

Mirja Liikkanen

Cultural consumption - class distinctions, drawing towards average or separate social worlds? The case of Finland

The way modern society classifies culture is hierarchical, and closely linked with its central institutions – the educational system and scientific and art institutions. Indeed, cultural tastes have most often been examined from the perspectives of social positions, social classes, social hierarchies and power. However, taste can also be seen as individual and social “putty”, and as an underpinning for individual identity. This article analyses the special features of Finnish tastes in culture and changes in them. It discusses the relative importance of keeping up with certain audience institutions, such as the media, culture and sports, to the values of various population groups, correlation between identification with certain social groups and music tastes, and the influence of generation and gender on the prevalence of tastes. The subject is approached through traditional methods of studying taste. Their presumptions have guided the way in which cultural tastes and their changes usually have been, can or are tempted to be seen.

The ongoing discourse about today’s society is in many respects conflicting. It is claimed that social classes have disappeared or at least lost their importance as far as people’s choices, styles and tastes are concerned. The structure of society is perceived as increasingly fragmented or horizontally divided into diverse equal segments or social worlds. Jukka Gronow (2004, 241) writes that quote, freely translated: “...In consequence of the fragmentation of social positions the rules concerning them have also shattered and become more private. Even in cases where clear rules concerning superiority exist, in the opinion of those in other social positions or practitioners of other occupations they are most probably more or less indifferent... Examined from this perspective, taste for high culture has no special status.” According to the interpretation of Daloz (2006, 24), the conventional description of society that is based on continuous movement of imitation and differentiation between the elite and lower classes no longer works in the post-modern situation. It does not mean that society is becoming increasingly equal, but that many codes exist in society irrespective of each other and their appreciation only has any significance within each sub-system of society.

However, modern culture also lays emphasis on the salience of classes and inequality. There is talk about a dichotomised structure of society that from the perspective of the new, globally-oriented middle class seems to offer full possibilities of freedom and choice but pushes other social groups into uncertainty and poverty (Sennet 2003). Storey (2003, 22) and Gibbons (2002) also see changes in the foundations of the class system; according to them cultural divisions have been replaced by financial ones. It has been discovered in the USA that in urban areas a large size of the so-called creative class, or new middle class, correlates with the largest income differentials (Creative....., 2003). In Finland, too, income differentials have grown at a

record pace since the mid-1990s, so that in relative terms the richest have become richer and the poorest poorer. Nevertheless, earners of medium income have remained as the largest population group (Pajunen 2005). Changes in income differentials seem to be reflected in the structure of society. For example, the Capital Region has started to become segregated regionally and socially according to this development (Kortteinen-Vaattovaara-Alasuutari 2005).

Beverly Skeggs (2004, 173) directs her criticism at social research. She insists that at the same time as in the British society, "... Class struggle is alive and well, highly apparent in the circuits of symbolic distribution (...) In fact class is so ubiquitous, one wonders why all the energy, anxiety and aggressive denial is put into proving that the working-class either does not exist or, if it does, is worthless." She claims that middle-class social theoreticians only study themselves and the targets of their own interest. In her opinion, better social theories might evolve if they would also examine "those who cannot make the same investments, who are not flexible or mobile."

For a couple of decades this orientation of researchers' interest towards precisely the middle class has been guided by the thought that these large middle classes, in fact, lead social development and gain ground in post-modern times. In Bourdieu's theory, too, the new middle class is the one that creates new ethics based on pleasure and is the only one that is capable of breaking the very close tie that exists in French society between cultural taste and social class. (Bourdieu 1984, 365-371). Maybe Skeggs is right in that directing the interest of research into this new aspect has made the whole society look like a classless action field of individuals.

The incongruences of social discourse may be partially fictitious. There are differences in how cultural taste and especially the hierarchical perception of culture is seen relative to social status and its determination. What there is agreement on is that the positions of the market and the media are seen as having strengthened relative to the traditional institutions of art and culture. Beverly Skeggs emphasises that in addition to the fact that economic inequality has widened, inequality is created by the mental imagery conveyed by the media. The mental imagery is directed at the corporality and style of population groups, and mental perceptions of their intellectual abilities. According to her, at the mental imagery level emphasising of individualism shifts the responsibility for the inequality to those in the weakest position in society. However, many structures are probably likely to exist side by side. Furthermore, when people are trained into occupations perceived as working class, the training does not just concern the skills related to the occupations but also the perceptions of the morals, styles and tastes associated with this social status, as Mari Käyhkö has proven in a highly interesting way with people trained as cleaners in Finland. (Käyhkö 2005).

Research tradition on cultural tastes

The central empiric-theoretic research traditions on taste are the tradition based on Pierre Bourdieu and the tradition of the stratification theory. In the European tradition, Pierre Bourdieu's theories and especially his

work *Distinction* (1977/1984) form the core of research into tastes. The so-called stratification research has also held a very strong position in the USA and the UK. Indeed, Mike Savage and Tony Bennett (2005, 3) wonder how far from each other these traditions have lived in the Anglo-American research culture in the past three decades. A key approach within the latter is based on Herbert Gans's thinking about cultural taste and its dispersal in society. Gans presented his scheme in *Popular Culture and High Culture, An Analysis and Evaluation of Taste*, published in 1974, i.e. three years earlier than Pierre Bourdieu's famous *Distinction* which was published in French in 1979.

In his book, Herbert Gans, who is little known in Finland, presents his perception of the relationship between taste and status groups in the US society of the early 1970s. His central concept is 'taste culture'. According to Gans, different taste cultures and respective taste audiences exist because there are different ethical standards and values, and disagreement about them. He calls his approach 'aesthetic pluralism' (cited volume, 69). According to Gans this concerns analytical groupings formed by the researcher (cited volume, 70). The assumption is that a group's atmosphere of attitudes and real choices are symmetrical with a class or group status. Structurally, the description is in many respects reminiscent of the audience segmentation models used in modern market research, as well as of the German researcher Gerhard Schulze's description of the experience society (Noro 1995b). The description has many points of convergence with but also divergences from that in Pierre Bourdieu's *Distinction*, which in turn is based on data describing the French society collected in the late 1960s.

According to Gans (cited volume, 70) the main reason for the diversification of people's cultural tastes is socio-economic status or class – which he claims is determined by income, occupation and education. According to him, among these education is the single one indicator that will probably best forecast what cultural choices a person is likely to make (cited volume, 71), with age and gender the next most important ones. As examples of other factors influencing cultural tastes he mentions religion, ethnic or racial background, geographic origin and place of residence, and personality.

An interesting feature in Gans's concept of cultural tastes is that he sees as their central shapers production and markets: record companies, the media, etc. Tastes in culture are shaped in interaction between everyday culture and occupational culture. Gans divides cultural tastes into five main categories: high culture, upper-middle culture, lower-middle culture, low culture and quasi-folk culture. According to Gans, in the early 1970s the dominating taste culture in the USA was lower-middle culture. He emphasises that there is continuous change within taste cultures and that their relative quantitative power relationships are shifting constantly. Of the new, evolving taste cultures he regards youth culture as the most important one and identifies several sub-cultures within it, such as drug-and-music culture that followed the original hippie culture, commune culture, and diverse radical political cultures, etc. According to him further dawning cultures include culture of the North American blacks, followed by other ethnic cultures in general.

According to Gans (1974, 75), high culture differs from other forms of taste culture in that it is dominated by its makers. To Gans (1992, vii) high culture is not culture of the upper class but that of the occupational layer

that earns its livelihood by creating, sharing, analysing and criticising diverse works identified as high culture. Gans does not give to high culture any special status as legitimator of general 'good taste' but sees it as a form of an occupational institution that is characteristic of modern society whose ethos is to try and prove that the culture it represents is a universally applicable value. By contrast, according to Bennett (2005), Bourdieu was not, as he was generally thought to be, a cultural relativist but to him art and art institutions represented universal, supra-historical, non-transferable values, at the same time as he naturally also saw them as historical. They are beyond the reach of a more worldly and commercial culture. This perception that art holds a special cultural status is widespread in sociology. For example, while describing, otherwise much like Gans, the field of art as a taste culture of high culture, Sulkunen states that, quote, freely translated: "...In the field of art...it is only good taste that matters, not necessity."

Gans emphasises that (1974, 13) at the individual level taste culture can be comprised of "partial cultures" that only concern some part of life. He says that with the exception of certain addicts of high or popular culture and some makers of culture, taste culture is not a comprehensive way of life. He emphasises that taste culture concerns matters in which people have a choice (1974, 12). In their pursuit of status people may even consciously select something from 'another' taste culture, for example from within their living environment, but at the same time retain the preferences for their 'own' taste culture in the privacy of their own home.

Although he sees education and occupation as the central factors that guide taste culture, he neither views the social movement of tastes just as a flow from top to bottom, nor the assimilation of tastes just from the perspective of struggling for status. According to his description, the movement takes place in many directions and because of many individual motives.

Bourdieu popular in Finland

The discrepancy in the results of Bourdieu and Gans does not necessarily only arise from differences in theories but also because each one of them describes their own, specific sphere of culture as a contemporary system of cultural taste of their time. In the same way as there have been considerable difficulties in applying the classifications of Bourdieu to Finnish society (Alapuro 2006, 61-62), the above section depicts well the contextuality of the details of Gans's description.

If direct application of Bourdieu has been difficult in Finland, it has not been easy elsewhere, either. For example, while studying Australia, Bennett et al. (1999, 201) state that when reading Bourdieu's *Distinction* one cannot help getting the impression that in the late 1960s French taste was almost totally shaped by national institutions. They conclude (cited volume, 5) that, "...One of our strongest reservations regarding Bourdieu's *Distinction* concerns its insularity in discussing French culture as a hermetically closed system. In view of the degree to which, historically, Australian culture has been shaped by the cultural flows of different phases of European and Asian migration, this has never been a viable option here." They also state (cited volume, 201) that as almost three decades have passed since Bourdieu's original study it is impossible to

imagine that the same indifference towards global culture would still prevail even in France, let alone in Australia which by tradition has sought its cultural pleasures from outside.

It is pointless to even look for Gans's groups of cultural tastes from Finland at the turn of the millennium. However, it is possible to use them, as well as Bourdieu's definitions, as a kind of a mirror in discussing special features of the Finnish system of tastes. Both bring to the fore similarities and dissimilarities of western societies. Similarities can be found both in their basic structures and in the flood of international influences during the past few decades. The dissimilarities are associated with cultural memory and layers of tradition. There is an interesting reciprocity between empirism and theory. At the same time as each time period produces its own theory it also invites interpretations that are linked to the structures of the concepts and meanings of own culture. Risto Alapuro (2006, 56) writes about the way in which Bourdieu was received in Finland that, quote, freely translated: "...This actually concerns a more general problem of communicating culture, in the sense that when an element of one culture arrives in another culture it is adopted on the terms of the receiving culture, it is made understandable to the receiving culture, it is modified or it modifies itself, unnoticed, to meet the needs of the receiving culture. The receivers frame it in their own way."

The American thinking concerning taste cultures has never reached Finnish sociology, and enthusiasm to study interconnections between social classes and taste choices did not really start here until after Bourdieu's *Distinction*, especially its English-language edition, had been published in Finland. Bourdieu continues to be one of the ex officio theoretic points of departure for studies of tastes in culture. The consequence of this is that Bourdieu's concepts of capital and the concept of habitus indicating total lifestyle are also widely used in studies of tastes. As Haatainen (2005, 118) states, quote, freely translated: "...For good reason French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's *La Distinction* (1979) could be regarded as the new testament of sociological research into consumption.

The interest awakened by Pierre Bourdieu in research on cultural tastes started in Finnish sociology in the 1980s and early 1990s. Of course, quite a lot of empiric research had been made even before it into reading, cultural hobbies, musical tastes, etc. However, Bourdieu got even the more theoretically-oriented researchers interested in studying tastes. Taste began to look like a central social issue. The recently published article collection 'I and Bourdieu' (Rahkonen et al. 2006) offers at least two interesting explanations to why Bourdieu in particular gained such a strong foothold in Finland. In their own way, both these explanations are linked with the structure and intellectual history of Finnish society.

Risto Alapuro (2006, 58) associates the welcoming with a situation in history where attempts were made away from structural sociological explanations towards a cultural analysis. According to him (cited volume, 60), quote, freely translated: "...Bourdieu offered a *bridge* from structure to culture...Bourdieu made it possible to emphasise culture without abandoning structure...In a certain group, there is a homological relationship between the work its members have done and the free-time they have spent. The principle offered a new 'cultural' perspective to the relationship between structure and culture, social organisation and cultural practices. On the one hand, the social world dictates habitus, but, on the other, habitus dictates how

the social world is understood. The main emphasis was not on class dynamics in the sense of active interaction between classes but on the culture of each individual class and in the hierarchy between the classes. The perspective suits a situation that is becoming and has already partly become established in Finland.”

Alapuro describes two different sociological traditions in social depictions, which he calls models of *descriptive representation* and *constructive representation*. According to him, (cited volume, 65) the traditional way of describing society in Finnish sociology seems to follow the descriptive representation model, quote, freely translated: “...Finland has perceived herself as a non-problematic society of groups based on classes...in Finnish descriptions of Finnish society...only very little that is unforeseen or mysterious remains between structure and representation.” Because of this, quote, freely translated: “...A society as sketched out by the ‘Great Outline’ has a (causally) primary structural level which class division, financial interests, etc., belong to and from the perspective of which other phenomena. such as ideas and opinions can be observed.” *La Distinction* gives the opportunity to also see classes as given and as an instrument for cruel classification of taste (Haatainen 2005, 118). Alapuro concludes that (cited volume, 63), quote, freely translated: “...Bourdieu was easy to adopt because he, too, was a kind of a structuralist...It was precisely like this, as Bourdieu of structures, that he was assimilated in Finland.”

Besides representing a system of tastes based on class, another essential characteristic of Bourdieu’s thinking is hermetic movement of tastes in principally one direction (Bourdieu 1984). In simple terms, good and legitimate taste is a taste capable of identifying the upper class and/or highly educated who represent major cultural capital. It is strived for by the middle classes with good cultural will who, nevertheless, lack knowledge and whose categories of criticism are, therefore, based on everyday life. Those excluded include farmers and especially the working class, who do not actually possess taste but whose choices are banal selections made out of necessity.

Sulkunen describes the mechanism (2006, 146) as follows, quote, freely translated: “...From the perspective of social ties the attraction in Bourdieu’s theories is in that he reveals the alchemy of habitus - the secret mechanisms that convert class positions into cultural practices and good taste. They work by virtue of their secrecy are, therefore, taboo. Proving this creates fear and fury, no matter how meticulously one tries to resist the temptation of cynicism. Modern music and absurd theatre enthusiasts do not like the claim that their good taste redoubles and piles up their already considerable cultural capital - and is, therefore, rational and goal oriented rather than purely aesthetic and personal quality. Respectively, people who love ‘banal’ religious or popular music because in their opinion it is beautiful, touching, etc., do not take kindly to the thought that their taste is actually quite rational adaptation to sparse cultural and financial capital.” Sulkunen’s examples relate to Finnish culture, where at the top, and representing good taste, are art forms of very small audiences and at the bottom conventional Finnishness.

The idea of the trickle-down effect, that is, flow of taste from top downwards and lower groups’ desire to imitate upper ones can be found in many sociological theories even before Bourdieu, as can be seen from,

for instance, Daloz (2006). Many of the earlier theories were associated with fashion or the movement of customs. The idea of the trickle-down effect can be found in diverse variations in, for example, Verblen, Simmel, Elias, Baudrillard and American functionalists (cited volume, 6). Daloz, however, states that while making empirical studies of different cultures and elites he has observed that this is by no means the only logic but that in different cultures people are proud to belong to social groups that are not very high in the social hierarchy and adhere firmly to the social practices of their own group (cited volume, 9).

On the other hand, in his famous essay about fashion Herbert Blumer wrote already as far back as in 1969 (pp. 281-282), "...The prestige of elite groups, in place of setting the direction of the fashion movement, is effective only to the extent to which they are recognized as representing and portraying the movement. The people in other classes who consciously follow the fashion do so because it is the fashion and not because of the separate prestige the elite group." According to him, (cited volume, 282) a fashion trend dies because a new one representing developing taste has replaced it, not because an elite group has abandoned it. According to him, fashion does not emerge from the need of a class to distinguish itself from others or imitate another class but as a response to stay in fashion and up-to-date in the changing world. He interprets these as fundamental changes that, "...shift fashion *from* the fields of *class differentiation* to the area of *collective selection*...." Collective selecting refers to efforts to choose from competing styles the one that corresponds with the developing taste. In his opinion this process is largely a mystery and very little is known about it.

There may also be a historical reason for Bourdieu's popularity in Finnish sociological thinking. For decades, the central ethos of sociologists has been to moderate social tensions and support social cohesion. This may also have had an implication on how intellectual it has been 'acceptable' to see society and one's own place in it. It may be that *Distinction* dissolved some of this tension, which can be seen in the article of the main importer of Bourdieu's thinking into Finland, J.P. Roos (2006, 84).

Quote, freely translated: "...It is clear that without doubt the Bourdieuan analysis offered administrative tools precisely for those in power, made mechanisms visible for exactly those who were in dominant positions thanks to these mechanisms. In other words, the fact that someone realises that cultural capital and the field set-up are all on his/her side does not by any means reduce his/her opportunities or increase the opportunities of those without cultural capital!"

Haatainen, too, states (2005, 119) that, quote, freely translated: "...Bourdieu's *Distinction* opened up an entirely new kind of world. It verified certain matters of course - ambition to stand out, undermining of values of products or practices, i.e. banalisation, class-specific differences – it could be said that for the first time the book proved a lot that a lot of people already knew and the phenomena of which had been discussed in fiction, women's magazines and market research. Now the phenomena were given a theory and a practice."

The basic structure of Finnish taste in culture

In international terms, empiric research into cultural tastes has been lively in recent years. The Leisure Survey of Statistics Finland on which this book is based is very much reminiscent of two other recent, extensive quantitative studies into cultural tastes and leisure activities. One was conducted in Australia in

1998 and the other in the UK in 2003. The Australian data have been reported in the book *Accounting for Tastes* (Bennett et al. 1999). Initial results from the British study have been published in a special issue of the periodical *Cultural Trends* (2006).

I will next go on to look for special characteristics in the Finnish system of tastes. I will start by examining the basic structures of Finnish taste in culture based on the analyses thus far made of the data from the Leisure Survey. The Leisure Survey includes a question for ascertaining what importance the respondents personally attach to certain spheres of life, activities and matters. I have examined (Liikkanen 2005) some of these by interpreting them as so-called audience institutions. I regarded as such institutions the media and sports, as well as the fields of culture and arts (see Table 1). I interpreted the answers to the questions as indicative of the relative positions of different audience institutions in Finnish society.

In addition to gender, the examination focused on two social groups: upper white-collar employees and production workers. In both international comparisons and in the Finnish data they represent the extremities of cultural choices. All groups regard as personally most important the daily media at home and as least important the so-called art fields. Thus, the obtained picture is quite reversed when compared to the conventional idea of cultural hierarchy.

The examination revealed strong and repetitive cultural structures in Finnish society. These were the centrality of literary culture, relatively small social differences and the centrality of gender. Upper white-collar employees differ only little from the rest of the population. They appreciate slightly less than others listening to the radio, watching television and listening to music, they are more strongly oriented towards literary culture and appreciate slightly more the fields of arts. On the other hand, all social groups appreciate the printed media and literary culture quite highly but perceive the importance of art culture as fairly minor. The homeliness and ordinariness of an institution became highlighted in the valuation profiles, the media at home is regarded as the most important throughout the line. Women appreciate matters related to culture more than men do, the literary culture being especially important to women, and not just reading of books and following of literary trends, but also reading of newspapers. There is also a large difference by gender in respect of sports which men appreciate more than women do in all groups.

The difference between the genders and the lack of differences between social groups could also be seen in that the valuation profiles of all women and upper white-collar employees were mutually very similar, as also were those of all men and production workers when looked at on the whole. These structures appear to be quite permanent. Prior to this, the matter was last studied eleven years ago and the structure had remained completely unchanged over these eleven years.

Table 1. Perception of audience institutions as personally totally unimportant and not part of one's own life

Audience institution	All	Upper-level salaried	Production worker	Women	Men
Reading of newspapers	2	0	0	2	1
Watching television	4	4	3	4	5
Listening to music	5	4	3	4	6
Listening to the radio	5	4	1	5	4
Reading of books	11	1	16	7	16
Following of literary art	17	7	22	12	23
Following of sports	21	28	12	29	13
Following of musical art	27	24	25	22	32
Going to the theatre	27	13	32	20	35
Going to the cinema	29	14	23	27	30
Going to concerts	30	15	34	24	37
Following of fine arts	35	23	41	28	43
Visiting art exhibitions	38	23	46	30	46
Following of cinematic	46	39	47	42	49
Following of dramatic	48	42	54	38	59
Going to the opera	64	46	80	56	73

An examination of rejective opinions brings out the typical features even more clearly. The orientation of upper white-collar employees especially towards the literary culture can be seen in that only one per cent of them regard the reading of books, and no more than a couple of per cent the following of literature, as personally totally unimportant to them, whereas among production workers the respective proportions were considerably higher (Liikkanen 2005, 96). The picture of genders having different cultural styles became stronger (Liikkanen 2001). The figures were closer to those of upper white-collar employees among women, but almost identical among men and production workers. Different audience institutions are associated with different social 'homes' and gendered styles. According to our data, women visit art and cultural institutions alone or with friends more often than men do, whereas men visit them with family members. In sports events the situation is totally reversed (Liikkanen 2005, 77-78).

Perceptions of the opera as personally totally unimportant crystallise perhaps most clearly the segregation associated with high culture in Finland. It is regarded as personally the most unimportant in all social groups, but less than half of upper white-collar employees feel like this while the respective proportion among production workers is 80 per cent. However, the opera is the only institution for which perceptions as personally important have increased somewhat both among upper white-collar employees and all women. While the opera is clearly the most rejected art institution, it could be concluded that choosing it crystallises something of the segregatory function of the environment of high culture. On the other hand, however, for some of the audience the change may relate to an opposite trend, that is, fading of the high culture status of the opera (Storey 1993).

In deviation from all other areas of culture, production workers appreciate both listening to music and following of music more than upper white-collar employees do. However, the situation is the opposite when going to concerts is concerned. This strengthens the idea that music is a special area of interest. The observation may be an indicator of different directions of trends in the area of listening to music as well as of variations in the importance different social groups attach to it. On the one hand the finding describes popularisation of the music culture and, on the other, the greater importance upper white-collar employees attach to cultural institutions associated with a certain location. It is likely that the habits and customs adopted through education and in the childhood home strengthen their perceptions of the homeliness and openness of venues of high culture to their own social circles. However, the fact that a concert hall of classical music or the foyer of the opera are personally inviting and socially or otherwise rewarding places does not mean that the perception of culture they represent would be the only one realised in the privacy of the home. Individual tastes may deviate considerably from this.

On interrelationships between class and cultural taste

The thought of Bourdieu that there is homogeneous correspondence between a person's social class, occupation and way of spending leisure is deep-rooted in the development of modern society. Simon Gunn (2005) shows how this kind of thinking linking culture, morals and lifestyle (and especially location or areas of residence) with the concept of social class is historically structured. In the British environment the central concept in this process was that of a suburb, born mainly to counterbalance 'slum'. He states that (cited volume, 53), "... The popularity and persistence of the notion of a suburban culture lay precisely in its potential to encompass the swelling ranks of the middle classes between 1880 and 1914, 'upper', 'middle' and 'lower', terms which themselves came into everyday usage at this period." These terms were adopted into everyday use during that time. He continues that (cited volume, 55), "... as it was elaborated as a category in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, 'class' was not primary sociological or even 'social' in its meanings. Its discursive components were cultural and moral at the same time as they were political, social or economic.."

During the 20th century the thinking gained ground with the help of research, public statistical classifications, the media and publicity. For instance, it was not until the 1911 population census that occupation was used in the UK as a classification variable when the population was divided into social groups. At that time the moral classifications that had been in everyday use were taken into official use (cited volume, 54), "... Classes I and II representing respectively an 'upper middle' and 'lower middle class', distinguished in turn from the skilled and unskilled working class, and the poor." This is one historic feature in the integration of lifestyles, morals, tastes and occupations that is so deeply in-built in the self-perception of modern society.

Although the social classes and status systems of western countries have a lot in common there are large deviations in the importance attached to these words. It is important to note that researchers from different countries and backgrounds use terms with differing contents. The deviations are based on different histories of countries and areas of culture, for instance the history of a country relative to the world economy (e.g. the

colonial system) or the positions the nobility or industrial workers have held. As examples, one could mention the central position of the nobility in France and the UK, race and ethnicity in the USA (Sennet 2002), the significance of the distinction between the working class and the middle class in the UK (Gunn 2005) or the division into educated and ordinary people in Finland. There are also large differences in how institutional art culture correlates with the definitions of social classes or status groups.

In today's societies class images have become more and more important tools of control. In places, they may no longer be more than faintly connected with the reality of society. Class images are built discursively on the memory of each society, they repeat the structures of the class society, history or industrialisation and classifications of the newer, consumption society. As in the late 19th century, today's class imagery emphasises style, morals and corporality. (Skeggs 2004). A key actor and recycler of meanings is the media and the discourse that takes place in it (Koivunen & Lehtonen 2006).

Finnish empirical classes

I will next study the relationship between identification with a certain social class and taste in music. An international question model and classification was used in the Leisure Survey in asking about identification with social classes. The respondents were asked which of the following social classes or groups they thought they belonged to: lower class, working class, lower middle class, middle class, upper middle class, upper class, or none of these. The reply alternative Don't know was also offered. The classification reflects today's perception of the domineering position of the middle classes in social structures, but on the other hand in quite an amazing way it also follows the pattern of thought about the structure of society Gunn described over a century ago. It can be presumed that at the general level the western way of thinking is quite congruent, although it could have brought more national emphases to the results if the matter had been approached with an open question about own class identification and the respondents' perceptions of social classes in today's Finland.

The majority, or around three-fifths of the population aged 15 and over feel that they belong to some middle class category. Good one-tenth of the population feel that they belong to the lower middle class while six per cent think they are upper middle class. The rest identify themselves with the middle class in general. There has been a lot of talk in social research about the entire society gradually becoming middle class. In this context it often means the adoption of middle class style and identity. Identification with the middle class is presumably getting more and more widespread, because the younger the respondent the more likely he/she was to think of being middle class. Identification with the unclassified middle class grows more likely the younger the person concerned, while identification with the lower middle class increases somewhat along with age, and identification with the upper middle class is most widespread among people of working age. Women and men identify themselves with the middle classes equally frequently. White-collar employment and identification with the middle class correlate with each other. Nearly 90 per cent of upper and good 70 per cent of lower white-collar employees thought they belong to some middle class category. One-fifth of upper white-collar employees thought they were upper middle class.

Table 2. Identification with class by gender

	Women	Men	All
Lower class	1	2	1
Working class	22	27	24
Lower middle class	14	13	13
Middle class	45	42	44
Upper middle class	5	6	6
Upper class	0	1	0
None of these classes	3	3	3
Refusals	9	6	7
Don't know	0	1	0
Data missing	1	1	1

Contrary to assumptions, people identifying themselves with the working class have not disappeared from society. Approximately one-quarter of the population reckon that they belong to the working class. Only 0.5 per cent think that they belong to the upper class and 1.5 per cent of the population aged 15 and over classify themselves as lower class. This means that 60,000 people, or the population of a medium sized town in Finland identify themselves with the lower class and 20,000 people, or the population of a small town think they are upper class. Around one-half of those feeling that they are lower class are pensioners or chronically ill people, and middle-aged men are overrepresented among them.

Three per cent of the respondents did not identify themselves with any of these classes, seven per cent refused to answer the question and 0.5 per cent answered Don't know. The respondents who did not identify themselves with any class divided fairly evenly between all age groups. Their number was relatively the largest among the oldest respondents, as also was that of refusals. The number of refusals was also comparatively large in the youngest age group.

More than half of the identifiers with the working class were men. Identification with the working class is most widespread in the middle age. Among the socio-economic groups, pensioners had the largest representation, approximately 30 per cent, among those identifying with the working class, followed by production workers. Correspondingly, approximately one-half of production workers, and distribution and service workers considered that they belonged to the working class and two out of five reckoned they were middle class. Identification with the middle class is slightly more widespread among distribution and service workers than among production workers.

Among pensioners, the distribution of identification with a class is reminiscent of that of the whole population, yet so that in relative terms a slightly larger number of them identified with the working class and a smaller

number with the middle class than was the case for the whole population. Likewise, the relative number of those who did not identify with any class was slightly higher among pensioners than among other population groups.

Taste in music as taste of class

Although both Bourdieu and Gans form their groups of class tastes and taste cultures using researcher's licence in forming their classifications, the theory of both contains the assumption that the choices are based on active functioning. Because the thought of a connection between social class and taste is deeply imbedded in the western way of thinking, it is justifiable to examine the relationships between them basing on subjective class identification. If social class plays a role in the structuring and functionality of identity, this question can be used to study how taste is connected with this entirety; how much identification with the 'class image' determines taste in music. The qualitative part of the data have been chosen for the examination, i.e. reporting of musical likes and dislikes in open questions. They will probably best describe a personal and private relationship with music, whether it be toned by social identification or personal identity.

How, then, is taste in music constructed relative to class identification? In all groups, musical taste is built around three major genres of music. These are classical music, rock music and easy listening music. I call a fairly large spectrum of mentions of pop, rock and other rhythmic music rock music, while distinct mentions of 'pop music' have been counted as their own category. Mentions of jazz music are also in their own category. The same main categories apply to both references to musical likes and dislikes although the emphasised content varies. It is also used in analysing any differences. People identifying themselves with the lower class and the upper class have been left out of the table below, and Don't know answers were included in the category of respondents who did not identify themselves with any class because the share of all of them in the population is too small and the number of references made too low for the examination. According to indicative results, these identifications did not seem to give any specifically striking structure to music tastes.

Tables 3. Mentions of favourite music by identification with social class

	Regards him/herself as belonging to:					
	Upper middle class	Middle class	Lower middle class	Working class	None of the given	Refused vast.
Share of population, %	6	44	13	24	3	7
Times mentioned	458	3234	976	1649	199	429
% of mentions						

Classical	23	12	11	9	9	9
'Rock'	25	25	22	23	33	22
Pop	10	11	9	8	17	9
Jazz	4	3	3	1	3	2
Easy listening	27	40	40	49	36	46
Folk, ethno music	2	2	2	2	3	3
Religious	2	3	2	2	5	4
Canzone	2	1	1	1	1	1
'Instrumental'	0	1	2	1	5	1
Unclassified	5	2	8	2	+2	0

Taste cultures in music do not appear to be clearly determined by the social class with which a respondent identifies him/herself. As favourite music, easy listening music seems to be the strongest music culture in Finland, followed by rock music. Pop music was mentioned as favourite music about equally often as classical music. The popularity of the different main genres of music is quite evenly distributed among all identifiers with different social classes.

The only group whose profile deviates from the others is the relatively small one of respondents who identify themselves with the upper middle class. In its profile the share of respondents preferring classical music is larger, and that of respondents preferring easy listening music smaller than in the other groups. However, there are no real differences between identifiers with the different social groups as far as rock or pop music are concerned. The slightly deviating profile of the small group of respondents who do not identify themselves with any of the social groups is probably explained by the fact that it consists mainly of younger age groups.

Academic education is highly valued in Finland and it is often thought that academic education, in fact, decides a high social position and, through it, also cultural taste. Indeed, education seems to predict well identification with the upper middle class, for the vast majority, of 70 per cent, of the respondents having identified themselves with it held some tertiary degree or qualification, while 40 per cent had at least an upper level university degree. Compared to the other respondents having identified themselves with some middle class category, the share of those with an upper university degree is typical of those respondents who identified themselves with the upper middle class. On the other hand, it should be noted that two-thirds of the respondents with such educational qualifications did not identify themselves with the upper middle class. As far as musical taste is concerned it could be said that high level of education combined with identification with the upper middle class indicates in Finnish terms a taste in 'high culture', in other words

orientation towards classical music and away from easy listening music, or ordinary 'Finnishness'. (Alasuutari in this publication).

All in all, the references to favourite music are very rich and detailed. This applies especially to rock music, where the favourite types are highly widely dispersed. In all groups, the commonest mention in rock music was just 'rock'. Among the identifiers with the working class, the next frequently mentioned were heavy rock and heavy metal, as well as Finnish rock music, while the most popular individual artists were Elvis Presley and Juice Leskinen. There was fairly little variation in the mentions among the identifiers with the upper middle class, with Finnish rock and Elvis Presley as the most popular.

From the identifiers with the unspecified middle class the largest numbers of mentions were received by Finnish rock, rap, hip-hop, heavy rock and heavy metal, blues, techno and reggae, as well as by individual Finnish artists: Eppu Normaali, J. Karjalainen, Juice Leskinen and Mamba. The identifiers with the lower middle class mentioned most often Finnish rock, blues and techno. The taste profiles of the identifiers with the different classes deviate to some extent but whether this is specifically due to the class experience is another question. Rock cultures seem to be the strongest among the identifiers with the working class and the middle class, the emphasis falling on heavy with those identifying with the working class while in addition to this the identifiers with the middle class in general also quote rap and hip-hop that are preferred by young people (Ekholm 2005, 108, Figure 8). Finnish rock is strongly featured in all groups, and the uniting aspect in it as well as in easy listening music appears to be Finnishness.

In terms of standing out, and even otherwise, rock and pop music seem to be the most diversified music cultures. There are certain to be many sub-cultures under rock music, some with a working class, some with a middle class, some with a masculine and some with a feminine profile. The results also indicate that the taste cultures of rock are strongly bound with age and gender.

Table 4 Musical dislikes by identification with social class

	Regards him/herself as belonging to:					Re- fu- sed vast.
	Upper middle class	middle class	Lower middle class	Working class	None of the given	
% of population aged 15 and over	44	13	24	3	7	
Times mentioned	334	2739	847	1504	161	341
% of mentions						
Classical	8	14	14	20	13	19
Opera	3	5	6	8	5	10
'Rock'	65	56	56	49	45	46
Heavy	22	18	15	12	14	15
Rap	18	17	16	14	7	10
Techno	14	10	10	7	7	6
Jazz	5	6	8	8	6	7
Easy listening	3	5	4	3	7	7
Folk music	5	3	5	3	2	3
Religious		4	4	4	5	3

Many have emphasised (Rahkonen 1995, Bourdieu 1984, Bryson 2002) the fact that taste is not just composed of preferences, but also of rejections and even dislikes. Indeed, the picture sharpens up interestingly when rejections of music genres are examined. These are based on answers to the open Leisure Survey question 'Are there some types of music you do not like at all?' The emphases in the rejections fall slightly differently from those in the mentioned musical preferences, and are not quite as detailed.

What might people reject and how relevant is the direction of their rejections to the interpretation of taste cultures? Is something that is close to own music taste or some entire music culture or even a group of people representing it rejected? Basing on the results from the mentioned dislikes both types of rejection can be observed.

The position of classical music as a 'Finnish class culture', albeit a very weak one, gains strength in the mentions of dislikes: it is rejected most by identifiers with the working class and least by identifiers with the upper middle class. If we compare mentions of musical dislikes with rejected audience institutions and musical preferences, active rejection of the opera is, nevertheless, fairly moderate compared to how distanced people feel from it as an institution and how rare opera music is as favourite kind of music. This would allow the assumption that a matter that is perceived sufficiently distant from own work and 'homeliness' does not need to be strongly rejected, either.

Among the music cultures, rock music arouses most negative feelings. It is rejected above all by upper middle class people, but its rejection is also strong in all groups. The central sub-cultures of rock music, i.e. heavy, rap and techno are high on the list of dislikes and rejected almost equally strongly by all groups. People must sense something in rock music that is far distanced from their own taste culture and the group with which they identify themselves. However, the rejecting may also be because people are attracted by some sub-genre of rock while strongly rejecting another one.

Why, then do the identifiers with the upper middle class reject rock most, after all rock is one of the central elements that the presenters of the theory of omnivorousness think should be linked with a taste for high culture. Is combining of taste for classical and rock music more of a question of generation, after all? Does it mean rejecting youth (rap) or working class (heavy) or defending own social environment, safety (techno)? Should not the identifiers with the upper middle class as representatives of the 'highest' cultural taste, in fact, reject easy listening music which, according to Sulkunen's interpretation (2006, 146), together with religious music represents 'banality', the liking of which evidences sparse cultural capital.

The high popularity of easy listening music as favourite kind of music is an interesting phenomenon that probably has connections with a larger area of meanings that define Finnishness. People are likely to have a variety of reasons for not rejecting easy listening music. First, to a large share of the population easy listening music is a self-evident part of everyday life, its music culture and own favourite music. Some probably fail to mention it because it does not belong to, or they do not encounter it, in their own sphere of life. People prefer to collide with the different sub-cultures of rock through new generations at home. Nevertheless this may not suffice as an explanation, and the paucity of rejections of easy listening music is probably also connected with the mechanisms of ambivalence associated with Finnishness.

Seeing ordinariness as a positive value is typical of Finnish culture. Haatanen (2005, 128) refers to it with the expression 'desirousness of average'. Finnish easy listening music is part of the core of Finnish popular culture and represents something shared and exactly ordinary Finnishness. Some of the repetitive mentions of Finnish rock within rock music can also be interpreted as almost meaning Finnish easy listening music. Easy listening music probably belongs to the same core of Finnishness as sauna, summer cottage and nature. As Finnishness it is identified with but, on the other hand, distanced from because it represents 'the people' and people's secondariness.

Central features of Finnish taste in music culture

The examination of likes and dislikes in music revealed a few central features of Finnish taste in music culture. Although it is clearly not structured on the basis of class identification, certain features of taste preferences associated with class identification could be observed even though for the most part Finnish taste culture does not seem to be shaped by identification with a certain social class. A small group identifying themselves with the upper middle class differed from the others in respect of greater liking for classical music in preference to easy listening music. People identifying themselves with the working class, in turn, keep themselves furthest away from classical music. This can be interpreted so that at least for the time being classical music and opera music, and the institutions associated with them have some importance in distinguishing 'class cultures'. However, disliking easy listening music is unlikely to be connected with the rejection of any specific social class but rather with distancing oneself from the 'masses'.

Liking of jazz should perhaps also be included in 'high culture' although it did not stand out very clearly in mentions of favourite music. It does not attract very wide interest but is, nevertheless, a genre of music where a linear increase in listening takes place among both men and women along with rising level of education (Alasuutari in this publication). Throughout its history in Finland, jazz has been popular among the academically educated and since the 1920s has represented modernism and internationalism (Liikkanen 1996). By contrast, other genres of music, such as canzone music, folk music or religious music do not seem to be structured by this dimension.

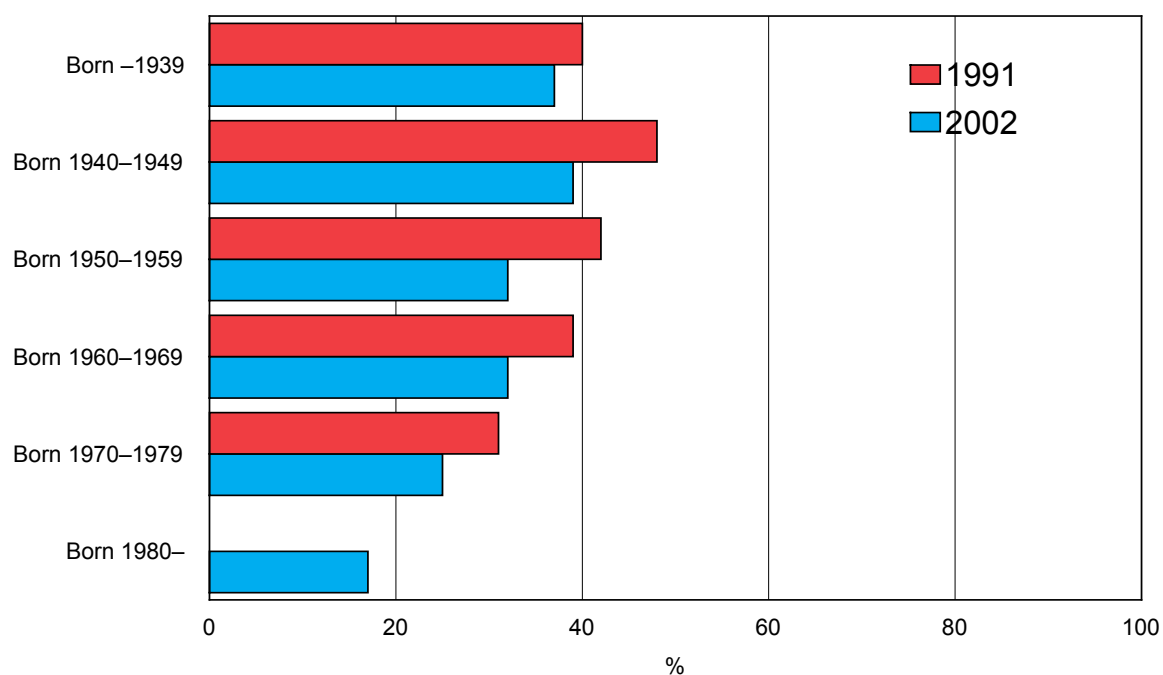
The strong position of easy listening music is a special feature of Finnish music culture. It is difficult to find a corresponding characteristic from other countries. Even just listened to it is the most popular genre of music whose popularity does not seem to be fading. The special position of the easy listening music culture is also underpinned by the fact that when respondents were asked generally about their targets of admiration and intensive following (Liikkanen 2005, 98) the long-term favourites of Finnish easy listening music were especially selected as targets of admiration. Most of the artists mentioned in answers to the question concerning favourite music were also easy listening stars (Ekholm 2005, 111-112). Finnish easy listening music is a strongly national phenomenon tied to the language although it has assimilated into it a lot of international material translated into Finnish, such as Argentinean tangos, Russian romances, German schlagers, Anglo-American foxtrots, and so on. By international comparison, a comparatively large proportion of the sound recordings sold in Finland are Finnish-produced. For instance, in 2003 Finnish sound recordings accounted for over half, or 56 per cent, of all sound recordings sold in Finland. (Finnish Mass Media 2004, 116).

In the light of the mentions concerning it, rock music with its various sub-genres seems to be the most diversified and in that sense the most renewable and vigorous part of music culture. For the sake of simplicity, I am again referring to rock music as a very broad concept, conscious of the fact that it may not be approved of by many devotees to its sub-genres. Many strong sub-cultures of music, favoured by different

generations can be observed in the mentions of rock music, as well as 'general rock' approaching easy listening music and domestic artists. Rock music enthusiasts include people who identify themselves with all the different social groups.

In 1990, Paul Willis wrote (1990, 128) that, "Élite and 'official' culture can no longer hope to colonize, dominate or contain everyday life because there is already something there which grows from its own resources...". In sociological writings, Bourdieu's thought about legitimate culture is a repeated and cherished idea. If legitimate is defined as publicly supported and as high culture, i.e. classical music, then people identifying themselves with the upper middle class certainly favour it. However, no movement toward a 'legitimate' direction as described by Bourdieu can be observed in the entire field of taste cultures, but from the 1990s to the 2000s listening to classical music has clearly lost popularity (Ekholm 2005, 108, Figure 5), and the same has also happened to going to concerts (Liikkanen 2005, 71). This applies to both women and men, although women still continue to be more interested than men in classical music. The audiences of classical music are also getting older than before.

Figure 1. Listening to classical music by year-of-birth cohort in 1991 and 2002



It is interesting that even the 'core' audience of classical music, i.e. upper white-collar employees and highly educated people, have cut down fairly drastically on their visits to concerts as well as on general listening to classical music. Previously, upper white-collar employees went to concerts of classical music clearly more often than people in other social groups. Today, however, nearly as many of the pensioners and farmers who have been to concerts have been to concerts of classical music as of the upper white-collar employees whose hobby is going to concerts. Among male upper white-collar employees, personal listening to classical music has actually plunged from around 60 to around 40 per cent, even though it is still clearly more frequent among them than among other men. The drop among female upper white-collar employees has also been

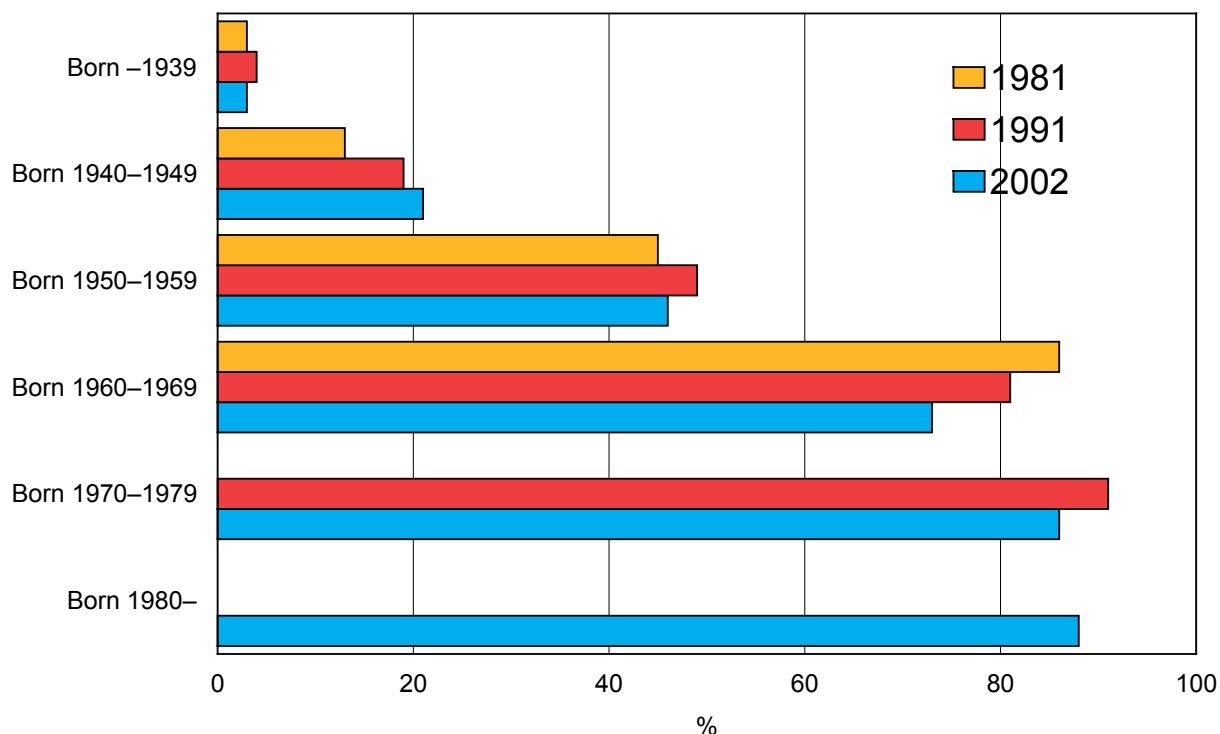
considerable, from 75 to 60 per cent. It may be that going to concerts of classical music is today characterised by age-related differentiation between diverse performing spaces.

All in all, women still listen more than men to classical music. Listening to classical music has diminished in all year-of-birth cohorts, but women of all generations clearly continue to listen to classical music more than men do. However, in the youngest generation born after 1980, women listen to classical music clearly less than earlier generations, so the difference between them and men is also no longer large.

When taste cultures are being assessed, the relative movement between different forms of culture should also be taken into consideration. If the movement of audiences is away from classical music, for the time being the popularity of easy listening music continues to appear to form quite a permanent backbone of Finnishness. The vast majority of the adult population listen to it. Among the music cultures of audiences, religious music and folk music are also genres favoured by diminishing audiences (Ekholm 2005, 108, Figure 5). In respect of rock music, however, the movement is an upward one. While as late as quarter of a century ago, in the early 1980s, listening to rock music was still pure youth culture, it has now gradually moved to constantly older age groups (Ekholm 2005, 109, Figure 6). Especially to some of those born in the 1950s, being interested in rock music has been a generational experience. Around half of them listened to rock and pop music in the early 1980s and the proportion has remained quite unchanged up to the beginning of the 2000s. Besides the music itself, it has been buoyed as an experience from youth by the sound recording industry and also by the development of sound reproduction equipment. This is the first of the so-called 'youth generations', to earlier age cohorts this genre of music was not important. Starting from the age groups born in the 1960s, pop and rock music have represented generations' dominant music culture in which the internal differentiation between pop and rock music has become more important than differentiation from other genres of music. As a dominant culture it may no longer be so strongly a choice made for the sake of own identity, meaning that it is also possible to withdraw from it along with age. While in the early 1980s, rock was still clearly a genre favoured by men, the fact that women now listen to it equally much and in the youngest age groups even more than men, also describes its development into a dominant culture. The artists who were named as favourites by all the respondents aged under 25 who listed their favourite artists represented rock music and the vast majority – 80 per cent – of these respondents were women (Ekholm 2005, 113).

It seems that in favouring rock, identification with certain sub-cultures of music is, indeed, more important than analysing of own music taste through identification with a social group, even though emphases of this type can also be seen: the greater popularity of heavy among identifiers with the working class, and hip-hop and techno among identifiers with the middle classes. Even to these differences, however, gender and age may have more bearing than to the identification with a social class.

Figure 2. Listening to rock and pop music by year-of-birth cohort in 1981, 1991 and 2002



To sum up it could be said that Finnish tastes in music culture do not seem to be structured only according to class or status groups as described by Gans. Class-based structuring is only one dimension of the composition of music taste cultures. Thus, the core seems to be formed by three dimensions that are built around classical music, pop and rock music, and easy listening music. Among these, classical music and easy listening music contain the largest numbers of features correlating with class segregation. Classical music associates especially with identification with the upper middle class. Its rejection is widest among people who identify themselves with the working class. Attitudes to easy listening music bring into this an interesting, history-bound feature. People identifying themselves with the upper middle class keep a certain distance from it as favourite music, but do not, in fact, actively reject it, either. This does not mean keeping a distance from any specific class, but from 'the people', which they cannot really reject as such even though they feel that they do not actually belong to it, either. On the other hand, people identifying with the upper middle class listen to rock as their favourite music, but also reject it more than other groups do. Identification with the upper middle class is only part of the reason for selecting classical music. The vast majority who mentioned classical music as their favourite identified themselves with other social groups. Gender plays an obvious role in choosing to prefer classical music. Otherwise, too, women select their favourites from among art cultures more often than men do.

Rock music is the most multi-dimensional of music cultures. It seems to indicate towards a number of identification targets, such as age (sub-genres of rock), gender, general middle class or Finnishness,

ordinariness (Finnish rock) or a certain interest community. All forms of music examined above – classical, easy listening, pop and rock music – are thoroughly impregnated by international influences and contents. Finnishness in them is represented by the way in which these music cultures are given significance and become a negotiated part of everyday order, its emotional culture and social interaction.

Tendency of omnivorousness

The results Peterson and Simkus (1992) and Petersons and Kern (1996) obtained at the beginning of last decade concerning growing omnivorousness of music tastes is one of the most often quoted references in research into changes in taste (Liikkanen 2003, Alasuutari in this publication). In research the phenomenon of omnivorousness has been regarded as especially interesting because it has been seen as changing in particular the attitudes of those representing taste for high culture and highly educated people towards other genres of music. Music genres conventionally considered as high or low culture are being increasingly combined. Interest in this specific group may be connected with Bourdieu-inspired thinking about its role as leader and legitimator of tastes in culture. Peterson and Simkus conclude, though, that the same trend concerns also other population groups and the entire American taste culture. Pertti Alasuutari proves (Alasuutari in this publication) that even in Finland high level of education no longer indicates taste for high culture to the same extent than before, i.e. selection of classical music, but that highly educated people choose to listen to a growing variety of music genres.

Basing on the examination of favourites and dislikes in music, classical and rock music would seem to have an interesting connection with the music taste of people identifying themselves with the upper middle class. Classical music represents their own world, but the relationship with rock music is contradictory, it is both own and alien, i.e. it is cherished and rejected. Listening to both classical music and rock music also associates strongly with the listener's other characteristics or cultural style. There is a major difference by gender in listening to classical music, women listen to it notably more often than men do, whereas in the listening to rock music age and gender are very important determinants. The next examination combines listening to both classical music and rock music by gender and year-of-birth cohort, and changes that have taken place in it.

Figure 3. Listening to both classical music and rock music by year-of-birth cohort and gender in 1991

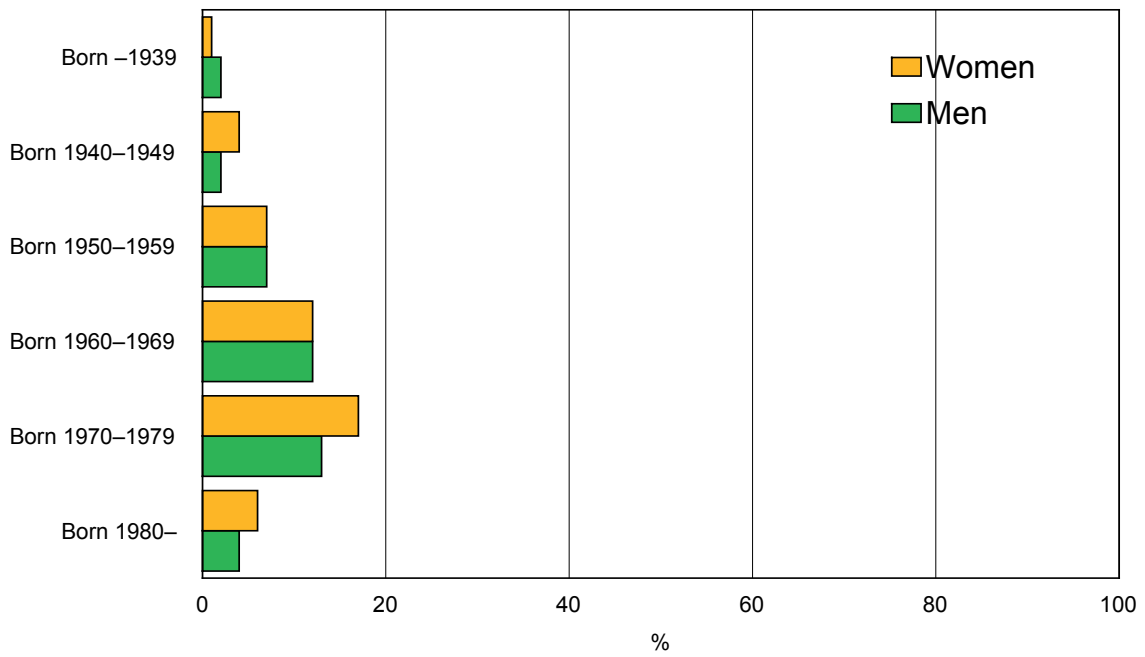
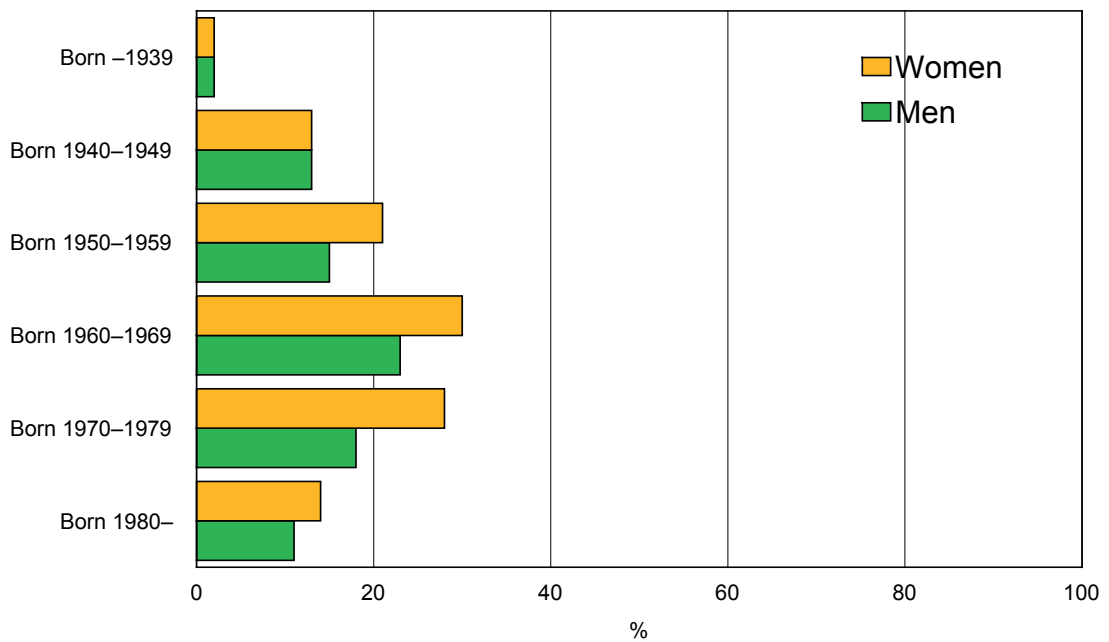


Figure 4. Listening to both classical music and rock music by year-of-birth cohort and gender in 2002



In 1991 it was still quite rare to listen to both classical music and rock music. The largest numbers doing this were found in the cohorts born in the 1960s and 1970s. Women accounted for a slightly larger proportion of them among the cohorts born in the 1970s. At the beginning of the 2000s, the situation was already quite different, and a considerably larger number of people were listening to both classical music and rock music. Their number had increased in all cohorts except for the very oldest one, and their numbers were the largest in the so-called rock generations, i.e. those born in the 1950s and earlier.

The consequences from the falling trend in listening to classical music can be seen in the very youngest generation. As only a small proportion of them listen to classical music on the whole, the proportion of those combining classical music and rock music is, naturally, also smaller than in the rock generations and the difference between the genders is also smaller. Women and men make equal proportions of listeners to both classical music and rock music also among those born in the 1940s. They are an older cohort than the rock generations, so in their case it may be because women and men have taken in to listening to rock music and combining it with classical music in step with the general cultural development. The examination shows that the trend towards omnivorousness is not only a new form of taste culture among highly educated people but also a phenomenon connected with behaviour compliant with gender and generation. The correlation between association of classical music with high culture and listening to rock music with masculinity grows weaker. By comparison, classical music had kept its position as a genre of music preferred by women, meaning that there are also more women than men who combine listening to both classical music and rock music.

Many interpretations of the omnivorousness link it in the Bourdieuan manner with changes in the class structure or status system of society. It is especially linked with the strengthened position of (global) middle classes or groups that signals change in the balance of power between classes and in the position of leadership in taste. To some, it only means change in the content of legitimate taste and detachment from conventional art institutions.

Bonnie H. Erickson who has studied the role of cultural taste at workplaces in Canada (1996) examines the phenomenon of omnivorousness and cultural taste in general from the perspective of the benefits gained from achieving success in working life. What kind of cultural and culturally connected knowledge brings benefit in a given environment varies considerably. Thus, according to her (cited volume, 221), "... there is no one type of culture (such as culture capital) that fuels class dynamics in all fields to at least some degree". She continues (cited volume, 224) that, "... In some settings, such as networks of writers, high-status culture is important in distinguishing social positions and rank. But in many others, including that vast mass of private sector companies below elite level, high-status culture is defined as an irrelevant waste of time." She mentions sports as a good example of a culture that has a correlation with gender, but not necessarily with class. Shared knowledge about sports is an advantage when networks are being built between men from different social classes.

According to Erickson (cited volume, 219) a more widely usable cultural resource is *cultural diversity* and cultural understanding of the rules of relevance. She states that, "... I argue that cultural inequality is not so much a hierarchy of tastes (from soap opera to classical opera), as it is a hierarchy of knowledge (from those who know little about soap opera or opera to those who can take part in conversation about both)." To her, omnivorousness means diversified cultural knowledge, which can be used for creating social connections and for one's own benefit in both work and social life. She considers that only part of culture is linked with social class and only some of this part is used in class relationships. She sees the life connected with leisure and the life connected with work as relatively separate. According to her (cited volume, 220), "... In leisure life, class is just one of many influences on lifestyles and culture is just one of many ways to draw social boundaries." Gans also sees a partial connection between taste structure and lifestyle, people also have other interests and in different environments they can change their taste culture for a while and use different repertoires on different arenas.

Erickson's model sees society as an entity formed by different social spheres and she indeed refers to Simmel, in whose social description complicated modern structures produce a large number of social circles and every individual has a unique combination of memberships in these social circles. This is also why, "... why one omnivore may choose one cultural mix while another chooses something quite different." (Erickson 247). This brings us to the discussion about social worlds as one possible way of describing modern society. The perspective of social worlds in describing the logic of modern world has been studied by Anselm Strauss and later especially by David R. Unruh and it is largely based on Simmel's idea about social circles. It has been advocated in Finland by Arto Noro (1995a) and Jukka Gronow (2004), in particular. Unruh states (1980, 217) that the perspective of social worlds endeavours to describe the segmented nature of today's world, in which social becomes organised also according to specific interests.

According to Unruh (cited volume, 280) commitments to social worlds are typically voluntary, partial, intermediated and from the point of identification eclectic. Social worlds are mostly not mutually hierarchical, but parallel and intersecting, sometimes nested. In his interpretation Gronow (2004) emphasises common aesthetic starting points of social worlds. Gans's definition of taste cultures contains a similar criterion. Taste cultures of the commonest level can, indeed, also be seen as loose social worlds based on mental images with which people identify themselves. Besides mental images of social classes they can equally well be connected with other targets of identification: Finnishness, gender, age. Cultural taste is not just differentiation from others, but also belonging to somewhere, whether it be an imaginary community of a nation (Andersson 1991) or taste culture associated with 'ordinariness'.

Unruh (cited volume, 280) identifies three levels in commitment to social world: alien, tourist, regular and insider. Although Gans (1974) does not analyse taste culture by degree of commitment, he makes many references to strong, life-long emotional commitments to certain taste cultures, which also hint towards insidership. These references relate to art culture and pop/rock culture. They can be interpreted as being associated with fandom, whose importance has been perceived as growing in audience cultures. From the perspective of social worlds it is not necessary to agree with the general point of departure in studies of

fandom that it is only limited to the area of popular culture (Grossberg 1995, 34, Nikunen 2005, 18, Heinonen 2005, 28), for many similar forms of behaviour and social activity can also be found in the worlds of 'art lovers'. In music, international music cultures, especially pop and rock music, but also classical music circle round the world, and people form new, more or less tightly knit networks around them, often with the help of new technology.

The social world perspective offers the opportunity to examine taste issues from the point of everyday life and habituality. With some taste cultures, we have the relationship of a regular, "... Both repetition and home address an essential feature of everyday life: its familiarity" (Felski 2000, 26). We feel at home wherever we find something familiar, whether it be an opera house or a sports field. The feeling of home is corporal, gendered and social, cultural habits and styles are simultaneously voluntary and inherited. However, in the cross flows of diverse networks, cultural traditions and international influences, and multiculturalism we are increasingly often tourists or even aliens in relation to 'other' social worlds and 'other' taste cultures (Liikkanen 2005, 97-99).

Finnish taste cultures – drawing on orientation towards average

The tastes of Finnish as well as of other cultures become organised in dialogue between own cultural tradition and international interaction. The challenge in describing it is how to observe and link together different parallel processes: births of new social forms, existence of old hierarchies and counter-structures, renewal and emergence of new hierarchies. The formation of tastes is also influenced by the relative positions in society of diverse institutions – science, art, media, and education system – and changes in the concepts and meaning structures they represent.

The examinations in the previous sections revealed permanency and changes in class identification in Finland and reflections from it into taste cultures. The vast majority of the population feel that they belong to the middle classes and in this the Finnish society follows the trend in western societies. Identification with the middle class is most prevalent among young people. The groups identifying themselves with the extreme ends, that is, the upper class and the lower class are small. Nevertheless, the fact that 1.5 per cent feel that they are lower class is as such an alarming signal of growing inequality in society, especially as interview surveys also otherwise reach those worst off fairly poorly. The relatively large number of people identifying themselves with the working class represents some kind of permanency.

There is no strong correlation between cultural taste and identification with a class in Finnish society. There is more unity than divergence between all classes, and more differences can be found between women and men. On the one hand, the differences become crystallised in the same thing that also unites, i.e. literary culture, while on the other hand, the differences are connected with the institutions representing or defined as high culture. The fact that young age and widespread feeling of belonging to the middle class are correlated is an interesting phenomenon from the point of changing taste cultures. In the audience culture of music it means especially preference of rock and pop music and through that maybe also identification as

international and detachment form certain traditional, basic cultural structures of Finnish society. Such a structure could be the twofold and tensioned attitude to the people and Finnishness originating from the history of the nation, which was discussed earlier when connections between class and music taste were examined. My interpretation was that the relationship with easy listening music represented this kind of tension, 70 per cent listen to it and it is quoted most often as favourite music, it is not rejected at all, but people regarding themselves as upper middle class keep a certain distance from it.

At the same time as people identify themselves with 'ordinariness' and Finnishness, they can always also take up a critical view. Satu Apo (1998) has referred to it with Erving Goffman's concept of 'spoiled identity'. It is a specific type of dialogue 'in which the members of a group representing a certain ethnic culture define it as being worse than several other ethnic cultures' (cited volume, 85). Speech represents a kind of cultural memory which in everyday repetition receives new interpretations and absorbs new things from international interaction. In 1994-1995 Apo collected from both popular (printed) and educated (seminars) publicity data about constantly repeated stereotypes or stigmas attached to Finnishness. According to her they, quote, freely translated: "...Can be derived from the basic claim that the Finns are backwoodsmen and peasants, in other words uncivilised and underdeveloped compared to so-called old civilised nations. The inevitable conclusion from the premise is that the Finns lack manners in *all* areas of social behaviour and self-presentation." Such expressions repeatedly seen in publicity as scum, yokel, wadded coat folk, shell suit folk or fur hat opera are connected precisely with this basic structure. Elsewhere, corresponding concepts would probably refer more clearly to population groups perceived as working or 'lower' class (Skeggs 2004). Indeed, concepts corresponding with, for example, the expressions 'highbrow', 'middlebrow' or 'lowbrow' that Peterson and Kern use (1996) have not been born into the Finnish language.

The 'tradition of spoiled identity' seems to persevere strongly in the media even in the 2000s. An example of this is the 'Ponytail band people' column of Anne Moilanen in Helsingin Sanomat, the biggest daily paper in Finland, in June 2006, which described the author's sentiments, most likely intended as ironic, onboard a ferry between Helsinki and Tallinn. The column was fairly critical but its logic follows and crystallises the recurring cultural manner of speech.

"...The problem was not the boat or the shipping line, but the passengers. You rarely see such a dismal cross-section of Finnish people.

A herd of badly dressed, overweight Finns, dragging their cases of beer ruddy-faced, trundle along in the transparent plastic gangways of the terminal. The women have short afro perms that were in fashion in the 1980s, now outgrown their cut. The end result is reminiscent of the familiar houseplant *mind-your-own-business*. If the hair is long, it is tied up with an elastic ponytail band. After all, you can tell peoples' social status from their hair retainers in about one second.

In one word, Finns going to Tallinn look deprived."

The classifier looks at her target possessively, corporally and patronisingly, and proves that she also knows the new keys for social classification, 'hair retainers', adopted from international television soap series. As the column continues the author switches perspective, a defence must be put up against the threat from the classifying Finnish eye. Nothing can protect even the classifier from it, not her classifying talent or even the high culture purpose of the trip.

"...Of course, they already photograph you along the plastic gangways. It is worth stopping to pose, even if you decide not to buy the photograph. Otherwise, a sample of grim-faced Jeans next door scurrying forward and looking completely unfocused and very, very unsexy – in plain language: mean – will be put on show in the busiest assembly hall of the ferry."

Besides that of the knowledgeable classifier, the 'cross-section of Finnish people' referred to at the beginning of the column only specifies one other social class, i.e. 'Finn-yokels' which in exact compliance with Apo's observations is placed lower than other people and is fastened to the national stigma of having 'no head for booze'.

"...It must be said of the Estonians and Swedes that they usually stand out favourably from the Finns. The most embarrassing thing about Finnish gangs is their drunken, bloated, unfounded national superciliousness.

"...The Finns are the new, ever more clearly distinguishable nation of losers around the Baltic Sea. "...They regard even boat cruises so depressing that they cannot cope with them without getting boozed out of their minds."

Publicity is becoming a more and more important source and producer of individual identities, group identification and inequalising mental images. In broad terms, the old tripartite division into good people, bad people and civilised/elite people sketched out by Koivunen and Lehtonen (2006, 21) can still be found on the arenas and among the subjects of today's Finnish public debate. What is new in the outlining is that as discussants the civilised people are split into two, the old, or political and cultural, elite and the new, or market elite. The discourse of the good people concerns ordinariness, everyday life and citizenship, and the discussants are mainly the traditional educated, elite. The discourse of the bad people concerns bad taste, forgotten people and scum, and the discussants come from the market elite and ordinary people. Lehtonen and Koivunen distinguish two arenas that seem to depart from the traditional tripartite division. The discussants on them are either the market elite or new, alternative actors and they are associated with young age, middle class, cosmopolitanism, alternativeness and individualism.

Global supply may highlight from the national catalogue matters that would have otherwise been left behind or forgotten. Such matters could be the derogatory or negative descriptions of the working class that are in active use in the Anglo-American world (Skeggs 2004) and that would have otherwise been discarded in

Finland decades ago. Yet, in their new 'Finnish' use they, too, often become attached to this same catalogue demeaning Finland. Paradoxically, the partner of the tradition of 'self-contempt' is the equality of the Finnish cultural circles and taste cultures, whereby someone who has settled into a place higher up can in the next moment be dropped back down among the others. The Finnish identity of the tensions may, indeed, have created togetherness and solidarity at the same time as it has put the emphasis on the valuation of ordinary things and orientation towards the average. Maybe the fact that over 70 per cent of the population appreciate easy listening music describes precisely this positive side of Finnish identity.

The cultural demand for the 'spoiled identity' is bound to diminish gradually and its usability in the cultural distinction game will become exhausted. What will happen when the repetition of ethnic self-contempt eases off? Does it release the entire population into the middle class spectrum of individual styles and choices? Or will the inequalising mental images of culture begin to look like the Anglo-American world where derogatory manner of speech and criticism of bad taste are directed at certain specific racial, social or geographic groups defined as being outside the privileged middle class?

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Mirja Liikkanen
Culture, and leisure studies
FIN-00022 Statistics Finland
tel +358 9 1734 3212
email mirja.liikkanen@stat.fi