

Most people do not have eclectic music tastes

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This research was conducted by **Tak Wing Chan and John H. Goldthorpe** at the **University of Oxford, UK**

Summary

The paper reports the results of a study into cultural consumption habits of 20-64 year olds in England. They found that people generally fall into three categories: omnivores, univores and a third group of omnivores that listen to recorded classical music in addition to rock and pop. Univores make up the majority of people at all levels of society, although education levels and social status are the most likely characteristics to determine which of the three groups people belong to.

The data were gathered in 2001 by surveying a nationally representative sample of adults

Although the survey collected a range of data on all forms of cultural engagement, as well as a suite of demographic data, the paper looked specifically at music consumption, and more specifically who chooses to listen to opera/opera, classical jazz, rock/pop music (in either a live or recorded format).

Up until now, arguments about the relationship between class, status and cultural consumption have flowed along one of three lines

The first is that elite cultural forms are enjoyed by elites in society more generally, whereas popular culture is enjoyed by the masses, or lower-status groups. The second is that cultural taste has nothing to do with class or any

other aspect of ourselves. The third is that elites are cultural omnivores who enjoy a rich and varied range of cultural activities, whereas in contrast people in lower status positions have a limited cultural taste. The authors suggest that none of those three explanations are suitable for the 21st Century. Although status has a significant impact on whether one is an omnivore or not the authors are conscious to point out that it does not have (in their words) an 'overwhelmingly strong' effect.

Keywords

music **UK** **class** **taste** **status** **survey**

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