

**Class background, parental socialization, and Gendered cultural preference  
in the context of China**

Student Name: Shuixia Lu

Student Number: 468781

Supervisor: Koen van Eijck

*Master Arts, Culture and Society*

Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication Erasmus  
University Rotterdam

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**ABSTRACT**

*The purpose of this article focuses on cultural consumption patterns of Chinese college students and examines the combined and individual effects of class background and parental socialization on gender-specific cultural preference in the unique context of China. It is an oriental developing nation with female children discrimination, the newly abolished one child policy, the absence of formal aesthetic education. With 155 questionnaires collected and multiple regression analysis used, we can determine the gender difference and measure the extent of the impact. We first found female students, in general, develop a taste for refined culture while boys are more inclined to lowbrow or popular culture which is in line with previous findings. Yet, popular music and TV programs do not display much gender distinction. Second, the impact of class background and cultural socialization on each type of proclivity varies. TV programs enjoyment and highbrow musical tastes are more triggered by parents' social position while parenting is the reason behind popular reading. Yet, these two important factors failed to account for other cultural preference, including highbrow and lowbrow activities engagement, highbrow music taste, and highbrow reading. Third, parents did socialize children on the basis of sex, which renders females in a disadvantaged position of developing highbrow tastes. Four, the number of and sex of siblings influence the way of parental socialization to varied extent.*

**KEYWORDS:** Bourdieu, Gender, Cultural preference, Parental Socialization, Class background

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## **Preface**

I own a great debt of gratitude to my supervisor professor Koen van Eijck who is always ready to help. Without his supporting help, the thesis would not have been completed. Thank you so much. Also, thanks my families and my dear friend Shi Mai for the encouragement and for being my moral support all the time. I really appreciate that.

## **1. Introduction**

Studies concerning cultural consumption, cultural preferences, and other cultural issues have been conducted for decades. One of the prominent hypotheses, the social distinction theory constructed by Pierre Bourdieu, states that the cultural activities involvements are not arbitrary but closely relates to the social class (1984, 1986). This social position is usually determined by economic capital and wealth that one possesses, cultural capital which refers to education level, taste, manners and knowledge base, and social capital, or the resources available through connections and networks of relationships. These three types of capital entwine with each other, which shapes the tastes of each individual in every possible way. With regards to cultural taste, people from higher social class backgrounds tend to consume more refined and legitimized culture, such as classical music and literature. The impact of social background on shaping cultural preferences implies that social status also can be passed on over generations. In other words, parents transmit their cultural tastes developed within their own classes to their offspring, which can generate inequalities in educational, cultural and social outcomes and they will last from generation to generation (Bourdieu 1977a, 1984; Bourdieu & Passeron 1990). Children obtaining different levels of cultural capital from parents in different social positions, consequently, will yield different outcomes, one of which is the persistently varied cultural tastes among classes.

To be noted, western industries countries usually are the focuses of cultural studies, which means more empirical studies should include non-western industries countries to validate the homology argument. (Jæger & Breen, 2016; Katz-Gerro & Jæger, 2015; Van Hek & Kraaykamp 2015; Van Wel, Couwenbergh-Soeterboek, Couwenbergh, Ter Bogt & Raaijmakers, 2005; Milner, 2000; Bourdieu & Passeron 1990). Western scholars have looked into the issue, but their results may only be relevant for the western societies. But what would be the case in non-western countries such as China? It would be intriguing to test the applicability in oriental countries such as China where the setting greatly differs, for example, the one-child policy of the millennials generation, authoritative parenting, female children domestic discriminations, and lack of art education (Lu & Chang, 2013). These factors may also

exert an significant impact on cultural reproduction and gender-specific socialization. This thesis, therefore, is going to expand this research domain to China to contribute to cultural taste studies geographically.

The hypothesis that has been mainly tested in western countries claims that family socialization affects children's cultural participation. However, there exist gendered cultural tastes for which class difference cannot be explained. According to Erik Bihagen and Tally Katz-Gerro (2000), in general, women develop a penchant for refined and elite culture while men usually are consumers of lowbrow cultural goods, which has also been concurred widely (e.g., Bennett, Bustamante, & Frow, 2013; Bihagen & Katz- Gerro, 2000; Christin, 2012; Coulangeon, 2013; Donnat, 2011; Dumais, 2002; Katz-Gerro & Sullivan, 2004; Nagel, 2010). It does not make sense to say that females are all born and raised in upscale families, while boys come from lower classes. The gender difference in cultural preference, as a matter of fact, also draws less attention than class differentiation. Bourdieu oversimplified the explanation for gender differences in cultural tastes, viewing gender as a specific indication of social class in *Distinction* (J. R. Hall, 1992, pp. 259, 267). And it is criticized for not taking into account gender fluidity and changes in women's social position. (Parker, 2016, p. 166, Bettio, 2017; Ciccio & Bleijenbergh, 2014; Olivetti & Petrongolo, 2016). One of the explanations dealing with the difference is parental socialization which may play a crucial role in shaping children's cultural tastes and the tastes they cultivated since little will, in turn, lead to different cultural preference on the basis of gender (Katz-Gerro & JæGER, 2015)

Differences in children's cultural preference patterns, under such circumstances, may find their origin in differential classes, but also in whether they were raised differently depending on their gender. But what matters more? Or are class and gender equally important in shaping children's cultural tastes? Gender has been a blind spot in Bourdieu's theoretical framework. Therefore, this thesis is going to assess both separate and compounded effects of class and parental socialization on gendered cultural preference in young adults in the Chinese context.

## 2. Theoretical background

### 2.1. Social distinction and cultural tastes

Published in 1984, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste* by Pierre Bourdieu revealed the homologous relationship between capital or class on the one hand, and tastes and cultural participation on the other, in the context of France. He pointed out it is more than an arbitrary personal choice to consume that cultural products. Cultural objects, according to Bourdieu, are characterized by a socially recognized hierarchy, which matches the social hierarchy of consumers (Bourdieu, 1984, pp.1). Explicitly, highbrow cultural activities, in general, are engaged by people possessing a relatively great amount of economic capital, cultural capital, and social capital. In contrast, lower class members are less prone to participate sophisticated cultural activities but appropriate culture lower in the socially recognized hierarchy. Relatively ‘easy’ classical pieces like “Blue Danube Waltz” and “the “Sabre Dance” usually were favored by consumers from the middle-class, compared to higher social class who were inclined to more refined music such as “*Well-Tempered Clavier*,” and “*Concerto for Left Hand*” in the study of the French around the 1970s (Bourdieu, 1984, pp. 15-17). The illustration manifests that there are class-related taste distinctions or homology.

Scholars question the contemporary applicability of Bourdieu’s model of 1970s France (Chan & Goldthorpe 2010; Peterson & Kern 1996). Empirical research, therefore, has been carried out in other contexts in order to test the validity of the homology theory. For example, the connection between social space and distinct cultural lifestyles has also been examined in contemporary Norway by Flemmen, Jarness and Rosenlund (2018). It is interesting to note that the nobility of Norway is less prominent than in 1970s France due to different historical trajectories. Steep social hierarchies seem to give away to relatively egalitarian class relations in the case of Norway in general. Yet, by conducting the empirical research, specifically mapping 168 lifestyle items onto the social space, “the validity of Bourdieu’s model of social class and the contention that classes tend to take the form of status groups” has been

sustained (Flemmen, Jarness & Rosenlund, 2018). Consumers in possession of different types of capital manifest distinct cultural tastes. For example, people with substantial economic capital prefer sensual and exorbitant cultural enjoyments, which is in contrast with counterparts with ample cultural capitals who lay more emphasis on “a more ascetic and intellectually oriented lifestyle” (Flemmen *et al.*, 2018)”. Furthermore, in the case of contemporary America, by looking into a substantial database of different cultural engagements of participants from diversified class backgrounds, Holbrook, Weiss and Habich (2004) affirmed that the cultural consumption patterns in America conform to Bourdieusian class distinction in cultural consumption patterns “by showing a tendency for differential revealed preferences toward highbrow/lowbrow cultural activities to be relatively more/less positive for those with higher/lower levels of economic and cultural capital”. In addition, the correlation between class and consumed arts, as a matter of fact, is quite strong in the American context by examining closely the “specifics of the preference spaces and differential preference vectors” (Holbrook, Weiss & Habich, 2004).

When the homology hypothesis is introduced to non-western nations, it also has been studied, but not as thoroughly as in western societies. In Chile, where the socioeconomic disparity is noticeable, Torche (2007) examines the association between social position and cultural consumption, especially book reading which is still regarded as one of the elite cultural activities in Chile. The substantial influence of social status on book reading is proven, with more people from the higher social class having a propensity for this cultural activity. It also happens in Singapore, a rather meritocratic society, where Tan (2013) points out the existence of different levels of the cultural capital of students resulting from class-based family backgrounds. Yet the finding of South Africa shows a different cultural consumption pattern, which presents “Bourdieu-like ‘high’ and popular culture consumption patterns” do not rely on traditional social space indicators but on the languages they speak (Snowball, Jamal & Willis, 2010). And cultural omnivorous was classified into traditional aged omnivorous with artistic motive and into modern younger omnivorous with entertaining motive. Thus, empirical evidence and theoretical arguments imply that the patterns may vary from one nation to



another given distinct national wealth, social conditions and other features (Bennett *et al.*, 2009; Smith 2001; Holt 1998). It makes sense supplemental researches to be carried out in new environments consequently.

The homology argument, however, has been challenged by the emergence of research on the omnivore–univore topic. Cultural omnivores are upscale consumers enjoying a breadth of cultural activities ranging from elite culture to popular culture. They have been identified in many studies (Peterson, 1992; Peterson, 2005; Peterson & Kern, 1996). And Chan and Goldthorpe (2010) coordinated studies in six nations: England, Chile, Hungary, France, the US and the Netherlands. It turned out that the omnivore–univore hypothesis gained much empirical support with people enjoying a wide spectrum of cultural tastes, instead of snobbishly sticking to legitimate culture. However, these groups of cultural omnivorous consumers usually are well-educated and from socially advantaged backgrounds; meanwhile they are not purely omnivorous, since they display repulsiveness for a number of cultural goods, such as TV sports programs, reality show, country and western music” (Warde *et al.*, 2005; Chan & Goldthorpe, 2010). Their selective omnivorousness, as a matter of fact, seems to be a modern-day variant of the Bourdieusian snob. Even though Bourdieu’s homology arguments have been challenged, the omnivore does not invalidate most of Bourdieu’s notion. Individual’s socio-cultural position still exerts a profound impact on the formation of cultural consumption, ranging from music, literature, dressing styles, eating habits and others (Bennett *et al.*, 2009; Bourdieu, 1984; DiMaggio & Useem, 1978; Katz-Gerro, 2006; Kraaykamp, 2002; Lizardo, 2006a). In other words, one’s cultural preferences and behaviors are still intricately linked to one’s class background.

## **2.2. Habitus and socialization**

The influential social reproduction theory demonstrates cultural tastes serving as a social status marker, and, in turn, different dispositions are cultivated in different social classes. The difference, in fact, will be maintained with cultural reproduction practices executed by parents, reproducing classed cultural tastes in the next generation. Upscale parents are capable of offering their children cultural resources that are deemed to be

legitimate and socially valuable (Bourdieu, 1984). Children, therefore, raised in particular social milieus, also display distinctive perspectives and act differently from class to class.

The concept of habitus, which refers to “a system of embodied dispositions [that] generates practice in accordance with the structural principle”, helps explain particular conducts and perceptions (Bourdieu, 1989). The social structure or class conditions within which people are born and raised exerts a quite pervasive impact on the lives of individual class members. But even while subjected to this influence, people still maintain self-awareness and autonomy, rather than being mindlessly governed by established habitus. (Bourdieu, 1989, cited in Houston, 2002). Durable habitus embodied in the way people perceive their surroundings, cultural tastes as well as proclivities, continue to be socialized in line with the social structure in which they are nurtured. It, in turn, marks the social distinctions of diversified social groups. In other words, “it will reflect class and material differences” (Houston, 2002). The research of Willekens and Lievens (2014) confirms the validity of Bourdieu’s theory of cultural reproduction as well. Domestic cultural reproduction has an impact on art and heritage participation as well as pop and rock participation, even though gender and education level have no strong effect on popular cultural engagement but on highbrow cultural participation (Willekens & Lievens 2014).

Highbrow culture and popular culture participation being structured by familial cultural capital can be partly understood through the notion of concerted cultivation, contributed by Annette Lareau (2011), which means that parents usually have malicious plans of how to cultivate their children to be elites. It is a parenting logic usually employed by American upper and middle classes. The lives of children born and raised in these social classes usually are stuffed with goal-oriented activities by parents with high expectations at the expense of a certain degree of playtime and freedom. On the contrary, children from lower classes usually are more left to themselves. They are more inclined to be governed by the logic of natural growth, with much more autonomy in shaping their lives. Class background exerts an impact on family tastes and dispositions, which accordingly influences the approaches people adopt in childrearing (Dumais,

2002). Class-based cultural proclivities and deportments, as a result, take shape under different parental practices. Children from upper and middle classes, given frequent and intense exposure to refined culture organized by their parents, may be inclined to consume highbrow culture whereas next generations from working class or lower classes are less concerned with legitimate culture. Lareau (2003) stated that “it is [the] economic and social resources that are key in shaping childrearing practices; as parents' own social class position shifts, so do their cultural beliefs and practices in child-rearing” (p. 251). In other words, different cultural tastes develop from childhood onwards in different social classes and may, therefore, persist over generations.

### **2.3. Gendered cultural tastes and cultural socialization**

Class distinction sheds light on heterogeneous cultural dispositions, while the habitus concept further supports that social milieus shape the lifestyles, practices and tastes and identities of children (Vandebroeck 2016; Lareau 2011; Savage *et al.*, 2001; Skeggs 1997). Children who were born and raised in a high-class family can later employ the elite culture that is obtained from their parents to achieve social advantages, especially educational achievement (DiMaggio, 1982; Kraaykamp & Van Eijck, 2010; Scherger & Savage, 2010). And it will result in the reproduction of class disparity across generations (Bourdieu, 1984). To be noted, most empirical researches regarding cultural dispositions lay emphasis on “parental influence and class background in the transmission of cultural capital to children” (Willekens & Lievens, 2014; Nagel, 2010; Dumais, 2008; Kraaykamp, 2003) and “studies of cultural capital and inequality typically focus on stratification along social class lines” (Aschaffenburg & Maas, 1997; DiMaggio, 1982; Dumais, 2002). However, with intensive concertation on class in the study of cultural consumption, a number of essential contributors have been ignored, and gender is one of them (Schmutza, Stearnsa & Glennie, 2016).

Traditionally, in general, women per se are keener on highbrow culture such as arts, music, theatre, and literature, which are characterized as feminine activities while men usually are consumers of lowbrow cultural activities. (Christin, 2012; Nosek & Smyth, 2011; Tepper, 2000; Close, Prenshaw & Zinkhan, 2004). But it is impossible

that all girls have upper social class background while not all boys are from less advantaged social position. Even though in his later work *Masculine domination* (2001), Bourdieu appeared to recognize the gender hierarchy as an autonomous stratification mechanism that affects people independently of their social class position, in contrast to his earlier views that gender is an explicit indication of social class (J. R. Hall, 1992, pp. 259, 267). However, this does not mean that his thinking on gender evolved a lot or became much richer through time (Silva, 2005). Bourdieu did not do justice to gender rationale in terms of different cultural engagement, especially in his earlier works, while more emphasis had been laid on the class (Atkinson, 2016; Lagaert, 2018). There had also been limited scientific attention regarding differences in gendered cultural tastes by the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Christin, 2012). Therefore, we need to find other reasons than classes variance to explain the gender-specific cultural difference.

And one of the contributing factors of gender difference is parental socialization. It is a parental practice, by which “beliefs, cultural values, customs and behaviors” of parents are able to be transmitted to the next generation who then internalize and use these assets to gain a promising social position in the future (Lee, 2003). But socialization is often gendered, since parents are intended to raise daughter to be consumers of refined culture, such as attending classical music concerts and museums visiting. (Christin, 2012; Lagaert *et al.*, 2017; Fredricks & Eccles, 2005; Zinkhan *et al.*, 2004; Eccles *et al.*, 2000; Tepper, 2000). For boys, they are raised to be more athletic because parents often encourage boys to engage into sports game, a sex-stereotyped activity to build leadership, power and manhood (Eccles & Harold, 1992). The gender-specific socialization starts to process since birth when boys and girls are dressed in different colors representing their sex (Carter, 2014). In a meta-analysis of 172 studies by Lytton and Romney (1991), it is shown that parents indeed tend to encourage sex-stereotyped activities. Also, in the context of western nations, based on what Lytton and Romney found, fathers are less lenient about childrearing of male who usually are punished more physically. Girls experience a different upbringing in general with a more complicated stratification than boys. According to Collins (2004), females usually work in the front stage of workplaces where the image of the organization will be

shown initially and can be well maintained by females. Meanwhile, they are also responsible for the reproduction of status in the domestic field. This first impression held by front stage female employees and housewives, called “Goffmanian labor”, which, as Collins (2004) claimed, will “result in a tendency of self-indoctrination, self-idealization and formal manners”. In other words, women, traditionally, are trained to be refined beings to achieve a decent social position for families or organizations. And consuming highbrow culture is a way to go. Christin (2010) and Tepper (2000) also state that parents laboriously cultivate females’ interest and active participation in legitimate culture, since “this realm of leisure activities (highbrow culture activities) provides a safer, separate sphere with more female attributes”. And it is usually mothers’ responsibility to stimulate girls’ interest instead of fathers’. But what influences lowbrow and male stereotypical activities? The results derived from pupils of 2nd-, 3rd-, and 5th-grade and parents with questionnaires demonstrate domestic socialization not only exerts a positive impact on females’ engagement in legitimated cultural activities but also on males’ interest in sports. Fredricks and Eccles (2005) championed that the stereotypical views on sports, viewed as a male activity, usually are reinforced by parents. Male students are encouraged while female counterparts are discouraged from doing sports, although types of socialization may act differently upon children’s cultural participation. For example, as Van Hek and Kraaykamp (2014) propose, active parental guidance would be more effective in encouraging children’s cultural participation. Therefore, the gender-specific cultural socialization sheds some light on the gendered cultural preferences in children’s later life.

Classes and gender-specific cultural socialization may act differently in shaping cultural tastes. Yet, the impact and outcomes may not entirely be consistent provided special circumstances of each region. A research concerning it used sibling samples to figure out the gender difference and the contributing factors. The results reveal that family background, as a matter of fact, has a limited amount of impact on gender-difference. Says in the researchers’ own words, “gender differences in highbrow leisure participation originate in factors outside the family” (Katz-Gerro & Jæger, 2015). What Katz-Gerro and Jæger (2015) found out challenges the dominant hypothesis that

parents' social positions as well as parental socialization are important factors causing gendered cultural preference. But, to be noted, this research is conducted in the context of Denmark, a developed country whose gender economic disparity is pretty mild compared with other nations, which grants women more time and financial support to pursue their own interest in highbrow cultural activities. Conclusions can vary from one country to another, just like Denmark in comparison to studies conducted in other nations.

#### **2.4. Case of China**

The testing and development of Bourdieu's homology hypothesis, Peterson's omnivorousness theory, generally took place in western industrialized nations, such as America, contemporary France, Norway and Canada. Peterson (2005) pointed out that distinct national variables, such as "levels of economic development, extent of inequality, levels of government subsidies, cultural traditions or the presence/absence and size of a cosmopolitan elite" are also a shaping force of "stratification of cultural consumption" (cited in Torche, 2007). This is championed by other researchers, including Bennett *et al.*, (2009), Smith (2001) and Holt (1998); under such circumstances, there is a list of distinctive factors, in the context of China, which may breed some interesting findings on the impact of class and socialization on gendered cultural preferences.

First of all, the unique one-child policy, deemed problematic by westerners, was just abolished three years ago and has not found precedence in any other countries but in the case of China. It may exert influence on parental socialization in comparison to westerners' with sound and objective footing of Blake's (1989) empirical findings. The family size entwines with the outcomes of offspring, according to Blake (1989) who found out that children from small size family, such as one-child families, are better off with respect to educational achievement. It is sustained by the dilution hypothesis which refers to resources including time, energy, finance invested on children by parents being diluted by the presence of many siblings and by pregnant mothers for years. Chinese one child policy had been implemented for over decades, so many Chinese young adults

are the only child in their families, while in western countries, without birth control, family size usually is larger than in China, which may give a hint on the difference in parental socialization.

Given the small size families, the only child is expected to gain more parental attention/ concerted cultivation, but that this might not apply equally to boys and girls, especially in China. The deep-rooted Chinese Confucian values and patriarchal family system may lead to a parental prejudice against daughters. For those parents, sons usually become breadwinners of the whole households and they continue the family line, supporting the elders (Hesketh, Li & Zhu, 2011). Sex-selective abortion happens, even though it is not as severe as in the old days. Child gender bias verified by the Rothbarth model shows that female children are discriminated in nuclear households even at the east coast urban area of China where the economy is thriving and well developed (Koohi-Kamali, Liu & Nguyen, 2014). Daughters are still placed in a disadvantaged position compared to sons in China. With two factors intertwined together, one child policy and parental prejudice against female children, the monetary and emotional investment in the cultivation of daughters and sons may tell a different story from other cases.

Domestic discrimination against female children, however, is argued against by some researchers, such as Lu and Chang (2013) who state that “the parenting of only children was gender egalitarian in that the same socialization strategies were equally applied to the only child, regardless of whether that child was a son or a daughter”. Their research finding seems to contradict what previous researchers found. We can hypothesize that boys will obtain more parental resources if the female girls prejudice exists in the case of China, while if there is the only one child situation, parental socialization will be more egalitarian as also some of the literature argues. Therefore, it would be interesting to probe into the gendered cultural tastes among Chinese to detect whether they were raised differently on the basis of sex in the Chinese context.

Last but not least, art education in China is far less properly justified than western countries; for example, seven to nine credit hours (1 credit hour (1 course) = 1 hour in class per week = 2-3 hours study time per week) is a must for German high school

graduates and two credits for their American counterparts (Fowler, 1996, p. 19). Although Chinese Ministry of Education has issued laws and policies to lay emphasis on art education, the outcome seems unsatisfying due to five problems, and two essential problems are lack of professional art teachers and examination-oriented educational system (Zhong *et al.*, 2013; Wang, 2015). Wang (2015) concluded that “art education in China may have ended up with failure” after conducting the research of Chinese college students’ art appreciation in which students described artworks with poor content analysis. It may suggest that both genders may be less keen interest in highbrow cultural activities but enjoy popular culture as a whole, given the fact that school art education is also one the reinforcement of the cultural appreciation.

Taking into consideration one-child policy, boys and girls are supposed to receive the same large amount of attention from parents, which possibly results in egalitarian socialization with boys and girls both intrigued into the authentic culture. But the female domestic prejudice does not agree with egalitarian socialization, saying boys would probably be invested more culturally and financially which working together with poor art education probably give rise to active engagement into highbrow cultural activities by males instead of females. We can, therefore, assume that the Chinese gender preference patterns will not entirely conform to the typical gender difference with girls’ appreciation of refined culture and boys’ interest into opposite cultural goods.



## **7. Method**

### **3.1. Data**

To test the relation of class difference and parental socialization with Chinese gendered cultural preference, the quantitative research method of a survey questionnaire is going to be employed. The research questions mainly are looking for the cultural consumption patterns of Chinese college students, comparison of the impact of class background and socialization on gendered cultural tastes. The quantitative methodology lays emphasis on comparison and measurement; consequently, it is better to employ quantitative methodology (Yilmaz, 2013). It is also a rather time-saving and cost-efficient approach to gather data (Kumar, 2011; Mathers *et al.*, 2007). Provided limited amount of research time and little research budget, it is sensible to carry out the research in a more efficient way. In addition, conducting the research with questionnaires offers great anonymity. If there are sensitive questions, respondents feel much more at ease when they are filling out a questionnaire, which helps to attain more accurate answers (Kumar, 2011). For example, some students would find it a little embarrassing and uncomfortable to talk face-to-face about their parents' occupations which may be not glamorous, or even menial. It is easier to write down the answer anonymously in a questionnaire.

### **3.2. Participants**

In this research, Chinese colleges students are target respondents. Because occupation, an indicator of class, is also an important contributor of different cultural preference, while we are testing the effect of class background not the class itself, college students with not jobs were recruited to exclude the effect of class. Also, college students are more independent and self-conscious about their cultural interest compared to lower grade students. And gender differences rise up in younger groups than grown-ups (Lagaert, 2018). 155 surveys were successfully collected by distributing the link of questionnaires through Wechat, Chinese social network. Students were recruited by snowball sampling, which “allows to explore networks”, even though it may cause some bias (Bryman, 2012). And in this research, due to this respondent recruiting

strategy, 74.19% of respondents came from Guangdong Province, which failed to cover the students' cultural preference of other locations. Respondents are around 22 to 18 years old, ranging from freshmen to seniors of colleges. 62.58% are female students compared with 37.42% male students. Besides, the only child students account for 55.48% of the sample whereas 44.52% of respondents have siblings, which suggests the failure of the one-child policy.

### **3.3 Measurement**

#### **3.3.1. Social Position**

To find out what impact family background exerts on students, parents' social position needs to be examined. One of the central concepts of Bourdieu's sociology is capital, which consists of three varieties, namely economy capital mainly measured by income and ownership, social capital referring to social connections and cultural capital mostly determined by education. In general, what social position people land on is basically defined by the volume and structure of their capital. In this research, two of the most salient manifestations, cultural capital and economic capital, of social position are taken into account. By examining the cultural capital and economic capital of parents, we can determine what class backgrounds respondents have and to what extent family background influence gender cultural tastes.

Cultural capital is operationalized as the educational level of parents. With the statistics gathered, in general, parents with high school diploma outnumber other diploma holders (34.84% of father and 28.39% of mother), followed by undergraduate diploma holders, with father undergraduates making up 27.1% and mother counterparts accounting for 21.29%. Only a small proportion (around 6%) of parents did not obtain any certificates, compared with approximately 13% of parents with master's degrees. For economic capital, occupations of parents were investigated. International Standard Classification of Occupations was adopted with a mild adjustment for Chinese work settings. 10 types of works were provided, with slightly more than one third of fathers and one fourth of mothers in this research taking important positions as Legislators, Senior officials, Managers. Jobs like service and sales workers also recruited 30% of

fathers and 30% of mothers, while the same proportion (20%) of mothers and fathers exercise professions of law, medicine, engineering and others.

### **3.3.2. Socialization**

To dig out in which way students have been socialized, questions including whether they attended the given extra-curriculum classes, the frequency of cultural talks with parents as well as the frequency of attendance of highbrow cultural activities and popular cultural activities, were asked. Details concerning cultural socialization were gathered by retrospective questions, by which respondents recalled cultural activities undertaken with their parents when they were around 10 to 12 years old. Cultural activities, cultural and art talks by parents and lesson attendance like fine art, dance and sports games can give a hint of whether parents socialize children according to their gender, and correlations with the class background can be checked. In addition, respondents need to answer the questions of the number and gender of siblings to test whether being the only child or have siblings of same or different gender has an impact on parental socialization.

### **3.3.3. Gendered cultural preference**

In addition, students' individual current cultural preferences were investigated. Respondents were invited to indicate their preferences on a five-point Likert scale. For TV programs preference, it was determined by the extent to which (ranging from dislike a lot, dislike a little, neither like nor dislike, like a little to like a lot) each respondent favored items from a given list of TV programs, consisting of animation, soap operas, sports games, entertaining shows, news programs and documentaries, which are the main types of tv programs in China. The same assessment was applied to the preference of musical genres, which contains youth popular music, including pop, rock and roll, hip hop, rap, indie music and country music, highbrow and serious music, including classical music, folk music, jazz. Frequency (ranging from never, rarely, sometimes, often, to very often) of reading types, of participation of cultural, arts and sports activities, and of playing popular mobile and computer games among the youth were

also then examined. In addition, samples in this thesis are undergraduate male and female students who are from 18 to 20 years, so age and gender are control variables.

## **4. Results**

### **4.1. Method of research**

With the data set collected, the SPSS program was applied to analyze the data. The spuriousness of relations or the impact of interfering variables was ultimately dealt with by using multiple regression analysis, which allowed me to control for such potentially confounding effects and assess the relative importance of predictor variables.

With all variables put in models, it became clear to what extent they had a net, or unique, effect on the outcome variables. For example, this allowed me to calculate to what extent the differences in cultural preferences between my respondents caused by different class backgrounds. In addition, controlling for class made sure that the remaining gender differences were not explained by class differences. Thus, multiple regression allowed me to assess causal effects of gender taking into account many additional potential sources of gender differentiation in cultural taste or behavior. The more variables I put into the model simultaneously, the more precisely I was able to assess the net effect of gender. With such models, I managed to evaluate and disentangle the relations between gender, socialization class and cultural preference. It worked the same as the socialization predictor or other variables were added to the model. But first I will address gender differences at the descriptive level. Besides, given the small number of respondents,  $p \leq 0.10$  was assigned with \* to indicate the significance, instead of  $p \leq 0.05$ , therefore we had \*  $p \leq 0.10$  for mild significance, \*\*  $p \leq 0.05$  for medium significance, \*\*\*  $p \leq 0.01$  for high significance.

### **4.2. Descriptions of gender differences**

The compare means command was employed to summarize and compare gendered differences in descriptive statistics across listed variables. In Table 1, the gender differences regarding childrearing and individual cultural tastes are presented. In general, parents were more prone to send their daughters to artistic lessons when they were around 10-12 years old than their sons. Girls outnumber boys in all lessons, except for sports lessons with 67% of male students compared to 58% of female students. The most prominent gender difference can be found in dance/ballet where there were nearly

60% of female students in contrast to 24% of male counterparts. This is the only significant gender differences in classes taken.

Interestingly, parents were more inclined to attend activities with their male children rather than taking girls. This attendance is measured by a five-point scale of frequency, which means the higher the number is, the more frequently respondents participated in the activities with their parents. As we can see, male students more often attended classical music and popular music concerts, as well as sports games with their parents at the age of 10 to 12 years old. In contrast, female students more often talked about arts and culture with their parents at the same age. These four activities involving parents show significant gender differences, which is not manifested in other categories of parental activities. Thus, parental socialization differs between boys and girls in this case; therefore, students' current cultural preferences may also display gender differences.

Frequency measurement of the five-point Likert scale is applied to students' reading habits and current cultural activities. Male students more frequently read scientific and technology books and manga and other comic books whereas females usually are loyal fans of Poetry and essay, Romance, and detective novels. These types of books, except for manga and other comic books where the difference is significant yet smaller, are highly gender-specific while other kinds of books show no significant gender distinction. In addition, for attendance frequency of their current cultural activities, boys participate more in lowbrow activities, including attending popular music concerts, sports games and playing mobile and computer games, which seems less appealing to girls. Yet, highbrow cultural activities, including visiting museums/art exhibitions, watching theater play and dance performance, surprisingly display no marked gender difference, which does not correspond to the typical gender cultural engagement pattern of western countries.

In addition, musical genres and TV programs are measured by five-point Likert Scale of preference. Musical tastes do not demonstrate gender distinctions, with all significant values above the .01. However, with respect to TV programs, three types of TV series are marked with gender difference, two of which, sports games more favored

by boys and entertaining shows more preferred by girls, are highly gender-specific. At the same time, girls are also keener on documentaries than boys, but this gender difference is smaller.

**Table 1: Results of compare means modeling of gender and parental socialization, individual current cultural activities (N=155)**

	Male	Female	Sig.
<i><b>Parental socialization</b></i>			
<b>Lessons</b>			
Musical instrument	66%	73%	.314
Dance/ Ballet	24%	59%	.000***
Painting/drawing	41%	53%	.179
Sports	67%	58%	.242
<b>Activities with parents</b>			
Museums/art exhibitions	2.28	2.07	.235
Plays	2.47	2.34	.488
Classical music concerts	2.26	1.73	.003***
Popular music concerts	2.12	1.67	.005***
Sports games	2.84	2.27	.004***
Ballet/dance performance	1.81	1.67	.379
Teaching/talking about arts and culture	2.36	2.85	.004***

***Individual current cultural preference*****Reading**

Scientific and technology books	3.22	2.75	.005***
Art books	2.83	2.97	.424
Literature	3.28	3.53	.153
Poetry and essay	2.62	3.07	.010***
Romance, e.g. <i>Pride and Prejudice</i>	2.78	3.30	.002***
Science fiction, fantasy and horror	3.24	3.02	.179
Manga and other comic books	3.28	2.96	.073*
Practical books, e.g. cooking	2.71	2.57	.433
Novels, e.g. detective novels	3.38	3.92	.003***

**Activities attendance  
of students'  
themselves**

Museums/art exhibitions	2.57	2.82	.176
Classical concerts	2.36	2.11	.184
Popular music concert	2.66	2.13	.008***
Theatre play	2.22	2.33	.596
Dance performance	2.07	2.25	.380
Sports games	3.16	2.42	.000***



Play or watch	3.00	1.88	.000***
LOL/King of glory/Player's unknown battleground			

#### **TV programs**

Animation	3.33	3.52	.297
Soap operas	3.14	3.30	.277
Sports games	3.74	3.01	.007***
Entertaining show	2.97	3.46	.000***
News programs	3.34	3.38	.825
Documentaries	3.40	3.78	.039**

#### **Musical genres**

Classical music	3.40	3.66	.106
Pop	3.64	3.89	.189
Rock and roll	3.28	3.14	.484
Hip hop	3.22	3.31	.660
Folk music	3.29	3.42	.383
Country music	3.36	3.69	.301
Rap	3.16	3.13	.915
Jazz	3.34	3.46	.551
Indie music	2.88	3.05	.260

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Significance: \*  $p < 0.10$  \*\*  $p < 0.05$  \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

Given the assumption of female children domestic prejudice in China, investment in girls is supposed to be limited. Yet, girls still earned a certain amount of parents' attention and investment, with more girls in this sample taking courses planned by parents. Also, parents were more often converse arts and cultures with female children. In contrast, boys were given more opportunities to attend activities with their parents.

However, for many individual cultural activities and preferences, the prominent gender difference is not found, not even in supposedly stereotypical female preferences such as highbrow music genres and musical instrument class attendance, painting/drawing classes attendance, museums/art exhibitions visits and classical concerts visits. Many empirical researches demonstrate that the number of female students usually overtakes that of male students in lessons like art, music, dance and in concerts attendance, and art museums visits (Christin, 2012; DiMaggio, 1982; Dumais, 2002). Here, we can see that the gender difference in China is not completely accordant with previous researchers found that women are more into highbrow culture and men into the lowbrow culture.

Yet, one thing worth attention is that there still exists a certain number of gender differences in many cultural items, so the small difference can be added up to an actual significant overall difference, which may reveal gendered cultural preference patterns. In the following factor analysis, the separate indicators of cultural activities and preferences will be converted into factors, or effectively scales, based on their mutual correlation, and the gender difference in these cultural scales will be revealed in the regression analysis.

#### **4.3. Effects of parental socialization and family background on cultural preference**

From the above compare means analysis, we can find out there are significant differences in cultural preference between male and of female Chinese college students. To further diagnose to what extent other factors, such as occupation and education of parents, as well as the way in which students were socialized when they were young, play a role in it, regression analysis is applied. Because in the following regression analysis, a number of concepts are converted by the principal component analysis into a set of factors that are uncorrelated among one another due to the varimax rotation. This principal component analysis is run before the regression command in order to create more robust and encompassing scales.

In table 2, we can see that two components are extracted by Principal Component Analysis from frequency of engaging in the listed activities over the last 12 months and

reading of given books and preference of musical genre. For TV programs, only one component is extracted. Looking at the table of frequency of engaging in activities, we can see that visiting museums, classical concerts, popular music concerts, theater plays, and dance performances loaded on component 1, while playing or watching mobile or computer games belongs to component 2. Watching sports games is less clearly assigned to one of the factors. Therefore, we convert activities participation into two new variables, highbrow activities and lowbrow activities.

**Table 2. Results of Principal Component Analysis of students' cultural preference (N=155)**

<b>Frequency of engaging in listed activities over the last 12 months</b>	<b>Component 1 Highbrow activities</b>	<b>Component 2 Lowbrow activities</b>
Museums	.667	-.276
Classical concerts	.825	-.061
Popular music concerts	.744	.141
Theatre play	.799	-.144
Dance performance	.617	-.009
Sports games	.464	.389
Play or watch LOL/King of glory/ Player Unknown's Battlegrounds	.079	.880

  

<b>Frequency of reading</b>	<b>Component 1 Highbrow reading</b>	<b>Component 2 Popular reading</b>
Novels (detective novels)	.794	.028
Literature	.761	.225
Romance (e.g. Pride and Prejudice)	.742	.246
Poetry and essay	.614	.278
Manga and other comic book	.111	.767
Practical books (cooking)	.076	.723

Art books	.190	.642
Science fiction, fantasy and horror	.417	.586
Scientific and technology books	.258	.548

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	Component 1	Component 2
<b>Preference of musical genres</b>	Popular music	Highbrow/authentic music
Hip hop	.912	.035
Rap	.816	.175
Rock and roll	.723	.284
Pop	.674	.354
Country music	.198	.771
Folk music	.189	.706
Classical music	.005	.661
Indie music	.286	.594
Jazz	.418	.587

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<b>Preference of TV programs</b>	Component 1
News programs	.713
Animation	.683
Documentaries	.665
Soap operas	.612
Sports games	.595
Entertaining show	.573

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Significance: \*  $p < 0.10$  \*\*  $p < 0.05$  \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

Likewise, we have four new variables, general highbrow/authentic musical taste (Country music, Folk music, Classical music, Indie music and Jazz) and popular music preferences (Hip hop, Rap, Rock and roll, Pop), general highbrow reading (Poetry and essay, Literature, Romance e.g. Pride and Prejudice Novels, e.g. detective novels) and

popular/lowbrow reading (Manga and other comic book, Practical books e.g. cooking, Art books, Science fiction, fantasy and horror and Scientific and technology books). For TV programs, only a single factor is extracted, implying that the amount of TV watching is more important than the specific programs being watched. In addition, all lessons, activities with parents as well as cultural and arts talks have been converted into three independent variables by simply adding number of lessons, activities and culture and art talks about art as a single variable in factor analysis command.

In addition, given the strong correlation between education of mother and of father (0.799\*\* Pearson correlation), the mean value of education of both parents is used instead of individual education levels of mother and of father to avoid multicollinearity and to offer one strong indicator of the family's educational climate instead of two competing ones. The same approach is applied to the occupation of parents with a 0.600\*\* Pearson correlation, for which the mean of both parents' scores is used as well.

With concepts converted into variables, we proceed with regression analysis to figure out the impact of variables. In table 3, linear multiple regression analysis is used to assess the effects of the independent variables, including gender, cultural socialization, and parental education and occupation on the dependent variable preference of highbrow musical genres. Gender is coded as 1=male and 2=female in the whole analysis. In Model 1, gender is entered and explained 2.7% of the variance in highbrow music consumption. As we can see, by moving from the men to the women (from 1 to 2), we see a .340 increase in highbrow music listening in model 1. The significant effect of gender does not change much in models 2 and 3, since no marked impact is found of parents' activities with children and from lessons they took. These aspects of family socialization, therefore, do not account for the gender difference in highbrow music preferences. The effect of gender, nevertheless, is weakened when the frequency of arts and cultural talking and education parents offered to their children is added to the model. Cultural and arts talks are more significant than gender given the larger standardized effect (.148 beta value for gender and .191 for talking). Only one of the factors of parental socialization exerts a significant impact on highbrow musical tastes, and gender still maintains its effect on shaping the taste, although about a quarter

of the gender effect from model 3 is now explained by this added variable. Thus, differences in how often parents discuss subjects of arts and culture with their daughters versus their sons account for some of the (gender) differences in highbrow music preferences.

But the salience of these two variables is overshadowed by other variables, measuring social position, which consists of education and occupation of the parents. In Model 5, education and occupation of parents are statistically significant with the proportion of explained variance increasing from 6.8% to 13.3%. Parent's education level shows a positive impact whereas occupation displays a negative effect when parental education is controlled, even though no relation between parental occupational status and highbrow music is present at the bivariate level. But the correlation between parental education and occupation is .446 which is quite high. It implies if respondents have higher educated parents, they are more likely to be into highbrow music when parents' occupational status is lower. And by using a compare means analysis, which is shown in footnote 1, we can see that female students on average have higher educated parents in this case<sup>1</sup>. We, therefore, conclude that any difference that is contributed by socialization is ultimately due to the fact that parents who invest more in cultural socialization are more highly educated and that it turns out that their education, one of the salient manifestations of social stratification, throws light on the gender-specific highbrow musical tastes.

In the regression result of popular music preference, we notice gender and joint activities with parents do not have a significant impact in model 1 and model 2. But in model 3, lessons do have a negative impact on this musical taste. The more lessons respondents take, the less likely they are to enjoy popular or lowbrow music. As shown from the above comparative analysis, female respondents usually took more lessons than male counterparts as teenagers. In other words, females are supposed to score

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<sup>1</sup> In this sample, females report higher education levels of the parents than boys, with the means of 3.96 of female students' parents in contrast to the mean of 3.47 of male students' parents, which would not usually be expected to be different for males and females.

lower than males for having had more lessons, but the regression does not show a suppression effect, so gender has no impact in any of the pop music models. No effects are found from cultural and arts talking or class background variables in model 4 and model 5. Therefore, unlike the stronger female highbrow music disposition, which is a result of family background, popular music tastes are more developed independently from family background, although negatively reinforced by parental socialization by the means of lessons attendance.

**Table 3. Results of regression modeling of musical genres and parental socialization and social position (N=155)**

<b>Dependent variable</b>	<b>Model 1</b>	<b>Model 2</b>	<b>Model 3</b>	<b>Model 4</b>	<b>Model 5</b>
<b>Highbrow/authentic musical genres</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>B</b>
	( $\beta$ )	( $\beta$ )	( $\beta$ )	( $\beta$ )	( $\beta$ )
Gender (female)	.340** (.165)	.377** (.183)	.403** (.196)	.305* (.148)	.267 (.130)
<b>Parental socialization</b>					
All activities with parents		.084 (.084)	.099 (.099)	.056 (.056)	.066 (.066)
All lessons			-.045 (-.054)	-.074 (-.084)	-.069 (-.083)
About 10-12 years old, arts and cultural talks and education				.186** (.191)	.130 (.135)
<b>Social position</b>					
Education of parents					.170*** (.232)
Occupation of parents					-.091*** (-.243)

<i>Variance explained</i>	.027	.034	.037	.068	.133
<b>Dependent variable</b>	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
<b>Popular musical genres</b>	B	B	B	B	B
	( $\beta$ )	( $\beta$ )	( $\beta$ )	( $\beta$ )	( $\beta$ )
Gender (female)	-.049 (-.024)	-.091 (-.044)	-.081 (-.009)	-.060 (-.029)	-.116 (-.056)
<b>Parental socialization</b>					
All activities with parents		-.096 (-.096)	-.056 (-.056)	-.075 (-.075)	-.076 (-.076)
All lessons			-.126* (-.152)	-.137* (-.165)	-.140* (-.167)
About 10-12 years old, arts and cultural talks and education				.080 (.082)	.038 (.039)
<b>Social position</b>					
Education of parents					.111 (.153)
Occupation of parents					-.021 (-.055)
<i>Variance explained</i>	.001	.009	.030	.036	.049

Significance: \*  $p < 0.10$  \*\*  $p < 0.05$  \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

In terms of reading preferences in table 4, effects differ between highbrow reading and popular/lowbrow reading. In model 1 for highbrow reading, gender is entered and explains 9.2% of the variance, with girls scoring much higher than boys. After the entry of cultural activities with parents in model 2, the gender effect goes up with the unstandardized effect rising from .628 to .724. Activities with parents also have a



positive effect on highbrow reading. Yet, according to compare means analysis of gender difference, parents were prone to socialize boys more in this means; consequently, boys are supposed to be fonder of highbrow readings. But females are more enthusiastic about highbrow reading with a higher score in model 1. Therefore, we can deduce that gender effect actually is partly suppressed in model 1, and it becomes stronger in model 2 where the path is opened up for a negative indirect gender-effect running through activities with parents. We can say that, despite females being taken less to cultural activities, daughters still make their own ways from the less advantaged position, developing more interest into highbrow reading than sons. Also, without prominent influence shown by other two socialization means or family background in subsequent models, it is logical to conclude that female prefer highbrow reading is attributed to neither parental activities nor the social status of parents. It is more like a taste developed by females themselves which may be attributed to other external and internal factors which have not been tested in this study, such as “adolescents’ gender identity, experienced pressure for gender conformity and gender role attitudes” in the case of Flanders (Lagaert, 2018).

As for general popular/ lowbrow reading, gender reveals its substantial negative influence in model 1. Being a female discourages reading which implies most audiences of popular reading materials are boys. In this model, gender explains only 4.7% of the variance in lowbrow reading before cultural activities of parents are entered in model 2, which displays a strong positive impact on it as the proportion of variance more than doubles. With more boys taken to join various of activities when they were young, boys develop more interest in this less sophisticated reading materials than girls. Also, the input of lessons students took in model 3 demonstrates a slight negative impact on popular reading. It makes sense girls attended more lessons, they, consequently, are less attracted by relatively uninformative books. In models 4 and 5, no crucial effects are found from the cultural talks and the variables tapping class background.

Therefore, what parents took them to do indeed plays a much more significant role in predicting popular/lowbrow reading than any other variables do. The fact that boys attended activities more often with their parents explains their higher scores on popular

reading. As a result, the difference between men and women in popular/lowbrow reading is attributed to differences in activities with parents, while none of the studied variables here shed light on women's highbrow reading taste, as the gender effect on highbrow reading is not affected by family socialization.

**Table 4. Results of regression modeling of reading and parental socialization and social position (N=155)**

<b>Dependent variable</b>	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
<b>General highbrow reading</b>	B ( $\beta$ )	B ( $\beta$ )	B ( $\beta$ )	B ( $\beta$ )	B ( $\beta$ )
Gender (female)	.628*** (.303)	.724*** (.351)	.719*** (.349)	.739*** (.359)	.678*** (.324)
<b>Parental socialization</b>					
All activities with parents		.228*** (.228)	.225*** (.225)	.234*** (.234)	.236*** (.227)
All lessons			.008 (.010)	.013 (.016)	.034 (.040)
About 10-12 years old, arts and cultural talks and education				-.038 (-.039)	-.058 (-.060)
<b>Social position</b>					
Education of parents					.082 (.111)
Occupation of parents					-.041 (-.109)
<i>Variance explained</i>	.092	.141	.141	.143	.154

<b>Dependent variable</b>	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
<b>General</b>	B	B	B	B	B
<b>popular/lowbrow</b>	( $\beta$ )	( $\beta$ )	( $\beta$ )	( $\beta$ )	( $\beta$ )
<b>reading</b>					
Gender (female)	-.448*** (-.217)	-.324** (-.157)	-.262 (-.127)	-.270 (-.131)	-.283 (-.137)
<b>Parental</b>					
<b>socialization</b>					
All activities with parents		.279*** (.279)	.314*** (.314)	.310*** (.310)	.313*** (.314)
All lessons			-.108* (-.130)	-.110 (-.133)	-.121* (-.145)
About 10-12 years old, arts and cultural talks and education				0.16 (0.16)	-.018 (-.019)
<b>Social position</b>					
Education of parents					0.89 (.121)
Occupation of parents					-.034 (-.089)
<i>Variance explained</i>	.047	.122	.137	.137	.148

Significance: \*  $p < 0.10$  \*\*  $p < 0.05$  \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

Table 5 gives a breakdown of the impacts of gender, parental socialization and family background on highbrow and popular activities within the last 12 months. The dependent variables are the frequency of highbrow activities participation and popular activities engagement respectively.

In the regression results of highbrow activities, gender, as the sole independent variable, does not show any influence in model 1 and the proportion of explained

variance is naught. The effect of gender, however, rises in model 2 when activities of parents come in. The activities variable depicts a significant positive effect. Yet, on the basis of the previous comparative means analyses, activities participation favors boys more than girls, which suggests that boys are supposed to be more enthusiastic about this cultural preference. The positive marked gender effect indicates a positive effect of being female in models 2, 3, 4, 5. Thus, the gender effect again has been counteracted by a negative indirect effect through activities with parents in model 1, which indeed proves that being a woman actually has a profound impact on the intense interest in highbrow activities participation but that this effect is neutralized by gender-specific socialization practices. Even though cultural and arts conversation more happened between parents and girls, it somehow discourages female from enjoying highbrow activities by displaying a negative impact in model 4 and model 5, so does the occupation of parents in Model 5. Yet, parents' education does not have much to do with girls' refined cultural activities involvement. Therefore, similar to the highbrow music tastes, girls in disadvantaged position still find their own ways to breed intellectual cultural preference.

In the second panel, it is noted that a negative effect of being female is 1.019, implying boys are much more into popular/lowbrow activities. Judged from five models, the significant negative effect of gender does not change much whereas two other important factors, parental socialization and social position of parents manifest no effect. Thus, it is concluded that parents tend to not affect boys' popular/lowbrow activities participation but do have a negative impact on females' highbrow activities involvement, albeit in a negative way.

**Table 5. Results of regression modeling of students' activities and parental socialization and social position (N=155)**

<b>Dependent variable</b>	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
<b>Students' highbrow activities</b>	B ( $\beta$ )	B ( $\beta$ )	B ( $\beta$ )	B ( $\beta$ )	B ( $\beta$ )
Gender (female)	.036 (.017)	.258* (.125)	.281* (.136)	.372** (.180)	.308* (.150)
<b>Parental socialization</b>					
All activities with parents		.505*** (.505)	.517*** (.517)	.557*** (.557)	.556*** (.559)
All lessons			-.039 (-.047)	-.016 (-.019)	.009 (.011)
About 10-12 years old, arts and cultural talks and education				-.173** (-.177)	-.171** (-.177)
<b>Social position</b>					
Education of parents					.050 (.068)
Occupation of parents					-.065** (-.170)
<i>Variance explained</i>	.000	.244	.246	.272	.293

<b>Dependent variable</b>	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
<b>Students' popular/lowbrow activities</b>	B ( $\beta$ )	B ( $\beta$ )	B ( $\beta$ )	B ( $\beta$ )	B ( $\beta$ )
Gender (female)	-1.019*** (-.495)	-.992*** (-.482)	-.960*** (-.466)	-.958*** (-.465)	-.992*** (-.480)
<b>Parental socialization</b>					

All activities with parents	.061 (.061)	.078 (.078)	.079 (.079)	.074 (.074)
All lessons		-.056 (-.067)	-.055 (-.067)	-.032 (-.039)
About 10-12 years old, arts and cultural talks and education			-.004 (-.004)	.029 (.030)
<b>Social position</b>				
Education of parents				-.047 (-.064)
Occupation of parents				-.014 (-.038)
<i>Variance explained</i>	.245	.248	.252	.252
				.268

Significance: \*  $p < 0.10$  \*\*  $p < 0.05$  \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

In Table 6, effects on the final dependent variable, TV programs preferences, are presented. Because TV programs yielded only one component in the above factor analysis, we cannot assign TV program consumption into highbrow or lowbrow tastes. Gender does not influence TV preferences in model 1, while in the rest of the models a significant positive influence of activities with parents on TV watching is found. Boys should score higher than girls because they more frequently did joint activities with parents, but gender does not illustrate a salient effect. On the other hand, there is a remarkable negative impact of all lessons, which indicates girls are supposed to score lower provided the fact that they took more lessons. But the figures in model 3 tells an opposite story, the effect of being a female is slightly important, which is to compensate for the fact that they are, again, in a sort of disadvantaged position with respect to TV watching because parental socialization (in this case: having taken more lessons which negatively affects watching TV) works against them. The gender effect disappears again in model 4, where it is explained by girls' talking more often with their parents about

arts and culture, although gender difference is found in separate TV programs (see table 1). In model 5, family background also reveals its significant influence since education level of parents has a positive effect. Thus, watching TV programs shows no gender difference, but it does have something to do with parents' social position.

**Table 6. Results of regression modeling of TV programs and parental socialization and social position (N=155)**

<b>Dependent variable</b>	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
<b>All TV programs</b>	B	B	B	B	B
	( $\beta$ )	( $\beta$ )	( $\beta$ )	( $\beta$ )	( $\beta$ )
Gender (female)	.148 (.072)	.220 (.107)	.314* (.152)	.207 (.100)	.135 (.065)
<b>Parental socialization</b>					
All activities with parents		.162** (.162)	.213** (.213)	.166** (.166)	.170** (.170)
All lessons			-.161** (-.194)	-.188*** (-.227)	-.188*** (-.224)
About 10-12 years old, arts and cultural talks and education				.203** (.208)	.140 (.143)
<b>Social position</b>					
Education of parents					.180** (.242)
Occupation of parents					-.061* (-.159)
<i>Variance explained</i>	.005	.030	.064	.102	.144

Significance: \*  $p < 0.10$  \*\*  $p < 0.05$  \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

From the compare means analysis of gender differences in cultural preference, we do not find typical gender cultural preference patterns. Yet, when differences of each cultural item are added up, gender differences became more explicit. Girls in this case are also found to be more interested in highbrow culture, including musical genres, reading as well as activities, which conforms to the findings of other western nations (Lagaert *et al.*, 2017; Lagaert, 2018; Christin, 2012; Nosek & Smyth, 2011; Tepper, 2000; Close, Prenshaw & Zinkhan, 2004). Boys, in contrast, are consumers of general popular culture, like popular culture activities, and popular reading. However, popular music is highly individualized, with no particular gender effects, which is not entirely in line with previous researches in which boys are supposed to be consumers of this kind (Lagaert, 2018, Atkinson, 2016). Besides, TV programs are equally welcomed by both boys and girls. Reasons behind each type of cultural taste are varied as well. Highbrow music tastes and TV programs preference is triggered by parents' social class, while popular reading preference heavily rely on the way parents brought them up. Other cultural preferences, such as females' intense enthusiasm of highbrow reading and highbrow activities are more developed on their own, even though parental practice is active in it in a negative way for girls. Boys' interest in popular activities also grows by themselves and is subjected neither to influence of parental socialization nor to parents' social position.

#### **4.4. Sibling's effects on parental socialization**

Chinese unique one child policy controls the family size which, as stated by Blake (1989) has an impact on how parents raise their children. To test the influence of male/female with/without same-sex siblings on the way parents brought up their children, compare means analyses is carried out. In table 7, the differences between respondents with or without same-sex or different-sex siblings in parental socialization are significant, with overall significance value much lower than .01.

First of all, judging from the means of cultural and arts conversations with parents, we can see that means of respondents without brothers or sisters, regardless of gender,



are much lower than those with same-sex and with different-sex siblings. In other words, only parents spend more time talking about arts and culture with the only child than those with siblings.

Second, regarding activities participation with parents, having a same-sex sibling increases these activities for males but decreases them for females. The same pattern is found in respondents with different-sex siblings; males with sisters are more likely to be taken out by parents while having a brother decreases the participation for girls.

Third, if we look at having taken lessons, the scores of males having or not having not same-sex siblings are quite close (.299 vs .278), but other two scores of female counterparts are different. Girls with sisters have a higher likelihood to take lessons, and so do the male respondents with sisters. Females with brothers also are more likely to attend extra-curriculum classes.

**Table 7. Results of sibling's effects on parental socialization from compare means analysis (N=155)**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Same-sex sibling</b>	<b>Cultural and arts talks</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Male	No	2.59	.004***
	Yes	1.89	
Female	No	2.97	
	Yes	2.35	
<b>Different sex siblings</b>		<b>Cultural and arts talks</b>	
Male	No	2.50	
	Yes	2.10	
Female	No	2.95	
	Yes	2.64	
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Same-sex sibling</b>	<b>All activities with parents</b>	<b>Sig.</b>

Male	No	.063	
	Yes	.713	
Female	No	-.080	
	Yes	-.491	
<b>Different sex siblings</b>		<b>All activities with parents</b>	.007***
Male	No	.150	
	Yes	.514	
Female	No	-.109	
	Yes	-.274	
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Same-sex sibling</b>	<b>All lessons</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Male	No	.299	
	Yes	.278	
Female	No	-.247	
	Yes	.101	
<b>Different sex siblings</b>		<b>All lessons</b>	.004***
Male	No	.238	
	Yes	.397	
Female	No	-.293	
	Yes	.054	

Significance: \*  $p < 0.10$  \*\*  $p < 0.05$  \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

In conclusion, we can say parents with more than one child would cut down the talks and divide their attention more equally to each of their children, which happened to respondents with or without same-sex or different-sex siblings. The odd of being taken to museums and other activities increases when males have sidings, especially brothers, but for girls, it falls especially if it is a sister. Besides, whether males have, or

have not same-sex sibling does not affect much the odds of lectures attendance, but it increases when they have sisters. Yet, it is less possible for girls to attend these lessons when they are the only child but having a sister increases the possibility.

## 5. Conclusion and discussion

Bourdieu's homology hypothesis argues people from upper class with substantial culture capitals and socioeconomic capitals usually are consumers of elite culture while lowbrow culture basically is consumed by the lower class. The class-based cultural distinction also persists over generations by cultural reproduction. Yet, it does not shed light on the gender-special cultural engagement, which refers to women's penchant for refined culture compared to men's preference over lowbrow culture. It is unreasonable to assume all women from higher social class, so gender difference may be attributed to other factors, such as parental socialization. Furthermore, cultural studies have mainly concentrated on western industrialized nations, but different social conditions may render cultural consumption different from nations. Therefore, this thesis focuses on the gender cultural consumption difference and to what extent the individual and combined influence of class and gender, on cultural practices in Chinese college students.

In this research, by using factor analysis, compare means and regression analysis, we first concluded that highbrow culture, including reading, music as well as cultural activities, are usually favored by female students, which is consonant with previous studies showing that females enjoy refined culture more while males, in general, prefer popular culture, even though popular music preference and TV programs do not reveal much gender distinction. Special social conditions of China do not render China completely alienated from other countries in term of the gendered cultural tastes.

Second, the homologous relationship between capital or class is not entirely applicable to the case of China. We found that only TV programs preference and refined musical tastes results from respondents' social background. And parental socialization is the contributor to popular reading preference. The rest cultural tastes are possibly nurtured on their own due to other factors which are not tested in this thesis.

Third, Chinese parents did socialize female and male children in different ways with girls taking more classes and offered more cultural and arts conversation while boys were taken to join various cultural activities. The socialization strategies of two genders indeed are not the same as what Lu and Chang (2013) proposed. However, from the above regression analyses, we can see that girls are still in a disadvantaged

place, such as less taken than boys to museums and other venues, but they manage to cultivate their refined arts and cultural appreciation, which implies that parents favor boys over girls, even though there is still a certain amount of investment on girls.

Fourth, whether respondents are the only child or have same sex or different sex siblings does have an effect on cultural reproduction. Cultural conversations were given to each child diminish with the presence of siblings, regardless of their sex. And males with siblings, especially a brother, visit art exhibitions or other places more often with parents, while it works opposite for girls, especially they have a sister. Also, males without or with brothers have a similar possibility to attend lessons, even though the odds goes up as they have different-sex siblings. However, if girls are the only child, they are less likely to be sent to extra-curriculum lessons unless they have sisters.

The above results are derived from quantitative analyses of survey data. The whole data set is mainly concerning what respondents consume and appreciate rather than how they perform cultural practices and consume cultural goods. Therefore, Holt (1997) stated that “quantitative studies using survey data, operationalize tastes only in their objectified form” instead of “embodied tastes” generated from qualitative statistics, which may lead to failure in testing Bourdieu’s ‘theory. However, many researchers pointed out that evidence from qualitative research method on cultural consumption patterns is in accordance with what they found from the quantitative research method (Chan, 2010; Halle, 1993; Painter, 2002; Bennett *et al.*, 2009). But a qualitative method is still encouraged for future researches to study in what way Chinese consume culture.

Given the small number of male college students participants, the result would be more reliable and valid if more male respondents are included. Also, for popular musical genres, there should be more to be included to find out the subtle gendered difference. So are the TV programs, and if so, they can be rotated and be classified into lowbrow and highbrow categories for gendered difference analysis. Besides, the regional disparity failed to be covered, since most of the participants are from Guangdong province, which renders the result incomprehensive and unrepresentative of the whole picture. In addition, because of the snowball sampling, the sample is

biased, because a great number of students are from private universities and prestigious universities, and nearly 20% of respondents are studying abroad, which means a great number of them are from middle or even upper class. More participants from lower classes should be included to produce a more reliable and full-scale result. In the future study, a more comprehensive research covering multiple provinces or cities, social classes should be incorporated to reveal the whole picture of culture consumption patterns in the context of China.

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## **Appendix A:**

### **Questionnaires of cultural preferences of Chinese college students**

This questionnaire is designed to explore the ways in which people from different families spend their leisure time. It will take you about 5 minutes to complete the questionnaire. All information you provide will be strictly protected with confidentiality and anonymity. Your participation is important, and I really appreciate that.

By answering this questionnaire, you understand that:

- ☐ Your participation is entirely voluntary
- ☐ You are free to refuse to answer any questions
- ☐ You are free to withdraw at any time

#### **1. What is your gender?**

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

#### **2. How old are you?**

- ☐ \_\_\_\_\_

#### **3. Are you currently studying abroad or in China?**

- ☐ Abroad
- ☐ In China

#### **4. What is the highest diploma or certification your mother and father have obtained?**

Diploma or certification	Mother	Father
No diploma		
Primary school		
High school		



Vocational diploma		
Undergraduate degree		
Master's degree and above		

**5. What are your parents' occupations? (If you are not sure which types your parents' jobs are, just write down names of jobs)**

Occupations	Mother	Father
Legislators, Senior officials, Managers (国家机关、党群组织、企业、事业单位负责人)		
Professionals (专业技术人员, 工程师、医生、教师等)		
Technicians and Associate professionals (技术人员和专业人员助理)		
Clerical support workers (一般办事员)		
Service and sales workers (商业、服务业人员)		
Skilled agriculturist and fishery workers (农、林、牧、渔、水利业生产人员)		
Craft and related trades workers (工艺者以及相关贸易人员)		
Plant/Machine operator & assemblers (机械机床操作员和组装人员)		
Elementary occupation (基层人员: 例如清洁工、矿工、农民等)		
Unemployment (无业)		

**6. Do you have siblings?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

**7. What is the gender of your sibling? 【You may choose two, if you have more than one sibling】**

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

**8. When you were about 10-12 years old, how often did your parents teach/talk to you about arts and culture?**

- ☐ Never
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Often
- ☐ Very often

**9. Please indicate for each type of activity below whether you ever took lessons in it and, if so, for how long.**

Activities	Yes	No	How long
Musical instrument			
Dance/ Ballet			
Painting/drawing			
Theatre/musical			
Sports			

**10. Please indicate for the types of activities how often you attended with your parents when you were about 10-12 years old.**

Activities	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often

Museums/art exhibitions					
Plays					
Classical music concerts					
Popular music concerts					
Sports games					
Ballet/dance performance					

**11. For each of the musical genres below, please indicate to what extent you like them.**

Music genres	Dislike a lot	Dislike a little	Neither like nor dislike	Like a little	Like a lot
Classic music					
Pop					
Rock and roll					
Hip hop					
Folk music					
Country music					
Rap					
Jazz					
Indie music					

**12. For each of the TV program below, please indicate to what extent you like them.**

TV programs	Dislike a lot	Dislike a little	Neither like nor dislike	Like a little	Like a lot
Animation					
News programs					
Soap operas					
Sports games					
Documentaries					
Entertaining shows					

**13. Please indicate for the types of books below how often you read them**

Categories	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often
Scientific and technology books					
Art books					
Literature					
Poetry and essay					
Romance (e.g. Pride and Prejudice)					
Science fiction, fantasy and horror					
Manga and other comic books					

Practical books (cooking, decorating)					
Novels (e.g. detective novels, historical novels)					

**14. Please indicate for each activity how often you have engaged in it over the last 12 months:**

Categories	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often
Museums/art exhibitions					
Classical concerts					
Popular music concert					
Theatre play					
Dance performance					
Sports games					

**15. How often did you play or watch LOL/King of glory(王者荣耀)/  
PlayerUnknown's Battlegrounds(绝地求生) over the last 12 months?**

- ☐ Never
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Often
- ☐ Very often

As a follow-up to this questionnaire survey, we would possibly arrange an interview with some participants. Would you like to participate in a follow-up interview? If your answer is yes, then please leave your contact information.

Your contact number: .....(optional)

Email address: .....(optional)

Wechat number: ..... (optional)

QQ number: .....(optional)