks, where each block contains actors that are structurally equivalent.

The analysis is conducted on the 1993 GSS dataset, which included a set of questions about the respondents' musical preferences. The results show that the structure of cultural rejection corresponds with meaningful divisions in the social structure, and is mostly consistent with omnivore thesis by Richard A. Peterson (1992). At the same time, the structure is not dominated by a single demographic fault line—be it age, race, or education. To validate the assumption that cultural rejection is indeed associated with symbolic exclusions, this study tests the relationship between positions in the structure of cultural rejection and the perception that Americans are united in their most important values. Consistent with the theoretical argument of this study, the result indicates that a respondent's perception of unity is associated with his or her position on the structure of cultural rejection after controlling for relevant demographic characteristics—memberships in blocks that tend not to reject tastes of others are associated with increased perceptions of unity. In addition, the result also suggests the existence of heterogeneity among omnivores. The implications of the findings are discussed.

Background

The classic works in sociology, including those by Max Weber (1978) and Thorstein Veblen (1912), have discussed the potential roles that cultural tastes play in social stratification. Research on this topic has especially flourished since Bourdieu's (1984) seminal work in *Distinction*. The studies that followed Bourdieu—for example, those by Paul DiMaggio (1982) and Paul DiMaggio and John Mohr (1985)—were centered on Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital. Cultural capital in these studies tended to be understood as participation in high-status culture, which reinforces the distinction between the elites and the masses, and confers advantages on those with high-status backgrounds. This emphasis on highbrow culture shifted after Peterson (1992) proposed his highly influential omnivore thesis. Based on the observation that those who prefer highbrow styles often also prefer nonhighbrow styles at the same time, Peterson suggested that the main cultural division in the United States was becoming that of omnivores-univores, instead of highbrows-lowbrows. In this argument, high-status individuals who prefer highbrow styles were becoming increasingly likely to appreciate a wider range of styles, including popular/lowbrow styles (Peterson and Kern 1996). With this, Peterson declared that omnivores occupy the top of the hierarchy of cultural tastes. Univores, however, tend to have lower status, and only prefer a few specific lowbrow styles. Since Peterson, the omnivore thesis has been generally well supported for Western contexts, although researchers do not necessarily agree on the fine details of

the omnivore thesis (Chan and Goldthorpe 2007; Coulangeon and Lemel 2007; Emmison 2003; Sintas and Álvarez 2002).

For the purpose of this study, it is useful to distinguish two complementary theoretical explanations behind the relationship between social stratification and cultural tastes. On one hand, one's cultural taste can be interpreted as a sign of his or her status. For example, those with higher status may simply possess more sophisticated cultural tastes because of education, training, being exposed to the arts as a youth, and so on. On the other hand, one's cultural taste can also be interpreted as the reflection of his or her symbolic relationships. For example, cultural elites' disdain toward popular culture can be interpreted as a reflection of their aversion to all things that are associated with the masses, which is an argument commonly raised in the elite-mass model of cultural stratification. Note that these two explanations are not mutually exclusive. Indeed, they roughly correspond with the two main interpretations of the omnivore phenomenon: seeing omnivorousness as a newly dominant cultural marker of high status, or seeing it as a product of an increasing societal preference for ideologies that emphasize democratic, inclusive values (Chan and Goldthorpe 2007; Coulangeon and Lemel 2007). The arguments in favor of the former position—for example, Bryson (1996) and Jordi López Sintas and Ercilia García Álvarez (2002)—emphasize that omnivores express their aesthetic superiority over the masses, although they may do so in ways different from traditional elites. Alternatively, some—for example, Bonnie H. Erickson (1996) and Michael Emmison (2003)—argue that omnivorousness corresponds with the capability to behave appropriately in diverse cultural circumstances, an ability which is associated with one's elevated social position. In both examples, omnivorousness is interpreted as a marker of high status. The arguments in favor of the latter position, however, emphasize the connection between a shift in cultural norms toward the celebration of tolerance and cultural diversity and the rise of omnivores. Thus, Bethany Bryson (1997) found that Americans with less education are more likely to form their musical preferences around their collective social identities, such as race, ethnicity, and religion—for example, those with lower education are more likely to reject musical styles that are associated with African Americans. Therefore, this interpretation of omnivorousness emphasizes shifts in the symbolic relationships among different social groups.

Furthermore, there are two aspects to the association between symbolic relationships and cultural tastes. The first aspect emphasizes the role of cultural tastes in facilitating connections among people. Culture exists as the common knowledge held across a society, and can therefore be used to facilitate coordination among individuals (Chwe 1998). Nicole L. Mead et al. (2011) found that their research subjects strategically consumed cultural products with the aim of achieving group affiliation. Omar Lizardo (2006) argued that, because of popular culture's broader distribution in social space, the consumption of popular culture is connected with a higher density of weak ties. The consumption of highbrow culture, however, is associated with a higher density of strong ties. Similarly, Erickson (1996), emphasized the importance of low culture (sports talk in particular) for coordination among the workers in the private contract security industry in Toronto. Jennifer Schultz and Ronald L. Breiger (2010) proposed the concept of weak culture—cultural practice that is banal, noninstrumental, nondemanding, and nonexclusive—and suggested that weak culture can be used as a bridge connecting diverse social groups. They argued that preference toward weak culture should be associated with willingness to maintain ties across cultural boundaries, and those who wish to maintain ties across cultural boundaries are likely to perceive unity within the society. Following this reasoning, they found that the number of musical styles being “weakly” liked is associated with perception of unity among Americans. Finally, consistent with the arguments connecting popular cultural tastes with sociability, Juul Mulder et al. (2007) found that a preference toward popular musical styles is associated with less problematic behaviors among Dutch adolescents.

Culture can be used, however, to separate people through maintaining the symbolic boundaries between different groups. In turn, symbolic boundaries are often used to maintain social boundaries (Lamont and Molnár 2002), which was the argument underlying Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital. Although the varied roles of culture in facilitating coordination and exclusion are seemingly contradictory, they can be seen as the two sides of the same coin. A boundary integrates those within the boundary, while at the same time excluding those who are outside of it (Edgell, Gerteis, and Hartmann 2006; Lamont and Fournier 1992). Hockey talk may have helped integrate the Canadian workers studied by Erickson (1996), regardless of their social class. However, at the same time, it excluded women and foreign-born workers who did not share the same experiences as their male, Canadian-born coworkers. Indeed, to Bourdieu (1984), the dual functions of culture are what produce bounded, discrete social groups from continuous social space. Because of this, the analysis of symbolic boundaries can potentially encompass both the binding and separating aspects of the interactions between symbolic relationships and cultural tastes.

The rejection of—or distancing from—specific cultural tastes is one of the ways in which cultural tastes could relate to the establishment and maintenance of symbolic boundaries. Primarily, distastes can signal the boundaries between cultural tastes that are worthy and cultural tastes that are not worthy. However, cultural tastes can also be used as proxies for perceived social groups. Echoing Bourdieu's (1984) famous formulation in *Distinction*—*taste is what bring together things and people that go together*—this study argues that one's rejection of a specific cultural taste can signal his or her willingness to symbolically distance himself or herself from the perceived social group that is associated with the cultural taste. Thus, cultural rejection is inherently connected with the maintenance of a symbolic boundary marking those who are deemed as outsiders to their own social group. Jonah Berger and Chip Heath (2007, 2008) explained this mechanism with their model of social identity signaling. In their argument, reminiscent of the classic argument by Georg Simmel (1957), individuals are motivated to signal a social identity that is distinctive from that of members of dissimilar out-groups; thus, they willingly abandon products that are associated with the members of dissimilar out-groups. Because cultural tastes often have strong association with one's social identity, rejection of cultural tastes can be used to establish a social identity that is distinct from the (out)group they wish to distance themselves from—thus preserving a symbolic boundary between themselves and the members of the out-group. This assumption of the connection between cultural rejection and symbolic boundary is implicitly shared by the arguments that emphasize the importance of cultural hostility. In Bourdieu's (1984) formulation, the rejection of less legitimate cultural tastes by the dominant group—especially by those who are endowed with more cultural capital than economic capital—serves to maintain the existing status hierarchy. Paul E. Willis (1977) made the argument from the opposite side, suggesting that the rejection of middle-class culture by working-class youths in Great Britain led them to working-class jobs, thus maintaining the class structure.

Symbolic boundaries—and thus, cultural rejections—often correspond with structural divisions within the society; for example, Bryson (1996) found that those with “tolerant” musical tastes were more likely to reject the musical styles associated with uneducated audiences, whereas those who were less politically tolerant were more likely to reject musical styles associated with blacks. Then, based on the proposition that cultural rejection corresponds with symbolic distancing—thus, maintenance of symbolic boundaries—between different groups in the social world, it is possible to analyze the structure of the symbolic relationships between different groups by analyzing the structure of cultural rejection. Some previous research—for example, Bryson (1996, 1997)—utilized a priori assumptions about which musical style should correspond with which social boundary. However, the analysis presented in this article does not rely on a priori assumptions about how specific musical styles relate to specific social boundaries. An observed distribution of cultural preferences could be an emergent property of underlying social interactions, which does not necessarily have logical connections to a specific demographic characteristic (DellaPosta,

Shi, and Macy 2015). An analysis based on *a priori* assumptions may miss empirical regularities that exist in our social world, but lack clear logical explanations. In addition, status stratification is inherently multidimensional (Hall 1992). Therefore, testing hypotheses about cultural rejection based on specific social boundaries may not necessarily be able to provide the overall picture of multidimensional relationships. Instead, this study aims to analyze the overall structure of cultural rejection that exists in the social world. This structure can be seen as a map of symbolic relationships in which people occupy different positions based on the cultural rejections they send and receive. In turn, these positions should be associated both with their positions in the social structure and with their perception of symbolic relationships with others.

Methodology

For this analysis, cultural rejection is operationalized as distancing from someone else by disliking (or, expressing distaste for) a musical style that is liked by that individual. For example, if person A likes rap and heavy metal, and person B thinks that these two musical styles are terrible, person B is rejecting person A—or at least, person A's preferences. It is important to note that the analysis here is not based on any assumptions about characteristics of musical styles. Someone may dislike rap, or perhaps he or she may dislike heavy metal instead; this study focuses on who are liking the styles he or she rejects, instead of which specific styles he or she rejects. This is different from other studies that assign specific meanings to specific cultural genres based on prior theoretical reasoning—for example, Bryson (1996) on musical styles associated with African Americans, or Lizardo (2006) on lowbrow cultures.

Music has a pervasive presence in U.S. society. Musical preferences frequently are an important component of one's identity, especially among youths. Music is commonly used as a tool of self-expression (Rentfrow and Gosling 2007). Indeed, several subcultures are perceived to be based around specific musical styles. Berger and Heath (2008) found that musical genres had a relatively strong association with divergence—people are relatively likely to abandon a musical genre if a large number of members of dissimilar out-groups adapt it. Musical preference is strongly associated with one's social identity (North and Hargreaves 1999), interpersonal perception (Rentfrow and Gosling 2006), and intergroup perception (Bakagiannis and Tarrant 2006). In addition, music is found to be the common topic among strangers who are working to get acquainted (Rentfrow and Gosling 2006), showing the role music has in communicating identities. Therefore, preference toward musical styles makes an appropriate operationalization of the model of cultural rejection.

Although an analysis based on attitudes toward musical styles is not as fine-grained as analyses based on attitudes toward specific cultural practices (e.g., using specific books, going to specific movies, and so on as in works of Bourdieu [1984] or Erickson [1996]), this characteristic is not necessarily a disadvantage. Although the actual boundaries of genres are ever-changing, genres nevertheless constrain the actors operating around them (Lena and Peterson 2008). The audiences of cultural products use category memberships to evaluate the products; thus, spanning genres can result in negative reactions from audiences (Hsu 2006). In addition, musical genres in particular have normative expectations about people associated with them, especially among adolescents (North and Hargreaves 1999). Furthermore, people tend to hold clearly defined stereotypes of fans of musical genres, and there are some truths to many of these stereotypes (Rentfrow and Gosling 2007). Finally, people are more likely to be informed of, and develop opinions about, genres than of specific cultural practices (Warde 2011). Indeed, from the final point, it can be argued that genres themselves have characteristics of coordination devices as described by Michael Suk-Young Chwe (1998). Genres exist as common knowledge, which can be used to facilitate communications between individuals who may not necessarily share same knowledge about specific cultural practices; for example, common knowledge of "heavy metal"

as a genre makes it possible to talk about heavy metal without having to name a single heavy metal band. For these reasons, preferences toward musical styles are appropriate for the study of cultural rejection.

The research is based on the culture module of the 1993 General Social Survey (GSS). The 1993 GSS was administered to a representative sample of American adults ($N = 1,606$). The culture module asked respondents about their attitudes toward 18 styles of music. For each musical style, respondents were asked to select their attitudes from six possible responses: “like very much,” “like it,” “mixed feelings,” “dislike it,” “dislike very much,” and “don’t know much about it.” Because of this module’s focus on musical styles, many studies of cultural preferences—Bryson (1996, 1997), Gindo Tampubolon (2008), and Amir Goldberg (2011), for example—have used the 1993 GSS dataset. Although the 1993 GSS is a relatively old dataset, it is the most appropriate dataset for this research. The culture module of the 1993 GSS asks the respondent’s attitudes toward various musical styles, whereas the culture modules from subsequent GSSs focus on cultural participation, making them less suitable for the analysis of cultural rejection. Although the Survey of Public Participation in Arts (SPPA) contains items about musical preference, these items are dichotomous; given that the category “do not like” in the dichotomous items has diverse interpretations (having negative attitude, having an ambivalent attitude, or lacking any opinions), datasets from the SPPA are less suitable for the analysis of cultural rejection.

This article utilizes blockmodeling for constructing the map of cultural rejections. Blockmodeling, a methodology that was originally developed in social network analysis by Harrison C. White, Scott A. Boorman, and Ronald L. Breiger (1976), attempts to find the positions within relational data (usually social network data), where each position (or, “block”) contains nodes that are similar to each other in term of structural equivalence. Structural equivalence is the key concept here. In social network analysis, structural equivalence means that two nodes (nodes typically are persons, though this is not necessary) share the same relationships with the same set of other nodes. For example, both persons A and B may reject persons C, D, and E, while being rejected by persons F and G. In this example, persons A and B are structurally equivalent, as they share the same set of relationship with the same other nodes. Note that structural equivalence between nodes A and B does not imply the existence of a relationship between A and B. In this example, A and B may or may not reject one another—but A and B can be structurally equivalent regardless of whether a tie connects them to each other. Because nodes in the same block share a similar set of relationships, an entire matrix of relational data can be condensed into relationships between blocks. This allows researchers to more effectively analyze the patterns that exist in the original relational data by focusing the analysis on blocks, where the blocks are seen as collections of nodes occupying similar structural positions. Because blockmodels are used to analyze the relationships among positions, the use of blockmodels is commonly associated with Bourdieu’s concept of field. For example, Paul DiMaggio (1986) has applied blockmodeling in his study of organizational fields. Similarly, Jürgen Gerhards and Helmut K. Anheier (1989) used blockmodeling in their study of a cultural field, which was composed of social networks among writers in Germany.

Blockmodeling is suitable for constructing a map of rejections for several reasons. First, rejection is relational by its nature, and blockmodeling was specifically developed for analyzing relational data. More importantly, rejection has a unique feature that makes blockmodeling especially suitable in comparison with other methods of analyzing relational data: Rejection is both directional and negative. Various methods of community detection within relational data—for example, modularity (Newman 2006)—are based on the assumption that two nodes are closer when they have a tie between them. Rejection ties, however, are negative relationships, in the sense that they separate nodes instead of connecting them. Therefore, blockmodels provide a suitable tool for the analysis of cultural rejection. Similarly, statistical analyses of relational data, such as

ERGM (Robins et al. 2007), tend to focus on the statistical effects of the existence of one tie on the other ties—which is not theoretically relevant for the analysis of cultural rejection. Finally, as a primarily exploratory methodology, blockmodeling does not require any a priori knowledge about structure of divisions within dataset, making it suitable for the goal of this research.¹

Cultural rejection is operationalized in the following manner: A respondent is assumed to like a specific musical style if he or she answered “like very much” or “like.” Similarly, a respondent is assumed to dislike a specific musical style if he or she answered “dislike very much” or “dislike.” On average, respondents liked (or liked very much) 7.5 musical styles, and disliked (or disliked very much) 5.4 musical styles. Although some studies suggest that specific answers to the questions—for example, “like it” or “mixed feelings”—may have unique interpretations (Schultz and Breiger 2010; Sonnett 2004), this binarization is appropriate for the purpose of this study. In addition, this methodology does not require removal of the cases with the answer “I don’t know.” Many respondents selected “I don’t know” to one or more musical styles, and removing these respondents could bias the results.

Furthermore, for each pair of respondents in the GSS, the number of musical styles that are disliked by the first respondent and liked by the second respondent at the same time was computed. This gives us information on the cultural rejection between every pair of individuals, resulting in a $1,604 \times 1,604$ valued matrix where each cell can take any number between 0 and 18, which is the total number of the musical styles. Because of the nature of the matrix, the diagonal cells of the matrix are zero, and are ignored in this analysis. The matrix was subsequently standardized using Jaccard’s coefficient, which can be expressed as follows;

A represents the set of musical styles disliked by the first respondent

B represents the set of musical styles liked by the second respondent

$|A|$ is notation for the size of set A

The metric value for rejection strength = $|A \cap B| / |A \cup B|$.

With this transformation, each cell in the transformed matrix can take any value between 0 and 1. If musical styles that A dislikes and musical styles that B likes are identical, this value becomes 1. If A dislikes no musical style that B likes, this value becomes zero. In rare cases where $A \cup B$ is empty, the value of zero was input into these cells as well. This matrix represents the relationships of cultural rejection between respondents, and was used as the basis of the analysis in this article. Note that rejection here is inherently asymmetrical—that is, although person A may strongly reject (styles preferred by) person B, this does not necessary mean person B will strongly reject person A in return. Overall, the value of cultural rejection has a mean of 0.1392.

With real-world datasets, it is usually impossible to create a sizable block that consists of actors who are completely structurally equivalent (a perfect fit). Therefore, blocks in blockmodels are better seen as approximations that help the analysis. Each block would contain a set of actors that are relatively similar to each other in terms of structural equivalence. There are several algorithms that can be used for partitioning blocks. CONCOR (Ronald L. Breiger, Scott A. Boorman, and Phipps Arabie 1975) is a method frequently used in cultural sociology—for example, by John W. Mohr (1994). However, CONCOR also has been criticized in that it is difficult to interpret the results obtained from the procedure (Wasserman and Faust 1994). In addition, a typical application of CONCOR restricts us to use configurations where the numbers of blocks are powers of two—typically resulting in a four-block configuration or an eight-block configuration. Given that there is no a priori assumption about the structure of cultural rejection, forcing either configuration may not be desirable. For these reasons, hierarchal clustering using Euclidean distance between actors, the method that was originally used by Ronald S. Burt (1976) for identifying positions within social networks, was used to partition the blocks. Ward’s (1963) method,

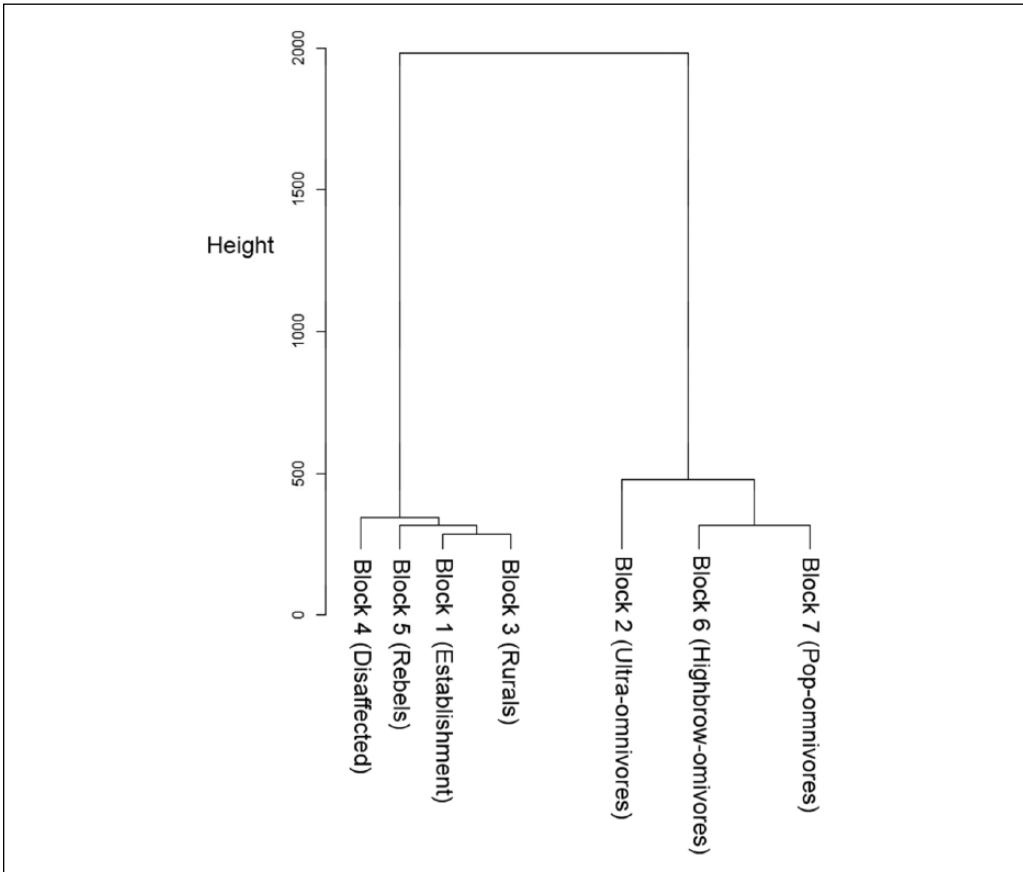


Figure 1. Dendrogram showing block arrangement based on hierarchal clustering.

Note. Height indicates distance between members of two blocks that are being joined. Cutpoints after the sixth branch are not used for this article, and are omitted from the graph.

which minimizes the variance within each block, was used as the linkage criteria for hierarchal clustering. The cluster dendrogram for partitioning blocks is shown in Figure 1. Height of a branch in dendrogram indicates distance between two blocks that are being joined. If two blocks (e.g., Blocks A and B) are joined at high height, it indicates that there are relatively large distances between members of Block A and members of Block B; thus, Blocks A and B are relatively dissimilar. The result shows that the third, fourth, fifth, and sixth branches have relatively similar heights, whereas branches after the sixth are somewhat further away in height. Each block in the seven-block configuration contains more than 100 respondents. With these reasons, the seven-block configuration provides a good compromise between precision and ease of interpretation, and was used as the basis for all subsequent analyses.

Block Descriptions

From Figure 1, it is evident that the basic structure underlying the data is made of two groups—the first group contains Blocks 1 (establishment), 3 (rurals), 4 (disaffected), and 5 (rebels), whereas the second group contains Blocks 2 (ultra-omnivores), 6 (highbrow-omnivores), and 7 (pop-omnivores). I explain how we derived these labels below. It was based both on whether

members of the block liked or disliked more musical styles, the demographics of people within these blocks as well as their tastes in music. The first group contains about 39.8 percent of the sample, whereas the second group contains about 60.2 percent. However, as the following analysis will show, the existence of the overall structure does not mean that each of the two groups is homogeneous.

The demographic and other characteristics of the seven blocks are represented in Table 1. Those in Blocks 2 (ultra-omnivores), 6 (highbrow-omnivores), and 7 (pop-omnivores) tend to have more musical styles liked than disliked, and those in Blocks 1 (establishment), 3 (rurals), 4 (disaffected), and 5 (rebels) tend to have more musical styles disliked than liked. Overall, the distinction between the two main groups seems to correspond with Peterson's omnivore-univore distinction, where Blocks 2, 6, and 7 could be classified as omnivores and Blocks 1, 3, 4, and 5 could be classified as univores.

The average musical preferences of the seven blocks are represented in Table 2. Blocks 2 (ultra-omnivores), 6 (highbrow-omnivores), and 7 (pop-omnivores) are all omnivore-like; however, the degree of omnivorousness varies noticeably by block. Block 2 is the most omnivorous; thus, it is labeled "ultra-omnivores" in this article. As we saw in Table 1, the members of this block have many more musical styles that are liked than disliked. Indeed, there are only a few musical styles that the members of this block do not like—heavy metal, and to a lesser extent, rap. Overall, Bryson's (1996) *anything but heavy metal* is an apt description of this block. This block also has the highest average education, and the largest proportion of women among all the blocks.

Blocks 6 (highbrow-omnivores) and 7 (pop-omnivores) are less omnivorous than Block 2 (ultra-omnivores). Table 1 shows that their members tend to like fewer musical styles and tend to dislike more musical styles than members of ultra-omnivores. In comparing 6 and 7, members of Block 7 (pop-omnivores) tend to both like and dislike fewer musical styles compared with members of Block 6 (highbrow-omnivores). In addition, there are some differences in the musical tastes between members of Blocks 6 and 7. Most notably, the members of Block 6 (highbrow-omnivores) tend to like highbrow music (classical and opera), whereas Block 7 (pop-omnivores) leans more toward popular music, especially more traditional lowbrow/popular music such as country, gospel, or bluegrass. Because of this, the members of Block 6 can be labeled "highbrow-omnivores," and the members of Block 7 can be labeled "pop-omnivores." Demographically, highbrow-omnivores are similar to ultra-omnivores; they tend to be young, highly educated, and having higher occupational prestige. Pop-omnivores, however, tend to be less educated and earn less compared with ultra-omnivores or highbrow-omnivores.

Blocks 1 (establishment), 3 (rurals), 4 (disaffected), and 5 (rebels) are relatively distinct from each other. The average age of the members of Block 3 is similar to that of the overall population. At the same time, they have less education, tend to live in more rural areas, and are predominantly white. Their musical preference is also consistent with stereotypes associated with their demographic characteristics; they tend to dislike highbrow music (classical and opera), musical styles associated with African Americans (jazz, rap, and to lesser extent, blues), and musical styles associated with counter-culture (new age, rap, heavy metal, and reggae). With these characteristics, the members of Block 3 can be labeled "rurals."

The members of Block 4 (disaffected) tend to be very old, and this block is the least educated and the most rural block of all. In addition, they have the lowest income of all blocks. This group is also noteworthy in that its members tend to have far more musical styles disliked than liked. Country and gospel—traditional lowbrow styles typically associated with the American heartlands—are the only musical styles that they like. This group appears to represent the old, cultural isolates, who can be labeled "disaffected."

The members of Block 1 (establishment) are roughly the same age as the members of disaffected. However, unlike disaffected, the members of Block 1 are relatively well educated and

Table 1. Demographic and Other Characteristics of Individual Blocks.

	Block 1	Block 2		Block 3	Block 4	Block 5	Block 6	Block 7
	Establishment	Ultra-omnivores	Rurals	Disaffected	Rebels	Highbrow- omnivores	Pop- omnivores	Total
No. of individuals in the block	135	361	272	103	129	380	226	1,606
% of males	41.5%	37.1%	46.3%	49.5%	45.7%	43.6%	41.2%	42.7%
Mean age	62.92	43.83	44.65	59.89	34.85	43.26	46.18	46.05
% of white	87.4%	80.6%	90.8%	80.6%	73.6%	85.2%	83.6%	83.9%
% of black	6.7%	13.6%	5.5%	12.6%	20.9%	9.2%	13.7%	11.1%
Mean years of education	12.85	13.99	12.29	9.60	13.16	13.73	12.96	13.05
Mean occupational prestige	45.32	44.94	40.31	37.43	42.10	44.58	43.43	43.2
Mean family income	32,535	40,669	33,246	19,667	32,908	38,455	37,983	35,990
Mean paternal education	9.58	11.72	9.76	7.11	12.51	11.57	10.83	10.92
Population size of municipality of residence, in logarithm	10.20	10.51	9.77	9.27	10.69	10.43	10.20	10.23
Mean no. of styles liked	6.19	11.20	4.97	3.37	5.70	8.53	6.71	7.52
Mean no. of styles disliked	7.32	1.92	7.80	12.48	8.31	4.57	3.28	5.38
Mean no. of styles very liked	2.39	3.21	1.41	1.19	1.53	2.48	1.74	2.19
Mean no. of styles very disliked	3.32	0.77	3.14	4.20	2.88	1.76	1.37	2.09
Mean no. of styles weakly liked	3.8	8.00	3.56	2.18	4.17	6.07	4.98	5.33
Mean no. of styles weakly disliked	4.0	1.150	4.67	8.27	5.43	2.81	1.19	3.29

Table 2. Musical Preferences of Rejection Blocks.

	Block 1		Block 2	Block 3	Block 4	Block 5	Block 6	Block 7
Style	Average	Establishment	Ultra- omnivores	Rurals	Disaffected	Rebels	Highbrow- omnivores	Pop- omnivores
Big Band	2.45	2.01	1.94	2.99	3.44	3.39	2.22	2.28
Bluegrass	2.67	2.74	2.22	2.81	3.03	3.67	2.68	2.34
Country	2.33	2.60	2.05	1.97	2.27	3.54	2.55	1.96
Blues	2.50	2.68	1.97	3.01	3.61	2.80	2.38	2.15
Musicals	2.59	2.35	1.97	3.26	3.76	3.40	2.27	2.51
Classical	2.67	2.08	1.92	3.62	4.00	3.22	2.25	2.95
Folk	2.76	2.49	2.20	3.22	3.44	3.66	2.58	2.74
Gospel	2.40	2.22	2.00	2.58	1.85	3.54	2.58	2.18
Jazz	2.61	3.12	1.91	3.23	3.87	2.70	2.43	2.32
Latin	3.14	3.43	2.35	3.87	4.13	3.45	2.92	3.19
Mood	2.41	2.45	1.97	2.67	3.11	3.22	2.31	2.13
Newage	3.68	4.21	3.05	4.28	4.40	3.38	3.50	3.87
Opera	3.48	2.93	2.73	4.30	4.37	4.03	3.19	3.84
Rap	3.92	4.32	3.41	4.42	4.48	3.43	3.87	4.08
Reggae	3.16	3.97	2.42	3.89	4.39	2.81	2.91	3.19
Rock	2.67	4.35	2.04	2.74	4.23	2.26	2.59	2.18
Oldies	2.25	4.04	1.75	2.03	4.01	2.34	1.98	1.76
Heavy metal	4.12	4.71	3.83	4.51	4.60	3.38	3.96	4.29

Note. In the original items, 1 indicates "like very much," 3 indicates "mixed feeling," and 5 indicates "dislike it very much." The numbers displayed here are the average values of all members within each block.

tend to have high-status occupations. Thus, this block primarily represents people who are old and relatively successful. Consistent with this view, the members of this block tend to prefer highbrow music, while at the same time reject musical styles that are associated with youths, including contemporary rock. Because of this, they can be labeled "establishment." Although this block may seem reminiscent of Bourdieu's cultural elites, it is important to note that this block does not reject all lowbrow music; the members of this block like some lowbrow music, especially more traditional lowbrow styles such as country, gospel, or folk.

Finally, Block 5 (rebels) has a profile much younger than the other blocks. This block also has the largest proportion of blacks, is the most urban block of all, and its members are relatively well educated. It can be argued that this block represents youths who are rebelling from mainstream culture. Indeed, this block likes heavy metal more than any other blocks, and likes rap more than any other blocks except ultra-omnivores. At the same time, it is the only block whose members dislike country and gospel—the musical styles that could be seen as representing the traditional American popular culture, and which are well liked by every other block. With these characteristics, the members of Block 5 can be labeled "rebels." As we have seen here, although the members of establishment, rurals, disaffected, and rebel share univorous tendencies, each block has a distinctive profile of musical tastes, and occupies a distinctive socioeconomic position.

To extend our discussion, we identify the determinant of individuals' structural position using multinomial logistic regression, with block membership as the dependent variable and ultra-omnivores as the reference category. Ultra-omnivores (Block 2) makes a suitable reference category for several reasons. First, it clearly is the most omnivorous block of the three omnivore-like blocks; following Peterson's argument, this block can be seen as the representative of the dominant, high-status American culture. In addition, it is the second largest block in the analysis.

Table 3. Multinomial Logistic Regression on Block Memberships.

	Block 1	Block 3	Block 4	Block 5	Block 6	Block 7
Variables	Establishment	Rurals	Disaffected	Rebels	Highblow- omnivores	Pop- omnivores
Intercept	0.0132	5.662***	6.845***	5.675***	3.015**	2.024.
Sex (female)	-3.665**	-2.032*	1.806	-2.641*	-0.1674	-0.6272
Race (black)	-0.8181	-1.400*	-0.5931	0.3451	-0.3019	-0.1580
Race (others)	1.339**	-0.7202	0.2967	-0.4193	-0.1122	-1.109†
Education (years)	-0.0508	-0.1818***	-0.3671***	-0.0925†	-0.0039	-0.1084**
Father's education (years)	-0.0405	-0.0919***	-0.1210**	0.0286	-0.0188	-0.0256
Age	0.0152	-0.0080	-0.0810	-0.1702***	-0.1039***	0.0090
Age, squared	0.0005	-0.0000	0.0010†	0.0014**	0.0010**	-0.0001
Population (log)	-0.2062*	-0.1610*	-0.0950	-0.1159	-0.0031	-0.0639
Sex × Population (log)	0.2912*	0.1303	-0.3003†	0.1912†	-0.0184	0.0256

Note. Block 2 (ultra-omnivores) is the reference category. Number of observations = 1,191 (415 observations deleted due to missing data). Bold-faced values indicate statistical significance at .05 level.

Pseudo- R^2 (McFadden) = .0969.

† $p < .1$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$. Two-tailed.

Finally, ultra-omnivores dislike the fewest number of genres; because the analysis here is based on rejections, the block which does not reject any other blocks makes the perfect basis of comparison. Various demographic characteristics (sex, race, age, age squared, education, father's education, and logged population size of the area of residence) were used as independent variables for the analysis. Income, mother's education, and occupational prestige were also used in the initial analysis, but were found to have no effects; therefore, these variables were dropped from the final analyses.² Finally, the interaction effects between sex and other independent variables were tested in earlier analysis; only the interaction effect between sex and population size had a statistically significant effect, thus was kept in the final analysis. Table 3 presents the result of this analysis.

As we can see, each block has distinctive sets of variables that are statistically significant determinants of its membership. The effect of gender is statistically significant for three univore blocks (establishment, rurals, and rebels), showing that women are less likely to be located in these blocks. This result is consistent with previous research that emphasizes the prominent roles that women occupy in cultural consumption (e.g., Collins [1992]).

For establishment (Block 1), sex, race (others), population size, and the interaction effect of sex and population have statistically significant effects. Women are less likely to belong to this block. For race, those in the "other" race category are more likely to be in this block than in ultra-omnivores. It is important to note that the majority of this block is white, and the effect of the dummy variable for black is not statistically significant. "Other" race category contains diverse groups including Asians, Pacific Islanders, and Native Americans. Therefore, it is difficult to interpret effect of race on this block. Although establishment is the oldest block of all in Table 1, the effect of age disappears if we incorporate other variables. Finally, although both the main effect of population size and the interaction effect of population size and sex are statistically significant, they have the opposite directions. Whereas men in urban areas are less likely to be in this block, this relationship does not hold true for women.

For rurals (Block 3), the effects of sex (women are less likely), the dummy variable for black (negative), education (less likely for those with more education), father's education (less likely for those with a father with more education), and population size (less likely for those who are living in densely populated areas) are statistically significant. Again, it shows that nonblacks, those with less education, those with less parental education, and those living in rural areas are more likely to belong to rurals than to ultra-omnivores.

For disaffected (Block 4), education and father's education have statistically significant effects. The respondents with less education and the respondents with less educated fathers are more likely to be in disaffected than in ultra-omnivores. The effect of age squared is statistically significant at the .1 level, and its effect is positive, which suggests that those with very advanced age are more likely to be in this block. Similarly, the interaction effect between sex and population size is negative at the .1 level, implying that women in urban areas are less likely to belong to this block. Although it is impossible to draw strong conclusions for these effects due to their weak significance levels, disaffected is the smallest block in the analysis. Thus, it is more difficult to obtain strong significance levels, especially in the case for its interaction term (gender and population). Therefore, I argue that these effects are worth mentioning, despite their weak significance levels.

For rebels (Block 5), sex, age, and age squared have the statistically significant effects. Age has a negative effect for rebels, showing that younger respondents are more likely to be in rebels than in ultra-omnivores. Age squared has a positive effect, showing that the negative effect of age gradually levels off. Although the effect of education is not statistically significant at the .05 level, it is at the .1 level, and its effect is negative. It suggests that those with more education are less likely to be in rebels than in ultra-omnivores. In addition, the interaction effect between sex and population size is positive at the .1 level, implying that women in urban areas are somewhat more likely to belong to this block than in ultra-omnivores. Although these effects have weak significance levels, rebels is the second smallest block in this analysis, making it difficult to obtain strong significance levels. Therefore, again I argue that these effects are worth mentioning, despite their weak significance level.

For highbrow-omnivores (Block 6), only age and age squared have statistically significant effects; the effect of age is negative. Similar to rebels, age squared has a positive effect, again showing that the negative effect of age gradually levels off. Finally, only the effect of education is statistically significant at the .05 level for pop-omnivores (Block 7). The effect of education is negative, showing that its members tend to have less education than ultra-omnivores—a finding that is consistent with this block's preference toward lowbrow music.

These findings indicate that divisions within the structure of cultural rejection are multifaceted; no single attribute dominates in the structure. As suggested by some researchers (Hall 1992; Katz-Gerro 1999; Tampubolon 2008), it is evident that cultural analysis based on a single demographic fault line—such as old-young or black-white—would not be able to provide a full picture of the cultural structure of the United States. However, men were more likely to be in three univore blocks (establishments, rurals, and rebels), indicating that there is some association between gender and omnivoreness. Women are commonly associated with increased sociability; increased sociability may be associated with reduced inclination for cultural rejection, consistent with the finding that men were more likely to be in three of four univore blocks. Curiously, gender has statistically significant interaction effects only with (log of) population size, but not with other demographic characteristics. This finding is somewhat consistent with Erik Bihagen and Tally Katz-Gerro's (2000) finding on highbrow cultural consumption in Sweden. Bihagen and Katz-Gerro (2000) found that though gender did not interact with age or education, gender interacted with (some) occupational categories and familial status. Unfortunately, it is impossible to speculate here why gender interacts with population size.³

Table 4. Interblock Rejections.

	Block 1	Block 2	Block 3	Block 4	Block 5	Block 6	Block 7
	Establishment	Ultra- omnivores	Rurals	Disaffected	Rebels	Highbrow- omnivores	Pop- omnivores
Block 1	0.111	0.274	0.189	0.073	0.280	0.251	0.203
Block 2	0.034	0.047	0.010	0.009	0.082	0.047	0.015
Block 3	0.195	0.270	0.100	0.076	0.196	0.231	0.137
Block 4	0.242	0.452	0.191	0.090	0.299	0.373	0.262
Block 5	0.285	0.338	0.193	0.197	0.181	0.284	0.224
Block 6	0.121	0.162	0.095	0.091	0.158	0.159	0.104
Block 7	0.072	0.092	0.016	0.013	0.107	0.085	0.027

Table 5. Interblock Rejections, Binarized.

	Block 1	Block 2	Block 3	Block 4	Block 5	Block 6	Block 7
	Establishment	Ultra- omnivores	Rurals	Disaffected	Rebels	Highbrow- omnivores	Pop- omnivores
Block 1	0	1	1	0	1 ^a	1	1
Block 2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Block 3	1	1	0	0	1	1	0
Block 4	1	1 ^a	1	0	1 ^a	1 ^a	1
Block 5	1 ^a	1 ^a	1	1	1	1 ^a	1
Block 6	0	1	0	0	1	1	0
Block 7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

^aA rejection strength is above double the mean rejection strength.

Block Relationships

Identifying block divisions is not the sole purpose of blockmodeling. Instead, its main advantage is that it aids in recognizing the relationships between blocks. The summary of interblock rejection strength is shown in Table 4. Values in the table represent the average strength of rejection between members of two blocks. For example, rejection from the members of establishment to the members of ultra-omnivores has an average strength of 0.2743—indicating that an average strength (in Jaccard coefficient) of rejection from establishment to ultra-omnivores across all possible pairs is 0.2743. Values in the diagonals show the extent to which members of a block reject the musical preferences of their fellow-block members.

Following the tradition of blockmodeling, Table 5 shows the binarized variation of the block rejection table. A cell value of 1 indicates a rejection strength above the mean rejection strength—the average strength of rejection across all possible pairs of actors—and a cell value of zero indicates a rejection strength below the mean rejection strength.

Several points can be observed in Table 5. First, both rebels and highbrow-omnivores have a value of 1 in their diagonal cell, showing that there is considerable intrablock rejection among the members of these blocks. Note that in this blockmodel, a block rejects itself when its members reject the other members of its own block with more than average strength. Because blocks are partitioned by similarity of their positions in the relational structure of cultural rejection and not by similarity of tastes, it is possible for blocks to have heterogeneous musical tastes. Establishment, rurals, and disaffected, however, display relatively low intrablock rejection despite a large

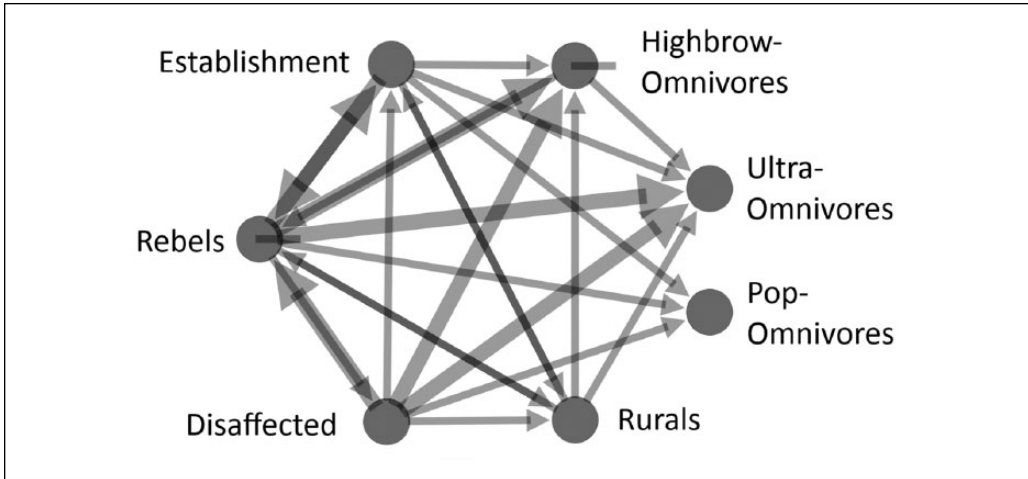


Figure 2. Visualization of cultural rejection between blocks.

Note. Lines indicate between-block rejection, and arrowheads indicate the direction of rejection. Thin lines indicate rejection strength above the average rejection strength (0.2743). Thick lines indicate rejection strength above double the average rejection strength. Short lines on rebels and highbrow-omnivores indicate that members of these blocks reject other members in the own block.

number of musical styles they dislike. This suggests that members of each of these blocks have relatively homogeneous musical tastes. Disaffected, in particular, rejects every other block but itself, again showing that its members have very narrow and homogeneous musical taste. Rebels also rejects all blocks, in this case including itself. However, it shows especially strong rejection toward establishment, ultra-omnivores, and highbrow-omnivores. Given that ultra-omnivores and highbrow-omnivores represent the modern mainstream American taste to some degrees, and establishment is primarily composed of successful elderly, this again supports the picture of rebels as youths distancing themselves from mainstream American styles—especially ones that are associated with the elites. Finally, neither ultra-omnivores nor pop-omnivores reject any blocks; this is expected, as the members of these blocks tend to dislike only a few musical styles.

It is also important to observe which blocks are being the objects of rejection. The most notable observation is that disaffected is being rejected only by rebels, suggesting that the former's taste is not widely opposed by Americans, despite the fact that they dislike many others' tastes. Their cultural taste is somewhat marginal, but not marginalized; they may only like country and gospel, but these two styles of music are well liked by every block except rebels.

Ultra-omnivores, rebels, and highbrow-omnivores, however, are rejected by every block except ultra-omnivores and pop-omnivores—the two blocks that do not reject any blocks. I suggest that these blocks are being rejected for different reasons. Given that members of ultra-omnivores like many musical styles, it is likely that the members of other blocks can find some musical styles that they dislike among the styles that the members of omnivores like. The same argument would apply to highbrow-omnivores to a lesser extent, as well. Because they have diverse tastes, nearly everyone has something to dislike about their tastes. However, this explanation clearly does not apply for rebels. Instead, it is clear that they are being rejected for their tastes toward rebellious, youth-oriented styles. Unlike disaffected, the cultural taste of rebels is marginalized—in a sense, rebels is in a mutual confrontation with the traditional mainstream American culture.

It is also possible to represent the blockmodel in the form of a network graph. Figure 2 is a visualization of Table 5. Thin lines represent rejection with strength between the mean strength of the rejection and double the mean strength. Thick lines represent rejection with strength above

double the mean strength. This graph displays the same pattern that was described earlier. Again, rebels are seen both receiving and sending a large amount of cultural rejections, whereas omnivores and highbrow-omnivores are only receiving rejection and disaffected is only sending rejection. Finally, pop-omnivores do not reject anyone, and are only weakly rejected by others.

With these results, it can be argued that the overall structure of cultural rejection is consistent with the omnivore thesis (Peterson and Simkus 1992). The members of univorous blocks, who tend to occupy peripheral locations on the social structure, reject both omnivore blocks and other univorous blocks. Omnivores, however, tend to reject fewer blocks. In addition, the overall structure of cultural rejection suggests the importance of mainstream, popular culture in integrating American society. This is especially noticeable with the blocks that tend to prefer popular, low-brow styles: disaffected, rurals, and pop-omnivores. Although the members of these blocks do not necessarily possess high status, their tastes nevertheless avoid receiving strong rejections—suggesting that their popular, lowbrow tastes are well accepted by other Americans.

Structural Position and Perception of Unity

If cultural rejection is associated with maintenance of symbolic boundaries toward out-groups, it is plausible that cultural rejection is associated with the perceived division between oneself and the members of out-groups. Unity is the opposite of division; the perception of unity implies the lack of perceived divisions. If one does not perceive a division between himself or herself and a certain group, there would be no need to symbolically distance himself or herself from this group by maintaining a social identity that is distinctive from the group. However, the very existence of perceived symbolic boundaries within a society implies the existence of perceived divisions—thus, lack of unity within the society. Therefore, one's position on the structure of cultural rejection should be associated with his or her perception of unity. To validate this argument, the relationship between block memberships and perceptions of unity is analyzed here. Following the theoretical argument behind cultural rejection, one's block membership should have direct association with his or her perception of unity, independent of his or her background characteristics. If cultural rejections indeed presuppose divisions, it can be hypothesized that the blocks that tend to strongly reject other blocks are less likely to perceive unity among Americans.

The perception of unity was used by Schultz and Breiger (2010), who argued that the perception of unity should be associated with possessing weak culture. Their argument was that nonexclusive, accessible forms of culture—which they call weak culture—should be associated with intention to connect with (or, having actual connections with) diverse social groups. Therefore, in their argument, the possession of weak culture should be associated with the perception of unity. Thus, the argument presented in this study and the argument made by Schultz and Breiger could be seen as the opposite sides of the same coin: one emphasizing the role of culture for separating groups, and one emphasizing the role of culture for uniting groups. The perception of unity was measured by the following binary-choice question:

There is a lot of discussion today about whether Americans are divided or united. Some say that Americans are united and in agreement about the most important values. Others think that Americans are greatly divided when it comes to the most important values. What is your view about this?

Among 1,606 respondents, 518 (32.3 percent) answered yes; 79 (4.9 percent) respondents gave no answer, and were omitted from the analysis. Table 6 shows the result of logistic regression. Block memberships were the independent variables of this analysis, whereas sex, race, age, age squared, education, and log of population size were used as the control variables. Father's education had no statistically significant effect, while requiring removal of large number of cases due to missing data. Therefore, father's education was not used as a control variable.⁴

Table 6. Logistic Regression on the Perception of Unity.

Variables	Estimates	SE
(Intercept)	-1.9462 ***	0.5837
Sex (women)	-0.1447	0.1117
Race (black)	-0.4776 *	0.1974
Race (others)	-0.0414	0.2630
Age	0.0381 *	0.0194
Age, squared	-0.0003	0.0002
Education	0.0370†	0.0205
Population (log)	0.0219	0.0265
Block 1 (establishment)	-0.8421 ***	0.2480
Block 3 (rurals)	-0.3295†	0.1766
Block 4 (disaffected)	-0.6744*	0.2796
Block 5 (rebels)	-0.2902	0.2318
Block 6 (highbrow-omnivores)	-0.4681**	0.1590
Block 7 (pop-omnivores)	-0.1258	0.1835

Note. Block 2 (ultra-omnivores) is the reference category. Number of observations = 1,520 (86 observations deleted due to missing data).

Pseudo- R^2 (McFadden) = .0213.

† $p < .1$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$. Two-tailed.

After controlling for these variables, the members of ultra-omnivores have the highest likelihood of agreeing that Americans are united about the most important values, and are therefore used as the reference category. The members of pop-omnivores have the second highest likelihood of agreeing that Americans are united. Three blocks (establishments, disaffected, and highbrow-omnivores) have likelihoods that are significantly lower than ultra-omnivores at the .05 level. Coefficient for members of establishment has a log odd of 0.431, showing that belonging to establishment reduces likelihood of agreeing that Americans are united by around 70 percent compared with those who belong to ultra-omnivores.

The finding that the members of ultra-omnivores and pop-omnivores are the most likely to perceive Americans to be united is consistent with the hypothesis. Neither of these two blocks rejects any blocks. It is plausible that the members of these blocks perceive that Americans are united, as it can be interpreted that they are less inclined to symbolically distance themselves from others. At the same time, the hypothesis is also consistent with the finding that the members of the establishment and disaffected blocks are more likely to think that Americans are not united. The members of both blocks—especially the disaffected—tend to dislike a large number of musical styles. The members of the establishment block tend to show strong aversion to newer, popular musical styles. The disaffected are highly marginal, and tend to reject anything that does not fit into the few traditional lowbrow styles that they like. It can be argued that the members of both establishment and disaffected are distancing themselves from the tastes that are associated with the younger, contemporary mainstream American society; because of this, it is plausible that the members of these blocks are less likely to think that Americans are united.

However, the results for highbrow-omnivores and rebels are more intriguing. The result for highbrow-omnivores is the most perplexing. Schultz and Breiger (2010) found that the number of musical styles that the respondents like (not including strong likes)—which is their operationalization of “weak culture”—is positively associated with perceiving unity. Based on this argument, the members of highbrow-omnivores should be likely to perceive that Americans are united; of all the blocks, highbrow-omnivores “weakly like” the second highest number of musical styles (Table 1). Instead, the members of highbrow-omnivores have the third highest likelihood of perceiving that Americans are not united.

A possible interpretation for this tendency relates to the two interpretations of omnivorousness: omnivorousness as a product of inclusive value and omnivorousness as a marker of high status. Although highbrow-omnivores have omnivorous musical preference, they show somewhat weaker preference toward prominent popular culture (country, gospel, contemporary rock), and relatively strong preference toward highbrow culture. Following Bourdieu (1984) and Lizardo (2006), it is plausible that the preference toward highbrow styles—such as opera or classical—is more likely to be associated with the maintenance of distinction from the masses. Therefore, it can be argued that highbrow-omnivores' omnivorousness should be interpreted as a marker of their orientation toward distinction, instead of a marker of inclusive value (or, following Schultz and Breiger [2010], orientation toward association with others), at least when compared with the other omnivore blocks. Distinction, much like cultural rejection, presupposes inclination for maintaining symbolic boundaries—which, in turn, could explain their lack of perception of unity.

Rebels, however, rejects every block including itself, and is rejected by every block except omnivores and pop-omnivores. However, its members are more likely to perceive Americans to be united than establishments, disaffected, or highbrow-omnivores, and the difference between rebels and ultra-omnivores is not statistically significant. It is difficult to interpret the result for rebels. Perhaps, they see unity in American society, although they themselves are not part of it. Alternatively, one can note that its members tend to prefer lowbrow styles. Because of this, this block could be understood as the opposite of highbrow-omnivores; although they do reject (part of) mainstream American society, their tastes nevertheless are somewhat oriented toward affiliation. As such, they may be more inclined to perceive unity among Americans than it is indicated by the large amount of cultural rejection they send.

Discussions

The overall structure of cultural rejection is consistent with the omnivore hypothesis. The univore blocks occupy peripheral positions on the structure, and they tend to reject both other univore blocks and the omnivore blocks. The omnivore blocks tend not to reject other blocks, and the ultra-omnivores, the most omnivorous blocks of all, have the most well-educated members. Although it can be argued that univores occupy more peripheral positions on the structure of cultural rejection, each univore block has a demographic profile that is different from the others—showing that the structure of cultural rejection in the United States is determined by a combination of characteristics (education, age, gender, rural/urban, race), instead of being determined by a single demographic characteristic.

In addition, consistent with the theoretical argument behind this study, one's position on the structure of cultural rejection is found to be associated with his or her perception of unity among Americans. At the same time, the findings on the perception of unity indicate that omnivores are not homogeneous. The heterogeneity of omnivores has been emphasized in some studies (García-Álvarez, Katz-Gerro, and López-Sintas 2007; Tampubolon 2008; van Eijck and Lievens 2008), and this result adds more evidence that suggests that omnivores are not homogeneous. In particular, there is the noticeable difference in the perception of unity between pop-omnivores and highbrow-omnivores. Although highbrow-omnivores like more styles of music, it is pop-omnivores who perceive Americans to be united, displaying a similar tendency to ultra-omnivores. It is plausible that preference toward highbrow taste is the key difference between these two blocks; highbrow-omnivores tend to prefer highbrow styles overall, whereas pop-omnivores tend to prefer popular styles. Some of the previous studies that emphasized the heterogeneity of omnivores—Ercilia García-Álvarez et al.'s (2007) and Koen van Eijck and John Lievens' (2008)—argued that the preference toward high-status styles is an important characteristic that distinguishes different types of omnivores. The heterogeneity among omnivores that is observed

in this study seems consistent with these arguments. Of the three blocks of omnivores identified in this study, ultra-omnivores appreciate both highbrow and lowbrow styles—whereas pop-omnivores tend to prefer lowbrow styles, and highbrow-omnivores tend to prefer highbrow styles. The consumption of popular (or, accessible) culture is related to associations with others (Lizardo 2006; Schultz and Breiger 2010), whereas the consumption of highbrow culture is related to distinction from others (Bourdieu 1984; van Eijck and Lievens 2008). If highbrow-omnivores are especially oriented toward distinction rather than toward association, it can be argued that their tastes are indicative of their willingness to establish symbolic boundaries; therefore, they are less likely to perceive Americans to be united. It is important to note that the current analysis is centered on the role of distastes for maintenance of symbolic boundaries. Therefore, it is not possible to directly analyze the role of highbrow preference—where liking, instead of disliking, is being used as a signal of distinction—for maintenance of symbolic boundaries.

However, brow-height is not the only aspect of musical styles that affect the structure of cultural rejection. For example, two styles—country and gospel—have a unique role in the structure of cultural rejection, which is not shared by some of the other, less popular, lowbrow styles. They can be considered quintessential traditional American popular music at the time when the survey was conducted. Indeed, Tampubolon (2008) considers them to be representative of the styles preferred by traditionally oriented omnivores. These styles are well liked by every block except rebels, and they are the only styles that are liked by the members of disaffected—the block that can be seen as being located on the periphery of U.S. society, and has very strong univorous tendency. Because disaffected only like genres that the majority of Americans (except rebels) like, they avoid receiving rejection despite the fact that they occupy a marginal position in the society. In a sense, the traditional American popular culture is what ties this marginal group to the mainstream society. Finally, to a lesser extent, contemporary rock may occupy the similar role as country and gospel. Although it is rejected by the two blocks that are mainly composed of elderly (establishment and disaffected), it is liked by every other block to varying degrees—much as how country and gospel are only rejected by rebels, which is the youngest block.

There are several limitations to this study. Most importantly, this study does not feature direct tests of underlying social psychological assumptions. This study is dependent on two core assumptions: People have some degrees of shared understanding about who likes what kinds of music, and people are motivated to distance themselves from musical styles that are associated with members of out-groups. Although previous researches provide some supports for these assumptions (Berger and Heath 2008; North and Hargreaves 1999; Rentfrow and Gosling 2006, 2007), it is impossible to directly test these assumptions using data from the 1993 GSS. The findings from the current study indicate that blockmodeling in this study has uncovered meaningful positions within the dataset, and these positions have strong association with the perception of unity. However, this does not guarantee that these positions are actually being organized by cultural rejection.

There are several directions to further develop the research on cultural rejection. First, similar studies on different datasets can help manage the restrictions posed by the dataset used here, and provide a more complete picture of the structure of cultural rejection. An analysis based on more specific cultural objects may yield different outcomes from an analysis based on broader cultural styles. For example, specific cultural practices, unlike categories, can signal information that is fine-tuned for specific audiences. Such signals are more suitable for communicating with others “in the know” (Berger and Ward 2010). Therefore, it is plausible that preferences that are communicated to small groups of knowledgeable audience—for example, preferences for musicians who are “cult favorites”—can signal distinction better than preferences for broader styles. Because of it, preferences toward specific, lesser known cultural practices may be used to attain the same goal as cultural rejection—maintaining social identities that are separate from members of out-groups. At the same time, the popularity of specific cultural practices tends to be much

more transient than that of broader cultural styles. Fads may come and go, but categorizations tend to be stable over time. Thus, a potential study of cultural rejection based on specific cultural practices could benefit from incorporating temporal dynamics—similar to the model proposed by Simmel (1957)—into the structural analysis.

Furthermore, it will be helpful to update this study with more recent datasets, so that it will better reflect the structure of contemporary American society. More than 20 years have passed since the GSS 1993 was originally administered. It may be the case that gospel and country no longer occupy special positions within American society; it is possible that the structure of cultural rejection based on musical preferences today may be different from that of 1993.

Finally, as noted, it is important to further analyze the social psychological processes underlying cultural rejection. Although Berger and Heath (2008) found evidence that the cost associated with being misidentified with dissimilar out-groups will lead to the abandonment of cultural tastes, the abandonment of cultural tastes is not conceptually identical to cultural rejection. Abandonment of a specific cultural taste is a more passive signal, in the sense that it displays lack of association with specific out-groups. Cultural rejection, however, is conceptualized as a more active signal, as the sender is actively attempting to distance herself from specific out-groups. Therefore, it is possible for cultural rejection to possess dynamics that are different from taste abandonment. In addition, the cost of misidentification with dissimilar out-groups, the main mechanism proposed by Berger and Heath, could not explain some of their findings.⁵ Intuitively, the core assumption of cultural rejection appears to hold true for many cultural practices including, but not limited to, musical styles, as long as these cultural practices are associated with social identities. There are many highly visible cultural practices that are commonly associated with some kinds of stereotypes (DellaPosta et al. 2015). As such, it is plausible to suggest that people's attitudes toward cultural practices are strongly associated with their attitudes toward others, and the symbolic boundaries around themselves. Direct empirical tests of these assumptions can help to further validate the main proposition behind this study.

There are two potential methodological approaches to empirically test the assumptions behind cultural rejection. First, it is possible to design a survey research to test the relationships between one's attitudes toward cultural practices, one's perception of symbolic boundaries, and one's perception of the association between groups of people and cultural practices. Although this approach is somewhat similar to Bryson's (1996), her argument about the relationship between cultural practices and groups of people is based on characteristics of cultural practices, not the actual association. Instruments that are specifically designed to investigate cultural rejection can allow for more complete analyses of cultural rejection. Another approach is to experimentally test the association between rejection of cultural practices and perceptions of symbolic boundaries. Experiments, by their nature, allow to assert causation. Both of these approaches can be used to further develop the findings of this study.

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Notes

1. It is possible to utilize blockmodels for confirmatory analysis; prespecified blockmodels can be used for hypothesis testing (Batagelj, Ferligoj, and Doreian 1998).
2. Supplementary analyses including mother's education, income, and occupational prestige as control

variables showed that addition of these variables did not noticeably alter the findings.

3. Bihagen and Katz-Gerro (2000) did not offer explanation for their findings.
4. Supplementary analysis using different configurations of control variables showed that overall results were relatively stable across different configurations of control variables.
5. For example, in one of their surveys, they found that Stanford students were much more willing to abandon the taste that is adapted by Princeton students, than to abandon the taste that is adapted by inner-city youths—despite the fact that Princeton students resemble Stanford students much more than they resemble inner-city youths.

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