On the deep, surprising, and persistently gendered dynamics in complex music tastes.

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1 INTRODUCTION

> She must be a variety. // Change so that nothing will change.
> – Wislawa Szymborska, *Portrait of a woman*

Taste should be intimately gendered. This we know by our intuitions and social theories. If we take tastes to reflect the internalization of social structure, it follows that taste must carry the mark of gender, one of the most fundamental organizing principles of social life (e.g. Bourdieu 1984; Lizardo 2017; Ridgeway 2011). Yet, empirical support for such gendered differences in tastes can be scant. Consider, for instance, the findings on gendered differences from some of our landmark studies of cultural omnivorousness: neither Peterson & Kern's (1996) nor Bryson's (1996) work find any statistically significant differences between men and women's tendency to like or dislike music genres (Figure 1). What explains this surprising disjuncture? Are the studies reporting homogeneity between men and women doing something wrong? Or are our intuitions and theories about the gendered nature of taste retrograde?

The answer we'll offer is a mixture of both. Drawing on data from a nationally representative survey of US residents in 2024, we show that the between-gender homogeneity in tastes is attributable to a reliance on affective preference as a first-approximation of taste. There is a deep, surprising, and persistent gendered structure to tastes, but they only emerge when we account for the multidimensional complexity of taste (Ma 2024). These gendered dynamics are *deep* in that they are hidden when taste is approximated in unidimensional form, requiring instead a fuller consideration of the taste's multidimensional complexity. They are *surprising* in that they only provide inconsistent support for standing theories on gendered differences in cultural tastes. Contrary to Bourdieusian theories about the gendered habitus (Bourdieu 1984), men are not more likely to hold the asymmetric tastes associated with the 'pure gaze.' Contrary to theories of gendered status beliefs from expectation state theory (Ridgeway 2011), women are not more likely to hold guilty pleasure tastes. Finally, these gendered differences are *persistent* to the accumulation of cultural capital. Cultural capital moderates both the valence and magnitude of gendered differences in complex tastes. While the accumulation of cultural capital ameliorates gendered differences in some complex tastes, it can also introduce fresh sets of gendered differences in others.

Our findings carry implications for scholars working in the sociology of culture, gender, and stratification. First, the study demonstrates both the importance and the usefulness of treating taste as a multidimensional concept. Despite being a central concept within the sociology of culture, taste has often been measured and operationalized along multiple ways, with little consensus among scholars (Ma 2024). We show that the three dominant paradigms of measuring taste – as preference, as consumption habits, and as a form of judgement – can be important to consider in a joint fashion. First-approximations of taste along one dimension risks eliding and overlooking deep homologies in the structure of cultural tastes. Employing such a multidimensional conceptualization of taste with spatial and relational methods of analyses (e.g. Atkinson 2016) may help us uncover a deeper understanding of the regularities in contemporary social life, helping to clarify the empirical puzzles around aggregate tastes that continue to puzzle contemporary scholars (Lizardo and Skiles 2012).

Second, our findings reveal a set of gendered differences that run counter to normative expectations within the sociology of culture and gender. Gender is crucial to the structure of cultural taste, yet it receives comparatively little attention (Atkinson 2016). Not only do we find gendered differences that are substantial and persistent, we also find that they are surprising in that they are not well-explained by hypotheses extended from Bourdieusian theories of gender and culture, or from expectation state theory (Ridgeway 2011). Third, our findings have implications for stratification in cultural fields. The accumulation of cultural capital does not imply the amelioration of gendered differences. A common sentiment in the cultural world is the idea that higher-status groups have more omnivorous tastes, are more likely to hold progressive and feminist values. Accordingly, one might expect that those gendered differences in tastes should be smaller among those with higher cultural capital, than those with lower cultural capital. This is not so. Cultural capital does not consistently ameliorate gendered differences in complex tastes. It only does so in select cases, and may even generate fresh sets of gendered differences in other complex tastes.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

The closest thing that the sociology of culture has to an axiom might be its central insight that taste is the product of socialization. In *Distinction* (1984), Bourdieu famously uses the case of taste to illustrate the dialectical relationship between subjective agency and social structure. While experienced on the phenomenological level as deeply subjective and personal, taste is at the product of socialization, bearing a regularity forged in the crucible of social structure. The human body, he argues, is conditioned by social structure into a set of master dispositions (*habitus*), and apply these dispositions in habitual and practical ways to all domains of social action – including, but not limited to, our expressions of taste. *Distinction* had focused on the role social class plays in taste formation. But class does not act alone. In matters of cultural taste, gender is expected to work alongside class: anxieties about class status and status distinctions are played out and performed through the categories of masculinities and femininities (McCall 1992; McNay 1999). In this study, we explore how gender shapes taste in music. Gendered logics of social life shape a person's dispositions just as class structures do, "constructing the body as a sexually defined reality and as the depository of sexually defining principles of vision and division" (Bourdieu 2001, pg. 11). Surely, then, we should find gendered dynamics of music taste as saliently and obviously as we find class dynamics thereof?

2.1 On the surprising between-gender homogeneity in tastes

It would not appear so. Gendered dynamics in taste - should they exist - are more disguised than expected. This is surprising in no small part because gender seems to be so deeply coupled with how music is produced and consumed. The production of music is similarly structured along gendered lines (Bayton 1998; Koren 2022). Women artists are underrepresented in genres like rock and rap, and overrepresented in genres like RNB, country, and folk music (Donze 2011). Music producers often closely adhere to conventions around masculine and feminine preferences in music in their creative choices (Koren 2022). Much of popular music is motivated by and preoccupied with gendered romantic relationships; public consumption of music in live performances and concerts is also directly integrated into gendered courtship rituals and activities (Christensen and Peterson 1988). Gender also affects *how* audiences receive music. Men tend to favor music genres that have associations of hardness and toughness; women prefer music genres that are associated with softness and romance (Millar 2008). Shepherd's early work (Shepherd 1986) on music tastes among the Quebecois discusses such gendered differences in genre preferences: hard rock, punk

and new wave were the most liked music genres among men, while chanson francois, soul, and disco were the most liked genres for women. In their survey of youth in Canada, Tanner et al. (Tanner et al. 2008) find gender to be a significant predictor of membership into taste clusters: boys are overrepresented in taste clusters involving hard rock and heavy metal while girls are overrepresented in taste clusters containing classical and folk music. Christensen and Peterson find that "males tended to prefer the more 'macho' hard rock forms whereas females preferred softer, more romantic and dance-oriented music types such as mainstream pop and contemporary rhythm and blues" (1988).

Yet whether there are robust gender differences in aggregate tastes across music – and not just particular subfields or types of music – remains an open empirical question (Tanner et al. 2008). Taste structures in music appears much more uniform than we might have expected. To the extent that gendered differences in aggregate tastes exist, it has been primarily demonstrated among 'highbrow' cultural forms (Christin 2012; Lizardo 2006; Planson 2023). [1] [2] Across the United States and the global north, women have much higher rates of participation in high-status cultural activities such as dance or the fine arts (Katz-Gerro 2002; Lehman and Dumais 2017). Women are more than twice as likely to be readers of fiction than men (Tepper 2000); women are much more likely to attend dance and theater performances (Ateca-Amestoy 2008; Chan and Goldthorpe 2005). When it comes to *music* tastes specifically, there can be surprisingly little to separate between men and women. Two of the most influential studies of aggregate music tastes of the past decades, Peterson & Kern's (1996) work on changes in cultural omnivorousness in the United States and Bryson's (1996) work on symbolic exclusion, find that null effects associated with gender in their respective statistical models (Figures 1A and 1B respectively). In a major study of aggregate cultural tastes in the United Kingdom, Savage (2006) finds that outside of two particular male-dominated music genres (rock music and heavy metal), there are no significant gender differences in music tastes (Figure 1C). In Lizardo and Skiles (2016a) replication of Bryson's work, they find that the gendered homogeneity in expression of symbolic exclusion largely persist (Figure 1D); indeed, in some of their work, they find the obverse (2016b), that women are actually more likely to express aversions than men. In Hanquinet and Taylor's (2025) recent study of music tastes among EU residents, they find that gender had "very little differentiating power" at distinguishing between taste clusters produced in their geometric data analysis. Between-gender differences in cultural participation are greatly ameliorated by we restrict it to lower-status forms of culture (Bihagen and Katz-Gerro 2000). Willekens and Lievens (2014) find no between-gender differences among Dutch survey respondents when it came to tastes for popular music genres. When comparing the cultural habits of husbands and wives in Italian household, Lazzaro and Frateschi (2017) find that outside of a select group of activities (such as theater and dance), men were actually more omnivorous and active than women when it came to cultural participation – although in this case, the authors attribute the gendered differences primarily to women's reduced access to leisure in Italy.

In the first part of our analysis, we seek to replicate previous findings that there are no between-gender differences in a person's aggregated preferences for music genres through an

[1] To be sure, this feminine bias in high-brow culture does not imply that these gendered differences are restricted to highbrow culture, or monolithic within it. For instance, Planson (Planson 2023) reports that among French middle-schoolers, "girls are more frequent readers, particularly of the more legitimate genres but not history/science books". When it came to television, girls preferred reality television and rom coms; boy preferred sports and documentaries (Planson 2023).

[2] We note that a proclivity for high-brow culture is not necessarily valorized or esteemed by society. As scholars of symbolic hierarchies in culture have noted (Coulangeon 2017; Lizardo and Skiles 2012; Planson 2023), contemporary distinction is often practiced through a curated logic of omnivorousness that some refer to as "bounded-openness," having a taste for the 'right mix' of high- and low-brow culture.

A

Table 2. OLS Coefficients from the Regression of Number of Lowbrow and Middlebrow Musical Genres Liked on Birth Year, Year of Interview, and Selected Control Variables

	Highbrows				Others			
	(Model 1) Number of Lowbrow Genres Liked		(Model 2) Number of Middlebrow Genres Liked		(Model 3) Number of Lowbrow Genres Liked		(Model 4) Number of Middlebrow Genres Liked	
Variables	b	Beta	b	Beta	b	Beta	b	Beta
Birth year	.02	.16**	–.01	–.07	.01	.12**	–.01	–.23**
Year of interview (1 = 1992)	.44	.15*	.25	.13*	.20	.07**	.15	.07**
Control Variables								
Male	–.07	–.02	–.20	–.10	.01	.01	–.20	–.09**
Adjusted family income	.00	–.11	.01	.04	.00	.01	.00	.12**
White	–.92	–.13	.60	.13*	.18	.05**	.38	.12**
Education in years	.05	.10	.00	.01	.05	.11**	.10	.28**
Size of community	–.01	–.04	.00	.02	–.02	–.08**	.02	.08**
Constant	–27.45*	—	9.25	—	–16.61**	—	26.20**	—
Significance of F	—	.00	—	.12	—	.00	—	.00
Adjusted R^2	—	.06	—	.02	—	.06	—	.16
Number of respondents	—	354	—	354	—	10,967	—	10,967

*p < .05 **p < .01 (one-tailed tests)
*p < .05 **p < .01 (two-tailed tests)

B

Table 2. Standardized OLS Coefficients from the Regression of the Number of Music Genres Disliked on Racism and Demographic Variables: General Social Survey, 1993

Independent Variable	Dislike of Rap, Reggae, Blues/ R&B, Jazz, Gospel, and Latin Music[a]	Dislike of the 12 Remaining Genres
Racism score	.130**	.080
Education	–.175***	–.242***
Household income per capita	–.037	–.065
Occupational prestige	–.020	.005
Female	–.057	–.070
Age	.163***	.126**
Black	–.132***	.042
Hispanic	–.058	–.029
Other race	–.017	.047
Conservative Protestant	.063	.048
No religion	.057	.024
Southern	.024	.069
Constant	2.415***	7.860
R^2	.145	.147
Adjusted R^2	.129	.130
Number of cases	644	605

*p < .05 **p < .01 ***p < .001 (two-tailed tests)
[a] Genres disproportionately liked by Hispanic or Black respondents.

C

Table 3 Logistic Regression on Liking of Musical Genres

	Rock	Jazz	World	Classic	Country	Electronic	Heavy metal	Urban
Female	**0.535*** **	0.822	0.787	0.853	0.949	0.785	**0.417*** **	1.302
Age	**0.952*** **	0.996	**0.969*** **	**1.063*** **	**1.051*** **	**0.928*** **	**0.958*** **	**0.921*** **
Ethnic minority	**0.226*** **	0.685	**5.208*** **	**1.867***	**1.935***	0.606	**0.285***	1.672
Moderate density	**0.635***	1.330	1.201	0.882	0.793	0.730	1.272	1.421
High density	0.679	**1.638***	**1.845*** **	1.123	1.019	1.263	1.000	0.960
Single person	1.084	1.060	1.305	0.938	1.252	1.081	1.068	1.064
Household with dependent kids	1.001	0.909	1.088	0.994	0.987	0.862	1.299	1.002
Household with non-dependent kids	0.956	0.980	1.135	**0.603***	0.885	1.060	0.663	0.856
Multi-family	0.955	1.458	2.295	0.445	0.698	1.905	0.814	1.277
O-level	0.959	0.978	1.187	**1.979*** **	**0.563***	0.840	1.237	1.340
City & Guilds	1.168	**1.673***	1.223	**1.821** **	0.734	0.783	**2.103***	1.433
A-level	1.160	1.231	1.243	**2.431*** **	**0.575***	**0.466** **	1.493	0.809
University	**1.740** **	**1.834***	1.630	**6.040*** **	**0.498***	0.806	1.724	0.924
Employers	**3.404** **	**2.775***	0.468	1.147	0.673	1.290	1.493	1.095
Self-employed	1.583	**1.866***	0.605	0.745	1.003	0.330	**2.497** **	0.856
High professional	1.308	**1.785**	0.698	1.708	0.556	1.338	1.123	664
Low professional	1.012	**1.603**	0.839	1.175	**0.605***	0.636	1.386	1.163
Low manager	1.690	1.285	0.649	1.050	0.675	0.665	0.883	1.202
High supervisor	0.705	1.421	1.164	1.212	1.452	0.692	1.615	1.475
Intermediate	1.323	1.116	0.729	1.211	0.938	1.488	1.675	0.717
Low supervisor	1.461	1.126	1.103	0.987	0.717	0.973	1.910	0.766
Low technician	**1.881***	1.506	1.446	0.502	1.125	1.443	1.704	0.925
Routine	0.884	0.930	0.914	0.798	0.709	1.819	0.873	0.806
Income 2nd quintile	**1.663** **	1.058	0.856	1.448	0.757	1.203	1.347	1.141
Income 3rd quintile	**1.539** **	0.861	1.019	1.251	0.833	1.112	**2.209*** **	1.177
Income 4th quintile	**1.542** **	1.261	1.043	0.873	0.730	1.634	1.689	1.391
Income top quintile	0.962	0.887	0.810	1.027	0.687	0.769	0.717	0.970

Notes: Reference categories: sex—male; age—treated as a continuous variable; ethnic minority—white British; population density—under 1.68 people per square kilometre (sparsest quintile); education—no educational qualifications; social class—semi-routine workers; income: lowest income quintile. Significance: *** = <0.001, ** = <0.01, * = <0.05.

D

Figure 2. Regression plot of main effects of person-level sociodemographic factors on the probability of expressing a dislike.

Fig. 1. Surprising absence of gendered differences in aggregate tastes: (A) from Peterson and Kern 1996 (B) from Bryson 1996, (C) from Bihagen and Katz-Gerro 2000 and (D) from 2016a.

additive index of genre preferences. A succession of cultural sociologists have argued that a person's cultural aversions may be a better indicator of a person's tastes because aversions are able to better function as resources for symbolic exclusion (Bryson 1996; 2016b). Following these scholars, we also consider an additive index of genre aversions. We test the following hypothesis:

> **Hypothesis 1.** There are no gendered differences in aggregate preferences or aversions.

2.2 Complex tastes and gendered differences

What explains the surprising homogeneity in tastes? The simple answer we have to offer is that between-gender differences are being concealed by our reliance on affective preferences as a first-approximation of taste. In its place, we advocate a Bourdieu-inspired approach that respects both the "unity" and "indivisibility" of taste (Bourdieu 1984, pg. 487, 502). Elsewhere, scholars have made the argument that taste wasn't just a semantically ambiguous polyseme, but can be usefully thought of as a complex, multidimensional phenomena (Ma 2024). Under this approach, affective preferences are but *one* of multiple modalities to taste.

In this paper, we want to first establish the existence of such complex tastes for music, and second, show how gendered difference emerge once we account for the multidimensional complexity of taste.

What do complex tastes towards music look like? To begin, a person's complex taste is jointly described by three modalities of action: not singly by reference to their affective preferences for a piece of music, but also by their social valuations of said music and the extent to which they participate in or consume it. Take the case of beloved, canonical works of classical music such as *Don Giovanni*. Such works are critically acclaimed, much beloved – yet often go unlistened to. To adapt a Twain expression, they are the music that "everybody wants to have had heard and nobody wants to hear" (Twain 1900). We may understand such tastes as part of a general form of complex tastes, the *taste pose*. The taste pose describes a taste where a person's sincerely enjoys and praises music without following through with consumption. If we were to think of each modality of taste as existing in stylized positive-negative binaries, it is possible to come up with eight (2^3) possible combinations of complex tastes (Becker 1998). In Table 1, we present one such combinatorial truth table, with an accompanying example of what such a complex taste might look like in music. Since previous work on complex tastes have rested on a patchwork of evidence across cultural fields, we begin by establishing some existence claims. We ask first if such complex tastes towards music genres are measurable and exist in non-negligible quantities across a representative sample:

Hypothesis 2: Complex tastes towards music genres exist.

Complex tastes can be symmetric or asymmetric. Symmetric complex tastes are straightforward: they refer to tastes where the three modalities of preferences, consumption and valuations are symmetric with one another. For the sake of clarity, we discuss complex tastes with their combinations of taste mode polarities in parentheses (preferences/consumption/valuations, in this order). This is the case with *congruent preferences* and *congruent aversions*. In the case of the former, all three taste modalities have positive valences (+/+/+), that is, a person expressing congruent preferences towards music X enjoys, consumes, and praises X. In the case of the latter, they all share negative valences (−/−/−), that is a person expressing congruence aversions would dislike, avoid, and censure music X. Asymmetric complex tastes make up the remaining complex tastes. In categorical terms, asymmetric complex tastes make up the majority of complex tastes. The *guilty pleasure*, *preacquired taste*, *taste pose*, *distant consumption*, *justified abstention* and *distant praise* are each a distinct variety of asymmetric complex taste, each containing a characteristic antinomy among the modalities of taste (Table 1). Guilty pleasures (+/+/−) refer to the pleasurable consumption of music a person considers to be bad for one reason or another. A person who self-censures the music that they enjoy and consume as "low-brow" could be described as having a guilty pleasure. Preacquired tastes (−/+/+) refers to the antecedent of acquired tastes, the development of tastes where pleasure did not come "naturally" for a person (i.e. one must spend time or resources "acquiring" said taste). As an example, consider someone who's in the process of "developing" their taste for opera – they want admire opera, are actively consuming yet, and yet do not currently have an affective preference for opera. Tase pose (+/−/+) refers to a complex taste where a person prefers and admires particular cultural article, yet at the same time, there is at least one meaningful sense in which they did not participate in the full consumption of the cultural article despite a lack of resource constraints. We provided an example of a taste pose in music in the previous section. Distant consumption (−/+/−) refers to the volitional consumption of culture a person considers neither good nor pleasurable. As an example, consider a person who consumes the music-of-choice of their significant other, in spite of their personal aversion of such music.

Table 1. Examples of complex tastes for music genres.

Taste	Example	Pref.	Cons.	Val.
Congruent preferences	Someone who takes pleasure from classical music, thinks of it at as an exemplar of good music, and takes the time to listen to it everyday.	+	+	+
Congruent aversions	Someone who does not enjoy classical music, thinks of it at as an exemplar of "bad" music, and avoids it as much as possible.	−	−	−
Guilty pleasure	Someone who enjoys pop music and listens it regularly. However, they confess to thinking of pop music as "low-brow" culture.	+	+	−
Preacquired taste	An aspiring singer who recognizes and respects the craft of opera singers. Though they'd like to be someone who enjoys opera, they're not that person – yet. They listen to it regularly, in the hopes of acquiring that preference.	−	+	+
Taste pose	Someone who takes pleasure from canonical works of classical music (e.g. *Don Giovanni*) and cites them as exemplars of good music. Yet, these classics are rarely if ever on their listening rotation.	+	−	+
Distant consumption	Someone who neither enjoys nor rates heavy metal, yet listens to it and attends concerts out of loyalty to their metalhead partner.	−	+	−
Justified abstention	Someone who enjoys drill music, yet has come to find the genres' portrayals of Black street masculinity to be pernicious to the community, and has since distanced themselves from listening to it.	+	−	−
Distant praise	Someone who appreciates the skill and craft behind classical music, even if they do not personally enjoy or listen to it.	−	−	+

Justified abstention (+/−/−) refers to the justified abstention of cultural articles that a person finds enjoyable. As an example, consider someone who is abstaining from hip-hop out of their belief that the genres' portrayal of Black street masculinity are bad for the Black community. Distant praise (−/−/+) refers to sincere praise that flies in the face of contradictory affective preferences and consumption habits. An example of this is a music critic who's able to fairly and sincerely praise music that they themselves do not personally enjoy or consume.

We hypothesize that complex tastes in music contain gendered dynamics where aggregate preferences/aversions don't:

> **Hypothesis 3:** Gendered differences emerge when we account for the complexity of tastes.

2.3 Conditioning for cultural capital

To what extent are these gendered differences in complex tastes conditional on social position? There are contrasting schools of thought about this. One line of thought is that class and status-group differences are superordinate to gender, such that class, social position, and cultural capital is inversely related to gendered differences in tastes (and by extension, to complex tastes). According to this line of thought, gendered differences are tied to class conditions that are particular to those in the working and low-middle classes. As such, gendered differences in tastes should be ameliorated by women's education and accumulation of cultural capital. Bourdieu counts among them. For Bourdieu, the gendered habitus is the literal embodiment of the division of labor between the genders. Gender differences thus were fundamentally rooted in class differences, "as inseparable from class properties as the yellowness of a lemon is from its acidity" (Bourdieu 1984, pg. 102). Women from subordinate social stations were not only the "greatest victims of symbolic domination, but also the natural vectors for the relaying of its effects towards the dominated categories" (Bourdieu 2001, pg. 101). In *Distinction*, Bourdieu makes a specific hypothesis about the inverse relation between cultural capital and gendered differences, writing that "the whole set of socially constituted differences between the sexes tends to weaken as one moves up the social hierarchy and especially towards the dominated fractions of the dominant class" (Bourdieu 1984, pg. 383). He expects women's elevated tendencies for aversions to be "expressed more overtly ... the weaker their cultural capital, the lower their position in the social hierarchy" (Bourdieu 1984, pg. 32). Under this Bourdieusian hypothesis, we can expect gendered differences in complex tastes to be ameliorated by cultural capital, such that there is a monotonically decreasing relationship between cultural capital and gendered differences.

This line of thought is challenged by a robust body of feminist scholarship that contest Bourdieusian subordination of gender to class. A common refrain among unsympathetic feminist scholars that is that"[Within Bourdieusian theory], gender as an analytic category almost never appears in the construction of concepts, except when it is given secondary status," so much so that gender may as well as be reduced to an index of the structure itself (McCall 1992, pg. 851). They contest that gender operates as an autonomous principle of social life, capable of imposing a logic that can contradict class-based expectations. Lovell (2000) draws on her work on women passing as military men as an example. "The habitus of the working woman, when forged by necessity in particular work-regimes, may have given her not only the motive but also the means for passing as a (working-class) man," Lovell writes (2000, pg. 19). The ease with which they were able to do so suggest that Bourdieu's claim that gender differentiation is less marked the higher one moves up

the social hierarchy may be restricted to a particular time and space, and be far less generalizable than we think. Gendered differences and gendered habitus have their own autonomy, and can vary up and down the social hierarchy. Cultural capital would then moderate gendered differences – in some cases ameliorating them, while in other times creating new axes of gendered differences.

To adjudicate between these two contending approach, we test the following hypothesis:

> **Hypothesis 4**: Cultural capital ameliorates the gendered socialization of complex tastes, such that there is a monotonically decreasing relationship between cultural capital and gendered differences.

3 DATA AND METHODS

3.1 Data

This paper draws primarily on original survey data of a quota-sampled panel of 1494 residents in the United States conducted in 2024 as part of the *Tastes, Complex Tastes and Meta-tastes* project at Nanyang Technological University. In October 2024, we fielded a public survey of music tastes that was designed to complement and extend previous efforts at measuring cultural taste in the United States, in particularly the National Endowment of the Art's *Survey of Public Participation in the Arts* (2022). From 1982 to 2022, the SPPA included items that tapped individuals' preferences for music genres.[3] Due to its longevity and representativeness, the SPPA serves as an effectively "canonical" data that that has provided the empirical basis for an enormous body of research into cultural tastes (e.g. Peterson and Kern 1996). Our survey serves as an updated extension of the SPPA that increases both the depth and breadth of measures related to music tastes. The survey was designed on Qualtrics, approved by the Nanyang Technological University IRB (IRB-2024-099) and fielded through Prolific Academic. The survey was fielded to 2,000 survey respondents who were randomly selected for participation according to their age, gender, race, education, and geographic region in order to approximate a representative sample of the U.S. population. Respondents were paid US$4 for the completion of the survey. Our final sample includes 1494 respondents passed the attention checks we put in place. Appendix I shows how survey responses from the present study compares with similar survey items from the 2022 wave of the SPPA.

3.2 Key measures

Tables 2 and 3 present respectively the summary statistics of key taste-related measures and sociodemographic characteristics of the respondents in the survey.

(1) Taste as affective preferences. To assess respondents' affective preference towards a music genre, they are asked the following question: "On a scale from 'highly disliked' to 'highly liked,' what are your personal preferences when it comes to [music genre]?" Respondents are given the following response options: highly disliked, disliked, neutral, liked, highly liked, and an option to indicate their unfamiliarity. Following previous studies (Arts 2022), we include 16 music genres in our questionnaire. They include the following: classical music, jazz, classic rock, alternative rock, pop, country music, dance or electronic music, hip-hop, blues, Latin music, Asian music (other than K-Pop), K-Pop, Middle-eastern music, African music, folk music, and gospel. To measure a respondent's *aggregated preferences*, we create an additive index that aggregates the total count of genres a respondent indicates as "liked" or "highly liked." Conversely, to measure a respondent's *aggregated aversions*, we create an additive index of that aggregates the total count of genres a respondent indicates as "disliked" or "highly disliked."

(2) Complex tastes. To create a measure for complex tastes, we create two additional survey items that assess respondents' social valuations of music genres as well as consumption practice with respect to music. To assess social valuations, we ask respondents the following question: "On a scale from 'very bad' to 'very good,' how would you personally rate the quality of music from [music genre]?" Respondents are only asked to evaluate genres that they indicate familiarity (i.e. follows a skip-pattern from the question before). They are given the following response options: very bad, bad, neutral, good, and very good. A person is considered to 'praise' a genre if they rate

[3] As of writing, the SPPA no longer includes these items. The latest wave, fielded in 2024, did not contain any questions on genre preferences.

Table 2. Summary of Taste Statistics

	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Non-zero
Tastes as affective preferences					
Preferences (+)	6.57**	2.80	0	16	1445
Aversions (-)	2.52**	2.55	0	16	1085
Complex tastes					
Congruent preferences (+/+/+)	4.76**	2.63	0	16	1411
Congruent aversions (-/-/-)	0.98**	1.46	0	9	671
Guilty pleasure (+/+/-)	0.03**	0.20	0	3	41
Preacquired taste (-/+/+)	0.03**	0.20	0	2	42
Taste pose (+/-/+)	0.18**	0.59	0	8	180
Distant consumption (-/+/-)	0.04**	0.21	0	2	47
Justified abstention (+/-/-)	0.02**	0.15	0	3	17
Distant praise (-/-/+)	0.28**	0.80	0	7	234

Notes: Two-sided t-tests against $\mu = 0$. $^{+}p < 0.1$; *p<0.05; **p<0.01.

it as 'good' or 'very good.' Conversely, they are said to 'censure' a music genre if they rate it as 'bad' or 'very bad.' To assess consumption practices, we ask respondents the following: "How often do you listen to music from these genres?" They are given the following response options: almost never, at least once a year, at least once a month, at least once a week, and almost everyday. A person is considered be an active listener of a genre if they have listened to music from that genre at least once a month. A person is considered to be someone who avoids a music genre if they described themselves as "almost never" listening to it.

To construct a complex taste, we consider a person's preferences, valuations and consumption practices jointly. There are eight possible kinds of complex tastes, each characterized by a distinct combination of the three modalities of taste. Following Ma (2024), we construct eight varieties of complex tastes (previously identified in Table 1) for each genre of music: (i) *congruent preference* where a person expresses a preference for a music genre that they also praise and actively listen to, (ii) *congruent aversion* where a person expresses an aversion for a music genre that they also censure and avoid, (iii) *guilty pleasure* where a person censures a music genre despite liking and actively listening to it, (iv) *preacquired taste* where a person expresses an aversion for a music genre despite both liking and actively listening to it, (v) *taste pose* where a person avoids a music genre despite liking and praising it, (vi) *distant consumption* where a person actively listens to a music genre despite disliking and censuring it, (vii) *justified abstention* where a person prefers a music genre despite censuring and avoiding it, and (viii) *distant praise* where a person praises a music genre despite disliking and censuring it. For each complex taste, we aggregate the responses across all music genres into an additive index. Figure 2 shows the frequency distributions of each complex taste in our sample.

(4) Gender. We rely on a binary measure of gender. We ask respondents for a self-report of their gender, and given three response options: "Male," "female," or "non-binary." A respondent is labelled as a woman if they self-report as female, and labelled as "Not woman" otherwise. For the sake of parsimony, we refer to those in the "Not woman" category as men in the rest of the paper.

Fig. 2. Frequency distribution of complex tastes for music genres.

Table 3. Summary of Sociodemographic Measures

	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Continuous measures				
Annual Household Income (in 1,000)	78.54	53.61	20	200
Education (no. of years)	16.06	3.77	10	24
Categorical measures				
Highest parents' education (no. of years)	15.52	4.22	10	24
Gender (%)	49.69	0.50	0	1
Identifies as politically conservative (%)	16.85	0.37	0	1
Identifies as politically liberal (%)	37.29	0.48	0	1
Identifies as Non-Hispanic White (%)	66.41	0.47	0	1

(5) Cultural capital. We rely on an individual's highest reported education attainment for our measure of cultural capital. We label a person has having "high cultural capital" if they report having a bachelor's degree, or more. Otherwise, we label them as having "low cultural capital."

(6) Sociodemographic covariates. Finally, we include controls for annual household income, parental education, age, race/ethnicity, political conservatism, political liberalism.

3.3 Methods

Since respondents' tastes towards music genres are discrete, non-negative measures, we use negative binomial regression to estimate the relationships between a person's gender and their aggregated music tastes (Long and Freese 2006). More specifically, we model a respondent i's aggregated taste Y with the following exponential function,

$$E(Y_i|X_1, ..., X_Q) = \exp(X_0 + X_1\beta_1 + ... + X_Q\beta_Q + \epsilon),$$

where $X_1...X_Q$ include measures of a respondent's gender and other sociodemographic covariates. We assume that Y_i follows a negative binomial distribution with mean μ_i and variance $\text{Var}(Y_i|X_i) = \mu_i + \alpha\mu_i^2$. Negative binomial regression are a generalization of Poisson regression that uses the α parameter to account for overdispersion in the dependent variable. Failure to account for overdispersion can lead to inconsistent estimates and spuriously small standard errors (Cameron and Trivedi 2013). To decide between negative binomial and Poisson models, we (a) tested for overdispersion in tastes and (b) compared goodness-of-fit measures (Bayesian information criterion) between the two classes of models (Table 4). We find overdispersion across most of the taste measures (guilty pleasure being the lone exception), justifying the use of negative binomial models over the Poisson. BIC values are likewise lower across all negative binomial models. We also considered the use of a zero-inflated negative binomial regression (ZINB) because of the excess zeros among some varieties of complex tastes. We prefer negative binomial regression for two reasons. First, there was no theoretical reason to make the ZINB assumption that there are two distinct processes at work, one producing the zeros and the other producing the non-zero counts. The excess zeros in complex tastes like justified abstentions are the result of natural variation in taste expression, rather than a structural zero. Second, model parsimony. Negative binomial models are simpler with fewer parameters to estimate, and are easier to interpret than ZINB counterparts since there is no need to account for two distinct processes.

Table 4. Dispersion test and BIC comparison between Poisson and Negbin models of tastes

	Dispersion Test	BIC (Model 1)	
	P	Poisson	Neg-Bin
Tastes as affective preferences			
Preferences (+)	0.00	6791.41	6786.73
Aversions (-)	0.00	6456.56	5778.56
Complex tastes			
Congruent preferences (+/+/+)	0.00	6613.03	6538.94
Congruent aversions (-/-/-)	0.00	4166.45	3797.84
Guilty pleasure (+/+/-)	0.07	436.43	433.91
Preacquired taste (-/+/+)	0.04	452.63	451.28
Taste pose (+/-/+)	0.00	1554.38	1409.32
Distant consumption (-/+/-)	0.02	506.51	503.36
Justified abstention (+/-/-)	0.04	288.62	274.68
Distant praise (-/-/+)	0.00	2104.23	1803.74

We build two models for each variety of taste Y. Model 1 includes the main effects of gender, cultural capital and the rest of the sociodemographic covariates (annual household income, parental education, age, race, ethnicity, and political orientation). Model 2 is an extension of Model 1 that includes the interaction between gender and cultural capital. Following recent literature on the use and interpretation of count models (Arel-Bundock et al. 2024; Kendler and Gardner 2010; Long and Mustillo 2021; Mize et al. 2019), we examine the following estimands with heteroskedasticity-consistent standard errors: (1) beta coefficient estimates of the main and interaction effects of gender, (2) model predictions of complex tastes, and (3) average marginal effects of gender. [4][5] We estimate our negative binomial model using quasi-maximum likelihood estimation, as implemented by the *MASS* package in R, and compute predictions and marginal effects using the *marginaleffects* package in R.

[5]We also thank a reviewer for urging us to include marginal effects in our analyses.

Table 5. Comparison of means across all tastes

	Observed Tastes				Predicted Tastes			
	$\bar{Y}$	$\bar{Y}_W$	$\bar{Y}_M$	$\bar{Y}_\Delta$	$\hat{Y}$	$\hat{Y}_W$	$\hat{Y}_M$	$\hat{Y}_\Delta$
Tastes as Preferences/Aversions								
Preferences (+)	6.57**	6.52**	6.64**	-0.13	6.61**	6.53**	6.69**	-0.16
Aversions (-)	2.52**	2.56**	2.47**	0.09	2.51**	2.54**	2.49**	0.05
Complex Tastes								
Congruent preferences (+/+/+)	4.76**	4.71**	4.82**	-0.1	4.8**	4.73**	4.86**	-0.13
Congruent aversions (-/-/-)	0.98**	0.89**	1.06**	-0.17*	0.97**	0.88**	1.05**	-0.17*
Guilty pleasure (+/+/-)	0.03**	0.02**	0.04**	-0.02*	0.03**	0.02**	0.04**	-0.02*
Preacquired taste (-/+/+)	0.03**	0.03**	0.04**	-0.01	0.03**	0.03**	0.04**	-0.01
Taste pose (+/-/+)	0.18**	0.21**	0.16**	0.05+	0.18**	0.21**	0.16**	0.05
Distant consumption (-/+/-)	0.04**	0.03**	0.05**	-0.02+	0.04**	0.03**	0.05**	-0.02+
Justified abstention (+/-/-)	0.02**	0.02**	0.01+	0.02*	0.02**	0.03**	0.01+	0.02*
Distant praise (-/-/+)	0.28**	0.34**	0.23**	0.11**	0.28**	0.34**	0.22**	0.12**

Notes: $^{+}p < 0.1$; *p<0.05; **p<0.01.

4 RESULTS

Table 5 shows the comparison of means of all tastes across men and women. Table 6 and Figure 3 report the coefficient estimates of the main effect of gender from our negative binomial models. Table 6 also reports the average marginal effects of gender from our models. Table 7 and Figure 4 report the coefficient estimates of the main effect of gender along with its interactions with cultural capital. Table 7 also reports the average marginal effects of gender across groups with low and high cultural capital. Complete tables of all regressions can be found in Appendix I. We find the following:

(1) There are no between-gender differences when it comes to aggregate preferences or aversions. We find support for hypothesis 1, that on average, men and women have similar amounts of aggregated preferences and aversions. There are no statistically significant associations between gender and observed preferences or aversions (Table 5). Similarly, there are no statistically significant differences between gender and predicted preferences or aversions from our negative binomial models.

(2) Complex tastes exist. We find support for hypothesis 2: complex tastes of all varieties *exist* (Table 5), even if some (e.g. taste poses) are more common than others (e.g. justified abstentions). What is more, we can be fairly confident about their existence among each of the genders, with one possible exception (justified abstentions among men are only significant at $p = 0.06$). Congruent preferences and aversions are the most common of the group, for understandable reasons – these are the complex tastes for which there are no mismatches among the modalities of taste. Of the remaining complex tastes containing asymmetries, the taste pose and distant praise are most common.

(3) Gendered differences emerge among complex tastes. We find support for hypothesis 3. Table 5, mentions above, includes comparisons of means of complex tastes across men and women. Table 6 reports the coefficient estimates for gender from the negative binomial models as well as the average marginal effects of gender. We find from both that there are statistically gendered differences across five of the eight varieties of complex tastes. This underscores the importance of accounting for

Fig. 3. Forest plots of coefficient estimates of gender from negative binomial models.

Table 6. Relationship between gender and tastes

	Coefficients		Marginal Effect	
	β_W	p	AME	p
Tastes as affective preferences				
Preferences (+)	-0.03	0.21	-0.19	0.21
Aversions (-)	0.02	0.66	0.06	0.65
Complex tastes				
Congruent preferences (+/+/+)	-0.03	0.28	-0.15	0.28
Congruent aversions (-/-/-)	-0.18*	0.03	-0.17*	0.03
Guilty pleasure (+/+/-)	-0.72*	0.05	-0.02*	0.05
Preacquired taste (-/+/+)	-0.19	0.58	-0.01	0.58
Taste pose (+/-/+)	0.22	0.20	0.04	0.22
Distant consumption (-/+/-)	-0.53+	0.09	-0.02+	0.09
Justified abstention (+/-/-)	1.16*	0.05	0.02*	0.05
Distant praise (-/-/+)	0.4**	0.01	0.11**	0.01

Notes: $^{+}p < 0.1$; *p<0.05; **p<0.01

the multidimensionality of tastes. Of these, three varieties of complex tastes have a masculine bias, and two a feminine bias. On the masculine bias: looking at regression estimates (Table 6), we find that women are 16.5% less likely to hold congruent aversions ($e^{-0.18}, p < 0.01$), 51.3% less likely to hold guilty pleasures ($e^{-0.72}, p < 0.05$), and 41.1% less likely to hold distant consumption tastes ($e^{-0.53}, p < 0.09$), while holding other factors constant. On average across the sample (Table 6), being a woman leads to a $-0.17(p < 0.05)$ decrease in congruent aversions, $-0.02(p = 0.05)$ decrease in guilty pleasures, and a -0.02 (p = 0.09) decrease in distant consumption, while holding other factors constant. On feminine bias in complex tastes: looking at regression estimates (Table 6), we find that women are 201% more likely to hold justified abstentions ($e^{1.16}, p = 0.05$), and 0.4% more likely to hold distant praises ($e^{0.40}, p < 0.01$), while holding other factors constant. On average across the sample (Table 6), being a woman leads to a $0.02(p = 0.05)$ increase in justified abstentions and a $0.11(p < 0.01$ increase in distant praise, while holding other factors constant. The main effects and average marginal effects of gender are not statistically significant for congruent preferences, preacquired tastes, and taste poses.

(4) The influence of cultural capital on gendered differences in taste is manifest, but unlikely to be monotonic. We find limited support for hypothesis 3. While we do evidence for the influence of cultural capital, it is unlikely to have a monotonically decreasing relationship with gendered differences in tastes. We observe cultural capital ameliorating gendered differences in complex tastes in three instances. One, among congruent aversions. When looking at coefficient estimates, we see that the male-bias ($-0.34, p < 0.01$, Table 7) among those with low cultural capital shrinks by 0.36 ($p = 0.03$, Table 7) among those with high cultural capital. Average marginal effects corroborate the picture: the large average marginal effects of gender observed among those of low cultural capital shrinks by 0.40 (p < =0.01, Table 7) when compared to those of high cultural capital. Two, the taste pose. The main effect of gender shows a women-bias ($0.49, p = 0.03$, Table 7) that shrinks by -0.61 ($p = 0.08$) among those with high cultural capital. We see similar from the average marginal effects: the woman-bias among those of low cultural capital ($0.11, p = 0.03$) decreases by 0.13

($p = 0.05$) when compared to those of high cultural capital. Three, with distant praise. While the delta between the AMES of gender for distant praise among high and low cultural capital groups cannot be reliably distinguished from the null ($0.12, p = 0.17$, Table 7), we note that gendered differences *statistically significant* among the low cultural capital group (biased towards women at 0.17, $p < 0.01$) while they are not statistically significant among those with low cultural capital ($p = 0.46$).

The picture from the rest of the complex tastes do not support hypothesis 3. We find that the accumulation of cultural capital can also introduce a fresh set of gendered dynamics to some complex tastes. For instance, we find that the male-bias towards both guilty pleasure and distant consumption can only be found among those of higher cultural capital. Gender has an average marginal effect of -0.04 ($p < 0.01$, Table 7) on guilty pleasures among with high cultural capital, a $0.03(p = 0.06)$ increase from the average marginal effect among those with low cultural capital. Similarly, gender also has an average marginal effect of -0.04 ($p = 0.02$, Table 7) on distant consumption among with high cultural capital, a $0.04(p = 0.10)$ increase from the average marginal effect among those with low cultural capital.

Table 7. Coefficient estimates for gender from negative binomial models

	Coefficients				Average marginal effects					
	β_W	p	$\beta_{W \times E}$	p	Low CC	p	High CC	p	Low − High	p
Congruent preferences (+/+/+)	0	0.97	-0.06	0.33	-0.01	0.97	-0.3	0.14	0.29	0.30
Congruent aversions (-/-/-)	-0.34**	0.00	0.36*	0.03	-0.39**	0.00	0.01	0.91	-0.4**	0.01
Guilty pleasure (+/+/-)	-0.1	0.84	-1.41+	0.07	0	0.84	-0.04**	0.00	0.03+	0.06
Preacquired taste (-/+/+)	-0.6	0.31	0.64	0.38	-0.01	0.30	0	0.93	-0.01	0.51
Taste pose (+/-/+)	0.49*	0.03	-0.61+	0.08	0.11*	0.03	-0.02	0.69	0.13*	0.05
Distant consumption (-/+/-)	-0.02	0.96	-1.11+	0.09	0	0.96	-0.04*	0.02	0.04+	0.10
Justified abstention (+/-/-)	1.52+	0.09	-0.69	0.57	0.02	0.11	0.01	0.26	0.01	0.69
Distant praise (-/-/+)	0.64**	0.00	-0.48	0.13	0.17**	0.00	0.05	0.46	0.12	0.17

Notes: $^{+}p < 0.1$; *p<0.05; **p<0.01

Fig. 4. Forest plots of coefficient estimates of main and interaction effects of gender.

Table 8. Review of Hypotheses Tested

Hypothesis	Details	Support
1	There are no gendered differences in aggregate preferences or aversions.	✓
2	Complex tastes towards music genres exist.	✓
3	Gendered differences emerge when we account for the complexity of tastes.	✓
4	Cultural capital ameliorates the gendered socialization of complex tastes, such that there is a monotonically decreasing relationship between cultural capital and gendered differences.	×

5 DISCUSSION

In the section to follow, we discuss the empirical results from our modelling of gendered differences in taste, and consider how they relate to the broader literature in the sociology of culture. Table 8 provides a brief review of the hypotheses tested and the relevant support (if any) we found for each in our analysis.

5.1 Complex tastes are real and measurable

Tastes can be complex and are only imperfectly approximated by unidimensional conceptions of taste. Previous work on complex tastes have drawn on case studies, meta-analyses of taste measurements, and are primarily theoretical in thrust. We complement such work by providing an empirical account of complex tastes towards music. Following Ma's work (2024), we show the distributions of an eight-member family of complex tastes across a nationally representative sample of US residents. The existence of symmetric complex tastes like congruent preferences and congruent aversions is unlikely to be surprising. But there is a larger burden of proof upon asymmetric complex tastes, some of which may strike readers as rare if not unlikely. Some varieties of asymmetric complex tastes are certainly rarer than others (taste poses are the commonest; justified abstentions the rarest), but their mere existence in a representative population of listeners should not be doubted.

5.2 First-approximations of taste can hide gendered differences

Unidimensional approximations of taste can conceal deep regularities in the structure of cultural taste. Complex tastes are not only theoretically interesting, but can be empirically useful. In this instance, we've seen how complex tastes can help identify social differences that are otherwise hidden by simpler approximations of taste. We began by reproducing an empirical puzzle among scholars of cultural omnivorousness, that there is a surprising between-gender homogeneity in aggregate preferences and aversions despite theoretical expectation of gendered differences. While taking affective preference as a first-approximation of taste can be a necessary and even reasonable thing to do in many empirical studies, it's also a heuristic that can conceal the hands of social structure. This is the case when it comes to the gendered dynamics of taste. Reducing taste to affective preferences requires that we flatten of the contradictions, asymmetries, and complex antinomies that make up the body of our tastes. As we do so, we also hide away important gendered

differences in tastes. When we treat taste to a complex, multidimensional concept that involves multiple modalities of action, gendered differences reveal themselves across a family of complex tastes.

5.3 Theorizing gendered differences in complex tastes

The gendered dynamics behind complex tastes are surprising, and do not neatly fit extant theories about gendered differences in tastes. While there is yet to an extended theoretical account of how gender structures complex tastes, we can build inductively from previous theories that speak about gender and tastes more broadly. We discuss two: (1) Bourdieu's theories of the gendered habitus, and (2) theories about gendered status beliefs from expectation state theory.

First, consider Bourdieu's theories of the gendered habitus (Bourdieu 2001). Bourdieu makes two statements about gendered differences in tastes that have implications for complex tastes. Bourdieu has written consistently about the multidimensionality of taste, and of the import of key asymmetries in tastes. He recognized one such asymmetry in the case of high-brow, "pure," tastes valorized by the mid-century French elite. As he saw it, the pure gaze demanded a retreat from "[culture] which speak most immediately to the senses and the sensibility"(1984, pg. 24) and in its place deference to "enunciation and systematization of the principles of specifically aesthetic legitimacy" (1984, pg. 22). The "pure" aesthete must necessarily have *asymmetric* tastes: they must be willing and able to praise culture contrary to their sensibility; conversely, be willing and able to censure culture amenable to it. Bourdieu speculates that such asymmetric tastes are more commonly held by men. He theorizes that there is a gendered division in aesthetics that descends from gendered divisions in labor. "The traditional division of labor between the sexes assigns 'humane' or 'humanitarian' tasks and feelings to women and more readily allows them effusions and tears, in the name of the opposition between reason and sensibility . . . Women are therefore less imperatively required to censor and repress 'natural' feelings as the aesthetic disposition demands" (1984, pg. 32). Put differently, Bourdieu hypothesizes women to be liberated from the demand of holding asymmetric tastes. Women should be more likely to express tastes like congruent aversions. Men – especially high-status men – ought to be more likely to cultivate asymmetric aesthetic dispositions.

In all, we find little support for Bourdieusian hypotheses about the gendered habitus. Women are *not* more likely to have symmetric complex tastes than men. In fact, we find that men are more likely to have congruent aversions than women. [6] We note further than the genre composition of congruent aversions look remarkably similar. Men and women share congruent aversions for same set of genres (hip-hop, country, and dance), although the former to a larger extent. Second, there isn't a simple masculine bias across all the asymmetric complex tastes. Men have more guilty pleasures and engage in more distant consumption [7] [8], but women are more likely to practice justified abstentions or express distant praise. [9] [10]

[6] Hip-hop, country, and dance/electronic music were the top three most represented genres for both men and women. More men have congruent aversions for these genres than women.

[7] Hip-hop, dance/electronic music, and Latin music are the top three represented guilty pleasures for men; hip-hop, pop, and dance/electronic music for women.

[8] Hip-hop, pop, and country are the top three represented distant consumption for men; hip-hop, classical rock, and pop music for women.

[9] Classic rock, country, and dance/electronic music are the top three represented genres among justified abstention for men; folk, K-pop, and Middle-Eastern music for women.

[10] Classical music, jazz, and Asian (non K-Pop) music are the top three represented genres among distant praise for men; classical music, jazz, and Latin music for women.

Second, consider theories of gendered status beliefs from expectation state theory. There is a robust body of literature within the sociology that speaks to male-bias in valuations within cultural fields (Miller 2016). As Miller points out in her review, "women artists, musicians, and writers describe being taken less seriously than men, being treated as novices when they are actually skilled professionals, and having to work harder than men for equal recognition." (Miller 2016, pg. 124). According to expectation state theory (Ridgeway and Correll 2006), such male-bias in evaluations can be internalized by individuals in the form of third-order status beliefs about aesthetics: individuals are aware that *others* think that culture produced and consumed by women are of inferior quality, even if they do not personally endorse such a statement. Status beliefs are most influential under conditions of uncertainty (Ridgeway 2011). Because quality in cultural fields can be so ambiguous (Hirsch 1972; Podolny 2004), individuals tend to draw on these third-order status beliefs about the worthiness of genres as a heuristic to guide their valuations. The *gendering* of status beliefs can impact the distributions of certain asymmetric complex tastes. Since these status beliefs are gendered, women are more likely to encounter status beliefs contravening their own preferences and consumption habits. For example, women may be more likely to censure their own music preferences and consumption (guilty pleasure); conversely, they may be more likely to praise music that they neither like nor consume (distant praise).

Our findings do not fully support the hypotheses extended from expectation state theory. We find that guilty pleasures and distant praises operate with contrasting gendered dynamics, only one of which supports expectation state theory. Contrary to expectations, women do *not* have more guilty pleasures than men. While the literature has written extensively about women's participation in such guilty pleasure tastes in select domain (e.g. Radway's 1984 work on romance fiction, McCoy & Scarborough's 2014 work on reality television), our standing evidence is that when it comes to music, guilty pleasure are not the lone province of women. Men on average have more guilty pleasure tastes than women. As mentioned in an earlier footnote, a similar set of genres are most represented men and women's guilty pleasure, with the main difference being the inclusion pop music in place of Latin music for women. But perhaps more interestingly, there's a difference in the 'tails' of the distribution of genres: only three genres (hip-hop, pop and dance) are represented more than once among guilty pleasures for women, as compared to eight genres for men. That is to say, men have a more diverse set of guilty pleasures than women. On the other hand, we find that women *do* express more distant praise than men. While similar genres are represented among distant praises for both men and women (earlier footnote), the magnitude of the counts are significantly higher for women. This is particularly so for jazz. While frequently cited as an object of distant praise for both men and women, far more women do so than men.

5.4 How cultural capital moderates gendered differences in complex tastes

Cultural capital plays an important role moderating the association between gender and complex tastes, but it does not assume the straightforwardly ameliorative role that as had been expected. Rather, the accumulation of cultural capital changes the axes along which men and women differ, decreasing the magnitude of gendered differences in some complex tastes while creating fresh new ones in others. In this respect, our findings support the feminist scholarship contesting the Bourdieusian hypothesis about cultural capital and gendered difference. There are *always* gendered dynamics to complex tastes, but both the valence and magnitude of these gendered dynamics are conditional on cultural capital.

Cultural capital *does* reduce some gendered differences in tastes. We find that cultural capital ameliorates gendered differences in congruent aversions, [11] taste poses, [12] and distant praise [13]. In all three cases, gendered differences cease to be statistically significant among those with high cultural capital. This is not the case with rest of the remaining complex tastes. We find that the accumulation of cultural capital can also introduce a fresh set of gendered dynamics to some complex tastes. That is the same for guilty pleasures[14] and distant consumption[15]. Among those with higher cultural capital, men are more likely to hold guilty pleasure and distant consumption tastes. There are no statistically significant differences among those with low cultural capital.

[11]Among those with high cultural capital, the distribution of genres contributing to congruent aversions for men and women are similar. Among those with lower cultural capital, one salient difference is the higher representation of hip-hop as a congruent aversion for men. Men identify hip-hop as a congruent aversion at almost double the rate as women.

[12]Among those with high cultural capital, the distribution of genres contributing to taste poses for men and women are again similar. Among those with lower cultural capital, Asian (non-KPop) music emerges as a major contributor to taste poses for women, but not for men.

[13]Among those with lower cultural capital, Latin music emerges as a major contributor to distant praise for women, but not for men. Among those with high cultural capital, the distribution of genres contributing to distant praise for men and women are similar.

[14]Among women with high cultural capital, pop music is the only genre that was identified as a guilty pleasure; among men with high cultural capital, there is a larger variety of genres identified as guilty pleasure tastes. Guilty pleasures are rare among both men and women of lower cultural capital.

[15]Among women with high cultural capital, country music is the only genre that was identified as a distant consumption; among men with high cultural capital, pop, hip-hop, and country are all significant contributors to distant consumption tastes. Although distant consumption is rare among both men and women of lower cultural capital, hip-hop is identified by both groups as the main contributor to distant consumption tastes.

6 CONCLUSION

Tastes can be complex. While our preferences, consumption habits, and aesthetic valuations are often congruent and aligned with one another, they are not always so. Actually-existing tastes often contain characteristic asymmetries and antinomies among the modalities of taste. The guilty pleasure is an example – we may be ashamed of the things we like and consume. In this paper, we've provided an empirical account of complex tastes in music, and used them to reveal deep, surprising and persistent between-gender differences in tastes.

We show that gendered dynamics in taste structures are *deep* in that the sense that they are concealed by first-approximations of taste. They dwell instead in the asymmetries and antinomies that exist across a person's taste. Accordingly, revealing such deep gendered homologies requires the joint measurement and consideration of taste as a multimodal action. These gendered dynamics are also *surprising*. They do not conform neatly to relevant theories about the gendered distribution of tastes. Contrary to Bourdieusian theories about the gendered habitus, we find that the asymmetric tastes that are associated with the 'pure gaze' do not have the masculine bias that was expected. Contrary to theories of gendered status beliefs from expectation state theory, women do not hold more guilty pleasures than men. In our view, it is too early to make proclamations over the continued relevance of either school of cultural theories when it comes to gendered differences in contemporary tastes. However, if further work using complementary qualitative designs corroborate our findings, then the need for a theoretical explanation that can suitably fill the lacunae will become more urgent. Finally, we also show how these gendered differences are *persistent* to the accumulation of cultural capital. Our findings support feminist scholarship contesting Bourdieusian hypotheses over the monotonically negative relationship between cultural capital and gendered differences. Cultural capital moderates both the valence and magnitude of gendered differences in complex tastes. While cultural capital can ameliorate gendered differences among a set of complex tastes, it can also introduce fresh gendered dynamics among others.

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